

# Development Planning and the Administration of Development in Swaziland : The Gap Between Theory and Reality\*

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## Introduction

The significance of development planning for the less developed countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America cannot be overemphasized. It is through the planning process that attempts are made to rationalize the use and allocation of scarce resources and also determine national development priorities. Above all, it is through development planning process that the government tries ensure the balanced growth of the national economy; and, in this way; raise the standard of living of the people as a whole. It is therefore not surprising that when African states achieved political independence, development planning became an acclaimed ideal such that Africa was dubbed 'the continent of economic plans'.<sup>1</sup> For most African states, development planning was regarded as a panacea for the problems of poverty and underdevelopment inherited from colonialism.

The advent and subsequent spread of planning was given impetus by a number of factors. Among these factors there was the unquestionable faith in conventional development theory, particularly the power of western economic and administrative tools and technologies. As planning became synonymous with independence and sovereignty, the development prospects of Africa countries appeared to be favourable. This wave of optimism was exemplified in the UN' s declaration of the 1960s and 1970s as 'Development Decades' in which Africa governments would play an active as opposed to a positive or regulatory role in the development process.

The universal acceptance of planning in the Third World had to rest on several basic socio - political and economic arguments. These included the inherent imperfections of LDC markets which necessitated government intervention in economic activities . There a rose also need to channel both human and physical resources into productive ventures by using the planning process as a means of attracting foreign aid and of mobilizing the people behind governments' attempts to eliminate poverty, ignorance and

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disease.<sup>2</sup> Above all, development planning particularly in newly independent African states, was regarded as intimately linked to political freedom . Due to this fact, development planning a symbol of nationhood.

By the beginning of the 1970s, however the phase of optimism that characterized the decade of the 1960s had given way to that of disillusionment and despair. This happened because African economic development failed to live up to the earlier expectations.<sup>3</sup> Analysts of the African development scene and of what was referred to as 'the crisis in planning ' agreed that 'the practice of planning has generally failed to bring many of the benefits expected from it'.<sup>4</sup> Despite a few isolated areas of achievement, such as in health and education, African economies stagnated considerably during the 1970s. Most of them experienced sluggish economic growth. This was due to some forces in the world economic system that were often beyond their control. Moreover, their populations grew rapidly, and the distribution of the benefits of such little growth as had occurred was uneven.

Though there are many causes of Africa's poor record of economic development, there is almost universal consensus that a vast gap exists between 'the theoretical benefits and practical results of development planning,<sup>5</sup> and that ' there have been many more failures than successes in the implementation of development plans'.<sup>6</sup> In this paper, we will examine the nature and limitations of development planning in Swaziland. We will begin with a brief analysis of the planning machinery. After examining the country's development policies and objectives from the post - Independence Development Plan (PIDP) during the year 1969 - 1972, to the Fourth National Development Plan (FNDP) between the year 1983 - 1988, we will conclude with an analysis of the causes of the gap between theory and reality in developing planning.

## Development Planning: The Organisational Framework

The organizational framework within which development planning takes place is as important as the planning process itself. This is because it is this framework that influences the activities of planners, ministries and departments in the pursuit of national development goals. The primary responsibility for plan formulation and implementation rests with the Department of Economic planning and Statistics (EPS). The existence of this Department dates back to the early 1970s when the newly elected Swaziland government embarked on programmes for socio-economic development. Like planning agencies in most African countries, the Department is specifically responsible for project appraisal, preparation of the annual capital budget in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, co-

ordination and administration of foreign aid and technical assistance, and the provision of general economic advice.

An integral part of the Department is the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The main responsibility of this Central Statistics Office is to provide basic data necessary for plan formulation and appraisal, including the supply of demographic, industrial and other statistics on development trends. Furthermore, there are several specialized committees that work hand in hand within the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics. An example is the Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) which is responsible for screening project proposals from sectoral ministries and departments. In addition, there are Inter-ministerial committees for Rural Development and Manpower Planning whose tasks are to co-ordinate inter-ministerial planning and implementation activities. Responsibility for overseeing the formulation and implementation of development programmes and projects at the ministerial or departmental level rests with planning units in most of the crucial ministries such as Agriculture, Education, Works and Communication, Industry, Mines and Tourism, and Natural Resources, Land Utilization and Energy.

