

Policy Brief on The National Environmental Policy and Strategies of Zimbabwe



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Acronyms

CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Community Conservation Areas
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
LEAP	Local Environmental Action Plan
NEP	National Environmental Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
TBNRM	Transboundary Natural Resource Management
PAWA	Parks and Wild Life Authority
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority

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Executive Summary

Zimbabwe is a country rich in natural resources. It is blessed with a number of natural resources which include minerals, wildlife and various vegetation. The full list of the natural resources recognised in Zimbabwe are listed in the National Environment Act.¹ Depletion of the natural resource base of Zimbabwe is detrimental to the nation's social, economic and political future hence protection, mitigation and conservation of the natural resource base is very important.

In pursuance of the aforementioned, in 2009 the national environmental policy and strategies policy was published with an aim to protect the environment and natural resources. This policy document's vision is to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life of the Zimbabwean people, as it rightfully credits natural resources and environment as key pillars for Zimbabwe's social and economic success.

Introduction

Despite the environment and natural resources being afforded protection in the Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013, the environment and the natural resource base is under threat from various activities within the country.² Zimbabwe has shown commitment to counter the depletion of the environment and natural resources base by being party to a number of international conventions.³

This policy brief aims to outline the policies which focus on the management of the environment and natural resources found in the national environmental and strategy policy document. Moreover, followed by a discussion on the laws and regulations enacted to aid the policy document in fulfilling its mandate. Finally, recommendations will be

¹ Natural Environmental Act Section 1.

² Section 73 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013.

³ Ramasar convention, Stockholm convention, Rotterdam convention, Bamako convention. As Accessed on the Environmental Management Agency Website [11/11/2019].

proffered in areas that can be included in strengthening the management of the environment and natural resources base of Zimbabwe.

National Environment Policy

Holistically, the policy framework gives guidance on how to prevent irreversible environmental damage, maintain essential, environmental processes, preserve the broad spectrum of biological diversity to sustain the long-term ability of natural resources to meet the basic needs of people, enhance food security, reduce poverty, and improve the standard of living of Zimbabweans through long-term economic growth and the creation of employment.⁴

The policy document is structured into ‘green issues’ which focuses on natural resource use and ‘brown issues’ which focus on industrial development and its effects, most notably energy use, waste production, and pollution. To achieve the aforementioned, the policy document is divided into 4 sections. Therein are 39 principles which give strategic directions to effectively make use of the nation’s environment. The 4 sections are divided namely into environmental issues, economic issues, social issues and environmental management

Environmental Issues

This section contains policies that aim to prevent, mitigate or control activities that negatively affect the natural resource base of the nation. The natural resources included in this section are: air, water, land, wildlife, protected areas, forests, plant resources, genetic resources, transboundary natural resources and biodiversity.

The principles are centred on proper planning, conservation and sustainable use of the natural resource base to ensure that it is economically, socially beneficial to the nation. Principles 1-6 are reflected in the Constitution of Zimbabwe i.e the right to food and water and right to education such as activities to be carried to tell communities on how best to make use of their natural resources.

Social Issues

Policies in this section address the nexus between human activities, the environment and economy. This section is divided into 11 sub sections that manage and mitigate the

⁴ National Environmental Policy.

negative effects of the social and environment interaction. The principles touch on the constitutional rights to education where there must be education of the public with regards to environmental matters so one is able to understand the interaction between the environment and population, right to equality, where it is highlighted that the environment is for the benefit of everyone (now and future generations).

Economic Issues

Acknowledges that the economic growth has both a positive and negative impact on the environment. There must be a balance between growth and development on one hand and ensured productivity of the environment, health, welfare and security of present and future generations i.e sustainable use of agricultural and mining land contained in principles 32-36.

Emphasis is on the sustainable use of the environment whilst enabling the country to benefit economically. The policy document highlights that sustainable use will be characterised by efficient use, mitigation, conservation and rehabilitation of the environment. The section is divided into 10 sub-sections namely agriculture, mining, forestry, industry, energy, natural resources management, transport and communication, retail, wild life and fisheries services. The principles mirror constitutional sections such as right to information allowing stakeholders to be fully informed of the relationship between the economy and the environment, right to agricultural land and environmental rights where economic development in interaction with the environment should be sustainable.

Environmental management

Focuses on the different approaches to be employed to help minimize the negative impact on the environment. Management will be through the agency (EMA). The management will be guided by policies, economic instruments, engagement with the public and multi-national agreements.

Policy Implementation

Agencies

Environmental Management Agency

Statutory body tasked with overseeing and ensuring sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment. The agency has offices in each district to

allow for better monitoring from a government perspective in-turn it also allows environmental players to have better access to services and information which is crucial in their interaction with the environment. The agency is guided by the policy document, legislation and other regulations to avoid degradation, harmful or potential activity at local levels. One of the ways to manage the environment is through tariffs and penalties which are supposed to be paid by players in the environmental arena. Moreover, the agency will carry out provisions of the constitution such as national development⁵ in the environmental sector and other constitutional provisions such as administrative justice.⁶

Regulations

National Environment Management Act

This Act repeals a number of legislations dealing with natural resources.⁷ Directs for the sustainable utilisation of natural resources, prevention of pollution and environmental degradation. The following statutory instruments were enacted to further the purpose of the act to protect the environment.

Environmental Management (Control of Alluvial Mining) Regulations, 2014 (S.I. No. 92 of 2014).

Outlines rehabilitation measures to be taken during and at cessation of alluvial mining, closure of the mine and inspections in order to help prevent vast degradation of the land. These measures help avoid abuse of the land and prevent miners leaving the land impoverished.

