

**CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ECOTOURISM
IN SOUTH AFRICA AND KWAZULU-NATAL:
A POLICY-ANALYSIS**

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the realms of conservation and sustainable development. A growing environmental concern is characteristic of the twentieth century. Never before has mankind been so aware of the greenhouse effect or the hole in the ozone. It is a concern which affects our understanding of human interactions with one another, as well as with our environment.

Development is finally being scrutinized by scientists and philosophers alike. The consequence is a global movement towards the virtuous utopia of sustainable development.

The thesis examines the evolution of environmentalism, both in a global context and here in South Africa. It clarifies the relationship between the earth's natural resources and humanity's obsession with progress.

The world is no longer a web of isolated countries. Technology and transport facilitate international movement which in turn fosters foreign cultural contact. Tourism is a leisure-orientated activity which is expanding feverishly worldwide. Tourism is often seen as enabling development. For some countries, it is a major source of revenue. This shows that tourism can impact tremendously on the people of a country.

Research has proved that tourism affects a country's people as well as their natural or build environment. Ecotourism, which is tourism based on natural resources, needs sensitive management which would react to a particular country's fragility. The thesis therefore investigates ecotourism to South Africa in general, and KwaZulu-Natal in particular. It is argued that ecotourism needs to be sensitive

to the region, its people and their natural assets. This can only occur if protection measures against exploitation are set up. Measures which would ensure that local people benefit and that growth and progress prevail, not exploitation.

Conclusions drawn show that the 'tourist' or 'international tour operator' are not the sole bearers of all 'evil' in the tourism industry. Government and government institutions have an obligation to protect their citizen from exploitative forces. They are responsible for providing an 'environment which is not to the detriment of our health'.

How can one determine whether such a responsibility has been, or is being realised? The thesis examines all official documents and white papers pertaining to conservation, sustainable development and ecotourism in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal.

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Last, but not least, to Sean, who not only survived my environmental preoccupation but motivated me to persevere.

DECLARATION

Except where explicitly indicated to the contrary, this study is the original work of the author. This dissertation has not previously been submitted in any form to another university.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM LIST

AFRA	Association for Rural Advancement
ANC	African National Congress
CAMPFIRE	The Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna and Flora
CORD	Centre for Community Organisation Research & Development
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSIR	The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DEA&T	Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism
DP	Democratic Party
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EJNF	Environmental Justice Networking Forum
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Group for Environmental Monitoring
GNU	Government of National Unity
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
INR	Institute of Natural Resources

IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
KBNR	KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources
KDNC	KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation
NEAC	National Environmental Awareness Campaign
NEAF	National Environmental Advisory Forum
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NP	National Party
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PPP	Polluter Pays Principle
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACOB	South African Chamber of Business
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WLS	Wildlife Society of Southern Africa
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZEAL	The Zululand Environmental Alliance

INTRODUCTION

Conservationists and developers have long been antagonists. They primarily seem to view one another as threatening. The more development takes place, the fewer natural resources are left over. The more land put under conservation, the less remains for progress. Can this antagonism ever be resolved? The fundamental aim of my thesis is to explore the feasibility of a harmonious relationship between conservation and development.

Environmental deterioration has compelled a confrontation between developers and environmentalists. Some environmental problems can be classified and understood. For example, acid rain is due to atmospheric pollution, therefore new ways of reducing harmful emission are sought, and cooperation between developers and environmentalists is initiated.

However one question escapes scientific substantiation: why conserve the environment?. It is one which is very relevant in an South African context because it questions the purpose of conservation at a time when people are fighting poverty. This is a question based on what is good, right or obligatory.¹ It is an ethical question which attempts to provide a normative basis for environmental conservation.²

Both international and South African conservation strategies which were

¹Fuggle, R.F. 'Environmental Management' in Fuggle, R.F. and Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Cape Town: Juta. 1993: 8.

²Ibid.

developed in the late 1970's are based on the credo "conservation is for man"³, which reasons that conservation is based on the environment's utility to humans. So today a widely accepted reason advanced for environmental conservation is that such action will produce the greatest good for the greatest number of people for the greatest period of time.⁴ This is an anthropocentric view of an conservation ethic: conservation in the interest of the survival of human beings, not for the inherent value of nature in itself.

Besides notions of utilitarianism, the world's three major monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, all hold that a human being is not the Ultimate Being but is a product of God's creation, as is the earth, and all plants and animals.⁵ All of creation is an integral part of nature. Ethical systems based on these religions differ from utilitarian theories.⁶ Judeo-Christian ethics argues that human beings are to act as stewards and should regard the earth and its resources as things held in trust.⁷ Judeo-Christian ethical norms require human beings to recognise that nature has a right to exist over and above its utility to them. They hold that humankind has been given control and management of the environment only to meet its needs and that it is our responsibility to ensure that natural

³The World Conservation Strategy compiled by the IUCN, UNEP and World Wildlife Fund 1980; A Policy and Strategy for Environmental Conservation in South Africa compiled by the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa 1978 - revised in 1980.

⁴Fuggle, R.F. 'Environmental Management' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Johannesburg. 1993: 8.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Fuggle, R.F. 'Environmental Management' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Johannesburg. 1993: 9.

⁷Ibid.

resources are sustained and that natural phenomena are not destroyed.⁸ This sentiment often prevails with conservationists. For them, man needs to review his human-environment relationships instead of searching for a solution in technological or scientific advances.⁹

Conservation has been justified philosophically. Accordingly, we should conserve natural resources because of their spiritual, moral and ethical value. True, economic development has been defined as the process of using resources to improve human well-being for this and succeeding generations through a careful balance of development and conservation.¹⁰ Some would say that conserving natural resources contributes to human well-being and selffulfilment.

The predicament is that the South African reality indicates economic hardship and poverty. Only something miraculous would change the destitute's ambivalence towards conservation. Addressing basic needs in discussing the conservation of natural resources becomes crucial. The thesis has this sentiment in mind rather than some philosophical justification that conservation is always a good.

With the ever increasing human population in Africa, the problem of people versus wildlife for land has become one of the most crucial issues in conservation. Game parks can no longer remain the exclusive domain of wildlife without local communities sharing in the benefits and resources of parks. Only a few pristine

⁸Ibid.

⁹Fuggle, R.F. 'Environmental Management' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Johannesburg. 1993: 10.

¹⁰Staath, R. & Baskind, P. 'Resource Economics' in Fuggle, R.F. and Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town, Juta. 1992: 27.

areas in the world are left. The challenge is to conserve these while at the same time ensuring that the local communities also benefit.

The thesis is an attempt to tackle this problem. It is an attempt to give some insight into what the relationship between people and protected areas in KwaZulu-Natal could be; to show that tangible benefits can be derived from conservation. Conservation is a form of land-use, which is in competition with other forms of land and resource use, such as commercial agriculture or industry, to find a niche.

METHODOLOGY

Attention will be given throughout the thesis at what has been done, or perhaps it is more appropriate to say, 'what has not been done', in either the public or the private sector, to ensure that wildlife becomes significant to the impoverished majority. From a methodological perspectives, this will be accomplished by analyzing various existing policies, working- and discussion papers. I explore how the various policies came about and influenced one another in order to determine the intellectual thinking behind them. Policies are significant in that they reflect social attitudes towards specific issues at a given point in time. They reflect the rationale behind certain conclusions drawn and they pretty much provide the basis on which future policies will be constructed,¹¹ (even though this domain is ruled by uncertainties and guesstimations).

The formation of policy, its legislation into law and the creation of institutions for their implementation do not take place overnight. Instead, they

¹¹Anderson, J.E. Public Policy-Making, Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York. Second Edition. 1979: 181.

form part of an evolutionary process. A process which is an accumulation of past experience, increasing knowledge, changing social attitudes, and variations of the intellectual quality of policy- and lawmakers themselves.¹² Issues pertaining to conservation, sustainable development and ecotourism in South Africa are explored in the light of this understanding of the policy process. A lot of policy formation occurs within the framework of governmental institutions, but much policy activity occurs elsewhere - and this also will receive attention.

My research was approached pragmatically and shaped on the basis of what information was attainable and relevant to the field of investigation. Policies are normally intended to serve the public interest. Today, South Africa's majority shows an immense need for acquiring means for achieving a basic subsistence or livelihood. Environmental conservation policies are thus necessarily influenced, or perhaps better understood as 'restricted' by the general public interest. I shall analyze them with such limitations in mind.

Another reality is that environmental policy-making here - although distinctively South African - is nevertheless influenced by international economic, social and ethical reflections on the environment. South African ideas on environmental management have been constructed along with (or perhaps better said, a few steps behind) international developments in this field. International thinking on environmental politics within the boundaries of my research topic is thus also considered.

However, an abundance of methodological problems became apparent. Much remains unknown or unexplained about how political decisions and public policies are made. Unfortunately, conclusions drawn - from an analytical point of

¹²Ibid.

view - depend greatly on predictions or on anticipating future trends. Anderson warns us against the urge to treat such assumptions or speculations about what happened as facts, as well as the (often self-serving) explanations or statements of political rollplayers, or their official documents.¹³

In this regard, any discussion or analysis of governmental White Papers or any official documents for that matter, must remain somewhat inconclusive as these documents are not judicially enforceable, nor do they in any way have persuasive status. Most are self-serving. Views on their status range from regarding them as promoting discussion and outlining a government's intention, to a mere restatement of the same set of problems, to not being worth the paper they are written on.¹⁴

Solid evidence (facts or data as one prefers), on the values and motives of decision-makers, the nature of public problems, the impact of policy, and other facets, were often hard to acquire in my investigation were simply not available. Nevertheless, the objective of this particular thesis was to present a more 'relevant' dimension to policy research: to engage in a discovery process, which would bear some social utility in times where the pursuit of addressing more basic needs seems more justified.

The case-study element is not given as much space as was originally intended because of the lack of certainty of the various findings, as well as the lack of preciseness of interviews, supporting documentation and limited access to

¹³*Ibid*

¹⁴Van Reenen, T.P. 'Environmental Policy-making and effective Environmental Administration' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1994: 42.

adequate information. During the two-year period in which I undertook my research, several approaches to KwaZulu government officials or to the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation met with frustration. The following documents were either 'lost' or never heard of by either institution:

- Tourism Policy for KwaZulu, KwaZulu government Cabinet Resolution 159/88, dated 3 May 1988.
- White Paper on Development Policy, issued by the Department of Economic Affairs of the KwaZulu Government in January 1986.
- Environmental Policy Statement of the Bureau of Natural Resources, issued by the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources, undated.
- Tourism Policy, prepared by the KwaZulu Working Group on Tourism, adopted by KwaZulu Cabinet Resolution 159/88 dd 3/5/88.
- KwaZulu Nature Conservation Act, 1975 as amended.
- The KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation's Annual Reports from 1992 onwards.

Perhaps because of the transitionary stage of current politics in South Africa, people contacted did not always respond fully or candidly to questions. Therefore, too many conclusions were based on assumptions, causing a general questioning of not only their value to the research, but also their validity. Only practical findings which could be substantiated irrevocably are incorporated in the theoretical analysis of my topic.

The thesis is structured in a specific progressive order. Ecotourism is advanced as a synthesis between conservation and development. Ecotourism is firstly a 'by-product' of conservation. It fosters revenue for game parks and reserves. Its financial benefits, secondly, makes it an instrument of development. In this respect I feel that issues of conservation and development need to be addressed in this order.

Ecotourism is an umbrella term depicting diverse nature-orientated

experiences. Because of the broadness of its application, I have restricted my analysis of ecotourism to one natural resource - wildlife. The thesis is primarily concerned with the prospects of wildlife conservation measures in South Africa in general and in KwaZulu-Natal specifically. The reason is because the majority of South Africa's electorate is rural, poor and at present, generally disadvantaged by wildlife. Without their support, wildlife and ecosystems are ultimately doomed. Support will not drop into the lap of conservationists. In fact, in a developing country such as South Africa, with a large impoverished population, there cannot be but an imperative to place as much land as possible under economically productive use.

Chapter One initiates the discussion on the rise of environmental concerns, globally and domestically. Conservation is seen as a necessity for containing environmental deterioration. The global preoccupation with development is being questioned. Chapter Two continues in the same vein. The undeniable need of South Africa to pursue development is stressed, but seen against the arguments raised in Chapter One, an alternative to environmental exploitation must be found. Sustainable development as such an alternative is analyzed. Its prominence in global environmental politics is emphasized and its relevance to South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal is motivated. Chapter Three explains the political and socio-economic complexities of KwaZulu-Natal and contrasts the grotesque development needs of the region against its abundance of natural resources. Chapter Four promotes tourism as a development option available to the region, drawing comparisons with current international development.

Chapter Five analyses and promotes ecotourism as the synthesis of the premises of the thesis: conservation and sustainable development. Chapter Six points out that one important ingredient of ecotourism, and or sustainable

development, is the people-element. South African policies such as the Government White Paper on a Reconstruction and Development Programme, (the RDP) have the upliftment of impoverished South Africans at heart. Any ideas promoted, such as ecotourism, will only find a niche in this society if they complement the objectives pointed out by the RDP.

Chapter Seven is a general critique of environmental management in South Africa. It examines the different levels of government institutions currently in place, as well as the extent of their capacity to protect the environment. The vagueness and uncertainties evident at the moment, are explored in Chapter Eight. This concluding chapter questions the extent of any real change in a democratic South Africa's approach to environmental management. It discerns how ecotourism can consolidate the desperate need for development and conservation - so as to bring about sustainable development in South Africa, together with a harmonious relationship between people and protected areas.

CHAPTER ONE

CONSERVATION - THE AMBIGUITIES

THE RISE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The rise of an environmental concern for the state of the world and human beings is particular to the second half of the twentieth century. The relationship between human beings and the environment became an issue of discussion in various fields, whether they were of a scientific, socio-economic or of a religious nature. A realisation transpired that human existence was faced with an environmental crisis: that despite the apparent global progress,¹ the consequences thereof resulted in global warming effects, the growing hole in the ozone layer, the devastation of the rain forests in South America, and the destruction of thousands of plant and animal species.²

Scientists warned that the earth was being threatened by the present trend of interaction, the present amount of natural resource utilisation and exploitation. If this continued, they said, it would lead to the world becoming more crowded, more polluted, less ecologically stable and more vulnerable to natural hazards. In the last few decades, different publications have reflected this awareness.³ This was the essence of the environmental crisis. Environmental deterioration has

¹Progress could be seen in life expectancy figures, increased global literacy, and a food production rate capable of accommodating the population growth rate.

²World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 2.

³For example, Limits to Growth, 1972; Our Common Future, 1987; Caring for the Earth, 1991; and the South African President Council's Report On A National Environmental Management System, 1991.

become a principal concern because it was and is threatening the earth's capacity to sustain continued advancements. The principle of modern environmental deterioration entails the depletion of essential resources for the maintenance of present-day life styles and the loss and destruction of natural processes which ultimately sustain life on earth.⁴ Environmental deterioration implied the need to look at the relationship between the environment and development differently - questioning traditional⁵ measures employed to achieve progress. By the late 1980's this environmental concern had reached the realm of politics worldwide, influencing government policies to reflect these concerns.⁶

Although not as rapid, these interests also reached South Africa. In an unofficial capacity, environmental issues were reflected by the growth of informal activities of concerned individuals, especially those by environmental groups and organisations⁷; a growth of media interest; and various environmental programmes, reports, articles and campaigns. This resulted in various

⁴Fuggle, R.F. 'Environmental Management' in Fuggle R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Johannesburg: Juta. 1992: 11.

⁵Traditional development measures signifies exploiting natural resources to achieve human development - without seeing the environment as deteriorable.

⁶In the United States, George Bush's presidential campaign of 1988 emphasised pollution as a major issue; Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika was accompanied by 'ekologia'; The United Kingdom's Margaret Thatcher, which always stood for a free-market government, imposed environmental safeguards on British industry, such as restrictions on the use of chlorofluorocarbons which damage the ozone layer.

⁷In the region of KwaZulu-Natal, for example, late in 1989 a small stretch of sand dunes on northern Natal's coastline became a symbol of victory for the country's rising eco-movement. Richards Bay Minerals, a foreign-owned mining consortium, planned to stripmine the dunes north of St Lucia for titanium. The area is recognised as one of the world's best preserved wetlands. Popular protests united a wide range of environmentalists. The Nationalist government, presented with one of the biggest petitions in South Africa's history, suspended the operation until the impact of mining was properly assessed.

environmental pressure groups springing up throughout the country.⁸

Fuggle and Rabie relate that this environmental awareness proceeded to an official level. In South Africa it was manifested through a variety of indicators such as departmental and other official reports, governmental White Papers, the reports of various commissions of inquiry and parliamentary debates, and through the administrative actions of governmental bodies at national, regional and local level. Perhaps the most important reflection of official environmental awareness is its presence in legislation.⁹ From 1970 onwards South African perspectives on what elements should be encompassed by environmental legislation have broadened considerably.¹⁰ Among some of the more important official publications to appear during this period are the 1980 White Paper on a National Policy Regarding Environmental Conservation, and the 1989 White Paper on Environmental Education; the 1984 reports of the President's Council on Nature Conservation in South Africa and on Priorities between Conservation and Development and the 1991 Report on a National Environmental Management System; the 1993 White Paper on a Policy on a National Environmental Management System for South Africa. Among the more important publications by the Council for the Environment¹¹ have been its Integrated Environmental

⁸For example, the Zululand Environmental Alliance (ZEAL), the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC), and Earthlife Africa.

⁹Fuggle, R.F. 'Environmental Management' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Johannesburg: Juta. 1993: 13.

¹⁰Legislation started to incorporate environmental concerns with regard to, for example, mountains, nature conservation, protected areas, soil conservation, coastal and marine environments, noise, solid waste, ionizing radiation, water pollution, air pollution etc. These were matters that had not previously been subject to government control.

¹¹The Council for the Environment is a sub-committee of the Department of Environment Affairs (established in 1981) responsible for research and advice to the Department of Environment Affairs.

Management in South Africa (1989), An Approach to a National Environmental Policy and Strategy for South Africa (1989). The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), commissioned by the Department of Environment Affairs, prepared the report Building the Foundation for Sustainable Development in South Africa (1992), the National Report to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro during June 1992.

THE EVOLUTION OF CONSERVATION

The implication of the perceived global environmental crisis was that conservation needed to be analyzed again. The environmental 'crisis' became an issue of conservation because the alarming rate of resource depletion discovered meant that there was now a drastic need for conserving these resources, as well as their habitats, if the earth and its inhabitants were to survive into the twenty-first century.¹²

The first international organisation devoted to conservation causes was "l'Office International pour la Protection de la Nature", founded in Brussels in 1934 through private initiative. The body evolved into the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN) and in 1956 the name was changed to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), now referred to as the World Conservation Union.¹³

Conservation at first meant protection or preservation. It meant protecting

¹²This sentiment is expressed in the WCED's Report, Our Common Future (1987); as well as by Huntley, B., Siegfried, R. & Sunter, C. South African Environments into the 21st Century, 1989. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

¹³World Wide Fund for Nature News Bulletin, Volume 1, Issue 5. 15-31 October 1994.

biological diversity (biodiversity) from human interference. It was a purely scientific endeavour to maintain species diversity which was executed by proclaiming certain ecosystems protected areas - with the objective of limiting outside interference. This approach enabled the protection of endangered species; it ensured ways of avoiding the extinction of certain species, such as the white rhino.

The aims of this particular conservation for deprived rural societies (mainly Third World societies) do not, however, represent as noble an endeavour as it would for someone living in an industrialised 'nature-deprived' society.¹⁴ To express the dilemma more empathetically, Margaret Jacobsohn quotes statements made by rural people living adjacent to the Richtersveld Nature Reserve in the Northern Cape¹⁵:

"Shoot the elephants. Or tell Nature Conservation to take them away. This is a place for people: we don't want animals here."

"When my cattle were starving, Nature Conservation chased them out of the Skeleton Coast Park - the last place where there was still food. They said that area was for wild animals and they would shoot cattle that came in. I had to put my cattle inside a kraal and watch them die, knowing that just down river, inside this park, there was fodder."

"So why doesn't Nature Conservation keep its elephants away from our ..

¹⁴Although the terminology First or Third World is in no way consistent or irrefutable, First World is most often interpreted as those leading industrialised countries of Europe, North America, Japan - the world of the industrially developed capitalist economy, while Third World depicts notions of underdevelopment, low levels of industrialisation, and accompanying poverty.

¹⁵The Richtersveld is a mountainous tract of arid land on the Namaqualand border between South Africa and Namibia.

food?"¹⁶

Jacobsohn said that until she heard these expressions, she had never seriously questioned Western conservation practices. She (like many others) honestly believed that all nature conservation was good and admirable and that conservationists were doing wonderful work: "Not only were they preserving wild areas for future generations and myself to enjoy, but they were ensuring biodiversity in the world's various ecosystems, rescuing endangered species from the brink of extinction and fighting a war against poaching."¹⁷

Conservation methods have impacted greatly on the lives and livelihoods of rural people. Most government or other conservation programmes have been applied without an awareness of the broader social implications they embody.¹⁸ Conservation was first and foremost a scientific preservation programme. This narrow view of conservation has been ascribed to the prominent role of specialists in designing those schemes - most commonly biologists in the case of measures for the protection of species and the preservation of habitats.¹⁹ The objectives of these programmes have tended to reflect the very narrowly conceived academic or ideological preoccupations of the specialists concerned, and tended to be framed

¹⁶Quoted by Jacobsohn, M. 'The Crucial Link' in Cock, J. & Koch, E. (eds) Going Green: People, Policies and the Environment in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1991: 210, 211.

¹⁷Jacobsohn, M. 'The Crucial Link' in Cock, J. & Koch, E. (eds) Going Green: People, Policies and the Environment in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1991: 211.

¹⁸This was witnessed in the Natal Parks Board, which only addressed this problem in September 1992 with their Neighbour Relation Policy.

¹⁹Anderson D. and Grové R. Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987: 3.

and dominated by the European view of the scientific need for nature conservation.²⁰

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CONSERVATION

Historically, the conservation strategies which have found favour have seldom been based upon the participation or consent of the communities whose lives they affect. Thus conservation has frequently meant the simple exclusion of rural people from national parks and reserves, in the interests of the protection of large animal species and the preservation of habitats.

The history of conservation worldwide has brought with it a legacy which remains significant in the mindset of rural communities and in their attitudes towards any conservation initiatives now proposed. South Africa is no exception. As such, it is a "[m]yth that conservation in Africa can be apolitical."²¹

Given the historical evolution of the implementation of conservation, it is understandable how there can be numerous examples of conflicting views towards conservation in the different sectors of our population. For instance, Gomolemo Makae's (senior official of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo)) attitude reflects a pressing dilemma for conservation. He argues that South Africa's conservation programmes had no relevance for the struggles of the country's black majority.²² Campaigns aimed at saving the sand dunes of St. Lucia from

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Anderson D. and Grove R. Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987: 6.

²²Koch, E. 'Rainbow Alliances' in Cock, J. & Koch, E. (eds) Going Green: People, Policies and the Environment in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1991: 31.

development, or reestablishing an abundant presence of rhinoceros in various game reserves, may easily seem to reflect primarily white, middle-class concerns. These are often labelled 'green issues'. And, in contrast, other ecological disasters that undermine the health and living standards of thousands of South Africans - notably asbestosis, (cancer caused by herbicide), and respiratory disease (from severe air pollution), or the lack of sanitation, water and shelter for a basic livelihood - represent environmental concerns of low-income groups. These particular environmental concerns are labelled 'brown issues'.²³

The majority of deprived rural people, it appears, will support an environmental movement as long as this is an attempt to address their poor living standards. When it comes to wildlife conservation, things again become race and class biased insofar as the wildlife conservation movements originate from an urban society of highly developed countries - hence the reference to 'eurocentric' attitudes towards conservation.²⁴ Eurocentric conservation principles promote a system of mainly restrictive control patterns on the ecosystems to protect the diminishing natural resources. Clad comments that restriction to nature reserves has as its essence the principle of exclusion.²⁵ To protect, one must exclude certain categories of outsiders or judge specific activities to be harmful. Because the power to exclude is so inescapably political, governmental agents reserve this power for themselves. To this extent, therefore, protected areas continue to be, for indigenes, paternalistically devolved and implemented. Precisely for this reason, a conservation area or park in a rural area is more likely to be feared as "taking

²³ McDonald, D. 'Fried Green Bureaucrats' in New Ground, Spring 1994: 39.

²⁴ Anderson D. and Grove R. Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987: 6.

²⁵ Clad, J. 'Conservation and Indigenous Peoples: A Study of Convergent Interests' in McNeely J. & Pitt, D. (eds) Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension in Environmental Planning, London: Croom Helm. 1985: 50.

something away" rather than welcomed for the protection it confers.²⁶

The South African white middle-class is not adequately aware of the whole spectrum of environmentalism - that environmentalism necessarily incorporates achieving basic levels of subsistence. "It sometimes appears as if it is easier to raise R2 million to save a rhinoceros than to save a human from a life of deprivation."²⁷ But in the same breath, there is perhaps also an absence of an appreciation of the wildlife conservation effort by the black community at large.

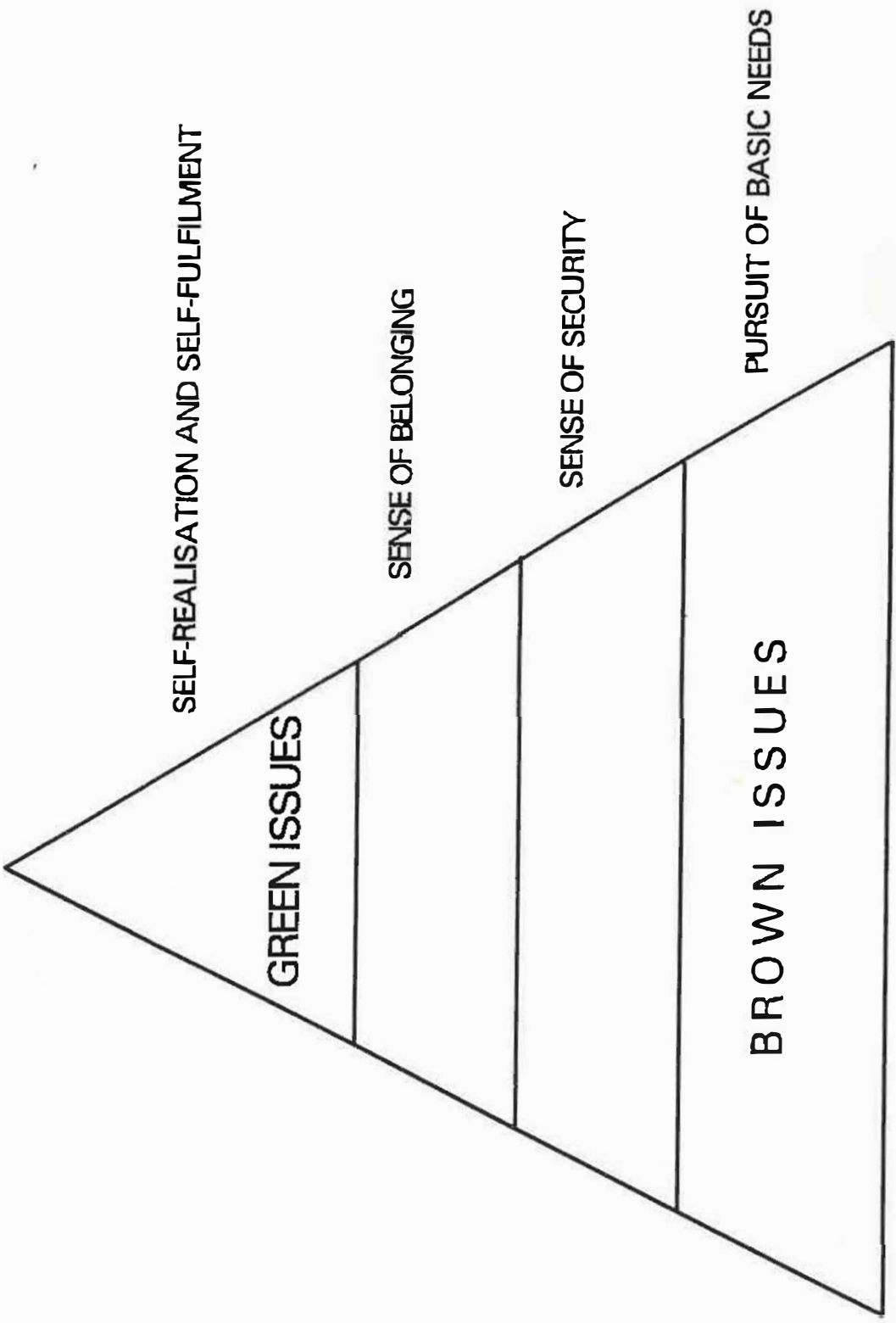
But the latter's ignorance cannot be held against them. In a South African environmental television programme, 50/50, the Maslow hierarchy of human needs was explained. (See Diagram 1.1). According to this, human beings find themselves on different levels. On the bottom level the basic needs predominate: a roof over your head, food in your stomach. Progress can be made by moving through the various levels (from the point where basic needs are the primary concern, to a sense of security, to a sense of belonging) to reach the top level which represents self-realisation or self-fulfilment. One should not see these levels as separate. They are intertwined. People at the bottom level also have a need for the aesthetic (such as parks and open spaces) but their energy and time is spent providing for their basic needs. In this respect, nature conservation has two poles: represented by 'brown issues' (bread and butter issues) and 'green issues' (the protection of fauna and flora). The human being is in the centre. Concerns over the environment should thus include a consideration of man.²⁸ In short, if

²⁶ibid.

²⁷Japhta Lekgetho of the Soweto-based National Environmental Awareness Campaign, quoted by Koch, E. 'Rainbow Alliances' in Cock, J. & Koch, E. (eds) Going Green: People, Policies and the Environment in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1991: 32.

²⁸50/50, 10 July 1994.

DIAGRAM 1.1: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS



basic needs are met, pressure will be lessened on natural resources. This is the fundamental principle to be addressed by any conservation programme.

The onus in this thesis is to put forward an argument which will harmonize the need for conserve wildlife with the need of providing for basic human needs in South Africa in general and for KwaZulu-Natal in particular. This is something which will have to cut across barriers of race and class. The problem can be bridged, I shall suggest, by linking the concept of development to conservation. This is not a point on which either developers or conservationists agree.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

Development is generally thought of as a process for improving human well-being through a relocation of resources that involves some modification of the environment.²⁹ Conservation is popularly regarded as the antithesis of development, the protection of certain environmental resources from the effects of development.³⁰ However, continued development is dependent on conservation, and, conversely, conservation is also dependent on the success of the development process. In this sense, conservation and development are integrally linked, and a proposal to proclaim a nature reserve, or to take action to save a natural resource (even if this is an endangered species) can be thought of as serving the larger development process. Both conservation and development are intended to improve some aspects of human well-being, whether it involves modification or preservation of the natural or built environment.

²⁹Stauth, R. & Baskind, P. 'Resource Economics' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town, Juta. 1992: 27.

³⁰Ibid.

The traditional mindset of the conservation community has failed to make this link.³¹ It has tended to ignore or deny that the problems of regional economic planning and community development have anything to do with conservation. This trend has been conducive to feelings of apathy and resentment towards conservation. Farieda Khan has examined in detail the factors that have acted to shape black attitudes towards the environment in South Africa.³² Her work demonstrates clearly that the injustices perpetrated mostly on blacks during the apartheid era, particularly those related to the dispossession of land in the name of conservation, have had a significant impact on the perceptions they hold towards the environment. As a consequence, environmental concerns and issues pertaining to land ownership become two sides of the same coin. Hostility to conservation programmes, which has long been associated with apartheid rule, threatens most attempts to protect biological species from extinction.³³ Cock and Koch also relate numerous examples of black South African apathy or hostility towards conservation since the establishment of many game reserves meant social dislocation and distress for local people.³⁴ In the words of Richard Clacey,

[i]f conservation means losing water rights, losing grazing and arable land and being dumped in a resettlement area without even the most rudimentary infrastructure and services, as was the case when the Tembe Elephant Park was declared in 1983, this can only promote a vigorous anti-conservation

³¹ Anderson D. and Grove R. Conservation in Africa: People, Policies and Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987: 5.

³² For example, her article 'Beyond the White Rhino' in African Wildlife, Vol. 44 No. 6, December 1990: 321-324. Contemporary South African Environmental Response, 1990. Cape Town: University Press.

³³ Koch, E. Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife: The Politics of Ecology in South Africa. London: Penguin. 1990: 55.

³⁴ Cock, J. & Koch E. (eds) Going Green: People, Politics and the Environment in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1991: 2.

ideology among the rural communities of South Africa.³⁵

The World Conservation Strategy (1980) illustrates that conservation does indeed need to include a human well-being element. It acknowledges the need for natural resources to be utilised in such a way that will promote human well-being. The document defines conservation as:

[T]he management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.³⁶

This definition reflects a concept which has emerged over time to incorporate notions of maintenance, sustainable utilization, restoration, and an enhancement of the natural environment. Conservation therefore implies wise management of the environment to ensure the viability of natural processes and life-support systems and the preservation of genetic diversity. It combines both protection and utilisation but in such a manner that the continued existence of all species of fauna and flora is ensured and intricate natural interrelationships are not disrupted.

The IUCN's concept of conservation is thus gradually improving the efforts of dedicated persons to protect threatened species of fauna and flora. From nature protection the concept shifted to that of habitat protection, and still later to a much wider concept of environmental conservation including the development of the welfare of mankind³⁷.

³⁵A rural fieldworker quoted in the Weekly Mail, 6 October 1989.

³⁶IUCN, World Conservation Strategy, Gland: IUCN. 1980: 136.

³⁷Point [1.3.5] of the Report of the Three Committees of the President's Council on a National Environmental Management System, 1991.

CONSERVATION AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Dr John Hanks suggests that an intense concern for wildlife seems to be untimely and inappropriate when a society is suffering from poverty, disease, malnutrition, starvation, and homelessness. As human beings, addressing these latter concerns should be fundamental, not those of wild animals and plants.³⁸ This conclusion would neatly summarize the attitudes of those deprived of basic human necessities towards conservation. The most pressing environmental needs of most South Africans are access to land, shelter, clean water, and to proper sanitation - thus means of subsistence. These needs are presently regarded as far more important than the preservation of various diverse spreads of wildlife and their ecohabitats.

The priority of achieving subsistence, although morally justifiable, is threatening for conservation. Now that South Africa has since April 1994 had a democratically elected government which will determine how and which needs will be addressed, change is on our doorsteps. However massive and urgent the needs of the underprivileged are, South Africa has a unique and valuable diversity of natural resources³⁹. These also need adequate attention.

³⁸Dr Hanks is the chief executive of the World Wide Fund for Nature, South Africa (WWF SA). Although his statement was made at a University of Natal Lecture back in 1981, it has more relevance now than ever, especially when one takes into consideration that South Africa now has a democratic elected government which is committed to relieve social inadequacies.

³⁹Over 240 species of mammals, 887 different species of birds and over 20 000 species of flowering plants. (Cloete, D. (ed.) 'Biodiversity - A New Ground Supplement' in New Ground, Autumn 1993.)

CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE

A country's environmental concerns are deeply reflected in its green movement. In other words, the nature of a society's environmental awareness determines its attitude towards the environment. Environmental activism which exhibits the most popular support in South Africa relates to brown issues. This leads me to speculate that it would probably be more easily accepted that we need to conserve in order to provide for future development; that natural resources such as water need to be carefully managed. It would probably become more difficult to prove that wildlife is as valuable a natural resource as our water supply. Such statements can be partially substantiated when one looks at the growth of South Africa's environmental awareness.

