

Deforestation is a major environmental concern in Kenya

Background

Kenya is endowed with some of the world's richest natural resources and ecosystems. The country has a complex environment providing habitats to thousands of unique plants and animal species.

The heritage is however threatened by increasing demands of a fast growing population and development. Kenya's environment is seriously being degraded. Some examples are:

- Forest reserves are diminishing at an alarming rate
- Catchment areas of many lakes and rivers are being destroyed with negative consequences such as flooding, landslides as well as reduced water flow
- Fertile soils are being washed away
- Many waters are being polluted
- Many plants and animal species are under pressure and may in future face extinction
- Land use conflicts are increasing
- The country is facing enormous challenges related to management of waste water and solid waste including hazardous waste
- Air quality in many urban areas is declining

The changing patterns of climate only makes our situation worse.

It is clear that the country must change this scenario. The future of our environment depends on the choices we individually and collectively make. There are opportunities for the country to manage its environment sustainably. To do so, it is imperative that the country immediately and deliberately makes choices that ensures achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.

If we fail to sustain our environment also the country's economic development will suffer since many sector developments and people's livelihood depend on natural resources and its ecosystem. For example, our fast-growing tourism sector largely depends on land based and coastal ecosystems which are now being degraded.

Efforts Towards Environment Policy

The Government has continued to encourage development without destruction of the natural resources base. The first initiative in this area was the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya.

The country's commitments to environmental management have been demonstrated through various initiatives. Key among these are: them the National Development Plans over the years, that have since 1974 addressed environmental issues, as well as the 1994 National Environment Action Plan. Several sectoral policies touching more or less on the environment have also been developed in the sectors of Agriculture, Livestock, Water, Energy, Food, Land, Wildlife, Forest, Industry, Trade, Arid and semi-arid Lands as well as Disaster Management.

Kenya has also participated in international meetings convened to address diverse global environmental problems. These include the United Nations Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm) in 1972, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. The Government of Kenya is signatory to and has ratified a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements including the main UN Conventions pertaining to Biodiversity Conservation, Climate Change and Desertification.

Kenya also enacted the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA, 1999) as the framework environment law. However, lack of a comprehensive environment policy has hampered the achievement of compliance and enforcement of the law. The draft Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1999 on Environment and Development was never discussed in Parliament and remains a draft.

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is aware of the formidable challenges presented by conflicting demands on economic growth and environmental sustainability has initiated a programme of work that will support integration of environmental considerations into the national planning process.

The Government has decided to elaborate an over-arching environment policy that will address all the above issues and problems. The comprehensive policy will provide a clear direction on how to manage and protect the environment.

Key Policy issues

The Environment Policy will deal with emerging national as well as international key issues related to the following thematic areas:

- Biological diversity
- Sustainable land use systems
- Water resource management
- Sustainable fisheries and marine resource management
- Pollution control and waste management
- Energy (renewable and efficiency)
- Climate change and variability
- Disaster preparedness and risk management
- Integrated planning and management
- Environmental information management
- Environmental education and public participation
- Environmental economics

- Environmental law/governance
- Environmental policy analysis.

Goal and Objectives of National Environment Policy

The main goal of the proposed environment policy is to set comprehensive policy guidelines for achieving sustainable development. The policy will influence the behaviour of individuals and institutions (both public and private) in production and consumption of goods and services, thereby enhancing their contributions to the realisation of the broader goals of the society in general and of sustainable development in particular.

The proposed policy will:

- Briefly provide the status and trends of ecosystems or habitats
- Provide clear visions for ecosystems and develop monitoring strategies
- Develop strategies in order to reverse the trends of environmental degradation as well as for fulfillment of visions
- Provide guidelines for environmental accounting



Pollution is a major environmental concern

- Mainstream environmental concerns into national development planning
- Provide insights and clear visioning to deal with cross-boundary or shared environmental resources
- Offer policy imperatives to help the country to deal with overlapping property rights in land vis-a vis environmental sustainability
- Elaborate specific measures on resource-use and management in arid and semi-arid areas of the country
- Underpin Kenya's engagement in multilateral environment agreements
- Provide strategies for implementation of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment
- Address both infra-structural and human resource capacities and institutional arrangements.

The environment policy will seek to create harmony among existing sectoral policies related to natural resources management. It will harmonize national development goals with environmental strategies. The resulting policy instruments will in the long term promote poverty reduction and environmental sustainability as envisioned by the Economic Recovery Strategy and Vision 2030.

Support to the Process

The team involved in the process of development of an environment policy comprises staff from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. The Ministry has allocated some financial resources to the process, while the other support is from the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). of key issues

- Regional Workshops to seek opinions and contributions on the preliminary outline and analysis of issues scheduled for January to March 2008.
- National Feedback Workshop to present Draft Environment Policy Paper to key stakeholders scheduled for April-May 2008.
- Submission of the Draft Policy Paper to the Minister by June 2008 for subsequent approval by the Cabinet and Legislation by Parliament.

Methodology for Policy Formulation and Participation

The policy formulation process will maximize the participation of key institutions and the wider public. There will be extensive public consultations during the entire process, from the start to the end, under the direction and guidance of the Environment Policy National Steering Committee.

The main elements of consultations will include – Stakeholder Workshops, Thematic Taskforces, Regional Workshops, Feed Back Workshops as well as interactive consultation through the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Website.

The major groups to be involved in the process will include all stakeholders among them Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous People, and their communities, the non-governmental organisations, Local Authorities, Workers and their Trade Unions, Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Community and the Farmers.

