

Environment and Natural Resources

Objective 7 Ensure environmental sustainability

- Goal 9 To incorporate the principles of sustainable development into national policies and programmes and revert environmental resource losses
- Goal 10 To reduce by half the percentage of people who do not have access to drinking water by the year 2015
- Goal 11 By the year 2020, to have considerably improved the lives of 100 million slum dwellers (world goal)

Performance Summary

Status of support conditions for attaining goal

Weak but improving

Will the goal be reached?

Very unlikely



Diagnosis and Trends

According to information provided by the Forestry Action Plan for Guatemala, and taking into account: forest categories in net units only, that is, without counting open or associated forests, it would seem that between 1992 and 2000 there was a slight increase in the land areas covered with forests, from 33% to 35%. However, each of the measurements was taken using a different methodology and, thus, they are not strictly comparable. Additionally, if the “mixed” forest type category is not included, it would seem that there was a reduction in the land areas covered with forests, from 29% to 26% in that same period. Records have been kept in thirteen management units using the same methodology, and these show that between 1986 and 2001 the area of these units decreased from 1,948,273 to 1,800,795 hectares (a reduction of 8%).⁸⁴

According to information from CONAP, in the decade of the ‘90s the land areas protected to maintain biological diversity have increased from 2,608,213 to 3,201,673 hectares (115 protected areas) between 1990 and 2002⁸⁵ (from 24% to 29% of the national territory). However, the records cover all protected areas, independently of their management category or their management effectiveness. Thus, 68% of protected areas (24% of the protected land areas) do not have a master plan, 14% of protected areas (5% of the land area protected) are in the process of developing a plan, and 18% of them (70% of the land area protected) already have an approved master plan.

From information provided by the Ministry of Energy and Mining, it has been estimated that energy has been used in a more efficient manner since 1990. For example, in 1990, \$818 were produced (adjusted by the purchasing power parity) per each equivalent barrel of oil consumed, while in 1999 the same equivalent of one barrel of oil produced US\$1,063.

Based on information from the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources⁸⁶ it has been estimated that in 1990 total carbon dioxide emissions were 0.9 metric tons per capita. Additionally, carbon dioxide emissions because of energy increased from 0.4 to 0.7 metric tons per capita between 1990 and 1999.⁸⁷ Finally, it has been estimated, from information provided by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, that in 1990 emissions from other gases that have a greenhouse effect⁸⁸ amounted to 0.2 metric tons per capita.⁸⁹ Eighty-three percent of these were carbon monoxide and methane emissions.

Guatemala has been able to increase the number of people with access to sources of water supply and sanitation services. Between 1989 and 2000, and in the case of water supply sources⁹⁰, the average rose from 75% to 85%, and from 57% to 79% in the case of sewage disposal services.⁹¹ However, disparities can be evidenced when this indicator is segregated by social-demographic characteristics. According to information collected to July 2002 by the National Information System on Water and Sanitation (SAS), the percentages of houses with water supply systems and latrines were 53% and 67%, respectively.

TABLE 6
People living in homes with UBN
(Unmet Basic Needs) of origin and water supply (percentages)

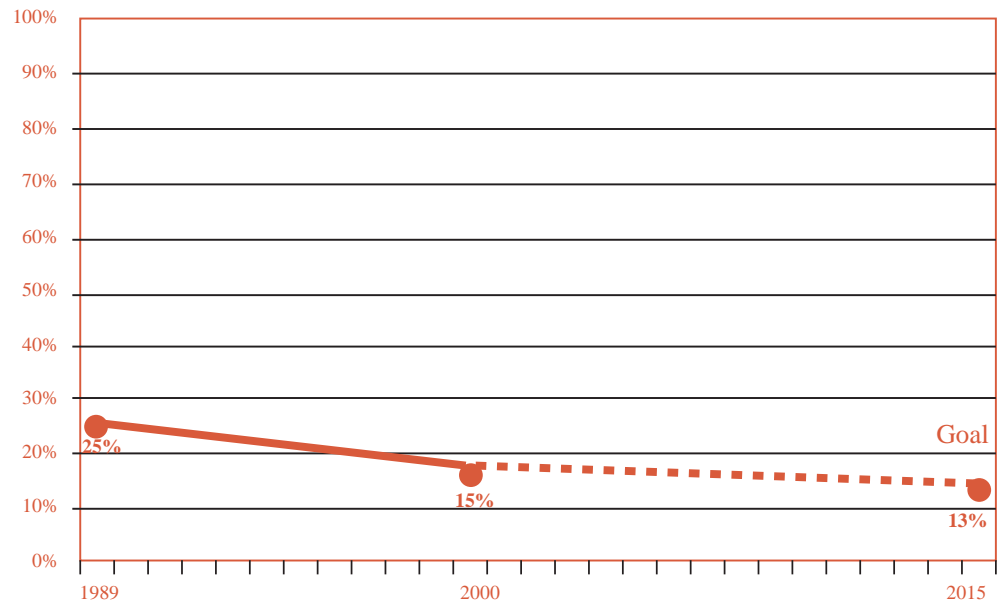
Characteristics	1989	2000
Country	25	15
Ethnic group of head of family		
Indigenous	35	21
Non-indigenous	20	11
Gender of head of family		
Male	26	16
Female	23	12
Geographic area		
Urban	21	11
Rural	28	18
Region		
Metropolitan	19	10
Northern	45	38
Northeastern	22	29
Southeastern	30	12
Central	17	10
Southwestern	21	9
Northwestern	40	19
Petén	25	28

