



Promoting

a global sustainable development agenda

South Africa's participation in the global arena since 1994 has exposed it to the paradigm shifts that recognise the role of the natural resource base and environmental management as a foundation of economic development in the global economy.

Prior to democracy, South Africa had been a signatory to many multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Antarctic Treaty. However, political isolation because of South Africa's apartheid policies resulted in the country being ineffective and unable to influence global debates on environmental issues. During apartheid, nature conservation was considered the most important environmental issue. Other broader matters, such as hazardous waste, the protection of the ozone layer and climate change, received little or no attention.

In 1994, South Africa was reintegrated into the global economy and the international political arena. It became a full and active member of the global community and also a member of the Group of 77 (G77) and China (the group of representatives of the developing countries in the multilateral arena). Since 1994, South Africa has become a country firmly committed to promoting democracy, peace and security, environmental protection, sustainable development and poverty eradication, not only in South Africa, but also in southern Africa, the continent and globally. It has also acceded to and ratified a number of additional conventions and protocols that enable it to promote the global sustainable development

agenda, particularly in terms of issues related to sustainable development and trade, climate change, chemicals and waste management, biodiversity, and activities that affect the world's oceans and marine environment.

After successfully hosting the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, South Africa has also assumed a global leadership role in promoting the goals and objectives of the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) on sustainable development. As chair of the 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 2003, South Africa played a central role in facilitating the establishment of a new framework and organisation of work for the CSD, which is the primary body in the United Nations for monitoring progress towards international sustainable development targets.

In fulfilment of its obligations arising from the JPOI, South Africa adopted a National Framework for Sustainable Development, which sets out a national vision, principles, trends and strategic priority areas for achieving sustainable development. South Africa continues to play an active role in the negotiations under the CSD on the various thematic areas that, to date, have included water and sanitation, climate change and energy, and agriculture, land, rural development, drought, desertification and Africa.

International collaboration contributes to combatting desertification.



There is an increasing trend by developed countries to link multilateral environmental agreements to international trade. Consequently, trade and environment issues also form part of the Doha Development Agenda Negotiations of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The fisheries sector has been identified as a priority sector in this regard. The department therefore needs to ensure that WTO negotiations grant developing countries sufficient policy space to assist their subsistence fishing communities, even while eliminating those subsidies that contribute to over-fishing and overcapacity.

Climate change – linked with energy security – has emerged as one of the priority issues on the global political agenda, alongside issues such as international trade negotiations and global peace and security. In Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was negotiated, setting a framework for future action to address climate change. The Kyoto Protocol, which was agreed to in 1997 and came into force in 2005, set legally binding quantified emission reduction targets for developed country parties that ratified the protocol. A 5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, below 1990 levels, is required by developed countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol in the first commitment period (2008 to 2012). The USA, which did not ratify the protocol, remains outside the legal framework for binding emissions targets.

In accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, developing countries continued with qualitative mitigation measures. In 2005, negotiations on further commitments by Kyoto-ratifying parties for the second commitment period (after 2012) was mandated. Parties agreed to launch a two-track approach: the Kyoto track to negotiate commitments for Annex I Parties for subsequent commitment periods, and the convention track to enhance long-term cooperative action under the convention.

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Fourth Assessment Report, which concluded that climate change is unequivocally caused by human socio-economic activities. From a South African and African perspective, the Fourth

Assessment Report provides a disturbing picture of the impacts of climate change on our society and economy. In response to this IPCC report at the 13th Conference of Parties (COP 13) in Bali in December 2007, the world community took a significant stride by agreeing to conclude negotiations on strengthening the international climate regime by the end of 2009.

South Africa is actively participating in this negotiating process, playing a coordinating role for the developing country block (the Group of 77 and China) and for Africa. The task facing the global community at COP 15 in Copenhagen is firstly to reach agreement on more ambitious and legally binding targets for developed countries for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, starting in 2013. Secondly, there must be agreement on a way of binding the USA to absolute emission reductions that are comparable to those of other developed countries. Finally, agreement must be reached, under the UN Framework Convention on ways to recognise and incentivise more ambitious voluntary action by developing countries.

