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**INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT POLICIES. THE POLICY
IMPLICATIONS FOR ZIMBABWE**

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INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES. THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR ZIMBABWE

Summary

This paper examines the nature of international environmental policies and their impact on trading relations between developed and developing countries. The main concern of this study is that businesses in the developed countries have been subjected to various regulations both local, regional and international, which aim to encourage them to improve their environmental performance. On the other hand businesses in the developing countries such as Zimbabwe are still to come to grips with emerging challenges brought about by local and international environmental legislation. Such a situation it is argued is likely to put Zimbabwean terms of trade in an unfavourable position, compared to regional trade blocks such as the EEC.

As concluding remarks, a strategy for incorporating environmental concerns within local businesses is presented, focusing on the design and implementation of Environmental Management Systems.

Introduction

Environmental awareness in Zimbabwe has been steadily increasing since the historic United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development held in Brazil, in 1992. In addition Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of international conventions which makes it necessary for both industry, the public sector and the Zimbabwean population at large to understand and act accordingly to foster a sustainable utilisation of the country's natural resources. Latest developments within the global economy points towards the need for nations, especially the developing ones like Zimbabwe to clearly ensure that their economies produce and consume in an environmentally friendly manner since the costs of not doing so, appear to spread further than the domestic market. Considering the fact that Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of international conventions, for a start it can be argued that in the future Zimbabwe's economic well being may be determined to some extent by international trade, which in itself may be influenced by growing international stand off against products that are regarded as environmentally unsustainable.

This paper looks at a number of international environmental policies and emerging schools of thought on how environmental issues can be applied at a global level. The main research problem that is discussed is the extent to which international environmental policies will impact on Zimbabwe's corporate world. To fruitfully discuss such an issue there is need to understand the following:

- Zimbabwe's environmental legacy since 1980
- Emerging European Union demands for environmentally friendly products from the developing countries
- International environmental policies and conventions and their implications on Zimbabwe (in particular the exporting industry)
- Possible adjustment to be made by the local exporting industry
- Possible approaches to business related environmental policy for Zimbabwe

In order to understand the implications of international environmental policies, it is important from the onset to put across a set of research questions which are as follows:

Research question 1: Environmental problems in Zimbabwe

Environmental problems in Zimbabwe can be broadly described as urban or rural based. The categorisation here is purely for easy understanding and analysis of the socio-economic basis of these problems (environmental problems). Where as some environmental problems are common to both the rural and urban areas, there are some which are more prevalent under certain conditions.

Question 1.

What is Zimbabwe's environmental legacy since 1980

Research question 2: International environmental policies

The growing realisation that the world is slowly becoming an economic global village makes it a responsibility of each nation to understand the forces that drive international markets. Growing international awareness of the need to collectively address environmental problems such as pollution makes it a necessity for countries to understand different environmental

policies and how each country can participate and contribute in the realisation of these policies

Question 2.

What are the international environmental policies relevant to Zimbabwe's corporate world and how can they impact on the performance of the local industry

Research question 3: Corporate Restructuring

The sector most likely to be affected by international environmental policies in most countries is the corporate world. In order for the industry to adjust to the new and emerging local and foreign environmental demands, corporate restructuring needs to be given greater attention.

Question 3:

What adjustments/changes within corporate and government policies are needed to adapt to international environmental demands

Research question 4: Economic and Technical options available

Corporate restructuring is one aspect of dealing with environmental problems. There are some technical and economic options which can be co-opted into a country's legal and economic machinery so as to entice both the industry and the population to monitor the impacts of their activities on the environment

Question 4.

What economic and technical options are available to corporations i.e. Environmental Management Systems, Environmental Audits, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Research question 5: Best practice

Where as it is often difficult to achieve a 100 % success rate in addressing environmental problems amongst companies, it is necessary that a set of best practice principles are put forward for the industry to try and follow. Such best practice can provide a basis and framework from which industry can jump- start in their efforts to address environmental problems.

Question 5.

Which approaches should be followed for a successful incorporation of environmental awareness and corporate environmental discipline in Zimbabwe.

