

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY**

**VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
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DECEMBER 1997

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. The word **Environment** commands a very broad meaning. It includes: air, land and water; plant and animal life including human life; the social, economic, recreational, cultural and aesthetic conditions and factors that influence the lives of human beings and their communities; buildings, structures, machines or other devices made by man; any solids, liquids, gases, odour, heat, sound, vibration or radiation resulting directly or indirectly from the activities of man; and any part or combination of the foregoing and the inter-relationships between two or more of them.
2. The lives of all Tanzanians are intimately connected to the environment: our survival and that of our future generations depends on the harmonious relationship with the natural elements. Tanzanians have no choice but strive to manage the environment and its natural resources in ways that enhance the potential for growth and opportunity for sustainable development of present and future generations. Tanzanians do not have the luxury of ignoring the fundamental stresses at the interface of development and environment. Environmental problems are real and are not someone else's problem. A healthy economy and a healthy environment go hand-in hand. Both are needed for our survival and prosperity.
3. There is a clear cause-and-effect relationship between poverty and environmental degradation. Environmental degradation leads to widespread poverty; equally, poverty is an habitual cause of environmental degradation as it undermines people's capacity to manage resources wisely. Problems of underdevelopment such as poverty, ill health and others that plague the majority of Tanzanians are as much environmental as they are developmental. Environmental protection is therefore a social and economic necessity. It is an integral component of sustainable development. Correspondingly,

sustainable development must be the central concept in environmental policy.

4. Satisfaction of basic needs is therefore an environmental concern of relevance to environmental policy. Investment in development is vital for environmental protection because the environment is the first victim of acute poverty, urban overcrowding, overgrazing, shrinkage of arable land and desertification. Resource channelling must be targeted to address poverty-related environmental problems. It must aim at eradicating communicable diseases, guaranteeing food, shelter, safe water for all, employment and income generation in rural and urban areas, particularly to combat poverty.

5. Sustainable development means achieving a quality of life that can be maintained for many generations because it is socially desirable, economically viable and environmentally sustainable. Development is sustainable if it takes place within nature's tolerance limits, both in the short and in the longer-term perspective. The challenge for all Tanzanians is to recognise the various demands made upon their environment, and reconcile these in ways which seek to maintain and enhance it for the future. Equally the purpose of development is to improve the quality of human life. Development is sustainable if it adequately addresses poverty in its broader sense as a composite index of human deprivation, extending from command over economic resources, access to education, food, shelter and energy needs, to control of the physical environmental quality. The challenge for the Government is how issues of environmental sustainability can be mainstreamed into the core of national development policy-making.

6. Tanzania is committed to sustainable development through short, medium and long term social and economic growth. The Government is currently undertaking strategies aimed at strengthening the financial base of social services through cost recovery; enhanced community participation and improved delivery systems and management of supplies. The driving motive for economic and social change will put our country at an important crossroads, where difficult choices will have to be made in assessing trade-offs between short-term economic gains which foreclose future options, and the better based sustainable development goals. Both these choices have important economic, sociopolitical, ecological and ethical considerations. Given the increased role of the market and private sector, the role of the Government in steering social sectors in environmental management will have to be highlighted and pursued with the keenest interest. The Government will pursue explicit policy objectives which take into account these considerations.

7. Tanzania took an active part in the preparations for, and during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which enshrined the integration of environmental concerns and economic development in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and Agenda 21. It is working closely with other countries in the Region and the International community to contribute towards a peaceful, healthier and better global environment for present and future generations. Tanzania has become a party, and is implementing a number of global and Regional Environmental Treaties, as a basis for global and regional cooperation in the pursuit for sustainable development. It is host to important sub-regional programmes and projects conceived and implemented in concert with neighbouring countries, as a basis for harmonised management actions and approaches, and as a form of preventive diplomacy.

8. Agenda 21 stresses the need to move from a development model in which sectors act independently of each other, to a model in which there is integration across sectors, where decisions take into account intersectoral effects, to improve intersectoral coordination. This involves the integration of policies, plans and programmes of interacting sectors and interest groups to balance long-term and short-term needs in environment and development. It calls for a coherent policy where priorities can be defined for the promotion of long-term economic growth, creating incentives for sustainable utilisation of natural resources, disincentives for environmental pollution and degradation, and effective management of the overall environment.

9. For Tanzania, therefore, the role of Environmental policy lies in providing for the execution of a range of strategic functions, notably:-

- (a) Development of consensual agreement at all levels for the challenge of making trade-offs and the right choices between immediate economic benefits to meet short-term and urgent development needs, and long-term sustainability benefits;
- (b) Development of a unifying set of principles and objectives for integrated multisectoral approaches necessary in addressing the totality of the environment;
- (c) Fostering Government-wide commitment to the integration of environmental concerns in the sectoral policies, strategies and investment decisions, and to the development and use of relevant policy instruments which can do the most to achieve this objective; and
- (d) Creating the context for planning and coordination at a multisectoral level, to ensure a more systematic approach,

focus and consistency, for the ever-increasing variety of players and intensity of environmental activities.

10. Since environmental policy involves many sectors and interest groups, its scope is necessarily broad, and the logistical demand for overseeing its implementation and ensuring coordinated attention to interconnected challenges is complex. The challenge is to ensure that all concerned take priority actions on all the main fronts; and that their actions are mutually supportive, reflecting a mission commonly subscribed to, by all. This means that the environment must be subjected to greater accountability and control, with more effective instruments having clear objectives to be pursued. It means strengthening the functions of government and the corresponding institutions in environmental protection.