Internationally, green movements have made themselves heard and have impacted greatly on national policies. According to Koch, green movements of the type that helped foment reform in Europe, North America, and more recently in the Eastern bloc, were significantly absent in South Africa.⁴⁰ Opposition to South African government policies and industry, concentrated on race, class and exploitation, and seldom challenged its environmental practices.

In 1989, South Africa's first national environment activist group, Earthlife Africa, was formally launched and adopted a programme heavily influenced by the example of the West German Green Party. The liberal opposition in South Africa's previous House of Assembly, the Democratic Party, set up a national network of committees to study ecological problems. Conservation organisations that had been in existence for a number of years, such as the Wildlife Society of Southern

⁴⁰Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife: The Politics of Ecology in South Africa. London: Penguin. 1990: 42.

Africa and the Endangered Wildlife Trust, engaged in new campaigns and received extensive media exposure.

In December, 1989 the United Democratic Front (an umbrella body of anti-apartheid groups generally sympathetic to the African National Congress (ANC)) held a mass Conference for a Democratic Future in Johannesburg. A resolution was adopted stating:

All South Africans have the right to a clean and healthy environment, and the preservation and rehabilitation of the environment forms a part of the process of liberation.

Shortly thereafter, the ANC, which was then still banned and in exile, released a statement outlining its policy on nuclear power, wildlife conservation, air pollution and other ecological issues.⁴¹

The National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC), which had been campaigning for more than a decade against atmospheric pollution in the townships and the need for "people's parks" in these areas, organised a series of workshops in 1990 with the ANC and its labour ally, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The militant South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) included environmental issues on the agenda of its annual congress. The South African Chemical Worker's Union (SACWU), the biggest affiliate of the pro-Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) campaigned for health and safety in the factories for environmental protection. In October 1990 the PAC released a policy document outlining its position on environmental issues.⁴² These policies indicated an intricate interplay between socio-ecological demands on the one hand, and political or

⁴¹Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife: The Politics of Ecology in South Africa. London: Penguin. 1990: 41.

⁴²Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife: The Politics of Ecology in South Africa. London: Penguin. 1990: 42.

economic constraints and possibilities on the other.

What is significant, however, is that the environmental focus expressed by the UDF, the ANC, the NEAC, and the PAC, is restricted to issues of pollution, safety and health and not really concerned with the conservation of wildlife resources. It still seems as if conservation priorities reflect the interests of a white elite class and not those of the majority of the population. The only time when wildlife conservation practices rank high on a political affiliation's agenda is where supporters (like The Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM)⁴³) argue for a greater distribution of wealth and benefits accruing from conservation practices. Again their concern is primarily materialistically inclined, stressing the importance of benefits. All these so-called 'green' groups tend to neglect the wildlife conservation element of environmental concerns: this supports my assumption that it would be easier to get popular support for brown issues than for green issues.

But what value has wildlife? A great deal has been written about the value of wildlife and the seriousness of the fact of species already lost. The international philosophy behind the preservation of biodiversity reflects a growing concern throughout the world today regarding the mass extinction of animals and plants to meet the needs of expanding human populations. It is claimed that we are losing species at the rate of 100 per day, which is 1000 times faster than the normal evolutionary loss.⁴⁴

⁴³GEM is a Johannesburg-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) which is active in voicing communities' grievances with conservation authorities.

⁴⁴Cloete, D. (ed.) 'Biodiversity - A New Ground Supplement' in New Ground, Autumn 1993.

What relevance does wildlife conservation have in the struggle for environmental integrity? A useful summary of the reasons usually given for justifying wildlife conservation is given in the report of a working party which was set up by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for the Environment on the management of natural resources in preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in June 1972. They say that wildlife has value:

- * as a contributory component of ecological stability and as a monitor of environmental pollution;
- * for the maintenance of genetic variability and the provision of a source of renewable biological resources;
- * for the needs of scientific research into the environment;
- * for its cultural and recreational value and as a component of the aesthetic quality of the landscape;
- * for environmental education;
- * for the economic value of its resource, scientific and recreational components;
- * to provide future generations with a wide choice of biological capital; and
- * for moral and ethical reasons.⁴⁵

It is generally accepted that wildlife has instrumental value, or value in terms of human utility. In recent years it has been argued that consideration should be given to extending not only moral rights but even legal rights to animals. Peter Singer asserts that there is no valid reason, conceptually at least, why the circle of legal recognition of inherent worth should not expand to include wildlife. He says a theory of justice would not be truly complete unless in some way it

⁴⁵Bothma, J. and Glavovic, P. 'Wild Animals' in Fuggle, R.F. and Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Johannesburg: Juta. 1992: 250

accommodates the notion that rights are extended to animals.⁴⁶ One is here faced with the logic of the pattern of extension of rights that has evolved, in terms of which legal rights have gradually been granted to children, slaves, women, blacks and fictitious persons.⁴⁷ However, in the present context of South Africa's social, economic and political needs, it is perhaps too soon to expect general acceptance of an extension of rights to animals because of their intrinsic worth and not simply because they serve man's utilitarian needs.

In conclusion, conservation presupposes different ideas for different people, some of which seem irreconcilable. For example, hardened conservationists are not enthusiastic about the prospects of utilising wildlife resources for the benefit of humankind, while development or economic growth necessitates a utilisation of the same resources in order to provide material benefits for an impoverished majority. This comprises a conflict of interests. The next chapter looks at some of the environmental challenges development entails and tries to clarify how the problem can be bridged. These are preliminary arguments which generate the necessary groundwork for my examination of ecotourism later on.

⁴⁶Singer, P. Animal Liberation, Wellingborough: Thorsons. 1983: 3-6.

⁴⁷Singer, P. The Expanding Circle, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1981: 120.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHALLENGE OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

DETERMINING THE CHALLENGE

Fairly recently on the 8 o' clock SABC television news, disturbing and troubling footage justified further any concern for conservation.¹ Desperate men and women had been plundering shellfish from rocks on a 'protected' Transkeian coast near Dweza to a degree far beyond acquisition for subsistence. For decades, conservation practices in South Africa have excluded communities from the rich resources. Now, in the context of a democratic government, Dweza's local people have given vent to years of anger, frustration and need. The result was a wild and unsustainable plundering of natural resources. Their motivations were never made public: whether it was an attempt to lash out at conservation authorities, or mere pillaging, was not discerned. Regardless, the problem remains the same: how can the rural poor live in harmony with their environment?

The South African reality presents a challenge for development. The Human Development Report of 1994 states that fifty percent of South Africa's population reside in rural areas.² Four out of every five of these live below the subsistence level.³ In KwaZulu-Natal this trend is even more severe. Of the 7 590 200 people who reside in KwaZulu-Natal, 69.66 percent live in rural areas, indicating

¹December 1994.

²United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1994. New York: Oxford University Press. 1994: 174.

³Steenkamp, N. 'How our Dolphins can Help the Poor' in Open Africa, Supplement to the Weekly Mail and Guardian, No 3, December 1994.

a serious dimension of poverty in this region.⁴ If four out of every five of these live below the subsistence level then it means that approximately 5 541 900 people in KwaZulu-Natal suffer some degree of deprivation. This hardship makes living in harmony with the environment nearly impossible. How does one address this? How does one establish a congruous relationship between the environment, conservation and development?

Many people think South Africa is a resource-rich country, but according to Staath and Baskind, it is not so.⁵ We cannot just pursue economic development and utilize our 'abundance of resources'. Although some resources are in 'abundance', including many kinds of minerals, the supply of other important resources, such as water, soil and forests, is quite limited. Most people in the country still have a very low standard of living and, to make matters worse, our population is growing rapidly⁶ - a population with a demand for more shelter, more sanitation, more subsistence.⁷

⁴Race Relations Survey 1993/1994. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations. 1994: 83.

⁵Staath, R. & Baskind, P. 'Resource Economics' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town: Juta. 1992: 27.

⁶According to the Human Development Report 1994 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), South Africa's annual population growth rate of 2.5 % is experiencing a 99 % increase, predicting a populating doubling figure in 2020. (UNDP, Human Development Report 1994, 1994: 174). According to the World Bank, South Africa's economic growth rate is only 2.3 % (Agenda, 5 October 1995).

⁷This sentiment is portrayed by various authors such as, Huntley, B., Siegfried, R. & Sunter, C. South African Environments into the 21st Century, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau. 1989; Fuggle, R.F. and Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Concerns in South Africa, Cape Town: Juta. 1993; and Cock, J. & Koch, E. (eds) Going Green, Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1991, as well as the UNDP's Human Development Report 1994.

There is a great need to increase the pace of development and some say that we cannot afford to spend much on conservation, or 'lock up' many resources at a time when so many people are still living in poverty.⁸ However, within the development paradigm itself, some have recognized that particular paths of development are ultimately self-defeating: growing evidence indicates that resource destruction from pollution and from over-exploitation is now occurring at a rate that could endanger the very process of development.⁹

The shortage of exploitable resources confirms that there is a great need to expand conservation efforts. Some say that even in developing countries such as South Africa, more resources should be conserved in order to protect society from suffering even greater poverty in the future.¹⁰ The issue is not whether South Africa needs development now and conservation later - it needs both - now. The challenge of resource management is thus to establish a balance between the environment, conservation needs and development needs.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

Just as development efforts cannot succeed without some conservation, so

⁸The Review Panel on St.Lucia heard from neighbouring communities that developing the mining of the pristine sand dunes of St.Lucia would be regarded as in their better interest rather than conserving the area for tourism. And that after adequate development had been obtained, the environment could be rehabilitated. (Department of Environment Affairs, Eastern Shores of Lake St. Lucia, Review Panel Report, 1993).

⁹WCED, Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 32.

¹⁰This is the general outlook of Huntley, B. Siegfried, R. & Sunter, C. in South African Environments into the 21st Century, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau. 1989.

conservation cannot succeed if the economy is not able to satisfy the basic needs and aspirations of the majority of the population. As the plundering of natural resources on the Transkeian coast illustrates, where there is great want, there is always the danger of overexploitation. People in need have little alternative but to exploit their resources. Only economic development can alleviate poverty. Economic development is generally understood to entail some degree of economic growth, which is the process of increasing the output of goods and services produced by an economy.¹¹

South Africa's economic development objectives are reflected in the adoption of the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme, which was accepted by the Government of National Unity and transformed into the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), (hereafter referred to as the RDP). Generally, education, jobs and houses are high on the agenda of the RDP. For the purpose of this chapter, the main development objectives identified in the document can be summarised as follows:

- * Ten years free schooling for all South Africans. The building of schools and the integration of farm and community schools into one national system. A national basic education and skills training programme.
- * A public works programme to create 500 000 jobs, jobs for youth through a national youth service programme and community opportunities through a Community Redevelopment Fund. A central goal for the mixed economy will be job creation.
- * Build 250 000 houses per year for ten to fifteen years to eliminate the backlog of 4 million houses.
- * Connect 500 000 dwellings per year to the electricity grid to serve 23 million people. Water, health, welfare and food security are equally prominent.
- * Provide clean drinking water for over 12 million South Africans, and sanitation (toilets and refuse removal) for the 21 million people without

¹¹Stauth, R. & Baskind, P. 'Resource Economics' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town: Juta. 1992: 27.

these services. The first target will be clean water within 200 metres of every house. Water for production will come later.

- * Health spending will emphasise preventive primary health care rather than curative care. Free health care for under fives at government clinics and health centres. A programme for early detection and treatment of priority diseases - such as TB and cervical cancer. Immunisation to cover 95 percent of the population within five years. Improvement in communication, understanding and cooperation between different types of healers.
- * An adequate pension for over 60's paid through post offices and banks. A regular maintenance benefit for every child under five. Major efforts to reintegrate street children into society.
- * Food security for all South Africans through job creation programmes, land reform, economic restructuring, and food subsidies. State support for part-time, small scale farmers, especially by women to increase household food security and incomes.¹²

Although necessary, this is an ambitious programme. In fact it is of such magnitude that it renders economic growth crucial - an ingredient which signifies potential environmental costs. Where does this programme leave the possibility for an increase in conservation measures, and what is its relationship with the environment in general and with conservation more particularly?

The RDP gives very little attention, compared to its development objectives, to environmental considerations.¹³ Only two points are specifically relevant to conservation, and these deal only with the extent of environmental management.¹⁴ Nothing is said about the necessity to conserve natural

¹²White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994), and Munnik, V. 'Reconstruction and Development: the ANC spells out the changes' in New Ground, Autumn 1994: 18.

¹³Only points 2.10.1 to 2.10.13 in the RDP relate to issues of the environment.

¹⁴Point 2.10.6.2 of the RDP:
Participation of communities in management and decision-making in wildlife conservation and the related tourism benefits.

Point 2.10.12 of the RDP:

resources in order to ensure future development. In fact, an underlying philosophy of sustainable development is an acknowledgement that environmental policies should maintain and expand the environmental-resource base.¹⁵ This philosophy is totally absent in the RDP.

The RDP does claim to attempt to reduce the pressure on natural resources in South Africa's pursuit of development:

Development strategies must incorporate environmental consequences in the course of planning. Measures such as land reform, provision of basic infrastructure, housing and targeted rural assistance (including extension services), and the maintenance of food security should ultimately reduce pressure on the natural environment.¹⁶

However, despite the RDP's commitment to "respect the environment", it will be difficult to ensure that the RDP does not cause long-term environmental damage. The sheer size of the reconstruction effort, the numbers of schools, clinics, houses, roads, waterworks and electricity supply networks, is a massive challenge for any government to deliver and would probably complicate or diffuse any requirement that all developments should be preceded by an environmental impact assessment, or at least 'reduce [the] pressure on the natural environment'.

Reconstruction will probably be carried out by the private sector's big construction and civil engineering companies, which may, as the new government might, be tempted to cut corners. The major challenge for any government in this area is to provide its department of the environment with enough responsibilities, capacity and the necessary power to ensure the implementation of environment

Both local and provincial governments must play a crucial role in environmental management. Strong provincial departments of environmental affairs must be established. A national department of environment affairs must ensure overall standards and financing of environmental protection.

¹⁵WCED, Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 57.

¹⁶Point 2.10.4 of the RDP.

sensitive policies. The outgoing Department of the Environment is marked by a weakness in enforcing control measures. Munnik cites the case of the air pollution control authority, which can boast one prosecution in the past thirty years.¹⁷ Who says things will be different now?

It is understandable that in an a developing country such as South Africa, with a rapidly growing population and large numbers of poor, immediate economic growth is wanted. But economic growth can cause great environmental costs and problems, which can in turn impede economic development. So one of the principal tasks in formulating economic development policies is to find ways to foster strong economic growth without running the risk of significant environmental damage which could be caused by pollution, waste and degradation. A comprehensive and sound environmental policy therefore needs to accompany the economic development policy. South Africa should strive for economic growth and environmental protection. The question is how to pursue and satisfactorily accomplish both the objectives simultaneously - in other words, how to achieve sustainable development.

THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The belief prior to 1980 that development and environmental conservation were incompatible objectives¹⁸ was challenged by The World Conservation

¹⁷Munnik, V. 'Reconstruction and Development: the ANC spells out the changes' in New Ground, Autumn 1994: 18.

¹⁸Development and conservation were seen to be incompatible insofar as a country could either achieve economic growth and development or maintain and improve the quality of the environment, but could not satisfactorily attain both goals simultaneously.

Strategy (1984).¹⁹ This document sought to achieve an integrated approach to development and the environment. It asserted that development and the conservation of natural resources were equally necessary for our survival as well as for the discharge of our responsibilities as trustees of natural resources for the generations to come.

In response to this document, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) presented Our Common Future (1987) (also known as the Bruntland Report). It made familiar the concept of sustainable development. The Commission defined sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'²⁰ Sustainable development emphasises the importance of growth and development, with particular stress on the 'permanence' of natural resources.

Our Common Future argued that it was indeed possible to achieve sustainable development. To do so would, however, necessitate the present generation changing the way in which it pursued economic progress. Sustainable development means trying to meet the basic needs of all - for instance, food, clothing, shelter and jobs - and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life. The difference between sustainable development and economic growth is that the goals of economic and social development, of meeting basic needs, have to be defined in terms of sustainability and the limitations which are imposed by both the current state of technology and society, as well as the

¹⁹IUCN, World Conservation Strategy. Gland: IUCN. 1984.

²⁰WCED, Our Common Future. New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 43.

ability of the environment to meet present and future needs.²¹

THE IMPLICATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Crucial points were made in Our Common Future which should greatly influence the thinking of policy-makers and environmental managers. The implications of sustainable development are that in the pursuit of sustainable development, long-term benefits and costs need to be envisaged. In the process, social equity should be striven for, both between generations and within generations. In other words, development should not be at the cost of a future generation's ability to develop. Furthermore, natural and cultural environments in the process of development are regarded as valuable, and that they should not be irrevocably damaged. Thus, in the process of pursuing economic growth, social and cultural development is also achieved. Sustainable development according to the Bruntland Report, emphasises the need to integrate economics with ecology in decision-making at all levels.²²

The Bruntland Report also highlighted 'the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given', as well as 'the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs'.²³ Accordingly, the rationale for sustainable development is to increase people's standard of living and, in particular, the well-being of the least advantaged people in societies, while at the

²¹WCED, Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 39-40.

²²WCED, Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 62.

²³Turner, R.K. Sustainable Environmental Economics and Management: Principles and Management, London: Belhaven Press. 1993: 4.

same time attempting to avoid future environmental costs which would impede future development.²⁴

There are difficulties embedded in the sustainable development paradigm as a whole, especially when applied in the context of developing countries. KwaZulu-Natal can be used as an illustration. For example, in the urbanised, industrial sector of KwaZulu-Natal, relatively few people's livelihoods are threatened by conservation measures which preserve natural resources and they can more easily enforce methods of moderation in their utilisation of these resources. On the other hand, in the less affluent, underdeveloped areas, struggles over the environment are usually around basic needs and are about strategies of survival rather than about preserving an aesthetically pleasing environment.²⁵ Conservation for them means a denial of utilising natural resources and as such a denial to achieve a basic livelihood. The apparent difficulty of sustainable development would be that it is hard for impoverished rural people to utilize their immediate natural environment in a 'moderate' way in order to ensure the same resource base for future generations. Sustainable development is thus harder to put in place when your populace is poor, underdeveloped and in desperate need of economic prosperity.

In this respect, any sustainable development strategy in South Africa would have to confront the question of how a vastly greater number of people can gain at least a basic livelihood in a manner which can be sustained.²⁶ The Bruntland

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Redclift, M. Sustainable Development: The Contradictions. 1987. London: Chatham. Redclift, M. 'Sustainable Development and Popular Participation' in Ghai, D. and Vivian J. (eds) Grassroots Environmental Action: People's Participation in Sustainable Development, London: Chatham. 1992: 26.

²⁶A working definition of *sustainable livelihoods* would be "a livelihood comprising the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living: a

Report does acknowledge that sustainable development, far from requiring the cessation of economic growth, recognises the problems of poverty and underdevelopment and that this cannot be solved unless there is some form of development and growth. As such, sustainable development requires more than growth, it requires a change in the content of growth. This 'new' growth necessitates environmental policies which maintain and expand the environmental-resource base.²⁷

Sustainable development as a philosophy surfaced as a result of the development route of First World countries. The achievements of the developed world reflect a particular path of transition from agriculture to industry to service-oriented economies. However, transition caused irreversible environmental costs. This can be seen in, for example, the extinction of species and disappearing ecosystems.²⁸ The philosophy of sustainable development calls into question the value of a similar 'path' for developing countries.²⁹

The developed world is suffering the consequences of indifference to environmental quality and is now deploying great efforts to repair past

livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation: and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels in the short and long term." (Redclift, M. 'Sustainable Development and Popular Participation', in Ghai, D. and Vivian, J. (eds) Grassroots Environmental Action, London: Chatham. 1992: 28.)

²⁷WCED, Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 57.

²⁸Pearce, D. 'Sustainable Development and Developing Countries' in Turner, R.K. (ed.) Sustainable Environmental Economics and Management: Principles and Management, London: Belhaven Press. 1993: 71-74.

²⁹WCED, Our Common Future, New York: Oxford University Press. 1987: 52.

environmental damage in order to salvage what it can and to prevent future damage to the environment.³⁰ Sustainable development as a paradigm would indicate that although securing real income gains is a priority, these gains are not 'permanent' if they impose heavy costs in the form of environmental damage.

If such a general interpretation of sustainable development exists and is widely accepted, then why can South Africa's environmental policies not be characterised by such an understanding? Why has little been done to provide policy-instruments to support the meagre amount of environmental policies that actually do exist in South Africa? It is hardly because ~~were~~ are not affected by environmental costs of First World development such as ozone depletion (on a global level) or acid rain and pollution (on a domestic level). Part of the answer lies in the fact that environmental policy largely reacts to the consequences of science and technology.³¹ Little policy work is done to prevent or envisage future consequences. Policy-making in this regard seems retrospective. On the other hand, sustainable development also incorporates a set of political and socio-economic yardsticks which makes it a difficult ideal to realise.

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The phrase 'sustainable development' has persisted and become a political

³⁰This is notable in, for example the strict recycling policies, the banning of CFC's, reduction of lead emissions. (From a public lecture at the University of Natal, presented by Robertson George of the WWF (March 1995)), and in Panos Media Briefing, No 14, January 1995, Panos Institute, London.

³¹Redclift, M. 'Environmental Economics, Policy Consensus and Political Empowerment' in Turner, R.K. (ed.) Sustainable Environmental Economics and Management: Principles and Management, London: Belhaven Press. 1993: 116.

reality.³² There is no doubt that the Report of the WCED ennobled the idea of sustainable development in international political circles. Dozens of other reports and books have now been written on the matter, and almost every major organisation has addressed it to some degree. It was the central theme in the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. Even in South Africa nowadays, it seems that no public figure or private corporation can afford to speak any other language. Yet one must not neglect to note that this apparent fixation may be essentially cosmetic.³³

To illustrate this point, sustainable development in practice requires basically a restructuring of our social existence. (See Table 2.1). For example, Our Common Future states that in order to accommodate sustainable development a political system is needed that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making. It also requires an international system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance; a production system that acknowledges the obligation to preserve the ecological basis for development. And an economic system which should be self-reliant.³⁴ These few examples are difficult ideals to realise in a global free-market environment. But nevertheless, sustainable development remains valuable and constructive in that it provides a philosophical framework as with which to reach a environmentally sensitive society.

A continuation of the sustainable development argument was presented

³²O'Riordan, T. 'The Politics of Sustainability' in Turner, R.K. (ed.) Sustainable Environmental Economics and Management: Principles and Management, London: Belhaven Press. 1993: 37.

³³O'Riordan, T. 'The Politics of Sustainability' in Turner, R.K. (ed.) Sustainable Environmental Economics and Management: Principles and Management, London, Belhaven Press. 1993: 39.

³⁴WCED, Our Common Future, London: Oxford University Press. 1987: 65.

1. A political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making.
2. An economic system that is able to generate surpluses and technical knowledge on a self-reliant and self-sustained basis.
3. A social system that provides for solutions for the tensions arising from disharmonious development.
4. A production system that respects the obligation to preserve the ecological basis for development.
5. A technological system that can search continuously for new solutions.
6. An international system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance.
7. An administrative system that is flexible and has the capacity for self-correction.

Source: WCED, Our Common Future, London: Oxford University Press 1987: 65.

jointly by the IUCN, the United Nation Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the document, Caring for the Earth (1991), which extended sustainable development yardsticks even more.

Caring for the Earth added an ethical position to the sustainable development debate, stressing that conservation was for the benefit of people. It linked conservation with development, with the empowerment of local people. It advocated eco-friendly lifestyles (for example, recycling, waste minimization, energy conservation). In short, it implied a review of existing social and political relationships which would establish a 'sustainable society', characterized by respect and care for the community of life; by improving the quality of human life; by conserving the earth's vitality and diversity; by minimizing the depletion of non-renewable resources; by keeping within the Earth's carrying capacity; by enabling communities to care for their own environments; by providing a national framework for integrating development and conservation; and by forging a global alliance.³⁵

In Caring for the Earth, the sustainable development argument now moves beyond the purely economical or environmental concern. As such it also has social significance. This social dimension of sustainable development has also been emphasised in the annual Human Development Reports issued by the UNDP. These reports are indexes of social progress made in all countries.³⁶

Putting sustainable development into practice thus requires a restructuring

³⁵IUCN, UNEP & WWF, Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living. Gland: IUCN. 1991: 9-12.

³⁶The social attribute of sustainable development and its relationship to ecotourism is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six of this thesis.

of institutional arrangements, transforming economic thinking, and changing social relationships with local communities. This will probably remain an utopian goal. South Africa under apartheid rule could never have achieved sustainable development because it was not based on the assumptions made by either the Bruntland Report or Caring for the Earth. The democratization of South Africa means that channels for political participation are now open to all South Africans. Principles of democracy (such as egalitarianism, participation, transparency) underlie sustainable development as the Bruntland Report and Caring for the Earth both indicated.

But democracy does not necessarily lead to a transformation of, say, international trade patterns or a redefinition of social relationships. Nevertheless, it enables sustainable development. South Africa's infamous past, and even present, is living proof that environmental abuse is related to imbalances in the distribution of political power. Those in control of the economy have the power to treat the environment as a free resource; those in government have the power to deny resources to the poor. A change to a society more committed to egalitarianism and democracy could help create the conditions for effective programmes to protect the environment because it allows for greater popular participation.

Universal voting rights and democratic access to environmental information as provided for in South Africa's Bill of Rights and the Interim Constitution should strengthen pressure on the government to address environmental problems, such as toxic contamination of drinking water from mining, polluted air in poor urban areas, or acid rain, which would all be conducive to achieving sustainable

development.³⁷

However, this pressure could, of course, be overwhelmed by the popular demand in a post-apartheid situation for economic gains at any cost. Nevertheless, for an ecologically sound economy to be assured, political principles are needed which encourage a commitment to long-term environmental sustainability.³⁸ Yet one must keep in mind that democracy and a redistribution of power are necessary but not sufficient conditions for effective ecological protection. In other words, they are prerequisites but not guarantees.

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A country like South Africa has a definite need for development. Any sustainable development proposal would need to become economically significant. Thus, a programme to protect and mend the country's ecosystems which wishes to be taken seriously would have to deal with the economic capacity to provide all citizens with basic social and welfare facilities.³⁹ In other words, the relationship between the environment, development and conservation has to be clarified. It has to be made clear that the three elements are not necessarily mutually exclusive: we can protect, conserve and develop at the same time.

³⁷This sentiment is expressed by Durning, A. Apartheid's Environmental Toll. Worldwatch Paper No 95. Washington D.C.: Worldwatch Institute, 1990; and Huntley, B. Siegfried, R. & Sunter, C. South African Environments into the 21st Century, 1989. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

³⁸Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife, London: Penguin. 1990: 57.

³⁹For example, ecotourism, whether implemented by the Natal Parks Board, the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation or the private sector. This will be looked at in Chapter Five.

[In order for South Africa to achieve sustainable development, the presumptions on which the South African economy is based would also need reassessment. This would entail, for example, stricter environmental control measures and limiting the utilization of natural resources.] This again becomes complicated. Koch is right when he says that the general argument expressed in various policies that 'life on earth will cease to exist unless we change our ecological lifestyles' has little appeal for the rural person desperate for firewood, or for the industrialist faced with diminishing profits.⁴⁰ Against such perceptions it becomes difficult to argue that the South African economy needs 'reassessing', or more importantly restructuring with sustainable development in mind. [Many recognise that general restructuring is inevitable now. Some argue that South Africa, as a developing country, cannot afford the costs of environmental control; that South African export products would not be as competitive in global markets if precautionary measures would have to be taken.⁴¹ Yet environmentalism is wrongly seen as increasing costs, and limiting competitiveness. Such arguments ignore the long-term, less-quantifiable costs of pollution: acid rain, damage to crops, or illnesses which afflict thousands of people and wildlife because the environment is contaminated. In fact, it may well be cheaper, when the long-term hidden costs are included, to impose strict standards and penalties on these practices. And the economic benefits of environmental control often far outweigh the costs, minimise liabilities and enhance equity.⁴² South Africa could be overestimating its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by at least 10 percent by not

⁴⁰Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife, London: Penguin. 1990: 57.

⁴¹Minister of Environment Affairs, Dawie De Villiers, in New Ground, No 18, Summer 94/95: 2.

⁴²Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife, London: Penguin. 1990: 57.

accounting for pollution and natural resource depletion.⁴³ Therefore, new, genuinely comprehensive economic yardsticks must be applied.

To pursue growth without assessing first whether the same goal can be achieved at less environmental cost does not make sense. Even if it is a costly or timely affair, disregarding environmental damage is more threatening. This is precisely why ecotourism presents itself as at least one option. Ecotourism could foster economic development in a sustainable way. What ecotourism actually means and how it endorses economic development according to the sustainable development paradigm, will be examined in Chapter Five. Of importance here is that in developing countries, economics will always remain an important yardstick in determining the appropriateness or even social legitimacy of conservation programmes. One can thus not downplay the economic dimension of sustainable development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Thinking in South Africa has been greatly influenced by international perceptions of sustainable development.⁴⁴ The Environment Conservation Act (no 73 of 1989) is an example of environmental policy based on sustainable development principles. According to the Act, sustainable development principles were intended to be incorporated in all future policy on environmental conservation and management in South Africa. Several South African political parties and non-

⁴³Financial Mail Special Report, 'Twenty-Twenty: Sustaining the Environment' in Financial Mail, 9 September, 1994: 66.

⁴⁴According to the Department of Environment Affairs, Building the Foundation for Sustainable Development in South Africa National Report to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, June 1992. Prepared by CSIR Environmental Services, March 1992.

governmental organisations (NGO's) too, have published policies supportive of sustainable development. For example, the South African NGO, Environmental Justice Networking Forum, (EJNF) held a Conference in Kempton Park on 25-27 November 1994 which initiated the Greening the RDP document. In 1995, the International Environmental Policy Mission Group,⁴⁵ produced a report in similar vein, entitled Environment, Reconstruction and Development.⁴⁶

However, progress in introducing this thinking into the decision-making process at different levels in government and the private sector has been weak. Public as well as private sector documents on national economic policies still tend to fail to mention the role of the natural environment in economic development.⁴⁷ Illustrating the same point, the Council for the Environment's IEM, a Framework for Harmony between Development and Environment, 1989, notes that very few developments have taken proper account of effects on the natural, social, economic and cultural environment, and that this has led both to widespread damage to the environment and to increased public pressure for stricter environmental protection.

Despite an abundance of apparent good intentions in the economic sector, compliance with sustainable development principles is poor when compared with the sustainable development yardsticks presented by the Bruntland Report, Caring

⁴⁵This Mission group was put together by the ANC, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO).

⁴⁶International Environmental Policy Mission, Environment, Reconstruction and Development, 1995. Johannesburg: International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

⁴⁷For example, The National Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Towards an Economic and Development Policy Framework for a Post-Apartheid South Africa, October 1990.

for the Earth. As an indirect result, a campaign, Twenty-Twenty, was devised in 1994 to bring sustainable development principles onto the South African agenda of reconstruction and development. One of its aims is to have environmental protection entrenched in the constitution, in governance and business practice. The campaign is intended as a partnership between government, business, trade-unions, non-government organisations and other constituencies of civil society under the leadership of Professor Dan Archer of the Institute of Natural Resources at the University of Natal. The aim of Twenty-Twenty is to enable decision-makers to see the environment as a priority, rather than a marginal luxury. Archer says that although the environment did not feature prominently in the run-up to South Africa's first democratic elections, an intention of Twenty-Twenty is to make government and the private sector aware of their decisions' impact on the environment.⁴⁸

A minimum objective of Twenty-Twenty is the establishment of an environmental awareness within the public sector. This can foster environmental education within the private and public sector. However, sustainable development requires more than mere rhetoric and awareness. Sustainable development is all about the implementation of sustainable resource management decisions. This is where government legislation becomes important. Neither on a national government level or a provincial government level has a particular strategy for environmental policy, legislation or implementation been determined. Post apartheid South Africa -in theory - seems to have accepted the sustainable development concept. However, it lacks appropriate policy instruments to regulate the scale of economics. Without this, it becomes difficult to determine whether South Africa is pursuing conventional economic development or sustainable development.

⁴⁸From an interview with Professor Dan Archer, 3 October 1995.

A sustainable development policy would be concerned with obtaining the most rapid rate of economic development that can be safely sustained and would be based on the assumption that both economic progress and environmental quality are needed to improve human well-being. (This is an important statement to remember when it comes to analysing ecotourism as a sustainable development objective).

Turner explains that if the sustainability goal is accepted, then a fundamental requirement is a set of sustainability principles that can give some concrete form to a sustainable development strategy. This strategy would have to reflect several dimensions of the sustainability concept: social, cultural, economic, political, environmental, and moral - and will have to deploy a package of enabling policy instruments. This is totally absent from the RDP. In fact, it is mostly absent from all environmental policies that exist in South Africa.⁴⁹

One positive aspect which could promote sustainable development is the fact that in the modern world the nation state cannot easily insulate itself from global perceptions, or from potential social protest stimulated by the international mass media or activities of various environmental NGO's such as Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Even more so in the tourism industry. International environmental agreements will become increasingly important, underpinned by the evolution of an international environmental cooperation ethic. For example, international tour operators were threatening to boycott the South African holiday market if a ban

⁴⁹It is absent from the Inkatha Freedom Party's Environmental Policy (1991), as well as from the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation's Tourism Policy (1992).

prohibiting trade in elephant products was relaxed at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, (CITES) meeting in November 1994.⁵⁰ They warned that they would consider blacklisting South Africa as a tourist destination if the government 'downlists' elephants.⁵¹ The African Travel and Tourism Association, which has more than sixty members, has thrown its weight behind the lobby against changes to CITES. This was later confirmed in an New Ground publication stating that fear of this was one reason that led to South Africa withdrawing its proposals at the CITES meeting.⁵² South Africa's behaviour is thus coming increasingly under the scrutiny of international NGO's.

As I have argued, sustainable development remains a difficult 'ideal' to pursue in developing regions. While environmental problems are also pressing in the developed sector, their occurrence is not linked to issues of scarcity or poverty. Sustainable development in South Africa would mean that stable growth in productivity would lead to a reduction in mass poverty and vulnerability, but without endangering the stability of the environment.⁵³

⁵⁰In 'South African Tourism Threatened' in the Sunday Times, 30 October 1994.

⁵¹To downlist means to move a species from a higher category to a lower one. Three categories of endangered species are recognized. The first, represents species in danger of extinction, the second those species which, although not threatened with immediate extinction, may face danger if trade in them is not controlled. The third, those species endangered in only some countries. The elephant belongs to the first category. The South African government was thinking of presenting an argument at the 1994 CITES gathering to move elephants from the first category to the second. (Devine, D. Erasmus, M. 'International Environmental Law' in Fuggle, R.E. and Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa Cape Town: Juta. 1992: 175.)

⁵²'Editorial' in New Ground, No 18, Summer 94/95.

⁵³Abugre, C. 'NGO's, Institutional Development and Sustainable Development' in Cole, K. (ed.) Sustainable Development for a Democratic South Africa, London:

An equilibrium has to be established between conservation, the environment and development. On the one hand, there is the danger of overstressing the environment, in that by destroying too many natural and cultural resources, the quality of life for everyone could decline. On the other hand, there is the danger of underutilizing our resources. If we fail to develop our resources sufficiently, we may not be able to provide an acceptable standard of living for all and this in turn could result in great social unrest, economic collapse and political upheaval.⁵⁴

Most significantly of all, South Africa is in the process of constitutional reform. National goals and policies are being re-examined in depth in this process. The greatest possible use should be made of sustainable development principles and approaches. The challenge for a future South Africa is to establish a just, peaceful and democratic society in which we can alleviate poverty and promote active social upliftment - without placing enormous demands on the environment. This chapter has highlighted key problems of development, and discussed the philosophy of sustainable development. I shall next analyze the socio-economic features of KwaZulu-Natal, with the objective of determining whether tourism in general, and ecotourism in particular, could yield a synthesis between the environment, conservation and development, since I wish to examine the role of wildlife conservation in sustainable development.

