

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

**THEY WOULD**



**...IF THEY COULD**

## WHY PARTICIPATE?

Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries provide many opportunities for the public, communities and civil society organisations to participate in environmental decision-making. These opportunities are conferred through domestic and international laws and conventions.

When civil society and your community participate in environmental decision-making, community issues are catered for in the development planning process, and good governance is strengthened.

## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

It is important to know what your own rights and opportunities are with respect to being able to participate in decision-making. There are many international, national, regional and local laws, policies and conventions that describe your rights to participate in the development planning process.

You can exercise these rights through a number of methods such as community meetings, letter writing, communicating by telephone, fax, community radio, newspapers and if available, the Internet. The Calabash Project of the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment has completed a guide for communities on the rights and opportunities you have to participate in environmental decision-making in the SADC region. Many other participation tools have also been developed.

## WHERE DO I START?

Find out who your environmental governance stakeholders are in your community, region, state, province or country. Introduce yourself and your organisation or community to them. Find out about their responsibility areas and how your organisation can become involved and assist in decision-making.

Use the Calabash "A One Stop Participation Guide" for ideas.

Contact the Centre for Public Participation, South Africa, for advocacy training and support.

## WHO CAN I CONTACT?

To get more detailed information on how to participate in environmental governance and decision-making please contact:



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