

**SADC SUB REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS IN PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD
SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 17TH – 19TH SEPTEMBER 2001
MAURITIUS**

**SADC KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

Preamble

We, the delegations of the countries of Southern African Development Community, consisting of government officials, civil society and the business community, meeting in Wolmar, Flic en Flac, Mauritius from 17th to 19th September 2001 for the Sub-Regional Consultations in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 2-11 September 2002, recognise that humanity has a common heritage. Our meeting in Flic en Flac follows on the SADC Report, "Sustaining Our Common Future" presented to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

We recall that the United Nations Conference of Environment and Development (UNCED) was convened in 1992 to discuss the central problems that every nation and community faces, these include how to cater for human needs, how to improve the quality of life of the millions who endure poverty and face uncertainty, and to do so, in the words of the World Commission on Environment and Development, "without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

We further recall the African Common Position on Environment and Development adopted by our governments at their meeting in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in November 1991, and which was submitted by the OAU to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

We are deeply concerned that ten years after the adoption of agreements at UNCED, including Agenda 21, the SADC sub-region continues to be confronted by social, economic, and environmental crises.

We are responding to resolution 55/199 of December 2000 of the 55th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which decided to convene the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa.

We are reaffirming the spirit of Africa's determination to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the peoples of Africa as reflected in the existing treaties of the African Economic Community (Abuja 1991) and the Treaty of the African Union that was established by the Summit of the African Heads of State and Government convened in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001.

We are also reiterating that multi-stakeholder participation is a necessary step in the implementation of Agenda 21 and more so in the preparation process to Johannesburg.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The SADC region has adopted Agenda 21 and the principles of sustainable development as the basis for the region's sustainable development strategies. The SADC countries have also ratified the three 1992 Rio Conventions, namely the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. The SADC countries have accordingly put in place appropriate mechanisms for implementing the conventions.

SADC has increased regional economic cooperation and integration, has developed a number of protocols including those on trade and shared water courses in the sub region which also main streams gender development.

Environment awareness has improved and many countries have put in place and strengthened policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks towards sustainable development.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

We realise that although globalisation provides opportunity and prospects for future sustainable development, including combating poverty, most countries in the sub-region continue to be marginalized and impacted negatively by it. Globalisation has increased the capacity of developed countries, particularly in the areas of trade, Finance and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

We further note that insufficient market access for African products in industrialised countries has further impacted negatively on the availability of resources for Africa's sustainable development.

We also note that the countries of the sub-region have continued to receive extremely low levels of foreign private capital as well as low levels of ODA. A substantial proportion of the sub-region's export earnings has been used for debt servicing resulting in the inability of our countries to achieve sustainable development.

We further note the inequality in the international trade environment with regard to the subsidization of certain sectors in the developed world.

PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

We reaffirm the New Africa Initiative (NAI) as a cornerstone for sustainable development in Africa. The NAI is a pledge by African leaders, based on a common vision and firm, shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. The NAI is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent and the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world.

We also re-affirm the three pillars of sustainable development, namely social, economic and environment. Humanity is still confronted by the interlocking environment – development crises. The pre-requisites for sustainable development, which can be defined as forms of progress, which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, still remain unfulfilled.

We take note of the Sub-regional Assessment Report on the progress made on the implementation of Agenda 21.

We note that gender is a development issue. A key constraint to sustainable development is a lack of gender equality and all our actions emanating from WSSD must be characterised by gender equality and empowerment.

We further note that a key determinant of success for sustainable development is the strong linking of trade and environment.

CORE ISSUES

These are priority issues for the SADC sub-region to be addressed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002. We recommend that these issues be considered in the formulation of the Africa position for the WSSD.

POVERTY

Poverty is prevalent in the SADC sub-region and is the primary constraint to socio-economic development. Further, poverty leads to environmental degradation and a poor environment robs people of health and food security. Internationally the primary threat to the environment is poverty as many poor nations are forced to sacrifice their natural

environments to have some measure of health and food security. Poverty is not only a problem of poor nations but also negatively impacts on richer nations as markets are compromised and international security is threatened. It is in the interest of the international community to fully address the problem and provide resources for sustainable solutions to the poverty crises. To that end, we propose that the following theme for the WSSD be considered: **POVERTY ERADICATION IS A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

Peace, Security and Stability

Peace, security and stability are a basic requirement for sustainable development. The model Southern Africa and Africa is choosing to use is regional and sub-regional governance to ensure peace, security and stability. The international community should appropriately provide resources and support to such models and initiatives like the New Africa Initiative and develop capacity to prevent, manage and resolve conflict.

Financing for Sustainable development

Given the inadequate resources for sustainable development we would like to see a transformation and increased access to financial mechanism like the Global Environment Facility (GEF); an acceleration in the process of improving market access particularly for developing countries, and the further reconsideration of debt relief. Debt relief, particularly the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, is recognised as a valuable contribution to the fight against poverty and has benefited some of the SADC member states. However, its application has not yielded the desired results of reducing poverty and improving the standard of living in the region. In this regard, there is a need to review the criteria for accessing the HIPC Initiative. There is also a need to expand the initiative in order to allow access to by other member states of the region.

Health

The developing world is currently straining under the burden of communicable diseases which are disabling our economies. HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria are exacerbated by our poor socio-economic conditions. The international community should invest in efforts to ensure access to affordable preventative and curative health care and medical technology, the improvement of the environment and conditions which contribute to these diseases and the building of appropriate capacity of local communities to deal with this crisis.