Source: Own estimates from ENS89 AND ENCOVI 2000

GRAPH 14

Access to better water sources

Population with UBN (Unmet Basic Needs) of origin and water supply (years 1989 and 2000, and 2015 goal)



Source: Own estimates from ENS89 and ENCOVI2000

To improve the life of slum dwellers it is important that they have secure land tenure. However, according to ENCOVI 2000, in the year 2000 only 33% of the population had registered property titles to the house or agricultural plot where they live. This situation is worse in the Petén (17%), and the northern (23%) and northeastern (26%) regions. No property title disparities were found between the urban and the rural populations.

Policies and Programmes

Guatemala ratified at least eight international treaties relevant to sustainable development during the decade of the '90s: 1) Central American Agreement for Environmental Protection (1989), and the Protocol on the Convention for the Creation of the Central American Commission on the Environment and Development (1992); 2) Central American Agreement on Cross-border Movement of Hazardous Wastes (1992); 3) Convention on the Conservation of Biodiversity and the Protection of Priority Wildlife Areas in Central America (1992); 4) Convention on Biological Diversity (1992); 5) Frame Agreement on Climatic Changes (1992) and the Kyoto Protocol; 6) Central American Convention on Climatic Changes (1993); 7) Central American Convention on the Management and Conservation of Natural Forest Ecosystems and the Development of Forest Plantations (1993); and, 8) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (1995).

The following are some relevant measures taken by Guatemala: 1) Government Resolution No. 252-89 prohibiting the manufacture and importation of chlorofluorcarbon gases and finished goods that contain these gases; 2) The Law for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment (Decree No. 68-86).⁹³ Article 8 mandates that environmental impact assessment studies must be undertaken; and 3) Law on Protected Areas (Decree No. 4-89). Additionally, in 1997 CONAMA designed an Environmental Action Plan. Also in existence is a Forestry Action Plan. There are also policies and regulations that provide monetary incentives and, thus, have contributed to the sustainability of forests and protected areas. The Guatemalan System of Protected Areas (SIGAP) was created within the framework of the Law on Protected Areas. Also of recent creation is the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources.

Challenges and Priorities

It has been estimated, on the basis of information in ENCOVI 2000 and INE population projections that an average of US\$46 million would be required between 2001-2015 to achieve the goal of reducing by half the percentage of people without access to better sources of water supply by the year 2015.

The main challenges are to create an awareness in the people on the importance of human resources and the environment; to have a critical mass of professionals to promote policies and programmes and, thus, ensure the sustainability of the environment; to obtain adequate financial support to promote environmental policies and programmes, to oversee that the laws and regulations that deal with the environment are enforced, and to have a regulating body and a code of laws that deal with this issue.

Evaluation and Follow-up Capacity

Evaluation & follow-up capacity elements	Value		
	Very Good	Good	Poor
Amount and regularity of information from surveys			✓
Data Collection Capacity		✓	
Quality of information from recent surveys		✓	
Statistical follow-up capacity			✓
Statistical analysis capacity		✓	
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis to policies, plans and mechanisms to allocate resources		✓	
Monitoring and Assessment Mechanisms			✓
Reporting and information dissemination capacity			✓