South Africa's involvement in negotiations related to chemicals and waste management are focused on the trade and transboundary movement of waste (the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal), sound chemicals management (the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management of the United Nations Environment Programme) and the phasing out of ozone-depleting substances (the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer).

South Africa is also party to a number of multilateral environmental agreements related to both the protection of ecosystems and the protection of species. These include the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (genetically modified organisms), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species and the Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna

and Flora (CITES). The department plays an important role in terms of representing South Africa and articulating the country's position at key meetings, where it negotiates issues taking the national and regional interest into account, puts forward South Africa's position, and shapes and contributes to international agreements.

As party to these conventions, South Africa has compiled and developed biodiversity-related legislation and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and the accompanying National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment. It has established terrestrial and marine protected areas and biosphere reserves, as well as world cultural and natural heritage sites. It has also contributed to the National Action Plan of the UNCCD. As such, it is positioned to become a key developing country participant in the process to reform international environmental governance structures.

In terms of protecting the ocean, the coastal environment and marine resources, South Africa is a signatory to a range of multilateral agreements. For the marine environment, these include the London Convention on Dumping at Sea, the Marine Pollution Convention, the Antarctic Treaty, the Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Regions and Related Protocols, and the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the East African Region and Related Protocols. The sustainable use of the oceans is governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. South Africa is also a member of several international organisations aimed at the sustainable management of the marine environment, such as the International Marine Organisation and the International Seabed Authority.

The business process that is followed in the department's international collaboration to promote a global sustainable development agenda starts off with policy research, followed by a process of stakeholder consultation, on the basis of which a negotiating mandate is obtained. On the basis of this mandate, the department can present the country's position at meetings of the parties who are signatories to various international conventions.

At these meetings, it reports on progress and implementation, and negotiates the country's position in terms of future policy developments. The outcome is the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies in order to bring about a change in the current state of the environment.

International environmental governance

The department plays an important role in ensuring that balanced and equitable governance structures prevail or are established within multilateral institutions and bodies, and that these governance structures can advance both national and regional interests. Its engagement with international environmental governance structures within bodies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), among others, contribute to promoting a global sustainable development agenda. It plays an important role in supporting the United Nations (UN) process on system-wide coherence, especially in terms of streamlining the UN to avoid duplication around the environmental pillar of sustainable development.

As such, it is positioned to play a leading role in the international environmental governance (IEG) debate. It contributes to the UNEP Environment Fund and has emerged as a key developing country player in the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), where it was in a position to make recommendations related to important environmental policy issues that affect the region. The department also engaged with the European Union on issues related to IEG and climate change through the South Africa-European Union (SA-EU) Environment and Sustainable Development Forum.

During 2008, South Africa contributed to the development of the World Bank Climate Investment Fund (CIF) and was a key player in ensuring that the governance structure of the fund was balanced and equitable in order to take the interests of developing countries into account. This fund, which was launched in July 2008, comprises international investment instruments that are designed to provide interim, scaled-up funding to help developing

countries in their efforts to mitigate rises in greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. Donors have pledged over US\$6 billion to the fund, which will be used to finance clean technologies for energy, as well as a special pilot project on climate change.

Multilateral relations

South Africa plays a critical role in multilateral environmental agreements and forums like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Through DEAT (in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs), South Africa plays a leading role in the negotiations around sustainable development, chemicals management, fisheries management, climate change, biodiversity and related heritage issues. The outcome of most of these negotiations reflects South Africa's negotiation objectives and positions.

The environmental sector – and especially climate change – has gained tremendous importance and priority on the global agenda and has become a key agenda item on many global forums, including the G8, the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the G20.

Bilateral relations

South Africa has developed from participating in engagements with other countries on an ad hoc basis 15 years ago to engaging in strategic frameworks of environmental and tourism collaboration. In fact, its bilateral engagements have proved to be so successful

that the National Treasury often uses DEAT as an example for other government departments to structure their donor management systems. Its strategic bilateral agreements have mobilised significant financial and technical resources for the environment and tourism sectors in South Africa. Bilateral funding has supported, among others, the rights allocation process and transformation of the fisheries sector, the development of world heritage sites such as Robben Island, the Cradle of Mankind and Mapungubwe, and the establishment of sustainable coastal livelihoods.