International Environmental Policies

Growing concerns about the depletion of scarce natural resources and the unsustainable nature of development (including consumption patterns) in both the developed and the developing world has ushered in a growing number of environmental agreements, which all aim to encourage national economies to consume and produce in an environmentally sustainable manner. The deliberations which culminated in the Rio Declaration in 1992, ushered in the determination to reduce the potential to consume and produce in unsustainable ways, that is in a manner which does not compromise the needs of the future generations (Brutland Report). Prior to 1992, the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment had marked a turning point on how world bodies such as the United Nations dealt with environmental problems. The approach that was to be adopted was that of coordinated strategies to address environmental problems. One of such coordinated strategies is the need for countries to come together and collectively attempt to address emerging environmental problems. The emergence of a set of international environmental treaties is one reflection of the attempt to follow a comprehensive global approach to managing environmental resources and coordinating sustainable development. Where as there are a number of such agreements a few are discussed in this paper.

The main international agreements that are directly relevant to Zimbabwe are:

1. Trade in Species Convention 1973

The Convention on International trade in Endangered Species (CITES), targets the threat due the overexploitation/extinction of endangered species of flora and fauna through international trade. It is based on a ban in trading for species listed in Appendix I. Trade in species listed in appendix II is controlled through an import/export permit system.

2. Montreal Ozone Protocol 1987

The Montreal Ozone Protocol targets the environmental threat that result from the depletion of the ozone layer. The proposed response calls for the phasing out of specific substances that deplete the Ozone layer.

3. Biodiversity Convention 1992

The Biodiversity Convention targets the environmental threat that results from the extinction of species on the global scale. The proposed response is the development of plans that protect habitat and also to improve commercial access to biological resources.

4. Desertification Convention 1994

The Desertification Convention targets the environmental threat that results from the spread of deserts through improper agricultural and other economic activities.

5. Climate Change Convention 1992

The Climate Change Convention targets the environmental threat that results from Global Climate change. The proposed response is to return to “earlier” emission levels by year 2000, and development of national emission limits and inventories

6. Basel Wastes Convention 1991

The Basel Wastes Convention targets the environmental threat that results from the unsafe disposal of hazardous solid waste and its movement. The proposed response has been that exporting countries must provide importing countries with detailed data on waste shipment and importing countries must have provided prior written consent.

Other emerging policies which are of international significance include the following:

1. The international Trading Order: World Trade Organisation

The World Trade Organisation came up with a set of guiding principles and rules which attempt to promote a no-discriminatory, transparent international trading framework.

2. European Union policies on Eco-packaging and Eco-packaging

The European Union has prepared a set of rules and regulation which attempts to encourage countries to provide consumers with information on the environmental quality of their products through Eco-packaging and Eco-labelling arrangements. Eco-packaging involves the promotion of environmentally friendly packaging materials. Eco-labelling promotes the adoption of logos on individual products to depict the nature of the processes that these products go through during the manufacturing stages

Environmental Management Systems i.e. EMAS and Environmental Management Standards

Environmental management systems are mechanisms that are put in place in an organisation with the main aim of addressing and managing environmental problems that emerge within the organisation. These systems may have set guidelines and measurements which need to be achieved for the organisation to be termed “environmentally friendly”. An example of such standards is the ISO 14000 series or the British EMAS system

Methodology

The main research methodology that was used in this study is grouped as follows:

1. Field Survey: Primary data collection

A field questionnaire (see attached questionnaire) based survey was initially arranged in which a sample of corporations in Zimbabwe was identified. For each firm, a list of questions was prepared. The questionnaire was drafted in such a manner that each company was asked to describe their attempts to address known environmental problems . The questionnaire also sought to understand the extent to which individual companies knew of international environmental policies which Zimbabwe is signatory to. Using a comparative inter-company analysis based on a sample frame from 74 corporations, a forecast of the attitudes and current attempts by Zimbabwean corporation to address environmental problems was achieved.

2. Comparative international analysis

In order for the analysis to have some international relevance, the experiences from other countries was used for comparison purposes.

3. Structured interviews

Structured interviews were one of the methods that had been proposed during the initial stages of the research. However due to logistical problems this method was not utilised.

4. Literature review: Secondary data

A review of relevant literature offered one of the most comprehensive methods of undertaking this research given the limited resources and time. Both local and international literature was reviewed.

Findings (Analysis and Evaluation)

From the discussions and returned questionnaires it can be argued that international environmental legislation and policies are most likely to have greater impact on Zimbabwe's comparative terms of trade.

