

The Making and Contents of Zanzibar National Land Use Plan: A brief account on a donor funded project

Muhammed Haji ALI and Muhammad Salim SULAIMAN, Zanzibar, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Zanzibar, which is part of the United Republic of Tanzania, comprised of two main Islands of Unguja (1464 sq km) and Pemba (868 sq Km) and over 50 small off shore islets most of which are uninhabited. Having an estimated population of around 900,000 and a corresponding population density of about 380 persons per square kilometre, Zanzibar stands out as one of the most populated agricultural islands in the world.

During the past three decades the Government of Zanzibar (GOZ) prepared and implemented a number of short term as well as medium term economic plans for the purposes of improving life standards of the inhabitants. This period witnessed massive investment on economic as well as social infrastructure such as transport water, power, health, industry, education and settlement programmes. However many of these investments were the product of independent decisions by public and private sector as well as donor agencies without any meaningful spatial coordination. Thus compounded with rapid population growth, spatial expansion of these activities have all brought tremendous pressure on the utilization of land and other natural resources.

Having a fundamental goal of economic growth and development the national economic plans that were prepared usually contained only implicit recognition of the spatial structure of the economy and at best provided for superficial treatment of physical problems that existed. Therefore, it became obvious that the long experienced spatial problems could not have been solved better by the economic plans only. Consequently the GOZ approached the Finnish Government (FINNIDA) to assist in preparation of an integrated land use plan and strengthen land management and administration in the country.

For the purpose of making the planning process as participatory as possible, four task forces, which drew members from various public as well as private institutions were formulated. The Integrated Planning Unit (IPU) of the Commission for Lands and Environment (COLE) acted as secretariat. Conveniently the planning process could be divided into three phases. The first phase was dedicated to data collection and analysis of the then existing situation, thereby paving way for the second phase of actual planning process. The second phase involved the production of sectoral land use maps, formulation of broad sectoral policies and strategic guidelines to address the identified issues and problems. Whereas the third phase involved the normal administrative procedures for approval of plans and policies.

NLUP is a broad, comprehensive strategic policy document, which sets out physical planning framework with a perspective to the year 2015. It provides a spatial framework for public as

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Muhammed Haji Ali and Muhammad Salim Sulaiman

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well as private sector investment programmes and serves as a basis for environmental protection.

The NLUP covers all sectors of the economy and contains a number of supplementary plans such as:

- ***The Settlements Structure Plan***, which lays foundation and guidelines for balanced approach to settlement development.
- ***Tourism Zoning Plan***, which identifies tourism development, zones and proposes strategy for its implementation.
- ***Coastal Zone Management Plan***, which provide for the best long-term sustainable use of the nation's terrestrial and marine resources.

It must be stated that considerable progress has indeed been made with regard to policy objectives and implementation of the plan in general. Conflicts between different land users have been significantly reduced and the NLUP has implicitly contributed to the lessening of the fundamental problem of poverty.

Many of the basic pitfalls experienced have not been emanated from the plan itself but rather from the common phenomenon of unsustainability of donor funded projects. As stated earlier preparation and subsequent implementation of NLUP depended almost entirely on the financial assistance from FINNIDA and when it pulled out in June 1996, many of the planned activities could not be implemented. Also despite of deliberate efforts to involve villagers during planning process, some of the planned activities have not been satisfactorily undertaken simply because they were not demand driven. Similarly during the implementation phase, one of the important objectives was to foster meaningful integration between physical and economic planning exercises. This important objective has not been fully realised as the economic plans are still having an upper hand and spatial dimension of development has not been given the expected attention. This scenario leads to the conclusion that the successful implementation of NLUP will necessarily continue to require a high level political backing.

CONTACT

Muhammed Haji
Department of Surveys and Urban Planning
Ministry of Water Construction
P O Box 811 Zanzibar
Tanzania
Tel + 255 24 2234038
Fax + 255 24 2236292
E-mail:

Muhammad Salim Sulaiman
Ministry of Water Construction
Energy and Lands
P O Box 238 Zanzibar
Tanzania
Tel + 255 24 2232194
Fax + 255 24 2232770
E-mail: mussa41@hotmail.com