The machinery for planning and implementation at the district (now regional) level is made up of Regional Development Committees (formerly District Development Teams) which are composed of central and local government officials drawn from the various sectoral ministries, departments and local authorities. Besides reviewing, monitoring and implementing development projects at the regional level, these committees play an important role as two-way clearing houses for project initiated at the community level as well as those originating from the central government. Chiefs and their councillors, including community organizations at the grassroots or village level also play an important role in development activities, particularly in enlisting the participation of local communities in the initiation and implementation of rural development programmes and projects.<sup>7</sup>

Except for a brief period in the mid-1970s when it was merged with Finance and became known as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics is part of the Prime Minister's Office. This however has been the case since Independence. Though experience in other countries proved that organizational propinquity to the chief executive was not in itself sufficient to ensure a planning agency's effectiveness,<sup>8</sup> the Department's proximity to the Prime Minister is said to reflect the crucial development role which the government assigns to it. Since the development plan is a statement of government policy, it is logical to place planning agencies near the centre of executive power. Moreover, because of its power and prestige as the focal point of government decision-making, the chief executive's office

can use its power and influence to induce compliance with plan requirements.<sup>9</sup>

The rationale for the Department's merger with the Ministry of Finance in the mid-1970s was the need to improve co-ordination between the development plan and the annual budget. Furthermore, since the planning process is intimately tied to the raising of funds through taxation and foreign aid, budget preparation and the control of expenditure, such an arrangement seemed logical. However, before the new organizational framework could be institutionalized, it was abandoned in favour of placing Economic Planning back in its traditional location-the Prime Minister's office. The main considerations behind the latter move were the facts that the planning function was subordinated to that of finance, and the difficulty of enlisting the co-operation of other ministries and departments which associated planning with the interests of the Ministry of Finance.<sup>10</sup>

#### Development Policies and Objectives, 1970-1986

A clear statement of development objectives is an important part of the planning process this is because it indicates the degree of commitment of the political and bureaucratic leadership to development.

Though national development objectives and policies differ from one country to the other and reflect different national preferences, priorities and ideologies, most development plans in Third World countries emphasize accelerating the rate of economic growth in order to improve people's standard of living. Unfortunately, development objectives are often vaguely defined. Because of vague definition of development objectives it becomes extremely difficult for them to be accomplished.

As in most developing countries with mixed economies, development planning in Swaziland is a combination of the project-by-project approach and integrated public investment planning. Planning is partial rather than comprehensive and is basically concerned with the preparation of a public investment programme. With regard to the private sector, government efforts are directed at creating an economic environment conducive to the healthy growth and expansion of direct foreign investment. The small size as well as the dependent and open nature of the Swazi economy renders it susceptible to external influences beyond the control of policymakers and thus prohibits the use of sophisticated planning techniques and growth models.<sup>11</sup>

The evolution of 'planning' in Swaziland dates back to the late 1940s when the British colonial administration was required, under the aegis of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, to prepare public

expenditure programmes to be financed through grants-in-aid.<sup>12</sup> The public expenditure programmes of the colonial administration could not be classified as development planning since they were prepared on a piecemeal basis and consisted mainly of a series of unrelated projects which had no relationship to annual budget.<sup>13</sup> Commenting on the inadequacies of colonial planning in general, Ben-Amor and Clairmonte have observed that:

...Colonial 'plans' were drafted by a few civil servants and were for the most part intellectual exercises; there were no annual reports of the plans' progress ... individual departments and ministries continued to operate their pet schemes separately, often seemingly oblivious of the existence of the 'plan'.<sup>14</sup>

It was not until the achievement of independence in most African states that development planning was undertaken with vigour and enthusiasm.

The Post-Independence development ushered in a new era of developing planning in Swaziland. Not only did it represent more than merely a public expenditure programme but also, and above all, it served as an important document through which the government expressed the needs and aspirations of the people. Emphasis was put on improving living conditions through the development of agriculture, mobilization of domestic and foreign capital, expansion and improvement of education and training, and the acceleration of localization in the civil service. Furthermore, the government committed itself to modernize the economy, undertake administrative and organizational changes, and expand agricultural research and extension.<sup>15</sup> Though the private sector was called upon to 'co-operate in the attainment of the government's principal objectives', no organizational framework was initiated for this purpose. Instead, the plan stated that 'private enterprise will be left alone to take its own decisions'.<sup>16</sup>

