

Local Agenda 21

178 countries attended the UN Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where Agenda 21 – a global action plan for sustainable development – was adopted. Agenda 21 emphasised the need to balance economic development with environmental and social considerations to ensure healthy living, good quality of life and equity among people into the future. Recognising that pressing global problems need to be tackled through local action to initiate change, 'Local Agenda 21' (LA21), focusing on local government responsibility and public participation, became a key component for implementing Agenda 21. Over 2000 local governments in 64 countries adopted LA 21, and set about involving civil society & business in planning sustainable development strategies at local level.

In 1994 Durban was the first city in South Africa to accept the Local Agenda 21 mandate as a corporate responsibility. The programme resulted in greater awareness of the value of environmental care and the need for dedicated environmental management functions in the City. Durban produced its first 'state of environment & development' report, using case studies in selected areas to probe environmental and developmental priorities. Based on these priorities the city has continued with a number of projects including developing Durban's response to climate change. The most successful of these has been the development of D'MOSS – a plan for consolidating open space to protect & manage the city's natural resource base. A strategic environmental assessment of the Durban South Basin highlighted pollution impacts and the need for an emergency management plan; however, little change has resulted from this. Lack of political will and changing priorities ensured that by 2002 LA21 impetus had fizzled out. Currently public participation on development issues is piecemeal and confined to the 'Integrated Development Plan' process at Ward level or EIAs. The City's progress towards sustainability has not been reviewed and there is no easy way for the Durban public to question particular development decisions that are taking Durban on an unsustainable development path.

For more information see:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agreed.html>

– Link to all UN documents & conventions on sustainability

<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/la21/la21.html>

– Resources on Local Agenda 21

Important Legislation related to Spatial Development

South African Constitution of 1996 Section 24

The Bill of Rights gives everyone the right to "an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development."

Local Government Transition Act, number 97 of 1996

Metropolitan Councils are required to enact constitutional obligations by developing environmental management policies and action plans, including appropriate environmental controls and incentives. An important aspect of this Act is that it obligates Metropolitan Councils to co-ordinate and guide the implementation of already established environmental initiatives.

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

Aimed at integrated development and management, this plan informs local government financial plans with respect to all its powers, duties and objectives. It is required in terms of the Local Government Transition Act and mostly looks at local land use planning, transport planning, infrastructure planning and the promotion of integrated local economic development.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)

EIAs are required as part of the legal process of approval for certain sizes and types of development, as prescribed in EIA Regulations under the National Environmental Management Act. The EIA process provides opportunities for interested & affected parties to comment on the ecological and socio-economic impacts of a development, which must be considered by authorities when assessing applications.

South African Constitution of 1996 Section 38

This clause offers everyone the right to approach a competent court if they feel that any right in the Bill of Rights has been infringed upon or threatened. The action may be taken on behalf of others. This right increases the responsibility of the authorities to ensure that the environmental rights of citizens are fully protected.

Current key Development Issues

- The creation of the Dube Trade port
- Future use of the existing airport
- Tolling of roads
- Traffic congestion, Road alterations & relocations
- Pipeline Projects
- Harbour expansion & access
- Threats to subsistence farming and fishing economies
- Load shedding and energy issues
- Development of township infrastructure & amenities
- Housing

SDCEA calls on the eThekweni Municipality to draw up, in consultation with the public & experts, comprehensive **development indicators** that will enable the City to assess & carry out ongoing monitoring of the WELLBEING of both the people of Durban and the environment on which we depend.

Examples of possible indicators include:

Good Governance

- The number of inter-departmental (within Municipality) and inter-governmental (government spheres) initiatives per annum
- The number of joint initiatives with civil society and business per annum
- The number and extent of City of Durban education and awareness programmes
- Budget and city resources allocated to support civil society initiatives
- Percentage of City of Durban budget not spent per annum

Socio-Economic

- Gini co-efficient – disparity of income between rich and poor
- Percentage of the working population that is unemployed sorted by gender and population group
- Percentage of people making a living informally
- Percentage of households living below the Household Subsistence Level
- Number of visitors to areas highlighted as tourist attractions
- Economic growth & investment patterns – is there growth in new industries gearing up for a more sustainable development path e.g. solar, clean production or is growth in 'negative' service industries such as financial speculation & security
- The incidence of HIV/AIDS, TB, Asthma and Cancer
- Incidence of murder, rape, house break-in and robbery
- Adult literacy levels
- Number of pupils per teacher
- Percentage of population in informal housing
- Percentage population using anti-depressants
- The average number of hours per week per capita devoted to participation in community organizations
- Percentage of food grown locally

Physical environment

- Percentage of total land used per activity type
- Area of green space within the City of Durban per capita
- Percentage of land area where natural ecosystems are being conserved or protected
- Spatial extent of alien species infestation

Energy & transport

- Energy consumption per person, per type of source & per sector per annum
- Percentage of households using non-electrical energy sources per type
- Energy intensity – energy consumption per unit GDP
- Percentage of city energy spent on transport sector
- Percentage of energy generated by renewable sources
- Traffic congestion – number & speed of vehicles on major roads per set interval
- Average distance between home and water & nearest essential services
- Distance from home to nearest available public transport node
- Percentage public transport use per kilometres travelled, transport type & income group
- Number of commuters per public and private transport mode

Water & sanitation

- Water use per person per annum
- The biological indicator of water quality
- Percentage of people with access to water & a good standard of sanitation in their home
- Percentage of people who can only access free basic water
- Water availability: Total water consumed per year divided by the total water resource growth rate per year

Pollution & waste

- Incidences where ambient air quality and emissions standards related to nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, benzene and PM2.5 are exceeded
- Number of people living in areas that do not meet air quality standards
- Greenhouse gas emissions per person per annum (are CO₂, CH₃, NO₂, CFC's, and ozone)
- Chemical contaminants in Land, estuarine, & marine biota
- The breaches of all industrial permits and the penalties imposed
- Amount of waste generated per person per annum
- The lifespan of landfills, both general and hazardous
- Percentage of waste recycled and reused per annum