

BOTSWANA CIVIL SOCIETY ASSESSMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Document prepared for the Botswana Civil Society WSSD Committee
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Acronyms

BOB	Bureau of Standards
BOCCIM	Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry & Manpower
BOCOBONET	Botswana CBO Network
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of NGOs
BOTEC	Botswana Technology Centre
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resources Management
CBOs,	Community Based Organisation
CI	Conservation International
CPM	Capability Poverty Measure
DANCED	Danish Cooperation for Environment & Development
EC	Earth Council
FAB	Forestry Association of Botswana
FHH/CHH	Female and Children Headed Household
FONSAG	Forum for Sustainable Agriculture
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
GoB	Government of Botswana
HDI	Human Development Index
IUCN	World Conservation Union
KCS	Kalahari Conservation Society
NCSA	National Conservation Strategy Agency
NGOs,	Non-Governmental Organisation
NDP	Government's 5-yearly National Development Plans
PTB	Permaculture Trust of Botswana
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RIIC	Rural Industries Innovation Centre
SMME	Small and Medium Enterprises
ST	Somarelang Tikologo
TL	Thusano Lefatsheng
UNFCC	United National Framework on Climate Change
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Executive summary

172 countries, including Botswana, approved a series of recommended actions commonly known as Agenda 21, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The objective of Agenda 21 is to strive for sustainable development worldwide. Botswana also ratified the Conventions on Biodiversity and on Climate Change (CBD/UNFCC) at the Rio Summit.

Ten years later, in Johannesburg in August-September 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will assess progress made since Rio. The Intergovernmental Summit will include a Civil Society Forum, as well as interactions between both fora. The Government of Botswana and Civil Society will send a delegation to participate.

The Botswana Government has held consultations and prepared a comprehensive assessment of implementation of activities related to Agenda 21. Civil Society has organised itself in a WSSD steering committee. During a workshop in September 2001 it was decided to prepare a position paper to complement the Government assessment. It was agreed that 'Civil Society' would be taken to include NGOs, CBOs, Youth Organisations, Media Institutions, Farmers Association, Special Interest Groups, Women Issues, Churches, Health Organisations, and the Private Sector.

This document therefore attempts to provide a cross-section of the involvement of these actors in the themes of Agenda 21; issues identified as critical and suggested required action. A sample of case studies addressing different critical issues is attached to illustrate actions being taken by various stakeholders from Civil Society. To allow the document to be in line with assessments produced by other countries, the format utilised is the Earth Council's Rio+5 assessment format.

The first section provides an assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21 in Botswana, both in terms of implementation strategy and of implementation structure, the latter with focus on consultations and stakeholder participation. This section also includes an assessment of implementation of the CBD and UNFCC in Botswana.

It is acknowledged that Botswana has not established an Agenda 21 implementation structure or strategy. Nonetheless, the various stakeholders have undertaken many important and commendable –albeit scattered– initiatives. Coordinating attempts have increased with the preparations for the WSSD, but are hampered by the erroneous impression that Agenda 21 is limited to environmental issues. The Government's Vision 2016 is a potentially ideal vehicle to implement the agenda of sustainable development, but currently lacks an implementation plan.

Initiatives regarding Biodiversity and Climate Change have followed the ratification of the Conventions. Botswana's biodiversity is an important resource and there is an urgent need for comprehensive data on it. In Botswana, climate change is closely related to water supply and desertification. The latter has its own Convention, which was ratified but has not yet been translated into the necessary action.

The second section of this report deals with critical, emerging and regional issues, as well as with the global critical issue of education, training and awareness.

There is a general consensus within Civil Society that Poverty and HIV/AIDS are currently Botswana's most critical issues. Approximately one in two Botswana lives below the poverty level, and the country's HIV infection rate is one of the highest in the world; this despite the country's image as a model developing country in the middle-income category.

Poverty and HIV infection are closely related, and both most severely affect disadvantaged groups such as women and minority groups. Lack of access to resources (e.g. land), collective denial and stigmatisation are among the components hampering successful tackling of these issues. Commendable actions have been undertaken, yet there is a need for participative identification of local poverty and HIV patterns and indicators, and for establishment of a national strategy, inclusive of tasks, objectives, goals and milestones.

Regional and emerging issues of concern include shared natural resources such as water required to meet future needs. In the absence of regional agreements, dams and other schemes involving shared rivers, and transboundary ground- or surface water pollution or contamination could be future sources of conflict. Since accurate information is crucial, there is a need for unrestricted reporting by the media. Currently however, there is a disquieting trend of press freedom being undermined within the region.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are a worrying emerging (and regional) issue, resulting in unknown health risks, biodiversity erosion and increased dependency.

The final part of this document looks at suggested ways forward.

In the immediate future, the main focus will be on sustainable development to reduce poverty.

Specific issues that should also be on the agenda are regional issues of concern such as the need for a sustainable water supply and the risk of desertification; as well as the global critical issue of the AIDS pandemic and the emerging issue of GMOs.

