





RIO+20
United Nations Conference
on Sustainable Development

Progress Towards
Sustainable Development in Southern Africa
Summary for Policy Makers

Economic Commission
for Africa

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Prepared with the financial support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank.

Economic Commission for Africa

Southern African Development Community

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

African Development Bank

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Publications:
Economic Commission for Africa
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tel: +251 11 544-9900
Fax: +251 11 551-4416
E-mail: ecainfo@uneca.org
Web: www.uneca.org

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

First printing May 2012

Edited, designed and printed by the ECA Publications and Conference Management Section (PCMS).

Cover photos: From top left UN Photo/Tim McKulka, Stock.xchng/Lars Sundstrom, Robert Parzychowski, Nate Brelsford, UN Photo/Fred Noy, Stock.xchng/Patrick Hajzler, UN Photo/Martine Perret, Stock.xchng/Robert Linder.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEC	African Economic Community
AU	African Union
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
BERL	Bio-Energy Resource Limited
CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
CSOs	Civil society organizations
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
FTAs	Free Trade Areas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
EIAs	Environmental impact assessments
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LTMS	Long-Term Mitigation Scenarios
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NDPs	National Development Plans
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WWF	World- Wide Fund for Nature
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Introduction

This summary report on progress towards sustainable development in Southern Africa, which covers Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, was prepared as part of the regional preparations for the Rio+20 Conference to be held in Brazil in 2012. The report provided input for the African regional review report for Rio+20.

In line with the call by the United Nations for stakeholder consultations and participation in preparation for the Rio+20 Conference, the report is a product of various subregional consultations. Specifically, the following countries were consulted, to varying degrees and levels of success: Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia. In addition to the consultations, reviews were undertaken on relevant documents pertaining to sustainable development in those countries. Additional literature review was undertaken for all the countries, with particular attention paid to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reports, National Development Plans (NDPs) and national institutional frameworks for sustainable development. Regional development frameworks were also analysed, namely, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Medium-Term Strategic Plan.

Regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were also consulted. These included the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), One-World, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Greenpeace.

The consultations were constrained by the lack of time available before the finalization of the report; these constraints also affected the quality of the report. In addition, the focal experts in the targeted countries were not easily accessible for consultations.

This report was deliberated on and enriched by the subregional consultative meeting for Southern Africa that was held from 6 to 7 October 2011.

The report is structured as follows:

(a) Priority sustainable development issues and trends;

(b) Concrete actions taken, highlighting best practices, progress made and achievements;

(c) Implementation challenges and constraints;

(d) Inter-linkages between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development;

(e) Institutional framework for sustainable development in the subregion;

(f) Transition towards a green economy within the context of poverty reduction and sustainable development in the subregion; and

(g) New and emerging challenges.

(h) Conclusions and recommendations on the way forward

Priority sustainable development issues and trends

The key priority development issues in the subregion are expressed in various frameworks. At the global level, these frameworks include the MDGs, as well as those of other United Nations programmes such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). At the continental level, the frameworks that influence regional priority setting arise from the Constitutive Act of the African Union, and the African Union (AU) New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

At the regional level, most of the Southern African countries belong to SADC and COMESA. Countries' development priorities are supposed to be referenced against the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and the COMESA Medium-Term Strategic Plan. However, this is not always the case in practice.

At the national level, all Southern African countries have developed national development plans as well as long-term visions. These plans and visions are also related to, although not fully aligned or integrated with, the regional and continental development frameworks such as NEPAD and the Integrated Rural Sustainable Development Programmes (IRSDP).

Concrete actions taken, highlighting best practices, progress made and achievements

Countries have been implementing sustainable development programmes individually and have seen success in various areas, particularly with regard to some of the MDGs. There is a need to build upon national progress through baseline studies to show what has worked and what has not, then develop tailored programmes and projects for replication of successes throughout the region.

