

National Strategy for Sustainable Development

DRAFT: CHAPTER 1 – RATIONALE, VISION, MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

1 Introduction

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002, reaffirmed the commitment of nation states to sustainable development. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) that emerged from the WSSD establishes 37 negotiated targets, including Paragraph 162:

"States should take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005."

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) provides a framework for all South African entities, whether government, civil society or business, on what sustainability means in light of the country's growth aspirations. It indicates how sustainability needs to be integrated as a key element in decisions that have economic, social, environmental and governance implications.

The NSSD, like any strategy, will need to be tested, revisited, and regularly updated, for it to remain relevant. This first version provides the basis for a long-term process of integrating sustainability as a key component of the development discourse and shows South Africa's commitment to the principles developed at the WSSD.

2 Background

2.1 International

The build-up to a South African NSSD includes a number of key international milestones that signify the increased awareness of sustainability as an important component in development strategies. These include:

- The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm (1972), where environment was recognised as a development concern;
- The 1992 Earth Summit, where Agenda 21 was agreed upon as a blueprint for sustainable development, reflecting global consensus and political commitment to integrate environmental concerns into social and economic decision-making processes.
- A decade of UN summits and conferences between 1992 and 2002 which focuses on the social, economic and environment related fields and widened the concept of sustainable development;
- The 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit where the Millennium Development Goals were adopted;

- The World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg (2002), which reaffirmed the commitment to sustainable development, placed poverty eradication at the centre of efforts to achieve sustainable development, and reinforced the notion of development that aims for equity within and between generations.

2.2 National

The sustainable development challenges South Africa faces include how to deal with the results of an apartheid-originated, political and economic paradigm (which was focused on a mining economy, applied a conservationism approach and was characterised by inequitable social development and investment in people).

Since democracy in 1994, South Africa's first real SD intervention was the RDP with its focus on:

- Build the economy;
- Democratize the state;
- Meet basic social needs;
- Reposition the country internationally;
- Develop human resources;
- Build a nation;
- Protect the environment.

In the years since the Millennium Summit and the WSSD, South Africa continued its move towards a more developmental state, given its democratic government and elevated international stature. Unique challenges remain, e.g. how to balance the need for continued macro-economic policy stability and fundamentals with the Two Economies paradigm and pressures for economic growth. Specific elements of the changed milieu include:

- The development of various social policies and strategies, e.g. Education, Health, Housing, ISRDP, URS and the National Environmental Management Regime (focusing on such areas as air quality, waste, biodiversity and marine);
- The emergence of Institutionalised Cooperative Governance Systems and stakeholder engagement processes (e.g. clusters, FOSAD, Premier Forums, NEDLAC);
- The development of planning tools such as the National Spatial Development Perspective and Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), Provincial Growth and Developmental Strategies, Integrated Development Plans and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (Asgisa);
- A continued situation where Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms remain fragmented.

2.3 Challenges to South Africa

There remains a need for a long term "framework of encompassing interest" – that facilitates co-ordinated action within government and with social partners. This

involves building a social compact to unite South Africans in an effort to create work, fight poverty, and reinforce national pride. Through focus on implementation, better integration and alignment across all spheres and direct contact with the people, the performance of the state can be further improved.

Other specific challenges that remain in light of South Africa's bid to entrench sustainable development principles are:

- How to address the consequences of the South African social transition, including interventions to address the Two Economies paradigm and create an improved focus on spatial development;
- How to improve the regional environment, implement NEPAD and facilitate high growth in SADC;
- An existing lack of a common and consensual national vision;
- Policy implementation and integration issues;
- A bias in the Vision 2014 towards social and economic development without integrating sustainability;
- Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of various plans and approaches;
- The need to strengthen capacity for sustainable local development;
- How to successfully move towards a longer-term view in development planning;
- The need for improved interactions between government and society;
- Meeting basic needs, while growing the economy

3 Rationale for a NSSD

Apart from Paragraph 162 in the JPOI, requiring states to take immediate steps to begin formulating national strategies for sustainable development, there is a need for countries to adopt bold, goal-oriented policy frameworks and national development strategies to meet the MDG targets.

A Sustainable Development paradigm is integral to our 2014 vision and beyond, as it defines the social, economic, environmental and governance parameters, and explicitly recognizes and acknowledges the trade-offs made in growing the economy, sustaining the natural resource base and meeting basic social and human needs. The value, impact and purpose of a NSSD are therefore:

- To inform, improve and guide cross-sectoral policy implementation and integration;
- To consolidate monitoring and evaluation processes;
- To inform the decision-making capacity for spatial development;
- To inform a longer-term decision making;
- To improve interactions between government and society.

4 The NSSD Charter

The NSSD Vision is what drives our actions to ensure sustainable development becomes an integral part of a coherent growth and development framework. As such the vision supports the core beliefs of social well being, ecological integrity, economic growth and effective governance.

VISION

South Africa aspires to be a sustainable economically prosperous and self-reliant nation state that safeguards its democracy by seeing to the fundamental human needs of its people, by managing its limited ecological resources responsibly for current and future generations, and by advancing the efficiency of integrated planning and governance through collaboration nationally, regionally and globally.

The NSSD Mission provides the roadmap on how the vision can be achieved.

Mission

To achieve true sustainability in development, we commit ourselves to:

- Integrate the development and decision-making processes available for sustainable development planning and monitoring;
- Develop South Africa's human capital;
- Foster an environmental consciousness among South Africans;
- Promote collaboration between all stakeholders (tiers, spheres, groups and sectors);
- Ensure strong planning and governance capacity is put in place;

- Implement key strategic initiatives and programmes;
- Utilise the advantages of technology to its fullest extent.

Principles

The principles by which our actions will be guided are:

- People-centered development
- Holistic approaches
- Macro-micro linkages
- Interdependence of the pillars
- Sustainable utilisation of natural resources
- Access to opportunities (redress and justice)
- Participatory democracy