The WSSD will provide an opportunity to reinvigorate Agenda 21 in Botswana. A national body –Government and/or Civil Society- should be mandated to coordinate the development of a localised Agenda 21 strategy, with specific tasks, goals, timeframes and milestones. The creation of a Ministry of Environment should provide an excellent opportunity to establish Agenda 21 as the core mandate for this Ministry.

It is recommended that after the Summit has been held, Civil Society should continue the co-operation established to prepare for the Summit. A joint task for NGOs will be to co-operate, establish joint programmes and strategies and lobby for funding. As international funding is diminishing, a national funding mechanism needs to be negotiated with all stakeholders. The private sector will have to play an important role in implementing Agenda 21, by ensuring sustainable management of operations and increasingly take on social responsibility. The environmental industry needs to develop and market adequate technology, and provide expertise to carry out assessments and audits.

Key figures for Botswana	
<i>Population</i>	584.644 (1971) → 1.7M (2001)
<i>Ethnic groups</i>	>20 ; 8 recognised in the Constitution
<i>Children under 15</i>	38.4%
<i>Urbanisation</i>	30%
<i>Poverty</i>	59% (1985/86) below poverty datum line → 47% (1993/94)
<i>Health facilities</i>	141 (1966) → 1324 (1998)
<i>Maternal mortality</i>	3.3 per 1000
<i>Life expectancy</i>	65.2 (1993) → 46.2 (2000)
<i>HIV/AIDS</i>	38.6% of 15-49 year olds. (2000) 20-29% among 15-19 y.o. (1999)
<i>HDI</i>	0.5 (1975) → 0.74 (1974) → 0.58 (1999)
<i>Average annual GDP growth since 1966</i>	→ 6%
<i>Per capita GNP</i>	\$3300 (2000) (2001 CCA)
<i>Education</i>	92% enrol in primary school
<i>Literacy</i>	34% (1981) to 75.6% in 1998
<i>Export</i>	79% diamonds 8% copper and nickel
<i>Agriculture share in GDP</i>	42.7% (1966) → 2.6% (2000))
<i>Labour</i>	3.5% mining; 2% agric.; 35% informal; 47% Govt; 15% unemployed
<i>Cattle</i>	1.2M in 1966 2.4M in 1999
<i>Goats</i>	0.5M in 1966 2.4M in 1999
<i>Plant species</i>	2700-2800 (17 endemic)
<i>Red data list mammals</i>	5 (0 endemic)

Background

The Republic of Botswana participated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and adopted the recommendations for global sustainable development known as Agenda 21, in addition to signing (and later ratifying) the Conventions on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Climate Change (UNFCCC).

→ **Agenda 21** or **the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development** is the joint statement approved by the 172 participating countries, which consists of 27 Principles these countries agreed to strive for.

These Principles were developed in 40 chapters around 4 parts (1) Social & Economic Dimensions: international trade, poverty, consumption patterns, population, human health, human settlements; (2) Conservation & Management of Resources: atmosphere, land, deforestation, desertification & drought, mountains, agriculture & rural development, biological diversity, biotechnology, oceans, freshwater, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, solid wastes & sewage, radioactive wastes; (3) the Role of Major Groups: women, children & youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers & trade unions, business & industry, scientists & technologists, farmers ; (4) Means of Implementation: financing, technology transfer, science, education, training & public awareness, capacity building, organisational structures, international law, information for decision-making.

Although no national strategy has since been established to implement Agenda 21 in Botswana, progress was made in several areas of Agenda 21, through initiatives from Government, civil society, the private sector and international donors.

Within the country's preparations for the coming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), to be held in Johannesburg in August-September 2002, the Government of Botswana (GoB) and Civil Society have been involved in a large number of national and international consultations.

→ "Our Common Future", the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development defines **Sustainable Development** as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

Civil Society has established a WSSD steering committee, which decided to produce the current document as a complement to the Government of Botswana's *National Report on the Implementation of Agenda 21*. In September 2001, a Civil Society workshop was organised to raise awareness on the WSSD and Civil Society's involvement, to select a participating delegation for the WSSD and to collect and synthesise information for the current paper and the attached case studies, which are meant to provide samples of what has been achieved in various areas.

The aim of this document therefore is to provide Civil Society's views on the achievements made in Botswana since Rio, assess priorities for the country and make suggestions for the way forward. Although the format adopted is based on that provided by the Earth Council (EC) Guidelines for country assessments, this document is not part of the ECs Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa.

→ During the Botswana Civil Society WSSD Workshop, it was agreed that "**Civil Society**" would include: Environmental NGOs; Developmental NGOs, Youth Organisations, CBOs, Media Institutions, Farmers Association, Special Interest Groups, Women Issues, Churches, Health Organisations, and the Private Sector.

National Agenda 21 strategies

The Republic of Botswana has received international praise for its remarkable development since the country's independence in 1966. While Government's 5-yearly National Development Plans (NDP) have focussed on developing the economy and infrastructure, the area of natural resources protection had also seen a number of steps undertaken prior to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Examples of legislation and policy are the Forestry Act (1968), the Agricultural Resources Conservation Act (1978), the Rural Development Strategy (1973), and the Wildlife Conservation Policy (1986). 1990 saw the approval of the National Policy on Natural Resources Conservation and Development, the creation of the National Conservation Strategy Agency (NCSA), and the approval of the National Water Master Plan.