Plastic Packaging and Plastic Bottles Regulation 2010 (S.I. No. 98 of 2010).

Prescribes plastic packaging and plastic bottles rules with the intention to protect the environment. This helps minimise air pollution, water pollution of the natural resource base by restricting harmful plastics to be used.

⁵ Section 13 Constitution of Zimbabwe.

⁶ Section 68 Constitution of Zimbabwe.

⁷ The Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act [Chapter 20:03]. 2001, Noxious Weeds Act. 1996, Hazardous Substances and Articles Act [Chapter 15:05]. 2001 and Natural Resources Act. 1996.

Environment Management Act (Environmental Impact Assessment & Ecosystems Protection) Regulations, 2007 (Cap. 20:27).

Contains regulations that require companies and people to obtain licences from EMA to carry out various activities that affect the environment or wildlife. This allows for controlled and monitored use of the environment. It also allows for an environmental impact assessment and the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report for such activities. Environmental impact assessment reports allow for proper assessment of the damage or potential damage to the environment. This will help guide the agency to take any measures to mitigate or restrict any harmful activities now or in the future.

Environmental Management (Control of Hazardous Substances) (General) Regulations, 2018 (S.I. No. 268 of 2018).

Provides for rules relative to the placing on the market of all hazardous substance, i.e. any substance, whether solid, liquid, or gaseous or any organism which is injurious to human health or the environment (and including hazardous waste). This helps in the handling of substances, control dumping or exposing the environment to hazardous substances by having guidelines on hazardous material available on the market.

Environment Management Act (Hazardous Waste Management) Regulations, 2007 (Cap. 20:27).

Contains regulations to packaging and labelling of substances, precautions in handling and storing of substances, and, in part, also concern importation. Manufacturing, storing, selling, using, importing, exporting, transporting, of hazardous substances or movement thereof shall be licensed or permitted. This helps all stakeholders to buy, use, dispose hazardous waste in an acceptable manner. This also allows personnel to handle the substances in a responsible manner.

Environment Management Act (Effluents and Solid Waste Disposal) Regulations, 2007 (Cap. 20:27).

Controls the disposal of waste or effluent which negatively affects the quality of the air, water and other natural resources. Power is vested in EMA to monitor and issue licences for waste or effluent disposal.

Environment Management Act (Atmospheric Pollution Control) Regulations, 2009 (Cap. 20:27).

Provides for clear regulations to control or ban activities to prevent air pollution. Contains penalties to help deter atmospheric pollution. This is to deter any activities that cause air pollution.

National Climate Strategy

Climate change exacerbates environmental challenges and natural resources scarcity. The document guides government on how to mitigate and adapt to climate change at national, provincial and local levels. The climate response strategy has seven pillars to ensure effective implementation of the national climate strategy to counter negative climate change.

Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)

It's a community-based natural resource management program which considers wildlife as a renewable natural resources. CAMP allows the community to benefit from wildlife through assisting in making of by-laws, proceeds and how to protect the natural resource. This policy document enables the communities of Zimbabwe to manage and benefit from wildlife resources through the program called Community Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources. This is document has a bottom up approach which allows the communities to make a major contribution in the management of wildlife within their area.

Conclusion

This policy brief discussed the national environmental policy document which is divided into green and brown issues in order to try fully protect the natural resources of Zimbabwe taking into account the environmental, social and economic issues. Lastly, there was a discussion of the implementation measures.

Policy Recommendations

Alignment of all Policies addressing Natural Resources

- It is imperative to ensure consistency and coherence at the outset between all policy documents such as the water policy, forestry policy, CAMPFIRE and other policies within the environment sector. There is need of an umbrella policy document addressing natural resources solely and will inform other policy documents addressing a specific natural resource. One umbrella policy document ensures that there is coherence within natural resource management.

Taxing Natural Resources

- Vast extractable natural resources minerals are already an essential revenue source for Zimbabwe. There is need of a clear picture in the agreements between big companies exploiting natural resources in Zimbabwe, so that the country adequately benefits from the exploitation of the resources.

Prioritization of Taxes from Natural Resources

- Use profits of exploitation of natural resources towards the development of renewable natural resources and awareness campaigns to the public to protect the natural resource base.

Availability of Information

- The policy document is based on stewardship, there is need of prompt updating of the EMA webpage in terms of new regulations, policies, directives to the public. This will enable the public to be compliant to new laws and regulations in order to protect the natural resources of the country. The webpage for EMA has not been updated with the 2018 regulations intended to implement the Environmental Management Act.

Prevention of Illicit Natural Resource

- Illicit exploitation of the natural resource base of the country. Illegal exploitation of the natural resource base is rampant in the mining of gold, where there are many illegal gold miners. Illicit exploitation brings about multi-faceted problems which include haphazard degradation of natural resources. Furthermore, the country loses much needed revenue.

Awareness

- addressing the key challenges in the natural resources sector requires a shared responsibility between government and the private sector. More awareness programs between the government and the private sectors (NGO's). Synergising of their efforts will go a long way to manage the natural resource base of the country. More awareness at household level e.g teaching of suitable farming practises to farmers.

More research

- More research to be carried out by government, academia, NGO's in trying to find ways to try save, preserve and mitigate depletion of the nation's natural resource base.
- More research is needed to find better farming, mining etc... to protect the natural resource base
- Research on how to find a balance between, natural resources (building of dams for food security) and possibility of health consequences (bilharzia)

Funding

- Government and private players need to fund activities which further research on better practises to mitigate depletion of the natural resource base. Funding can go a long way to support More research, help awareness campaigns among other initiatives.