Earthscan. 1984: 125.

⁵⁴Stauth, R. & Baskind, P. 'Resource Economics' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town, Juta. 1992: 29.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REGION KWAZULU-NATAL

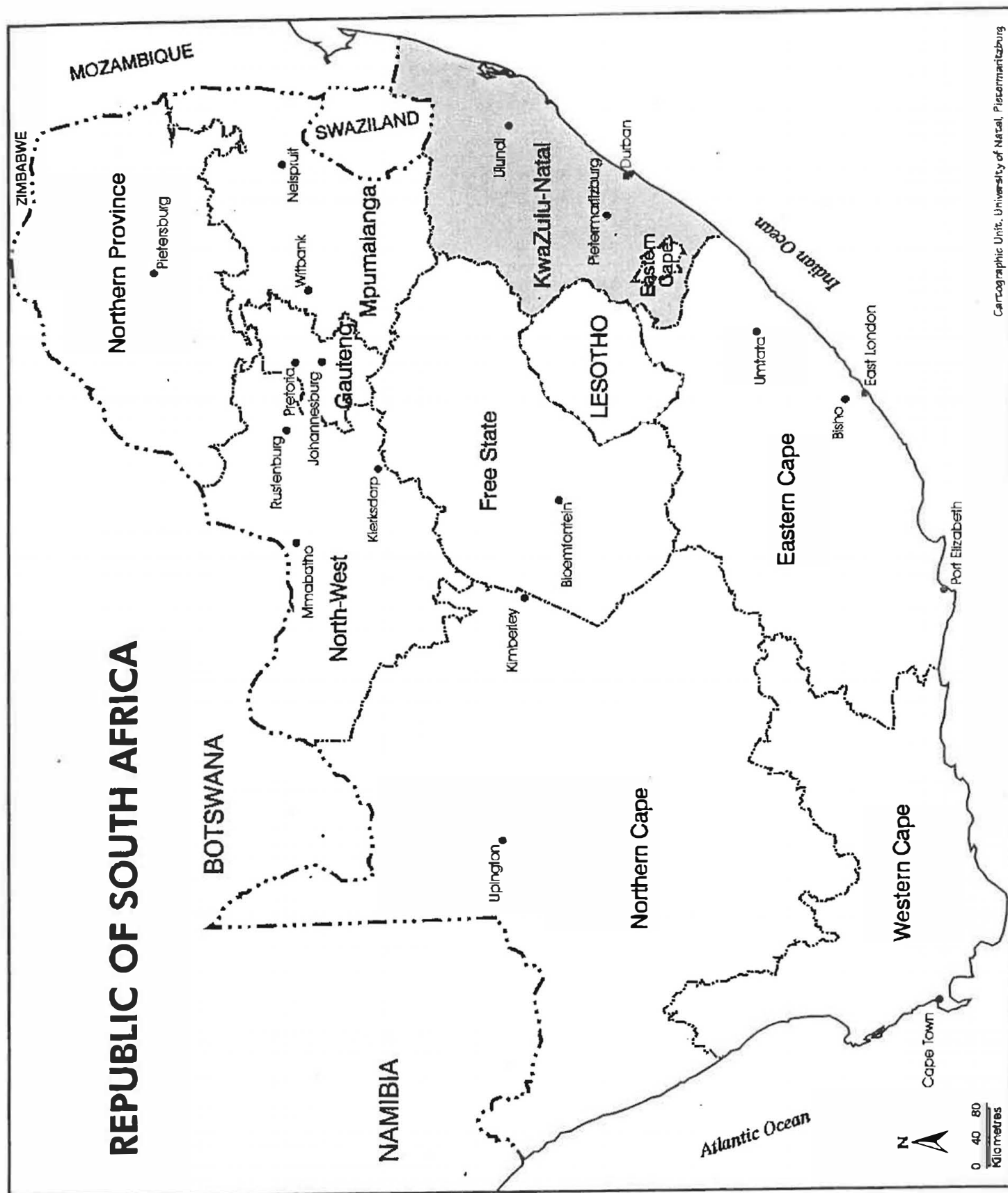
KwaZulu-Natal, one of South Africa's nine new regions (see Map 3.1.), incorporates the former province of Natal, the homeland KwaZulu and the north-eastern part of Transkei. The formation of environmental policies and programmes for KwaZulu-Natal will inevitably be forged in relation to the particularities of the political and social features of the region. In other words, the prospects of ecotourism must be analyzed with regard to the social and political realities of the region. In this chapter various political and socio-economic features of KwaZulu-Natal are discussed in order to illustrate the challenge of conservation and development in this area.

THE POLITICS OF THE REGION

KwaZulu-Natal is a region where political life is extremely complex. Violent clashes between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) were, especially in the 1980's and prior to the general election of April 1994, very marked. During this time problems were intensified by Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini's desires to restore the pre-1838 Zulu Kingdom and the IFP's threats of non-participation in South Africa's first general election.

Ever since the unbanning of the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and the PAC in February 1990, the struggle for territorial control of KwaZulu-Natal by mainly the IFP and ANC, has been central to the violence that has taken place - reaching an all time high just prior to the national election. The region was divided into a number of 'no-go' areas, with restrictions imposed on

MAP 3.1: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



free political activity by, for example, ANC members in areas under IFP 'rule'.¹ The assistance of the chiefs was increasingly sought in recruiting persons into Inkatha and negative sanctions, including attacks and the burning of homesteads, have been applied to those chiefs who were reluctant to take political sides.²

The IFP, which won a majority vote (50.3%) in KwaZulu-Natal in the April 1994 elections,³ is seeking a confrontation with the central government over its regional powers. The IFP is apparently mainly concerned with establishing a strong devolution of power to the province and acquiring greater autonomy for the 'kingdom of KwaZulu' (See Map 3.2)⁴

De Haas and Zulu are of the opinion that, despite the IFP deciding at the last minute to take part in South Africa's first democratic elections, this does not mean that the IFP has conceded to the interim constitution.⁵ The fact that KwaZulu and its legislative assembly no longer exist, and that the IFP leader has accepted the appointment as Minister of Home Affairs in South Africa's ANC-led national government of national unity, does not mean that the IFP's has disposed of its 'federal' notions. In one of his first public appearances, Minister Buthelezi is

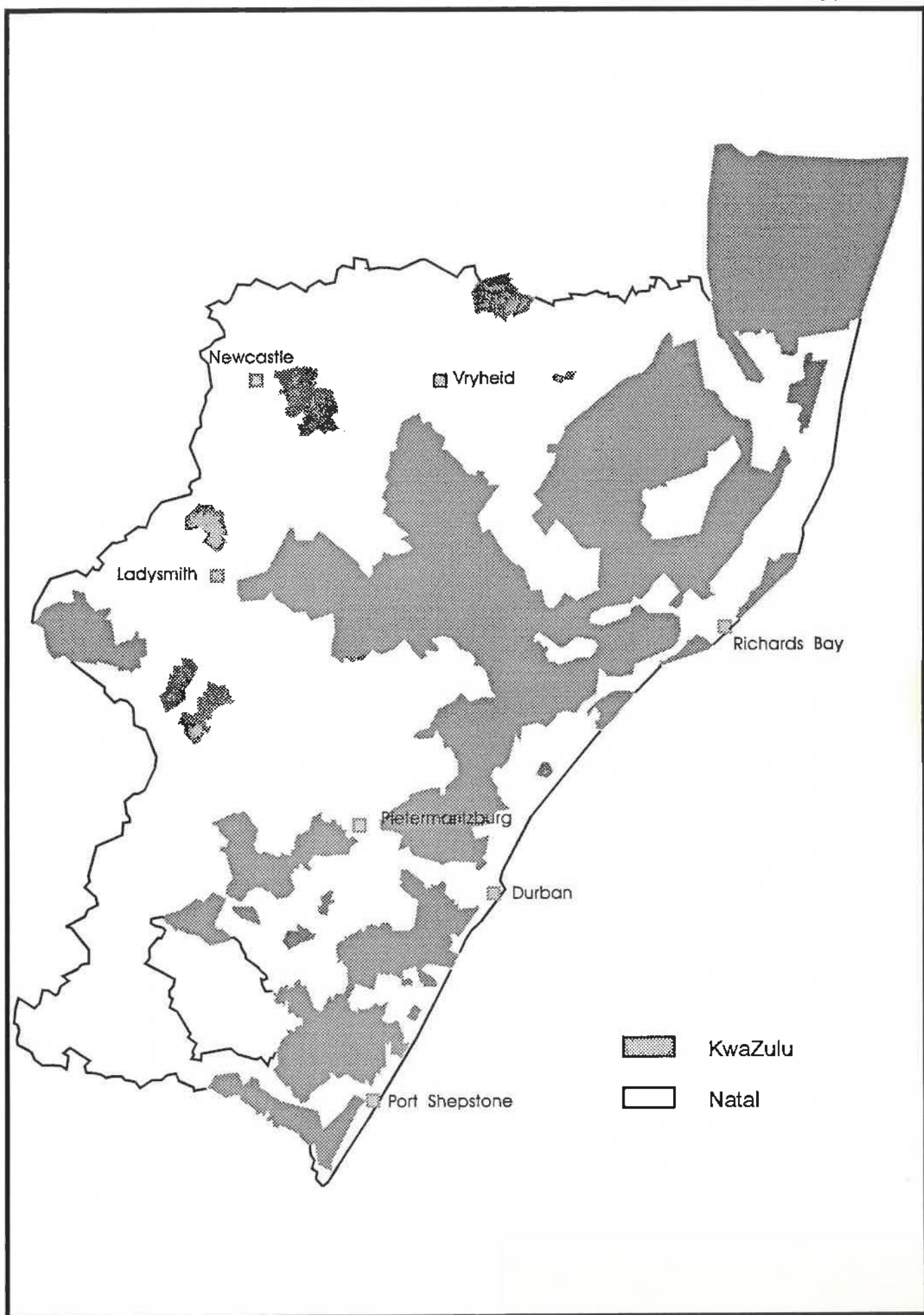
¹Louw, A. 'Post-Election Conflict in KwaZulu-Natal' in Indicator South Africa, Vol. 11 No. 4. Spring 1994: 16.

²De Haas, M. and Zulu, P. 'Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 20, No. 3. September, 1994: 442.

³Eveleth, A. 'IFP Races Against Time to write Constitution' in Weekly Mail and Guardian, July 28 to August 3. 1995: 13.

⁴'IFP's Plans: No to GNU, Yes to Parliament' in Weekly Mail and Guardian, March 3-9, 1995: 2.

⁵De Haas, M. and Zulu, P. 'Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 20, No. 3. September, 1994: 433-446.



reported to have said that, while he pledges his support to President Mandela, his IFP followers should realise that 'the struggle for federalism has just begun'.⁶

One can thus not say with any certainty that the IFP will not attempt to pursue its federal ambitions as exhibited in the IFP's KwaZulu-Natal constitutional proposals released in 1992 which was a statement of the IFP's position in favour of federalism.⁷ This constitution was designed to entrench Inkatha's dominance in the state of KwaZulu-Natal, thereby facilitating secession at some unspecified later date. "The fact that it has succeeded in becoming the dominant party in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government may well give it a platform from which to propagate its vision of a federal South Africa with renewed vigour."⁸

Controversy exists around the Ingonyama Trust Act, an Act which involves a land deal between the previous Nationalist government and the former KwaZulu government just before the latter's demise. Under this Act, King Zwelithini and the chiefs became the sole custodians of some 3 million hectares, about 95 % of the former KwaZulu (See Map 3.2).⁹ This has met with harsh

⁶Quoted by De Haas and Zulu from the Natal Mercury, 16 May 1994.

⁷On 1 December 1992 the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly approved 'The Constitution of the State of KwaZulu-Natal', claiming that this was 'a first step in a process which will establish the State...as a member state of the Federal Republic of South Africa.' De Haas, M. and Zulu, P. 'Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 20, No. 3. September, 1994: 434.

⁸De Haas, M. and Zulu, P. 'Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 20, No. 3. September, 1994: 434.

⁹Lawrence, R. 'KwaZulu and Natal in the Politics of Constitutional Transformation in South Africa'. Paper presented at a Conference on Redesigning the State: The Politics of Constitutional Change. Centre for Federal Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. July 1994.

criticism by the ANC which believes that this has led to the crippling of development in rural areas and also, to an absence of financial assistance by various institutions because title deeds cannot be issued to borrowers. Since this area takes up about a third of KwaZulu-Natal, the ANC wants to review this Act.¹⁰

The IFP's relationship with the King is difficult to discern. There is Zwelithini's apparent rift from the IFP; there is conflict between the ANC, the King and the IFP about the IFP's independent establishment of a House of Traditional Leaders. Buthelezi appear to have usurped the position historically enjoyed by the King.¹¹ He has created a strong foothold in the province through his chairmanship of the House of Traditional Leaders (customarily one would have assumed this to come under guardianship of the King) where most of the province's 300 chiefs support him.¹²

Points of dispute a year after the first national election are still mainly between the ANC (which won the majority vote on a national level) and the IFP, covering a range of issues. The ANC, with the King's support, managed to pass legislation in the National Assembly granting President Mandela the responsibility of determining the remuneration of traditional leaders. With this decision, the IFP's grip on the House of Traditional Leaders was weakened. The IFP is trying to oppose this decision by arguing that traditional leadership is a provincial matter in

¹⁰Madlala, C. 'The Province that Bleeds as the Politicians Bluster' in the Sunday Times, July 9, 1995: 23.

¹¹De Haas, M. and Zulu, P. 'Ethnicity and Federalism: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal' in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 20, No. 3. September, 1994: 440.

¹²IFP's Plans: No to GNU, Yes to Parliament' in Weekly Mail and Guardian, March 3-9, 1995: 2.

terms of the interim constitution.¹³

Discontent also exists surrounding the location of the KwaZulu-Natal capital. The choice is between Ulundi, seat of former KwaZulu government and IFP stronghold, and Pietermaritzburg, the Natal provincial capital.¹⁴ The ANC is in favour of the latter remaining the region's capital while the IFP would like to transfer provincial offices to Ulundi. (See Map 3.2.) The region's ANC seems to be battling to come to grips with the fact that the IFP is constitutionally entitled to some regional autonomy.¹⁵

It is difficult not to assume that all these disagreements represent more than just the IFP's commitment to the principle of federalism; rather they indicate a desperate attempt to consolidate its regional power base. Indeed, the IFP's 20 point-plan, brought to the media's attention in July 1995, seems to be a revision of the original principles advanced in 1992.¹⁶ This plan is viewed by the ANC as a secessionist plan, but the IFP considers it an affirmation of provincial powers which KwaZulu-Natal is legally entitled to under the interim constitution.¹⁷

¹³Madlala, C. 'The Province that Bleeds as the Politicians Bluster' in the Sunday Times, July 9, 1995: 23.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Lawrence, R. 'KwaZulu and Natal in the Politics of Constitutional Transformation in South Africa'. Paper presented at a Conference on Redesigning the State: The Politics of Constitutional Change. Centre for Federal Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. July 1994.

¹⁶This document (as the 1992 Constitution of KwaZulu-Natal) was greatly influenced by Oriani-Ambrosini, an advisor to the IFP, known for his conservative views and support for secession politics.

¹⁷Madlala, C. 'The Province that Bleeds as the Politicians Bluster' in the Sunday Times, July 9, 1995: 23.

At present, local government elections will be opposed by the House of Traditional Leaders if the ANC denies international mediation, which was an agreement made between the ANC, the NP and IFP before the national elections in 1994 facilitating the IFP's participation in the election. According to the IFP, their entrance into the electoral process of 1994 was on the premise that international mediation, and not the Constitutional Assembly, would decide on issues of funding, the position of the monarch and the provincial powers of KwaZulu-Natal.¹⁸ The ANC has made it clear that it will only allow international mediation once the final constitution is drawn up and finalised in April 1996.¹⁹ The ANC and NP both feel that international mediation is only intended for matters which cannot be resolved by the Constitutional Assembly. They argue that international mediation was never intended to usurp the Constitutional Assembly.²⁰

The struggle between the ANC and IFP for power and authority in the province seems to be the overriding concern of the region, and probably will be for some time. This tendency will complicate the establishment, functioning and cooperation of provincial government departments with national government. (This will be looked at in Chapter Seven). Besides the political complexities, KwaZulu-Natal also has several crucial socio-economic problems which create particular complications for conservation.

¹⁸Chothia, F. 'Mediation Put Off Too Long Says Okumo' in Weekly Mail and Guardian, 24 February 1995: On Line: <http://www.mg.co.za/mg/>.

¹⁹Eveleth, A. 'IFP Races Against Time to write Constitution' in Weekly Mail and Guardian, July 28 to August 3. 1995: 13.

²⁰Eveleth, A. 'IFP Sees No Joy in Mediation Promises' in Weekly Mail and Guardian, 31 March 1995: On Line: <http://www.mg.co.za/mg/>.

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

KwaZulu-Natal experiences diverse socio-economic stresses. It is home to 23 % of South Africa's population but only produces 14.7 % of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).²¹ After Northern Transvaal and Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal is the third poorest region, with 69.66 % of its population residing in rural areas. Deloitte and Touche consultants report a high level of underdevelopment and poverty in the region.²² There is not only a massive income (or level of subsistence) gap, but also a population distribution gap between the urban and rural areas.

Brett points out that because KwaZulu-Natal is located on the eastern side of the continent, it receives a higher rainfall than the rest of South Africa, explaining why 23 % of the regional population is concentrated on 7.4 % of the land.²³ On top of this, historical inequalities, intensified by the homeland system,²⁴ have concentrated two-thirds of the population of KwaZulu-Natal on only one-third of the land. Because only 12 % of KwaZulu is arable, and with a population density of 170 people per square kilometre in the KwaZulu region (see

²¹'Reconstruct' in Work in Progress, No 17, April/May 1994: 15.

²²McGrath, M. 'Financing the Future' in Indicator South Africa. Volume 11, Number 2. Autumn 1994: 49-52.

²³Brett, M.R. 'Conservation in Natal - an Assessment' in Monitor, No 9. First Quarter 1990: 3.

²⁴The KwaZulu homeland was based primarily on land set aside as Natives Reserves in the nineteenth century, as well as parts of the historic Zulu kingdom not taken by whites after the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879. This was formally constituted under the 1913 Natives Land Act. A homeland was the only area where Africans could acquire land legally. The apartheid theory behind the homeland system was that the African population is not South African, but belong to their own ethnic nationalities. (Williams, G. and Hackland, B. The Dictionary of Contemporary Politics of Southern Africa, London: Routledge. 1988: 107).

Map 3.2), KwaZulu-Natal's topography illustrates that the regional concentration of people and livestock results in serious soil erosion. It has been estimated that soil loss in the region exceeds natural rates of replacement twenty-eight fold.²⁵ Once natural resources have been destroyed, they cannot be replaced.

The reincorporation of the homelands into South Africa was not without consequence. It is no coincidence that of the nine new provinces, those with the largest homeland component - Northern Transvaal, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal - are the same provinces which are regarded as the poorest. The fact that KwaZulu-Natal is not well endowed with economically important minerals,²⁶ will mean that 'undoing the consequences of apartheid' (mass underdevelopment, the duplication of services) in the region could entail great costs.²⁷ At the same time, however, possibly the greatest benefit that will emerge from the reintegration of the homelands, is the establishment of a rational holistic framework for regional development planning. The currently fragmented and distorted structure of regional government in South Africa has seriously hindered the development of the most impoverished areas of South Africa.²⁸ KwaZulu-Natal is an extreme case.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Luckily KwaZulu-Natal is rich in natural resources and has great potential for tourism development, partly because of its Zulu heritage and its

²⁵Robinson, P. Dr. 'Strategic Issues in Natal/KwaZulu' in Monitor, No 10, Second Quarter 1990: 2.

²⁶The Buthelezi Commission Report. 1981: 4.

²⁷'Reconstruct' in Work in Progress, No 17, April/May 1994: 15.

²⁸*Ibid.*

underdeveloped/rural state - which could be utilized to the region's advantage.²⁹ (Table 3.1 presents both the liabilities and assets of KwaZulu-Natal).

There is a two-sided stress on the region's resources: the poor rural and urban majority struggling to stay alive at the subsistence level (with the consequent deforestation and desertification) and an affluent minority who exhibit a First World consumption pattern (and accompanying pollution and waste creation). Both these lifestyles have a negative impact on the environment and are not sustainable. In countries in the First World, the threatened collapse of environmental systems has occurred only after strong economic development, which in turn could support and afford the implementation of remedial measures. In KwaZulu-Natal, by contrast, environmental degradation and economic stress are occurring simultaneously.³⁰

Some people are of the opinion that, in many respects, "environmental conditions in KwaZulu-Natal are not beyond recovery if changes are made now, but the lapse of another ten or twenty years will inflict irrecoverable problems upon our descendants."³¹

The major stresses on KwaZulu-Natal's natural resource base will continue to be demands for water and food by a rapidly growing and urbanizing population. Hay and A'Bear believe that issues of poverty, stress, environmental abuse and

²⁹Development of Southern Africa, KwaZulu Development Information. Volume I. Section I. Halfway House: Development Bank of Southern Africa. 1988: 9,10.

³⁰Hay, D. and A'Bear, D. Economic Development Strategies for Region E: The Natural Environment. Institute of Natural Resources Working Paper No 90. Institute of Natural Resources: University of Natal. 1993: 19.

³¹Ibid.

LIABILITIES	ASSETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Persistent political violence. * Massive inequalities with poverty, landlessness and highly, inadequate access to water, sanitation and electricity in rural areas and informal settlements. * Rapid and badly managed urbanisation (1.8 million people in informal settlements). Housing is in short supply and informal settlements are mushrooming at alarming rates. * 0,5 % doctors/1000 population, high infant mortality at 52/1000. * Low education levels and high illiteracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A diversified and relatively well developed economy with a strong manufacturing sector. * Good natural resources - a water rich region. * Several universities, technikons and other training institutions. * A modern transport sector and good infrastructure (although unevenly distributed), harbour, airport. * Tourism growth potential (because of its rich natural resources, and thorough infrastructure).

Source: 'Reconstruct' in Work in Progress, No 17, April/May 1994: 14.

lack of financial capital to support various infrastructures will remain. They add that the pressure to convert pristine natural resources such as game reserves and wilderness areas into agricultural land could grow as poverty in the rural areas continues. The short-term picture seems quite sombre.³²

"GREEN" AWARENESS IN THE KWAZULU-NATAL REGION

Hay and A'Bear argue that society's regard for the environment in KwaZulu-Natal ranges from the extreme "rape and pillage" of natural resources, through ignorance and apathy, to extreme protectionism.³³ They stress that if we are to succeed in creating a sustainable socio-economic system in this region, a strong ethical environmental creed will have to be developed amongst individuals, communities and leaders.

In KwaZulu-Natal increased public awareness of environmental issues and their consequences is helping to create a social consciousness which is moving elements of society in the direction of "green" (perhaps away from liberation movements to environmental issues).³⁴ Non-Governmental Organisations active in the regions, such as Earthlife Africa, the Zululand Environmental Alliance (ZEAL) and the Wildlife Society, combined with an interested press, have considerable ability to mobilise public action in this region. The recent controversy of Richards

³²Hay, D. and A'Bear, D. Economic Development Strategies for Region E: The Natural Environment. Institute of Natural Resources Working Paper No 90. Institute of Natural Resources: University of Natal. 1993: 17.

³³Hay, D. and A'Bear, D. Economic Development Strategies for Region E: The Natural Environment. Institute of Natural Resources Working Paper No 90. Institute of Natural Resources: University of Natal. 1993: 19.

³⁴Hay, D. and A'Bear, D. Economic Development Strategies for Region E: The Natural Environment. Institute of Natural Resources Working Paper No 90. Institute of Natural Resources: University of Natal. 1993: 17.

Bay Mineral's mining proposals in St. Lucia is graphic evidence of how these organisations can influence public perceptions and orchestrate action. So too was the protest, organised by Earthlife Africa, by the general public outside Thor Chemicals' main entrance in Cato Ridge - demonstrating a general disapproval of environmental abusive behaviour.³⁵

But there is scope for continued environmental activism, especially when it comes to issues of conservation (in particular, wildlife-conservation). Let me again use the outrageous plundering of shellfish on the Transkeian coast near Dweza as an example. Environmental groups mentioned earlier were not rallying support for the local neighbours of the Dweza Nature Reserve who were desperately seeking solutions to their precarious situation. Months and years of pleas to the Transkeian Conservation authorities to harvest and utilize natural resources fell on deaf ears causing them to react violently against the environment. Only after severe environmental damage was sustained,³⁶ were their grievances concerning the achievement of basic subsistence, given cognisance.³⁷

CONSERVATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL: AN ASSESSMENT

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is internationally respected amongst nature conservationists. It is the province where the white rhino was saved from impending extinction, and where pioneering work was done on the sedation and live capture of game animals. The province has also received acclaim for many

³⁵ Jeffery, C. 'United War on Toxic Waste' in Natal Witness, 14 November 1994.

³⁶ According to experts, the shellfish reaped by the local communities will take the eight to twelve years to restore. 50/50, 16 July 1995.

³⁷ 50/50, 16 July 1995.

other conservation initiatives, including the conservation of marine turtles, the extensive protection of the Drakensberg mountains, and the establishment of a system of conservancies on private farmland.³⁸

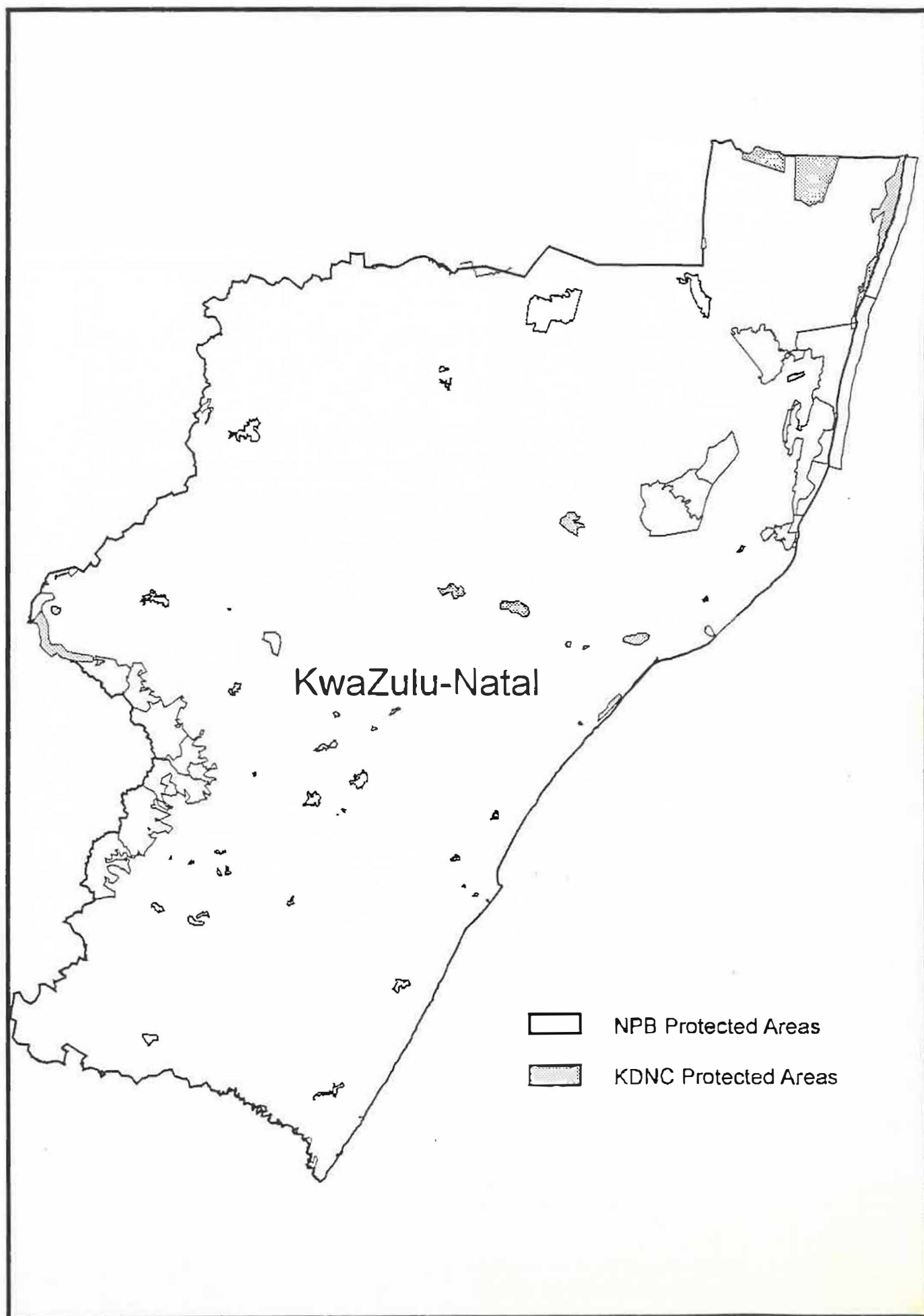
The conservation management of KwaZulu-Natal parks has been referred to by some writers as being the best in Africa, and it rates very highly when measured against the rest of the world.³⁹ Conserved areas in the region are managed, primarily, by three organisations: the Natal Parks Board (NPB), the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC) and the Forestry Division of the Department of Environment Affairs. Together, the area conserved by the three organisations totals 8.36 % of the province's territory. (See Map 3.3.)⁴⁰

Brett is of the opinion that these favourable statistics do not mean that conservation in this region is in an irreproachable state. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recommends that every country should aim to place 10 % of its surface area under some form of permanent conservation. The argument behind this set minimum is that it would safeguard sufficient natural habitats found on earth for the prosperity of future generations: in other words, to ensure principles of sustainability. According to Our Common Future (1987) human activity at present is altering and affecting the viability of natural systems at a rate unsurpassed by any previous generation. The need to conserve threatened ecosystems is increasing, and not diminishing.

³⁸Brett, M.R. 'Conservation in Natal - an Assessment' in Monitor, No 9. First Quarter 1990: 3.

³⁹Davis, I. 'The Natal Parks Board' in South African Panorama, October 1987: 18-21.

⁴⁰The Natal Parks Board's Annual Report, 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995.



The magnitude of the conservation problem is increased when the principles of Island Biogeography are applied. Brett explains the theory as follows: conserved land, which increasingly becomes pockets in an altered landscape, functions in much the same way as do oceanic islands. Islands close to the mainland and of a considerable size support a diversity of species. On islands situated far from the mainland, a high extinction rate is to be expected as species become locally extinct due to insufficient numbers and migrants are unable to repopulate the island.⁴¹ The relationship between this principle and conservation is that large reserves are able to sustain a greater diversity of species than small reserves. In Botswana, five national parks and reserves conserve 18 % of the country. In Malawi, 11 % of the country is conserved in only nine national parks and reserves. In KwaZulu-Natal however, approximately 90 nature reserves protect 8.36 % of the province. Simple deduction tells us that many must be small and that the long-term viability of these areas is questionable.⁴²

The conservation challenges for the KwaZulu-Natal region are plentiful. Will conserved areas survive if they exist as islands of natural prosperity surrounded by overpopulated, semi-desert wastelands? How can our conserved areas become the cherished property of all the people of KwaZulu-Natal? How can government justify proclaiming more land to establish new parks and reserves? What will the role of the traditional tribal system be for conservation? How will the provincial government combine the two major conservation administrations of the region (the Natal Parks Board, and the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation) into one, where each claims to be the most beneficial for conservation in the region?

⁴¹Brett, M.R. 'Conservation in Natal - an Assessment' in Monitor, No 9. First Quarter 1990: 4.

⁴²Brett, M.R. 'Conservation in Natal - an Assessment' in Monitor, No 9. First Quarter 1990: 4.

The KDNC and the NPB were separated by the apartheid system. Each is proud of its achievements. The democratization of South Africa in 1994 has made their separateness and duplication of duties under different authorities unnecessary. The Provincial Cabinet is now reviewing both institutions with the objective of establishing a unitary environmental management system for the region, comprising elements of both the Natal Parks Board and KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation. This is easier said than done when personal pride and survival is at stake. In essence, the organisations do not differ fundamentally. Both have the same aspirations, and act in the interest of wildlife conservation.⁴³

THE NATAL PARKS BOARD

The Natal Parks Board is essentially a nature conservation body. It was established in December 1947. Before then, nature conservation was the responsibility of the Natal Fisheries Board, the Inland Fisheries Board and the Zululand Game Reserves and Parks Board. The need for one comprehensive board grew out of these. The NPB's responsibilities in the boundaries of the province of Natal include the management of large game reserves, the development of pleasure resorts along the coast, around inland lakes and in the Drakensberg, research on fauna and flora, trout farming, the conservation of historical sites, and law enforcement.⁴⁴

The operations of the Natal Parks Board differ from those of the National

⁴³Interview with Ian Colvin, Natal Parks Board employee, 18 July 1995.

⁴⁴Davis, I. 'The Natal Parks Board' in South African Panorama, October 1987: 18-19.

Parks Board in the sense that the former is not only responsible for the reserves under its control, but also oversees nature conservation in general in Natal. It has been subsidised by the Natal Provincial Administration and is answerable to the province.⁴⁵

The Natal Parks Board subscribes to South Africa's official policy on conservation, which is in line with the world conservation strategy of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The Board's nature conservation policy statement is a commitment to 'the sensible utilization and development of natural resources and the preservation of as many natural ecosystems and species as possible.'⁴⁶ The Board prides itself on its continuous involvement in research on all aspects of wildlife, as well as its commitment to educate people on the necessity of maintaining processes on which human survival depends.⁴⁷

According to its Annual Report⁴⁸, the Board is responsible for the management of 80 protected areas, totalling 694 753 hectares⁴⁹, about 11 % of the surface area of Natal. (See Map 3.3.). In addition, 28 % of KwaZulu-Natal's coastline is protected as marine reserves.

A separate paragraph in its Annual Report reflects on the changes that the Board has had to undergo over the last few years. It illustrates the global evolution

⁴⁵Davis, J. 'The Natal Parks Board' in South African Panorama, October 1987: 19.

⁴⁶The Natal Parks Board Mission Statement, 1995.

⁴⁷Natal Parks Board's Mission Statement 1994.

⁴⁸The Natal Parks Board's Annual Report, 1 April 1993 to 31 March 1994.

⁴⁹This figure has doubled since 1988.

of the concept of conservation by referring to the importance of the socio-economic context to conservation. The paragraph reads as follows:

Facing the challenges of political and social change, the Board has over the past few years embraced a conservation model which promotes as much biodiversity as possible, practising conservation as a sustainable economic force which extends from pro-active socio-economic involvement with neighbours living adjacent to its protected areas, to enhancing the province's tourism industry, both locally and internationally.⁵⁰

As a result, the NPB is extending its conservation responsibilities into local community programmes.

THE KWAZULU DEPARTMENT OF NATURE CONSERVATION

When KwaZulu became a self-governing region in 1977, the Natal Parks Board had to cease expanding nature conservation in KwaZulu. This created a vacuum. In this context, the KwaZulu Bureau for Nature Conservation (KBNR) was born. The Bureau's main functions were to identify, conserve and develop the potential nature reserves with their natural inhabitants for use by present and future generations with minimal adverse environmental impact.⁵¹ It was also responsible for developing and encouraging the exploitation of natural resources by local inhabitants in a sustainable manner so that these resources would be self-renewing and available to future generations.⁵²

The KBNR was part of the KwaZulu Department of Economic Affairs but moved towards greater autonomy and became a separate entity - the KwaZulu

⁵⁰The Natal Parks Board's Annual Report, 1 April 1993 to 31 March 1994.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Greig, J.C. 'The KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources' in African Wildlife, Volume 36, Number 4/5. p.137.

Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC). (See Map 3.3). Because of a lack of KwaZulu government funding, the KwaZulu Conservation Trust was established in 1989. The then Chief Minister, Buthelezi⁵³ is the president and Nick Steele the executive chairman.

The KDNC sees a definite need for resource management.⁵⁴ The short-term alleviation of human problems will inevitably rebound in the future and create other, far more serious problems. Therefore, says the KDNC, development must be tightly controlled to minimize environmental damage. Allowing rural people unrestricted access to the natural resources in the reserves would deplete their own resource base in a short period because of their population numbers.⁵⁵ At the same time, however, the rural people living outside the reserves should benefit from the conservation effort, so that, in time, they would come to support it and the tourism which would flow from it. The KDNC proposed to do this:

- * by allowing communities controlled, sustainable use of resources within the reserves;
- * through employment opportunities and by sharing in a percentage of profits made through tourism, game sales and so on; and
- * all natural resources should be utilised in a sustainable manner. This is possible only through education and where people are offered alternatives

⁵³Former Prime Minister of KwaZulu, and now IFP leader and Minister of Home Affairs.

⁵⁴Information on the KDNC is very limited. No literature could be gained from the KDNC itself. To date no annual report of this organisation exists, or any report in similar vein. This makes any discussion on the conservation authorities of KwaZulu-Natal appear biased towards the NPB. The KDNC's approach to conservation in the region has therefore in this chapter been derived from secondary sources such as the Financial Times Survey of 1990.

⁵⁵Greig, J.C. 'The KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources' in African Wildlife. Volume 36, Number 4/5. p.137.

to the resources they require.⁵⁶

Yet little of this has materialized. A problem present in the region is a deeply entrenched traditional mistrust of conservation authorities due to their history of depriving local people of land and resources in the establishment of reserves for an affluent, usually white, elite.

The NPB and the KDNC have been accused of authoritarian behaviour. Because of the forthcoming amalgamation between these two organisations, planned for April 1996, accusations are being thrown at one another, each trying to discredit the other's management style in the hope that their's will triumph. Some criticism is valid and deserves closer examination. For example, Nick Steele claims that:

the Natal Parks Board's conservation officers tend to see their black neighbours as KwaZulu's problem, not theirs. Hence, there has been little or no attempt to integrate their conservation areas into the local economy in whatever form.⁵⁷

Steele asserts that the KDNC:

[E]ncourages participation by tribal authorities in its management committees. This works quite well as the Tribal Authority representatives can report back on management matters.⁵⁸

The Natal Parks Board agrees that the KDNC does award the local

⁵⁶Financial Mail Special Report, 'KwaZulu Conservation Trust' in Financial Mail, 23 November, 1990: 58.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Financial Mail Special Report, 'KwaZulu Conservation Trust' in Financial Mail, 23 November, 1990: 65.

environment twenty-five percent of the revenue collected from reserves by the KDNC. But the NPB regards this as a hand-out which is not conducive to the region's economic development precisely because the money is collected by the Tribal Authorities.⁵⁹ Some also say that channelling revenue through the tribal authorities has not led to the development of the local economy of KwaZulu.⁶⁰

In addition, rural people have been removed from the land and not adequately compensated by the KwaZulu conservation authorities. For example, the establishment of the Tembe Elephant Park in Northern Zululand in 1981 meant serious dislocation for the people who occupied the land prior to the creation of this KDNC's conservation area. The Surplus Peoples' Project (SPP), an organisation which studies forced dislocation in South Africa, noted in its report on the situation in KwaZulu that "the people of the area were not, by and large, seen as part of the total ecology of the area, with moreover, prior claim to its resources, but as problems, obstacles who could be, and frequently were, moved elsewhere so that the environment could be 'preserved'".⁶¹

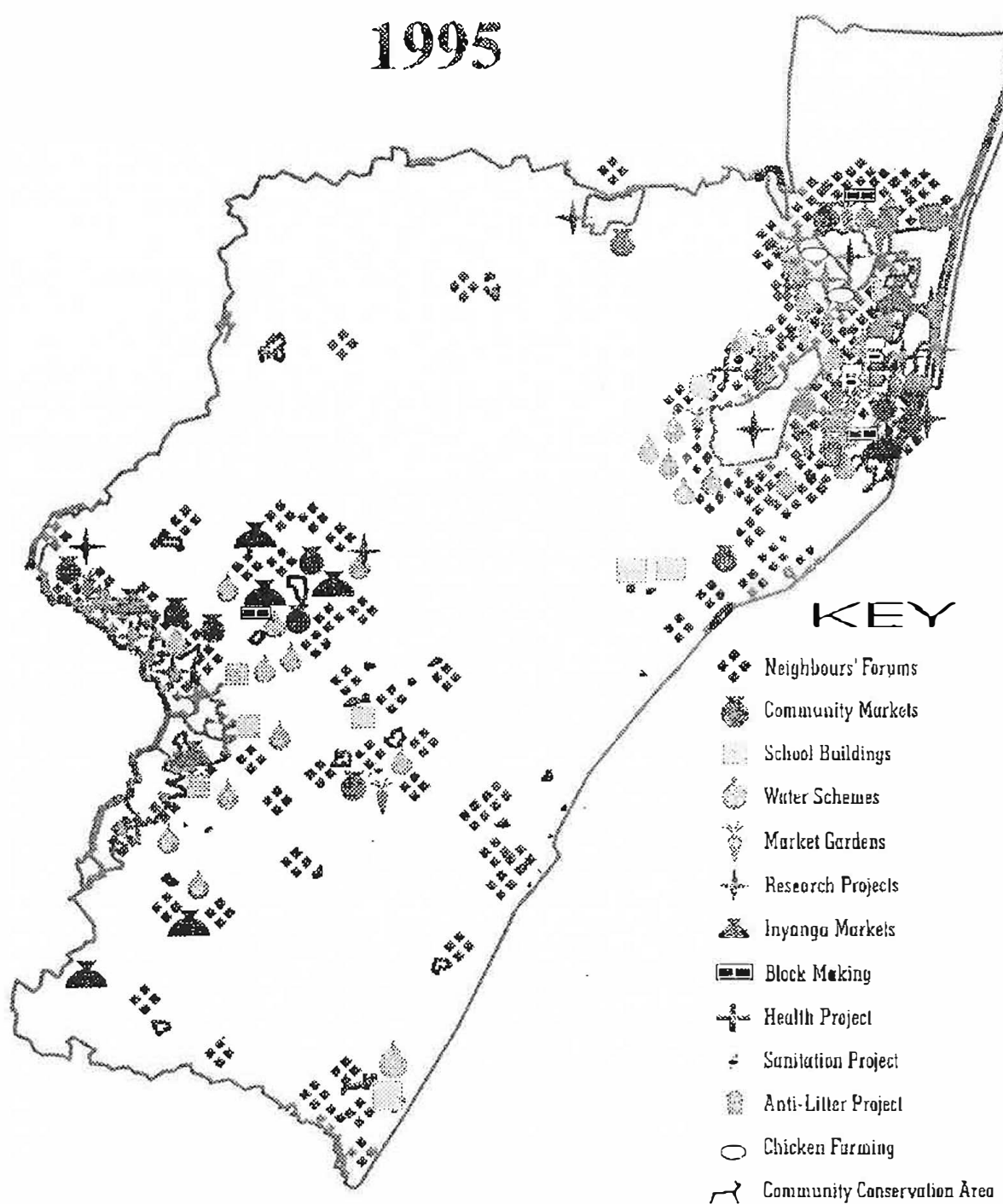
The Natal Parks Board is very proud of their neighbour relations programme, which was put into practice in 1991. They boast of an abundance of community projects for those communities living in close proximity to the Natal Parks Board's nature reserves. (See Map 3.4). These projects include community road-building, water-supply schemes, community curio centres, and the establishment of 'muti'

⁵⁹Financial Mail Survey. 'Keeping Pace with a New South Africa' in Financial Mail, 22 March 1991: 5-35.

⁶⁰Fowkes, J. KwaZulu Ezemvelo. Report of the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. 1989: 280.

⁶¹Centre for Community Organisation Research and Development (CORD). Overcoming Apartheid's Land Legacy in Maputaland. Working Paper No. 3. 1990. University of Natal: Durban.

MAP 3.4: NATAL PARKS BOARD'S NEIGHBOURS' PROGRAMME



PROJECT VALUE : R 12 165 000

NATAL PARKS BOARD
NATALSE PARKERAAD



nurseries.⁶² The partnership that has developed between the Natal Parks Board and the Rural Foundation has led to the joint funding of a community development officer and an appreciable amount of training for Board staff.⁶³

At the Hilltop Camp in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, apparently, forty-one functioning community forums with park neighbours have been established. These have resulted in operational market gardens, water schemes, dam construction, curio stalls and new school buildings. Provision is also made for the local communities to harvest natural resources from the reserves, with quantities being measured in tonnes and valued in thousands of Rands.⁶⁴

Progress has been made in extending conservation services and enhancing the Board's image in the black community. Adding a significant new dimension was the participation of the Board in the Environmental Education section in a weekly programme on Radio Zulu. The Board's Environmental Education Services has been involved in the Board's attempt at consolidating positive neighbour relations, thus establishing it as a significant contributor to the well-being of neighbouring communities.⁶⁵

A DEVELOPMENT ROUTE FOR KWAZULU-NATAL

In light of the region's political complexities, socio-economic stresses and the general attitude towards the environment, combining the region's desperate

⁶²A 'muti' nursery is a nursery where medicinal plants are grown and nurtured for their healing value, and then retailed to the public.

⁶³The Natal Parks Board's Annual Report, 1 April 1993 to 31 March 1994.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

need for economic growth with that of conservation would seem to be a difficult proposition. In determining a sustainable development route for KwaZulu-Natal one should perhaps reiterate what the most important strategic issues are that demand resolution.

Dr Peter Robinson⁶⁶ has indicated the strategic issues of the region as: (1) creating effective participation in general, for all rural people in the political process and in decision-making structures; (2) fostering economic growth to provide for the minimum aspirations of the regional population; (3) employment creation; (4) dealing with urbanization; (5) providing infrastructure and housing; (6) promoting regional financial development because of the limitations of central government funding and of diverse development concerns competing for priority; and finally, (7) to install effective environmental management procedures to ensure long-term economic development.⁶⁷

Not all development options can address these strategic issues to the same extent. If the region is to prosper, it needs to find a development route suitable to its people and geographical characteristics. Naas Steenkamp claims that it is a falsehood that the deprivation of KwaZulu-Natal can be addressed by agriculture. He argues that there is not enough land with the required agricultural potential to do so. On top of this, there are several surveys which indicate that this is also not always what rural people want to do. According to Steenkamp, South Africa needs comprehensive rural development, of which agriculture is an appropriate but

⁶⁶Dr Robinson is a town and regional planner, and was a lecturer in the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Natal, Durban.

⁶⁷Robinson, P. Dr. 'Strategic Issues in Natal/KwaZulu' in Monitor, No 10, Second Quarter 1990: 2.

not exclusive component.⁶⁸

But rural development, too, has limited potential. End results still reflected low productivity levels - making rural development programmes insufficient and desired in and of themselves. Rural development can only assist in providing a means of subsistence.⁶⁹ It can help people to help themselves but it does not necessarily lead to overall economic development or growth, and it cannot provide for the needs as expressed by Robinson.

In terms of manufacturing goods for exports, South Africa as a whole is having difficulty in competing on international markets, because of wage increases and production cost rises which have not kept pace with productivity. Therefore the country - never mind KwaZulu-Natal - is going to find it increasingly difficult to grow as an industrial country.⁷⁰ Tourism offers an alternative development route. It could go a long way in fostering economic growth, employment and financial development. In fact, this option has been regarded as one of KwaZulu-Natal's few assets (See Table 3.1). In the next few chapters tourism in general, and ecotourism in particular, will be analysed, seeing how this form of endeavour can bring together KwaZulu-Natal's development needs with conservation practices.

⁶⁸Steenkamp in 'How our Dolphins can Help the Poor' in Open Africa, Supplement to the Weekly Mail & Guardian, no 3, December 1994.

⁶⁹A working paper compiled by C. Breen, T. Little, A. McIntosh, D. A'Bear and M. Mander titled 'The Integration of Conservation and Development'. 1991.

⁷⁰From an interview with Dr Bhadra Ranchod, then Minister of Tourism as published in RSA Policy Review, August 1993: 15 - 29.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOURISM

In this chapter, I will argue that tourism is a potential component of economic development for KwaZulu-Natal. It is a component which is currently underperforming, one that could outperform agriculture or manufacturing. Tourism is also a component of economic development which is not yet regarded by South African decision-makers as being as valuable as our gold resources. Where South Africa's mineral resources in the past were our main passport to development, tourism is perhaps a future option, taking into consideration recent speculation that South Africa's gold resources are diminishing.¹

KwaZulu-Natal is not perceived to be a region with a generous mineral resource base ready to exploit. In fact, if one thinks of KwaZulu, images of a distinctive Zulu culture and rituals spring to mind. An authentic image which is a unique feature, not to be found anywhere else on earth. KwaZulu means "land of the Zulu", and the region has an interesting history of war and bloodshed. Films marketed worldwide, like "Shaka Zulu" have popularized this Zulu image even more.

The region has a rich diversity of wildlife. Here one can find the last herds of free-ranging elephants. Every year, on the northern part of the region's coastline, loggerhead marine turtles come looking for nesting grounds on the beach. The St. Lucia Wetland estuary, a bird sanctuary, is regarded as worthy of belonging on the list of the World Heritage Sites. Thoughts of the white rhino worldwide are inextricably linked to the conservation efforts of the Natal Parks Board.

¹50/50, 16 July 1995.

Promoting tourism towards the region is not the problem here.² Tourism is like any other industry in that it implies a series of consequences, costs and benefits. It is also an industry which would affect the socio-political and economic attributes of the region because of its widespread reach. Tourism embraces a vast and diverse range of activities, from large-scale mass or package tours to small-scale, individually tailored holidays; from internal domestic visits to family or friends, to international or intercontinental journeys, to business trips and 'sun, sand and sea' recreational breaks; from sports, nature, health, 'green' or alternative holidays, to culture or adventure.³

The problem with tourism is partly its extent but also its rapid growth rate. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reports that between 1970 and 1990 tourism grew by nearly 300 per cent. It is expected to grow by half again before the end of the century. According to the WTTC, tourism is the world's largest employer, employing 118 million people worldwide - that is one in every fifteen employees. It pays US \$540 billion annually in wages and salaries, and about 60 per cent of all international travel is related to tourism.⁴

The growth of tourism is ascribed to the increased leisure time and

²The Natal Parks Board has achieved recognition by winning various environmental awards. It received the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award, more specifically for the Hilltop Camp at the Hluhluwe Umfolozi Park, placing it in the top five worldwide. Such international media coverage can only be in the interest of tourism promotion of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, the Automobile Association Award for best self-catering facility accompanied the British Airways Award. Hluhluwe is easily accessible from the Durban Airport, Louis Botha - which is receiving international flights, and is thus destined to attract great numbers of tourists. (50/50, 19 March 1995).

³De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco, Oxford University Press. 1976.

⁴The Report of The World Travel and Tourism Council. 1991.

disposable income of many living in the industrialised countries. There are several factors which make it likely that the present expansion of tourism will continue. These include longer holiday entitlements, larger disposable incomes and the greater expectation of life-after-retirement. Technical advances in the field of air transport and telecommunications will further extend the scope of international tourism.⁵

Steenkamp says that Britain, for example, earns R125 billion a year from tourism - yet is a country which is regarded as a model of modern agriculture. Twice as many people are employed in its tourism industry as in farming, making tourism a worthy endeavour.⁶

Globally, South Africa is only a small player, accounting for less than 0.25 per cent of the tourism industry. Of 560 000 overseas visitors to South Africa in 1992, 70 per cent were from Europe, nine per cent from the USA and 5.5 per cent from Taiwan and Japan.⁷ In South Africa, tourism is only the fourth-largest income earner and in terms of gross national product measurement, lags more than six times behind the rest of the world.⁸ Why? Probably because of South Africa's unstable political climate and the perceived threat to personal safety. Such factors would restrict an international tourism growth. But more significantly, South Africa's past racist policies could not be very conducive to tourism. South Africa's racially based laws regulated access to public facilities.

⁵Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon, United Kingdom: World Wide Fund for Nature. 1992: 1.

⁶Steenkamp in 'How Our Dolphins Can Help the Poor' in Open Africa, supplement to the Weekly Mail & Guardian, no 3, December 1994.

⁷From an interview with Dr Bhadra Ranchod, then Minister of Tourism, published in RSA Policy Review, August 1993: 15.

⁸White Paper on Tourism. 1992.

Foreign visitors could not always be assured of access to all amenities. South Africa was, under these circumstances, not the ideal place to come to, especially taking into consideration the various economic sanctions, international boycotts and prohibitions, as well as South Africa's pariah status.

Only in 1992 did the South African government construct an acceptable tourism policy insofar as it highlighted the need to redefine South Africa's political dispensation if it wished to gain a greater percentage of the global tourism market.⁹ Now, three years later, because of extensive political reform in the country, South Africa can finally compete on the global market. Diverse publications have argued that the tourism industry is set to become the world's biggest industry, with an enormous economic potential.¹⁰ The United Nations estimates that tourism will produce more revenue than the steel, car or even oil industries by the end of the decade.¹¹

The White Paper on Tourism (1992),¹² firmly states that tourism has the potential to become the top earner of foreign currency for South Africa too. In contrast to our manufacturing or agricultural capabilities, our tourism potential is unlimited, because South Africa has a seemingly endless list of natural features. (It has the third highest biodiversity index of any country in the world). (See Table

⁹Point 2.5 of the White Paper on Tourism, 1992.

¹⁰Beyond the Green Horizon (1993), Nature Tourism (1991), Ecotourism: The Potentials and the Pitfalls, (1990). White Paper on Tourism (1992).

¹¹Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon. United Kingdom: World Wide Fund for Nature. 1992: 1.

¹²The White Paper on Tourism (1992), although compiled by the previous regime, has been accepted by the ANC dominated government of national unity. It therefore remains a useful document in analyzing the scope of tourism in South Africa.

4.1 for a list of South Africa's biodiversity).

Interestingly, each observer tends to back his judgement about tourism with personal feeling. As a result, studies done by those involved in tourism tend to be remarkably positive - highlighting the advantages, and those carried out by academics tend to be dominantly negative - highlighting the adverse implications.¹³ Taking neither extreme - but the route in between - I wish to place tourism within the general debate on sustainable development. Tourism, perhaps more than any other activity, depends on the quality of human and natural environments and resources.¹⁴ Yet, more often than not, it appears to be a rapid, short-term development. Developers move in on a prime site, develop it and when the site loses its appeal because of 'wear and tear' on those very assets, they simply seek other sites appropriate for tourism development.¹⁵ If the widespread support for tourism as a development strategy entails such adverse consequences, then its active promotion becomes a cause for concern.

Several factors justify a focus on tourism. The global growth of this industry was seen as offering a new opportunity for so called underdeveloped countries to secure foreign exchange and stimulate economic growth.¹⁶ Because these countries generally had an abundance of rich biodiversity, or pristine environments and mysterious cultures, tourists, especially from industrialised countries, became interested in travelling to these far-off places. Tourism's influx of foreign

¹³De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco, Oxford University Press. 1976: 5.

¹⁴If a country's natural and built environment is not 'attractive' enough, it has little chance of becoming a tourist destination.

¹⁵The experiences of Spain come to mind, where famous tourism sites have suffered from erosion.

¹⁶Panos Media Briefing, Number 14. January 1995. London: Panos Institute.

- South Africa is wedged between two ocean current, one warm, one cold;
- South Africa has five major biomes displaying an array of life forms not to be matched on earth, these are:
 - * a wide diversity of ecosystems
 - Fynbos, one of the world's five floral kingdoms, with 8500 flowering plants;
 - Rainfall biome displaying three times the diversity of the rainforests of South America;
 - The Karoo, harbours 19 veld types and more than 7000 plant species (three times as many as the British Isles);
 - The higher-lying grassland, with plant species exceeding 4000;
 - Savannah, with well over 7000 plant species;
 - The lowland forest, although reduced to 0.08 % of the land surface, still nourishes 1300 plant species;
 - * glimpses of untamed Africa;
 - * excellent climate which gives us the potential to be a year-round tourist destination;
 - * attractive beaches with supporting facilities of good quality;
 - * fine infrastructure of protected areas, game lodges, wilderness trails;
 - * it is a well placed destination for viewing the large African mammals in the wild;
 - * and is an exciting destination for scuba divers, ornithologists, trailers, botanists, palaeontologists, anglers, etc.
- This is also the only place in the world where you can see the 'big six' mammals, including the *Pleistocene mega-herbivores* and whales in our bays.
- South Africa is known for the 'big five': buffalo, leopard, lion, elephant and rhino;
- South Africa has coral reefs, snow-covered mountains, bush and parkland, deserts, swamps, wetlands and the world's largest sand mass.
- South Africa's cultural, archaeological and palaeotological diversity is unique. Britain might have the oldest man (about half a million years old), but in the hills around Johannesburg (which are 100 times older than the Himalayas) *Australopithecus africanus*, the grandmother of all living humans, roamed three million years ago.
- In the Karoo National Park, visitors can see 300-million-year-old fossils;
- African village life that goes back twice as long as colonial history is being uncovered in the northern Transvaal;

Sources: White Paper on Tourism, (1992). Fig. D. Ecotourism. A briefing paper prepared for the ANC-COSATU-SANCO. Environmental Policy Mission, 28 January 1994. Steenkamp in 'How our Dolphins can Help the Poor' in Open Africa, Supplement to the Weekly Mail & Guardian, No 3, December 1994.

populations into sensitive areas led to unforeseen consequences of environmental degradation and abuse by tourists. (Kenya, Spain, Island countries like Mauritius have, for example, suffered environmental damage.)¹⁷

Tourism as an activity can therefore be included in the general questioning of some of the basic assumptions about the relationship between development and economic growth: the realisation that growth alone may not suffice to overcome poverty. As I discussed in Chapter Two, the sustainable development paradigm is a search for means that will enable the poor to provide for their basic needs through more productive work, more widely available social services, and increased participation in political decision-making.¹⁸ One needs to reconsider whether the deliberate and large-scale development of tourism, conceived as a major net earner of foreign exchange, leads to the results consistent with this newly identified goal of sustainable development.

The most obvious and immediate benefit of tourism being voiced is the creation of jobs and opportunities for people to increase their income and standard of living. Tourism claims to provide employment at different levels. (See Table 4.2). Employment could be realised directly by working at the tourist facilities, or indirectly, by working at factories manufacturing tourist products. Or employment could be derived through investment related employment, whereby the revenue from tourism is fed back into regional development.¹⁹ Besides the above, income generating opportunities could also be created by tourism in the informal

¹⁷Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon. United Kingdom: World Wide Fund for Nature. 1992: 2.

¹⁸Our Common Future 1987, Caring for the Earth 1991.

¹⁹De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco, Oxford University Press. 1976: 42-44.

TABLE 4.2: TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT TOURISM PROVIDES:

DIRECT EMPLOYMENT	INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT	INVESTMENT-RELATED EMPLOYMENT
In businesses that sell goods and services directly to tourists such as hotels, restaurants, transport operators and shops.	Stimulated by tourists's expenditure in activities, such as manufacturing and wholesale distribution that supply goods and services to the tourism businesses.	In construction and other capital goods industries.

Source: De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco, Oxford University Press. 1976: 42-44.

sector. Durban's beachfront is testament to this, where one can find anything on sale from artwork to pigeon food.

If tourism is selected as a development strategy, then it should conform to the requirements of sustainable development. Along with the facilitation of tourism facilities, planners should give attention to basic needs of the local population, for example housing, water, sewerage disposal, schools and other services. To enforce any such development criteria, government policies have to be in place with the necessary legal back-up. In other words, the tourism industry has a socio-cultural and political dimension besides being an economic industry.

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSION OF TOURISM

One can easily support arguments for a socio-cultural dimension in tourism, primarily because the people who enjoy, or suffer, the main impact of tourism are those who live in the tourist destination areas. These people's socio-cultural and political milieu will probably be affected by the development of tourism. The encounter can have several negative effects on local residents. For example, tourism creates contact between diverse cultures. Normally it is a relationship where the tourists are better-off than the local inhabitants which could increase social tensions. And the very presence of foreigners in a underdeveloped country is widely believed to generate significant social effects by introducing alien, or what is perhaps worse, unattainable life-styles and values to the local people.²⁰

Tourism, besides mass media, education and urbanisation, is a modernizing force that affects the attitudes and values of people in all societies. Although

²⁰De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco, Oxford University Press. 1976: 68.

tourism cannot be blamed for producing social changes insofar these are not different from other modernisation influences, it can however adversely influence certain values. For example, the average tourist is a free-spending vacationer, who may consume more food in one day than a impoverished local inhabitant may consume in a couple of months. Widespread resentment or jealousy by poor people of the tourist's wealth and well-being would not be rare. Resentment will also appear when local residents are excluded from tourist facilities and benefits.²¹

With regard to culture, tourism can promote cultural pride through the promotion of indigenous arts and crafts, which could have economic spin-offs. Some would argue, however, that tourism contributes to a degeneration of traditional crafts. For instance, curio production of "kitsch airport art" and performance of fake folklore are stimulated by tourist demand.²² Local people may change traditional designs to bring their products more in line with the taste of their new customers, causing a degeneration of previous traditional knowledge and dampen artistic initiative.²³ However, local cultures can also benefit where tourists place a high value on elements in the local environment which were previously taken for granted or regarded as backward by the local population. By introducing foreign visitors to aspects of the Zulu culture, traditional sangomas for example, could receive additional respect and recognition.

²¹Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon. United Kingdom: World Wide Fund for Nature. 1992: 22.

²²Ibid.

²³De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco. 1976: 68.

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF TOURISM

One important factor which has served to reduce the number of tourists in a democratic South Africa is the question of personal safety. The continuing persistence of violence remains, especially in KwaZulu-Natal where it is highly publicised. (For example, numerous fights in hostels outside Durban between ANC boarders and IFP residents; the persistent violence in the Umlazi area; and the struggle for regional power between the ANC and IFP). There is also the serious presence of 'ordinary' crime displayed in muggings, robberies and assaults on innocent people. Armed robbery of motor vehicles in KwaZulu-Natal has apparently increased dramatically since April 1994.²⁴ It is difficult to distinguish between criminal violence and political violence. Violence in South Africa often involves elements of both. Louw says that criminal activity and gangsterism by people affiliated to political parties is common.²⁵ Community workers and leaders accuse criminal elements of thwarting reconciliation processes. It becomes obvious that political violence in KwaZulu-Natal has definite criminal dimensions. Law and order needs to be established, otherwise the expansion of tourism on a regional scale will remain difficult to attain. But violence in the tourism industry is not solely a South African problem. The World Tourism Organisation has provided countries worldwide with guidelines on how to combat assaults on tourists. "Solutions", according to them, need to be implemented across the board: from tourist accomodation, to car rental agencies and nature reserves.²⁶

Constructive progress has been made over the last few months throughout

²⁴Louw, A. 'Post Election Conflict' in Indicator South Africa, Conflict Supplement No 3, September 1994: 17.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶South African Broadcast Corporation, 9 November 1995.

South Africa. The Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEA&T), SATOUR (South African Tourism Board), the police and the business sector have held joint workshops specifically to resolve the issue of violence affecting the tourism industry.²⁷ One conclusion drawn is that safety programmes need to be discussed and created at community level. Dr Hanekom²⁸ feels that communities will cooperate with police tourism safety units if material benefits from tourism accrue to the communities themselves.²⁹ At the Kruger National Park, for example, street kids were increasingly mugging tourists. Consequently, a workshop was held between the tourism unit of Johannesburg and the local community. An education system was set up, street kids were fed and the whole process is still being monitored by South African police community workers. The result is a drastic decline in assaults on tourists in that particular region. KwaZulu-Natal has a tourism unit in Durban operating on the same principles and one is in the process of being established in Umtata.³⁰

Since the DEA&T has not yet determined an environmental policy, a regulative vacuum exists.³¹ However, the previous government's White Paper on Tourism gives a good indication of the problems that need to be addressed in the tourism industry.

In summary the document noted that:

- * While the tourism industry can make a valuable contribution to overall economic growth, tourism potential is related to such factors such as

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Dr Hanekom is Deputy Director General of the DEA&T.

²⁹How this can be attained will be discussed in Chapter Six.

³⁰South African Broadcast Corporation, 9 November 1995.

³¹This concern is dealt with in Chapter Seven and Eight.

political stability, natural resources, climate, size of the country, tourism infrastructure, and general economic conditions.³²

- * The natural and cultural environments are important attractions that give rise to tourism. Foreign tourists are seeking more nature interactive experiences. This indicates that the preservation of the country's pristine natural environment, including its rich fauna and flora and the diversity of the cultural heritages of Southern Africa, will serve as a major drawcard for tourists. Tourism planning at all levels should, therefore, take note of these vital elements. However, as tourist destinations become more crowded, such places could become more polluted and more vulnerable ecologically than previously. Trampling ecologically sensitive areas can lead to erosion and to the disturbance of plants and other fragile resources.³³

The document shows a fairly comprehensive understanding of the implications for tourism generally, and for the environment specifically. Bantubonke Holomisa, as Deputy Minister of Environment Affairs and Tourism, said that the sentiments expressed have been endorsed by the 1994 government of national unity.³⁴

THE TOURISM POLICY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Perhaps somewhat in contrast to the national perspective, in October 1991 the KwaZulu government adopted a tourism policy (and has not reviewed this since). This was prepared for the KwaZulu Cabinet by the Working Group on Tourism. The previous KwaZulu government's tourism policy is significant when discussing the nature and scope of tourism in KwaZulu-Natal, because of the IFP

³²Point 2.3 of the White Paper on Tourism, 1992.

³³Point 4.2.1 of the White Paper on Tourism, 1992.

³⁴50/50, 3 September 1994.

electoral victory in the region in 1994.

The tourism policy of the KwaZulu government, in comparison to the 1992 White Paper, is not a very thorough document. It only builds on other KwaZulu government documents already published, and does not reflect the current international interest (as demonstrated by the WWF or the WTTC, for example) in sustainable tourism. In this regard, the policy merely reiterates issues of tourism which by now are general knowledge. When this policy is compared to current international thoughts on sustainable tourism (as I will discuss in Chapter Five) it seems somewhat lacking in that it does not reflect the general reservations about tourism. It neglects, however, to reflect on potential disadvantages or costs involved for the people of KwaZulu by the tourism industry and how this should be addressed.

Positively, though, the KwaZulu government's policy acknowledged the following:

- * The establishment of a tourism industry as a means of stimulating economic development in KwaZulu - with the end objective of relieving poverty and inequality.³⁵
- * The advantages involved in tourism as being:
 - * the relatively labour intensive nature of the industry
 - * the strong multiplier effect
 - * the foreign exchange earning potential
 - * the non-consumptive nature of tourism which, if correctly managed, is sustainable over time.³⁶

³⁵Point 1.3 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

³⁶Point 1 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

This tourism policy was meant to be implemented in the homeland of KwaZulu, but still be of value to the national policy on tourism.³⁷

In its reflection of what tourism should be, the policy goes as follows. Tourism should:

- * be a concept to which all can aspire in terms of contributing to the upliftment and socio-economic wellbeing of all the people of KwaZulu;
- * provide a means of strengthening community pride;
- * make a significant contribution to safeguarding environmental, historical and cultural resources; and
- * contribute to the creation of goodwill, peace, understanding and friendship between the people of KwaZulu and others from elsewhere in South and southern Africa and around the world.³⁸

No mention is made of the degree of vulnerability the environment has for tourism (notions of carrying-capacity, sustainability, degradation) which the White Paper on Tourism (1992) illustrated. Neglected, too, is the fact that the tourism industry is heavily dependent upon a strong natural resource base which needs protection.

Tourism development in KwaZulu should, according to the policy document, take place within the following guidelines:

- * Tourism projects within KwaZulu should be appropriate to both the development needs of the people and the tourism potential of particular locations.
- * No tourism development project should be approved without consultation with interested and affected parties. This should include the representatives

³⁷Point 1.2 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

³⁸Point 1.4 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

of the community where such developments are proposed.³⁹

Tourist attractions in KwaZulu are seen to be:

- * Its people and their history;⁴⁰

The history and heritage of the Zulu people is seen as a very important tourism asset. The "Zulu" image can become an important image-builder for the region. The policy comes short in that it does not address potential problems: research proves that the manipulation of culture could stagnate the natural development process of the rural people because it romanticizes their traditional lifestyles and at the same time legitimizes oppressive behaviour (such as the subordinate position of women in KwaZulu).⁴¹

- * Its natural features.⁴²

KwaZulu's natural resources are regarded as a major tourist and recreational resource. Yet the fact that they are threatened by population pressure on the land, and that the development of tourism constitutes only one land-use option in competition with other forms of land utilization, receives little attention in the policy adopted.

Besides population pressures, the KwaZulu region also has unemployment, illiteracy, and education problems, housing shortages, and high levels of underdevelopment. Although the tourism industry can address all these issues, tourism planning needs to look beyond mere economic issues to political, social,

³⁹Point 2 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

⁴⁰Point 3.4 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

⁴¹Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon. 1992. United Kingdom: World Wide Fund for Nature, and De Kadt, E. Tourism: Passport to Development? Published for the World Bank and Unesco. 1976: 68.

⁴²Point 3.4 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

cultural, and environmental ones. It sounds as if the policy document stresses the economic aspirations of the proposed tourism industry in KwaZulu without giving due recognition to other socio-political factors.

The policy document does acknowledge the need for a tourism body. This would be of great importance. Its primary task would be to eliminate duplication of effort by the public and private sectors. Such an agency would aim to improve planning and coordination between bodies in the public and the private sectors involved in the industry. It would also aim to ensure better co-ordination through making all relevant ministries and departments aware of the government's tourism drive.

In KwaZulu's tourism policy, very little consideration is given to the environment. Or put differently, the inevitable link between tourism and the environment is not explicitly made:

The tourist industry will be developed to maximize its contribution to the economy. However, due care will be taken to protect both the social norms of the people and the fragile ecosystems.⁴³

The policy states that it will not allow its tourist asset base to be destroyed by the activities of tourists - measures taken to ensure this, however, are not mentioned. What the policy does, is to link tourism to the development of the region. It states that tourism projects within KwaZulu should reflect both the development needs of the people and the tourism potential of particular locations.

Natal's provincial powers did, in the past, not have the capacity to make policy on matters such as tourism or the environment - there is thus no comparative regional tourism policy. The democratisation of South Africa and the

⁴³Point 3.4 of the Tourism Policy of the Government of KwaZulu.

decentralisation of legislative powers to the various provinces, and with it the integration of KwaZulu with Natal will probably eradicate this absence. It is still to be determined whether policy formation for tourism in KwaZulu-Natal will improve on past policies by promoting tourism in line with international thinking on sustainable tourism.⁴⁴ For this to happen, the current IFP government of the KwaZulu-Natal province would need to go beyond the limitations of previous KwaZulu policy on tourism.⁴⁵

One hears over and over again that tourism is the world's fastest growing industry. And, together with KwaZulu-Natal's unique features (see Table 4.3), this fact warrants a closer examination in exploring the prospects for tourism in the region. Tourism is reliant on natural resources - but so is the rural population of KwaZulu-Natal. Tourism, with its primary resource base in the environment, is a fragile industry. A question which springs to mind now, is how an influx of tourists and the possible over-utilisation of sensitive eco-areas can be managed successfully in order to preserve the very core of tourism attractions in KwaZulu-Natal.

