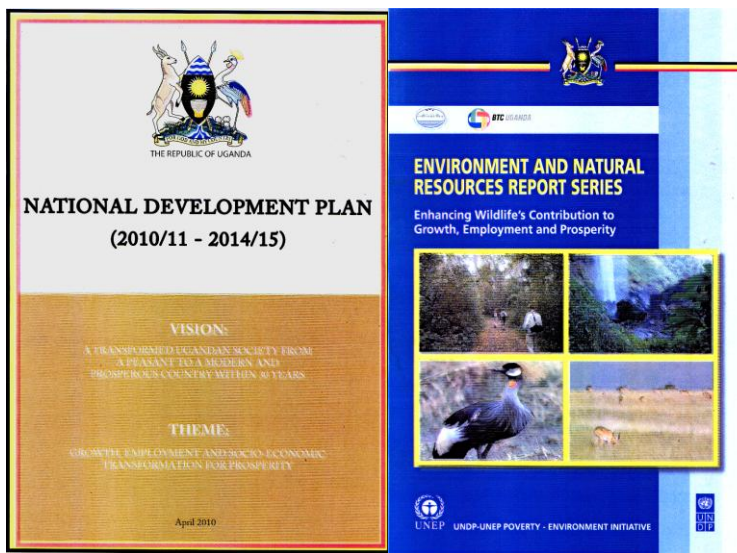


Did the National Development Plan take into account the recommendations of “Enhancing Wildlife’s Contribution to growth, employment and prosperity” report?

A briefing Paper prepared for the Poverty and Conservation Learning Group (Uganda)



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February 2012

PCLG Discussion Paper No 08

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Background

Poverty eradication has been one of the major goals of the Uganda Government since the mid-late 1980s. In July 2008, the Government produced a major document, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), to guide its investments to foster the transformation of Uganda into a prosperous and peaceful society. The Poverty Eradication Action Plan set the arena for government sectors and subsectors including the Wildlife subsector to evaluate their performance and make strategies to help consolidate gains attained to date as well as to address challenges and constraints during the implementation period. As part of their contribution to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2010/11-2014/15 that replaced PEAP as Uganda's national development framework, the Wildlife Subsector through their self-evaluation report made recommendations to guide the enhancement of wildlife contribution to the national development (Kaggwa *et al* 2009). The purpose of this report is to review the extent to which the NDP adopted the recommendations of the Wildlife and Prosperity report (Kaggwa *et al* 2009).

Introduction

The Vision of the Uganda Government is to transform the Ugandan Society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous society within thirty years. In pursuit of this vision, the National Development Plan is the primary government strategic plan that, if well implemented, will enable Uganda achieve its development goals. However, this transformation can only be sustainable if the environment and natural resources (ENR) are used wisely. Official statistics indicate that ENR contribute over 90% of Uganda's exports. Similarly, over 90% of the national energy demand is met through the exploitation of biomass fuel (Moyini *et al.* 2002).

Uganda's vision for the environment and natural resources (ENR) sector as stated in the Sector Investment Plan (SIP) of 2007 is as follows: ***a sustainable, productive natural resource base and healthy environment for improved livelihoods, poverty eradication and economic growth.*** This vision is in agreement with the overall aim for conserving wildlife in Uganda. The Wildlife Sector's vision is: ***To promote the long-term conservation of the country's wildlife and biodiversity in a cost-effective manner that maximizes the benefits to the people of Uganda.***

As a result of its location at the interface of the West African tropical forests and the East African savannas, variable altitudinal ranges and a mix of habitat types, Uganda is exceptionally rich in biodiversity. It is ranked among the ten richest countries in terms of biodiversity (MTTI 1999). The Albertine Rift is an important hotspot for biodiversity in Uganda, harboring over 50 percent of mainland Africa's bird species, 39 percent of mammal species, 19 percent of its amphibians and 14 percent of its reptile species (Plumptre *et al.* 2003). The variety of plant and animal life together with the favorable

climate in Uganda favors the tourism industry. Uganda is also home to Mountain Gorillas and Chimpanzees that are important tourist attractions in the East African region. The geographical distribution of these great apes is restricted and Uganda must take advantage of this unique opportunity to boost its tourism industry.

Uganda's Development Framework

Historical Perspective

During the period of governance by the National Resistance Movement, the initial development framework was the Poverty Eradication Action Plan. The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) was first developed in 1997 as the country's framework for addressing key poverty challenges. As a result of emerging challenges during implementation, the PEAP was revised twice, first in 2000 then again in 2004. It is the latter version that was replaced by the National Development Plan (NDP) as the nation's development framework.