These early initiatives and the commitment of the Government of Botswana (GoB) to Agenda 21 led to high expectations for sustainable development in Botswana. Ten years later, while progress has continued to be made through a considerable number of initiatives undertaken in the various areas covered by the 27 principles and 40 chapters of Agenda 21, as well as in terms of global policy through the environmental audit of the NDP8, and through the principle of sustainable development as a basis for GoB's *Long term vision for Botswana, towards prosperity for all* (Vision 2016), it must be recognised that the country has not yet truly adopted the agenda of sustainable development.

In general, the NDPs focus more on required budgets for different Government departments than on a comprehensive development strategy. Given the structure of GoB, any issues of sustainable development are often perceived as "environment" rather than crosscutting, and are placed within the sole Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment. Efforts, albeit often considerable and commendable, are therefore often scattered. Some legislation and policy is in place, but these are isolated efforts rather than part of a strategy. While the Vision 2016 is potentially an ideal vehicle for sustainable development in Botswana, no mechanism is yet in place to link the Vision with the NDPs and no agenda exists to translate it into an action plan.

The main achievements of the different Government institutions that relate to the 40 chapters of Agenda 21 have been assembled in the *Botswana National Report on the Implementation of Agenda 21 and other Rio Earth Summit decisions*. Some reporting on initiatives from other stakeholders such as NGOs, CBOs, Unions and the private sector has been included.

Within Civil Society, a large number of NGOs and CBOs are working in various areas of sustainable development, including such areas as urban environment, community-based natural resources management, permaculture, forestry, agriculture, wildlife and conservation, and veld products. Additionally, several NGOs focus on development, with both rural and urban programmes. Other NGOs work on specific issues such as health/HIV, gender and human rights. Case studies illustrating this broad range of activities are included with this document.

A number of NGO and CBO networks and coalitions have been created. The Botswana CBO Network (BOCOBONET) has now more than 60 CBOs under its membership, and the Botswana Council of NGOs (BOCONGO) is the focal point for most NGOs.

In the private sector, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) have been started in areas such as renewable energy, recycling and environmental consultancy. In addition, some of the larger companies such as the mining companies have environmental management plans and social responsibility initiatives. The largest company, Debswana, has cooperated with the Botswana Bureau of Standards (BOBS) to adopt an Environmental Management System (EMS) based on the ISO 14001 standard. The private sector also cooperates with NGOs, through fundraising, corporate membership and/or direct action such as the cooperation between the oil industry and Somarelang Tikologo (ST) in the Waste Oil Management programme.

→ *Agenda 21: more than 'environment'*: among the key issues in Agenda 21 on which progress will be assessed in Johannesburg are HIV/AIDS and poverty, but also issues like equitable access to land and other resources, women's rights, rural development and agriculture, which are central to sustainable development in Botswana. Despite this, there is a misconception among stakeholders –within GoB, NGOs, business and the general public– that Agenda 21 is “something about environment/climate change/biodiversity”.

The absence of a national *Agenda 21 planning process* producing a *national Agenda 21 strategy* was identified by the participants in the Civil Society WSSD workshop as the core bottle-neck of the sustainable development agenda in Botswana.

Some of the perceived benefits of such a planning process and subsequent implementation of an agreed plan would be

- Comprehensive stakeholder identification, involvement and consultation
- Resulting awareness among all stakeholders
- Clear task distribution for all stakeholders and identified mandate for the coordinating agency
- Agreed and identified locally relevant goals, objectives, indicators and milestones
- Efficient implementation - avoid duplication, improve cost-efficiency
- Adequate resources allocation

As will be outlined in the section looking forward, it is imperative that a localised Agenda 21 is established. During the WSSD it will have to be determined whether GoB or Civil Society will take the lead in this process. Assistance will have to be sought from UNDP for this planning process, specifically from the GEF funding which was created as a result of the Rio Summit and has been under-utilised in Botswana.

→ The **Global Environment Fund** (GEF) was created subsequent to the Rio Summit as the main vehicle to mobilise and facilitate international support for implementation of Agenda 21 and the related Conventions. The fund supports local, regional and international initiatives initiated by Civil Society or Government. Within the structure of the United Nations system, it falls under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Integration and participation

Contrary to what happened in many other countries acting on the recommendations emanating from the Rio Summit, Botswana has not yet established a National Committee for Sustainable Development; and no national Agenda 21 implementation strategy is in place. Some coordination initiatives should however be recognised.

Coordinating initiatives

Several initiatives originating with GoB, the international community and/or Civil Society have attempted to improve information exchange and coordination among stakeholders. These include DANCED's creation of the Environmental Heritage Fund; IUCN's consultations and NGO strategy on the environment; the CBNRM forum with NGOs, CBOs and Government, as well as specific initiatives to prepare for the WSSD such as the NCSA coordinated process to prepare the National Agenda 21 Assessment and the Forum for Sustainable Agriculture (FONSAG) WSSD workshop and the resulting WSSD Civil Society Committee.

