

## KENYA

### LOCALISING AGENDA 21 IN NAKURU

*The experience of Localising Agenda 21 in Nakuru illustrates the scope for translating a strategic vision into concrete actions and for developing institutional structures that coordinate the many groups involved in urban governance.*

Nakuru town (the fourth largest settlement in Kenya, with a rapidly growing population currently at 480,000) is the administrative centre for the Rift Valley Province. The town is an agricultural and industrial centre, and a tourist destination famous for its flamingos. Today, with economic and population pressures, the town and its hinterland are expanding into neighbouring agricultural or unstable land, and the Lake Nakuru National Park. Coupled with falling standards of urban services and lack of planning since the early 1970s, the demands of a growing urban population are in conflict with the preservation of the unique ecology surrounding the city. A key constraint has been a lack of cooperation and trust between civil society and local government institutions.



In 1995, the Belgian Administration for Development Cooperation and the Municipal Council of Nakuru, with the support of UNCHS (Habitat) and various other agencies, launched an initiative to adopt the Local Agenda 21 Strategic Structure Planning (SSP) approach in the town to involve all local interest groups in ongoing, consensual policy making and planning. SSP began with a consultative workshop, which brought together representatives of the main stakeholders in the town (CBOs, NGOs, training institutions, coun-





cillors, government, private enterprises, donors and international agencies). An urban profile was developed, which looked at the town's assets, problems and priority areas for intervention. Key priority areas included space use conflicts near the bus station, improvement of wells around the town, environmental protection of green spaces such as the Menengai Crater and lake margins, and rehabilitation of the council's rental housing stock. These concerns were



formulated into an 'Urban Pact,' committing the various partners in implementing critical components of the SSP.

The SSP was the first urban structure plan approved by the Government under the new Physical Planning Act. It radically departed from earlier planning approaches, both in terms of content and process (ie it contained sustainable urban development as the entry point and processed a consultative approach, chaired by the local authority). The vision promoted by the SSP is now being put into action and is

managed by a Town Planning Unit, which supports the Council's planning work. Assistance is provided by central government and Leuven University in Belgium, where local planners are being trained.

An ongoing problem in realising the SSP has been the uncoordinated activities of CBOs. This was resolved by the creation of local Zonal Development Committees, which coordinated the various activities with information exchanged between CBOs and the council. Benefits of this approach are already being felt, including investment in strategic projects identified through the SSP, cleaner neighbourhoods, interest in the environment and significantly, the ability of the main interest groups to communicate their ideas and cooperate with each other.



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