Within the PEAP, government's policy objectives in the wildlife subsector included the preservation of wildlife, in particular for species where Uganda has a large share of the world's remaining population, generating income, and ensuring that the communities near the parks share the benefits and are made aware about wildlife conservation. The need to investigate illegal small-scale trade in wildlife and its products was also highlighted. The PEAP identified certain priority actions for wildlife. These, among others, included:

- Revision of the Wildlife policy and legislation
- Marking all Protected Area (PA) boundaries with community and district-level cooperation, and improving dialogue with communities to minimize encroachment.
- Improving infrastructure in PAs.
- Expanding the revenue sharing scheme to all PAs
- Engaging private sector, communities and local governments in initiating and benefiting from wildlife related enterprises including tourism.
- Encouraging UWA to work with districts in the management of problem animals and vermin to reduce crop losses for the community.
- Developing management plans, and where appropriate, bylaws to protect critical wildlife habitats outside PAs.

The Uganda Wildlife Act provides for 20% of all entry fee collections to flow directly to the relevant community. A total of US\$ 516,288 was disbursed to the communities neighboring protected areas in the first four years of the millennium. The amount has

since risen considerably. Funds are allocated by the communities, and have been used to rehabilitate roads, clinics, schools and water sources. Reviews of the revenue sharing policy however show that there is still dissatisfaction amongst communities especially since individual households are not targeted directly. This could partly be due to the issue of human-wildlife conflict, which seems to be on the increase as human population increases and encroachment on habitats previously occupied by wildlife gains momentum. Indeed the first international conference of the Poverty and Conservation Learning Group held in Masindi in November 2010 (PCLG 2010) identified human-wildlife conflict as one of the issues that requires urgent attention. However, there have been other instances when communities have benefited from wildlife based enterprises, apart from revenue-sharing. Examples such as Buhoma camp site, Magombe swamp and Lake Mburo sport hunting show the potential for wildlife to contribute to poverty eradication.

The PEAP reiterated government's commitment to local consultation before taking decisions on the use of land for conserving wildlife. For example, it highlighted the need to appreciate the needs of pastoral people for grazing land when taking decisions to create and manage protected areas. It also emphasized the need for greater community awareness about the value of wildlife to the community so as to make it easier for livestock and wildlife to coexist.

The current situation

In an evaluation of the PEAP undertaken by Byamugisha and Smith (2008), one of the key findings was that although there had been substantial reduction in poverty over the 10 year implementation period, this reduction was biased against the majority of people and mainly benefited the better-off. The evaluation also highlighted serious deficiencies in coordination of government business. This may have informed the decision by government to revisit the existing development framework and come up with an entirely new framework.

The Wildlife and Prosperity Report

Wildlife sector stakeholders may have realized that the full potential of wildlife to contribute to national development had not been realized under the old development framework. This is why the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) in collaboration with UNDP and UNEP and with the support of Belgian Technical Cooperation, through the Poverty Environment Initiative commissioned a study that assessed the extent to which biodiversity, specifically wildlife, is contributing to the national economy. The report from this study would inform the formulation of the proposed new development framework, the National Development Plan.

The 2009 report highlighted the importance of Uganda in terms of global biodiversity ranking. It also pointed out the continued dependence of millions of Ugandans on natural resources for survival but noted the high level of natural resource degradation which threatens human livelihoods. The report also pointed out the immense pressure on wildlife protected and other natural ecosystems. It also showed the heavy dependence of Uganda's tourism industry on wildlife.

The main issue that emerged from the report is that Uganda is very well endowed with wildlife resources which could potentially be exploited for improving human livelihoods and the country's economy. However, the resource base is under heavy human pressure due to a variety of reasons including rapid population growth and rampant poverty. Although the report showed that numbers of large mammal species were slowly but steadily recovering, including increases in chimpanzee and gorilla populations, it pointed out certain species that had become extinct in Uganda in recent decades. The report also showed the importance of the wildlife sub sector in Uganda's tourism sub sector, which had overtaken coffee as Uganda's leading foreign exchange earner. Despite this, the wildlife subsector had not been identified as one of the key areas for investment by the Uganda Investment Authority. This is why the report suggested that UIA needs to shift focus and prioritize wildlife conservation and entrepreneurship. The report highlighted the need for greater priority to be placed on wildlife conservation in the national planning framework so as to exploit wildlife potential fully.

