

## **Module 2 – Introduction and Background to Integrated Environmental Assessment in Africa**

### **Overview**

This module introduces the background against which IEA and reporting has been developed in Africa. By the end of the module, you will have learned about:

- The key points in the development of environmental assessment and reporting in Africa
- The AEO process
- Early environmental assessments in Africa
- The link between environment and sustainable development in more recent African initiatives and environmental assessment reports

## 2.1 Introduction

Integrated environmental assessment (IEA) and reporting has been used to link human development, economic activity, and environmental management in the context of sustainable development. The realization of the importance of these links has been evolving since the late 1960s in the United States of America and early 1970s at the international level when in Stockholm, in 1972, the United Nations Conference on Human Environment adopted a declaration which, among other decisions, provided for environmental assessment and reporting (UNEP 1981) (see Section 2.3 below). More than a decade later in 1983, the United Nations established the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), which went on to define the relationship between environment and development in its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*. The report also advanced the concept of sustainable development, which defines environmental policy responses today. The WCED declared in the report that the then existing institutions and decision making process, both at national and international levels, could not cope with the demands of sustainable development (WCED 1987).

For Africa, one of the most important policy initiatives in terms of environment and development issues, was the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action, and the formation of AMCEN in Cairo, Egypt, in 1985. The objective of AMCEN was to strengthen cooperation between African governments in economic, technical, and scientific activities, to halt and reverse "the degradation of the African environment in order to satisfy the food and energy needs of the peoples of the continent" (AMCEN 1985). It has become the guiding forum for Africa leading up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio in 1992. The 40 chapters of the UNCED *Agenda 21* laid a solid foundation for the promotion of sustainable development in terms of social, economic, and environmental progress (UN 1992). Although other important conferences have occurred since then, Agenda 21 remains a major blueprint for environmental management across the world.

The latest in this series of conferences was the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg which reviewed the progress made on the declarations at Rio in 1992. It reaffirmed the World's commitment to sustainable development and adopted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, stressing that the resources to overcome poverty and achieve sustainable development were available. Chapter VIII of the Plan of Implementation specifically addresses sustainable development in Africa. The Chapter also highlights the international community's recognition of the NEPAD Action Plan of the Environment Initiative (UN 2002).

## 2.2. Early environmental assessment activities in Africa

Environmental assessment for decision making in many African countries was mainstreamed in the 1980s as national environmental profiles, and during the implementation of NCS and NEAPs. Before then, assessments were in the context of national reporting on flora and fauna under MEAs such as the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), particularly in terms of listing of species on the different appendices of the convention.

In 1985, UNEP published a booklet - *Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme*, which highlighted the then African environmental

situation and some of the major policy initiatives. A major policy response measure proposed by Africa is the 1982 *World Charter for Nature*, which was initiated by the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (then Zaire), and adopted by both the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

In the lead up to the UNCED, virtually all countries in Africa prepared UNCED national reports highlighting environment and development issues. The AMCEN process was key to leading this process.

Early SOE reports gave good descriptions of the state of the environment as observed at the time the reports were written. A review of the history, progress and lessons learned from the writing of SOE reports was discussed at a workshop in Harare in August/September 1997. It showed that over time, there had been a lot of change in national and sub-national environmental reports (including SOE Reports), in three main characteristics: ownership, participation, and links to policy. Early reports were not a result of user demand but were produced in response to external demand (IUCN/ROSA 1997). Table 2 below gives some examples characteristic of early African reports to illustrate lack of ownership by African countries (e.g. Angola, Lesotho, Mauritius etc); little commitment and poor networking in their production (e.g. Malawi, Mozambique); and little or no link to policy (e.g. Tanzania, Zambia).

Regarding actual state of the environment reports, the 1994 *State of the Environment in Southern Africa* perhaps provides the first comprehensive assessment of the environment at sub-regional level. Similar reports have been produced since then.

The AEO-1 report launched at the 9<sup>th</sup> AMCEN session in Uganda in July 2002, was the first comprehensive IEA report at the regional level. Through its sub-regionally distributed network of CCs and other stakeholders, the AEO process has spawned several initiatives of which capacity-building is an integral part.

