



Integration of Biodiversity in Sao Tome and Principe

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Sao Tome and Principe reported¹ that we have sought to adequately integrate the issues of Biodiversity into the plans, programmes and sectorial and intersectorial policies of Sao Tome and Principe. Below we show the various National and International plans and programmes and some studies in which can be verified an integration of these issues:

- National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (ENRP, 2002);
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- National Plan for the Environment and Sustainable Development (PNAAD);
- National Action Plan for Adaptation to Climatic Change (NAPA);
- National Plan for the Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent and Organic Pollutants (POPs);
- Plan to Combat Deforestation and Soil Degradation;
- Forestry Commission of Central Africa - Convergence Plan;
- Other conventions: CITES, Convention on Migratory Species, Ramsar and Global Heritage Convention;
- Proposal of National Plan for Forestry Development;
- Master Plan for the Marshes of Sao Tome and Principe;
- Charter (Updated) of Agricultural Policies and Rural Development (2007);
- The 13th Constitutional Government of the DRSTP programme (2008);
- Project to promote Livestock Development (PADP PADP I and II / BAD);
- ECOFAC Project;
- Marine turtle protection programme (2003-2006 U.S., 2006 -2007 RAPAC, 2007-2008 – own funds)
- Responsible Fishing Project (UNDP);

¹ Sao Tome and Principe (2009). Fourth National Report on the Biodiversity, 1st DRAFT, Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment, Directorate General of the Environment, January 2009

- National plan for the combat of bird flu (Department of Livestock, WHO, UNICEF, Ministry of Health).

For detailed information on the areas, objectives, strategies, specific actions and priorities of these plans and programmes, we suggest that you consult the documents concerning them.

However, in general, we observed that all plans, programmes and projects reveal a great concern with the issue of sustainable development, namely the need for conservation, appropriate and sustainable use of biological resources and their ecosystems, and the combating of poverty in particular. Not marginalized was the important role played by biodiversity in terms of generating income, increasing the country's economic growth, equitable distribution of its benefits, ensuring food security and nutrition in order to improve the quality of life of the population.

Food security and energy

For example, the recently approved government program, (Program of the XIII Constitutional Government, 2008) considers food security and energy as priority. The strategy for ensuring food security is planned through the recycling and proper valuation of agricultural ecosystems, hence the success expected by its implementation.

Forestry

In the case of Forestry, the same programme advances, "that under the present conditions of the forestry sector in Sao Tome, the objective set, is the implementation of measures that will allow the monitoring of the protective measures for water resources, soil, and climatic conditions of the islands of Sao Tome and Principe, exercised by forest ecosystems, which the Government considers the natural basis for the practice of activities.

The protective measures in this area, reside in, among others, the fight against illegal felling of trees by resorting to an intersectorial strategy, involving not only the forestry sector, but also the Army, the National Police, Local Authorities and farming associations. Reforestation, providing the sector with instruments, evaluation, and articulation with the Directorate General of the Environment are some of the actions to be taken in the field of environment and forestry. The Directorate of Forestry is facing a shortage of qualified personnel to bridge this gap. The training of technical staff is planned for the near future.

Therefore, the communication between sectors is fundamental in order to attain the objectives of sustainable development in Sao Tome and Principe. It appears that there is political willingness and sensitivity on the part of the government for this.

This willingness has also been demonstrated by the development partners, although, in our view, there are still difficulties to be overcome at tactical or methodological level. It will be necessary to adopt mechanisms that allow the integration to work effectively, with a view to curb the unnecessary conflicts, optimize resources because they are limited, make appropriate use of skills, strengthening and raising

the levels of leadership. Everyone should seek a common consensus for an appropriate and sustainable solution to problems.

On the other hand, adequate integration of the issue of Biodiversity can only be possible with the improvement of the Directorate General of Environment (DGA). Although it is still lacking in well trained, well paid technical personnel to implement its functions, it is now obviously more structured.

This Directorate is head of several directorates, namely: Nature Conservation and Directorate of Statistics and Environmental Education with new personnel.

This restructuring indicates that there has been an extra contribution from the state budget to render the DGA more operational. However, the DGA is still very far from accomplishing its mission in reducing the level of marginalization that prevails in the country. It needs to educate the rural communities, their organizations and citizens and help them understand the process of conservation and the sustainable use of resources, so that they can participate actively in reducing the pressure on these same resources.