

ACCELERATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA:

Country lessons from applying
 integrated approaches



The Poverty-Environment Initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Programme Environment (UN Environment) is a global UN effort that supports country-led efforts to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into national development planning. The Initiative provides financial and technical assistance to government partners to set up institutional and capacity-strengthening programmes and carry out activities to address the particular poverty environment context.

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FOREWORD

Livelihoods, poverty reduction efforts and economic growth in Africa are highly dependent on the quality and availability of natural resources, and are thus extremely vulnerable to degradation of those resources and to climate change. Development efforts hence need to equally embrace economic, social and environmental sustainability as emphasized in the recently adopted '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' as well as 'Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want'.

These high-level, future-facing consensus documents are great opportunities to work together across sectors and disciplines in new ways towards sustainable development. The good news is that the importance of natural capital to Africa's development and poverty reduction efforts has increasingly been recognized at the highest political levels, that businesses are looking at natural capital potential and risk, that there is increasing innovation to draw on, and that there is growing public interest and concern.

In fact, many countries in Africa have already made important gains towards breaking down the silos among sectors, stakeholders, hierarchies and disciplines – by fostering more coordinated and integrated approaches to development policymaking, planning, monitoring, budgeting and implementation. Several countries have made notable progress since 2005 through their partnership with the Poverty-Environment Initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment).

The work that African governments and the Initiative have done together offers many lessons on how to achieve real-world sustainable development and the pieces of the puzzle that must be put in place to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa 2063 goals within national contexts. We believe that now is the time to pull together that learning from the Initiative and country partners in Africa. There is much to share with policymakers and development professionals to scale up, and speed up, achievement of the SDGs and Africa 2063 goals.

The examples provided in this publication illustrate how to start putting in place what the former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, called “a practical twenty-first century development model that connects the dots among the key issues of our time: poverty reduction; job generation; inequality; climate change; environmental stress; water energy and food security.”

As countries move forward, there is a need to step up a gear to move from the current situation to more integrated and inclusive approaches: that is, from pioneer programmes, such as the Poverty-Environment Initiative, to getting sustainable development to the heart of development efforts and a systematic approach with people's jobs and systems becoming more integrated and efficient. From a recent focus on plans and budgets to public and private investment strategies and standards, capacities and resources to implement plans, and institutional reforms for sustainable development.



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