The PIDP represented a significant departure from colonial planning; though it was not entirely free from the inadequacies of its predecessors. Faced with the problem of lack of reliable data on which to base sound planning decisions and forecasts, little or no attempt was made to relate policy to investment or to stated objectives. In some cases, economic policies and measures were not only contradictory but were also at variance with objectives. For instance, while the government committed itself to spreading employment opportunities and maximizing the people's earnings, its policy of allowing private enterprise to take its own decisions without interference meant that the latter was free to choose between capital and labour intensive techniques of production. These and other shortcomings, including such events as the signing of a new Southern African Customs Union (SACU) agreement which significantly increased

the country's share of customs revenue, rendered the PIDP inoperative as a planning document.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the newly elected government was trying to come to grips with the reality of the problems and challenges of the post-independence era. It faced an acute shortage of suitably qualified and experienced personnel in virtually all job categories. There was need to expand, strengthen and restructure the state apparatus in order to enable it to serve adequately the needs of a rapidly expanding population that looked to the new government to deliver the fruits of independence. The government lacked a clearly defined development strategy or long-term view of the problems it faced and did not have the necessary experience in the administration of public affairs in general and development planning in particular. In such circumstances, while the PIDP articulated the government's national development goals and objectives, it achieved little that was concrete.

The government's experience in the management of development through planning improved during the period of the Second National Development Plan (SNDP) 1973/74-1977-78. The objectives of the SNDP reflected the government's concern with redressing many of the inadequacies of colonial planning through, *Inter alia*, securing a greater degree of Swazi control over the commanding heights of the economy. Accordingly, more emphasis was laid on the creation of employment opportunities both in traditional agriculture and in the modern sector; raising rural incomes through the progressive modernization of traditional agriculture; reorienting educational and training programmes to meet the requirements of an expanding economy; increasing the supply of trained manpower to accelerate localization; providing improved housing and health facilities to low-income families in both urban and rural areas; promoting a balanced and equitable distribution of the benefits of development among individuals and regions; and diversifying external economic relations both in trade and foreign aid.<sup>18</sup>

Though the Swazi economy achieved impressive growth rates in the early 1970s, by the mid-1970s a number of socio-economic problems, had emerged. The SNDP highlighted some of these as the lopsided nature of income distribution and the employment crisis, and expressed government's commitment to solving them. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that the colonial educational system, with its emphasis on academic as opposed to practical subjects, was mainly responsible for unemployment, particularly among young school leavers. For instance, according to government figures, while the demand for new workers in the mid-1970s was approximately 2,500 per annum, there were about 4,700 job seekers a year. This meant that only about half of those entering the labour market each year could find employment, leaving the rest to either join the ranks of the unemployed, seek work in South Africa

as migrant labourers, or find whatever employment they could in the rural areas.

In the year immediately after independence, government policy in Africa countries, including Swaziland, laid undue emphasis on rapid industrialization and relegated agricultural and / or rural development to secondary importance. During this period, development strategies and economic policies had an unquestionable faith in industrialization, and regarded it as a cornerstone of the development process whereby the rural areas and their inhabitants would benefit from the so - called 'trick - down' effect. The development strategies of the 1960s and early 1970s had disastrous consequences. In most developing countries, they led to rural urban imbalances and rapidly accelerated rural - urban migration.

Rural - urban migration in Swaziland is a legacy of socio - economic dualism and decades of foreign domination of the Swazi economy, the effect of which has been severely to weaken rather than modernize the traditional subsistence sector. The continuation of dual socio - economic patterns, including divergences between the traditional and the modern industrial sectors after independence, has led to agricultural decay and stagnation. Rapid rural - urban migration has further led to a situation whereby the urban centres can not cope with the provision of goods and services to the swelling numbers of urban dwellers. In these circumstances, unemployment, crime and juvenile delinquency have increased.

The phenomenon of agricultural stagnation and rural poverty can be attributed to a constellation of factors, some of which are peculiar to Swaziland's historical, political and economic circumstances. Labour migration, the origins of which date back to the colonial era, contributed significantly to the decline of subsistence agriculture on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) and resulted in worsening poverty and inequality. With most able - bodied men absent as migrant labourers, subsistence agriculture could not prosper as it was left in the hands of women, children and the aged.<sup>20</sup> Though the government tried to solve the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment through the Rural Development Areas Programme (RDAP), these and other related measures have not been notably successful. Among other things, measures for halting rural - urban migration have been frustrated by the attractiveness of mine employment , mainly in South Africa.

Though rural - urban migration is exacerbated by natural disasters such as drought, famine and disease, it has also historical and political origins which date back to the policies of colonial governments. In Africa, it is said that :

" ... the cities were the special province of the white colonialists, whereas African were made to settle for homesteads on the fringes of urban life. A great psychological hunger for town life and its attendant status rain forces the obvious economic benefits in these area. Everywhere urbanism is associated with modernity, with a faster pace of life ... It invokes symbols and status all the more valued, indeed coveted, when they had been long denied. <sup>21</sup>

This observation applies particularly to Swaziland where until the early 1960s, racial discrimination, including the existence of separate facilities for Europeans and Africans, was enshrined in law.