The main "recommendations" from the report were three:

- Maintaining the integrity of wildlife protected areas
- Contributing to local and national development through development of wildlife-based enterprises.
- Supporting economic development through tourism.

The National Development Plan

The NDP recognizes 8 growth sectors. These are:

- Agriculture
- **Forestry**
- **Tourism**
- Mining
- Oil and Gas
- Manufacturing
- Information and Communication Technology, and
- Housing

These growth sectors are supposed to be complemented by another 10 sectors:

- Science and Technology
- Transport
- Energy
- Water for production
- Land Management and Administration
- Physical Planning
- Urban Development
- Trade Development
- Financial Services, and
- Cooperatives

These would all be facilitated through 8 interrelated social sectors:

- Population
- Labour and Employment
- Education and Sports
- Skills Development
- Health and Nutrition
- HIV/AIDS
- Water and Sanitation
- Social Development

Finally, all these different sectors can only work through what were described in the plan as enabling sectors:

- Legislature
- Justice, Law and Order
- National Defence and Security
- **Environment**
- Climate Change
- Water Resource Management
- Meteorology
- **Wetland management**
- Development of National Statistics
- Standards and Quality Infrastructure
- Public Sector Management
- Accountability
- Disaster Management
- Sub-national Development
- EAC Integration
- Public Administration
- Regional and International Cooperation

It is important to recognize that growth in some of these sectors may compromise growth in others. For example, since colonial times, agriculture has been the most important economic activity in Uganda. Agriculture is the most practical option for the majority of Ugandans especially those in rural settings to reduce poverty. Consequently, this is one of the growing economic sectors. During the 2008/9 financial year, the sector grew by 2.6% (UBOS 2005). Unfortunately, increase in agricultural output is mostly achieved by increasing the area of land under agriculture rather than intensification. This, in turn contributes to the loss wildlife habitats as virgin land is converted to agriculture. Habitat loss is regarded as the single most threat to wildlife (the major tourist attraction) in Uganda (NEMA 2006/07). Therefore, for the wildlife subsector to thrive in Uganda, agricultural expansion needs to be planned in such a way that it does not compromise the most important habitats for wildlife. This is however, a challenge because the demand for agricultural land is fueled by the rapid human population growth which currently stands at over 3% per year. The latter, categorized as a social sector therefore affects the performance of the wildlife sub-sector. Mining and the oil and gas sectors may also have serious impacts on the tourism sector if they disrupt wildlife and its habitats, which, as already noted is the basis for tourism. It is therefore, important to minimize the negative impacts of oil and gas exploitation on wildlife, because the latter is a renewable resource that can potentially support the national economy indefinitely.

In all those sectors listed in the NDP, the ones that have the most direct bearing on wildlife are **forestry, tourism, environment and wetlands management.**

Forestry

Forestry is a sector that needs particular attention for the wildlife sector to function properly. In addition to its importance as source of energy for industrial and domestic activities, it plays a major role in the ecological balance in the country. Offsetting the ecological balance is likely to trigger off negative impacts that will affect the national economy since wildlife, agriculture, and human well being are dependent on the ecological balance. Although the forestry sector was recognized in the NDP as a primary growth sector, it was noted that forest cover in Uganda has had a precipitous decline over the past few years. For example, total forest cover declined from 24% in 1990 to 18% in 2005, a period of only 15 years (Uganda Government 2010). NEMA (2006/07) estimated that about 70% of forests are located outside protected areas. It is therefore not surprising the country has continued to lose forest cover since owners of the land on which these forests are would rather convert them to more economically rewarding uses. Unfortunately, even forests in government reserves are shrinking and sometimes such losses in forest cover are aided by government (NEMA 2006/07)! The ideal situation for proper ecological functioning should be 30% forest cover (Uganda Government, 2010). The NDP proposes a number of strategies to realize the objective of enhancing forest cover. Restoration of forest cover is premised on greater emphasis on

tree planting and forest plantations. Restoration of degraded natural forests is expected to be achieved through preparation of a landscape restoration plan and enforcement of a sustainable forest management regime. Increased protection is also mentioned as one of the strategies to ensure a healthy forest cover. An interesting strategy is the promotion of eco-tourism as a means of ensuring forest protection. The forest loss referred to earlier, is happening at time when forest based ecotourism is becoming popular. Uganda has a competitive advantage in forest based tourism over its sister nations in the East African region and therefore the government should invest more in forest protection if the country is to realize the full benefits of forest based ecotourism. Unfortunately, wildlife does not feature significantly in the forestry sector discussion and great apes, on which most of the existing eco-tourism is based, are not even mentioned.