In addition, the problems special to tourism in developing regions still need to be set in the wider context of development, and the main issues addressed by tourism should fit in with the more general considerations of policy-makers for sustainable development.

⁴⁴Such as the argument presented in Beyond the Green Horizon (1993) and by Johnson, P. and Thomas, B. in Perspectives on Tourism Policy, 1992. Great Britain: Guildford & King's Lynn.

⁴⁵There still remains an absence of a joint tourism policy for the KwaZulu-Natal region. According to John Fowkes (Fowkes Consultancy) no joint tourism policy was ever published, although a conference was held in 1986 to discuss the possibility. (From a personal letter received in April 1994).

- * Coral reefs with over 1200 species of fish;
- * Submarine canyons ideal for game fishing experience of the Mozambican Coast;
- * Black and White Rhino, cheetah, crocodile, hippo, a diversity of bird and plant species and an abundance of small game;
- * Lakes, such as the St. Lucia lake, or Sibaya, which is the largest freshwater lake in Southern Africa.
- * Most attractive of all is the region's very wilderness and inaccessibility.

Source: Financial Mail Special Report, 'KwaZulu Conservation Trust' in Financial Mail, 23 November 1990: 57-63.

In the previous chapters, I attempted to stress the need for establishing a balance between conservation and development. When it comes to the tourism industry, this need becomes even more urgent. This is the crux of the thesis: how to consolidate and integrate development and conservation needs within the tourism industry in KwaZulu-Natal.

The environmental dimension requires roleplayers to try to ensure, particularly at resorts established in previously remote areas, that service provisions for vehicular traffic, waste disposal, water and energy supplies are designed to avoid disruption of natural systems.⁴⁶ It demands a reassessment of natural resource utilization. It brings up the whole argument again of conservation and sensitive resource utilization.

According to the WWF, foreign visitors are travellers not simply wanting relief from a northern winter on a tropical beach. The trend is towards adventure and exploration, contact with local cultures, and getting away to unspoilt areas. The global trend has become a search for 'an environmental experience', 'sun' 'sand' 'beaches' and 'wildlife'.⁴⁷ The result is the evolution of 'ecotourism' as representing something different from ordinary tourism, claiming to provide for this new demand. South Africa is also on this bandwagon, actively promoting the country as the ecodestination. What this concept entails is often neglected. In the next few chapter I will discuss what it would mean for South Africa in general, and KwaZulu-Natal more specifically, to pursue 'ecotourism' in the years ahead.

⁴⁶Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon. United Kingdom: World Wide Fund for Nature. 1992: 10.

⁴⁷Panos Media Briefing, No 14. London: Panos Institute. January 1995: 2.

CHAPTER FIVE

ECOTOURISM IS...

Ecotourism is, as the cliché goes, a bit of a 'buzzword' these days. Everyone has heard it, and even more interestingly, tourism promoters everywhere are using it. This would be wonderful if only it would mean the same comprehensive thing for everyone. Instead, it is a term increasingly modified to suit particular intentions.¹ Why? Because it means big money. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world and ecotourism is its fastest growing sub-sector.²

Ecotourism has become popular. People involved in the travel industry are noting an increasing demand for nature tours, as part of an overall rise in international and national tourism.³ No specific study has been undertaken to determine why, but conclusions drawn by the South African Tourism Board (SATOUR) speculate that many tourists come from urban or suburban settings;⁴ they may feel the need to "get back in touch with nature". Others may feel trapped in the "nine-to-five" routine of their "civilised" life.⁵ The enormous work of various international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) lobbying on

¹My general observation has been that the prefix 'eco' is open to abuse and misinterpretation. Some understand it to refer to economics, others to ecology, or ecosystems.

²Panos Media Briefing, No 14. London: Panos Institute. January 1995: 2.

³Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon, United Kingdom: WWF. 1992: 2.

⁴Steenkamp, N. 'How our Dolphins can Help the Poor' in Open Africa, supplement to the Weekly Mail and Guardian, No 3, December 1994.

⁵50/50, 25 September 1994.

various environmental issues, such as GreenPeace, might also have instilled in various consumers' minds a need to reassess their relationship with nature which could explain why a greater percent of tourists now opt for ecotourism. In South Africa this new interest in "nature tourism" is also evident. The South African Tourism Board has earmarked 1996 as the year of adventure and ecotourism.⁶

Dr David Fig notes that the ecological consciousness of people worldwide has influenced tourism.⁷ I would add that this influence has a twosided consequence. Tourists, on the one hand, have become 'environmentally concerned', perhaps because the increase of extinction rates of species have emotionally affected them, leading to a 'desire' for so-called ecotravels. But this does not necessarily mean that their activities as tourists are environment-friendly. On the other hand, tourist operators reflect this new trend for ecotravels by providing tourists with 'ecodestinatons' - also not necessarily of an environmentally sensitive nature. This 'ecological consciousness' within the tourism industry is increasingly being called ecotourism, rightly or wrongly.

In South Africa, apparently, and somewhat ironically, ecotourism has not yet been defined - but we have a State President's Award for Excellence in Ecotourism.⁸ Many interpretations of ecotourism exist, however, some more prescriptive than others. The common parameters they all refer to is tourism and the environment. The required relationship between these two parameters are, at the best of times, vague.

⁶Khumalo B. 'Explore South Africa's cheap thrills' in Open Africa, Supplement to the Weekly Mail and Guardian. No 2, November 1994: 6.

⁷Fig, D. Dr. (Research Director). Ecotourism: A Briefing prepared for the ANC-COSATU-SANCO. Environmental Policy Mission of the Group of Environmental Monitoring (GEM). 28 January 1994.

⁸50/50, 25 September 1994.

For example, Jenkins differentiates between ecotourism and green tourism - why, remains uncertain. According to him, ecotourism is travel or leisure activities which involve an element of ecological awareness and interest. It might include travelling to Northern KwaZulu to see wildlife, or even visiting a centre for alternative technology to appreciate its environment-friendly technology or to learn a bit more about organic gardening.⁹ The essence of ecotourism, for Jenkins, is that it relates consciously to the natural environment. Paradoxically, though, ecotourism need not necessarily be sustainable tourism - says Jenkins.¹⁰

On the other hand, green tourism, in Jenkins' view, suggests a form of travel or leisure activity which is environment-friendly in its own right. A cycling holiday visiting wildlife reserves and staying at environment-friendly lodges with vegetarian meals, could be seen as a classic case of green tourism. To be truly green, however, one would further expect the green tourist and any green tour agency to insist on relatively low impact and small scale operations. It is also important that the tourism is controlled by locals and that the revenue, or at least a large part of it, stays within the locality and that any profits are invested in improving or conserving that area's environment.¹¹

I have difficulties with such an interpretation because I do not see green tourism and ecotourism as mutually exclusive. Ecotourism defined by Jenkins is then not much different from ordinary tourism. Tourism is also based on elements of the natural environment. If ecotourism involves an element of ecological awareness and interest then it relates very closely to green tourism.

⁹Jenkins, D. 'Ecotourism' in New Ground, Summer 93/94: 22.

¹⁰*ibid.*

¹¹*ibid.*

An alternative approach to defining ecotourism is to apply the scope and application of ecology in the term ecotourism, as Edington does.¹² Ecology concentrates on the environmental relationships of organisms, their reactions with one another and the properties of whole assemblages of organisms (communities) occupying the same habitat. 'Eco' is derived from the Greek 'oikos' meaning house. As such, an ecotourist is someone who becomes a 'guest' of a home, becomes part of the host's environment, culture and lifestyle, thereby emphasising the human dimension of ecotourism.¹³

Ronnie McKelvey says ecotourism is environment-friendly and economically sustainable tourism.¹⁴ By this he means that resorts have certain responsibilities towards the environment (for example, limiting waste generation) and towards the local economy (distributing wealth among local people). His interpretation gives adequate respect to the required relationship between environment and tourism for ecotourism to subscribe to principles of sustainability. This interpretation also refutes Jenkins distinction between green tourism and ecotourism discussed earlier.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), U.S.A.'s interpretation of ecotourism depicts the relationship between environment and tourism a little better. Ecotourism "combines the pleasures of discovering and understanding spectacular flora and fauna with an opportunity to contribute to their protection...so that the promotion of ecotourism does not destroy the natural

¹²Edington, J.M. Ecology, Recreation and Tourism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986: Foreword.

¹³50/50, 25 September 1994. McKelvey is the owner of Londolozi - a world renown private game reserve situated in Mpumalanga.

¹⁴McKelvey is the owner of Londolozi - a world renown private game reserve situated in Mpumalanga.

resources upon which its success depends."¹⁵ Ecotourism is "travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas." In these terms, ecotourism "implies a scientific, aesthetic or philosophical approach to travel, although the ecological tourist needs to be a professional scientist, artist or philosopher. The main point is that the person who practices ecotourism has the opportunity of immersing himself/herself in nature in a manner generally not possible in the urban environment."¹⁶

The WWF (USA) relates to the concept ecotourism, elements of contribution: ecotourism should contribute to the protection of natural resources, and the cultural peculiarities of a region form part of the natural environment. Professor Hattingh of the University of Pretoria agrees with such an understanding of ecotourism. He says ecotourism is when the tourist himself realises that he must learn and gain something from the experience. That ecotourism is, primarily, nature-orientated in such a manner that conservation benefits and that the local community's integrity is respected.¹⁷ His interpretation adds a dimension to ecotourism which emphasises the tourist's role in contributing to conservation by understanding the process and by limiting any negative consequences his or her presence might cause either to the environment or to the local community.

The Ecotourism Society of the United States's definition is still more

¹⁵Quoted by Kathryn Fuller, President of WWF (USA) in Boo, E. Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls, Washington D.C.: WWF, 1990: xiv. (Emphasis added).

¹⁶Ceballos-Lascurain in Boo, E. Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls, Washington D.C.: WWF, 1990: xiv. (Own emphasis added).

¹⁷50/50, 25 September 1994.

comprehensive. It embraces both environment and economics: "ecotourism is purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem while producing economic opportunity that makes the conservation of natural resources financially beneficial to local citizens."¹⁸

This seems a definition worth adopting, especially in a South African context where at present the majority of local people are not benefitting from tourism. So defined, ecotourism is then necessarily environment-friendly tourism. The concept of environment here extends beyond natural resources to include human well-being. In a Panos briefing it was summarized as follows: "[i]n its purest sense, [ecotourism] is an industry which claims to make a low impact on the environment and local culture, while helping to create jobs, and conserving wildlife and vegetation. It claims to be responsible tourism which is ecological and culturally sensitive."¹⁹ The adoption of such a definition would represent a tendency towards a more harmonious relationship between ecological and economic principles. This then, is the premise on which further discussions of ecotourism in this thesis are based.

A commitment to ecotourism would then presuppose sustainable tourism development. It would recognise the interdependence between the environment and the economy: a healthy economy is essential to maintain environmental quality, and in turn, a quality environment is necessary to sustain economic activity, particularly tourism.

¹⁸Wood, E. 'Global Solutions' in Whelan, T (ed) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 201. (Own emphasis added).

¹⁹Panos Media Briefing, No 14, London: Panos Institute. January 1995: 4.

As a product, ecotourism capitalises on the growing interest in the environment but instead of adding the 'green' label purely as a marketing ploy, the aim of sustainable tourism development is to produce net benefits for the economy over the long term, while conserving the environment and the social resource base for future generations of both residents and tourists. In this context, ecotourism is a framework within which tourism can be developed in line with the principles of sustainability, and this has implications for the tourist, the operator and the host country or region.

Still, in reality, things are a little more complicated. The frightening aspect about ecotourism is its popularity. One can thus predict substantial environmental and cultural exploitation. Because ecotourism could be anything from a walk in the park, to a trip to a historical site, to a scientific observation of natural processes and so on, my analysis of ecotourism in this thesis is necessarily restricted to ecotourism with wildlife as its primary resource base. What is meant by wildlife-based ecotourism? Firstly, it is a non-consumptive means of using wild resources to benefit human populations.²⁰ If sensitively managed, wildlife-based tourism offers the chance to develop an industry that simultaneously protects wildlife. It would also reduce the incentive to develop land for agriculture or to exploit wildlife for consumptive uses.²¹

The complication of wildlife-based ecotourism in a KwaZulu-Natal context is that when the majority of people are living below the subsistence level, wildlife

²⁰A non-consumptive use of wildlife is a way of gaining material benefits from natural resources as opposed to preserving it, but utilizing it in such a way that the resource base is not vulnerable to consumptive utilisation (which hunting would imply).

²¹Barnes, J. Burgess, J. and Pearce, D. 'Wildlife Tourism' in Swanson, T.M. and Barbier, E.B. (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 136.

preservation measures seem to reflect elitist interests. This is an emotionally burdened issue. The reasons are abundant. Firstly, wildlife conservation methods in the past (not only in the region but throughout South Africa) excluded local communities from access to wildlife resources and the conservation process as a whole. Encroachment by local communities into conservation areas was then severely punished by conservation officers.²² Furthermore, any benefits derived from wildlife conservation programmes were not shared with these communities, which consequently fostered feelings of antipathy and hostility towards conservation. Wildlife conservation did not hold any apparent benefits. Rather, conservation became a symbol of denying the local communities their livelihoods. Wildlife was perceived by these people to be more important to conservationists and the elite few than their poverty and their battle to survive - a battle which did not receive adequate recognition or sympathy.

Desperate and resource-hungry people will have little compassion for the fate of wildlife resources if conservation practices continue to deny them a basic subsistence. As a result, wildlife conservation should be made economically and socially viable in order to guarantee future conservation programmes. Wildlife conservation should thus occur concurrently, and not in contrast, with programmes to achieve basic subsistence, such as the RDP.

International opinion seems to be that the economic potential of wildlife-based ecotourism market is substantial.²³ Not many regions can boast a wildlife

²²Financial Mail Special Report, 'KwaZulu Conservation Trust' in Financial Mail. 23 November, 1990: 58.

²³Barbier, E.B. 'Economics for the Wilds' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B. (eds), Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 15,16.

diversity such as that of KwaZulu-Natal's. To conservationists, the global growth in ecotourism is a cause for both enthusiasm and concern. Enthusiasm because it warrants the continued pursuit of conservation, but concern in that conservation is becoming an 'economic pursuit'. Ecotourism can generate badly needed revenue for local and regional economies, bring about heightened local awareness of the importance of conservation, and provide new incentives for development organisations to preserve natural areas, instead of developing them. But at the same time, however, the demands placed on ecosystems and natural resources to provide financial returns can destroy the very uniqueness of fragile biodiversity that attracts people.²⁴ Developing ecotourism within the conservation paradigm thus poses an enormous challenge.

Mike Rattray is very concerned that "we talk a lot about ecotourism but we don't concentrate enough on the conservation angle."²⁵ By this he means that the economic benefits of tourism based on wildlife resources is overemphasised - and this at the cost of conservation. This is a significant problem of ecotourism. If one keeps in mind that ecotourism is being promoted as the synthesis of development and conservation, then the conservation component needs to carry substantial weight. The issue for park managers, government official, and tour operators throughout South Africa is not how to capitalise on the ecotourism potential of protected natural areas - but how to conserve special features of such areas, and how to lessen their vulnerability to this growing trend towards global ecotourism.

²⁴Boo, E. Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls. Washington D.C.: WWF. 1990: xi.

²⁵50/50. 25 September 1994. Rattray is owner of Mala Mala, (a South African nature reserve in Mpumalanga), and a trustee of the South African National Parks Board.

All economic activities involve the use of resources, natural and human, many of which cannot be renewed, recycled or replaced. Tourism, in general, is one of the least regulated industries.²⁶ If ecotourism is going to be true to its essential meaning, it has to be environment-friendly. Despite a growing understanding of the environmental crisis, tourism development continues to damage the environment through over-construction, excessive numbers of visitors, vehicular and other types of pollution, thereby diminishing the benefits for host societies, for tourists and ultimately the industry itself. Tourism is threatened by wider environmental problems such as ozone depletion, desertification, deforestation, pollution, soil and beach erosion, and rising sea levels.²⁷

The tourism industry, especially, is vulnerable to unsustainable practices because tourists are mostly representatives of the 'better-off' citizens, whose lifestyles are characterized by over-consumption. Tourism in underdeveloped regions cannot be sustainable if this consumption pattern is displayed in an impoverished region. In South Africa, for example, tourist resorts which display water features, constant lawn sprinklers, an abundance of accessible taps, would portray an image of callousness in a context where water shortages are experienced by the local inhabitants - especially in a region where most of the inhabitants have to walk kilometres to collect water.

In the Kruger National Park, a study was conducted under the coordination of the University of Cape Town, to measure consumption patterns of overnight tourists. The installed meters showed that in a rondavel, occupied by a family of six, 4000 liters of water a day was used - the equivalent of 27 full baths, and 95

²⁶Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon, United Kingdom: WWF. 1992: 2.

²⁷Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon, United Kingdom: WWF. 1992: 6.

KiloWatts electricity a day - an average amount normally used over ten days.²⁸ This is definitely not sustainable ecotourism. Ecotourism would require a reduction of such consumption patterns and the promotion of the acceptance of responsibility for waste creation and consumption. It would incorporate such features as low energy appliances and lighting, recycling wherever appropriate, the use of recycled or environment-friendly paper, and catering for vegetarians. This is difficult to establish, however, especially in a free-market system where consumers often feel they have the right to exploit amenities because they have paid for them. (And having fun means being excessive!)

AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC

In this respect, establishing ecotourism sustainably would include an aspiration to establish an environmental ethic among ecotourists. As Richard Ryel and Tom Grasse have indicated, to instill an ecotourism conservation ethic would be quite a burdensome and perhaps idealistic pursuit.²⁹ Nevertheless, they feel that ecotourism should stimulate among travellers and among the inhabitants of the destination an awareness, an appreciation, and some understanding of the ecosystem and the need for preservation. "If the subtle beauty and balance of nature are not revealed to travellers, how can their experience of the wilderness promote understanding and appreciation of wildlife?"³⁰

²⁸50/50, 25 September 1994.

²⁹Ryel, R. and Grasse, T. 'Marketing Ecotourism: Attracting the Elusive Ecotourist in Whelan, T (ed) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 164.

³⁰Ryel, R. and Grasse, T. 'Marketing Ecotourism: Attracting the Elusive Ecotourist in Whelan, T (ed) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 165.

Ecotourism should aim to stimulate an appreciation of nature among the local people too. They may take for granted the marvels of nature that have been a part of their daily lives, yet the preservation of these vital habitats ultimately rests on their behaviour. The preservation of a nation's cultural heritage, appreciation for the customs and traditions of native peoples and respect for their privacy and dignity, are also essential fundamentals of ecotourism. The presence of tourists is inevitably intrusive to local inhabitants; therefore an ecotourism conservation ethic should encourage cultural sensitivity. "Ecotourism should not be at the cost of the local people and their economic integrity and neither to that of the environment."³¹

The real eco-tourist causes as little disruption and pollution as possible. Ecotour operators should instill a conservation ethic for environmentally sensitive travel in their clients if they are to continue bringing visitors to fragile sites. As such wildlife and their habitats must not be disturbed, tourism to natural areas must be sustainable. The experience a tourist gains in travelling must enrich his or her appreciation of nature, conservation and the environment, and tours must strengthen the conservation effort and enhance the natural integrity of places visited.³²

It is possible that ecotourists are less demanding in terms of lodging than other types of tourists and thus do not need accommodation, food, or nightlife that meet luxurious standards. The nature traveller seems more willing to accept and

³¹Ryel, R. and Grasse, T. 'Marketing Ecotourism: Attracting the Elusive Ecotourist' in Whelan, T. (ed) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 164.

³²Whelan, T. 'Ecotourism and Its Role in Sustainable Development' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 16.

appreciate local conditions, customs and foods. Nevertheless, basic services and infrastructure are still required to make ecotourism a significant economic force and a sought-after activity. However, while nature tourists could be less demanding in terms of accommodation standards, they could be more demanding in seeking information sources about their destination: in other words, they could be intellectually more demanding.

The WWF is of the opinion that ecotourists as defined above would represent an active contribution to sustainable development and conservation efforts because of their keen interest, free time and spending money. Fig claims that the ecotourism industry has a captive and eager audience for environmental education. Visitors are highly motivated to learn about botany, ornithology, zoology in general, marine biology, ecosystems and environmental management.³³

A significant restriction on wildlife-based ecotourism is that this resource base is very sensitive to human interference (whether through human contact, or environmental transformations created by development), not to mention the accompanying environmental degradation 'such as pollution and waste build-up' because of increased tourism. Wildlife-based ecotourism requires delicate management. In this respect, the scale of tourism needs to be sensitive to the management of wildlife-based tourism, which can both threaten wildlife and also give rise to stress in animal populations.³⁴ Apparently, there is evidence to this effect in Kenya. In some of its very popular areas, Kenya's wildlife has suffered -

³³Fig, D. 'Ecotourism: A Briefing prepared for the ANC-COSATU-SANCO'. Environmental Policy Mission of the Group of Environmental Monitoring (GEM). 28 January 1994.

³⁴Barnes, J., Burgess, J. and Pearce, D. 'Wildlife Tourism' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 149.

resulting in, for example, a deviation of the natural behaviour patterns of certain species - leading to a loss of the potential wildlife resource base.³⁵

Biologists and species experts are wary that the promotion of wildlife-based tourism will lead to the "farming" of wildlife, which would lead to a degeneration and eventual loss of genetic diversity, and, in short, overlooking the whole point of scientific conservation.³⁶ Specific scientific conservation methods have to be upheld, ensuring a rich genetic pool. However, tourism can be a powerful force for environmental preservation and protection. The last forty years have seen a growth and expansion of national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserves designed to preserve endangered animal and plant species, without which the current diversity would not be a reality.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIODIVERSITY FOR ECOTOURISM

Economists distinguish non-renewable natural resources (such as oil, coal, gold and iron) from renewable resources (such as forests, animals and grasslands). In principle, the renewable resources are inexhaustible when managed appropriately. Together, these can be considered "biological resources", based on genes, species and ecosystems which have actual or potential value to people. These biological resources are the physical manifestations of the globe's 'biodiversity'.³⁷

³⁵Ibid

³⁶Cloete, D. (ed.) 'Biodiversity - A New Ground Supplement' in New Ground, Autumn 1993.

³⁷McNeely, J.A. Economics and Biological Diversity: Developing and Using Economic Incentives to Conserve Biological Resources, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. 1988: 2.

The word biodiversity refers to the total variety of genes, species and ecosystems in a region. **Genetic diversity** is the variety of genes within a single species. This diversity enables populations to adapt to, and survive, changing circumstances. **Species diversity** is the *variety* of different species found in a region. **Ecosystem diversity** is the associations of species, or communities in particular geographic areas. **Human cultural diversity** is seen in religious beliefs, land-management practices, crop selection, diet - which are also a part of biodiversity.³⁸

McNeely asserts that "as the non-renewable resources are gradually consumed, the renewable biological resources are likely to increase in importance and nations which have maintained their rich endowments of biological diversity may well have a significant advantage over those whose biological resources have been depleted."³⁹ A fundamental point to bear in mind is that effective systems of management can ensure that biological resources not only survive, but in fact increase while they are being used, thus providing the foundation for sustainable development.⁴⁰

McNeely argues that since future consumption depends to a considerable extent on the stock of natural capital, conservation may well be a precondition for economic growth. Conservation is certainly a precondition for sustainable development which unites the ecological concept of carrying-capacity (the amount of human interference nature can endure) with the economic concepts of growth

³⁸Cloete, D. (ed.) 'Biodiversity - A New Ground Supplement' in New Ground, Autumn 1993.

³⁹McNeely, J.A. Economics and Biological Diversity: Developing and Using Economic Incentives to Conserve Biological Resources, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. 1988: 3.

⁴⁰Ibid.

and development. But instead of conserving our rich resources (forest, wetland and sea), current processes of development are depleting many biological resources at such a rate and reducing them to such low population levels that they will be rendered non-renewable.⁴¹

This phenomena has motivated a certain constituency which argues against sustainable use of wildlife. The arguments have been grouped by David Cumming, the project leader of WWF's wildlife utilisation project in Zimbabwe, into three categories:

- * **Animal Rights View:** This is a moral argument, which rests on recognising the rights of individual animals to life.
- * **Romantic View:** Here it is maintained that wildlife and wilderness are 'destroyed' the moment that there is any attempt to manage or intervene. This argument is also known as "The Garden of Eden" view - the belief that wild animals and places must remain untouched by man.
- * **Preservationist View:** This argument claims that the marketing of wildlife or placing a value on wildlife products encourages the slaughter of animals, and so threatens their survival.⁴²

Hanks rightly points out that of these three arguments, the animal rights and romantic view are essentially value judgements which cannot be refuted on empirical or experimental grounds. They are legitimate beliefs which should be respected. Aldo Leopold once suggested that our system of ethics should be extended to embrace all living things and ecosystems in what he called a "land

⁴¹McNeely, J.A. Economics and Biological Diversity: Developing and Using Economic Incentives to Conserve Biological Resources, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. 1988: 3.

⁴²Dr Hanks, J. 'Sustainable Use of Wildlife' in Our Living World. Magazine of the Southern African Nature Foundation: WWF. September 1993: 5

ethic". His idea was to manage the land in accordance with an ethical system (that is judgements about what is right and what is wrong) rather than an economic system (that is judgement based on what brings utility).⁴³ Leopold's land ethic is an appealing concept, but unfortunately there is an insurmountable difficulty in putting it into practice. The problem is that virtually every resource management decision, including ecotourist ones, leads to some adverse impact on some part of the natural environment.⁴⁴

The utilization of wildlife biodiversity is at present a very topical issue. Studies are being done to determine to what extent utilisation programmes, do in fact, threaten species survival.⁴⁵

In the pursuit for utilising wildlife diversity for the benefit of conservation and development, the role of game reserves and parks is preeminent. Besides the considerable amount of natural resources which have to be "protected" in order to conserve biodiversity, accompanying natural habitats and ecosystems require effective protection too. A problem with this in South Africa is that access to land is at present a need shared by the majority of the South African population, which is a legacy of the apartheid system which the present Government of National Unity (GNU) has to address. As a consequence, the value of protected natural areas has begun to be seriously questioned. Ian Macdonald feels that sometimes the questioning is genuine, often it is ill-informed, and, in a few instances, it is

⁴³Stauth, R. & Baskind, P. 'Resource Economics' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town, Juta. 1992: 30.

⁴⁴Dr Hanks, J. 'Sustainable Use of Wildlife' in Our Living World, Magazine of the Southern African Nature Foundation: WWF. September 1993: 5.

⁴⁵Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992.

simply political opportunism.⁴⁶ He is adamant that parks and reserves are necessary: "[p]arks are fundamentally important to the future of biotic diversity on earth". "They are whole segments of the living world that simply will not survive outside such areas."⁴⁷ A certain South African dung beetle can only be found in our national parks and nature reserves. Elsewhere they have already become extinct.⁴⁸

MacDonald says that it must not be forgotten that the direct revenue generated by South Africa's national parks and reserves, as well as the ripple effect on the local economy, benefits the nation as a whole. A survey done by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and the National Parks Board in the Kruger National Park showed that the use of the park for conservation and tourism is at least as economically efficient as it would be were it used for agriculture.⁴⁹ The significant difference is that this efficiency is not felt directly by the local communities but rather by the shareholders of the reserves and the national authorities. Protests against nature reserves are normally arise when direct benefits do not accrue immediately to local communities.

Macdonald also points out that as land hunger grows outside the reserves

⁴⁶Ian MacDonald is the South African Nature Foundation's Conservation Director. (MacDonald, I. 'Parks and Reserves are the Jewels of the Nation' in Our Living World, Magazine of the Southern African Nature Foundation: WWF. May 1994: 5.)

⁴⁷MacDonald, I. 'Parks and Reserves are the Jewels of the Nation' in Our Living World, Magazine of the Southern African Nature Foundation: WWF. May 1994: 4.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹MacDonald, I. 'Parks and Reserves are the Jewels of the Nation' in Our Living World, Magazine of the Southern African Nature Foundation: WWF. May 1994: 5.

it is tempting for politicians to offer their electorates 'new land' by deproclaiming protected areas.⁵⁰ Such moves would be a short-sighted and very expedient. Not only is the area involved very small in comparison to the extent of the need for land, but many of our protected areas were proclaimed to protect essential catchment areas. The net effect of any such deproclamations would be negative for the overall regional and national economies, especially in the long-term.⁵¹

The overexploitation of biodiversity and natural habitats is providing the major new development challenge of the twentieth century. Questions become abundant: How can the process of change be manipulated in South Africa so that biodiversity can be managed to ensure sustainable development? Which economically attractive land uses are compatible with the conservation of biodiversity? What economic incentives and legislative enforcements are available to promote conservation instead of over-exploitation?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WILDLIFE-BASED ECOTOURISM

A sustainable approach to wildlife-based ecotourism would be to attempt to bridge the gap between the pro-use and anti-use wildlife constituencies. In short, it could provide economic incentives as to why wildlife, wildlands, and biodiversity should be conserved - and how the correct utilisation of conservation can bring sustainable development. But is it possible to reconcile the conservation of wild resources with economic development so as to ensure that developing societies with these resources have an incentive to ensure their long-term management and survival? This is the key question at the heart of conservation and development issues in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

In the foreword to Economics for the Wilds, Swanson and Barbier argue that, in the past, economists have not paid sufficient attention to the economic role of wild resources in development, and as a consequence the economic value of these resources has frequently been overlooked in analysis of land use options. They advocate placing wildlife, wildlands and their diversity in the proper economic development context.⁵² Their's is a more rational and viable approach when developmental needs predominate and stands in stark contrast to hardened conservationist's anti-use stance.

Barbier argues as follows:

The failure to appreciate and assess the total economic value of wildlife and wildlands often results in a distortion of economic incentives. That is, excessive loss of natural areas and habitats is the outcome of their values not being fully recognised and integrated into decision-making processes by individuals in the market place and by government. If markets fail fully to reflect these values, then market failure is said to exist. Where government decisions or policies do not fully reflect the 'socially beneficial' values of natural areas, there is government or policy failure.⁵³

If this is true, then South African policies on this issue need reviewing. For example, the ANC's Draft Bill of Rights (1993) is highly anthropocentric, stressing how the environment must be used to the benefit of all people; the RDP promotes the principle of utilisation of natural areas to the benefit of all South Africans. The notion of the sustainability of this utilisation is not adequately stressed in either the Bill of Rights or the RDP to enable a true appreciation of the value of the

⁵²Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992.

⁵³Barbier, E.B. 'Economics for the Wilds' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 24.

environment and natural resources - and thus, according to Swanson and Barbier's line of reasoning, indicates a policy failure. The IFP's Environmental Policy has the same strengths and weaknesses in this respect, stressing the utilitarian value natural resources should have for people, but on the other hand, the principle of sustainability is slightly more prominent here than in the RDP or the Bill of Rights.⁵⁴ The Department of Environment Affairs's White Paper on Environmental Management (1993) gives adequate attention to the principle of sustainability and is the first official government document to link environmental conservation with economic development, but it is inadequate in showing the necessary utilitarian benefits of nature conservation.

Wildlands and wildlife have a significant role to play in the sustainable development objective of developing regions. However, as a natural resource, excessive exploitation of the wilds has to be avoided. As these values are "socially beneficial", appropriate public policies must be designed to ensure the protection, conservation and sustainable management of wild resources.

Sustainable development urges leaving to future generations the same diversity of wealth - human and natural - we enjoy. Tourism depends a lot on this diversity. For one, a nature and culture rich environment influences the choice of tourist destinations. A loss of diversity would mean a loss of potential attractions. Indirectly, diversity provides resilience to evolutionary stress - it also reduces over-dependence on any one natural feature.⁵⁵ In other words, maintaining and promoting natural, social and cultural diversity becomes essential

⁵⁴Inkatha Freedom Party, 'Environmental Policy of the Inkatha Freedom Party' in History in the Making. November 1990: 50-52.

⁵⁵Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon, United Kingdom: WWF. 1992: 12-13.

for long-term sustainable tourism.

Many environmentalists are uneasy with the notion of developing the utilization of wildlife as a means of protecting it. But given population pressures and the development needs of the relatively poor, the idea of outright preservation through non-use is unrealistic. It would fail because it offers no incentives for local people to respect the resource in question. Protected areas represent unreasonable constraints on alternative uses of the land (such as farming or ranching) which local people perceive would be of greater economic value. The end result is then the familiar erosion of protected areas through gradual encroachment and poaching. If a viable wildlife utilization option could be found - one where conservation and development are regarded as equal beneficiaries - incentives to conserve resources rather than to transform them, would be provided.

The international conservation community has increasingly come to view conservation and preservation as politically defensible, particularly if protected areas can provide economic assets for the local people. Ecotourism can be a viable economic alternative for rural populations in dire need of income and can, for instance, slow the depletion of forest resources due to firewood collection and short-lived agricultural development. Dixon warns against excessive emphasis on the economic value of parks, arguing that this would lead to the belief among decision-makers that parks exist primarily for economic profit. If ecotourism then does not fulfil economic expectations, tourist activities could be replaced by economic activities to the detriment of conservation, such as cattle ranching or agriculture.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, I feel that parks should be regarded as economically

⁵⁶Sherman, P. and Dixon, J. 'The Economics of Nature Tourism' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 89-90.

valuable. They justify the creation or maintenance of protected areas in an otherwise poverty stricken region, or as Dixon says, it puts a qualitative label on a park's "right to exist" - which could be a necessity in an underdeveloped region like KwaZulu-Natal.⁵⁷

Ecotourism can provide an economic justification for the conservation of areas that might not otherwise receive protection. Pearce argues that protected-area-tourism or wildlife ecotourism may offer, besides employment and revenue creation, an additional point of opportunity: that, as many conservationists have noted, since wildlife-based ecotourism in protected areas tends to occur in peripheral and non-industrialized regions, it may stimulate economic activity and growth in isolated, rural areas.⁵⁸ This would be the case for KwaZulu.

This raises the issue of how to pursue wildlife-based ecotourism. Kenya, for example, has opted for high turnover, relatively cheap package tourism, ensuring accessibility to most. South Africa has similarly encouraged low price domestic tourism through subsidisation of national protected areas. (However, the continuation of this subsidisation is not guaranteed). Zimbabwe has opted for a different approach of attracting fewer tourists, but at higher prices. This leaves two options:

- (1) high turnover of tourists, with a relatively cheap entrance fee, or
- (2) low turnover and high-price entrance.

This is normally determined by the protected area manager's interpretation of the concept of carrying-capacity.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Pearce, D. Tourist Development. 1981. New York: Longman House.

THE CONCEPT OF CARRYING-CAPACITY: ITS RELEVANCE TO WILDLIFE-BASED ECOTOURISM

The Natal Parks Board has combined the two options available: some protected areas are based on high turnover, relatively cheap entrance (for example, Drakensberg Reserves), and others on low turnover and high-price (for example the Itala Game Lodge) - depending on the area's environmental vulnerability.⁵⁹ Because no answers yet exist to determine an area's carrying-capacity, the problem arises that only time will tell what the area can and cannot sustain. For example, in various Drakensberg regions, certain areas, after being easily accessible for years, will now have to be closed so that environmental degradation can be halted, and hopefully reversed.⁶⁰ Thus, ironically, the survival of protected areas may be threatened by the very thing that is claimed to protect them - tourism.