Africa and the subregion have demonstrated their commitment to sustainable development in many ways. At the continental level, the first Nobel Peace Prize for environmental action was awarded to an African woman, the late Professor Wangari Maathai. In July 2011, the President of Mozambique, Armando Emílio Guebuza, received the "Gift to the Earth" award, signed by the Director-General and President of the World- Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), in recognition of his Government's efforts in promoting and expanding the areas of conservation of natural resources. South Africa is due to host the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP 17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November/December 2011. The Prime Minister of Mauritius has taken leadership in sustainable development matters by bringing them under the direct authority of his Office. In Malawi, Bio-Energy Resource Limited (BERL) has been established for the commercial production of Jatropha trees to provide biofuel. Communities earn income by growing the trees and selling the oil-rich seeds for processing. Zimbabwe has also started selling Jatropha fuel. Botswana is building strong recycling capacity through public-private cooperation to bring poor people into the recycling business in order to improve the current situation, in which only 1.35 per cent of the 6000t/month of waste produced in Gaborone is recycled using buy-back centres. Regional economic communities (RECs) are also implementing initiatives aimed at ensuring sustainable development and the attainment of the MDGs.

The subregion and its member States are facing a number of challenges, individually and collectively. These challenges are limiting the full realization of the subregion's potential in the implementation of programmes aimed at the attainment of the development targets and milestones as set out in the regional and national priorities.

While a number of initiatives are being implemented, these are neither deep nor wide enough to propel the subregion towards the attainment of the MDGS. For instance, efforts such as the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), aimed at creating the necessary conditions for sustainable development, are being made. At the subregional level, both SADC and COMESA have reported some progress towards the attainment of regional integration in line with the African Economic Community (AEC), namely with the establishment of free trade areas (FTAs). However, the lack of progress in the implementation of the social and economic pillars of sustainable development at the national level will detract from the subregional efforts being made. A review of the MDG reports of several Southern African countries revealed that not all the countries will meet all the MDGs by 2015.

Given that a lack of financial resources is one of the key obstacles to sustainable development, both COMESA and SADC have identified resource mobilization as a priority. Efforts are therefore under way to mobilize resources for development, as well as build capacity to enable effective implementation. More effort is needed for the effective implementation of set programmes and targets. It should also be borne in mind that developing policy frameworks is a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

Implementation challenges and constraints

The subregion and its member States are faced with a multiplicity of development frameworks, all of which require adoption and implementation. These include both global frameworks, such as those arising from the Rio process as well as those of development partners and multilateral institutions, and those derived nationally based on the aspirations of each country's population. This scenario presents a number of challenges and constraints for the implementation process.

National aspirations and priorities are often sacrificed to externally- driven programmes tied to funds. For example, while most countries have developed a reporting and monitoring process for progress made towards the attainment of the MDGs, no such efforts are expended for reporting on the implementation of national development plans or the subregional frameworks.

Another glaring challenge is the lack of financial, human and technical capacity, both at the State level and within subregional secretariats, to implement set national and regional programmes.

The existing institutional arrangements at the national and subregional levels are not amenable to the effective implementation of agreed programmes. This is because, at the subregional level, there is not sufficient organic linkage between the subregional secretariats and national institutions information flow is poor.

At the national level there is often duplication and overlap of efforts, which further results in poor allocation of already scarce resources and capacities.

Another challenge that needs urgent attention is that of political will and leadership. Many of the national development plans are never implemented to the full. They simply expire, and another one is put in place. There is therefore a need to ensure that monitoring and evaluation systems are put in place and implemented at the national level, with a view to effecting accountability and reporting on progress made in implementing these programmes, in addition to the MDGs.

While companies have embraced voluntary sustainability reporting, the fundamental profit motive and growth in the capital base continue to drive business, with short-term financial metrics the measure of success. The bonus culture and share price appreciation provide strong incentives for the existing extractive economy, with its short-term thinking, since the necessary investment in sustainable development initiatives is made on a voluntary basis and not on any significant scale.

Over the last few decades this has resulted in a great deal of capital being channelled into property, fossil fuels and structured financial assets with embedded derivatives, instead of renewable energy, energy efficiency, public transportation, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem protection, and land and water conservation. The challenge is therefore to determine how to provide incentives for the investment of capital in sustainable development imperatives.

