

Agenda 21

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Agenda 21: Environment and Development Agenda
Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development
Integrating Environment and Development in Decision Making
Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources
Local Authorities' Initiatives in Support of Agenda 21

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Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development

In industrialized countries, the consumption patterns of cities are severely stressing the global ecosystem while settlements in the developing world need more raw material, energy, and economic development simply to overcome basic economic and social problems. Human settlement conditions in many parts of the world, particularly the developing countries are deteriorating mainly as a result of the low levels of investments in the sector attributable to the overall resource constraints in these countries. In the low-income countries for which recent data are available, an average of only 5.6 per cent of central government expenditure went to housing, amenities, social security and welfare. Expenditure by international support and finance organizations is equally low. For example, only 1 per cent of the United Nations system's total grant-financed expenditures in 1988 went to human settlements while in 1991, loans from the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA) for urban development and water supply and sewerage amounted to 5.5 and 5.4 per cent, respectively, of their total lending.

On the other hand, available information indicates that technical cooperation activities in the human settlement sector generate considerable public and private sector investment. For example, every dollar of UNDP technical cooperation expenditure on human settlements in 1988 generated a follow-up investment of \$ 122, the highest of all UNDP sectors of assistance.

This is the foundation of the "enabling approach" advocated for the human settlement sector. External assistance will help to generate the internal resources needed to improve the living and working environments of all people by the year 2000 and beyond, including the growing number of unemployed - the no-income group. At the same time the environmental implications of urban development should be recognized and addressed in an integrated fashion by all countries with high priority being given to the needs of the urban and rural poor, the unemployed and the growing number of people without any source of income.

Human settlement objective

The overall human settlement objective is to improve the social, economic and environmental quality of human settlements and the living and working environments of all people, in particular the urban and rural poor. Such improvement should be based on technical cooperation activities, partnerships among the public, private and community sectors and participation in the decision making process from community groups and special interest groups such as women, indigenous people, the elderly and the disabled. These approaches should form the core principles of national settlement strategies. In developing these strategies, countries will need to set priorities among the eight program areas in this document in accordance with their national plans and objectives taking fully into account their social and cultural capabilities. Furthermore, countries should make appropriate provision to monitor the impact of their strategies on marginalized and disenfranchised groups with particular reference to the needs of women.

The program areas included are:

- Providing adequate shelter for all;
- Improving human settlement management;
- Promoting sustainable land use planning and management;

- Promoting the integrated provision of environmental infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage, hazardous and solid waste management;
- Promoting sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements;
- Promoting human settlement planning and management in disaster-prone areas;
- Promoting sustainable construction industry activities;
- Promoting human resource development and capacity-building for human settlement development.

Integrating Environment and Development in Decision Making

Prevailing systems for decision-making in many countries tend to separate economic, social and environmental factors at the policy, planning and management levels. This influences the actions of all groups in society, including Governments, industry and individuals, and has important implications for the efficiency and sustainability of development. An adjustment or even a fundamental reshaping of decision-making, in the light of country-specific conditions, may be necessary if environment and development is to be put at the center of economic and political decision-making, in effect achieving a full integration of these factors. In recent years, some Governments have also begun to make significant changes in the institutional structures of government in order to enable more systematic consideration of the environment when decisions are made on economic, social, fiscal, energy, agricultural, transportation, trade and other policies, as well as the implications of policies in these areas for the environment. New forms of dialogue are also being developed for achieving better integration among national and local government, industry, science, environmental groups and the public in the process of developing effective approaches to environment and development. The responsibility for bringing about changes lies with Governments in partnership with the private sector and local authorities, and in collaboration with national, regional and international organizations, including in particular UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank. Exchange of experience between countries can also be significant. National plans, goals and objectives, national rules, regulations and law, and the specific situation in which different countries are placed are the overall framework in which such integration takes place. In this context, it must be borne in mind that environmental standards may pose severe economic and social costs if they are uniformly applied in developing countries.

The overall objective is to improve or restructure the decision-making process so that consideration of socio-economic and environmental issues is fully integrated and a broader range of public participation assured. Recognizing that countries will develop their own priorities in accordance with their prevailing conditions, needs, national plans, policies and programmes, the following objectives are proposed:

- To conduct a national review of economic, sectoral and environmental policies, strategies and plans to ensure the progressive integration of environmental and developmental issues;
- To strengthen institutional structures to allow the full integration of environmental and developmental issues, at all levels of decision-making;
- To develop or improve mechanisms to facilitate the involvement of concerned individuals, groups and organizations in decision-making at all levels;

- To establish domestically determined procedures to integrate environment and development issues in decision-making.