During the Civil Society WSSD workshop, a need for improved consultation between all stakeholders was strongly recommended. This includes coordination between Civil Society and GoB, and among members of Civil Society (inclusive of the private sector), where it is hoped that the structures and cooperation established during the preparation of the WSSD will be consolidated after the WSSD.

The general perception is that information exchanges are the exception rather than the norm, and that after consultations relevant officials could be more efficient in relaying feedback to their constituencies. The following examples illustrate the potential for information exchange.

Grassroots experience

NGOs, CBOs and in a somewhat different context private companies, have a closer relationship with the communities than Government officials who, in turn, have access to various stakeholders and to decision-makers. Their information is therefore naturally complementary and information flows regarding needs and impact, why programmes may or may not work, available data and national and international coordination are needed continuously.

This crucial role of Civil Society to provide feedback between communities and decision-makers, and to supply essential field expertise and experience required for successful implementation of local programmes is currently threatened by the absence of a national funding mechanism for NGOs, while international donors are reducing funding for Botswana, in view of its status as a middle-income country. A durable funding solution is essential to ensure that NGOs can continue to provide quality support to communities.

Science, technology and indigenous knowledge

Improved consultation and joint planning with all stakeholders would also ensure that the technical capacity and know-how present in the country, including indigenous knowledge, appropriate technology and implementing capacity are efficiently used.

BOTEC's office building is an example of available appropriate technology. It is one of the few large office buildings in Africa to have used an energy- and water-efficient design. However, the knowledge gained from this project has yet to be adopted in other building projects.

Implementation of Conventions

During the Rio Summit, Botswana signed the Conventions on Biological Diversity (CBD) and on Climate Change (CCC). Earlier, GoB had also ratified the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES, in 1977), and the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol related to protection of the Ozone layer (1991). Since the Rio Summit, the UN Convention to combat desertification (1996) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1997) were ratified.

Biodiversity, wildlife and wetlands

The NCSA is the national secretariat for the CBD and coordinates activities of different stakeholders. Two national reports on implementation of the CBD were published, and a draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is due to be developed with participation from stakeholders from relevant GoB Departments and representatives from Civil Society. Several NGOs have also organised workshops to improve awareness regarding CBD.

Despite this framework, a lot of work remains to be done to slow or stop the decline in biodiversity in Botswana. Positive notes are that regular large mammal (game) surveys and research on specific animal species are undertaken, 40% of land is reserved for wildlife management and 70% of timber forests are protected.

For more than a decade, community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) has proven to be a potentially successful approach to sustainable management of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity. It has been advocated and tested by several NGOs and CBOs with positive results. This has now led to a draft CBNRM policy. To successfully implement this, communities will truly have to be empowered to manage projects. However, the current situation is most often that management is carried out by a partner entity (GoB, business, NGO) and that the real decision-maker regarding natural resources remains Central Government.

While there is general concern regarding Botswana's biodiversity, a major problem that needs to be addressed is the lack of baseline data. No inventories exist for all species with exception of the (large) mammals, no records are established of indigenous knowledge (IK) and there is little or no data regarding disappearing or threatened species. As new species are being recorded in the Okavango, undoubtedly others are becoming extinct without having been identified. NGOs such as

Permaculture Trust of Botswana (PTB), Thusano Lefatsheng, Veld Products and the Forestry Association of Botswana (FAB), work on different aspects of collecting and preserving species varieties, such as tree species, land races, wild crop relatives and other veld products.

→ The expression '**veld product**' is used throughout southern Africa to indicate any indigenous non-timber products that can be harvested in the wild. These traditionally provide for a number of needs including nutritive and medicinal. With declining interest in their use and threats of developments, invasive species and genetic pollution, the veld product diversity is under threat, as is the vast knowledge associated with it.

Many species have medical and/or commercial applications. The recent patenting of a diet drug based on the Hoodia, the liquor made from the fruit of the marula and the grapple tea are well-known examples. They also illustrate the pitfalls: without documentation and property rights the local communities will not benefit from any "discoveries" such as the Hoodia; and foreign businesses capable of using plant tissue culture techniques to grow the grapple may well succeed in eliminating competition by obtaining inclusion of the naturally grown plant on the CITES list. An issue to be addressed is the lack of legislation addressing access and benefit sharing, and the need for regulation of import and export.

A draft CBNRM policy exists, but scattering of responsibilities within Government (NCSA is situated within Land, Housing and Environment while Agriculture is the main Ministry involved) tends to lead to slow progress for any legislation related to a cross-sectorial issue such as biodiversity.

A specific concern for Botswana (and most likely the whole of Africa) is Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). This is one of the emerging critical issues, and needs to be addressed at the WSSD. It will be important for Civil Society to lobby for control mechanisms on trade or production of GMOs, and to research potential impacts.

Wildlife has been the main initial focus of environmental management in Botswana. Current concerns are the overpopulation of elephants and the general problems of co-existence of livestock with wildlife, which need a sustainable solution. In this context, and in view of the presence of an estimated 2.4M heads of cattle and 2.4M goats, there is a need to study their impact and establish carrying capacities for wildlife and livestock, and strategies for co-existence.