Because of socio - economic dualism and the huge differentials between the modern and traditional sectors and also between non - Swazis and non - Swazis, the highly skewed nature of the distribution of income worsened rather than improved in the post - independence era. Unemployment greatly aggravated poverty and inequality and prompted the initiation of the RDAP, whose objectives were to raise rural incomes and improve living standards in rural areas, particularly on SNL. During the period of the SNDP, it was also realized that just as (SACU) encourages industrial polarization industries tend to locate in South Africa because of its favourable economic environment such as a larger and more developed market , advanced physical infrastructure and well - established financial and monetary institutions-the government's post independence economic policies encouraged domestic industrial polarization. Economic development in Swaziland tends to benefit the Manzini -Matsapha - Mbabane industrial enclave.

A review of the SNDP showed that progress towards the achievement of plan objectives was severely hampered by the shortage of trained manpower, over-optimistic forecasts, unexpected changes in development priorities, and weak coordination machinery. The latter resulted in delays in plan implementation, coupled with economic trends such as inflation and high energy costs over which the government had no control.<sup>22</sup> Despite these and other problems, the early 1970's were, as noted earlier, a period in which the economy was in peak performance. The budget surpluses achieved mainly due to increased customs revenue, substantially improved the government's financial position. By the late 1970s, 95 percent of civil service positions were localized. Most of the public service institutions and organisations were firmly established and the experience of the early 1970s laid the foundation for future planning.

During the period of the SNDP, a phenomenon of unparalleled significance not only for planning but also for the development process in general, was the emergence of Tibiyo Taka Ngwane <sup>23</sup> - a traditionally -based and controlled corporation that is administered by the monarchy on behalf of the Swazi nation. Through Tibiyo Taka Ngwane the Swazi nation acquires

shareholdings and direct control in most of the major agro-industrial and mining enterprises. Among these are the U.K. controlled Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), Lonrho, Courtaulds, Turner and Newall, Tate and Lyle, Libby's and South African-based companies, including Anglo-American, Kirsh Industries and Sun International. Though criticized as 'a mechanism by which the Swazi rulers acquires a material base in the capitalist sector of the economy',<sup>24</sup> the government views Tibiyo as a major vehicle for increasing the control and participation of the Swazi nation in economic development.

The government is conscious of need to achieve a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development and thus eliminate domestic industrial polarization. During the period of the Third National Development Plan (TNDP), 1978/79-1982/83, the government accordingly put greater emphasis on balanced regional development and encouraged the establishment of industries in such peri-urban centres as Shiselweni in the south and Piggs Peak in the north. The development and improvement of the physical and telecommunications infrastructure took precedence over other projects. Though these measures did not have a marked effect on the employment situation, they laid the basis for a balanced regional development strategy.

The TNDP picked up the threads of its predecessor and espoused three main open-ended national development objectives- economic growth, self-reliance, and social justice and stability. However, these development objectives proved contradictory and were difficult to accomplish. Recognizing these difficulties, the government acknowledged that 'the rate of progress is not dependent entirely on government's own efforts but is influenced by political and economic factors beyond its control' and that 'the equitable distribution of the fruits of development does not happen automatically'. Rapid growth in the modern sector, it was further stated, 'will not of itself produce benefits for the great majority of the people who are outside the money economy or on the fringes of it'.<sup>25</sup>

These admissions notwithstanding, there was optimism about the prospects of recovery in the South African economy on which Swaziland depends heavily. An economic growth rate of 7 per cent and an increase of 6.5 per cent per annum in agricultural production were forecast for the period of the TNDP.<sup>26</sup> With regard to self-reliance, the plan put heavy emphasis on strengthening the government's administrative capacity by localizing expatriate-held posts in industry, developing local sources of goods and services, promoting labour-intensive industrial operations, developing indigenous entrepreneurship and management, achieving self-sufficiency in maize production.<sup>27</sup>

Social justice and stability were to be achieved through the continuation of most of the programmes and projects initiated during the period of the SNDP. These included those relating to the equitable distribution of economic opportunities and the decentralization of industrial development. While continuing with measures for the diversification and reorientation of the school curriculum, more emphasis was also placed on spreading educational and social services widely. Finally, a commitment was made to increase and improve the quality and quantity of health services, including the provision of adequate housing for low-income groups.<sup>28</sup>

To a great extent, the accomplishment of these objectives depended, *inter alia*, on the existence of an incomes policy for rural and urban areas that would narrow the ever-widening income gap between the two sectors. However, no such policy was formulated despite the government's awareness of the dimensions of the incomes problem and its expressed commitment to spreading economic opportunities and social services more widely. Although new policies on minimum wages, taxation and prices were implemented in the early 1980s and have been periodically reviewed ever since, they have failed to reduce income disparities. In these circumstances, the colonial socio-economic heritage of dualism has intensified rather than diminished.