Tourism

The second primary growth sector that has a direct bearing on wildlife is tourism. The NDP illustrates that tourism is a crucial growth sector noting that the contribution of the sector to GDP was estimated at 9.2% in 2008 compared to Kenya's 10.8% (Uganda Government 2010). The sector also makes a significant contribution to employment and shows an increasing number of tourist visitations over the years. The plan also notes that tourism expenditure is increasing at an annual rate of 22%. Having noted all those positive trends, the plan points out the over-reliance of tourism on the wildlife sub-sector and highlights the need for diversification. Although the trends in the Wildlife Sector's contribution to national economic growth are encouraging e.g. the number of foreign and domestic tourists entering national parks were expected to increase to 146,000 in 2011 from 138,000 in 2008; foreign exchange earnings from tourism were projected to reach USD 711million in 2011 from USD 590 million in 2008; and the number of foreign tourists was projected at 1,046,000 in 2011 from 844,000 in 2008 (MTTI 2010/2011) this growth may be jeopardized if competing economic sectors are not well managed.

The plan's two objectives for the tourism sector are to:

- Develop and review the policy, legal and regulatory framework
- Increase the contribution of tourism to GDP and employment.

The first objective has two strategic interventions whereas the second has sixteen. The majority of these strategic interventions focus on reviewing policies, laws and regulations, improving quality and marketing of tourism products, enhancing tourism entrepreneurship and tourism human resource as well as improving tourism services and infrastructure. There are only two that relate directly to wildlife.

The first one relates to diversification of tourism products and the major interventions include habituation of new gorilla, chimpanzee and monkey groups for tourism and re-introduction of chimpanzee and rhinos into the wild. The second strategy relates to

improvement of human – wildlife relations. A number of interventions, varying from formulation of national guidelines for wildlife veterinary issues, resettlement of affected people in key tourism areas, creation of migration corridors to implementing an evaluation of existing problem animal management (PAM) interventions with a view to improving them and adopting new ones.

Environment

Environment is regarded as an enabling sector in the NDP. This is a sector that is highly significant to the country's economy. For example, information available shows that in 1998, 54.4% of total GDP was attributable to the sector (Uganda Government 2010). It is in this sector that biodiversity, for which Uganda is quite well-known, falls. The values of biodiversity are quite diverse and immense but oftentimes, it is only the direct use values that are appreciated. This explains why, while dealing with tourism, wildlife often emerges as a major issue. While discussing the country's biodiversity endowment, there is mention of half of the global population of Mountain Gorillas and the comparative advantage of Uganda for bio-trade. The NDP once again highlights the rapid deterioration of the quantity and quality of natural resources as a result of high human population growth and economic activities and singles out habitat loss as having affected most ecosystems including forests, wetlands and rangelands. The danger of invasive alien species as a threat to indigenous species is highlighted as is the potential threat of oil and gas development in the Albertine graben, a biodiversity hotspot.

The NDP identifies 3 key objectives for the environment sector:

- Restore degraded ecosystems
- Ensure sustainable management of environmental resources and minimize degradation
- Identify and address emerging environmental issues and opportunities

None of the thirteen strategic interventions directly and specifically target wildlife although they would create an enabling environment for recovery.

Wetlands Management

The NDP recognizes wetlands as a separate enabling sector and are described as a *“critical part of the environment and are one of the important natural resources that invariably contributes to the health of the environment and the socio-economic development of the country”*. They are recognized as an important element of biodiversity supportive, among other things, of the tourism industry. The NDP highlights the major functions of wetlands and the associated contribution to the national economy but also points out the alarming rates at which wetland habitats are disappearing, again attributable to increasing human population and development pressure.

The only plan objective for wetlands management is to enhance the sustainable use of wetlands in order to achieve the optimum ecological value and socio-economic benefits for development. Six strategic interventions are proposed, one of which is the maintenance of the biodiversity conservation value of wetlands. Others focus on maintenance of ecological value, sustainable use, wetland restoration, strengthening of the policy, legal and institutional framework as well as trans-boundary cooperation.