Among the successful wildlife programmes in Botswana is the Khama Rhino Sanctuary, where this virtually extinct species has been reintroduced since 1992/1993.

→ ***The CITES convention and the elephant problem in Botswana.***

It is estimated that Botswana's elephant population has doubled in the past 10 years, to a figure of 120.000, exceeding the estimated carrying capacity, with devastating results for their own and everyone else's habitat. It has been reported that their range has expanded by 46%. There is some support within Civil Society for lobbying for the lifting of trading restrictions and/or for compensation measures. However, a durable solution to the problem lies in regional management. If populations in north-eastern Namibia and southern Angola can benefit from the elephant presence and poaching is effectively prevented, the elephants can reclaim their past rangelands. This is clearly an issue that has to be negotiated internationally. The recent regional pre-SITES meeting hosted by KCS and DWNP saw the SADC countries agree to a joint position regarding authorised sales and/or trade in live animals.

The Okavango Delta, listed as a Ramsar site, is Botswana's most famous natural monument. The Delta is a fragile eco-system with a wealth of known and most likely some unknown species. Much research is undertaken by Government Departments, Universities (UB and international), and NGOs ; but coordination and strategic planning is lacking. IUCN's initiative has led to the NGO's working in the area to draft a strategic plan. The Delta also depends on water from the river of the same name, which is shared with Angola and Namibia. Potential dams, pipelines or other water schemes upstream would severely damage this fragile ecosystem.

Climate change, ozone depletion and desertification

While the CCC and Montreal Protocol were ratified, Botswana has yet to sign the Kyoto protocol. Studies have been undertaken in terms of the country's carbon and ozone depleting emissions. A National Ozone Unit has been established at the Department of Meteorological Services. Botswana is a net sink for greenhouse gases, however in a semi-arid region it is clearly vulnerable to climate change. Currently, models predict that global warming may increase the temperature in Botswana by several degrees. This would have a direct negative impact on water availability and would contribute to desertification.

Although Botswana has ratified the UN convention to combat desertification in 1994, the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification is still in the draft stage. There is some concern within Civil Society that this is not seen as a priority. There is a need for research into areas vulnerable to desertification, which should be identified and monitored. Mitigation plans should be established, and preventive protection measures taken.

With current predictions from the National Water Master Plan estimating that water demand will exceed capacity by 2020, potential temperature increases due to global warming could accelerate this and result in water problems within the next decade. Without regional agreements regarding the shared rivers, it is easy to see the potential for a serious problem and even a regional conflict.

It is generally agreed that water management (or lack of it) is the main cause of the water shortage. Knowledge and technology are certainly available to reduce water consumption, and it is estimated that wastewater in Gaborone alone could provide an extra 10% of the current national consumption. The case of Windhoek, which despite a doubling of its population between 1989 and 1996 kept its water needs at the same level through re-use, shows what can be done in a similar environment.

Water conservation in Gaborone is promoted by NGOs such as ST and KCS (Kalahari Conservation Society). The mining industry has developed techniques for maximum water-efficiency and re-use. R&D is available from RIIC (Rural Industries Innovation Centre) and BOTECH (Botswana Technology Centre) on water-efficiency and reuse. BOTECH has built a water-efficient (and energy-efficient) office building and a factory, and thus gained extensive expertise, which is unfortunately not used in new building developments. There is a need to revise Building Control Regulations, dating from 1962 (but based on the UK's regulations of almost a century ago !).

Domestic energy is still mainly reliant on wood. Even in Gaborone, an estimated 79% of households use wood as the main source of energy. Development of local energy

sources for electricity production is focused on coal. Estimated coal reserves warrant consideration of coal as a viable national source of energy, but there is a need for long-term impact assessment and research into efficient and clean burning technologies.

With more than 3000 hours of sun annually, and a low population density, Botswana is an ideal country for the use of solar power. While model plants have been established and household systems developed by BOTEK and RIIC, this technology is not yet adopted within national development programmes – less than 1% of the energy supply is from renewable sources. There is a need to assess long-term cost-efficiency of grid-extending programmes for rural electrification compared to renewable energy technology.

Critical issues

During the Civil Society workshop organised in September 2001, participants worked in 4 groups to determine priority issues of sustainable development for Botswana. Those groups were (1) Land management, agriculture, drought and desertification, poverty and human settlements; (2) Industry, consumption and production patterns, trade and environment, sustainable tourism, science and technology, biotechnology, atmosphere, energy, transport, waste and toxic chemicals; (3) Integrated decision-making, institutional arrangements, information, education and awareness, demographics and international law; (4) biodiversity, flora and fauna.

Many of the issues debated are obviously interlinked. While most stakeholders from within Civil Society who were interviewed for this report insisted that priority issues should not be an excuse to ignore other very important issues, the consensus is that poverty and HIV/AIDS are Botswana's major concerns. This is in agreement with the UN System's 2001 Common Country Assessment (CCA), which lists Poverty, AIDS and Environment as the main concerns.

