



Nairobi, 21 September 2006

Recommendations
from the
African Regional Workshop
Cities, Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Cities are often located where there is availability of natural resources and ecosystems. With urban growth, these ecosystems are affected and their services to cities are diminished. Relations with the hinterland become more important as cities have to go further and further away to find vital resources. Impacts on urban ecosystems from cities, from residential or industrial areas are unavoidable. It is therefore imperative that the impacts are managed and minimised to achieve sustainable and long-term availability of ecosystems. All stakeholders, from local communities to national governments, have a role to play.

Participants of the Workshop on Cities, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, which was held as a side event to the AfriCities Summit in September 2006, therefore recommend the following actions.

Communities and NGOs should:

1. Assist in the conservation of urban ecosystems;
2. Organize community-based initiatives to protect urban ecosystems (e.g. Friends of Nairobi National Park);
3. Get involved in integrated planning of their city.

Local and national governments should:

1. Use integrated planning approaches involving all stakeholders to trigger awareness, a feeling of ownership and care for natural resources;
2. Develop land use plans through consultative meetings to ensure that communities are owners of the plans;
3. Conduct community awareness campaigns;
4. Use an ecosystems approach to planning that goes beyond the city boundaries:
 - Take initiative to work with other local authorities to manage shared resources (e.g. rivers),
 - Work with national governments,
 - Link different ecosystems around the city to improve sustainability of the different ecosystems;
5. Use green accounting so that ecosystem values are included in decision-making;
6. Invest local revenue in protection of urban ecosystems;
7. Organize tree-planting along river banks, urban parks and other urban ecosystems;
8. Establish rules and regulations on wildlife and biodiversity protection, national protected areas and ecosystems;
9. Adopt polluters-pay principle and enforce regulations:
 - Work with the industries to reduce emissions,
 - Install financial incentives to reduce ecosystems pollution;
10. Monitor status of ecosystems and conduct impact assessment of city development projects.

Managers of Urban Protected Areas should:

1. Manage urban protected areas as a visitor card for national conservation;
2. Reach out to all parts of society:
 - Provide free entrance and transport (e.g. Cape Town's Wild Card),
 - Establish recreational attractions (e.g. swimming pools, soccer fields) connected to a visitor's centre that provides information about the protected area,
 - Establish trails,
 - Work with schools to include visits to parks in school curricula and develop programmes to bring nature to schools (e.g. tree planting, vegetable gardens);
3. Work with cities and communities in order to create partnerships and understanding:
 - Wildlife managers should be involved in city strategic planning and city representatives should be involved in park management (through the board);
4. Manage communication as an essential tool to sell benefits of protected areas to the public;
5. Offer capacity building to city councillors, city staff, and stakeholders;
6. Address human wildlife conflict pro-actively in order to find common solutions that are of benefit to wildlife and communities alike:
 - Use alternative, sustainable ways to keep wildlife off agricultural land (e.g. chilly plants),
 - Use schemes such as compensation and lease, fence mapping to open migratory paths.