Waste

Poor waste management, including hazardous waste, is a core contributor to environmental degradation, health hazards, over-exploitation and depletion of scarce resources. The international community needs to re-commit to international and regional agreements. Further the availability of resources and capacity to manage and monitor compliance needs to be reinforced.

International Environmental Governance (IEG)

The current IEG regime is not efficient and does not favour the participation of less resourced countries particularly from the developing world. We would like to consider an IEG model that is characterised by:

- * A single centralised political council that meets regularly to pronounce on the policy environment
- * A single co-ordinating organisation for environmental issues that has strong relations to the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Global Environmental Facility and other multilateral agencies
- * A clustering of Multilateral Environmental Agreements based on issues with joint programmes on cross-cutters
- * Sustainable resources and funding mechanisms to maintain the system

Food security

There are insufficient, inadequate access and inequitable distribution of food in the SADC region. This leads to malnutrition. Lack of financial support, inadequate training and research in agriculture, climate variability, civil strife are the root causes of food shortages. There is a need to increase food production and access to food, and to put in place the mechanisms that facilitate financial support and appropriate training in agriculture and agro processing. We need to guard against potential food dumping, especially genetically modified food.

Energy

Energy plays a very important role in facilitating social, economic and environmental objectives. Millions of people are without access to energy in the SADC region. At least 80% of the people in the sub-region are still dependent on almost exclusively on traditional sources of energy. Fossil fuel plays a central role in the socio-economic development of our region, while simultaneously providing the necessary infrastructure for the regional economic base for the region to become an attractive host for foreign investments in the energy sector. Biomass forms the main energy source in the rural domestic sector, while other renewable energy development opportunities are already being explored in the fields of solar power, wind power, pumped storage and hydropower schemes. Research and development, for clean coal technologies, efficiency of energy

supply and usage, and affordable uptake of renewables is required for adaptation to specific indigenous conditions in Africa.

Climate change

We note with concern the current impacts and potential future impacts of climate change on the SADC region, particularly sea level rise and extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. We welcome recent progress on reaching agreement on targets and time frames and strongly urge the rapid agreement of final details under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

Biodiversity

We take pride in the great wealth of biodiversity in the sub region. We note the scientific and economic opportunities attached to this source of wealth and the imperative of ensuring that these opportunities directly benefit the region. To that end, we call for the support of the implementation of the OAU's Model Law for the protection of the Rights of Local Communities, Farmers and Breeders, and for the Regulation of Access to Biological Resources and the OAU's Draft African Biosafety Model Law. We would like the world to support an accelerated effort for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.

Water

Water scarcity is a problem in many parts of the SADC region and water resources is under constant threat from pollution. Poor distribution of water resources coupled with frequent droughts and floods leads to direct hardship for many people particularly the poor. This also results in land degradation with consequent loss of livestock, wildlife and the disruption of the ecological system.

We note with concern that millions of people in the sub-region still lack access to safe water and sanitary services. We look at the WSSD to agree on a global strategy and resources to deliver the Millennium Declaration target on access to safe water and sanitary services.

Water management systems in shared basins need to be prioritised.

Land degradation and desertification

The majority of the people in the SADC region directly depend on land resources for their livelihoods. However, there are, to varying degrees, poor land management practices and in some countries inappropriate land tenure systems. This leads to land degradation and non optimal use of land.

In order to address this, there should be increased resourcing and accelerated implementation for the Convention on Combating Desertification. This is particularly acute in the context of the SADC region where many of the countries have National Action Plans and Political will for their implementation.

Marine and coastal management

Coastal communities and some national economies, particularly small island states, are highly dependent on their coastal and marine resources. The integrity of coasts and oceans is under threat from unsustainable development and over exploitation. We note the impact of climate change on coastlines and especially on small island states.

We call for the harmonisation and co-ordination of the regional and international laws and agreements related to the Seas. Improved compliance and enforcement of the international and regional agreements is essential. Technology for monitoring levels of fish stocks and to guard against illegal fishing is needed. Increased support for capacity building for the sustainable management and development of coastal areas is required.

Market access

We note with concern that the benefits of economic globalisation have not been fairly shared across nations. The New Africa Initiative calls for a shift in emphasis from aid to trade agreements that facilitates sustainable development in the region and a more equitable global system, which results in a fair distribution of benefits.

Capacity building and technology transfer

We note that the technology gap has widened significantly between the region and the developed countries since 1992, in particular, the development benefits of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This situation needs to be addressed with technology transfer, information exchange and technology partner ships. We should ensure improved access and affordability of sustainable development technologies for developing countries. We are committed to developing and promoting Indigenous Knowledge Systems and technology. We call for strong partnerships to support initiatives to build capacity in all of these issues in the SADC region.

Conclusion

Sustainable development is dependent on a vibrant social, economic and environmental strategy for Planet Earth. The WSSD presents an opportunity to enhance and strengthen the dialogue between North and South to result in meaningful participation and outcomes, which furthers the sustainable development objectives of the South and halts our marginalisation through globalisation. Thus we call on the North to work in partnership with the South to operationalise the restructuring of the global sustainable development governance regime and commitments made in the Millennium Summit, the G8 Declaration, Skagen and other such initiatives.

We would want the WSSD to agree on a Johannesburg Plan of Action to meet its targets in the period 2002 – 2012. Further in order to ensure the appropriate and effective implementation of the WSSD agreements, we would like the WSSD to cement the pillars of a concrete committed global partnership that will characterise this period by an overwhelming sense of achievement toward sustainable development.