A review of the TNDP showed that the economic buoyancy that characterized much of the period of the SNDP came to an end in the early 1980s. The EPS' Economic Review, 1978-1982, summed up some of the problems that militated against the accomplishment of the TNDP's objective as follows:

... the effects of the world-wide recession on raw material markets, and the transmission of the recession to the South African economy were among the important factors ... The situation of over-supply in the world sugar market, which depressed prices considerably led to budgetary problems ... Aggregate growth was also affected by crop production due to drought.<sup>29</sup>

Other problems included a worsening employment crisis and a high increase in consumer prices, the control of which was difficult, if not impossible, due to the openness of the economy and its vulnerability to external influences. Such problems were by no means confined to Swaziland but were endemic throughout most LDCs. As with the SNDP, the accomplishment of the objectives of the TNDP was hampered by skilled manpower shortages, especially at the professional, managerial and artisan levels. In the public sector, these shortages were aggravated by the government's inability to recruit and retain qualified personnel as well as by 'a school system which prepared students inadequately for further training in the technical and scientific fields'.<sup>30</sup> It is partly for this reason that the government finds it increasingly difficult to achieve rapid

localization in industry. Other reasons are the absence of a strong commitment to fundamental change and the fact that in a period that was characterized by significant political turbulence, as the 1970s and early 1980s were in Swaziland, administrative reforms were relegated to secondary importance.

The mid-1980s witnessed further deterioration of the economy, the resilience of which was severely weakened by regional and international economic trends. The inflation rate of 16 per cent per annum continued unabated, and the government and parastatal sector experienced budgetary deficits which, coupled with balance of payments problems, increased the debt-servicing burden.<sup>31</sup> These difficulties were exacerbated by the uneven flow of public investment, depreciation of the local currency, fluctuations in world and regional commodity markets, poor performance of the traditional agricultural sector, persistent drought, and the destruction of the country's transport and telecommunications infrastructure caused by cyclone 'Domoina' in February 1984.<sup>32</sup> It is against the background of these and other problems that the Fourth National Development Plan (FNDP), 1983/84-1987/88, was formulated.

The FNDP put emphasis on such national development objectives as achieving greater efficiency and control over the use of public funds, stimulating private investment in existing and new activities, creating additional jobs through vocational training programmes, and promoting productive agricultural employment opportunities in the rural areas.<sup>33</sup> Over the past decade, the government has found it difficult to exert effective control over the use of public funds<sup>34</sup> which, because of mismanagement, are often diverted to purposes other than those for which they were intended. Moreover, performance of the parastatal sector is unsatisfactory. This prompts several calls from MPs for the greater control and efficient management of public enterprises, most of which have incurred huge financial losses in recent years.

Job-creation through vocational training is made more urgent by the continuing unemployment crisis and the need to produce skilled manpower in line with industrial requirements. The government also realizes that the fight against unemployment of agriculture on SNL. As the FNDP put it:

... the ability of the economy to avoid serious and sustained open unemployment ... will depend, to a great extent, on the capacity of the traditional rural sector, through change and modernization, to absorb substantial amounts of additional labour.<sup>35</sup>

The implementation of the development strategy outlined in the FNDP depended on many factors, chief among which was the performance of the

economy, the ability of the government to exert effective control and direction over public spending, and above all, its ability to use the planning process as an instrument of development. It is to the problems and limitations of development planning that we turn in the next section.