The primary need is to integrate environmental and developmental decision-making processes. To do this, Governments should conduct a national review and, where appropriate, improve the processes of decision-making so as to achieve the progressive integration of economic, social and environmental issues in the pursuit of development that is economically efficient, socially equitable and responsible and environmentally sound. Countries will develop their own priorities in accordance with their national plans, policies and programs for the following activities:

- Ensuring the integration of economic, social and environmental considerations in decision-making at all levels and in all ministries;
- Adopting a domestically formulated policy framework that reflects a long-term perspective and cross-sectoral approach as the basis for decisions, taking account of the linkages between and within the various political, economic, social and environmental issues involved in the development process;
- Establishing domestically determined ways and means to ensure the coherence of sectoral, economic, social and environmental policies, plans and policy instruments, including fiscal measures and the budget; these mechanisms should apply at various levels and bring together those interested in the development process;
- Monitoring and evaluating the development process systematically, conducting regular reviews of the state of human resources development, economic and social conditions and trends, the state of the environment and natural resources; this could be complemented by annual environment and development reviews, with a view to assessing sustainable development achievements by the various sectors and departments of government;
- Ensuring transparency of, and accountability for, the environmental implications of economic and sectoral policies;
- Ensuring access by the public to relevant information, facilitating the reception of public views and allowing for effective participation.

To support a more integrated approach to decision-making, the data systems and analytical methods used to support such decision-making processes may need to be improved. Governments, in collaboration, where appropriate, with national and international organizations, should review the status of the planning and management system and, where necessary, modify and strengthen procedures so as to facilitate the integrated consideration of social, economic and environmental issues. Countries will develop their own priorities in accordance with their national plans, policies and programs for the following activities:

- Improving the use of data and information at all stages of planning and management, making systematic and simultaneous use of social, economic, developmental, ecological and environmental data; analysis should stress interactions and synergisms; a broad range of analytical methods should be encouraged so as to provide various points of view;
- Adopting comprehensive analytical procedures for prior and simultaneous assessment of the impacts of decisions, including the impacts within and among the economic, social and environmental spheres; these procedures should extend beyond the project

level to policies and programs; analysis should also include assessment of costs, benefits and risks;

- Adopting flexible and integrative planning approaches that allow the consideration of multiple goals and enable adjustment of changing needs; integrative area approaches at the ecosystem or watershed level can assist in this approach;
- Adopting integrated management systems, particularly for the management of natural resources; traditional or indigenous methods should be studied and considered wherever they have proved effective; women's traditional roles should not be marginalized as a result of the introduction of new management systems;
- Adopting integrated approaches to sustainable development at the regional level, including transboundary areas, subject to the requirements of particular circumstances and needs;
- Using policy instruments (legal/regulatory and economic) as a tool for planning and management, seeking incorporation of efficiency criteria in decisions; instruments should be regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure that they continue to be effective;
- Delegating planning and management responsibilities to the lowest level of public authority consistent with effective action; in particular the advantages of effective and equitable opportunities for participation by women should be discussed;
- Establishing procedures for involving local communities in contingency planning for environmental and industrial accidents, and maintaining an open exchange of information on local hazards.

Countries could develop systems for monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving sustainable development by adopting indicators that measure changes across economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Governments, in cooperation, where appropriate, with international organizations, should adopt a national strategy for sustainable development based on, inter alia, the implementation of decisions taken at the Conference, particularly in respect of Agenda 21. This strategy should build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country. The experience gained through existing planning exercises such as national reports for the Conference, national conservation strategies and environment action plans should be fully used and incorporated into a country-driven sustainable development strategy. Its goals should be to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations. It should be developed through the widest possible participation. It should be based on a thorough assessment of the current situation and initiatives.

Integrated Approach to the Planning and Management of Land Resources

Land is normally defined as a physical entity in terms of its topography and spatial nature; a broader integrative view also includes natural resources: the soils, minerals, water and biota that the land comprises. These components are organized in ecosystems which provide a variety of services essential to the maintenance of the integrity of life-support systems and the productive capacity of the environment. Land resources are used in ways that take advantage of all these characteristics. Land is a finite resource, while the natural resources it supports

can vary over time and according to management conditions and uses. Expanding human requirements and economic activities are placing ever increasing pressures on land resources, creating competition and conflicts and resulting in suboptimal use of both land and land resources. If, in the future, human requirements are to be met in a sustainable manner, it is now essential to resolve these conflicts and move towards more effective and efficient use of land and its natural resources. Integrated physical and land-use planning and management is an eminently practical way to achieve this. By examining all uses of land in an integrated manner, it makes it possible to minimize conflicts, to make the most efficient trade-offs and to link social and economic development with environmental protection and enhancement, thus helping to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. The essence of the integrated approach finds expression in the coordination of the sectoral planning and management activities concerned with the various aspects of land use and land resources.