One consequence of this is that major focused interventions are required in the area of tax reform and subsidies for investment in the green economy. Given the other competing needs that national Governments face, making the case for such interventions proves difficult.

Socialization of sustainable development in the general discourse also meets with obstacles when some members of society are in a survival paradigm, i.e. looking to address immediate needs for food etc., while extremely wealthy members of society have consumption patterns with very large carbon – and more generally ecological – footprints in excess of what is recommended for equilibrium with the planet's biocapacity. If the general public does not prioritize reducing its ecological footprint, neither will it exert any pressure on business, from a consumer activism perspective, to introduce more ecologically- sound business practices. This creates a vicious cycle of structural forces where consumers have large carbon footprints and require business – largely characterized by short-term thinking – to provide products and services with large carbon footprints, so creating a structural misalignment with national or regional strategies aimed at sustainable development.

Multi-stakeholder participation is critical to the implementation of sustainable development programmes. Member States have endeavoured to open up spaces for such participation, but more still needs to be done to move from inclusion in policymaking to actual implementation and budgetary inputs. Communities have indigenous knowledge and practices that they have been using for decades to sustain themselves. These need to be modernized and reflected in the current sustainable development discourse, and should, in turn, contribute to the global agenda. In this regard, national consultations should always be used to inform subregional consultations, because it is at the national level, through local level consultations, that the true subregional picture on progress towards sustainable development comes to light. One proposal focuses on the establishment of a high-level multi-stakeholder mechanism whose purpose would be to provide an impetus for sustainable development efforts at the regional, subregional and national levels.

Gaps exist between policy and implementation. While recognized efforts have been made in policy and strategy development, it is a matter of concern that these policies and strategies remain largely unimplemented. There is therefore, a need to identify and address the fundamental bottlenecks hindering implementation. These bottlenecks go beyond hard and tangible constraints such as financial and human resources, and encompass soft issues such as leadership, political commitment, and vision- and agenda-setting. There is also a need to address the level of societal consciousness regarding sustainable development, so that it becomes a way of life for all the people, rather than simply a concept that people learn about at school or officials engage in at work, while the reality on the ground is very different.

Regional institutions for sustainable development are not well coordinated, and lack the capacity and resources to fulfil their mandates. There is a need for better information flow and communication, integrated planning and implementation, as well as effective use of existing resources between and among those national, subregional and continental institutions that are responsible for implementing sustainable development programmes. In this regard, note should be taken of the need for the United Nations system, at all levels – national, subregional and continental – to work in a coordinated manner, and within the context of regional priorities. The capacities required at each level and their configurations need to be determined and addressed in a systematic and systemic way, with a long-term perspective.

The interlinkages between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development

The five capitals model of sustainable development has "natural capital", comprising renewable resources, non-renewable resources, sinks and ecological processes as the base of a pyramid with "human capital" (knowledge, skills, health and motivation) as its next tier. "Human capital" in turn provides a basis for "social capital", i.e. the institutions that form human society. It is from that basis that "manufactured capital" in the form of material goods and fixed assets contributes to the production or services processes from which "financial capital", as the ultimate measure of economic progress, is derived. Over-extension of the natural capital base of the pyramid creates instability in the system as a whole. In the world of financial capital, the aim is to grow the capital base and consume the income streams. The same logic needs to be applied in the context of natural capital.

In the sustainable development context, the ecological footprint measured in global hectares per capita is examined to assess whether living systems are such that the regenerative capacity of the earth is in equilibrium with the consumptive capacity of human society. At present, globally there is an estimated 30 per cent overshoot, with major variations between countries. South Africa, for example, has an ecological footprint of 2.3 global hectares per capita, which is approximately one quarter of that of the United States. Consequently, part of the challenge of sustainable development for African countries is that in an interconnected global ecology, poorer countries effectively subsidize the high consumption of rich countries and face consequences such as drought, while at the same time they have no influence over rich countries' consumptive patterns.

