

Environment Charter

BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY



Guiding Principles

For the UK government, for the government of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

- 1 To recognise that all people need a healthy environment for their well-being and livelihoods and that all can help to conserve and sustain it.
- 2 To use our natural resources wisely, being fair to present and future generations.
- 3 To identify environmental opportunities, costs and risks in all policies and strategies.
- 4 To seek expert advice and consult openly with interested parties on decisions affecting the environment.
- 5 To aim for solutions which benefit both the environment and development.
- 6 To contribute towards the protection and improvement of the global environment.
- 7 To safeguard and restore native species, habitats and landscape features, and control or eradicate invasive species.
- 8 To encourage activities and technologies that benefit the environment.
- 9 To control pollution, with the polluter paying for prevention or remedies.
- 10 To study and celebrate our environmental heritage as a treasure to share with our children.

Alan Huckle
BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY
26 September 2001

Valerie Amos
UNITED KINGDOM
26 September 2001

Commitments

The government of the UK will:

- 1 Help build capacity to support and implement integrated environmental management which is consistent with the BIOT's own plans for sustainable development.
- 2 Assist the BIOT in reviewing and updating environmental legislation.
- 3 Facilitate the extension of the UK's ratification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements of benefit to the BIOT and which the BIOT has the capacity to implement.
- 4 Keep the BIOT informed regarding new developments in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite the BIOT to participate where appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.
- 5 Help the BIOT to ensure it has the legislation, institutional capacity and mechanisms it needs to meet international obligations.
- 6 Promote better cooperation and the sharing of experience and expertise between the BIOT, other Overseas Territories and small island states and communities which face similar environmental problems.
- 7 Use UK, regional and local expertise to give advice and improve knowledge of technical and scientific issues. This includes regular consultation with interested non-governmental organisations and networks.
- 8 Use the existing Environment Fund for the Overseas Territories, and promote access to other sources of public funding, for projects of lasting benefit to the BIOT's environment.
- 9 Help the BIOT identify further funding partners for environmental projects, such as donors, the private sector or non-governmental organisations.
- 10 Recognise the diversity of the challenges facing Overseas Territories in very different socio-economic and geographical situations.
- 11 Abide by the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (See Annex 2) and work towards meeting International Development Targets on the environment (See Annex 3).

The government of the British Indian Ocean Territory, so far as is appropriate in the circumstances of the territory, will:

- 1 Bring together representatives of government of local users, of the scientific community and of environment and heritage organisations in a forum to formulate a detailed strategy for action. (See Annex 1).
- 2 Ensure the protection and restoration of key habitats, species and landscape features through legislation and appropriate management structures and mechanisms, including a protected areas policy, and attempt the control and eradication of invasive species.
- 3 Ensure that environmental considerations are integrated within social and economic planning processes; promote sustainable use of natural resources within the territory.
- 4 Ensure that environmental impact assessments are undertaken before approving major projects.
- 5 Commit to open and consultative decision-making on developments and plans which may affect the environment; ensure that environmental impact assessments include consultation with stakeholders.
- 6 Implement effectively obligations under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements already extended to the BIOT and work towards the extension of other relevant agreements.
- 7 Review the range, quality and availability of baseline data for natural resources and biodiversity.
- 8 Ensure that legislation and policies reflect the principle that the polluter should pay for prevention or remedies; establish effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- 9 Promote the value of our environment as a part of the world's natural heritage of regional and global significance.
- 10 Promote publications that spread awareness of the special features of the environment in the BIOT; promote within the BIOT the guiding principles set out above.
- 11 Abide by the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (See Annex 2) and work towards meeting International Development Targets on the environment (See Annex 3).