Enhanced south-south cooperation has been achieved with Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Argentina, Chile, Nigeria and Egypt. South Africa is also actively engaged in the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) forum, negotiating and signing environmental and tourism MoUs, and intensified cooperation with China on environment and tourism. In terms of north-south cooperation, relations with Germany, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the European Union, among others, have been enhanced and strengthened.

SADC and Africa

With the advent of democracy, South Africa's role and responsibility in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the subregion has increased. South Africa plays a leadership role in articulating its own interests, as well as those of countries in SADC, Africa and other developing countries. It provides global leadership on sustainable development and has succeeded in strengthening SADC's

environmental structures through the SADC Environment Ministers' Forum.

South Africa successfully hosted the 12th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in June 2008. It also assumed presidency of AMCEN for the period 2008 to 2010. Under South Africa's leadership, the terms of reference for the AMCEN Presidency and AMCEN Secretariat were defined and approved. Furthermore, an earmarked fund was created within the AMCEN Trust Fund to facilitate the receipt of funding from donors to finance the activities of AMCEN. Proper fiduciary standards are applied. An important outcome of AMCEN-12 was the adoption of the AMCEN Johannesburg Declaration on the Environment for Sustainable Development. South Africa also supported AMCEN by initiating a process to develop a common African position on key issues such as the implementation of NEPAD's Action Plan of the Environment Initiative and the development of a climate change implementation framework to strengthen Africa's role in multilateral agreements related to this issue. This process will galvanise Africa's position to be taken at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The African Union (AU) has approved the integration of AMCEN into the AU as a specialised technical committee at ministerial level. The implication of this decision is that AMCEN will be positioned as the environmental arm of the AU. There is a growing expectation in SADC and African countries in general that South Africa should provide them with financial and technical assistance. Poor capacities in SADC and Africa, as well as a lack of resources in many African countries, pose challenges in terms of addressing the department's African agenda.

Resource mobilisation

South Africa's active participation in the international arena has enabled it to tap into various multilateral funding sources available to developing countries to meet global environmental commitments. Furthermore, South Africa is a donor and active member

of the Replenishment Committee of the GEF. As a key developing country player, it has succeeded in coordinating and strengthening the SADC GEF constituency, as well as the SADC Ministers' of Environment Forum. This has enabled it to exercise some influence as to the policies, procedures and programming of the GEF. South Africa has been lobbying for some time for the reform of the GEF governance structure and Resource Allocation Frameworks (RAFs), and the position that it has developed for the renegotiation of the GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) is being taken seriously. Following its negotiations, the council has agreed that the RAF needs to be revised and reformed.

South Africa has, therefore, gone from being a non-participant to becoming a regular and active participant in the GEF Council and donor to the GEF Trust Fund. Through the Global Environmental Facility, it has been able to access over US\$100 million in grant funding for national, subregional and regional environmental projects of global significance (a substantial increase to the funding of \$20 million that was granted in 1994).

The projects that have received funding from the GEF have included projects such as the Richtersveld Community Biodiversity Conservation Project, the Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative, the African Stockpile Programme, the South Africa Wind Energy Programme, St Lucia, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, the development and adoption of a strategic programme for water use and the management of sustainable natural resources in the transboundary basin of the Upper Orange/Senqu River, and the implementation of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) Programme to restore the depleted fisheries and coastal resources in Namibia and Angola.

Particular emphasis is placed on programmes that will benefit the entire region, such as the BCLME, the Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystem, Sustainable Land Management, the Global Ballast Water (GloBallast), the Western Indian Ocean Marine Highway, the South Western Indian Ocean Fisheries, the Global Pollinators and the Transfrontier Conservation Area programmes.



The Mapungubwe landscape is protected in terms of the World Heritage Convention.