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POLICY BRIEF
NATIONAL LAND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT POLICY
AND STRATEGY (2000)

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xiii. Population

Reduction in the growth of the nation's population is vital to achieve sustainable land resources management and the associated goals of food security, improved health, employment and poverty reduction. The government plans to implement programs that emphasize increased awareness of population problems on land and the benefits of smaller family sizes; to provide integrated population and land use management education in the formal school system and other institutions of learning.

The government strategizes to promote the role of women in the design, management and implementation of population and health programs in order to integrate population, land use and management issues. However, it is traditionally men that are still the major influencers in decision making within the family hence the need to promote their role in population health programs too as they usually are the ones that determine the number of children a family has.

xiv. Women and Gender

Integrating gender issues in all phases of policy and decision making on land will assist in making sure men and women as equal partners have a shared responsibility over sustainable use and management of land resources.

It is also important to utilize the positive indigenous knowledge of women in sustainable land use and management programs and to develop and implement policies that recognize and enshrine the legal rights of women to land on an equitable basis.

Women's role in land use and management should be recognized



xii. Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Local Communities



women's role in land use and management has to be recognized

NGOs are required to compliment government efforts in promoting sustainable land use and management practices by:

Training local communities in sustainable land use and management practices such as crop production, live-stock raising and other resource management activities.

Disseminating information to communities and help source funds for community initiatives on sustainable methods of land utilization.

Identifying mechanisms to enable local communities to prepare and submit self-help programmers for improvement of land use and management

Identifying, analyzing and incorporating positive traditional knowledge in land use and management systems

BACKGROUND

Malawi adopted the National Land Resources Management Policy and Strategy in 2000. Its overall goal is promoting efficient, diversified and sustainable use of land based resources for both agriculture and other uses so as to avoid sectoral land-use conflicts and ensure socio-economic development. The policy recognizes the need for policy guidelines on the conservation and management of land resources as their depletion or degradation may affect food security and sustainable socio-economic growth.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The national land resources management policy and strategy is developed to assist in:

balancing requirements for different land uses and regulating the competing demand for land by different sectors;

Designating the best use of land for optimal socio-economic development;

providing guidelines and strategies for the sustainable utilization of the land resource base;

Defining roles of different players in land resources management issues, guide the formulation and review of sectoral policies and legislation related to land use and its management; and

Enabling the country to determine the priority application of both internal and externally provided resources.

The policy also serves as an instrument for conservation of land for agriculture and indicates land use and management measures that will help balance and regulate the competing land use for different activities such as forestry and human settlements.

STRATEGIES

The policy outlines 16 specific objectives in different areas of interest together with strategies that will be able to help achieve the objective under each area of interest. Among others the policy presents the following objectives and strategies:

i. Land Productivity

The objective here is to improve and sustain productivity of land for agriculture and other alternative land uses. In order to achieve this, the government of Malawi intends to promote the use of appropriate soil and water conservation practices; provide information on proper land use planning and management of land resources; and the dissemination of appropriate soil organic matter building technologies.

However there are no clear guidelines to specify soil and water conservation practices or soil organic matter building technologies inline with the stipulated provisions for land productivity.



Photo showing Compost maure



Inappropriate waste disposal as above may result in pollution and land degradation

xi. Natural Resources

As natural resources are a base for the Malawi economy, promoting management, conservation and utilization of natural resources is important in order to ensure sustainable land and ecosystem productivity. This can be achieved by ensuring that environmental impact assessments are carried out where land use and associated practices are likely to have significant adverse impacts on natural resources; using educational curricula and media to raise awareness on the importance and wise utilization of natural resources and also promoting monitored and controlled access to natural resources by local communities' for their own socio-economic benefits e.g. national parks and inland water systems.

ix. Incentives in Land Management

The Government aims to promote the use of incentives which encourage communities to undertake soil conservation measures. This will be achieved by developing guidelines on the type and use of reward schemes in land resources management, providing loan guarantees for compliance with leasehold covenants; provision of tax rebates for establishment and maintenance of soil conservation measures; and establishment of a mechanism for linking agricultural credit worthiness of land users to good land management practices.

x. Waste Disposal

Institution of measures for the satisfactory disposal of waste would establish the prevention of land degradation and land based pollution. Furthermore, encouraging the recycling of re-usable materials and composting waste from farms, agro industries and even households to use as organic fertilizer or for other purposes would help reduce the problem. The government has since designated land suitable for use as waste disposal sites. Though the designation of disposal sites reduces the immediate problem of waste disposal, construction of landfills would be much more efficient in terms of management and reuse/recycling of the wastes for uses such as methane production and other uses.

ii. Land Rehabilitation

The government sets out to ensure that degraded land is rehabilitated for agriculture and other purposes. The extent of degraded areas is to be mapped and areas for rehabilitation prioritized. Local communities are encouraged to form conservation committees to rehabilitate degraded areas where as the government is set to offer technical assistance to the communities in programs such as physical soil conservation, grazing management and agro forestry.

iii. Public Awareness in Land Management

Public awareness is intended to instill a sense of responsibility and commitment towards management of land resources in the public masses. To achieve this, the policy provides for regular awareness campaigns on sound land resources management practices, strengthening and enhancing land conservation modules and curricula as well as reviewing training approaches in schools, colleges and relevant institutions. Involving all stakeholders such as traditional leaders, policy makers, the private sector, NGOs in awareness campaigns would help to capture a wider audience in awareness.

iv. Community Initiatives in Land Resources Management

The government plans to develop training manuals using the most successful participatory approaches for training communities in land use and management; and to develop and follow appropriate methods of extension based on principles of participation, two way communication, empowerment of farmers to solve their own problems, and farmer to farmer extension. This will be in attempt to provide an enabling environment for community initiatives in managing land resources.

v. Technology Development in Land Management

The objective in this area of interest is to develop technologies that are economically viable; ecologically sound and socio-culturally acceptable and the strategies highlighted include the strengthening of a holistic research which assesses causes and effects of soil erosion and degradation in interaction with agricultural activities; and also carrying out demonstrations and interpreting research results into simple messages for farmer training and appreciation.

vi. Institutional Capacity Building

The institution in charge of implementing the policy is the Land Resources Conservation Department. The policy objective in institutional capacity building is to strengthen the capacity of the institutions that plan, implement, monitor and evaluate land resources management for them to be able to perform effectively and efficiently. The government therefore plans to:

- Provide training to staff involved in land management.

- Ensure the provision of materials and equipment for effective and efficient functioning of the department.

- Empower rural communities to effectively manage their land resources

- Develop the human resources required for the implementation of the policy and optimum utilization of managerial, technical and scientific talent

vii. Legislation

To provide a legal framework the policy outlines the following strategies:

- Formulate a legal framework for the implementation of the land resources conservation policy

- Encourage maximum community participation in formulating, reviewing and updating sectoral laws relating to land use, planning and management.

- Make legal provision for punitive measures and incentives relating to prevention and control of soil erosion as well as improvement and maintenance of soil fertility.

- Empower traditional leaders to authorize the use and occupation of customary land and ensure its sound use and management.

- Establish land use and management appeals tribunal

viii. Land Resources Information

To improve the acquisition and utilization of land resources information for proper planning and management of land resources for agriculture, the department intends to ensure adherence to standards in land resources data collection, analysis and management; undertake periodic acquisition of aerial photographs and satellite imagery and maps for purposes of updating land resources information and; to establish and maintain land resources information sharing with national and international centers involved in land resource information generation and analysis.