The ecological footprint is measured against the Human Development Index (HDI), which looks at life expectancy, education and income to measure human well-being. The definition of sustainability is therefore the achievement of both high human development and a low ecological footprint. A commitment to sustainable development means recognizing that a critical challenge now faces economic policy, namely, how to decouple economic growth and poverty eradication from rising levels of natural resource use and waste per capita over time.[1]

The proposed framework for measuring this in the region looks at environment, pollution control and preservation of biodiversity as ecosystem services, education and equity as socio-political services and energy and employment as economic services. This framework needs to be undergirded by a strong governance paradigm.

The governance paradigm in the region is very strong. Countries are signatories to various multilateral agreements and have comprehensive legislation to address the issue of sustainable development.

Botswana, for example, has very strong policies and strategies for poverty reduction, rural development, conservation, waste management, biodiversity preservation, food and wetlands, which are increasingly being incorporated into the governing NDP. The concern for Botswana is that it has attained middle-income country status, having achieved the required 7 per cent growth rate, yet poverty still remains. One of the challenges of achieving middle-income country status is that all the donor agencies that previously provided assistance in conservation matters have now stated that the country must resolve its own issues, and civil society organizations (CSOs) struggle to raise the necessary funding for conservation efforts.

Botswana has an extractive driven economy. Diamonds and coal are major resources driving its gross domestic product (GDP), with tourism the next most important sector. The country is looking at diversifying into manufacturing as infrastructure opportunities arise, and also potentially solar energy, given its vast desert and ample sunshine. In the private sector, there are players in recycling looking to create economic opportunity out of waste management. However at this stage Botswana cannot engage with climate change via mitigation, but only via adaptation, for example, by growing the right crops and afforestation. Botswana also questions the paradigm of measurement on a per capita basis, as it prefers measurement of greenhouse gases on an aggregate basis.

South Africa, too, has a very strong policy and strategy framework for poverty reduction, rural development, environmental management, forestry, fisheries, waste, water management, transport, desertification, biodiversity, carbon trade which is embedded in treasury, and trade and industry which are incorporated in a comprehensive sustainable development and national plan-

1 National Framework for Sustainable Development, 2006.

ning framework. It has created platforms to engage business and civil society in an effort to create a common agenda on sustainability.

At present, South Africa is experiencing deterioration in the quality of all key environmental outlook findings, including air quality, biodiversity, freshwater resources, land use and degradation, invasive alien species and ozone depletion. In addition, it has a high official unemployment rate of approximately 25 per cent and one of the highest Gini coefficients in the world at approximately 0.6.

South Africa has a very well-established long-term climate change mitigation strategy, especially given that it is a resource-based economy. Most of its emissions come from the supply and use of energy. Given that it is a coal-dominated economy, emissions per capita and per unit of GDP are high. Three broad areas are being looked at: energy efficiency in industrial processes and in all buildings; changing the fuel mix to include renewable energies; and climate-friendly technological intervention.

The key for South Africa is to use its long-term mitigation scenarios as an opportunity to create work. Significant progress has been made in mainstreaming youth employment in the production of solar water heaters, for example. The move to high technology is the next required strategic driver.

Institutional framework for sustainable development in the subregion

Institutional frameworks in most countries of the Southern Africa region are weak, and are therefore unable to deliver on the sustainable development agenda. It is a matter of concern that in many countries environmental issues are governed by various different ministries and/or departments. There are ministries of water, energy, environment, agriculture and trade and industry etc., which all, in one way or the other, handle aspects of sustainable development. Yet there are no mechanisms to ensure that, for example, the Ministry of Trade in a given country, which issues mining licences, works with the Ministry of the Environment, which deals with environmental impact assessments (EIAs). Such institutional set-ups tend to promote duplication and institutional rivalry, often hindering implementation.

At the regional level, the capacity and resources of the SADC Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources are limited. COMESA also faces the same capacity and resource challenges. As such, most activities are limited to the holding of workshops and conferences, at the expense of facilitating implementation. In addition, most implementation activities are based on donor funds. The fact that resources to support the implementation of sustainable development programmes are limited and donor-dependent makes the regional programmes unsustainable, and long-term institution-building and capacity-building poses a continuous challenge.

