



**WORKSHOP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LEGAL
DATABASES ON ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INFORMATION IN AFRICA -
ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES -**

NAIROBI, 16-17 JUNE 2005

**OVERVIEW OF THE DRAFT CONTENTS FOR THE GUIDELINES FOR A NATIONAL
WEBPAGE CONTAINING A DATABASE ON ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY**

1.0 Introduction

The development of a website on national environmental law and policy has to follow certain criteria taking into account the target users. This implies firstly fast accessibility to the information (thus using internet providers that give good services, i.e. American usually), downloadable information, summary reports or other should always be linked to full text in order to provide reliable information. In a second phase it is certainly advisable for all participating countries to have similar items on the environmental law and policy contained in their webpage. Attention should always be paid to copyright law by inserting the copyright symbol, a copyright notice and disclaimer.

The advantages of having similar items on the webpage are that to ensure uniformity of available information and also to enable easy searching of the webpage.

2.0 Draft Contents for an Environmental Law and Policy Webpage

It is proposed that the contents of a national webpage on environmental law and policy should contain the items given below. It's also important to note, however, that not all participating countries may need all the contents as provided herein as they may be at different levels of development and implementation of environmental law and policy.

The contents of a webpage are as follows:

- a) **Primary Legislation** (acts/statutes/decrees of parliament, etc in full downloadable format). Where possible a cross-link with other national websites on law on the subject matter can be made. The data can be classified into groups depending on the subject, for example, legal data related to water, land, forests, wildlife, flora and fauna, etc are put into their respective groups.
- b) **Subsidiary Legislation** (regulations, rules and instruments) made under primary legislation and where possible cross-link to primary legislation under other similar national websites);
- c) **Bylaws, Ordinances, Rules:** etc (sub-national governments, regions, districts or other administrative institutions. Where possible cross-link with other similar national websites on the subject matter);

- d) **Licenses, Permits, Forms** and any other administrative authorization that is required under both the primary and subsidiary legislation. Information packages to investors or tourists on environment protection would also be included here. Guidelines on how to fill the forms and submit them to the authorities would also be relevant.
- e) **Environment Guidelines:** this can contain, for example, EIA and audit guidelines and how they are practiced, public participation, guidelines on locating landfills, ecosystem guidelines.
- f) **Court and Tribunal Decisions (or Judgments and rulings):** court and tribunal decisions and awards from national courts of record and tribunals (can also include those from courts that do not form the court record e.g. linkages to foreign judgments that are persuasive);
- g) **Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs):** at national level this can contain date of ratification/accession, status of implementation and the activities to done to fulfill MEA obligations, and a cross-linkage to the text of the MEA or FAOLEX).
- h) **Policies and Plans:** national environment policies, national environment action plans, forest actions plans, wildlife policies; national biodiversity strategy and action plans, waste management strategies, pollution control policies, chemicals management pans, soil conservation plans, land-use and agricultural plans, etc. These can be subdivided into areas such as brown and green environment).
- i) **Reports:** (including research or assessment reports made on existing laws and policies) depending on national outputs.
- j) **Each Webpage should have Linkages:** to other websites, e.g. international organisations, NGOs, MEAs, FAOLEX, ECOLEX, UNEP, other participating countries, official national websites, etc.
- k) **Search Engine with Keywords:** All web sites should have a searchable engine with keywords common to all participating countries.
- l) **General Information:** current news, information on institutional and administrative setting, background to policy and law development, details or summary on how laws are formulated and adopted. Contact addresses of institutions dealing with laws and regulations.