Lindberg argues that although it is a concept which is difficult to quantify, an area's carrying-capacity can be qualitatively described as the level of visitation that can be sustained without causing unacceptable change or overexploitation.⁶¹ Boo says that it must be evaluated in both ecological and aesthetic terms. Ecologically, carrying-capacity has been reached or exceeded when changes occur in animal behaviour (for example, outmigration, changing nesting patterns); when the number of animals reduces, sometimes up to species extinction; and when there is erosion of paths, degradation of water quality, and low availability of

⁵⁹From an interview with Mike Haynes, employee of the Natal Parks Board, on 19 May 1994.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Lindberg, K. Policies for Maximising Nature Tourism's Ecological and Economic Benefits. 1991, International Conservation Financing Project Working Paper: World Resource Institute.

firewood.⁶² The reaching of an area's carrying-capacity may be perceived by visitors as an aesthetic problem: too many visitors destroy an area's image as "wilderness" and thus make it less attractive to nature tourists; visible environmental deterioration triggers a similar reaction.⁶³ To this Lindberg adds "host social carrying-capacity" which is the level beyond which unacceptable change will be caused to the local cultural stability as well as a community's change of attitude towards tourists.⁶⁴

The difficulty in establishing a carrying-capacity for a protected area lies in the fact that it is simply not possible to determine, says Boo, "an absolute empirical optimum and that it cannot be gauged by the point of marginal returns."⁶⁵ Once the carrying-capacity has been reached, it may already be too late for the ecosystem.⁶⁶

Whelan points out that often, park managers, conservationists, and governments decide to solve their carrying-capacity problems by emphasizing quality rather than quantity. In other words, they target fewer people who can pay more. This may make sense from an environmental point of view, but it has elitist implications. If this trend means that ecotourism becomes an industry only for the rich, then average citizens will not be able to learn about other environments and

⁶²Boo, E. Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls, Washington D.C.: WWF. 1990: 22.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Lindberg, K. Policies for Maximising Nature Tourism's Ecological and Economic Benefits, 1991, International Conservation Financing Project Working Paper: World Resource Institute.

⁶⁵Boo, E. Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls, Washington D.C.: WWF. 1992: 22.

⁶⁶Ibid.

wildlife and will be less inclined to fund or support protection efforts.⁶⁷

Charging admission fees to parks is a controversial issue. Many believe that citizens should not have to pay to see their own country's natural heritage.⁶⁸ However, all protected areas have limited ecological and aesthetic carrying capacities. The logical solution is that if the number of visitors remain low, the deleterious consequences become less likely. However, discriminatory measures are hereby implied. Lindberg argues that there has been considerable debate about the fairness of determining access through charging visitors high fees. The debate usually centres around the "free good" nature of parks and protected areas. If such areas are true "national heritage sites", the argument goes, citizens should not be denied access because they cannot afford fees. After all, citizens as a group pay for the protected areas indirectly through taxes. On the other hand, this could easily lead to overexploitation and the environmental degradation of natural resources. Again, wildlife's need for sensitive management makes a measure of strict control unavoidable and irrefutably necessary.⁶⁹

Especially in the KwaZulu-Natal region, the rural population is regarded as of the poorest in South Africa.⁷⁰ These people can certainly not afford to "visit" ecotourism sites. But it is their mere population numbers that bring tears to the eyes of hardened conservationists. Policy-makers are thus confronted by the dilemma of balancing an area's carrying-capacity criteria on the one hand, and indiscriminate access on the other.

⁶⁷Whelan, T. 'Ecotourism and Its Role in Sustainable Development' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 13.

⁶⁸Boo, E. Ecotourism: The Potentials and Pitfalls. Washington D.C.: WWF. 1990: 40.

⁶⁹Lindberg, K. Policies for Maximising Nature Tourism's Ecological and Economic Benefits. 1991, International Conservation Financing Project Working Paper: World Resource Institute.

⁷⁰'Reconstruct' in Work in Progress, No 17, April/May 1994: 15.

The dilemma of access to wildlife tourism facilities is not the only problem for ecotourism. What is often regarded as a more serious problem is access to the harvesting of natural resources. Biologists are of the opinion that species need to be conserved with their particular ecosystems, and that the ecosystems therefore warrant protection too. However, local people cannot be denied access to natural resources if their livelihood depend on it. Again, one is faced with striking a delicate balance. It has been argued before that rural dwellers surrounding a conserved area have an intrinsic right to a park's resources.⁷¹ The implications of such a statement are that it threatens tangible resources. The problem which has arisen is how to determine who has a right to resources such as thatch grass, firewood and meat from culled animals? If these resources are made available to people on the immediate boundary of a game reserve, what mechanism will be used to prevent others from moving into the area to claim their share? And if the resources are sold, then the influential and the economically powerful few within the community will monopolise usage. Consequently, the people who really need the resources will lose out.

Ecotourism needs very sensitive policy-making and implementation. It is a concept burdened with contradictions. It is full of extremes: either the economic implications threaten its existence or the conservation dimension is threatened; either all people have access to natural resources, or discriminating measures are applied; either conservationists are happy, or developers thrive, and so on and so on. Although possible, it is difficult to manage this industry in a way which will benefit the environment, development and the people equally.

Private game reserves have not been spared any of the accusations, that they, for example, cater for an elite section of the population only; but what makes these game reserves significant is the way in which they have addressed the apparent contradictions in their industry. One has to bear in mind that the

⁷¹Brett, M. 'Conservation in Natal - An Assessment' in Monitor No 9, First Quarter, 1990: 5.

private sector is ruled by market forces and its policies reflect how game reserves could best realise financial benefits in a context fraught with social and political problems. I wish to take a closer look at private game reserves generally, questioning whether ecotourism is necessarily elitist. If so, is this necessarily a vice?

ECOTOURISM: ELITIST OR NOT?

In South Africa, tour operators have often translated ecotourism into "maximum income, minimum impact" with the implication that a few rich people enjoyed nature in luxury.⁷² Private game reserves, the likes of Sabi Sabi, Londolozi, Mala Mala, are far beyond the average citizen's financial reach. Indeed, their service is geared towards the world's wealthy.⁷³

How do these lodges relate to ecotourism? They say, very comfortably: ecotourism is the interdependence between tourism and conservation, "and the one cannot survive without the other" says Michel Giarardin, a director of Sabi Sabi. He explains that tourism generates the money to pay for conservation. "Looking after the bush is an expensive business, but if you don't conserve your product you have no product to market."⁷⁴

The argument is that while the Kruger National Park with its two million hectares can cater for the less expensive end of the tourist market, a small private enterprise is obliged to go to the upper end that provides worthwhile profitability with minimum impact on the environment. Private game lodge managers all agree that they can only survive if a large percentage of profits is ploughed back into furthering their resources. It seems that successful lodge owners do care for the

⁷²Munnik, V. 'The Scramble for Paradise' in New Ground, Autumn 1993: 4.

⁷³Cited in Curzon, C. 'Ecotourism - Conservation Ethics - Profit', in Africa - Environment and Wildlife, July/August, Vol 1 no 2, 1994: 36-42.

⁷⁴Ibid.

environment and do worry about preserving it for prosperity.

The problem with such private game reserves seems to lie not with conservationists or environmentalists, but more with humanists arguing for the upliftment of the rural poor and the accessibility of all South African to their national heritage. However, I doubt whether the nationalisation of such areas, or attempts to make reserves accessible to everyone would in fact be a more viable alternative. These game reserves are of national value because they are responsible for the inflow of foreign tourists, and for marketing South Africa abroad, of their own expense. Sabi Sabi has been voted "Top Safari Lodge in the World" for nine consecutive years.⁷⁵ Already a member of the Leading Independent Hotels of Southern Africa, Londolozi is on par with the very best destinations internationally.⁷⁶

One objective of ecotourism is to create diversity within the industry, to lower stress levels - in other words, to provide diversity for different target groups. Thus ecotourism should allow for more expensive private reserves as long as they contribute to national revenue, and more specifically - the regional economy; and provided they create local employment and act in the interest of conservation. According to Curzon, when it comes to helping and working with the rural communities surrounding them, nearly all the private lodges take this seriously.⁷⁷ This has come about because managers of protected areas have experienced difficulties with openly hostile neighbours. In response, these neighbours' needs are increasingly being addressed.

Private game reserves are, it seems, becoming increasingly human-centred. Curzon says that most private reserves promote locally-made products which are sold in the lodge curio shops. Staff and their families usually have controlled

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

access to firewood, thatching materials and meat. Employment is obviously a direct benefit - most private lodges employ well over one hundred local workers with a direct impact on their families at a ratio of probably 10:1. Education, medical and recreational facilities are optional extras.⁷⁸ One could attempt to enforce such benefits by constructing policies and laws in this respect. In fact, the real benefits that local communities wish to derive from conservation practices relate to issues of education, health care and human well-being.

An additional responsibility which should be borne by all game reserves, private and public, is that they should be of educational value. Sabi Sabi puts emphasis on training field staff who take out guests and communicate the conservation ethic to them. That besides the 'Big Five' (lion, buffalo, rhino, elephant and leopard) there is the dung beetle - so that guests acquire a better understanding of the environment as a whole.

Ecotourism requires environmentally-friendly accommodation. Londolozi, for example, is very much the 'green lodge' and bans airconditioning and pesticides from all its rooms, and lays great store on enhancing their guests' environmental awareness.⁷⁹ Londolozi is a game reserve often referred to as an 'elitist', 'white', 'rich' institution acting in the interest of a white aristocracy set in a hostile, alienated, underprivileged neighbouring society.⁸⁰ However, it indirectly supports 650 local Shangaans through employment alone, while it also provides numerous other benefits by way of health care, education, social services and job training. Numerous grassroots businesses have been created around the reserve, and a sewing cooperative, taxi operation, woodselling, carpentry, thatching and vegetable production industries are all examples of successful joint ventures. The local communities are starting to see that wild animals attract people to the

⁷⁸Curzon, C. 'Ecotourism - Conservation Ethics - Profit', in Africa - Environment and Wildlife, July/August, Vol 1 no 2, 1994: 36-42.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰50/50, 25 September 1994.

reserves, so bringing in money, which in turn directly raises their own living standards.⁸¹

It thus seems that hostile feelings toward these rich upmarket private game reserves come from those select few who do not share in the profits (for example, members of the National Environmental Awareness Campaign, supporters of the Pan African Congress) and who call for the nationalisation of nature conservation areas, since this would, supposedly, ensure that all the people of South Africa would benefit.⁸² This has raised a separate argument about the role of private game reserves in the pursuit of ecotourism as a national or regional development strategy.⁸³ In some instances, hostility seems to be a case of sour grapes. Hostile attitudes also are held by those who demand a part of the management of such rich and flourishing estates - wanting a share of the riches which they argue - is a direct consequence of their national heritage.⁸⁴ But this is not necessarily a duty to be fulfilled by private industries, nor is this a very rational demand.

Curzon feels that while some South Africans may find it hard to accept that they should be excluded from prime game viewing by prices they cannot afford, the opposite entails a few practicalities.⁸⁵ These game reserves don't pretend to cater for all needs in the bush; instead, they see themselves as just a part of the whole complement of services and venues. While the game viewing experience is available to a broader spectrum of tourists in most modestly priced but no less

⁸¹50/50, 25 September 1994.

⁸²Allen, A. 'The Great Land Debate' in African Wildlife, Volume 48, Number 3. 1994: 1.

⁸³MacDonald, I. 'Parks and Reserves are the Jewels of the Nation' in Our Living World, May 1994: 4.

⁸⁴Moloi, D. 'Rural People Speak: The Land - A Matter of Life and Death' in New Ground, Autumn 94: 16-17.

⁸⁵Curzon, C. 'Ecotourism - Conservation Ethics - Profit', in Africa - Environment and Wildlife, July/August, Vol 1 no 2, 1994: 36-42.

wonderful venues such as the Kruger National Park (on which game reserves like Sabie Sabie, Mala Mala border) the relatively high rates at private lodges enable them to continue their efforts to conserve, educate, manage the land, contribute to local employment, and act as responsible custodians of South Africa's priceless wildlife and the ecosystems they inhabit.⁸⁶ As long as the private sector conforms with national environmental requirements, contributes to the objectives of the RDP, and benefits its local neighbouring communities, as well as the economic well-being of the region, a private industry is in keeping with the national objective of sustainable development.

If government implements ecologically sound policies and private reserves can cooperate, there will be scope for both. In any case, only about 7 % of South Africa's land surface is at present under protection.⁸⁷ There is room for more. The private sector's involvement in conservation should be encouraged since government funding is limited when it comes to proclaiming more land as protected areas and then maintaining them.

In retrospect, South Africa's top earning private game reserves have gone much further in contributing to the pursuit of true ecotourism than what government subsidised conservation institutions have. Perhaps this is because private game reserves were not protected from local community demands to the extent that government funded nature reserves were. The latter were financially and politically protected by government support for their exclusion of local people and their isolation from regional demands. This tendency, for example, was apparent in the Natal Parks Board's strategy. Change in its conservation strategy has only occurred over the last few years. Why? One can only assume that the NPB's anticipation of reduced financial government support has made it more responsible towards the local neighbouring communities - to such a degree that

⁸⁶ibid.

⁸⁷Brett, M.R. 'Conservation in Natal - an Assessment' om Monitor, No 9. First Quarter 1990: 4.

they are attempting to offer the same services to their local people as the private game reserves, such as Londolozi and Mala Mala, have been providing.

CONCLUSION

Once South African policy-makers agree that ecotourism offers adequate developmental and conservational scope, they have to decide on how this industry can be conducive to promoting sustainable development. There is a need for the government of national unity to realise its responsibility in assisting the furthering of low-impact tourism while aware that ecotourism requires ecological, economic and social stability, good governance and management.

Ecotourism has not yet been successfully evaluated as a development strategy for the KwaZulu-Natal region. Mechanisms are not in place to evaluate the environmental impact of tourism. A lot has been said about the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's) but these are very scarce, and at present, they are only executed by popular demand, as was the case about the St. Lucia estuary. In other words, public awareness of environmental concerns determines whether EIA's are implemented or not.

Ecotourism and wildlife-based ecotourism should never be regarded as a crucial source of income for a region. In general, tourism is an unstable source of income, greatly influenced by volatile factors, such as political instability, weather and international currency fluctuations. Nevertheless, ecotourism should, if possible, contribute to a region's general development objective. In a region where poverty prevails, every 'industry' has to contribute to regional well-being. KwaZulu-Natal is an excellent case in point.

Dixon and Sherman summarize the practical implications of ecotourism as follows:

It has the desirable attribute of allowing both conservation and economic development objectives to be met simultaneously. Nature tourism is not,

however, the solution to all conservation problems. Some protected areas cannot sustain any direct use; others may yield larger social benefits when developed for other forms of tourism.⁸⁸

As in other development industries, the debate on ecotourism is an on-going one, the methodologies are still being tried and tested, and the results still uncertain. Ecotourism for the KwaZulu-Natal region presents a viable alternative to other more obviously detrimental forms of development (for example, agriculture). However, if ecotourism is to be truly beneficial to all concerned, the principles of sustainable development must be upheld. This means ensuring that resources are not over-consumed; that natural and human environments are protected; that tourism is integrated with other economic and development activities. It also means that ecotourism should provide real benefits to the local communities; that local people are involved and included in tourism planning and implementation; and that cultures and people are respected.

While it appears that ecotourism can be a tool for conservation and rural development, the only way that this will materialize is if a concerted effort is made to incorporate local communities in the tourism industry. Involvement with local people and consequent rural development will not happen automatically. In some cases, tourism in protected areas is not benefitting the surrounding population precisely because they are not involved. This leads me to contemplate an argument for local community participation in ecotourist activities.

⁸⁸Sherman, P. and Dixon, J. 'The Economics of Nature Tourism' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 128.

CHAPTER SIX

AN ARGUMENT FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Pessimists have often pondered the future of conservation areas surrounded by impoverished, land-hungry communities. The scepticism and apprehension seem valid: how can conservation areas expect to flourish amidst informal settlements of masses of impoverished people? This is a topic of much debate and speculation, which cannot be ignored. The facts remain simple: most conservation areas are surrounded by impoverished local communities which still view these natural resources as theirs. The unfolding of conservation measures (as explained in Chapter One) has caused some local communities to (understandably so) view conservation authorities as an extension of apartheid's discriminatory and prohibitive policies. With the democratisation of South Africa, perhaps hope was fostered by these local communities that land claimed as conservation areas would now be restored to them as the "rightful" owners. But this cannot easily happen. Conservation has become invaluable. Yet local communities are as dependent on these resources now as they were fifty years ago.

Perhaps a serious shortcoming of most ecotourism projects is that local people are not given any role in the planning process or implementation, but are rather forced off lands that were traditionally theirs to use. As a result their means of subsistence has been removed without negotiation and very often, too, without the provision of a viable alternative.¹ This in itself explains why rural people

¹Whelan, T. 'Ecotourism and Its Role in Sustainable Development' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, U.S.A. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 9.

plunder natural resources in protected areas. It also explains why they could easily become resentful of the "rich tourists" and wildlife now occupying that same land.²

In South Africa, the planning associated with the country's national parks took place at a central, not a local level. Even in Natal, proclamations declaring a certain area a protected area took place on a provincial level with the Natal Parks Board as the custodian of national interests. In KwaZulu, the KwaZulu Bureau for Natural Resources (now the KDNC) behaved in exactly the same manner: people were moved from their lands and told they would be compensated for the loss. Many are still waiting for this "compensation". Occasionally, they were discouraged from entering the parks at all, and in many cases, important sources of income were suddenly no longer available.³ It has only been in recent years that government agencies and conservation organizations have begun to turn towards a more localized approach.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

There is only a small body of work which has begun to examine the links between local environmental knowledge, political processes and the management of resources.⁴ The role which traditional cultures play in conservation was recognised at the Conference for the New World Conservation Strategy in 1988

²Ibid.

³'Conservation: A Case For the People of Kosi Bay' in New Ground, Vol 1 No 1, September 1990: 10.

⁴For example, McNeely, J and Pitt, D. (eds) Culture and Conservation: the human dimension in environmental planning, 1985. London: Croom Helm; and IUCN World Conservation Strategy for the 1990's (with UNEP and WWF), 1990. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN/UNEP/WWF draft.

according to which "conservation has always been integral to the survival of indigenous peoples. Without renewable resources to harvest, they lose both livelihood and way of life."⁵

Sustainable development is usually discussed without reference to indigenous epistemological issues. It is assumed that the European system of acquiring knowledge, through the application of scientific principles, is a universal epistemology.⁶ The consideration of indigenous epistemologies in sustainable development policy-making should be a significant feature, since it symbolizes the cultural roots of quite different traditions of knowledge.⁷ Any conservation method which rests solely on European ideas of conservation will often fail to gain support among rural people.⁸ What is required is an admission that, when observing local resource management strategies, one is dealing with different epistemologies possessed by unconventional groups of people which could have value.⁹

⁵IUCN World Conservation Strategy for the 1990s, Gland: Switzerland. 1990: 134.

⁶Redclift, M. 'Sustainable Development and Popular Participation: A Framework for Analysis', in Ghai, D. and Vivian J. (eds) Grassroots Environmental Action: People's participation in sustainable development. London: Chatham. 1992: 33-35.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Redclift, M. 'Sustainable Development and Popular Participation: A Framework for Analysis', in Ghai, D. and Vivian J. (eds) Grassroots Environmental Action: People's participation in sustainable development. London: Chatham. 1992: 35.

⁹Vivian, J. 'Foundations for Sustainable Development: Participation, Empowerment and Local Resources', in Ghai, D. and Vivian J. (eds.) Grassroots Environmental Action: People's participation in sustainable development. London: Chatham. 1992: 55.

People who rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihood have, most of the time, typically developed methods to ensure the conservation of their environment. Such indigenous resource management practices are commonly referred to as 'traditional'.¹⁰ Social controls have been developed in many communities with the explicit purpose of regulating the use of resources, and ensuring that the environment is managed sustainably. For example, some cultures have established specific periods where no hunting is allowed, or they limit fishing quotas. Various ethics and rituals also surround certain animals or plants; for example, in some tribes only the chief can hunt buffalo.¹¹ The fact that such traditional management systems exist (although they might be latent or invisible to outsiders) means that caution must be taken before judging traditional resource practices as unregulated.

At the same time, however, it is also important not to idealize all indigenous practices.¹² Many traditional societies are definitely repressive. Traditional resource management systems can also be inequalitarian, and can in reality exclude large numbers of people from benefitting. The exclusion of Zulu women from the decision-making process of tribal authorities is perhaps the most readily observable

¹⁰For the purpose of the Task Force, traditional lifestyles have been defined as the ways of life (cultures) of indigenous people which have evolved locally and are based on the sustainable use of the local ecosystem; such lifestyles are often at subsistence level of production and are seldom part of the mainstream culture of their country, though they do contribute to its cultural wealth." (Clad, J. 'Conservation and Indigenous Peoples: A Study of Convergent Interests' in Mcneely J. and Pitt, D. (eds) Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension in Environmental Planning, London: Croom Helm. 1985: 45.)

¹¹50/50, 19 March 1995 and Munnik, V. 'Scramble for Paradise' in New Ground, Autumn 1993: 2-4.

¹²Vivian, J. 'Foundations for Sustainable Development: Participation, Empowerment and Local Resources', in Ghai, D. and Vivian J. (eds.) Grassroots Environmental Action: People's participation in sustainable development. London: Chatham. 1992: 55.

instance in the KwaZulu region.¹³

Beyond traditional resource management practices, indigenous people exhibit a wide range of attitudes towards the management and protection of their natural resources by outside resource managers. Such people's support or disapproval stems primarily from a concern with livelihood: with their desire to maintain or improve levels of living which depend to a large extent on their ability to make productive use of natural resources.¹⁴ The main concern is how to achieve a basic livelihood. Conservation will be threatened if people have to bear costs which affect their means of a basic livelihood. For example, at a People and Parks conference, organised by the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), held on 1-2 October 1994, the communities living alongside the northern border of the Kruger National Park complained about the trampling of their crops by elephants that had escaped from the park. By way of compensation, these people would like to be able to 'shoot the animals and sell the ivory.'¹⁵

Clad believes that collective action by local communities to resist the implementation of environmentally destructive development projects is rarely triggered primarily by an overriding concern to preserve the environment in its existing state, but rather hinges on the lack of sufficient benefits accruing to them

¹³The codification of customary law defined the status of black women. As legal minors, women were doomed to live perpetually under the guardianship of men. This legal status effectively ties their hands, preventing them from inheriting property, or succeeding to the chieftainship. (Matlala, P. 'Can Chiefs change?' in New Ground, No. 13. Spring 1993: 2-4.)

¹⁴Clad, J. 'Conservation And Indigenous Peoples: A Study Of Convergent Interests' in McNeely J. & Pitt, D. (eds) Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension In Environmental Planning, London: Croom Helm. 1985: 50.

¹⁵'People and Parks Conference' in Environmental Justice Networker, No. 3. Spring 1994: 8.

- again stressing the overriding concern with achieving a basic livelihood.¹⁶ Such attitudes do not imply that traditional communities are insensitive to the aesthetic niceties of their surroundings, but rather indicate that they have a desire to survive and to improve their living conditions.

One could argue that indigenous people and outside resource managers can be appropriate allies because both wish to control and preserve the environment. Both would also stand to benefit from closer cooperation. For resource managers, the benefits of working with indigenous people would include gaining an additional constituency, (which could galvanize local support for them in the region. Recruiting people with profound knowledge of local areas could teach outsiders about long-term resource strategies which have proven their adaptability for thousands of years. For indigenous people, the benefits would include legal recognition of ecologically sound traditional land-use practices; assistance in utilizing their traditional lands properly; and new advocates at government level.¹⁷

In principle, says Clad, it sounds as if a comfortable convergence exists. Pragmatically, however, there are considerable difficulties which would contradict a belief that interests of indigenous people and resource managers are automatically shared.¹⁸ For example, accepted conservation methods worldwide promote a system of control patterns of the ecosystems that are set up by national governments. Certain restrictions accompany the control patterns: the exclusion

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Clad, J. 'Conservation And Indigenous Peoples: A Study Of Convergent Interests' in McNeely J. & Pitt, D. (eds) Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension In Environmental Planning, London: Croom Helm. 1985: 47.

¹⁸Ibid.

of indigenes from conservation areas, for example, would mean a denial of access to what they have been regarding as their natural resources for generations. Conservation *per se* is not always resisted by indigenes. What troubles (and rallies) them is their powerlessness against the outsider. Many conservation planners may misjudge the extent to which rural groups living within or adjacent to proposed protected areas actually wish to contribute to attaining conservation objectives. The case of the harvesting of marine resources, such as shellfish, at Dweza on the Transkeian coast, illustrates the misunderstanding that can exist between conservationists and the local inhabitants.¹⁹

'Answers' to questions about resource management are normally arrived at by the state in the form of policies, and by other outside institutions, which make assumptions about what is beneficial for people, and about ways in which the environment can be managed more effectively for indigenes.²⁰ This top-down approach to decision-making has come under scrutiny in recent years, especially by those who advocate a 'people-centred' alternative.

¹⁹With the formation of the Transkei Nature Conservation authority in 1976, the neighbouring community of the Dweza Nature Reserve were denied access to the same natural resources they had been utilising for the last eighty years. The conservation officers regard the reserve as too valuable for the protection and conservation of biodiversity to be subjected to any form of exploitation by the neighbouring communities. As a direct consequence, the local people were denied measures of achieving a basic livelihood. The local people expressed their understanding of the Transkei Nature Conservation goal of protecting the biodiversity, but in the same breath voiced their need for some controlled utilisation of natural resources such as weeds, thatch, sand, grazing ground. (50/50, 16 July 1995.)

²⁰Clad, J. 'Conservation And Indigenous Peoples: A Study Of Convergent Interests' in McNeely J. & Pitt, D. (eds) Culture and Conservation: The Human Dimension In Environmental Planning, London: Croom Helm. 1985: 47.

THE PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Korten rightfully criticizes the development industry which has evolved in the past four decades for failing to respond to a global commitment to alleviate poverty.²¹ Followers of this development strategy reasoned that if adequate growth rates could be sustained, the poor would be swept along with the tide of rising incomes. In his view, this has failed to happen. As he puts it:

While the poor are being carried along as on a tide, it is not that of the rising of buoyant economies. Rather, they are caught in the tides of flood and drought, desertification, communal violence, unrestrained population growth, and the ebbing of employment and income generating opportunities.²²

The alternative Korten has in mind is a **people-centred vision**. For Korten, development is more than simple undifferentiated growth in economic output. He defines development as:

a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.²³

This notion of development is different from the conventional one insofar as it is not restricted to equating development either with industrialization, or with increases in economic output. The people-centred approach argument is that if local people are empowered so that they come to regard themselves as responsible

²¹Korten, D.C. Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press. 1990.

²²Korten, D.C. Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press. 1990: ix.

²³Korten, D.C. Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press. 1990: 66.

for their own destiny (instead of development agencies), they would act more responsibly towards their natural resources. But in order for them to respect their given environment, an alternative to exploitable practices first has to be established. Local people will only stop exploiting their environment if, firstly, they are provided with alternative means of realising subsistence; and secondly, if they are made responsible for maintaining their natural resources. Consequently, the people-centred approach suggests that development policies should be constructed to promote local people's independence. According to this principle, sustainable development cannot succeed without at least the approval and participation of grassroots participants of local communities themselves.

THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

Evidence of greater attention to participation, and with it, poor people's rights in the environment, can be gleaned from the first draft of the World Conservation Strategy for the 1990s. In it the lack of attention to people in the original World Conservation Strategy, (1980) was set right. The discussion of policy, planning, legislation and institutions pays particular attention to the obligations which a more sustainable development strategy places on governments to consult people, to facilitate their participation in decisions, and to make information available to them.²⁴ The World Conservation Strategy also recognises that 'special attention should be given to participation by women and indigenous peoples'.²⁵ The final section of the document gives considerable attention to local strategies, arguing that local communities should be given the

²⁴IUCN World Conservation Strategy for the 1990s, Gland: Switzerland. 1990: 137-144.

²⁵IUCN World Conservation Strategy for the 1990s, Gland: Switzerland. 1990: 138.

opportunity to prepare their own sustainable development strategies 'expressing their views on the issues, defining their needs and aspirations, and formulating a plan for the development of their areas to meet their social and economic needs sustainably'.²⁶

There has been a very gradual shift in the attitudes of planners and decision-makers over the past two decades towards local participation in the development process. Governments, multilateral development banks, and nongovernmental organizations are beginning to recognise that environmentally sustainable development, of which ecotourism is an example, rests on gaining local support for the project.

Drake adds an important point, saying that the capacity of national and local governments to manage effectively the rapidly growing number of development projects and programmes will be limited, unless functions become more decentralised and communities involved.²⁷ This could easily be the case in KwaZulu, a region rich in natural beauty and vulnerable to exploitation by international or even national developers'. The region's riches should not be allowed to bypass the locals. This risk can be reduced if effective participatory programmes are set up which will benefit the locals - instead of mainly outsiders.²⁸ Furthermore, multilateral development banks and nongovernmental

²⁶IUCN World Conservation Strategy for the 1990s, Gland: Switzerland. 1990: 156.

²⁷Drake, S. 'Local Participation in Discriminatory projects' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, U.S.A. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 132.

²⁸Studies done by Tourism Concern (a membership network of people concerned with tourism set up in Britain in 1989) and the WWF (Britain), concluded that there is little evidence that tourism to India, Indonesia, Thailand or Malaysia

organizations alone cannot effectively ensure that benefits will be channelled to the local population.²⁹ Finally, pragmatic considerations aside, planners have a moral obligation to involve the people whom their projects will affect if sustainable development is the objective.

Participation by rural people is a necessary component of sustainable development generally and ecotourism specifically - because of the shared natural resource base. Local participation gives people the ability to influence the outcome of development projects, such as ecotourism, that have an impact on them.³⁰

There are few, if any, clearly defined approaches to planning local participation for ecotourism projects in KwaZulu-Natal.

The fact that local issues are slowly but surely being addressed in global documents such as the IUCN report, allows one to predict that national governments are less likely to ignore international opinion and the acceptance of popular grassroots support in environmental decision-making processes. But one cannot deny the participatory vacuum present throughout South Africa. In order to accommodate participation, capacity-building becomes important.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

If, for example, there can be agreement on the need for true participation,

had filtered through to local communities, implying that local involvement and participation could rectify this. Eber, S. (ed.) Beyond the Green Horizon, WWF: London. 1992: 23.

²⁹Panos Media Briefing. No 14. January 1995. London: Panos Institute.

³⁰Drake, S. 'Local Participation in Discriminatory projects' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, U.S.A. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 132.

one of the challenges confronting ecotourism development in the KwaZulu-Natal region as a whole, is enabling community participation. Development implementation then needs to move beyond merely delivering infrastructure, towards actually empowering less developed and previously marginalised communities.³¹

The present "incapacity" of communities to become effectively involved in development projects is a direct consequence of apartheid.³² Apartheid promoted a paternalistic attitude towards rural (and other) black South Africans and denied them decision-making powers by placing these in the hands of a white minority. Most communities lack the capacity, they do not possess the knowledge or skills needed to become involved in the technical, financial and managerial aspects of development. This fact often underlies assumptions or arguments against providing for local community participation. For instance, because certain local expertise and literary skills are apparently absent, the conservation authorities of both the NPB and the KDNC have felt justified in implementing a top-down approach towards decision-making. The NPB and the KDNC have tended to address local community problems through consultation with tribal authorities (chiefs) and have avoided dealing with civics, youth and other community structures which really represent grassroots opinion.³³

It is true that many communities in informal urban and rural areas are not "policy-literate"; they are unable to understand the complexities of formulating and

³¹Clark, C. & Bekker, S. & Cross, C. 'Civic Capacity Building' in Indicator South Africa, Vol 11 No 4 Spring 1994: 86.

³²Clark, C. & Bekker, S. & Cross, C. 'Civic Capacity Building' in Indicator South Africa, Vol 11 No 4 Spring 1994: 87.

³³Ibid.

executing conservation policies.³⁴ But if it can be said that communities are not 'policy-literate', then it can also be said that developers are not 'poverty-literate', since they are not sensitive to the problems of the communities they purport to aid.³⁵ The need for capacity-building is thus not necessarily limited to communities: development agencies and state organisations need to acquire the capacity to understand the effects of social issues on disempowered communities before they characterize local communities as 'incapable'.³⁶

Empowerment in the form of capacity-building would entail transforming communities from passive recipients into active participants in the design and delivery of programmes. But apparently this process is 'fraught with problems'.³⁷ For one, it is felt that it is very difficult for organisations who are set up to operate in a "top-down", non-empowering fashion, to adapt to new approaches which truly involve communities instead of ignoring them.³⁸ But what actions constitute participation?

Local communities can participate in ecotourism projects at the planning stage, during implementation, and thereafter can share the resulting benefits. Participation in the planning process includes such tasks as identifying problems, formulating alternatives, planning activities, and allocating resources. The implementation stage entails managing and operating a programme. Sharing benefits means that the local communities could receive economic, social, political,

³⁴Clark, C. & Bekker, S. & Cross, C. 'Civic Capacity Building' in Indicator South Africa, Vol 11 No 4 Spring 1994: 88.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

and cultural benefits from the project, either individually or collectively.³⁹ This is what participation is in its entirety. Merely communicating decisions to local people, or employing them when work becomes available does not constitute true participation.

Drake cautions us against believing that local participation should be seen as a 'cure-all' for all the socio-economic costs of ecotourism projects. There are some valid concerns and problems involved in establishing local participation. For example, facilitating local participation necessitates managerial and administrative staff (which could be a problem in the illiterate parts of KwaZulu). Pressure could also be exerted by a community to widen the range of services and activities beyond those which would be sustainable for the region. Benefits do not always reach the intended target group, but, for example, the rural elite instead of the rural poor. Involving local people could increase their frustration or dissatisfaction if a project is delayed or delivers inferior services to those anticipated.⁴⁰

Illiteracy or so-called 'incapacity' is no excuse for not allowing for participation by communities in ecotourist enterprises. Many suggestions exist to promote participation in projects affecting indigenous people or illiterate populations.⁴¹ One of the most important means for developing capacity for full involvement of communities is through experiential learning. This suggests that

³⁹Drake, S. 'Local Participation in Discriminatory projects' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 133.

⁴⁰Drake, S. 'Local Participation in Discriminatory projects' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, U.S.A. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 161, 162.

⁴¹Drake, S. 'Local Participation in Discriminatory projects' in Whelan, T. (ed.) Nature Tourism: Managing for the Environment, U.S.A. Washington D.C.: Island Press. 1991: 152.

communities can be drawn into the conservation process and can learn the necessary skills through being involved in all aspects of the process. Here, free access to information about various procedures becomes a prerequisite for community involvement and capacity-building.⁴²

The fact remains, however, that despite these potential complexities, the risk of creating an ecotourism project, which is not supported by and constructed with the local people, will have worse consequences: continued hostility, apathy, encroachment and poaching, circumstances under which ecotourism would be difficult to materialize.

Whether KwaZulu-Natal's conservation and development needs would best be served by expanding and strengthening state bureaucratic structures, or by building greater community self-reliance and control of planning inputs, is an ongoing argument among various development and conservation institutions in South Africa. Current opinion, according to the Centre for Community Organisation, Research and Development (CORD), seems to favour a 'bottom-up planning' approach to address the severe social dislocation and poverty now partially attributed to top-down development mismanagement.⁴³ The 'top-down' approach epitomised by the KDNC to alleviate poverty is on a small scale, local and reformist, and development inputs are routed through traditional leaders of local communities. As CORD points out, the KDNC's conservation efforts within the region dispossesses local people of the development potential of their natural heritage under the guise of consultation with indigenous populations.⁴⁴

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³CORD, Overcoming Apartheid's land legacy in Maputaland, Working Paper 3, 1991: 6-7.

⁴⁴Ibid.