Each country should develop a national sustainable development strategy, linked to monitoring capacities/mechanisms, which have fixed time-bound reviews, including in relation to budgeting. These can then be harmonized through subregional and regional strategies in order to create coherence in implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation.

Transition towards a green economy within the context of poverty reduction and sustainable development in the subregion

The green economy is a response to a bleak global outlook, including challenges of food security for 9 billion people by 2050; freshwater scarcity by 2030; bad sanitation for 2.6 billion people; 884 million people with no access to clean drinking water; and MDGs looking very uncertain.[2]

A green economy can be defined as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. Practically speaking, a green economy is one whose growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments need to be catalysed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes. This development path should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and source of public benefits, especially for poor people whose livelihoods and security depend strongly on nature.[3]

The view is that the concept of a green economy does not replace sustainable development, but that the green economy should merely reflect the economics of sustainable development. The understanding is that since the three key factors that cause an environmental burden are population size, individual consumption and technology, the route to a green economy is through an allocation of 2 per cent of GDP to key sectors including agriculture, buildings, energy supply, fisheries, forestry, industry including energy efficiency, tourism, transport, waste management and water,[4]with enabling conditions including changes to fiscal policy, and the reform and reduction of environmentally harmful subsidies; use of new market-based instruments; targeting of public investments to green key sectors; greening of public procurement; improvements to environmental rules and regulations as well as their enforcement; and education of citizens on green economics. At an international level, there are also opportunities to add to market infrastructure, improve trade and aid flows, and foster greater international cooperation.[5]

What is proposed in the transition to a green economy is the creation of a single metric to measure the economic consequences of policies and strategies, in order to establish whether the activities undertaken are creating environmentally- sound pro-poor economic growth.

In moving away from a strict focus on the GDP growth rate, the proposed metric to make this assessment of the complex system of flows between the economy and human needs, on the one hand, and ecological concerns, on the other, is the rate of poverty reduction per unit of GDP per capita.

There is a need for the subregion to create space to further explore the implications of the green economy for its long-term poverty eradication plans. In addition, the green economy cannot be

2 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.

discussed in isolation from the ongoing debates on climate change, mitigation and adaptation, including the impacts of climate change on economic growth and poverty alleviation. While in the long term the green economy may be beneficial to the subregion, there is a need to be cautious about persistently introducing external concepts, which may distract the subregion from the path it has set itself to attain sustainable development. The green economy can therefore be relevant only in so far as it addresses the economics of sustainable development. At the moment, the subregion does not have the luxury of theorizing on new concepts. The focus should be on the implementation of existing frameworks as espoused in Agenda 21 and adopted by countries at the national level. The green economy should not be allowed to stifle the regional economic trajectory and progress. The question should be how to scale up implementation of sustainable development initiatives. The following points should also be noted:

(a) Public sector funding, whether through carbon taxes or user charges, could be considered to raise revenue to finance greening activities, including the use of subsidies to direct pricing and green activity;

(b) Private sector funding mechanisms have not been properly identified in the subregion. Nedbank Capital in South Africa is very strong on green financing but Nedbank in Swaziland does not show the same capability;

(c) It is important to distinguish between global green issues, such as climate change and ozone depletion, and local green issues, such as water scarcity in Botswana which it combats via adaptation, irrigation and drought-resistant crops. The MDGs have clearly shown that you cannot apply a panacea and expect the same outcome in all cases;

(d) It is important to fully consider other implications of the green economy, such as questions of land tenure, for example, and understand that the green economy has major political considerations that are not necessarily environmental; and

(e) It is important that the subregion does not just follow issues from the West without examining how they are of value locally, especially if they do not have financial support. Knowledge can be drawn from other experiences as well.

Africa should accept the green economy transition as a more specific programme for the implementation of sustainable development, but should not accept sweeping definitions of a green economy that would determine policy direction, until their policy implications have been investigated and clarified for each country case.

The subregion should be able to define green products for itself and sequence their mainstreaming based on its own experiences.

New and emerging challenges

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development was held against the backdrop of a number of challenges, namely the HIV/AIDS pandemic, globalization and its impacts, and the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Terrorism had also just become a global priority.