### Development Planning: The Gap Between Theory and Reality

That development planning in most African countries, including Swaziland, has failed to be effective instrument of socio-economic development is unquestionable. Because plans are idealized statements of goals based on predictions and forecasts, they have little, if any, influence on day-to-day policy decisions.<sup>36</sup> Many reasons have been put forward for the crisis in planning, chief among which is the lack of administrative capacity for plan implementation. As Waterson observed:

... few countries can cope with the administrative problems which development planning brings. These problems are so complex that in most less developed countries the limitation in implementing plans is not financial resources, but administrative capacity.<sup>37</sup>

In Swaziland, the causes of plan failure are many and varied. First, there is lack of precision in the definition of development objectives. The development objectives are overly optimistic, as was the case with those of both the S NDP and the T NDP. Furthermore, the planning process is too rigid and inflexible, unable to respond adequately to the exigencies of a volatile socio-political economic environment such as that which exists in Southern Africa. This is because, as pointed out earlier, of the openness of the economy and its vulnerability to forces over which the government has no control. Moreover, there are few policy options available to the authorities to influence the nature and direction of economic development. Thus, in order to grapple with political and economic uncertainties, and bridge the gap between promise and performance, development planning must be flexible rather than rigid.

When the economy achieved impressive growth rates in most of the 1970s, politicians and government officials wrongly attributed the statistical success of this period to effective development planning. Though the emphasis of both the S NDP and the T NDP was on the equitable distribution of economic benefits, this objective has not been realized. The T NDP's capital investment programme was in favour of capital-intensive techniques of production in industry, estate agriculture and transport, rather than programmes which have an impact on the poorer segments of the population. For instance, industry was allocated 22 per cent of the capital budget and transport 19 per cent; agriculture and cooperatives received 14 per cent, education 13 per cent, housing 5 per cent and health 2 per cent.<sup>38</sup>

Such an investment package resulted in the widening of the gap between the modern and traditional sectors and was inconsistent with the commitment to a fair distribution of economic benefits which would reduce the negative effects of socio-economic dualism. Figures on income distribution are not readily available; however, there is reason to believe that past economic growth had a peripheral impact on the lives of members of low-income groups and that the mid-1980s slowdown in the economy hit these groups the hardest. This phenomenon is not unique to Swaziland but is found in most African countries. As Helleiner aptly observed:

... where income per capita is as low as it is in most of Africa, one simply has to accept the fact that even rapid economic progress will leave the average level of living very low.<sup>39</sup>

Development plans throughout the 1970s and early 1980s emphasized the urgency of finding some practical solutions to the employment crisis. However, like income distribution policies, the creation of employment opportunities proved more difficult to achieve than to prescribe. As a result, unemployment and underemployment have increased rather than decreased. During the period of the TNDP, it was estimated that of the 8,500 annual gross additions to the labour force, an average of 4,400 would find employment in the formal sector, while the remaining 4,100 would either join the ranks of the unemployed or being absorbed in the traditional agricultural sector. Unfortunately, due to the worldwide recession there was a considerable fall in employment opportunities in the agricultural sector: thus, between 1980 and 1984 the formal private sector lost approximately 6,700 jobs<sup>40</sup> (see Table I)

Table I: Estimated Paid Employment, 1980-84  
(No. of Employees)

Sector	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Formal Private Sector	55,077	57,243	54,775	54,327	50,581
Public Sector	20,047	22,496	22,582	24,246	24,552
Total Formal Sector	75,124	79,739	77,357	78,573	75,133
Informal Sector	10,145	10,452	10,873	11,519	12,000
Total	85,269	90,191	88,230	90,092	87,333
Growth Rate	+3.3%	+5.8%	-2.2%	+2.1%	-3.1%

Source: Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, *Economic Review and Outlook* (1986).

While efforts were made to control the growth of the civil service between 1980 and 1984, there was a significant increase in the number of public sector employees. This was due mainly to the uncontrolled growth in the number of non-established or daily-paid posts, for which individual

sectoral ministries and departments are responsible. This growth was partly a response to political and economic pressure to find a solution to the unemployment problem.

There is a general agreement that the annual budget is the principal means by which government authorize and control expenditure. This being the case, it is thus by examining the link between development plans and national budgets that one can determine the extent to which a government is committed to planning.<sup>41</sup> Given the structural limitations that face Swaziland in the use of conventional monetary, fiscal and pricing policies, the budget is an important instrument for influencing the development process. However, due to failure to adhere to basic planning and budgetary principles and procedures, the budget does not prove to be an effective instrument of economic policy. In the review of the TNDP, it was observed that:

... the budget is not as effective as it might be. Government projects funded through the capital budget do not have their desired impact on national development. Instead, projects whose objectives should be to contribute to national development often further sectional interests ... Line ministries often put forward projects without any prior discussion and whose contribution to national objectives are indeterminate ... costs bear no relation to likely benefits ... decisions are made on the choice of technology and input mix without reference to national resource availability.<sup>42</sup>