**Table 2.1: Some early reports on the environment from African countries**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>NATIONAL &amp; SUB-NATIONAL REPORTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>CONSTRAINTS AND SUCCESSES</b>
Angola	Prepared in 1992 for UNCED.	Outdated environmental legislation and policies. Lack of coordination between ministries.
Lesotho	State of Environment Report for UNCED 1992. SOE prepared through National Environmental Secretariat within the President's Office headed by General Secretary every three years or as rate of change demands. Uses local consultants, with peer reviewers to cross-reference validity of information. Used as a tool for decision making and for academic institutions.	
Malawi	Report for UNCED 1992; NEAP 1994 and related Environmental Support Programme; Environmental Management Reports for catchments; Environmental Management Project report; National Inventory of Natural Resources Management; NATURE; Rio+5; National Environmental Information Systems Report State of Environment.	Time, lack of data and information, and lack of commitment are constraints to the production of SOE
Mauritius	Ministry of Environment prepared an SOE for UNCED in 1992 with the assistance of a foreign consultant but the document was mainly descriptive. Instead, the NEAP, the National Environmental Policy and white papers were used for decision making.	Lack of baseline data.
Mozambique	National Environment Management Programme 1994, National Environment Policy 1995, Environment Framework Act 1997, 1st SOE 1990. Institutional leader Environmental Division 1990, Environmental National Commission 1992, Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Affairs 1994.	Lack of networking; human and financial resources and current data. Also SOE not prioritised by some sectors.
Namibia	National: Environmental Profile of Namibia, Namibia's Green Plan, Sector Environment reports such as desertification etc. under responsibility of Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Sub-national: Environmental profile and atlas, Namibia's least known wilderness, Biodiversity.	No previous culture of sharing or reporting information on the environment; budget limitations; technical inexperience.

COUNTRY	NATIONAL & SUB-NATIONAL REPORTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	CONSTRAINTS AND SUCCESSES
South Africa	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism responsible for legislation, but Interdepartmental Committee for Environmental Co-ordination lead agency for co-ordination from different sectors. Little produced because of country's isolation and exclusion. Report for UNCED 1992; various Environmental Management Plans.	Plenty of information available but no culture of sharing. Gaps at regional level which need to be filled.
Swaziland	Secretariat established under Ministry of Tourism and Department of Environment 1992 in preparation for SOE. Produced report for UNCED 1992, EIA legislation, Environmental issues paper in preparation for National Development Strategy, Swaziland Environmental Action Plan 1997, Biodiversity Plan.	Challenge to develop and implement EIAs across institutions.
Tanzania	Conservation Strategy, National Action Plan, Forestry Action Plan, National Action Programme to combat desertification, UNCED 1992, EIA Guidelines, Marine Contingency Plans produced through Environmental Management Council and NGOs, establishment of Environmental Information Centre and Tanzania Natural Resources Information Centre at Dar es Salaam. Sub-national: Regional Environmental Profiles since 1991, Environmental Pollution Status reports through five district consultative committees and strategies.	Inadequate resources; unreliable and unavailable data; weak networks; bureaucratic procedures; political clout is limited because politicians do not understand the issues.
Zambia	NEAP 1994 produced by Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources; SOE 1994 coordinated by Environmental Council of Zambia. Sub-national: Environmental Profile of Lusaka produced by Lusaka City Council; Lusaka Action Plan; Provincial Environmental Action Plans. Annual reports on pollution.	Lack of awareness; no trained personnel in environmental reporting; difficult to access information on environmental issues.
Zimbabwe	First SOE 1992 compiled from provincial reports with Ministry of Environment funding only. EIA Policy 1992. Ministry of Environment Committee responsible for development of indicators available for chapter coordinators of SOE.	

Source: SADC/IUCN/SARDC 1997 (unpublished)

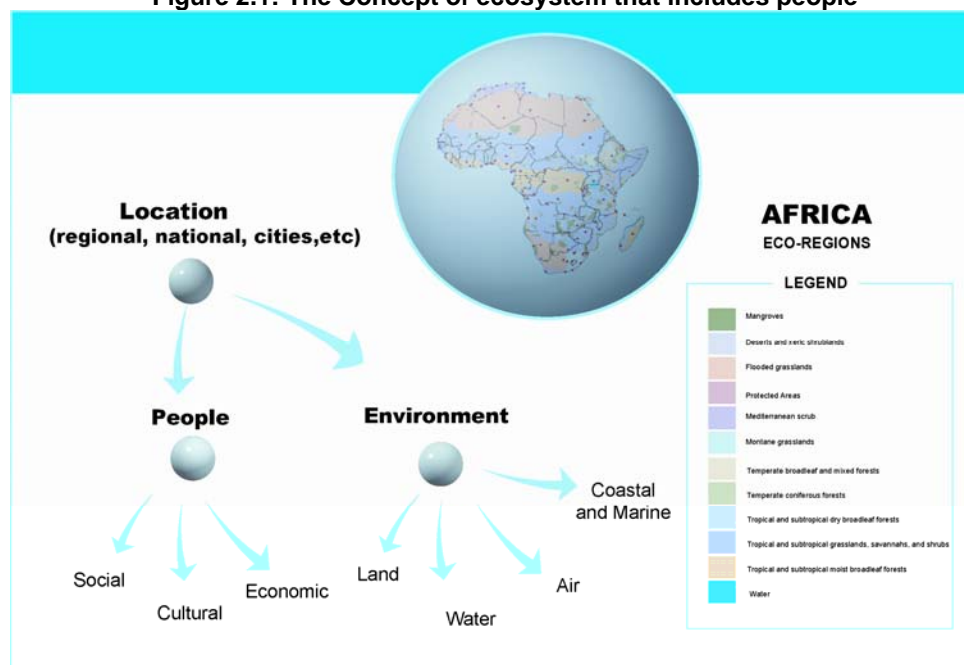
The various reports highlighted, and many others published over the years, provide a rich source of environmental data and information as well as trends, particularly since the 1980s. Taken together with socioeconomic reports produced by other agencies, for example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, and others, these reports have become critical to IEA and reporting. The old reports also provide important information on the evolution of assessment – from SOE to IEA and reporting. The evolution has also seen a transition of the various frameworks and methodologies from resource and sector-focus to more complex methodologies which take into account social, economic and environmental interactions.