Ten years later, the same challenges and their impacts still persist, and new challenges have also emerged, further compounding the already difficult situation. New and emerging challenges which have had a direct negative impact on development efforts in the region and subregion (as well as globally) are the financial, fuel, food and fertilizer crises, as well as climate change. Individually and in combination, these challenges have wreaked havoc on ongoing development efforts.

The emerging challenges require stronger leadership, greater innovation and more creativity from the region's human capital than ever before. There is a need to embrace the challenges as opportunities to develop, for example in the areas of science and technology, research, and value addition to the region's natural resources, in order to create and mobilize the resources that are required to address these challenges.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Rio+20 Conference presents an opportunity for the Southern Africa subregion to re-examine its development paradigm and come up with new strategies for addressing poverty and sustainable development in line with the many global, regional, subregional and national commitments that member States have made. It is also an opportunity for Southern Africa to learn from other subregions regarding what has worked and what has not worked, and use lessons learned and experience-sharing to fast-track the implementation of national and regional commitments.

The review process has revealed that while countries and the subregion have many policy frameworks, the implementation of these frameworks remains a major challenge owing to a variety of national, subregional, and global constraints. These include issues relating to the impact of globalization; the recent financial, fuel and food crises; and climate change, which have hampered development. Other challenges relate to institutional inability to respond to the global impacts, poor coordination, inadequate capacity and poor implementation skills. The lack of financial resources affects both the national and subregional spheres. There is also the challenge of countries having to respond to and align their development efforts with those of the subregion – as part of fostering regional integration – as well as those arising from global processes to which member States belong. Another challenge stems from the fact that even though on paper and in policy the incorporation of the three pillars of sustainable development into day-to-day practice is well understood, demonstrating this in practice is overshadowed by the need to provide basic services and livelihoods to the poor. This in itself compromises sustainability as the natural resource base is overexploited.

It is therefore recommended that member States integrate subregional, continental and global development frameworks into their national development strategies, so that they can focus on one integrated development framework, and develop monitoring and reporting capabilities that cater for national, subregional, continental and global requirements and stakeholders.

There is also a need to devise strategies for domestic resource mobilization, and link industrialization programmes to value addition. This would serve to resolve the shortage of funds for development, and also create much needed employment.

Capacity-building and institutional coordination at all levels needs focused attention, and should therefore be undertaken in a systemic manner which addresses the fundamental causes of the inability of countries and the subregion to implement agreed programmes.

Stakeholder participation needs to be reviewed with the goal of ensuring that the subregion's human capital becomes a resource for development. People need to participate in the development process, and not be viewed as a burden on the State. This requires strategies for empowering stakeholders and opening up spaces for them to contribute towards sustainable development.

The concept of the green economy needs to be explored further, with a view to ascertaining its relevance to the subregion, in the context of the challenges that Southern Africa is facing. Lessons learned from previous economic models such as structural adjustment programmes should be used to engage with this new concept. The region should therefore have a process of using its own experts to examine the concept, and come up with recommendations that can be used in practical ways to make decisions and take action on the green economy.

There is a need for additional efforts, demonstrated political leadership and commitment to the implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) outcomes, and related national and regional priorities. However, waiting 10 years to review implementation is too much of a gap, especially in a region where poverty and inequality are deepening. The subregion should therefore have a process of more regular reviews, to ensure that commitment and implementation momentum is not lost.

There is a need to develop harmonized technology transfer policies that regulate the import of obsolete technologies from overseas. Otherwise the subregion will remain burdened by old technologies, while the rest of the world is progressing.

There is a need for the subregion to take advantage of information and communication technologies, for development. The M-Pesa innovation is a case in point which demonstrates that, given an enabling environment, the subregion can use technology to fast-track the attainment of its targets. It also demonstrates that Africa has the potential and capability to contribute to global technological innovations, rather than be a dumping ground for old technologies.

In order for the subregion to be able to effectively monitor and evaluate its progress towards sustainable development, there is a need to develop benchmarks and a common baseline upon which, over a period of time, progress can be measured. This is in addition to developing a subregional common standard of measurement, including definitions of what constitutes a sustainable programme.

