NAMIBIA

MDG7

Progress Towards Environmental Sustainability

Namibia's abundant natural resources are a backbone of the national economy, fisheries and mining. Approximately 43% of Namibia is designated as freehold land, 39% as communal land, and 18% as government land. The majority of the population is dependent on the land in some way, especially for extensive cattle, goat and sheep farming. However, the arid and semi-arid nature of the country coupled with recurrent droughts and flooding, especially in the northern areas, creates difficult conditions for a substantial part of the population dependent on subsistence agriculture.

With the decision by Cabinet to proclaim the Sperrgebiet as a national park, protected areas cover 16.8% of Namibia. Apartheid policies focused on wildlife conservation and exploitation of minerals such as uranium, diamonds and copper. Since Independence, the main challenge for Namibia has therefore been to introduce the principles of sustainable development and natural resource management. As a developing country located in an arid region where drought and high climatic variability are endemic, and where great demands are placed upon the natural resources. Namibia is considered particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Marine fisheries are greatly influenced by the Benguela current, which poses a great challenge to resource management. Desertification threatens sustainable economic development because it reduces productivity, including water supply, limits opportunities for other forms of land use, alters natural habitats and threatens biodiversity.

Environmental sustainability in Namibia affects the country's ability to achieve all MDGs. The impacts of desertification in Namibia include deforestation, soil erosion, bush encroachment, reduced soil moisture-retention, loss of biodiversity, and soil salination. This results in economic losses and escalating poverty for the majority of the population through declining agricultural production and reduced food security. These in turn lead to greater vulnerability towards the accelerating HIV/AIDS epidemic, human migration, rapid urbanization and an increased dependence on government support and importation of food. Poverty, food insecurity, environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS form a vicious circle, and pose a key challenge to achieving the MDGs in Namibia.[1]

QUICK FACTS

CURRENT PORTFOLIO BUDGET

Total UNDP-GEF and Co-Finance:	$53,235,000
Total:	$53,235,000

SPOTLIGHT

Country Partnership Programme for Sustainable Land Management[2]

As one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Namibia is subject to frequent droughts. Land degradation and the attendant desertification is therefore an increasing problem, manifested by habitat conversion through deforestation, overgrazing of rangelands, and changes in the vegetation structure in pastoral areas. Approximately 70% of the population is directly dependant upon subsistence agriculture and livestock husbandry; land degradation therefore jeopardises rural livelihoods, undermines ecosystem integrity, and threatens the forfeiture of global environmental benefits.

Reversing land degradation requires bringing together government ministries from many sectors, community leaders and NGOs, while removing capacity constraints at the institutional and individual levels – actions opposing to previous environmental policies and the lack of land tenure rights. A new GEF project to develop a Country Partnership Programme for sustainable land management (SLM) will seek to address these capacity constraints through an inter-sectoral programmatic approach and coordinated execution of a package of strategic interventions. The project will run until 2010 and will incorporate a US$ 9.25 million GEF grant and additional co-financing grant of US$ 82.061 million from international donors to meet SLM objectives. As the executing agency, Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism will direct the framework and strategies of the pilot programme, together with the Government of Namibia, the EU, UNEP and other development partners and civil society leaders. The one-year preparatory phase ending in August 2005 resulted in the formulation of a stakeholder participation plan and monitoring plans.

This Partnership is essential for combating land degradation in Namibia. Both the Ministry and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification place a high priority on public participation as a means of combating land degradation, thus creating a strong sense of ownership among the people of Namibia and advocating a long-term, sustainable approach to preventive measures against land degradation and poverty.

LAND

The Environment Unit in UNDP Namibia strives to mainstream environment in development activities in order to ensure their sustainability through policy dialogues and by creating awareness at all levels of the society. In close co-operation and partnership with both national and local governments, NGOs, Private Sector and civil society UNDP offer technical, advisory as well as administrative services in regional co-operation and co-ordination in natural resource management and sustainable energy development, national capacity for participation in global conventions, regulatory regimes and funding mechanisms for environmentally sustainable development and promotion of public-private partnerships for urban environment. Resource mobilisation for environment/poverty reduction efforts in Namibia is also an important role of UNDP. UNDP strives to solicit international funding sources for both governments and civil society in their efforts towards sustainable development and to achieve the MDGs.

Simon R. Nhongo, Resident Representative

PORTFOLIO

FSSD*

To support Namibia to reduce poverty while protecting the environment, UNDP is implementing funding from GTZ, the PPPUE Trust Fund and GEF for projects in poverty reduction, capacity building and improving basic urban environmental services in Namibia. In addition, the GEF-funded National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) process, Poverty Reduction Action Plan and Public-Private Partnerships all bring environment and poverty to the forefront of their strategic frameworks.

ENERGY

In Namibia, UNDP is assisting the provision of renewable energy to support national development needs. For example, a project funded by UNDP's Energy Thematic Trust Fund supported the development of biomass management tools, including an energy needs assessment, a users' manual and Geographic Information Systems map, leading to the production of a national strategy for sustainable use of biomass energy. In terms of climate change, GEF funding has enabled the country to fulfil its commitments to the UNFCCC in the form of the Second National Communication. In addition, GEF has supported projects to enable adoption of new technologies that reduce GHG emissions, and to removes barriers to solar technologies, such as financing, installation and maintenance.

LAND

UNDP is supporting the adoption of sustainable land management practices in Namibia. For example, the GEF Country Pilot Partnership for Sustainable Land Management seeks to address the root causes of land degradation in Namibia. The Spotlight section provides fuller details on this initiative.

BIODIVERSITY

UNDP is supporting biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in Namibia. For example, GEF has mobilised significant resources to strengthen the State Protected Areas (PAs) Network and terrestrial ecosystems, and to complement initiatives in production landscapes and in coastal and marine ecosystems. The two-phase project will focus on strengthening systemic and institutional capacity and improving partnerships with local communities, the private sector and government agencies. The second phase includes creating PAs on non-state land and strengthening private reserves.

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PARTNERS

Some of our Partners working with UNDP and the Government in Namibia

GTZ
SIDA
DANIDA
USAID
Government of Japan

[1]MDGR 2004 and http://undg.org/documents/5307-Namibia_MDG_Report_2004.pdf; [2]GEF Online database: http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=2439; *Frameworks and Strategies for Sustainable Development