Proposed Policy Process

The main steps will be:

- A first national stakeholders' Workshop to launch the process and seek engagement.
- Thematic Taskforces to undertake preliminary policy analysis of key issues
- Regional Workshops to seek opinions and contributions on the preliminary outline and analysis of issues scheduled for January to March 2008.
- National Feedback Workshop to present Draft Environment Policy Paper to key stakeholders scheduled for April-May 2008.
- Submission of the Draft Policy Paper to the Minister by June 2008 for subsequent approval by the Cabinet and Legislation by Parliament.

Institutional Arrangements for the Process

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources established a number of organs to ensure proper co-ordination and effectiveness of the process of development of the environment policy. The organs are:

Environment Policy National Steering Committee

Members: 15 eminent Kenyans of diverse professional experiences.

Role: Preparation of a draft Environment Policy by leading the process to successful conclusion

MENR Policy Secretariat

Members: MENR staff, supported by Danida, Sida

Role: To coordinate the policy process and act as Secretariat for or

Short-term Consultants

Members: Team of experts, headed by an Environment Policy Expert

Role: Support the policy process by providing technical support

Resource Persons

Members: Specialised resource persons and international experts

Role: Addressed key issues in Environment Policy

Thematic Taskforces

Members: Individuals from public, private sector and civil society institutions.

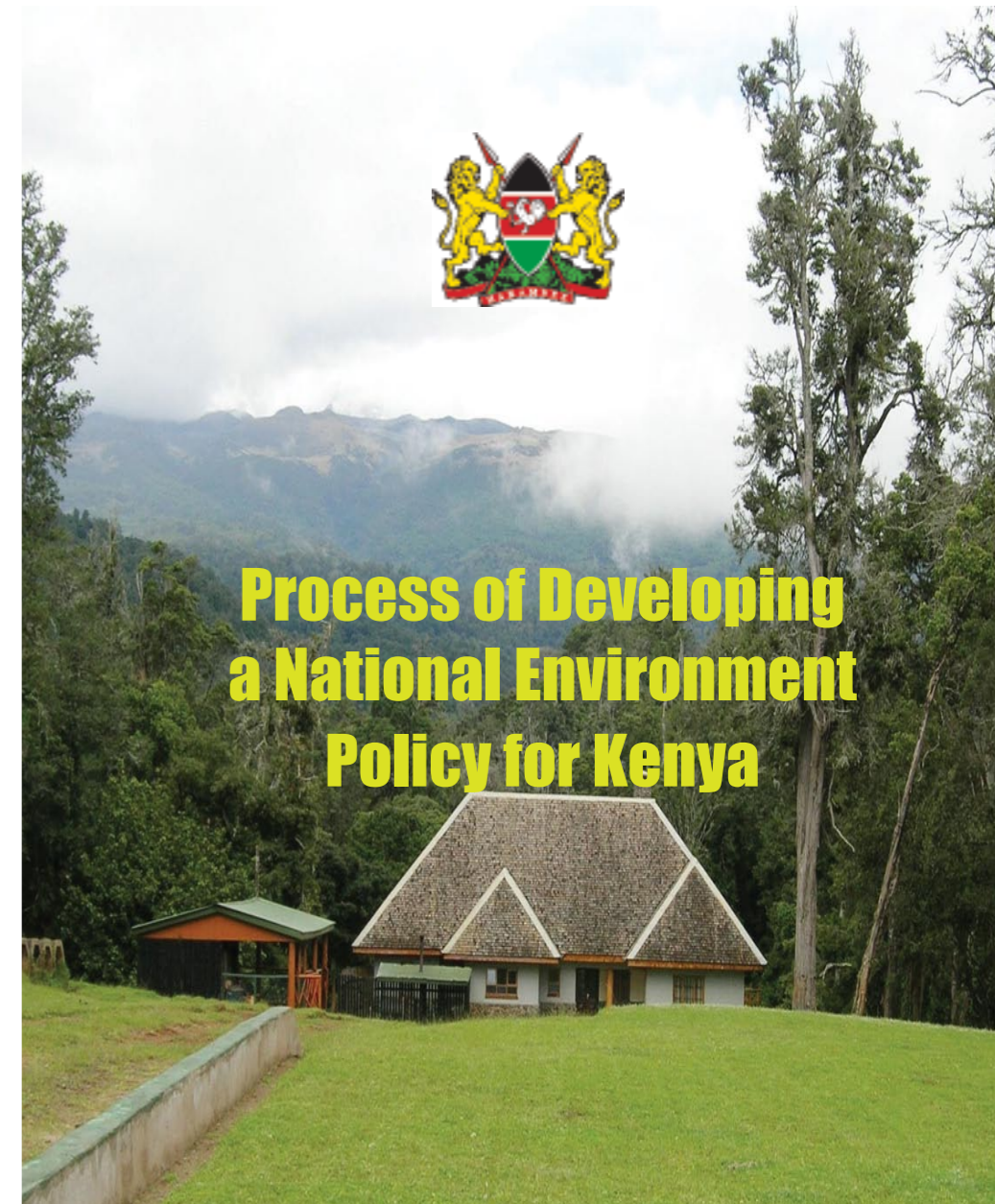
Role: Review and elaborate policy positions on key issues

COMMUNICATION

During the process a website for the policy formulation process has been opened and can be visited on www.environment.go.ke and email: e-policy@mazingiraasili.go.ke or contact the Secretariat of the Policy Process on telephone 2730808.



Process of Developing a National Environment Policy for Kenya



At a Glance

Our Environment, Our Life