As already shown above, the wildlife and prosperity report had three major recommendations. Below is an assessment of the extent to which the NDP adopted those recommendations:

a) Maintaining the integrity of wildlife protected areas in Uganda

This recommendation was not adequately addressed in the NDP. In addition to stabilizing or increasing populations of key wildlife species in protected areas, the Kaggwa *et al* (2009) called for the elimination of encroachment in all protected areas by 2015. Although national parks are fairly safe from encroachment, the NDP does not provide any strategy for stopping encroachment on forest reserves yet these also are inhabited by wildlife of tourism potential. It is unfortunate that in some cases the elimination of forest reserves is encouraged by government as was the case in South Busoga Forest Reserve, Bugala Island and the attempt on Mabira Forest Reserve.

The Budget Speech (Uganda Government 2011/12) did not mention the Wildlife Sector among the priorities for the financial year 2011/12 but reported a 3% and 2.7% increase in the livestock and food crop sectors, respectively in the year 2010/11. Undoubtedly, a portion of the registered increases in the livestock and food crop subsectors has contributed to the loss of forests. If this loss of wildlife habitats is not checked, efforts to develop forest based tourism may prove futile.

The NDP recognizes the high rate of forest loss in districts like Mayuge (100%) and some districts in Central Uganda (32.6-86.7%) as a serious problem. The current loss of forests in Uganda contradicts the idea of tourism development especially in regions like central Uganda where there are no national parks and; Forest Reserves are the protected areas of the highest status. If tourism development is to benefit all areas in Uganda, government should endeavor to protect forest reserves, particularly in regions with no national parks.

With regards to effectively and efficiently managing wildlife outside the protected areas in collaboration with stakeholders, there is no clear strategy in the NDP of how this will be done. There is however, one intervention under the strategy on reviewing tourism policies and plans. It states, "Develop and implement the Wildlife sub-sector regulations (fire arms, sport hunting, farming, ranching, eco-tourism, scientific and education use

and extractive utilization) for the protected areas". Presumably this intervention is not aimed at guidelines for wildlife farming or ranching in protected areas but outside them!

As far as promoting conservation-led business and investments that will contribute to local and national development, the NDP has two strategies under the Tourism sector.

- i. Undertaking research to support the development of tourism, wildlife resources and cultural heritage.
- ii. Develop a public-private partnership framework for the management of tourism, wildlife and heritage sites.

If these two strategies are properly implemented it would help Ugandans realize the economic benefit of their wildlife and heritage resources. Unless nationals participate in the running of tourism related businesses, they will continue to be the underprivileged lot in this industry. Traditionally, this industry has been dominated by foreign companies which remit most of their profits to their countries of origin. This state of affairs cannot propel economic development within Uganda. This is not to say that foreign companies should be excluded from the business, but they should at least invest some of their profits in Uganda so as to stimulate economic growth.

The sub-recommendation to strengthen the capacity of UWA to become a self-sustaining organization seems to have been ignored by the NDP, much as this would be a very important step in the conservation of wildlife in Uganda.

One sub-recommendation that seems to have been adopted in the NDP is that on strengthening relationships with communities in order to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and enhance benefits from wildlife conservation and protected area management.

Human-wildlife conflicts can be a major hindrance to wildlife conservation and tourism development in any country. In Uganda, this problem is likely to escalate as the human population continues to grow. This will result in stiff competition between wildlife and humans for land and other resources, water in particular. Kaggwa *et al* (2009) called for strengthening relationships between wildlife managers and communities neighboring conservation areas in order to minimize such conflicts as one way of enhancing tourism development in the country. The NDP took up this recommendation and suggested several innovations ranging from:

- a) Formulation of national guidelines for wildlife veterinary interventions.
- b) Resettling and/or compensation of communities residing in key conservation and tourism areas such as the Majelli community in Ajai, the Benet in Mt. Elgon and Mbwa Tract in Bwindi. This is particularly essential for Bwindi because of its importance in the conservation of the mountain gorillas.
- c) Negotiating for land to establish migratory corridors in Aswa Lolim.
- d) Evaluating existing human-wildlife mitigations and where possible improve them.

- e) Implementing problem animal deterrent measures e.g. trenches, walls, thunder flushes, crocodile barriers, pepper and live fences) to reduce incidents of human animal conflicts. Some of these have already been implemented in parks such as Kibale National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Parks. However, they are not without problems. The use of live fences inevitably results in introduction of exotic species that may become invasive which in turn will affect the integrity of the conservation area. Fencing off an area will isolate the park further and this may hinder dispersal of the young.
- f) Electric fencing of sections of Lake Mbuho and Queen Elizabeth N P boundaries to address the human-wildlife conflict in those areas. Restricting animals in a small conservation area like L. Mbuho National Park may lead to high population densities of large mammals with negative impacts to the ecosystem. On the other hand, the cost of electric fencing may be so prohibitive that the intervention may be difficult to implement.