Critical issue 1: Poverty

Poverty is essentially a problem of internal distribution, since Botswana's remarkable economic growth has basically benefited half the country, with 48% of the population below the poverty line despite an impressive per capita GDP. It is also a problem of urban/rural divide, with the rural population, especially rural dwellers, being the worst affected. The problem also knows a gender imbalance, with female-headed households (FHH) much more affected than men. An important factor in these imbalances, is the lack of access to resources for these vulnerable groups, especially land.

Given the complex structure of poverty, Civil Society feels there is a clear need for a local analysis of poverty. This would allow a clear breakdown of its causes and components, and an establishment of local indicators, objectives, goals and milestones. While recently developed indicators such as the Capability Poverty Measure (CPM) and Human Development Index (HDI) are useful general yardsticks that go beyond income poverty, there is a need for identification and monitoring of other relevant local factors and their role in poverty in Botswana. That there is a real

need to define and set out common goals and targets is also clear from the language currently used, which goes from combating through reducing and alleviating to eradicating poverty.

A comprehensive analysis of poverty, with participation of all stakeholders, would equally address the problem of sensitisation. There are indications that currently poor people tend to be stigmatised for failing to be part of progress, or for marginalising themselves.

Empowerment and capacity building are another essential component of a durable solution to the problem of poverty in Botswana. Short-term relief and compensation may actually disempower citizens. In an era where the country is concerned with the availability of human resources as a consequence of the AIDS pandemic, it is seen as crucial to develop and use the available human resources more efficiently. This includes making better use of specific groups, such as minority groups with extensive indigenous knowledge, women who are still not allowed opportunities to achieve their full potential, and refugees, who can play an active role in the development of their host country.

Efficient and sustainable use of natural resources has to be achieved to successfully fight poverty. This includes strategic land-use planning, promotion of suitable crops and proven sustainable techniques such as Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM), as well as comprehensively inventorying the country's biodiversity and ensuring that the rights to its use are accorded to the local communities.

Critical issue 2: HIV/AIDS

The battle against the AIDS pandemic, which is severely affecting Botswana, with official estimates of close to 300.000 Batswana living with HIV, has to be a high priority for the country. Although this is now agreed throughout all sectors of society, there is still an attitude of stigmatisation and denial around the disease.

Government has taken a number of steps, such as the programme to prevent mother-to-child transmission and information/awareness programmes; and the past years have seen a large number of activities funded by local or international donors, implemented by an increasing number of institutions, often NGOs or CBOs. Some large companies have also initiated internal campaigns.

While funding for these projects is currently readily available, there is a lack of coordination and overall planning which is likely to reduce their overall efficiency, and may even impact negatively on future funding. Interventions are in some cases donor-driven and may not be appropriate to the realities of life in Botswana.

It is therefore recommended to improve the consultative process and to invest in research on the underlying causes for the extremely high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Botswana, and to establish a national strategy including identification of localised goals. If the reasons for the rapid spread are thoroughly identified, a strategic programme with involvement of all stakeholders can target specific areas of concern. Most of the ensuing programmes could be implemented through Civil Society.

To successfully implement HIV/AIDS-awareness programmes, it is imperative to be able to communicate with the target population. Given that one in every three Batswana is illiterate, and that a considerable percentage do not speak Setswana or

English, a successful campaign will require a communication strategy inclusive of all languages used in the country.

There are many links between poverty and HIV. Female and Children Headed Household (FHH and CHH) figures have sharply risen as a result of the epidemic, and these families have great difficulties to break out of poverty. Having to care for sick relatives makes the situation worse. Conversely, women and children from poor households are vulnerable to infection when they are economically forced to grant sexual favours in exchange for goods. Rape, especially child rape, is a growing problem in Botswana; and offenders are more likely to get away with their crime when the family of the victim has less means to react.

Other critical issues

While many issues are inter-related –and indeed often directly impact on poverty and/or HIV/AIDS- a number of major local issues should again be emphasised.

Vulnerable groups

In addition to the health and security inequities for women, the overall gender imbalance in Botswana remains a critical issue. Any sustainable development which does not include full empowerment and protection of women and girls is bound to fail. Certainly in a society where households are increasingly run by women or even children, and where concerns over the availability of human resources as a result of the AIDS pandemic are expressed, the country needs to provide an environment conducive to women reaching their full potential. This is the objective of several NGO programmes, such as Emang Basadi's programme for women in politics and the cooperation with the Botswana Police to improve handling of abuse and rape cases.

Hunter-gatherer groups are among the poorest communities in Botswana. Any poverty alleviation programme needs to include them as a high priority, whether they are called indigenous people or remote area dwellers.

In addition to full access to resources (land ownership), there is a need for political, economic and social empowerment, such as representation in District Councils where they are currently rarely represented, and capacity building to manage CBNRM programmes and gain a sustainable income.