The present consists of one program area, the integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources, which deals with the reorganization and, where necessary, some strengthening of the decision-making structure, including existing policies, planning and management procedures and methods that can assist in putting in place an integrated approach to land resources. It does not deal with the operational aspects of planning and management, which are more appropriately dealt with under the relevant sectoral programs. Since the program deals with an important cross-sectoral aspect of decision-making for sustainable development, it is closely related to a number of other programs that deal with that issue directly.

Land resources are used for a variety of purposes which interact and may compete with one another; therefore, it is desirable to plan and manage all uses in an integrated manner. Integration should take place at two levels, considering, on the one hand, all environmental, social and economic factors (including, for example, impacts of the various economic and social sectors on the environment and natural resources) and, on the other, all environmental and resource components together (i.e., air, water, biota, land, geological and natural resources). Integrated consideration facilitates appropriate choices and trade-offs, thus maximizing sustainable productivity and use. Opportunities to allocate land to different uses arise in the course of major settlement or development projects or in a sequential fashion as lands become available on the market. This in turn provides opportunities to support traditional patterns of sustainable land management or to assign protected status for conservation of biological diversity or critical ecological services.

A number of techniques, frameworks and processes can be combined to facilitate an integrated approach. They are the indispensable support for the planning and management process, at the national and local level, ecosystem or area levels and for the development of specific plans of action. Many of its elements are already in place but need to be more widely applied, further developed and strengthened. This program area is concerned primarily with providing a framework that will coordinate decision-making; the content and operational functions are therefore not included here but are dealt with in the relevant sectoral programs of Agenda 21.

The broad objective is to facilitate allocation of land to the uses that provide the greatest sustainable benefits and to promote the transition to a sustainable and integrated management of land resources. In doing so, environmental, social and economic issues should be taken

into consideration. Protected areas, private property rights, the rights of indigenous people and their communities and other local communities and the economic role of women in agriculture and rural development, among other issues, should be taken into account. In more specific terms, the objectives are as follows:

- To review and develop policies to support the best possible use of land and the sustainable management of land resources, by not later than 1996;
- To improve and strengthen planning, management and evaluation systems for land and land resources, by not later than 2000;
- To strengthen institutions and coordinating mechanisms for land and land resources, by not later than 1998;
- To create mechanisms to facilitate the active involvement and participation of all concerned, particularly communities and people at the local level, in decision-making on land use and management, by not later than 1996.

Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of regional and international organizations, should **ensure that policies and policy instruments support the best possible land use and sustainable management of land resources**. Particular attention should be given to the role of agricultural land. To do this, they should:

- Develop integrated goal-setting and policy formulation at the national, regional and local levels that takes into account environmental, social, demographic and economic issues;
- Develop policies that encourage sustainable land use and management of land resources and take the land resource base, demographic issues and the interests of the local population into account;
- Review the regulatory framework, including laws, regulations and enforcement procedures, in order to identify improvements needed to support sustainable land use and management of land resources and restricts the transfer of productive arable land to other uses;
- Apply economic instruments and develop institutional mechanisms and incentives to encourage the best possible land use and sustainable management of land resources;
- Encourage the principle of delegating policy-making to the lowest level of public authority consistent with effective action and a locally driven approach.

Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of regional and international organizations, should **review and, if appropriate, revise planning and management systems to facilitate an integrated approach**. To do this, they should:

- Adopt planning and management systems that facilitate the integration of environmental components such as air, water, land and other natural resources, using landscape ecological planning (LANDEP) or other approaches that focus on, for example, an ecosystem or a watershed;
- Adopt strategic frameworks that allow the integration of both developmental and environmental goals; examples of these frameworks include sustainable livelihood systems, rural development, the World Conservation Strategy/Caring for the Earth, primary environmental care (PEC) and others;

- Establish a general framework for land-use and physical planning within which specialized and more detailed sectoral plans (e.g., for protected areas, agriculture, forests, human settlements, rural development) can be developed; establish intersectoral consultative bodies to streamline project planning and implementation;
- Strengthen management systems for land and natural resources by including appropriate traditional and indigenous methods; examples of these practices include pastoralism, Hema reserves (traditional Islamic land reserves) and terraced agriculture;
- Examine and, if necessary, establish innovative and flexible approaches to program funding;
- Compile detailed land capability inventories to guide sustainable land resources allocation, management and use at the national and local levels.

Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of national and international organizations, should **promote the improvement, further development and widespread application of planning and management tools that facilitate an integrated and sustainable approach to land and resources**. To do this, they should:

- Adopt improved systems for the interpretation and integrated analysis of data on land use and land resources;
- Systematically apply techniques and procedures for assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts, risks, costs and benefits of specific actions;
- Analyse and test methods to include land and ecosystem functions and land resources values in national accounts.

Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with national institutions and interest groups and with the support of regional and international organizations, should **launch awareness-raising campaigns to alert and educate people on the importance of integrated land and land resources management and the role that individuals and social groups can play in it**. This should be accompanied by provision of the means to adopt improved practices for land use and sustainable management.

Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with national organizations and with the support of regional and international organizations, should **establish innovative procedures, programs, projects and services that facilitate and encourage the active participation of those affected in the decision-making and implementation process**, especially of groups that have, hitherto, often been excluded, such as women, youth, indigenous people and their communities and other local communities.

Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with national institutions and the private sector and with the support of regional and international organizations, should **strengthen the information systems necessary for making decisions and evaluating future changes on land use and management**. The needs of both men and women should be taken into account. To do this, they should:

- Strengthen information, systematic observation and assessment systems for environmental, economic and social data related to land resources at the global,

regional, national and local levels and for land capability and land-use and management patterns;

- Strengthen coordination between existing sectoral data systems on land and land resources and strengthen national capacity to gather and assess data;
- Provide the appropriate technical information necessary for informed decision-making on land use and management in an accessible form to all sectors of the population, especially to local communities and women;
- Support low-cost, community-managed systems for the collection of comparable information on the status and processes of change of land resources, including soils, forest cover, wildlife, climate and other elements.

Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of regional and international organizations, should **strengthen regional cooperation and exchange of information on land resources**. To do this, they should:

- Study and design regional policies to support programs for land-use and physical planning;
- Promote the development of land-use and physical plans in the countries of the region;
- Design information systems and promote training;
- Exchange, through networks and other appropriate means, information on experiences with the process and results of integrated and participatory planning and management of land resources at the national and local levels.

Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with the national and international scientific community and with the support of the relevant international organizations, should **research and test, through pilot projects, the applicability of improved approaches to the integrated planning and management of land resources**, including technical, social and institutional factors.

Governments at the appropriate level, in collaboration with the appropriate local authorities, non-governmental organizations and international institutions, should **promote the development of the human resources that are required to plan and manage land and land resources sustainably**. This should be done by providing incentives for local initiatives and by enhancing local management capacity, particularly of women, through:

- Emphasizing interdisciplinary and integrative approaches in the curricula of schools and technical, vocational and university training;
- Training all relevant sectors concerned to deal with land resources in an integrated and sustainable manner;
- Training communities, relevant extension services, community-based groups and non-governmental organizations on land management techniques and approaches applied successfully elsewhere.

Governments at the appropriate level, in cooperation with other Governments and with the support of relevant international organizations, should **promote focused and concerted efforts for education and training and the transfer of techniques and technologies that**

support the various aspects of the sustainable planning and management process at the national, state/provincial and local levels.

Governments at the appropriate level, with the support of appropriate international organizations, should:

- Review and, where appropriate, revise the mandates of institutions that deal with land and natural resources to include explicitly the interdisciplinary integration of environmental, social and economic issues;
- Strengthen coordinating mechanisms between institutions that deal with land-use and resources management to facilitate integration of sectoral concerns and strategies;
- Strengthen local decision-making capacity and improve coordination with higher levels.

Local Authorities' Initiatives in Support of Agenda 21

Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives. Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and subnational environmental policies. As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.

- By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on "a local Agenda 21" for the community;
- By 1993, the international community should have initiated a consultative process aimed at increasing cooperation between local authorities;
- By 1994, representatives of associations of cities and other local authorities should have increased levels of cooperation and coordination with the goal of enhancing the exchange of information and experience among local authorities;
- All local authorities in each country should be encouraged to implement and monitor programs which aim at ensuring that women and youth are represented in decision-making, planning and implementation processes.

Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues. Local authority programs, policies, laws and regulations to achieve Agenda 21 objectives would be assessed and modified, based on local programs adopted. Strategies could also be used in supporting proposals for local, national, regional and international funding.

Partnerships should be fostered among relevant organs and organizations such as UNDP, the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat) and UNEP, the World Bank, regional banks, the International Union of Local Authorities, the World Association of the Major Metropolises, Summit of Great Cities of the World, the United Towns Organization and other relevant partners, with a view to mobilizing increased international support for local authority programs. An important goal would be to support, extend and improve existing institutions working in the field of local authority capacity-building and local environment management. For this purpose:

Habitat and other relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system are called upon to strengthen services in collecting information on strategies of local authorities, in particular for those that need international support;

Periodic consultations involving both international partners and developing countries could review strategies and consider how such international support could best be mobilized. Such a sectoral consultation would complement concurrent country-focused consultations, such as those taking place in consultative groups and round tables.

Representatives of associations of local authorities are encouraged to establish processes to increase the exchange of information, experience and mutual technical assistance among local authorities.