Failure in the implementation of development plans are also caused by the inherent weaknesses in the planning machinery, especially at the level of sectoral ministries, departments and regions. Because of the centralized nature of the planning process, the majority of trained personnel are concentrated at the central planning office. The neglect of the local level has made it difficult, if not impossible, for viable planning structures to evolve. In many African countries such as Tanzania, Zambia and to some extent Kenya, district or regional development organizations play an active part in formulating and implementing rural development projects. In Swaziland, their role is severely circumscribed by a weak development planning machinery and this militates against the effective co-ordination and implementation of development programmes and projects at the local level.<sup>43</sup>

In Swaziland, as in most newly independent African states, development planning is inextricably related to, and is also an integral part of the political process. It is therefore vitally affected by the political system. The diarchical political system contributes to the failure to use the planning process effectively as a means of allocating scarce resources. The existence of two separate, though overlapping, political and administrative structures leads to numerous problems of co-ordination, communication

and duplication of functions. In view of this situation, the World Bank noted that:

... there have been problems as two separate administrative systems have attempted to conceive and administer the development of the country's resources. Their activities have increasingly overlapped. The SNC has extended its domain beyond the traditional sector through shareholding in Swaziland's largest industrial and plantation enterprises and the central government has entered the domain of tribal lands in its attempts to increase the productivity of the rural economy through an extensive rural development program.<sup>44</sup>

The existence of two parallel administrative systems each varying for influence and supremacy also leads to the fragmentation of the policy and decision-making process. In the most cases this results in a conflict of interest between the two structures of power. Given the complexities of the political systems in Swaziland, it is sometimes difficult to identify the actual centres of decision-making, let alone avoid a situation whereby government official duplication are caught in the cross-fire of conflicting directives. This affects development planning in that the numerous delays caused by lack of consensus paralyze the decision-making apparatus. Conflict of interest arises whenever politicians dictate that funds be diverted into financing prestigious and economically unsound projects with no relationship to the development plan. Planning is concerned with the mobilization and allocation of resources in order to achieve national development objectives. Among other things, this calls, in mixed economies, for the co-ordination of efforts between ministries, departments, the parastatal sector and industry. One of the limitations of planning in Swaziland is that not all financial and development agencies or the resources under their control are involved or included in the development planning process. A case in point is the giant Tibiyo Taka Ngwane Corporation through which the Swazi nation controls considerable financial resources. Tibiyo's resources and the project it undertakes either on its own or in partnership with multinationals, lie outside the planning apparatus, yet the Corporation has a significant impact on national development. Again, in the words of the World Bank:

"... the fact that these projects which make up a significant portion of the country's investment program, are not subjected to screening and intergration into comprehensive development plans is a reflection of the persistent economic and political dualism and is a handicap for the development of a consistent country strategy"<sup>45</sup>

As a means of obtaining the rational use and allocation of scarce national resources, a development plan affects the government as much as it does the public. There is therefore a need to devise mechanisms for eliciting public participation in plan formulation and implementation. Unfortunately, in Swaziland, as indeed in most African countries, despite a growing chorus calling for the 'localization' of development planning,

plans are still prepared, often almost in camera, by a handful of mostly expatriate personnel. The latter have little, if any, knowledge or experience of the countries for which they plan and use sophisticated econometric models that are often unsuitable for conditions in these countries. No mechanisms exists for involving the public, either through the mass media, public meetings or professional organizations, in plan formulation. Lack of public participation in plan formulation affects implementation in that people feel no obligation to ensure the plan's success.

Equally absent are mechanism for involving the private sector in the development planning process. In other words, there is virtually no formal planning link between the central government and industry. On the other hand, most planning decisions affect the private sector in many respects. In an attempt to rectify this anomaly, the former Prime Minister, Prince Mabandla, created an Economic Advisory Council (EAC) in 1982.<sup>46</sup> This had an aim of establishing a meaningful two-way flow of information between the government and industry, and thus bring the latter closer to the development planning process. However, the EAC was short-lived, following the turbulent political events of 1983 which culminated in the removal from office of the Queen Regent Dzeliwe and Prince Mabandla.<sup>47</sup> It went into oblivion. The private sector plays an important role in the country's economy but, in the absence of either a formal or ad hoc machinery for bringing it closer to the planning process, the development plans may not reflect the reality in industry. Above all, in the absence of public support and private industrial participation and co-operation, the implementation of development plans is not guaranteed.