With the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the Human Rights NGO Ditshwanelo has worked on a Central Kalahari Game Reserve Management Plan, which includes core zones, community use zones and tourism development zones. Unfortunately, the Cabinet has until now rejected this plan. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this initiative can be the basis of a solution and a model for other areas. Successful programmes can only be developed in a participatory manner, whereby beneficiaries are owners rather than recipients of development processes and thus provide the identification of needs, requirements and desirable solutions as perceived from within their own culture.

→ **Indigenous people** are defined by the UN Working Group on Indigenous People (1982) as "existing descendents of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived (...) and reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial situation, who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of which they now form a part, under a state structure which incorporates mainly the national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant"

The working definition adds that it includes "isolated or marginalised groups" not having suffered conquest if they

- (1) are "descendents of groups which were in the territory (...) at the time when other groups (...) arrived" ;
- (2) "(...) have preserved almost intact the customs and traditions of their ancestors (...)";
- (3) "are, even if only formally, placed under a State structure which incorporates national, social and cultural characteristics alien to theirs"

Urbanisation

Close to half the population of Botswana now lives in urban areas. In other words, 80% of the population increase since independence –500,000 people- have gone to urban areas. Problems related to urbanisation are closely related to carrying capacity and limited natural resources.

An urban population consumes several times the amount of water and energy of the same rural numbers. Waste and pollution are concentrated and thus increase risks. Water- and energy-saving technology and techniques are available nationally and internationally, as are appropriate building technologies and waste management skills. Unfortunately, little of this knowledge is currently put in practice. For urban areas the main issue is management and/or planning. The ongoing multi-stakeholder partnership coordinated by ST to develop an Environmental Vision for Gaborone is therefore an important initiative. The main concern is whether it will actually be implemented.

→ *Problems related to urbanisation*
 A resident of the Gaborone landfill;
 the dam behind her supplies
 Gaborone's water ;
 Children playing with dumped rubbish
 in an oil-polluted pool of water.

Rural development, agriculture and food security

In addition to improved urban planning, rural development and decentralisation are the appropriate way to slow urbanisation. Agriculture, including subsistence agriculture, should be encouraged; women and minority groups need access to productive land; rural infrastructure and access to health facilities and schools with skilled staff needs to be improved. It should be assessed whether the incentives for farming and rural development provided by GoB equally reach all communities, and if not the disadvantaged communities should be assisted to tap into those resources.

As the current food crisis in southern Africa painfully demonstrates, food security is essential to allow sustainable development. However, Botswana imports the vast majority of its food supplies. Agricultural development to achieve food security through self-sufficiency needs to be part of the long-term vision for the country.

Emerging issues

While the HIV/AIDS pandemic is certainly the major issue impacting on Botswana since the Rio Conference, a number of emerging issues could become very important.

Regionally shared natural resources

An important emerging issue –although it could be argued that it is an age-old issue–relates to regionally shared natural resources.

Botswana is expected to run out of groundwater in the next 20 years, and water requirements in other countries in the region are likely to increase equally rapidly. Plans in the region for dams, pipelines or water schemes on rivers such as the Okavango, Zambezi and Limpopo will have major effects on local and downstream populations. Issues such as regional water pollution/contamination are potential sources for future regional conflict. The political situation in the sub-region, with conflicts and/or political instability increases the risk of conflicts over transboundary natural resources.

→ The Kalahari Gemsbok (Botswana and South-Africa – Namibia is yet to participate) and other *Transfontier Parks* in Southern Africa, such as the Shashe-Limpopo Trans-frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) between Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe show the possibilities for fruitful regional co-operation in natural resources management.

Nonetheless, it will be important to monitor progress and learn from difficulties encountered, specifically with regard to equitable benefits obtained by the peoples living in those areas.

Genetically Modified Organisms

A second emerging issue concerns Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). With the current lack of legislation and the majority of consumer products and seeds being imported from the RSA (where US companies are important shareholders) Botswana is certainly a potential importer of GMOs.

Very little is currently known regarding the long-term health effects of genetically modified foods. Botswana can hardly afford to risk potential consequences on the health of its population.

There are indications that genetically modified seeds could result in genetic erosion and reduced biodiversity in Botswana, in addition to creating increased dependency, as is the case with most hybrids. Sustainable development of agriculture would require local capacity for natural seed production, and regulation regarding imports. With many industrialised countries banning GMOs, Africa is at risk of being an ideal market for these. Local plant conservation activities aimed at preserving the local gene pool, such as the PTB project on Agricultural seed conservation, and FAB and Veldt Products' seed collection projects, should receive more support and should be incorporated in a national activity.

In view of this, a precautionary attitude should be promoted in Southern Africa and countries should be mobilised to take a strong position against GMOs during the coming WSSD.

For these regional issues SADC plays a major role to provide a framework for dialogue and regional agreement. The UN should put these issues on the agenda of regional and international meetings. Civil Society in Botswana will continue to lobby and raise awareness, with projects such as “Every River has its people”, a regional project for which KCS is the managing and implementing NGO in Botswana.

NEPAD new partnership for Africa deal

A third emerging issue relates to the NEPAD initiative. Very little is currently known regarding this initiative within Botswana. There is a fear that the focus lies heavily on economic development. It is therefore recommended that before Botswana formally commits to any initiative, a national debate be organised regarding its implications for sustainable development in Botswana.