Further, environmental demands from the European Union and from international policies are likely to determine the export success of local corporations' products destined for the European Union market.

Results

The Environmental Legacy in Zimbabwe 1980-1998

There are a number of factors which have contributed to the prevalence of environmental problems in both the rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe. The common environmental problems include, air, noise and water pollution, land degradation, and poor waste management. The environmental legacy for Zimbabwe can be seen from a number of levels ranging from politics and administration, to urban planning and industrial expansion. The following are some of the factors that have contributed to a deterioration in the environmental quality in Zimbabwe.

1. Socialist ideological constraints

- Marxist industrial ideology
- Over ambitious planning goals

- Unsustainable agricultural policy and practices
2. Centralised decision making
 - Bureaucracy
 - Corruption
 - Lack of local inputs in environmental policy decisions
 - Delay in response to environmental problems like pollution
 - Lack of flexibility
 3. Uncontrolled industrialisation
 - Uncontrolled industrial expansion
 - Inefficient and wasteful natural resource utilisation
 4. Outdated technology
 - Applied regardless of local ecosystem capacity
 - High energy use and resource wasteful
 - Little pollution reduction at source
 5. Limited applications of economic incentives
 - Soft financial constraints on waste and pollution
 - Low raw material prices
 - Low/free waste disposal charges
 - Low levels of pollution fines
 6. Low priority for the environment
 - Management concerns with meeting production quotas
 - Management neglect of environmental issues
 - Centrality of economic issues over environmental protection
 7. Concentration on ad hoc response to environmental crisis
 - End of pipe solution over integrated environmental management
 8. Under-investment in environmental protection
 - Lack of administrative capacity
 - Lack of legislation
 - Lack of scientific capacity
 - Financial limitations
 - Systematic delays in implementing environmental projects

9. Information scarcity

- Lack of information on pollution
- Data unreliability
- Data limitations
- Lack of public access to data

10. Uncontrolled urban expansion

- Poorly located residential and industrial areas

Lessons to be learnt

The main lessons to be learnt for local corporations is as follows:

- The demands from the Climate change , Montreal protocol and the EU legislation is likely to lower the competitiveness of Zimbabwean exports if the local industry does not react by modifying its processes and products to suit these conditions.
- There is an urgent need for the local industry to improve its manufacturing processes and products to be environmentally friendly.

This can be achieved through the following recommendations:

Policy recommendations

The broad policy recommendations are centred on the development of an industrial business environmental charter which will involve the following

1. Environmental priorities- recognise environmental management as one of corporate priorities.
2. Integrated Environmental Management-integrate all corporate policies.
3. Process of improvement- continued improvement of all corporate policies.
4. Employee environmental awareness- spread environmental awareness amongst all employees.
5. Prior assessment- assess environmental impacts before a new activity commences- EIA, Environmental Audits.
6. Products and Services- promote environmentally friendly products and services.
7. Customer advice- provide efficient and honest environmental advice to customers.

8. Promote the development of environmentally friendly facilities and operations
9. Encourage Environmental Research
10. Follow a precautionary approach- avoid activities and actions which damage the environment even without scientific validation.
11. Promote environmentally friendly contractors and suppliers.
12. Emergency preparedness- be prepared for unforeseen situations.
13. Transfer of technology- promote the transfer of technology amongst firms.
14. Towards a common cause
15. Foster Openness to concerns
16. Compliance and reporting- measure environmental performance

Encouraging Environment Auditing

Environment Auditing is a management tool comprising a systematic, documented periodic and objective evaluation of how well organisation, management and equipment are performing with the aim of contributing to safe guard the environment by facilitating management control of environmental practices and assessing compliance with company policies, which would include meeting regulatory requirement and standards applicable.

Recommended structure of an environmental management system for Zimbabwe

1. Full management commitment
2. Decision on the scope of the audit
3. Baseline review of activities/regulations
4. Formulate corporate environmental policy
5. Identify and assess options for implementing the environmental policy
6. Prepare a management plan
7. Report on the findings

Brief Resume

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Current

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- Details of position:
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PUBLICATIONS

Ndlovu A. (1997)' The UNDP/GEF Photovoltaics for Household and Community Use Project in Zimbabwe' In Nils Viking (1997) PDI Course Proceedings, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.



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