



## **Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Tuvalu**

### **Contents**

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Framework for environmental and biodiversity conservation .....	2
3. Relationship of the NBSAP to MDGs and the contribution of biodiversity conservation.....	5

## **1. Introduction**

Tuvalu reported<sup>1</sup> on framework for environmental and biodiversity conservation, and relationship of the NBSAP to MDGs and the contribution of biodiversity conservation

## **2. Framework for environmental and biodiversity conservation**

A broad framework for environmental and biodiversity considerations has been provide by the National Strategies for Sustainable Development 2005-2015 (NSSD) adopted in 2005. It provides for the sustainable development of resources. It arose out of the challenge set at the UN Millennium Summit (World Summit for Sustainable Development – WSSD) when the international community agreed to eight Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), one of which encompasses the environment; another poverty reduction.

The NSSD identified eight strategic areas, one of which is Natural Resources: Agriculture, Fisheries, Tourism and Environment. Noting that Tuvaluan society and its subsistence economy have been built on the sustainable use of the nation’s limited natural resources, now under threat, the challenge is to reconcile conflicts arising from changing attitudes and a growing cash economy.

The priorities and strategies for the Environment are to:

- Develop and implement an urban waste and management plan for Funafuti, (this has been completed in 2006).
- Establish national climate change adaptation and mitigation policies
- Encourage international adoption of Multilateral Environment Agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol
- Increase the number of conservation areas (CAs) and ensure regulatory compliance

The performance monitoring measure for the Environment is that “management has improved in general and that progress is made in urban planning, land reform and waste management in Funafuti specifically and to a lesser extent in the outer islands”.

Biodiversity conservation was not made explicit in the NSSD, but has been subsumed under the strategy for CAs. There are also possible conflicts with key policy objectives for Agriculture and Tourism. For instance, objectives to increase the land available for agricultural production and increase the number of tourists could be environmentally detrimental if not carefully managed.

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<sup>1</sup> Tuvalu (2009). Tuvalu National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Fourth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 44 pp.

The NSSD led to the 2007 Kakeega Matrix which presented an up-to-date account of Tuvalu's development needs, where each donor was involved or intended to be involved. It highlighted specific areas, projects or activities where Tuvalu lacked experience, technical experience or financial resources. Some of the projects identified for the Environment for the period 2007-2009 have been actioned, such as finding for a solid waste management plan, the development of the NBSAP, the establishment of more conservation areas, the development and the implementation of Environment Impact assessment policies. The National Development Act was produced and came into force on 24 June, 2008. The Act explicitly provides for the protection of biodiversity in Part IX, setting out the role of the Department of the Environment.

In December 2005 Tuvalu prepared the National Action Programme (NAP) and submitted it to the UNCCD Secretariat. It recognised the connectivity of objectives with other Multi-lateral Environment Agreements (MEAs). It was noted that because land degradation affects and is affected by environmental concerns such as loss of biological diversity and the effect of climate change, the NAP had great potential to promote synergies with other environmental programmes. It provided strategic priority activities on land degradation, inventory and monitoring, the establishment of sustainable land management plans and the integration of traditional knowledge into modern systems. However, a lack of data and poor recognition of the role of the NAP has meant that actions have not been translated into concrete initiatives.

In order to assist in the elaboration of the NAP, a Sustainable Land Management Project (SLM) has been funded by GEF. It will build capacity in two areas:

i) Mainstreaming SLM:

This will involve Integrating land resource and degradation issues into national development planning processes, consistent with the objectives of the National Strategies for Sustainable Development 2005-2015.

ii) Integrated Land Use Planning Systems (ILUP):

This entails the establishment of development planning systems; strengthening of participatory planning; addressing institutional mechanisms and individual capacities for integrated land-use planning. Implementation will be at the national and local Kaupule levels, with links and co-contributions to support food security and livelihoods initiatives, providing a direction for land use planning suited to customary systems.

Expected project outcomes

1. Increased knowledge and awareness of land degradation and the importance of sustainable land management.
2. Enhanced technical, individual and institutional capacities for SLM.

3. Systemic capacity building and mainstreaming of SLM principles and objectives
4. Enhanced technical support at the local, outer Island and national levels to assist with mainstreaming and integrated decision-making.

Principally, the project seeks to raise awareness and provide training and tools to empower communities to be more directly involved in decision-making and to consider land use and farming practice choices to deal with the increasing pressures of population growth. It is hoped that communities will be empowered to adapt to maintain food security, by building resilience to detrimental pressures or diverting those pressures, many of which are created or exacerbated by poor land use choices. A GIS mapping system will be developed, incorporating local knowledge and scientific information. At national level, an assessment of the legislative frameworks will be undertaken, initially to seek opportunities for mainstreaming SLM in development policy and decision-making processes.

Under Outcome 3, an integrated land use planning system will be developed for medium-long term development, incorporating a rural land-use policy framework, a consideration of options and a roadmap for the integration of law, administrative processes and fiscal systems.

In the process of achieving these outcomes and outputs, there is clearly an opportunity to piggy-back biodiversity considerations and dovetail the NBSAP, since one of the NBSAP objectives is to mainstream biodiversity. Better environmental information and the gathering of baseline data through the development of a GIS system will be invaluable. This needs to cover more than land-use changes and needs to be on-going, beyond the time frame of the SLM project, in order to produce trend information. Without this, management decisions and interventions about resources and biodiversity conservation will be ill-informed.

Furthermore, though a policy framework is to be developed, at this stage this will not lead to detailed land-use plans, ordinances and regulations. The challenge will be in the translation of policy into concrete actions on the ground, dealing with the vexing issue of curtailing, in the public interest, individual rights to use land and natural resources.

At present, preliminary and full environmental assessments are required under the Environmental Protection (EIA) Regulations 2007. The Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment has considerable discretion as he decides whether a preliminary or full environmental assessment is required. The latter may be required by the Minister "for any development relating to a major project that a preliminary report indicates is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment". Public consultations may be required, at the discretion of the Minister. Residential building and churches that conform to all legal requirements relating to building standards are exempt, as are routine maintenance to public infrastructure. This leaves the issue of point and non-point (diffuse) discharges or impacts legally unresolved.

### **3. Relationship of the NBSAP to MDGs and the contribution of biodiversity conservation**

The 2010 Target of the CBD is to: Achieve a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth

In April 2002, the Parties to the Convention committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations General Assembly and was incorporated as a new target under the Millennium Development Goals.

#### **- MGD Indicators and their relevance to Tuvalu**

Although the NSSD noted that some of the MGD indicators do not work (or work well) in small populations such as Tuvalu, the provisional ones developed by the CBD are valid, even though it is acknowledged that some require more work. In particular, those that indicate the status and trends in biodiversity, sustainable use and threats are fundamental. As noted above, these are areas where Tuvalu is deficient. The link between human welfare and ecosystem integrity has also not been established in monetary terms, nor has the socio-economic importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services and indigenous knowledge or the equitable sharing of benefits and dis-benefits. The Tuvalu Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2004-2005 for instance only recorded monetary income. Of the total household income, 5% was derived from Handicrafts, 8% from Fishing and 3% from Agriculture. However this is not a true reflection of the value of biodiversity to livelihoods as non-monetary values, for instance from subsistence harvesting of marine and terrestrial species is not recorded.

Although Tuvalu ranked 4th out of 13 PICs on the Human Poverty Index (using 1998 data) and slipped to 6th (using 2008 data Annex 1) ten years later. This index tells us nothing of the contribution that biodiversity played as this was not one of the measures used in the calculation of the index.