The problems arising from past conservation policies and increasing economic pressures on wild resources have led to a much needed rethinking of wildlife management strategies. In some instances, deproclamations of some reserves and parks have been advocated. However, the benefits of this are debatable. In KwaZulu-Natal, there is enough unused land in the region suitable for community conservation programmes. Secondly, conserved land only takes up approximately 9% of the whole region. Thirdly, the land normally under conservation is not necessarily arable or suitable land for agricultural purposes. Fourthly, claims to the land by the local people tend to focus on what the nature reserves offer: tourism, an abundance of wildlife, prestige, and revenue. In the arguments for redistributing wildlands and reserves, one can detect a sense of bias, an emotional 'need' to reclaim such land as community property. There also exists a fear among conservationists that a prosperous reserve would attract more impoverished people to its borders, threatening the sustainability of an already fragile environment. While this issue is in fact an environmental conservationist issue, in the South African context it has become highly politicised: it is an issue over who has control over what natural resources and, more importantly, how this control is obtained.⁴⁵

COMMUNITY-BASED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES

In an attempt to address both strategies and past attitudes, a more direct, and possibly a more widely applicable, and acceptable, approach to reconciling rural development and conservation has been advocated through community-based wildlife management programmes. The World Bank noted the potential of this approach towards conservation in promoting overall rural development through

⁴⁵Khan, F. 'Involvement of the Masses in Environmental Politics' in Veld and Flora. June 1990: 36-38.

increasing local incomes, improving standards of living, strengthening local community structures and human resources, and generally empowering local communities to manage their own natural resources with minimal external input or control.⁴⁶ Community-based wildlife programmes attempt to establish effective participation and capacity-building. These are premises similar to those of Peter Korten's people-centred approach to sustainable development.⁴⁷

Communal management schemes in developing countries often prove a more effective means of appropriating the value of wild resources than either public or private management and encourage their sustainable management.⁴⁸ Community-based wildlife management is a fairly recent interest in Sub-Saharan Africa. This interest should be viewed in the context of evolving approaches to natural resource preservation, how preservation has changed to conservation, how the human being has been accommodated in the term 'environment', and finally, how a global call for greater popular participation has emerged.⁴⁹ Community-based wildlife programmes seek to engender the cooperation of local communities in wildlife conservation through ensuring that a sufficient share of the benefits gained from wildlife management and utilisation will accrue to communities in order to compensate for any costs imposed on them.⁵⁰ But it also entails a real

⁴⁶Barbier, E.B. 'Community-Based Development in Africa' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 105.

⁴⁷Korten, D.C. Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press. 1990: 66.

⁴⁸Barbier, E.B. 'Community-Based Development in Africa' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 102, 103.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

transfer of responsibilities and control, making local communities accountable for sustainable natural resources utilisation.

There are in Africa a handful of projects where conservation is accepted because it supports rather than restricts the lifestyles and material interests of people who live alongside the borders of nature reserves.⁵¹ Another is the CAMPFIRE project in Zimbabwe.⁵² Local people here are left in charge of their own natural and wildlife resources which they utilize to create tourism revenue, which in turns serves as a mode of development. This type of project illustrates a different implementation of conservation: where people are seen as part of the land. Consequently, conservation does not then become the exclusive domain of the privileged at the expense of the indigenous population.

However, wildlife management procedures in KwaZulu stand in stark contrast to CAMPFIRE. The KwaZulu authority's approach is to hand 25 % of revenue from conservation-related tourism to tribal authorities for the benefit of the communities.⁵³ Although the Kosi Bay campsite apparently earned some R10 000 in 1986, R17 000 in 1987 and more than R35 000 in 1988 for the Tembe Tribal Authority, the people of the area say they have not received any of this money nor have they derived any other tangible benefits. Consequently, they

⁵¹One example is the project near the village of Purros - 50km inland from Namibia's Skeleton Coast. Another example evolves around the creation of the Richtersveld National Park in 1989.

⁵²CAMPFIRE is an acronym for the Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources.

⁵³The KwaZulu Government's Tourism Policy (1991), previously discerned in Chapter Four.

question the effectiveness of the tribal authority's 'distributive system'.⁵⁴

Koch is of the opinion that 'conservation by consensus', or popular support, will only work with a relatively democratic and equitable method of distributing revenue derived from nature reserves. KwaZulu is not the only region where this is absent. In many of South Africa's rural and ex-homeland areas, community-based wildlife conservation programmes will require a restructuring of local power relations.⁵⁵ Maybe tribal authorities should not be regarded by conservation authorities as the agents responsible for distributing benefits to their subjects. Alternative measures should be found which would produce real benefits for the people at large.

The economic desk of the ANC has, according to Max Sisulu and Stan Sangweni, given some thought to the way in which the new government should approach conservation. The ANC supports strategies "which advocate full community participation in the management of wildlife resources and in the economic benefits flowing from this resource".⁵⁶ "If wildlife is perceived as an asset by the communities where it exists, they will take it upon themselves to protect it and not be party to poaching and smuggling."⁵⁷ The Government of National Unity, dominated by the ANC, has supported the concept of popular participation by including it in the White Paper on a Reconstruction and

⁵⁴ 'Conservation: A Case For the People of Kosi Bay' in New Ground, Vol 1 No 1, September 1990: 10.

⁵⁵ Koch, E., Cooper, D. and Coetzee, H. Water, Waste and Wildlife: the politics of ecology in South Africa. 1990: 28.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Development Programme.⁵⁸

Community-based wildlife management and utilization schemes usually have one or more means of sharing benefits with local communities, for example, revenue sharing, employment creation, infrastructure investment and the utilization of resources. (The several ways in which this sharing of benefits can occur are elaborated in Table 6.1).

Apart from increasing benefits to the local people, community-based wildlife projects also have a decided commitment to increasing local participation and empowerment. This ranges from involving local communities in project planning and design, to training and skills development in project activities, to actual community-run management of culling operations, to tourist services, anti-poaching operations and other projects.⁵⁹ This does not imply encroaching upon existing nature conservation programmes, but could be a way of establishing wildlife management as an industry in itself, as well as an attempt to conserve 10% of what is internationally regarded as the general amount of land that should be conserved. Countries in Southern Africa base their community-based wildlife programmes on the Hwange Principles.⁶⁰ These principles refer to issues of community empowerment and self-reliance through participation, communication forums, access and control over natural resources. (See Table 6.2).

⁵⁸Point 2.10.6.2 of the RDP: Participation of communities in management and decision-making in wildlife conservation and the related tourism benefits.

⁵⁹Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 106.

⁶⁰The Hwange Principles are the guiding principles of African countries for community-based wildlife programmes which were developed in Hwange National Park in 1992.

TABLE 6.1: BENEFITS OF REVENUE-SHARING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- * Revenue-sharing with the local community of any proceeds from wildlife-related activities, such as tourism, safari hunting, commercial culling, and so forth.
- * Employment or income generation through the development of rural development programmes or activities in the protected area or in surrounding buffer zones, local job creation in tourist, wildlife and park services or in commercially run cropping or hunting schemes and creation of markets for local handicrafts and produce.
- * Infrastructure investment in schools, roads, hospitals, clinics, water supply and other much needed public infrastructure works required by rural communities.
- * Direct utilization of wild resources, through reserving hunting quotas and licenses for local communities, establishing user rights and buffer zones for limited resource exploitation, controlled culling operations by local people for subsistence, pest damage control or profit, facilitating private, commercially orientated wildlife operations, such as game ranching, and other means of increasing the direct economic benefits to local communities from wild resources.

Source: Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 106.

TABLE 6.2: THE HWANGE PRINCIPLES

- * The conservation of biodiversity can be promoted by adapting land-use systems.
- * Communities must be empowered through the promotion of their role in decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation.
- * Effective communication of information to community members is necessary for decision-making and empowerment.
- * Dialogue with all stake-holders and relevant parties is essential.
- * Communities must have access to, control over, and responsibility for the sustainable use of natural resources.
- * Promotion of self-reliance and competence at various levels is vital to avoid long-term dependency or failure.
- * There must be a clear understanding that benefits are inextricably linked to the sustainable use of the resources.
- * Acceptable representative institutions must be developed for decision-making, management and consultation.
- * There should be a strategic selling of the programme at levels above the field (e.g. district, regional, national and international) by the implementing agency and sponsors with increasing involvement of the community.
- * Enabling legislation must be enacted that allows for decision-making power to be vested in local institutions and for communities and individuals to derive direct benefits from the sustainable utilisation of the resources.

Source: African Wildlife, vol. 47, no 6: 246.

However, in most schemes, with the exception of privately run or commercially-oriented projects, actual ownership of the protected areas and wildlife remains in the hands of the state, and many of the important decisions regarding use rights still remain with central authorities or their local representatives.⁶¹ This is, to some extent, the case presently at the Natal Parks Board. Their community projects occur on land which remains under the Board's custodianship. The projects are also under strict NPB supervision. In fact, such projects cannot be really termed as community-based wildlife programmes but are more a way of establishing community benefits. A community-based wildlife management programme would necessitate actually proclaiming some land as conservation territory and granting a local community autonomy to utilize that environment in a manner wholly conducive to sustainable development.

COMMUNITY-BASED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT FOR KWAZULU-NATAL?

Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE is often seen as a model for community conservation in South Africa.⁶² Game harvesting, hunting and tourism are the sources of income for these projects, which are controlled by local, democratically elected committees. These committees calculate the extent of wildlife resources, decide how much can be harvested and how to use the income.

CAMPFIRE funds are spent on water projects, schools and clinics. They provide training opportunities and the necessary skills for local people. For example, some district councils run training programmes for 'Problem Animal

⁶¹Barbier, E.B. 'Community-Based Development in Africa' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 105.

⁶²Holt-Biddle, D. 'Campfire' in Africa: Environment and Wildlife, Vol 2. No 1. January/February 1994: 35.

Reporters' which enable participants to protect people from wild animals.⁶³ These workers are elected by the people and are accountable to local structures which pay them. Projects work together through the CAMPFIRE association, which gathers and sends out information; produces a newsletter; cooperates with organisations with similar interests; markets their products; and lobbies for CAMPFIRE with government and also internationally. The programme is now expanding its activities and is, for example, responsible for organizing its own tourist safaris.⁶⁴ This community-based wildlife management programme not only enables local people to participate in this venture, but also consciously promotes entrepreneurship.

The demands of the rural people of South Africa, makes community-based conservation a worthwhile consideration.⁶⁵ Since rural people are the majority of KwaZulu-Natal's population, demands made by them threaten conservation methods which wilfully ignore their needs. Rural people are adamant that animals must no longer get priority over people. Game parks should only be set up if neighbouring people will benefit from them and communities are involved in managing them. Rural communities also demand basic, affordable services and infrastructure, including clean water supplies, adequate and accessible health care, schools and creches, roads, agricultural extension services and recreational facilities. They say that development programmes must include job creation,

⁶³Holt-Biddle, D. 'Campfire' in Africa: Environment and Wildlife. Vol 2. No 1. January/February 1994: 35.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵On 12 February 1994 the Community Land Conference was held in Bloemfontein to voice the demands of rural people. (Moloi, D. 'Rural people speak: the land - a matter of life and death' in New Ground, Autumn 1994: 16-17.)

empowerment and skills training to alleviate poverty.⁶⁶

CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, has gone a long way towards providing for such kinds of needs. Nevertheless, Maveneke pointed out that projects generally do not yield quick results and unrealistic expectations must be avoided.⁶⁷ CAMPFIRE began in the 1970's and is only now beginning to produce returns. It had to survive and endure a learning phase with many mistakes. One early mistake was simply handing out profits to communities. (Note the present twenty-five % revenue hand-out by the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation mentioned previously in Chapter Three). The implication was that the revenue received was not always invested in the community as a whole, but enriched certain people only for a limited time until the funds dried up. Now profits are invested in community development projects designed to benefit everyone in the long-term.

Projects like CAMPFIRE are not the sole solution to all of South Africa's environmental conservation problems. There are people that believe they are not benefiting enough from such a system.⁶⁸ Others feel that despite the scheme, the damage caused by wild animals, especially elephants, remains a problem. Issues of drought and increasing population numbers are matters which also do not disappear overnight.⁶⁹ The economic and participatory benefits of schemes like CAMPFIRE need to be carefully developed and continuously monitored in order to succeed in the twin objectives of ensuring firstly that local communities begin

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Taparendava Maveneke is the Chief Executive Officer of the CAMPFIRE association in Zimbabwe.

⁶⁸Holt-Biddle, D. 'Campfire' in Africa: Environment and Wildlife. Vol 2. No 1. January/February 1994: 35.

⁶⁹Ibid.

viewing wildlife as an economic asset worth maintaining, and secondly that these communities have sufficient control over decisions to manage the resources and the income they generate.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the role local indigenous people can play in conservation management has received little if any recognition. One example does, however, exist. In northern Zululand on the border of the elite Phinda Reserve to the north of Lake St. Lucia, the Makasa tribe are busy establishing a new 1700 ha game reserve with the help of the Natal Parks Board. Tribe leader, Nkosi Gurnede says:

If people know they've got a finger in the pie, they will look after it with care. This game reserve is being established by the Makasa Tribe. All of them have now become watchdogs.⁷⁰

The recent construction of the reserve's fence was (for a change) welcomed by the Makasa tribe. In contrast to past anxieties which accompanied the construction of reserves, the tribe now exhibited enthusiasm. The difference this time was that the initiative came from the tribe itself. When Nkosi Gurnede found out that the Makasa land was to be included in the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Area, he applied to the province to manage this land in collaboration with the tribe and to conserve it as a tribal nature reserve.⁷¹

All decisions regarding the reserve are made by a management committee consisting of four Natal Parks Board representatives and four representatives from the Makasa Tribal Authority. The Natal Parks Board are also assisting in restocking

⁷⁰Our Living World, Supplementary Issues of the Southern African Nature Foundation, WWF, September 1994.

⁷¹Ibid.

the reserve with game from the nearby Mkuzi Game Reserve. In addition, three members of the Makasa tribe are being trained at Mkuzi as game guards. Says Gumedede:

Once the reserve is fully established, the tribal people will be able to go and view the game. Grass can be harvested and there will be jobs. When the animals are culled, the people will get venison. Money from the reserve will be used to build schools and clinics.⁷²

Whether this reserve will be utilized in a sustainable manner and for the benefit of the whole community, only time will tell. However, a progressive stance on the part of the Natal Parks Board is revealed by this act of capacity-building. In this respect, all stand to gain, conservation is being promoted; the local people have gained true empowerment and participation; and ecotourism is being promoted by the local people themselves, and not by some foreign organisation.

The Bureau of Natural Resources (now the KDNC) has expressed support for a more progressive approach, saying that its practice is to ensure "the survival of KwaZulu's environment without hindering economic development or denying the rural people the natural resources upon which many of them depend for day to day living."⁷³ The article quotes the former Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Mangosuthu Buthelezi in his support for this position: "the old notion that conservation can only be successful if people are removed from the areas concerned must be abandoned. We are quite determined that in KwaZulu we will not conserve nature

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Greig, J. 'The KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources' in African Wildlife, Volume 36 Number 4/5: 137.

in the human vacuums created at the cost of great misery."⁷⁴

However, those working with the local people of KwaZulu-Natal feel that the sentiment expressed by KDNC is far from being implemented. The Surplus People's Project (SPP) described the attitude of conservation planners as one where "the people of the area were not, by and large, seen as part of the total ecology of the area with, moreover, prior claims to its resources, but as problems, obstacles which could and frequently were, moved elsewhere so that the environment could be 'preserved'."⁷⁵ They relate the creation of the Tembe Elephant Park in 1983 as an example where theory was not put into practice. The creation of the Park meant forced removals for thirty-two families, some of whom claim not to have been consulted or compensated. Others still wait for water supplies promised for their new settlement. The biggest grievance, probably, was the lack of effective consultation with local people in arriving at the Tembe conservation plan.⁷⁶

Mr Mtiyane, representative of the Isididi group, one of the local bodies formed to oppose the relocation of inhabitants, points out that people are not averse to conservation but to the way it is done. In a study commissioned by the then KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources, John Fowkes and the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town were asked to determine the role of the private sector in tourism development and conservation in the KwaZulu region. Fowkes arrived at various conclusions. What matters in this context is his

⁷⁴'Conservation: A Case For the People of Kosi Bay' in New Ground, Vol 1 No 1, September 1990: 10.

⁷⁵'Conservation: A Case For the People of Kosi Bay' in New Ground, Vol 1 No 1, September 1990: 10.

⁷⁶Ibid.

findings about the attitude of the local people towards the government of KwaZulu with respect to conservation measures.⁷⁷

According to the Fowkes' report, the KDNC was seen as the implementing arm of government in taking away land from the people. Local inhabitants were denied or only granted restricted access to nature reserves, which exacerbated feelings of hostility even more. In some areas of KwaZulu the KDNC was seen as "the enemy of the people".⁷⁸ People also felt that communication was weak between them and the authorities. The research pointed to a failure to keep in touch with local feelings and attitudes, that decisions were made bureaucratically with support from the then Chief Minister. Some staff members were criticised for still using the inappropriate colonial attitudes towards conservation, which was believed to work against the constructive involvement of local people in the decision-making processes.⁷⁹ The KDNC was also perceived to be obstructionist in its reaction to development proposals.⁸⁰

With regards attitudes towards tribal authorities, the Report states that there

⁷⁷Fowkes claims that only views emanating from more than one source were recorded. I compared the Report issued by the KwaZulu Government with John Fowkes's own copy and found an extra chapter in the latter's. This additional chapter deals, among other things, with the political implications of certain decisions; the local people's perception of the KwaZulu government; and their attitudes towards tribal authorities. Reading the various conclusions drawn, one can only speculate why this particular chapter was omitted from the publicised version.

⁷⁸Fowkes, J. KwaZulu Ezemvelo. Report of the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. 1989: 278.

⁷⁹Fowkes, J. KwaZulu Ezemvelo. Report of the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. 1989: 279.

⁸⁰Fowkes, J. KwaZulu Ezemvelo. Report of the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. 1989: 278.

are reservations about how effectively some of the tribal authorities transmit the benefits of tourism or conservation developments to the people who are affected. This creates problems for conservationists or developers who seek to distribute benefits to local communities through the channel of tribal authorities. Tribal authorities were also seen as being ineffective in communicating news of change to their communities.⁸¹ Not all tribal authorities were seen as truly representing the views of all their people. Decisions may, therefore, be taken by the tribal authority which are not acceptable to the local communities.⁸² According to the Report, the authority of the tribal authority is entrenched in traditional customs and government procedures. Moves to undermine this status, or to by-pass the tribal authority, could be seen as attempts to diminish government authority.⁸³

The Report also says that research has shown that the people of KwaZulu living in a subsistence economy view all the natural resources around them from a totally utilitarian point of view.⁸⁴ This is understandable, but the implication for conservationists is that conserved areas must be accepted and altered to have a utilitarian value for surrounding communities.⁸⁵ Fowkes' conclusion thus supports the premises of community-based wildlife programmes.

Promoting ecotourism as one way of achieving rural development is not an attempt to romanticize indigenous societies, nor to deny the presence of

⁸¹Fowkes, J. KwaZulu Ezemvelo. Report of the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. 1989: 280.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Fowkes, J. KwaZulu Ezemvelo. Report of the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. 1989: 284.

environmentally destructive community level activities in some circumstances. The current Manguzi-Road issue between the KDNC and the local community of the KwaZibi Coastal Reserve in Maputaland (a region in northern KwaZulu-Natal) is testimony to this. This local community receives 25 % of the reserves' revenue; is allowed controlled harvesting of natural resources; and cattle grazes within the reserve, has chosen to tear down 3 km of the KDNC's KwaZibi reserve's fence. Apparently, with the support of the tribal authorities and RDP funding, the local community is planning to tar the existing gravel road which runs through the reserve.⁸⁶ The KDNC became aware of their intentions a couple of months ago and insisted on establishing a forum for discussions, but to no avail. This incident indicates the profuse challenge conservation authorities are confronted with when surrounded by impoverished, development-hungry people. Yet it also indicates conservationists' fragility against outside material powers.

Despite the sometimes environmentally destructive nature of rural people, Vivian remarks that it still is essential to recognize the critical importance of indigenous organizations of marginalized people for sound development under a wide variety of conditions.⁸⁷ Such organizations can function as agencies for the promotion of alternative, sustainable approaches to social and economic development and they are vital for the success of initiatives for environmental preservation and protection.⁸⁸

Sustainable environmental management succeeds best where active local-

⁸⁶The South Coast Herald, 23 November 1995.

⁸⁷Vivian, J. 'Foundations for Sustainable Development: Participation, Empowerment and Local Resource Management' in Ghai, D. and Vivian J. (eds) Grassroots Environmental Action: People's Participation In Sustainable Development. London: Chatham. 1992: 55.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

level support exists.⁸⁹ Thus, for any conservation or development proposal to prosper, it needs popular support. This means that there should not only be consultation with the local people, but also participation. In any event, because of their close affinity with their natural environment, and their dependence on it, indigenous people have over many years developed a rich tradition of conservational wisdom and an understanding of natural processes. They should therefore be involved in the control and planning of the use of these resources, including wildlife. The harmonizing of local needs and local knowledge with conservation is indispensable to sound environmental and socio-economic planning.⁹⁰

In sum, the whole approach of community-based wildlife development in KwaZulu-Natal should be to reconcile the conservation goals of the preservation of species and natural system with the individual aspirations of the people concerned.⁹¹ A key condition for success is a commitment by national policy-makers to community-based wildlife management as well as a decentralisation of control.

Where does the responsibility for sustainable ecotourism at present lie? Who is in control when it comes to determining the scope of local community participation? In other words, what are the relevant institutional arrangements? On what rationale are these arrangements constructed? These are the issues which will be addressed next.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Bothma J du P. & Glavovic, P.D. 'Wild Animals' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. Environmental Management in South Africa, Cape Town: Juta. 1992: 258.

⁹¹Barbier, E.B. 'Community-Based Development in Africa' in Swanson, T.M., and Barbier, E.B., (eds) Economics for the Wilds, London: Earthscan Publications Limited. 1992: 132.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The negotiation process which dominated South African politics in the early 1990's was mainly characterised by the extension of political rights to all, the inclusion of a Bill of Rights which accommodates minority rights as opposed to mere majoritarianism, the release of political prisoners, amnesty, and the RDP as a way of addressing the country's economic backwardness. Many environmentalists and conservationists were justifiably concerned during the negotiation process since it appeared that 'green issues' were either being ignored or subverted instead of them being addressed.¹

THE PROBLEMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's environmental management system is a product of socio-economic and political change. It is a system which incrementally adapted to needs emanating from its context.² The historical development of environmental conservation in South Africa followed a similar path to that in other countries where the conservation focus changed from species preservation to a more comprehensive approach of habitat and ecosystem conservation.

To highlight the changes in South Africa's environmental management approach, Schwella and Muller distinguish between five developmental phases of

¹Yeld, J. 'The New Constitution: New Environmental Opportunities?' in African Wildlife, Vol. 47, No. 5, Jan/Feb 1994: 5.

²Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa, Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 72.

the evolution of environmental conservation in South Africa:³

(1) Preservation of species through legislation (1655-1875)

The state had the right and the duty to control the exploitation of wild animals and plants on behalf of the people as a whole.⁴

(2) Institutionalization of the conservation function (1875-1960)

The preservation of species became formally institutionalised for the first time with the establishment of the Cape Forest Department in 1875. South Africa's first formal conservation areas were demarcated forest reserves established in terms of the Cape Forest Act 28 of 1888. A number of protected areas were also established. The respective provincial authorities took over control of these areas after the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910.⁵

(3) Need for a comprehensive approach (1960-1980)

The establishment of a state Social and Economic Planning Council in 1942 was the first deliberate step at national level in regulating man-environment interactions in a more comprehensive sense. The objective was to assist the government with the formulation of an integrated economic and social policy. The Natural Resource Development Council was created by the Natural Resources Development Act 51 of 1947 in order to assist the government in regulating the exploitation of natural

³Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 72-74.

⁴Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 72.

⁵Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 73.

resources. The 1960's signify progress in South African natural resource management with the establishment in 1964 of a Department of Planning and the promulgation of the Physical Planning and Utilization of Resources Act 88 of 1967, because it indicated a recognition of the multidisciplinary nature of physical planning. From 1970 onwards, environmental awareness by government increased. In 1971 environmental pollution was investigated by a cabinet committee. In 1972, a permanent Cabinet Committee on Environmental Conservation, chaired by the Minister of Planning, was established. A non-statutory South African Committee on Environmental Conservation was to advise this cabinet committee. This consisted of representatives from government departments and other administrative bodies concerned with environmental affairs. In 1973 the Department of Planning became the Department of Planning and the Environment which had to coordinate legislation relating to the control of pollution and to make provision for considering environmental factors during land-use planning. This department was reorganised in 1979 to become the Department of Environmental Planning and Energy.⁶

(4) The quest for a national environmental policy and conservation strategy (1980-1990)

In the early 1980s, the government's White Paper On a National Policy Regarding Environmental Conservation was published. As a result of the process of rationalization of the public service, the Department of Water Affairs, Forestry and Environmental Conservation came into being in 1980. The Department changed name to the Department of Environment Affairs in 1981, which meant an amalgamation of certain state responsibilities concerned with the administration of natural resource conservation. The Environment Conservation Act 100 of 1982 was one of the first steps in the implementation of the government's White paper.

⁶Ibid.

The Planning Committee of the President's Council also investigated and reported in 1982, on Nature Conservation in South Africa and on Priorities between Conservation and Development. In 1982, the Council for the Environment became a statutory body in terms of the Environment Conservation Act, to advise the Minister of Environment Affairs on all matters pertaining to the environment.⁷

(5) Unified Environmental Management (1990-)

The President's Council was requested by the State President in December 1989 to investigate and make recommendations on a policy for a national environmental management system. In The Report of the Three Committees of the President's Council on a National Environmental Management System, the Council endorsed the view that environmental management is, and should remain, the responsibility of national government. This view was justified on account of the fact that environmental threats facing South Africa are serious and demand urgent action, and that central government is the most appropriate institution to manage the environment.⁸

The recommendations of the Report focused primarily on streamlining the policy-making functions and strengthening the central government's organisational ability to monitor the application of environmental policy, although it was not believed that the Department of Environment Affairs should be converted into a "super department" vested with executive responsibility for all aspects of

⁷Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 73-74.

⁸Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 74-75.

environmental management.⁹ Yet these recommendations, as I have already mentioned, have largely been left unattended.

The incremental adaption of an environmental management system for South Africa has led to problems manifesting themselves when changes to the system into an integrated whole are considered. These problems can be condensed as:

- * A lack of a central mission, goals and objectives at which the system is directed.
- * Owing to the constitutional arrangement, a multiplicity of institutions have been created to deal with various aspects of environmental management. This results in a fragmentation of the service-provision system and creates serious problems of coordination.
- * Because environmental management is not considered a high national priority, the institutions involved are not vested with high political status and the administrative system is not given sufficient official authority to handle possible conflicts of interest in respect of environmental management.
- * Owing to the fragmented and uncoordinated functioning of the administrative system, dualistic conservation or exploitation assignments were conferred upon particular institutions. This inevitably led to conflicts of interest within these institutions.¹⁰

⁹The Report of the Three Committees of the President's Council on a National Environmental Management System. (1989).

¹⁰The Report of the Three Committees of the President's Council on a National Environmental Management System. (1989), and Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 72-74.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The President's Council's Report on a National Environmental Management System (1993) identifies the fragmented nature of environmental legislation and the diffusion of responsibility for its administration and enforcement as the most serious problem relating to environmental management in South Africa. Responsibility for the environment has been divided between many different government departments, the provincial administrations and local authorities. For example, at national level, marine pollution is controlled partly by the Department of Transport and partly by the Department of Trade and Industry; and marine resources by the former Department of Community Development, the Department of Environment Affairs, and the Department of Trade and Industry.

In the past, the Department of Environment Affairs was an extremely weak department, whose policy-making process was limited by the obligation to obtain the consent of the Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and any other Minister whose department would be affected by a proposed environmental policy.¹¹ The Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989) amended this situation by empowering the Minister of Environment Affairs to declare policy and to determine norms and standards to be complied with. The Act provides that each Minister, Administrator, local authority and government institution whose decisions have an influence on the environment, will have to conform to the policy requirements declared by the Minister of Environment Affairs. In other words, the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism has now been given a far greater amount of decision-making autonomy, with other departments now beholden to it, rather than vice versa.

¹¹Loots, C. 'Making Environmental Law Effective' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Vol. 1 No. 1, March 1994: 24.

But what new prospects does the five-year interim constitution¹² hold for environmental management? One of the most important gains has been the vital provision under its "Chapter 3: Fundamental Rights", Section 29 of which reads: Every person shall have the right to an environment which is not detrimental to his or her health or well-being.¹³ Although it is a 'broad' provision, and one which will only be given proper meaning in the judgements of the Constitutional Court - its mere presence is a vast improvement on the earlier situation.

Equally significant is the provision in Chapter 3 of Section 7 (4), which defines the right of any person to apply to a competent court of law for appropriate relief where "an infringement of or any threat to any right entrenched in the Chapter is alleged."¹⁴ This is the right of *locus standi* (right to intervene). The relevant section is quite specific: persons entitled to bring an action may include an association acting in the interests of its members, a person acting as a member of or in the interest of a group or class of persons, and a person acting in the public interest.

The issue which tends to be more contentious is that in terms of this chapter, the environment has been added to the list of functions and activities due to become regional affairs. South Africa's nine new provincial parliaments are required by the new interim constitution to establish their own departments of environment affairs. Section 126 and schedule six of the interim constitution assign legislative and administrative competency on environmental matters to

¹²South Africa's interim constitution came into effect after the April 1994 national elections.

¹³Van Reenen, T.P. 'Environmental Policy-making and effective Environmental Administration' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1994: 37.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

provinces. Accordingly, "nature conservation - excluding national parks, national botanical gardens and marine resources" is a regional function. An inherent problem here will be how to maintain a holistic approach towards the environment in South Africa.

However, also included is Section 118, part of which reads:

"an Act of Parliament...shall prevail over a Provincial Law inconsistent therewith only to the extent that...

- (ii) the Act of Parliament deals with a matter that requires to be regulated (sic) or coordinated by uniform norms or standards that apply generally throughout the Republic...
- (v) the provisions of the Act of Parliament is (sic) necessary for the determination of national economic policies, the protection of the environment..."¹⁵

These clauses imply the presence of a national department of environment affairs with concurrent powers necessary to set national standards, represent South Africa internationally, and monitor South Africa's obligations in terms of international treaties and agreements. This sets up potential conflict between the government of national unity and the IFP provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal (which will be looked at later).

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS AND TOURISM:

RESPONSIBILITY ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

The institutional responsibility for the environment, conservation and tourism on a national level goes to the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism

¹⁵ibid.

(DEA&T), with Dr Dawie de Villiers as the current Minister and Major General Bantubonke Holomisa as his Deputy Minister. The National Parks Board, the various provincial authorities on the environment, and the South African Tourism Board (which is mainly responsible for marketing South Africa as a tourist destination) all are under the DEA&T's custodianship. (See Diagram 7.1). This means that all aspects of ecotourism now come under a single department at the national level. But the new powers granted to the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (by the Environment Conservation Act of 1989) with regard to policy enforcement will obviously not be felt until a national environmental policy is declared. To date no such policy has been announced. However, in the meantime, Minister De Villiers, has appointed a committee to advise him on environmental matters.¹⁶

Although the DEA&T has no definite overarching policy, some responsibilities of the Department have been discerned. These are:

- * classifying conservation areas into categories;¹⁷
- * analyzing closer cooperation between the National Parks Board, other nature conservation authorities and the Board of National Botanical Institute;
- * through government support, assisting the National and Provincial Nature and Environmental Authorities to expand the tourism capacity of the parks, without affecting the conservation status of resources;

¹⁶Environmental Justice Networker, No 3 Spring 1994: 1.

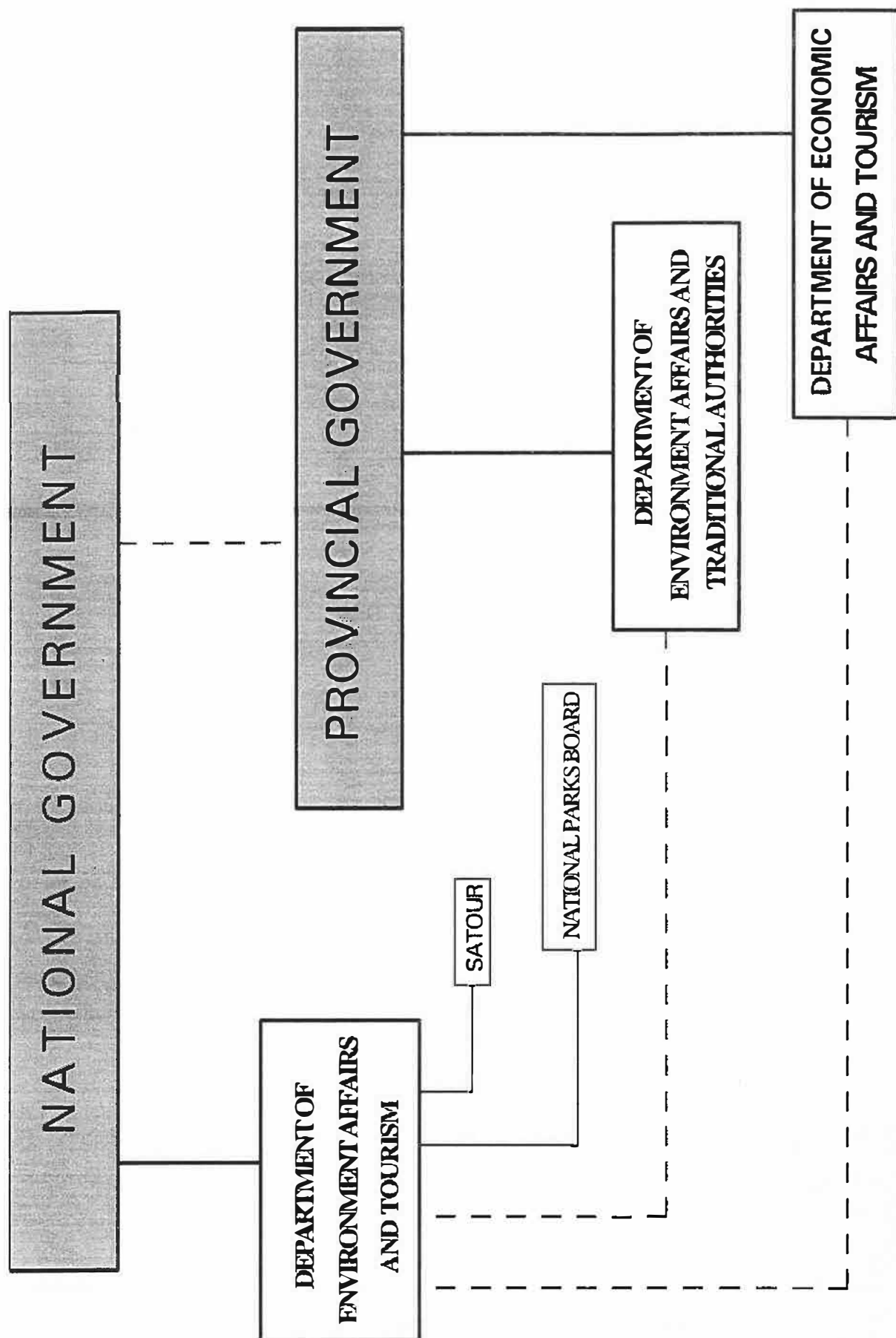
¹⁷There are three types of categories:

Category A: Conservation areas classified as national parks and national botanical gardens.

Category B: Other parks, nature conservation areas and botanical gardens of regional importance.

Category C: Conservation areas such as state controlled dams where the private sector can be involved in development.

(White Paper on Tourism, 1992: 9.)