The monitoring and evaluation of progress towards sustainable development should be linked to the monitoring and evaluation of national and subregional development plans, as well as reporting, accountability and transparency. The reporting should not only be linked to the 10-year United Nations summit intervals, but should be a way for countries and the subregion to assess themselves and have national and subregional dialogue about how best to attain the set (international) targets, which have been adopted at the national level.

The countries of the subregion cannot continue to rely on external funding for their development. There is, therefore, a need to develop innovative domestic resource mobilization and financing mechanisms, fundamentally based on value addition of the subregion's natural resources, as well as its people. The strengthening of current tax collection mechanisms is critical. In addition, and in the context of sustainability, charging a carbon tax for development is being proposed. There is also a need to effectively utilize the existing limited resources. The Economic diversification is important in this regard.

In relation to the above, it is important to understand donor agendas in funding sustainable development initiatives, and ensure that subregional countries are not setting themselves up for long-term disadvantages in bilateral or multilateral relations, for example, by accepting assistance that is tied to procuring goods and services from the donor country.

There is a need for an integrated approach to sustainable development, whereby countries and the subregion have one common reference point for their respective efforts. Currently, there are too many frameworks within which countries and the subregion have to work, and these result in poor allocation of scarce resources and capacities. This situation also negatively affects the manner in which countries monitor and evaluate their progress towards sustainable development. Hence the need for one metric to measure sustainable development and focused priorities for the subregion's development.

Governments should make information available, where it exists, and generate new data, including best practices on sustainable development. Countries can also share experiences and capacities across the subregion. For example, Mauritius's capacity development on natural disaster management in respect of cyclones can be adapted to other countries' unique situations, e.g. floods, droughts, etc.

The APRM should look at local and regional scientific assessments which are very specific to the region. The subregion should reject global definitions of green economy-related matters, and instead draw on best practice from the MDGs, which allowed for "sovereign" flexibility in definition. The subregion should use definitions that are relevant to Africa's circumstances with African peer-to-peer accountability. Certain industries should not be off bounds to Africa because of global rules.

There is a need to move away from voluntary reporting at world summits on sustainable development to the continuous monitoring of and reporting on sustainable development efforts at the country level. Research and other institutions involved in data and information collection and dissemination would be best placed to serve this purpose. One possibility would be to strengthen the APRM in order for it to be guided by the principles of sustainable development and poverty reduction, thereby greening its outlook.

Some global targets are prohibitive for Africa; for example, if Western countries decide on an emissions standard for cars of 60 mg of CO_2, African countries should not be bound to comply with it if average car emissions in Africa are 109 mg of CO_2 because the subregion cannot afford electric cars (which, in any case, are subsidized in the West).

There is a need to place a very strong emphasis on trade agreements and their assessment to make sure that there are no hidden pitfalls. For example, China is known to ask for first rights of refusal on mineral assets, which in effect constitutes control of those assets, while foreign companies wishing to export to China must establish a joint venture with a Chinese company and apply for a licence per product and per region. Consequently, it is a very imbalanced trade regime.

The mainstreaming of gender into the analysis and an understanding of how the genders are affected differently is critical to sustainable development, and should be given priority. Botswana and Malawi have placed a great deal of emphasis on Millennium Development Goals 3, 5 and 6, which are key considerations for economic advancement. Cultural considerations also need to be given attention; for example, in Swaziland being associated with civil society carries socio-political stigma and, consequently, sustainable development advocacy and civil society action does not exist.

At the United Nations level:

(a) The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is top heavy with little implementation capacity on the ground;

(b) Coordination of the United Nations system needs to be enhanced at all levels – For example, how integrated are UNDP, CSD and UNEP?

(c) United Nations bureaucracy: The reporting process needs to be looked at. There is inadequate involvement of lower-level stakeholders in subregional reporting on sustainable development at United Nations events since countries are often represented only by high-level ministers, who, furthermore, have to contend with voluminous United Nations documentation. It would make more sense to have continuous monitoring of key indicators that are relevant to the context of the subregion and country in question.