

Environmental Governance

INTRODUCTION

Despite growing environmental challenges and the impacts of a serious drought, the civil war shifted priorities to a war economy and limited environmental management. The peace accord presented a new opportunity for reform and review of environmental legislation, enforcement capacity and other key concerns. The potential for funds from international community to improve knowledge and information for decision-making and resource management present an ideal opportunity for environmental management officials.

The main feature of the recent environmental reform is that it has not been able to keep pace with the changing national context and the related conflicts. Underlying these events have been the changing environmental conditions such as climate change, population growth, and land degradation.

This assessment team reviewed the institutional structure, legal frameworks, and relevant treaties.

EXISTING INSTITUTIONS AND STRUCTURES

The structure of environmental governance at the national level is characterized by a number of small units linked to the environment but not closely linked to each other. The key bodies with a primary focus on the environment are the Ministry of Environment and the Committee for Natural Resource Management. In addition, there are a variety of provincial councils and local management bodies.

The Ministry of Forest and Agriculture has received a large portion of the allocated potential funding for environmental governance. Prior to the civil war, a Ministry of Water and Irrigation existed but after this dissolved the responsibilities were mostly given to the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture.

The Ministry of Environment was created a year after the peace accords and after the re-division of responsibilities that enlarged the mandate of the Ministry of Forestry and Agriculture, with a mandate to manage surveying, urban planning, and environmental resources. However, no environmental mandate is specified in legislation, as legislation predates the establishment of an environmental portfolio in the ministry. The staff in the ministry is limited to 25 people.

The Committee for Natural Resource Management was established in the mid-1990's by the Environmental Framework Act, as a response to global environmental treaties. The Committee for Natural Resource Management has primarily been a coordinating body and focal point for international liaison and agreements. Their staff is large, around 60 people with roughly 30 career civil servants and 30 short-term contracts.

The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife manages all the wildlife issues.

KEY LEGISLATION

Environmental Framework Act: Primary objectives focused on natural resource management, not on pollution control. The Act calls for:

- Protection of environment and its natural balance
- Sustainable use of resources
- Integration of the link between environment and development
- Empowerment of authorities responsible for the protection of the environment
- Activation of the role of the concerned authorities and prevention of relaxation or disposal of duties

CONCERNS

- Limited governance capacity to adequately implement existing mandates and regulations.
- Under investment matched with new mandates.
- Environmental governance authorities lack sufficient capacity for enforcement.
- Currently no enforcement at any level.
- Laws remain insufficient but are reliable base for a wide range of application.
- Limited environmental data and weak monitoring and evaluation.
- Scarce environmental data creates barriers to solid quantitative analysis, weakens environmental planning and management tools, and weakens the ability to raise awareness at governmental level and disseminate information. Key recommendation: immediately invest in data collection system by national authorities and supported by UN offices.