The different frameworks which were common in the past include:

- Issues framework - land degradation and soil erosion, water and air pollution and waste management
- Environmental resource framework - agriculture, forestry, tourism, energy
- Environmental media framework - land, air, water and biota
- Environmental process framework - pressure, state, response.

The environmental process framework has since evolved to include all of the above within the driving forces-pressures-state-impacts-responses (DPSIR) framework, which was used in the AEO-1 report. Other methodologies include vulnerability and resilience assessment, ecosystem assessment as employed by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and human-ecosystem assessment.

**Figure 2.1: The Concept of ecosystem that includes people**



The DPSIR framework has been adapted to the Opportunities Framework, which was used to prepare the AEO-2 report. The main difference between the DPSIR and Opportunities Frameworks is that the latter highlights the state of the current environmental assets and the opportunities they provide for sustainable development in Africa. The emphasis is on opportunities rather than losses – the environmental losses are analysed in the context of foreclosure of opportunities.

Integrated environmental assessment (IEA) and reporting has become commonplace across Africa with many countries now using it to assess and report on the national environment. However, it is common for national level reporting for countries to start using traditional SOE reporting. Box 2.1 gives a summary of Libya's First National Report on the State of the Environment, 2002. Although the IEA and reporting skills had been well developed at the time this report was made, the Environment General Authority of Libya strategically decided to produce its first report using the traditional SOE reporting process with a possibility of using the IEA and reporting process in subsequent reports.

**Box 2.1: Libya's First National Report on the State of the Environment, 2002**

Libya is about 1 775 000 km<sup>2</sup>. 94.73 per cent of the country is desert, only 3.94 and 0.29 per cent are covered by agriculture and forests respectively. The population of the Jamahiriya was 3.23 million in 1984, growing to 4.4 million in 1995. Estimates for the 2005 population are 5.87 million. The majority of the population live along the northern coast in the country's major cities. The percentage of the population living in cities has increased dramatically since the 1970's; in 1973 it was 57.5 per cent, but by 1995 it had

reached 85.39 per cent. The districts that contain the four major cities of Tripoli, Benghazi, Misurata, Azzawiya and Derna have a population density of 45 persons per km<sup>2</sup>, a hundred times the density of the districts to the interior of the country (0.45 persons per km<sup>2</sup>). The country greatly depends on oil and other oil-related products and has not been able to diversify the sources of its income over the almost 40-year period during which it has pumped oil for export. Oil, however, is a non-renewable resource and continued dependence on it without diversification is not acceptable under Libya's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Libya's *The First National Report on the State of the Environment* (2002) states that "the main objective of development is to fulfil the needs of man [sic] such as food, clothing, shelter, job opportunity and his aspiration for a better life". The main factors that constrain the achievement of this objective sustainably in Libya relate to limited water supply. Up to 95 per cent of the total water supply is ground water but is supplemented at an increasing rate by valley water (2.7 per cent); desalinated water (1.4 per cent) and reusable treated water (0.7 per cent). The most important use of water is agriculture (85 per cent) which is continuously increasing with greater demands for food for a rapidly growing population. Urban and industrial purposes take 11.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively. Safe water drawing limits have been calculated especially for underground aquifers, but they are not followed because of excessive demand. In the Gefara Plain, for example, safe drawing limits are exceeded by 5.61 per cent leading to fast depletions in the quantity and degradations of quality of water supplies. Infiltration of sea water to compensate for drawn water especially in the coastal strip has led to serious degradation of water quality rendering some of the water drawn unsuitable for most uses. Encroachment of salt water into underground aquifers has also been experienced further south for similar reasons. Serious health, environmental and socioeconomic effects, together with socioeconomic losses may be expected from these occurrences. In addition, land is becoming dry, salty, and less able to support increasing populations and/or provide jobs. This may not be a reversible state of the environment.

Legislation on water management and use has been passed under a general umbrella of laws that address environmental protection in general with specific laws, administrative and technical decrees, and regulations on water management and use. The legislation is promulgated with due consideration to relevant international rules and standards. An example of water legislation includes Law No.3 of 1982 in regard to the regulation of water sources utilization. The law has 14 Articles including those that emphasize that every person shall undertake to preserve water (Article 1); and that people are the owners of water sources (Article 2). The law sets priorities for the provision of licenses for water drilling in the order of human usage, agriculture, and mining and industrial purposes (Article 8).

Source: Government of Libya 2002

### 2.3 UNEP environmental assessment mandate

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) derives its mandate from UNGA

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