Botswana National Profile and Action Plan on Public Access to Information on the environment and environmental decision-making processes developed within the context of the UNITAR/UNECE Pilot Programme

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The Rio Declaration on Environment and development was adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**Outputs of the summit:**
* Several Principles, amongst which was Principle 10.

Principle 10 addresses issues of citizen participation in decision processes on environment related matters.
Botswana selected to be amongst 3 African countries to pilot the project (DRC and Mali)

Implementation period: 2010-11

Exercise was successfully carried out within the period indicated above
Components of Principle 10:

* Access to environmental information

* Public participation in environmental decision making

* Access to environmental justice
Definition:

- Availing of information and data held by public or private bodies, that is required for use to exercise or protect of environmental right.

- This concept enables the public to participate in environmental decisions-making that affect their lives.

The National Profile provides an overview and documents strengths and weaknesses of national access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice schemes related to environmental matters.

UNITA provided financial and technical assistance.
The project has revealed that Botswana Government has been implementing Principle 10 of Rio Declaration by default as the public was accessing information related to environmental issues at a national level through media (Government Gazette, Daily News, Radio stations), traditional gatherings consultation (kgotla) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

A survey was conducted to establish general public opinion on issues of public access to information, participation in the environment decision making and access to environmental justices.

- Designed with the guidance of UNITAR guidance document
- Carried in Seven out of Ten districts
Sampled areas
A total of 200 questionnaires administered

Civil Status

Stakeholders who participated in the survey

No of respondents

5.1% 7.1% 6.6% 1.5% 6.1% 5.6% 24.0% 21.4% 13.3%

NGO Centrl Gov Private Sector Youth CBOs Parastal Tribal Admin Land board Council VDC Clubs

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Access to Environmental information

* Lack of legislation which binds holders of environmental information to avail it to the public

* Barriers in dissemination of and access to environmental info. (Information available in English and it is too technical)

* Inappropriate information dissemination methods to the majority
Action plan for the implementation of Principle 10

* An action plan has been developed.

* Copies have been sent out to the stakeholders
Latest developments to strengthen Principle 10

* There is a section in the Environmental Management Act (Bill) that deals with access to environmental information.

* The Environmental Assessment Act of 2011, which repeals the previous Environmental Impact assessment Act of 2005

* National Development Plan 10
Implementation challenges

- The project was funded by UNITAR, up to the Priority setting Workshop stage.

- At the moment the activities have not been budgeted for due limited funds.
Thank you.