

**Enabling a Global Imperative of Sustainable Development
through Indigenous (Local) Ways of Knowing:
A Case of Southern African**

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ABSTRACT The paper attempts to highlight the complexity of the challenge that faces a sustainable development approach that takes on board indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). Although on the surface there appears to be inextricable links and similarities in values and purpose between the moral imperative of sustainable development and indigenous knowledge, deeply imbedded tensions caused by pluralistic interpretations and associated agendas for sustainable development still need demystifying. This is further made complex by the holistic, contextual and often tacit nature of IKS. Simplistic, utopian and instrumentalist approaches to and perspectives on indigenous knowledge and sustainable development are also questioned. A brief overview and examples of practice within South African and the Southern African contexts relating to IKS policy initiatives are provided to further illustrate the inherent issues and challenges.