



NC PSDF TOOLKIT 5 | INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS AND AGREEMENTS



Province of the Northern Cape
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS AND AGREEMENTS TOOLKIT

This toolkit provides a comprehensive overview of international environmental protocols, agreements, and conventions to which South Africa, including the Northern Cape and its municipalities, is committed. These international commitments are crucial in guiding regional planning and development strategies that emphasize sustainable development, environmental protection, and socio-economic progress. The toolkit details the significance of these international frameworks and their implications for local and regional planning.

TOOLKIT INTENT

This Toolkit is to be Used to:

- Guide the development and implementation of strategies that align with international commitments to sustainable development.
- Detail South Africa's adherence to international environmental agreements and the role these play in regional planning.
- Provide a framework for integrating international protocols into local and regional planning and development decisions.
- Emphasize the importance of conserving biodiversity, managing natural resources, and mitigating climate change impacts in alignment with global agreements.
- Foster collaboration between the Northern Cape, its municipalities, and international bodies to achieve sustainable development goals.

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The TOOLKIT should be read in conjunction with the Land Use Management Section of the PSDF. This comprehensive approach ensures that the planning and development initiatives align with the overarching goals of the PSDF, fostering coordinated and sustainable development throughout the Northern Cape Province.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS, AGREEMENTS, AND CONVENTIONS

The South African government, along with the Northern Cape and its municipalities, is committed to a number of international environmental protocols, conventions, and agreements. These commitments necessitate the development and implementation of strategies that promote sustainable development. This toolkit outlines the relevant international agreements and their significance to regional planning and development.

1.1.1 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from June 20-22, 2012. This conference marked the 20th anniversary of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development and the 10th anniversary of the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Rio+20 aimed to renew political commitments for sustainable development and address global challenges such as environmental degradation, poverty, climate change, food security, resource depletion, and inequality. The conference focused on two main themes:

- A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction.
- The institutional framework for sustainable development.

Seven priority areas needing urgent attention were identified: energy, decent jobs, sustainable cities, food security and sustainable agriculture, water, oceans, and disaster readiness. The outcome document, "The Future We Want," outlined plans and strategies for sustainable development.

1.1.2 2. AGENDA 21

Agenda 21 is an international program adopted by more than 178 governments during the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. The South African government, including the Northern Cape and its municipalities, is committed to implementing Agenda 21. This program emphasizes sustainable development to address poverty, hunger, sickness, illiteracy, and ecosystem deterioration. Key principles include:

- Integrated approach to land resource management.
- Promoting sustainable human settlement development.
- Integrating environment and development in decision-making.
- Establishing systems for integrated environmental management and auditing.

The Local Agenda 21, a community-wide, participatory effort led by local governments, aims to establish comprehensive action strategies for environmental protection, economic prosperity, and community well-being.

1.1.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. The SDGs are a set of 17 global goals adopted by all United Nations Member States, aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all by 2030. These goals address various aspects of sustainable development, including poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace and justice, and partnerships for the goals.

1.1.4 UNESCO'S MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME

The MAB Programme is a global initiative that promotes sustainable development through scientific research, strategic planning, and collaboration. Biosphere reserves are central to this program, fulfilling three functions:

- Conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic variation.
- Promotion of socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable development.
- Support for research, monitoring, education, and information exchange related to conservation and development.

1.1.5 UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

The World Heritage Convention promotes international cooperation to protect cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. The Northern Cape includes the Richtersveld Botanical and Landscape World Heritage Site, part of the Succulent Karoo Biodiversity Hotspot, recognized for its unique flora and fauna. Integrating biosphere reserves can enhance the management and conservation of such sites.

1.1.6 CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

This comprehensive agreement requires countries to develop strategies for sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. It aims to link conservation with economic development, ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, and integrate biodiversity considerations into land-use planning. The PSDF supports these objectives through biodiversity conservation, eco-corridor rehabilitation, and sustainable landscaping.

1.1.7 UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

Established at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the UNFCCC aims to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations to prevent harmful interference with the climate system. Governments are mandated to gather and share information on greenhouse gas emissions, launch national strategies for mitigation and adaptation, and cooperate on climate change initiatives.

1.1.8 KYOTO PROTOCOL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

South Africa is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty under the UNFCCC aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol allows industrialized countries to invest in emission reduction projects in developing countries, contributing to sustainable development. Potential CDM projects in the Northern Cape include solar and wind energy farms, biodiesel production, and energy-efficient building designs.

1.1.9 UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

Adopted in 1994, the UNCCD is the first legally binding international framework to address desertification. It emphasizes participation, partnership, and decentralization, focusing on land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas.

1.1.10 NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)

NEPAD is a vision for Africa's renewal, addressing peace, security, good governance, and economic development. It emphasizes African ownership and management, with development plans prepared through participatory processes involving the people.

1.1.11 RAMSAR CONVENTION

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands aims to conserve and sustainably use wetlands through international cooperation. South Africa, a contracting party since 1975, benefits from the convention by gaining access to guidelines, expert advice, and support for wetland conservation and wise use. The Northern Cape's commitment to the Ramsar Convention helps maintain the ecological integrity of its wetlands.

1.1.12 ORANGE-SENQU RIVER COMMISSION (ORASECOM)

Established in 2000, ORASECOM promotes equitable and sustainable development of the Orange River Basin's resources. It provides a forum for consultation and coordination among Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia to manage the river basin's water resources effectively.

1.1.13 SOUTH AFRICA'S INCLUSION IN BRICS

South Africa joined the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) group in 2010, enhancing its role in global economic and environmental governance. BRICS provides a platform for cooperation on sustainable development, climate change, and environmental protection. South Africa's participation in BRICS aligns with its commitments to international environmental agreements and promotes sustainable development goals within the broader context of emerging economies.

1.1.14 AGENDA 2063: THE AFRICA WE WANT

Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic framework for the continent's socio-economic transformation over a 50-year period, adopted in 2013. This blueprint aims to achieve a prosperous, peaceful and integrated Africa driven by its own citizens. The framework identifies key areas for development, including economic growth, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and political stability. It emphasizes the importance of Africa's ownership of its development agenda, underpinned by strong governance, accountability, and partnerships.

Key Pillars of Agenda 2063:

- Economic Growth and Development: Foster inclusive growth through industrialization, infrastructure development, and the sustainable use of resources.
- Social Inclusion and Welfare: Promote equitable access to quality education, healthcare, and social services to reduce poverty and inequality.
- Environmental Sustainability: Prioritize the sustainable management of natural resources, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation to ensure long-term ecological balance.
- Good Governance and Peace: Strengthen democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law to create a stable and secure environment conducive to development.
- Regional Integration and Unity: Encourage deeper integration among African countries to enhance trade, mobility, and collaboration on shared challenges.
- Empowerment of Women and Youth: Ensure gender equality and empower young people as key drivers of Africa's development.
- Africa's Global Positioning: Enhance Africa's role and influence in global affairs by promoting its interests and forging strategic partnerships.

The implementation of Agenda 2063 within the Northern Cape and South Africa at large is vital for aligning local and regional development with the broader continental vision, ensuring that the province contributes to and benefits from Africa's transformation journey.