Water is a vital resource for both wildlife and domestic animals and can be a source of conflict. The NDP recognizes this problem and proposes a study to investigate this conflict in areas neighboring protected areas, and to construct 25 new valley tanks to hold about 2.2 million m³ of water. This is a commendable undertaking but wildlife managers and livestock keepers need to be vigilant against the possibility of disease transmission among wildlife, humans and livestock.

b) Contributing to local and national development through development of wildlife-based enterprises

On building the capacity of landowners to manage and benefit from wildlife, the strategy in the NDP to develop a public-private partnership framework for the management of tourism, wildlife and heritage sites, under which it is proposed to register and train private wildlife management entrepreneurs countrywide could be an effective intervention. This would also contribute to development of private sector-driven wildlife-based enterprises.

c) Supporting economic development through tourism development

This was the third and last main recommendation from the wildlife and prosperity report. It had five sub-recommendations. On improvement of tourism infrastructure, facilities and services; the proposed interventions in Strategy 10 under Objective 2 of the tourism sector in the NDP to increase the contribution of tourism to GDP and employment are particularly relevant. These go hand in hand with the strategic interventions for improving the tourism human resource (Strategy 9). Some of the interventions such as construction of museums at Kabale and Hoima, finalization of plans for Soroti and Jinja as well as supporting renovation of key cultural and religious sites and establishment of interpretation centres at 10 cultural and archaeological sites contribute to the second sub-recommendation to diversify tourism products and optimize revenue earnings. There is a specific strategy on diversification of tourism

products. Unfortunately, the two interventions related to wildlife only have to do with availing new gorilla, chimpanzee and monkey groups for tourism and re-introduction of chimpanzees and rhinos to the wild. The former is fraught with difficulties because of the potential risk of endangering the whole concept of eco-tourism if too many great ape groups are habituated. The impact resulting from over-dependence on great ape tourism could compromise the apes' health and well-being. Re-introduction of chimpanzees to the wild also requires large forested areas that are not already inhabited by other wild chimpanzees. With the rapidly declining forest estate in Uganda, especially in the chimpanzee species range, it is difficult to see how feasible re-introduction of chimpanzees would be.

Although there is mention of the need to diversify tourism products to reduce over-dependence on wildlife there is not much in the NDP to promote eco-cultural and educational tourism. However, as regards promotion and marketing of tourism in all the wildlife protected areas another sub-recommendation; the NDP devoted a whole strategy on developing marketing tools and packaging Uganda as the preferred tourist destination through reviewing the national tourism marketing strategy and enhancing marketing tools. Furthermore another strategy on securing international and domestic source markets for tourism by strengthening presence in existing tourism source markets and identifying and nurturing new tourism segments also contributes to the sub-recommendation of the wildlife and prosperity report.

Finally, with regards to provision of adequate tourism information, the NDP lays out a strategy to strengthen the tourism and wildlife information system, including developing the Tourism satellite Account (TSA) through a number of interventions including the development of a tourism management information system and strengthening the animal wildlife database.

Conclusion

The National Development Plan, Uganda's existing development framework recognizes wildlife in particular and the environment/natural resources sector in general as very important for Uganda's economic growth. The plan goes ahead to enumerate the various causes of previous poor performance in the sectors. It also goes a long way in outlining strategies through which disruption of the ENR sector to the detriment of the country's welfare could be prevented. Unfortunately, in the case of wildlife which is admittedly under increasing threat, there are few interventions specifically geared towards reversing trends in wildlife loss. There are interventions which would favour wildlife recovery, such as restoration of degraded ecosystems, but which, by themselves would not prevent wildlife decline. It is therefore recommended that in the first review of the plan, specific interventions targeting protection and recovery of wildlife populations as well as measures to regulate overexploitation of biodiversity for economic gain without regard to sustainability issues be included.

It is also worth noting that whereas high population growth is cited as the leading cause of environmental degradation; when discussing population as a social sector, the issue of family planning is only briefly mentioned. It would appear as if, much as rapid population growth is recognized as a threat to environmental sustainability, there is an unwillingness to tackle the problem head-on.

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