Global issue – education, training and awareness

Formal, non-formal education, training and awareness are cornerstones of any durable solution to development problems.

In Botswana, the NCSA has been mandated to establish an environmental education (EE) division. The national education policy was revised and now includes EE. A national action plan has been developed which includes developing resource materials, school environment policy (SEP) packs, and training of teachers. Training workshops have been organised and resource materials have been developed. The main problem is converting available documentation into used resources and true awareness, as many participants in workshops have not been empowered to convert what they have been told into action in their school.

An additional concern is that with access to documentation, schools should have access to appropriate appliances, such as energy-saving bulbs, self-closing taps, consumption meters etc; depending on the priorities they establish in their SEP.

Civil Society therefore has an important role in providing programmes to complement this action. In Gaborone, KCS and ST have undertaken enviro-school projects, whereby one model-school is being assisted. These programmes include a bio-park within a school (KCS), and implementation of an environmental policy, including water- and energy-saving technology. Various initiatives have led to development of education centres such as at the Gaborone Game Reserve (supported by KCS); Lechwe Education Centre (supported by Conservation International (CI), who have an EE programme in Maun; and private EE initiatives such as at Mokolodi Game Reserve and Mankwana.

The partnership between KCS and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks to develop environmental school clubs resulted in the Association of Environmental Clubs of Botswana, now grouping more than 50 clubs throughout the country

→ Tree planting in schools is one component of raising awareness and educating young (and old) Batswana. As can be seen, schoolyards are often totally cleared of vegetation, which suits the objective of a neat school with less risks of mischief.

A concern is also the need to teach a holistic view on environment. Education should convey a message to children that cleaning up litter, saving water, planting trees or growing vegetables are not isolated activities, but part of sustainable use of natural resources, which also affect major issues in their lives such as their health and the future of their country.

In terms of awareness, a number of campaigns are organised in partnership between GoB, Civil Society and the private sector to commemorate specific international environmental days. Awareness raising is also a major component of the activities of most NGOs.

All too often, raising of awareness incorrectly assumes there is no knowledge out there, and knowledge is “disseminated” rather than exchanged. In a country that has chosen rain (Pula) as its national symbol and currency, there is a certain paradox in the need to raise water-awareness. Insufficient use is made of traditional value systems and sound cultural practices in Botswana to improve awareness. Examples are the use of totems, which require the protection of an animal and its eco-system; or traditions regarding protection of certain tree or animal species during certain seasons, which have generally a deep-rooted and ecologically sound basis.

Many NGOs and CBOs are trying to disseminate information through the Internet. An example is the cbrm.bw website managed by SNV/IUCN, which includes a comprehensive series of occasional papers on CBNRM.

The way ahead

Participation of Civil Society in the WSSD

- With the WSSD a new opportunity arises for Civil Society to bring sustainable development for Botswana on the international and national agenda.
- In their deliberations at the WSSD, the representatives of Civil Society will focus on the role sustainable development can play to alleviate poverty in Botswana.
- Regional issues regarding sustainable natural resources management in Southern Africa need to be addressed.

Establishing Botswana’s Agenda 21

- Subsequent to the WSSD, Civil Society will seek to mobilise stakeholders, including donors, to establish a National Committee for Sustainable Development (NCSD).
- This NCSD will have the task of undertaking comprehensive consultations with stakeholders ; with the objective of developing a National Agenda 21 strategy.
- The NCSD will subsequently coordinate the implementation of this
- A goal should be to finalise this National Agenda 21 strategy before 2005.
- Establishment of Local Agenda 21s will be part of this National plan
- The NCSA is the best indicated entity to incorporate a NCSD, if a general consensus and commitment to extend its mandate and capacity can be obtained. Alternatively, the Civil Society steering committee for the WSSD will take the lead in identifying a suitable structure, in cooperation with all stakeholders.
- The commitment of GoB to establish a Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism in 2004 is an opportunity should the Ministry take the sustainable development agenda as its core objective.

The future for NGOs

The reduction of development funding from overseas donors is a general phenomenon. It is worse in Botswana as many donors phase out their operations since the country is in the lower middle-income group (although this should be contrasted with the disturbing reality that nearly 50% of the country's population lives below poverty level). In Botswana, no standardised Government subsidies exist for NGOs. Recommendations are therefore

- Lobbying with donors not to stop funding for projects directly aimed at the poor section of the population and their environment – rural and the poor urban areas;
- Jointly assess funding needs;
- Government to consider a subsidy mechanism for NGOs;
- NGOs with overlapping or complementary programmes to consider joining forces (eg joint planning, joint project submissions) to become more cost-efficient; to eliminate financial highs and lows, and to reach the entire country since too much focus is currently on Gaborone.

The Private Sector, the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM) and the Unions will have an important role in implementing an agenda of sustainable development. Compliance with environmental standards within ISO 14000 and/or proper EIA procedures will become necessary. There is a need for the environmental businesses in the country to maintain high standards in carrying out EIA and Environmental Audits.

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