Of the numerous causes of the crisis in planning, the most obvious is the existence of different perceptions of the nature of politics and the role of development planning among politicians, government officials and planners. As economists, most planners view politics and politicians in the same way as they view a utility maximizing consumer.<sup>48</sup> In other words, planners adopt a 'rational consumer' model of politics in which the politician is believed to have adequate knowledge of all policy options and their likely outcomes and, in benevolent fashion, is committed to achieve optimal results in the national interest.<sup>49</sup> Such a perception is not based on reality. Because of such situation conflict between the principal actions in the Department of Economic Planning and Statistics accuse politicians of submitting development projects that are either not included in the plan or do not meet planning requirements. At the same time politicians accuse planners of viewing the planning process as an academic exercise far removed from reality and of using planning to 'sabotage and delay the implementation of the King's projects'.<sup>50</sup>



The existence of a tense situation between politicians, government officials and planners is not conducive to co-operation and co-ordination, though the latter are prerequisites for effective development planning. The conflict atmosphere is partly an indication of the fact that in over two decades of planning in most African countries, including Swaziland, no serious attempt has been made to integrate politics into the planning process; this is despite an acknowledgement that politics lies at the centre of planning and that a plan is essentially a political document which, together with the national budget, determines who gets what, when and how.<sup>51</sup>

In Swaziland, as in many African countries, there is lack of strong political support for planning, and this is one of the causes of the gap between promise and performance in developing planning. Both politicians and senior government officials rarely make reference to the development plan in their public policy pronouncements. Planning is regarded as an isolated activity that takes place behind the closed doors of the planning office and has no bearing on the administration of public affairs.

### Conclusion

Despite the wave of optimism over prospect for African development that characterized the 1950s and 1960s, conventional theories of economic growth in general and development in particular failed to solve many of the socio-economic problems that have surfaced in these countries. During the 1970s and 1980s, disparities in living conditions between rich and poor states and between the highest and lowest income groups widened rather than narrowed. The trickle-down effect that was the hallmark of the development strategies of the 1960s failed to alleviate widespread poverty.<sup>52</sup> Although, as a result of this experience, the development strategies that emerged from the mid-1970s onwards were geared towards spreading the benefits of development and increasing the productivity of income of the poorest groups, these objectives have not been accomplished.

The crisis in planning can be attributed to a variety of causes which differ from country to country. However, there are common causes of a social, political, economic, administrative and historical nature. In many African countries, including Swaziland, colonial rule was such that it left them unprepared for handling the immense tasks of development administration. Colonial powers left behind machinery for development planning that was inadequate for meeting the growing responsibilities of the post-independence era. While some of the blame for Africa's problems must rest with colonialism and the colonialists' lack of responsiveness to the needs and aspirations of the indigenous population, many of the ills of the post-colonial era stem from the policies pursued by

the post-independence ruling elites. For instance, they have not used planning effectively as a means for the rational allocation and use of scarce resources. As Rondinelli observed:

"... governments ... still attempt to use planning and management techniques to control development activities rather than to facilitate and encourage the flexibility, experimentation, and social learning that are essential in implementing development projects successfully. Administrators have yet to come to grips with the experimental nature of development policies and with the uncertainties inherent in their implementations"<sup>53</sup>

In Swaziland, the gap between promise and reality in development planning is caused by an array of problems. These range from weak planning machinery at the central and local government levels, lack of adequate co-ordination between ministries and departments, poor planning budgeting procedures and methods, and the absence of formal links between the government and the private sector to inadequate manpower resources, poor co-ordination and communication within the diarchical political and administrative system, and the influence of political and economy is buffeted by external forces, it can be argued that the mid-1980s' slow-down in economic growth is the result of fundamental economic weaknesses that are within the power of authorities to rectify. They include a shortage of skilled manpower and management talent; inadequate investment in the industrial sector; low productivity on SNL; and a population growth rate that is among the highest in Africa.<sup>54</sup>

The most formidable challenge facing the development and planning in Swaziland, as in most African states, is that of instilling a sense of commitment and political will into the leadership. This is by no means easy. Moreover, as Todaro pointed out, even committed politicians must overcome powerful vested interests if development is to take place:

'... a political 'will to develop' entails much more than high-minded purposes and noble rhetoric. It requires an unusual ability and a great deal of political courage to challenge powerful elites and vested interest groups and to persuade them that such development is in the long-run interests of all citizens. In the absence of their support, whether freely offered or coerced, a will to develop on the part of politicians is likely to meet with continuous frustration and growing internal conflict.'<sup>55</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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