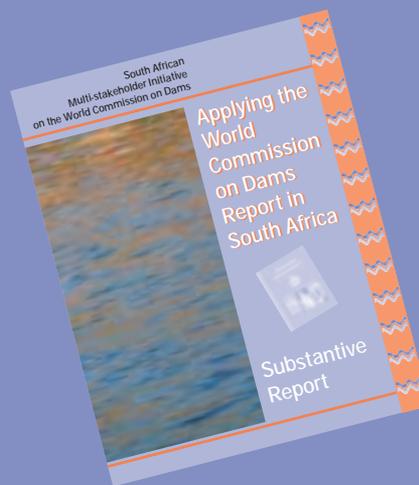


Applying the World Commission on Dams Report in South Africa



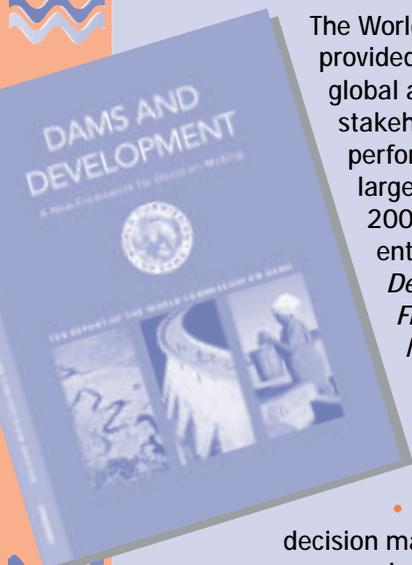
Summary and Substantive Report

Available in hard copy or downloadable from the web from the following organisations and web pages:

Environmental Monitoring Group:
Tel: 021 448 2881
Fax: 021 448 2922
Email: info@emg.org.za
Web page: www.emg.org.za

United Nations Environment Programme Dams and Development Project (DDP)
Email: ddpinfo@unep.org
Web page: www.unep-dams.org

Background



The World Commission on Dams provided the first comprehensive global and independent multi-stakeholder review of the performance and impacts of large dams. In November 2000, the final report entitled: "*Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision Making*" was launched in London. The report presented:

- The findings of the global review
- A new framework for decision making around water and energy resources development, and
- Developed an agenda of seven strategic priorities and corresponding criteria and guidelines

The Commission's Report concluded with the challenge: ***We have told our story: what happens next is up to you.***

The first South African Multi-stakeholder Symposium on the WCD was held in July 2001. South African stakeholders accepted the core values and approaches, and declared themselves to be broadly supportive of the strategic priorities outlined in the WCD report. They believed that the guidelines needed to be contextualised for the South African situation.

The report *Applying the World Commission on Dams Report in South Africa* in both the Summary and the Substantive Versions represent the outcome of a three-year effort to contextualise the WCD Report in South Africa and to seek consensus on what can be done to improve large dam practice.

It closely examines dam practice, environmental concerns, the legacy of dam-affected communities, and the legislative, policy and procedural frameworks to draw out proposals for the way forward. This volume is essential reading for everyone concerned with dams.



Brian Hollingworth (Chairperson) and Mirriam Kibi (Affected People) handing the Report to Minister Sonjica (March 2005)

Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Sonjica: *"..the South African Initiative, including members of my Department, has worked tirelessly over the last three years to build consensus on how we should respond to the WCD Report and how here in South Africa we can improve our decision making on dams – the ultimate purpose of the whole process..."*

Brian Hollingworth, Chairperson. *"As Chairperson of this Initiative, I have felt humbled and inspired by the commitment of those whose contributions this work represents. I trust that everyone who delves into these pages will sense the weight of thinking that has gone into the quest for consensus."*

Klaus Toepfer: UNEP *"From a Dams and Development Project perspective, the publishing of this report represents one of the most successful outcomes from a number of years of actively supporting and facilitating national dialogue initiatives."*

Priority Areas

Whilst numerous recommendations have been developed and are listed in the Substantive Report, the Coordinating Committee agreed that central recommendations concern the need to:

- Address outstanding social issues, and continue the work of the Reparations Subcommittee
- Develop the process of gaining public acceptance through enhanced public participation procedures
- Improve comprehensive options assessment, and prioritise water demand management

Additional priorities for Action included:

- Prioritise further resources for sustaining rivers and livelihoods,
- Improving monitoring and evaluation of dam performance
- Setting in place national policies for benefit sharing and monitoring social impacts of new dams
- Improving regional good governance through promoting the uptake of WCD principles in NEPAD and other African initiatives for development as well as in the actions of South African institutions operating throughout Africa



Overflowing Vaal Dam (Photo: J. Kroon)

Priority Recommendations

The priority recommendations identified at the Multi-stakeholder Forum held in October 2004 have been grouped under three main areas.

1. Addressing unresolved social issues of existing dams

- Address unresolved social concerns from existing dams
- Explore and implement mechanisms for recognising entitlements and sharing benefits for new dams
- Reparations Sub-committee



Temporary tin shacks where communities are still waiting resettlement since 1986, Inanda Dam

2. Enhancing governance of water and energy resources development

- Improve integration of water resources issues in macro-level planning
- Enhance public participation
- Build capacity and allocate finance to facilitate empowerment
- Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation systems
- Promote water demand management
- Promote regional good governance

3. Promoting river health and sustainable livelihoods

- Prioritise resources needed to sustain rivers and livelihoods
- Maintain existing pristine rivers
- Monitor river systems against objectives of the Reserve
- Agree methodologies to determine environmental water requirements on a regional scale



The Way Forward

A new committee with renewed commitment and energy was elected at the Forum October 2004. Their task, in the multistakeholder spirit, is to encourage the adoption of the recommendations of this report.

The value of the work will be to the extent that it improves dam policy and practice. For this, we need all players to become involved in the implementation of the recommendations. Our challenge is therefore to all those involved in or affected by dams in South Africa that what happens next depends on you!

