BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Guiding Principles

For the UK government, for the government of the British Virgin Islands and for the people of the British Virgin Islands.

1. To recognize 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, habitat 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.

Ralph G. O'Neal
British Virgin Islands
26 September 2003

Herminie Amos
United Kingdom
26 September 2003

Commitments

The government of the UK will:

1. Help build capacity to support and implement integrated environmental management which is consistent with the British Virgin Islands' own plans for sustainable development.
2. Assist the British Virgin Islands in reviewing and updating environmental legislation.
3. Facilitate the extension of the UK's notification of Multilateral Environmental Agreements to the British Virgin Islands and which the British Virgin Islands has the capacity to implement.
4. Keep the British Virgin Islands informed regarding new development in relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and invite the British Virgin Islands to participate wherever appropriate in the UK's delegation to international environmental negotiations and conferences.
5. Help the British Virgin Islands to ensure it has the capacity and mechanisms it needs to meet international obligations.
6. Promote better cooperation and the sharing of experience and expertise between the British Virgin Islands and 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 benefit to the British Virgin Islands' environment.
9. Help the British Virgin Islands identify further funding partners for environmental projects, such as donors, the private sector or non-governmental organisations.
10. Recognize the diversity of the challenges facing Overseas Territories is very different socio-economic and geographical situations.

The government of the British Virgin Islands will:

1. Bring together government departments, representatives of local industry and commerce, environment and heritage organisations, the Governor's office, individuals, environmental champions and other community representatives 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 patterns of production and consumption within the territory.
4. Ensure that environmental impact assessments are undertaken before approving major projects and while developing our growth management strategy.
5. Commit to open and consultative decision-making and transparency in 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 British Virgin Islands and work towards the execution of other relevant agreements.
7. Review the range, quality and availability of baseline data for natural resources and biodiversity.
8. Ensure that legislation and policy reflect the principle that the polluter should pay for pollution or remediation, providing effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
9. Encourage teachers within schools to promote the value of our local environment (natural and built) and to explain in role within the regional and global environment.
10. Promote publications that spread awareness of the special features of the environment in the British Virgin Islands; promote within the British Virgin Islands 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).