- * through government support, accepting a conservation function and acquiring and consolidating land for conservation and tourism purposes.¹⁸

An advantage of having norms and standards fixed by a central government department is that they will then apply throughout the country, thus providing some measure of coherence. The Director-General of the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism can now apply to court for an order compelling directors of other departments, administrators, local authorities and government institutions to comply with the policy declared in terms of the Environment Conservation Act.¹⁹

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT ON A PROVINCIAL LEVEL

The decentralisation of decision-making powers to provincial level could entail an improvement on previous environmental management procedures. In the past, political decision-making in South Africa tended to be rigid, centralised and authoritarian. It has been said that the application of consensus models to decision-making had been totally absent, and very little information has been given on how the system handled scientific and technical knowledge and information.²⁰ Van Reenen says that political decision-making suffered from a 'bureaucratic' syndrome which resulted in the unquestioned and servient acceptance of the norms and values imposed by powerful centralised pro-

¹⁸White Paper on Tourism, 1992: 9.

¹⁹Loots, C. 'Making Environmental Law Effective' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Vol. 1 No. 1, March 1994: p.25.

²⁰Van Reenen, T.P. 'Environmental Policy-making and effective Environmental Administration' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1994: 37.

government bureaucratic institutions.²¹

The decentralisation of environmental affairs to a provincial level can be viewed as a change for the better, especially taking into consideration the problems and weaknesses of the previous government's environmental department. But, in some respects, this redistribution of power and responsibility to a region as politically complex and volatile as KwaZulu-Natal may however, cause serious difficulties.

The complications are perhaps most glaring where the traditional authorities (a legacy of the KwaZulu government) are combined with the conservation portfolio under the authority of one department (See Diagram 7.1). The role of chiefs is thus categorised with conservation, thereby implying shared interests. One can foresee problems here. For instance, because of South Africa's democratisation process, conservation authorities have been indirectly forced to make conservation more beneficial to local communities. However, where this might be possible to enforce in various administrations, it becomes questionable when applied to the traditional KwaZulu tribal system. The autonomous power and status of each tribal chief is fully recognised as each tribe is a political entity with its own land and authority. Each tribe is governed by a hereditary tribal chief, hence the monarchical authority.²² Whether the chiefs' decisions are necessarily in the interest of their populace and the environment has not yet been adequately determined. What is well-known is the denial of certain personal freedoms, and the chiefs' authoritarian manner of decision-making and implementation.

²¹Ibid.

²²Development of Southern Africa, KwaZulu Development Information. Volume I. Section I. 1988: 9-10.

The coordination of conservation with traditional authorities will not be an easy endeavour. In rural areas where land belongs to a tribal authority, the implications for conservation and ecotourism will be dependent on a particular area's chief. On the other hand, perhaps the assimilation of these two portfolios under one department could provide a forum for communicating conservation concerns to traditional authorities and vice versa.

On the provincial level in KwaZulu-Natal, the implications for ecotourism with regard to the institutional arrangements are somewhat complex. Tourism falls under the responsibilities of the Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism, which in turn will be constructing policies in accordance with the national Department of Trade and Industry. (See Diagram 7.1). Conservation or environmental protection on the other hand, falls under the Department of Conservation and Traditional Authorities. If ecotourism is to be promoted, it will necessitate the support of both the Department of Conservation and Traditional Authorities and the Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism. Furthermore, the former department is headed by Inkosi Nyanga Ngubane, who is affiliated to the IFP, while Jacob Zuma is the Minister of Economic Affairs and Tourism as well as the province's ANC leader. Whether cooperation between these two departments can be executed easily where political parties are deeply opposed to one another, is questionable.

As a result of the various divisions of responsibility, the legislation emanating from the different departments at the provincial level and its enforcement will be hard to coordinate. Furthermore, the protection of the environment is not the primary objective of most of the departments which can impact on the environment. For example, the provincial Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism will obviously be concerned primarily with the promotion of the economy

rather than the state of the environment. With tourism under this department, it would be hard to ensure that principles of sustainability are enforced in the tourism industry, that potential costs to the environment will be prioritised - especially since the decentralisation of central government gives provincial authorities greater autonomy to legislate on matters that pertain to the province.

Provinces are required to develop and implement strong environmental policy and legislation appropriate to their unique circumstances, while remaining within the national framework and norms. They are also required to enforce the laws they create, control pollution, limit negative environmental impact from development and manage nature conservation.

But given the lack of funding, this is a tall order. A year after South Africa's first democratic elections, the new provincial departments responsible for conservation and tourism are still not sure how to implement regional environmental authority. The problem is that provinces have never had departments of environment affairs before. An Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) survey to monitor progress in the establishment of provincial departments of environment affairs confirmed this confusion.²³ In KwaZulu-Natal this process is complicated by procedures to integrate the previously separate nature conservation administrations of Natal (the Natal Parks Board) and KwaZulu (the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation).²⁴

What has been determined with some degree of certainty is that provincial

²³EJNF, 'Massive Task Facing Regional Environment Minister'. Spring 1994: 10,11.

²⁴The particularities of the amalgamation of these two organisation was at the time of writing, still being negotiated, but would by March 1996 be finalised.

legislation will outweigh national legislation, except where national norms and standards are required for effective governance or protection of the environment. But what the national norms and standards are, remain unknown. The national Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism is charged with representing South Africa's interests internationally and is required to provide the provinces with a minimum framework of norms and standards; to coordinate priority issues and cross-boundary initiatives; to audit the sufficiency, effectiveness and quality of provincial environmental management; and to ensure that provincial bodies are adequately resourced.

With regard to provincial institutional arrangements, it seems that an institutional division (between a department of economic affairs and a department of conservation), may be necessary and functional, due to the widespread nature of the environmental services performed. It is, however, perhaps necessary to establish a central government institution with high political status and sufficient governmental authority, in order to render the required environmental protection service. Such an institution could provide the general policy framework on environmental matters and should be able to act decisively when conflict arises between powerful interest groups. At the moment this is the responsibility of the national Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEA&T)

The DEA&T has been given the watchdog task of ensuring the implementation of environmental laws. The question is whether or not it will be able to do so effectively. Loots feels that the problem it is likely to face is that because it is a government department headed by a minister who is a member of the national executive, it is not independent. The minister will be bound to act in accordance with decisions of the Cabinet. In this respect, Loots feels that it would be better for the legislature to create an independent administrative body, instead

of empowering the DEA&T.²⁵ Loots' suggestion would appear to have widespread support on a provincial level. Dr George Hughes of the Natal Parks Board has expressed his approval for an independent environmental agency backed by full statutory powers, and has rejected the idea of a 'super-department of environmental affairs'.²⁶ Such an agency could then, for example, ensure that ecotourism development proposals are subjected to an environmental impact assessment. As it stands, it seems doubtful whether the DEA&T would assume this role.

THE EXTENT OF DECENTRALISATION

Opinions differ on whether South Africa needs a strong national environmental watchdog, or whether responsibilities should be decentralised as far as grassroots level. Schwella and Muller are of the opinion that after a general policy framework has been set, taking scientific and technical considerations into account, the remaining actions and decisions regarding environmental management should be more democratic.²⁷ This implies the institutionalisation of opportunities for public participation in environmental decision-making. It also implies devolving decision-making and decentralizing executive actions to public bodies which function at regional and local levels. Schwella and Muller feel that since environmental concerns probably do not feature as a priority for a majority of South Africans, even strict and sophisticated legislation will not necessarily

²⁵Loots, C. 'Making Environmental Law Effective' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Vol. 1 No. 1, March 1994: 26-27.

²⁶Financial Mail Survey. 'Keeping Pace with a New South Africa' in Financial Mail, 22 March 1991: 27.

²⁷Schwella, E. & Muller, J. 'Environmental Administration' in Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. (eds) Environmental Management in South Africa. Juta: Cape Town. 1993: 80.

induce favourable attitudes to environmental concerns. Democratic involvement and participation in decision-making and executive actions, on the other hand, may well enhance the legitimacy of environmental policies, objectives and actions.²⁸

In a similar vein, the Democratic Party (DP) argued that environmental affairs should be a concurrent legislative and executive regional power because "basic environmental issues are close to the people and are of intimate concern at a personal level, for example, clean air, clean water, clean streets, clean rivers, combatting litter, disposing of waste, providing open space, preserving attractive local spaces, protecting local flora and fauna."²⁹ Because all these issues are felt most keenly at a local level, the DP argued that these should be identified, controlled and effectively managed as close to the people on the ground as possible. Granting the environment as a regional power could empower people in an effective and meaningful way.³⁰

But there is a difference between grassroots participation in environmental matters relating to basic environmental issues advocated by the DP above, and the same type of democratic opening for wildlife conservation. Yeld rightly points out that it is doubtful whether the provincial power structures will be sufficiently interested or powerful enough to oversee the conservation and sustainable utilisation of protected areas on a regional level. In a country where land-hunger is eminent, there is a valid fear of 'too much local people empowerment' in

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Yeld, J. 'The New Constitution: New Environmental Opportunities?' in African Wildlife. Vol 48, No 1 Jan/Feb 1994: 5.

³⁰Ibid.

deciding on the sustainable utilisation of protected areas.³¹ The importance of the conservation of biodiversity in order to achieve sustainable development is not a matter of general knowledge. Too much damage caused by past practices³² has to be repaired first before it can be expected that people will prioritise conservation to the same degree as environmental problems such as pollution or health hazards. So where does one go from here? What does the future hold for sustainable development, conservation and ecotourism?

Changes towards a society where development and environmental conservation are integrated - the philosophy of sustainable development - is desirable. Yet South Africa has proved itself to be rather slow in adopting development strategies which could bring this about. The final chapter examines why.

³¹Yeld, J. 'Shaping the Future' in African Wildlife. Vol 47, No 5, 1993/1994: 195.

³²Conservation of wildlife, for example, was in the interest of a select few only.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LOOKING AHEAD

The characteristic which, at this point in time, best epitomises environmental management in South Africa, is uncertainty. Yeld wonders whether or not South Africa has been sufficiently creative in forging its interim constitution.¹ In contrast to past legislation, the current constitutional inclusion of some environment rights (as discussed in Chapter Seven) is an advance. However, in comparison with progress made in international circles, South Africa has been relatively slow. Yeld also questions whether the new shape that has been cast for South Africa is merely a remake from the same old environmentally destructive mould?² Has environmental management in South Africa really changed? Will the Department of Environment Affairs be more effective now?

In some respects, things have not changed. The appointment of Minister of Environment Affairs (Dawie de Villiers, a minority party leader) and his deputy (a former homeland military leader, General Bantu Holomisa), for example, tends to reflect a lack of importance attached to the portfolio of environmental matters, which is a continuation of the past. Consider, too, the slowness in providing a national environmental policy, and in passing legislation on environmental laws and regulations.³ Or take the attitude revealed by Minister Dr De Villiers in his Department's failure to halt the importation of toxic waste because South Africa

¹Yeld, J. 'Shaping the Future' in African Wildlife. Vol 47, No 5, Dec/Jan 1994: 5.

²Ibid.

³By 15 September 1994 no proclamations had been delivered on environmental legislation issues. However those concerning development, education and housing were proclaimed.

stands to gain economically in its treatment of other countries' waste.⁴ With such actions, can it be said that a philosophy of sustainable development or environmental ethics actually exists in this department?

The slowness of the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEA&T) and the government's general disregard for the environment portfolio, illustrates South Africa's overriding concern with development. In the same breath, it indicates a failure to pursue sustainable development practices from the start. Development is necessary, but South Africa could provide for basic needs in ways which are in harmony with conservation or preservation. It seems as if South Africa will continue to stress achieving development first, and then react to the repercussions of its economic development strategies later. The preoccupation with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) has somewhat obscured the global environmental concerns of the twenty-first century. In this way, the government's RDP is no different than development policies followed by the industrialised countries.

In some respects, though, progress has been made. For example, the Government's subscription to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and reference to the "polluter pays principle" (PPP) implies tighter control of big corporations. But on the other hand, an EIA is only required if the Minister of Environment Affairs and Tourism has identified the need. Again, the absence of an environmental policy translates into a vacuum of environmental regulation - which leaves the environment vulnerable to continued exploitation. Nevertheless, various NGO's are trying their best to instill an environmental consciousness among

⁴Editorial, New Ground, No 18, Summer 94/95.

South African decision-makers.⁵

Fortunately, human well-being is at the centre of government discussions on development and the environment as witnessed in the Bill of Rights and RDP.⁶ Perhaps in some respects, too central. The concern here is whether people are now prioritised above sustainable environmental concerns. Referring to the issue of EIA again, the process - Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) - as it is applied in South Africa tends to have a humanistic bias in its evaluations. Jeremy Ridl (an environmental lawyer in Durban) says that environmental impact is perceived in South Africa as having a direct bearing on human well-being.⁷ According to this sentiment, a development or conservation proposal would be rejected or approved in terms of its contribution to human well-being alone, and not because of a combination of environmental and human well-being concerns.

What is thus disconcerting (or disappointing) to find is that in various government proposals there is only scant and indirect reference to environmental concerns. There is no evidence in South Africa today that sustainable development in fact means striving for a healthy and well-managed environment which is crucial to the achievement of a successful society. Nowhere does the argument seem to imply that programmes such as the RDP, are dependent on the environment being managed soundly - now.

The fact remains that environmental policy-making is inescapably political.

⁵Such as the Environmental Justice Networking Forum in their 'Greening the RDP'. Constitutive Conference 25-27 November 1994.

⁶Relevant parts of the two documents are attached as Appendix 8.1.

⁷Ridl, J. 'IEM: Lip-Service and Licence?' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy. Volume 1 Number 1, March 1994: 61-84.

It relates to government action on many fronts. It has been perfectly epitomised as follows:

It involves conflicts and controversies over what should be done, how it should be done, and who should do it; it requires difficult choices as to both ends and means; it deals with essential societal goals and purposes.

And no easy calculus is available to tell us what choices to make.⁸

As Chapter One and Two have indicated, the majority of South African policies show a concern with environmental issues only insofar as they affect the basic health and well-being of the citizens. They primarily pertain to issues of pollution and waste creation (also called brown issues or bread-and-butter issues). If any mention is made of conservation or biodiversity it is either very limited in comparison with the brown issues discussed, or very anthropocentric. But the degree varies from document to document.

Instead of analysing various policies in detail, I would like to use the ANC's document entitled 'The Future Environment Policy for a Changing South Africa' as a stepping stone in my critique of what has not yet been done in order to facilitate a congruous relationship between conservation and development. This ANC environmental discussion paper compiled by Max Sisulu & Stan Sangweni in 1990 was an attempt to formulate a strategy which they said would achieve a sound environmental management policy consistent with growth and development requirements.⁹ The ANC's discussion paper claimed in 1990 that they would adopt several principles to foster this 'when it comes to play a role in the

⁸Van Reenen, T.P. 'Environmental Policy-making and effective Environmental Administration' in The South African Journal of Environmental Law and Policy, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1994: 36.

⁹This was published in History in the Making, November 1990. One has to bear in mind that it was a pre-election statement: it could be "tainted" by election manifesto's - fight for votes.

government of the country'.¹⁰ Of relevance to conservation is paragraph (a):

A careful balance between the needs of current and future generations will be made in the exploitation of **non-renewable** natural resources. In this respect, the exploiters of natural resources will be required to develop new technologies that use less of such resources and otherwise search for alternative resources. They will also be required to take appropriate conservation and rehabilitation measures.¹¹

Yet wildlife is a renewable resource, and, according to this paragraph, is not included in any discussion on 'appropriate conservation and rehabilitation measures.'

Paragraph (c) relates to environmental management, also with the objective of formulating 'a strategy for achieving a sound environmental management policy that is consistent with growth and development'¹²:

The ANC would put in place comprehensive legislation on environmental management and protection. Such legislation would seek to address and make provision for pertinent environmental issues including: environmental impact assessments; resource management and protection; environmental monitoring; prevention and elimination of environmental pollution and damage to ecosystems; provision of appropriate administrative structures for environmental monitoring assessment and management at district, provincial and national levels.¹³

The ANC also said it is committed to conservation and the rational use of our natural resources for the benefit of the present and future generations. The ANC's position is that,

¹⁰ANC, 'The Future Environmental Policy for a Changing South Africa', in History in the Making, 1990: 39. (Own emphasis added.)

¹¹Ibid. (Own emphasis added.)

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid. (Own emphasis added.)

[W]e, the present generation, have a responsibility which we owe to future generations of South Africa to preserve the environment for them so that they will find it in a viable and usable form.¹⁴

The Working Paper claimed that the ANC's policy on environment management will seek to ensure that development (economic and social) does not take place at the expense of the natural environment. It was also the ANC's position that in planning and implementing economic growth programme(s), a correct strategy would be to maintain a healthy balance between economic and social benefits on the one hand, and environmental protection on the other hand. In policy terms this means: development and growth with environmental protection.¹⁵ Yet, existing and new developments are not assessed in terms of their effect on land and natural resource use, their social and cultural impact, waste management and pollution controls, integrated regional planning, and so on.¹⁶

One year into the ANC dominated Government of National Unity's period of governance, little of the above has been put in place. Is the GNU restricted from acting according to environmental imperatives by the overwhelming grassroots demand for the provision of services such as housing - even though the points mentioned above would foster the Reconstruction and Development Programme in practice which is both sustainable and beneficial to development? Media interviews with representatives of the Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism have also not been able to discern why it is taking such a long time for the

¹⁴ANC, 'The Future Environmental Policy for a Changing South Africa', in History in the Making. 1990: 39-40.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Fig, D. Dr. (Research Director) Ecotourism, Environmental Policy Mission, Group of Environmental Monitoring. 28 January 1994: 5.

Department to come up with effective environmental legislation.¹⁷

But what about wildlife? The ANC participates in the national tourism forum and in a number of local economic development forums.¹⁸ Yet in the RDP no attention at all was paid to the merits and potential of the ecotourism industry. The ANC's environmental discussion paper of 1990 devoted four paragraphs to the discussion of wildlife development and to tourism and the environment. The problem is seen to be the increased pressure on land for human settlement and for agricultural production which is likely to limit the availability of land for wildlife conservation and its use for major economic activities like tourism. Conflicts of these land-use requirements lead to such aberrations as poaching. Yet, in many ecological zones in South Africa, wildlife management and conservation offer the only ideal balance between human economic activity through tourism and environmental conservation. Besides, wildlife is a heritage we need to preserve for prosperity. There is a need, therefore, to establish an optimal balance between devoting such lands to wildlife and meeting the requirements of human settlement and sustenance.¹⁹

The ANC views wildlife as a national resource and they have said that their policy in a free South Africa will put emphasis on state assistance to communities in managing wildlife resources, particularly in rural areas where wildlife utilization on a sustainable basis represents a significant and viable land-use option.²⁰ The

¹⁷50/50, 3 September 1995 and in Environmental Justice Networker, No 3 Spring 1994: 1.

¹⁸Fig, D. Dr. (Research Director), Ecotourism, Environmental Policy Mission, Group of Environmental Monitoring. 28 January 1994.

¹⁹Paragraph 23 of the ANC's 1990 Environmental Policy.

²⁰Paragraph 24 of the ANC's 1990 Environmental Policy.

ANC is in agreement with the policy approach of some of the neighbouring states which advocate full community participation in management of wildlife resources and the economic benefits flowing therefrom.²¹

Wildlife, says the ANC, should be perceived as an asset by local communities so that they will protect it instead of being party to poaching and smuggling. The ANC believes that a positive approach in protecting animal species is to emphasize public participation in management and rational utilization of animal products.²² Their environmental policy fails to discuss the various institutional structures which need to be put in place, as well as various control mechanisms to ensure that rural people will protect and not overutilize wildlife resources.²³

And ecotourism? Only one governmental organisation has attempted to construct a policy which promotes a synthesis between the need for conservation and development in the form of tourism: the South Africa Tourism Board, SATOUR.

SATOUR'S ECOTOURISM POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following principles are being proposed by SATOUR as fundamental to the successful development of ecotourism:

- * In view of the fact that the components of the ecotourism environment (tourist, biophysical and cultural environment, the local people and the

²¹Ibid.

²²Paragraph 25 of the ANC's 1990 Environmental Policy.

²³As referred to in the discussion for the need for effective and true participation in Chapter Six.

ecotourism industry) are interdependent, SATOUR says that ecotourism should at all times be developed in an integrated manner. The ultimate goal for ecotourism development in South Africa is for it to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of our people, particularly those living in and around areas of particular ecological and cultural value, both through direct economic gain and indirect spin-offs.

- * To achieve this goal, the ecotourism resource base must be managed appropriately to ensure maximum socio-economic benefits and long term sustainability.
- * Such management requires a continuous, participative process, the cornerstone of which is effective involvement of all stakeholders (namely tourists, local communities and the tourism industry throughout the life-span of any ecotourism project)²⁴

A provincial policy for KwaZulu-Natal on ecotourism is non-existent. Neither The Natal Parks Board nor the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation's tourism policies or conservation policies are this comprehensive. If they are the institutions (whether amalgamated or restructured) responsible for the implementation of ecotourism in KwaZulu-Natal, it would be advisable that they deploy a policy framework which at least promotes all the principles of Satour's Ecotourism Framework. Taking into consideration the immense impact of tourism on both the natural and socio-cultural environment, definite parameters need to be set. SATOUR's Ecotourism Policy Framework is a valuable briefing which not only pinpoints the requirements of ecotourism but also expands on how the various requirements can be put into practice. SATOUR has effectively responded to the lack of central government's commitment to ecotourism and the principles of sustainable tourism. (SATOUR's policy framework is attached as Appendix 8.2).

²⁴SATOUR's Ecotourism Policy, 1993.

The White Paper on Tourism (1992) as it stands, has been accepted by the GNU. In this respect the national government has committed itself to tourism development. As a result, funding has been made available to provinces for the development of ecotourism facilities. This has, however, not been evaluated on the basis of specific ecotourism policy guidelines, but rather on the basis of economic viability. In this regard, Satour proposes

that all applications for government-supported-ecotourism funding be screened and evaluated for acceptance according to the ecotourism policy framework and that, apart from financial viability and other critical factors, adherence to the principles adopted in the framework be a prerequisite for funding allocation.²⁵

SATOUR proposed itself as the national body which could facilitate ecotourism management throughout South Africa, as is reflected by the following statement: "all areas of ecotourism potential [should] be scientifically identified and incorporated into SATOUR's tourism management information system."²⁶

Ecotourism needs to be linked to rural economic development, transferring real responsibilities to rural communities. If national government or provincial government cannot or will not ensure sustainability, perhaps the people whose lives are most threatened by unsustainable behaviour will react proactively. This is where non-governmental organisations come into play. Even conservation authorities can act independent from government and facilitate this.

For communities in KwaZulu-Natal to gain real benefits, it is important that they establish and operate their own ecotourist facilities. In order for this to work, the provincial Department of Nature Conservation and Traditional Authorities will require access to capital and extension services, training and capacity-building, as

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶SATOUR's Ecotourism Policy, 1993.

well as a more active validation and recognition of traditional knowledge and resource-use strategies. The Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism (DEA&T) should be responsible for assisting such endeavours. My thesis has shown that this is likely to remain an ideal. Despite the normative value of suggestions which would foster a harmonious relationship between conservation and development, or between government authorities and local people, critics agree that recommendations eventually lead to policy reviews and thus suggestions have value regardless.

Fig suggests that ecotourism should be regarded as having a strong part to play in the country's rural reconstruction and development programme. The very plausible argument is that if community-based facilities for foreign tourists are encouraged, real transfers of resources would occur. There would be a slower exodus from the rural areas, and the industry would have a multiplier effect on local economies.²⁷

Ecotourism can be strategically manipulated to contribute to the regional economy. Because South Africa is in a transitional stage, it is an appropriate time for change. Environmental policies have been adapted as the socio-economic context has changed, but their implementation and enforcement have been neglected. There could not have been a more ideal time in South African politics to promote sustainability within a national development plan. Yet there seems to be a general lack of political will and clout despite the fact that sustainable development is the dominant international trend today.

Conservationists should somehow be convinced that complex interactions

²⁷Fig, D. Dr. Ecotourism, Environmental Policy Mission, Group of Environmental Monitoring. 28 January 1994: 5.

exist between poverty, human population growth, economic and social development and environmental degradation. Decision-makers should realise that new social and economic commitments are necessary, but they have to be articulated and defined within an overall framework of sustainability that gives equal weight to environmental concerns.

Research has shown that there is substantial fragmentation of strategic policy planning, regulation and management in the travel and tourism industry as well as with environmental conservation in South Africa. There is a need for greater coherence if any consistency is to be achieved in the field. Enough guidelines exist for provincial natural resource authorities and administrators to structure ecotourism in a sustainable manner. Although not void of criticism, provincial conservation organisations in KwaZulu-Natal have in the last three years come a long way in fostering sustainable participatory conservation projects with rural communities. But these remain dispersed and inconsistent. SATOUR suggested that codes of ecotourism ethics be formulated for the tourism industry, local population and the tourist and that these be widely circulated and promoted so as to become an integral part of an overall tourism policy.²⁸ This could definitely be a step towards encouraging a symbiotic relationship between conservationists, developers and local communities.

Humanity depends on the earth's resources in order to meet its basic needs. The World Conservation Strategy, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wide Fund for Nature all argue that the capacity of the earth to support human and other life has been significantly diminished; that the earth has its limits and its resources are not infinitely expandable. The objective becomes to live within these limits and at the same time, see that those who lack a tolerable quality

²⁸SATOUR's Ecotourism Policy, 1993.

of life, get more.²⁹

I foresee problems in simple-minded statements like "clearly, people will accept conservation when its benefits outweigh the benefits from traditional land use".³⁰ Benefits need to be defined and made absolutely apparent to those who are directly affected by change. We should not be creating game 'zoos' just for the sake of producing revenue. I believe the anthropocentric emphasis carries a risk if it replaces the ethical and even scientific basis for conservation. The environment should have value irrespective of its usefulness to humankind. I do maintain, however, that the environment should not be protected or utilised at the cost of humankind - but protection it definitely needs.

The ethics of environmental conservation provide a basis on which to structure the relationship between human beings and their world. If people believe in an environmental philosophy, the link between conservation and development would be more easily made. "The environment is where we all live; and development is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode."³¹

Sustainable development has no 'formula'. There is no one cohesive plan which would guarantee the desired results. As my thesis has shown, socio-political issues complicate conservation priorities and ideals. Everything is interlinked. Ecotourism and community-based wildlife programmes should be regarded as

²⁹IUCN, UNEP, WWF, Caring for the Earth, Gland: IUCN. 1991: 4.

³⁰Statement made by the ANC in 'Future Environment Policy for a Changing South Africa.' ANC Position Paper in History in the Making. November 1990: 37-35.

³¹WCED, Our Common Future, Oxford University Press: New York. 1987: xi.

initiatives which, with time, could expand into a sustainable regional economy. Although a definite plan cannot be constructed, actions which are detrimental to sustainable development can be pinpointed, for example, top-down approach in devising conservation measures, denying local people at the grassroots level benefits from tourism. Instead, notions of people-participation, sustainable development, enforceable government policies, all can aid the search for a formula conducive to sustainable development: where conservationists, developers and local people can pursue their individual objectives harmoniously.

APPENDIX 8.1**EXTRACTS FROM THE ANC DRAFT BILL OF RIGHTS**

Preliminary Revised Version February 1993

ARTICLE 12**LAND AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

- (1) The land, the waters and the sky and all the natural assets which they contain, are the common heritage of the people of South Africa, who are equally entitled to their enjoyment and responsible for their conservation.
- (2) The system of property rights in relation to land shall take into account that it is the country's primary asset, the basis of life's necessities, and a finite resource.

RIGHTS TO LAND

- (3) South Africa belongs to all who live in it.
- (4) Access to land or other living space is the birthright of all South Africans.
- (5) No-one shall be removed from his or her home except by order of a Court which shall take into account the existence of reasonable alternative accommodation.
- (6) Legislation shall provide that the system of administration, ownership, occupation, use and transfer of land is equitable, directed at the provision of adequate housing for the whole population, promotes productive use of land and provides for stable and secure tenure.
- (7) Legislation shall provide for the establishment of a tribunal for land claims which shall have the power to adjudicate upon land claims made on legal or equitable grounds, and in particular shall have:
 - a) the power to order the restoration of land to people dispossessed by forced removals, or where appropriate to direct that compensation be paid, or other suitable acknowledgment be made, for injury done to them;
 - b) the power to award particular portions of land, or rights to land, to such claimants, where there are special circumstances arising out of use, occupation or other similar grounds, which make it equitable for such an award to be made.
- (8) Legislation shall also make provision for access to affordable land to be given as far as possible, and with due regard to financial and other resources available to the state, to those historically deprived of land and land rights, or deprived of access to land by past statutory discrimination.
- (9) All such legislation shall guarantee fair procedures and be based on the

principle of achieving an equitable balance between the public interest, including the above objectives, and the interests of those whose existing titles might be affected.

- (10) Any redistribution of land or interest in land required to achieve the above objectives shall be subject to just compensation which shall be determined according to the principle of equitable balance between public interest and the interest of those whose existing titles might be affected.
- (11) In the case of a dispute regarding compensation, provision shall be made for recourse to an independent tribunal, with an appeal to the courts.
- (12) All natural resources below and above the surface area of the land, including the air, and all forms of potential energy or minerals in the territorial waters, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of South Africa, which are not otherwise owned at the time of coming into being of this Constitution, shall be vested in the state acting as trustee of the whole nation.
- (13) The State shall have the right to regulate the exploitation of all natural resources, grant franchises and determine royalties subject to payment of just compensation in the event of interference with any existing title, mining right or concession.

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

- (14) All men and women shall have the right to a healthy and ecologically balanced environment and the duty to defend it.
- (15) In order to secure this right, the State, acting through appropriate agencies and organs shall conserve, protect and improve the environment, and in particular:
 - a) prevent and control pollution of the air and waters and degradation and erosion of the soil;
 - b) give regard in local, regional and national planning to the maintenance or creation of balanced ecological areas and to the prevention or minimising of harmful effects on the environment;
 - c) promote the rational use of natural resources, safeguarding their capacity for renewal and ecological stability.
 - d) ensure that long-term damage is not done to the environment by industrial or other forms of waste;
 - e) maintain, create and develop natural reserves, parks and recreational areas and classify and protect other sites and landscapes so as to ensure the preservation and protection of areas of outstanding cultural, historic and natural interest.

- (16) Legislation shall provide for co-operation between the State, non-governmental organisations, local communities and individuals in seeking to improve the environment and encourage ecologically sensible habits in daily life.
- (17) The law shall provide for appropriate penalties and reparation in the case of any damage caused to the environment, and permit the interdiction by any interested person or by any agency established for the purpose of protecting the environment, of any public or private activity or undertaking which manifestly and unreasonably causes or threatens to cause irreparable damage to the environment.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2.10 ENVIRONMENT

- 2.10.1 Apartheid legislation distorted access to natural resources, denying the majority of South Africans the use of land, water, fisheries, minerals, wildlife and clean air. South Africa's apartheid policies, combined with the underregulated activities of local and transnational corporations, contributed to the degradation of environmental resources, including soil, water and vegetation. They encouraged the misuse of fertilisers and pesticides. They placed workers' lives at severe risk because dangerous practices and substances were inadequately monitored (mining in South Africa remains an extremely dangerous job). Poverty and environmental degradation have been closely linked. In general, existing environmental policies allow inefficient and wasteful use of water, energy and raw materials, and high levels of air and water pollution.
- 2.10.2 The democratic government must ensure that all South African citizens, present and future, have the right to a decent quality of life through sustainable use of resources. To achieve this, the government must work towards:
 - 2.10.2.1 equitable access to natural resources;
 - 2.10.2.2 safe and healthy living and working environments, and;
 - 2.10.2.3 a participatory decision-making process around environmental issues, empowering communities to manage their natural environment.
- 2.10.3 Environmental considerations must be built into every decision. To accomplish this, procedures must be set in place which oblige

decision-makers to demonstrate what environmental considerations they take into account when considering projects.

2.10.4 Development strategies must incorporate environmental consequences in the course of planning. Measures such as land reform, provision of basic infrastructure, housing and targeted rural assistance (including extension services), and the maintenance of food security should ultimately reduce pressure on the natural environment.

2.10.5 The democratic government must revise current environmental legislation and administration with a view to establishing an effective system of environmental management. It must make use of environmental auditing, with provision for public disclosure. It must monitor those activities of industry which impact on the environment.

2.10.6 Strategies should include:

2.10.6.1 a system of waste management with emphasis on preventing pollution and reducing waste through direct controls, and on increasing the capacity of citizens and government to monitor and prevent the dumping of toxic wastes;

2.10.6.2 participation of communities in management and decision-making in wildlife conservation and the related tourism benefits;

2.10.6.3 environmental education programmes to rekindle our people's love for the land, to increase environmental consciousness amongst our youth, to coordinate environmental education with education policy at all levels, and to empower communities to act on environmental issues and to promote an environmental ethic, and

2.10.6.4 the establishment of procedures, rights and duties to allow workers to monitor the effects of pollution, noise levels and dangerous practices both within the workplace and in its impact on surrounding communities and environment.

2.10.7 Marine resources must be managed and controlled for the benefit of all South Africans, especially those communities whose livelihoods depends on resources from the sea. The fishing stock must be managed in a way that promotes sustainable yield and the development of new species. The democratic government must assist people to have access to these resources. Legislative measures must be introduced to establish democratic structures for the management of sea resources.

2.10.8 **Environmental regulation.** South Africa has wide-ranging environmental legislation. However, responsibility for implementation is scattered over a number of departments (Agriculture, Water Affairs

and Forestry, Health and Mineral Resources) from national to local authority level. The Department of Environmental Affairs administers only a few of the relevant Acts. This has resulted in discrepancies, anomalies and ineffectiveness.

2.10.9 Fines for environmental offenses are inadequate and inconsistent. The South African legal system makes it difficult to obtain locus standi in the courts on environmental issues.

2.10.10 The democratic government must rationalise environmental legislation into a cohesive and workable form. It must legislate the right to access to information on environmentally harmful practices. It must also require compulsory environmental impact assessments for all large-scale projects. It must establish an environmental ombuds and criminalise environmental offenses. It must review and conform with international conventions and agreements on environmental issues.

2.10.11 **Environmental management must be transformed to promote the active participation of civil society.**

2.10.12 Both local and provincial governments must play a crucial role in environmental management. **Strong provincial departments of Environmental Affairs must be established.** A national Department of Environment Affairs must ensure overall standards and financing of environmental protection.

2.10.13 A Commission on the Environment must be established as an independent body to ensure transparency and accountability on the part of agencies dealing with the coalition and publication of data on the environment. It must also provide an interface between civil society and public agencies responsible for the environment and natural resources.

APPENDIX 8.2**1993 SATOUR'S POLICY FRAMEWORK: TOURISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

1. Eco-tourism should at all times be developed in an integrated manner. This means that the tourist, the biophysical and cultural environment, the local people and the tourism industry should be treated as contributing elements to an overall tourism experience.
2. The ultimate goal of eco-tourism development is to improve the quality of life of our people.
3. Eco-tourism must be managed appropriately through a participative process. This entails:
 - joint decision-making by stakeholders
 - joint responsibility and accountability of stakeholders
 - joint sharing in benefits derived.
4. Eco-tourism marketers and operators should capture the true character of the eco-destination.
5. The guidelines for integrated environmental management, as laid down by the Department of Environmental Affairs, should be accepted as a formal procedure in the development of eco-tourism products.
6. Local communities should be empowered to be partners through effective education, communication and training.
7. Active and effective communication channels should be established to ensure that a balance is achieved between respecting local cultures and tradition and ensuring a high quality tourism experience.
8. Application for government-supported eco-tourism funding should be screened for acceptance according to Satour's eco-tourism policy framework, and only after consultation with the local community.
9. All areas of eco-tourism potential should be scientifically identified and a portfolio of case studies should be drawn up.
10. A code of ethics will be formulated for the tourism industry, the local population and the tourist. This will be highly circulated and promoted.

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7. Briefings

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