



# NEWS Letter

Quarterly of the West African  
Coast Observation Mission (WACOM)

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## Chronicle:

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## Commitment of countries to participate in the effort giving consistency to the actions aiming to preserve and protect West African coastal area

The main activity of the West African Coastal Observation Mission (WACOM) during the 2013 second and third quarters remains the organization of national workshops presenting the findings of the West African Coastal Master Plan (SDLAO). Nine workshops were held in the different countries between mid-June and mid-August 2013, according to the following schedule: Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana. These workshops will be complemented by those to be planned in Togo and Guinea Bissau, probably in the course of October and November 2013.



These workshops reflect the commitment of countries to participate in the effort giving consistency to the actions aiming to preserve and protect West African coastal area. The opening ceremonies were presided at very high levels of representation in the different states (Minister in charge of Environment, Principal Private Secretary of Ministers in charge of Environment, Director in charge of Environment, etc).

As a whole, the various presentations (diagnosis and regional Master Plan, comprehensive sector-based Master Plan, priority sectors by country and the running of the WACOM) aroused rewarding and additional discussions of the work done upstream. Once again, national experts showed great mastery in their understanding of the state of the coastline and related issues, risks to coastal erosion, human pressure, development of tourism, climate change, etc. Besides, the workshops have enabled to check the perfect quality of the SDLAO and the geographic information in the maps of the West African Coastal Master Plan, basis for the work of the WACOM.

These workshops confirm the existence of high quality human resources, able to provide reliable data collection and the upward flow of relevant information to build up the database of the WACOM, for the regular updating of the state of the coastlines. The main challenge seems to be in the related financial aspects.

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# SDLAO workshop findings in the different countries

**The workshop findings allowed to share more information on the SDLAO, expand the network of experts and resource persons of the WACOM and identify stakeholder institutions of national WACOM branches in each country. They also allowed to learn from the operating requirements of national branches, both in technical terms and financial means.**

## **Information sharing:**

Many participants were unaware of the SDLAO despite the availability of documents in ministries in charge of environment in different countries and on the website of IUCN. As is so often the case, the flow of information is lacking, especially for such a cross product as the SDLAO.

This failure has been largely filled with participants from different backgrounds but sharing a field of common interest: the coastal area. Presentations helped participants to understand the context of implementation of the SDLAO, discover, assess and take possession of the products. Each institution is in a position to assess its ability to contribute to the provision of information for the regular updating of this work.

## **Widening the network of WACOM experts:**

At the rate of 30 participants on average per workshop, from various backgrounds, the WACOM network of experts and resource persons has substantially expanded. The database of the WACOM network members becomes enriched, increasing the spectrum of information dissemination and further diversify the expertise. The mailing list of the WACOM will thus be considerably lengthening as soon as it is updated. We should particularly remember the participation, alongside the environment and research authorities, institutions such as land-use planning, civil security, autonomous ports, local communities, civil society or media.

## **Identifying WACOM national branches:**

In the structuring of the WACOM, national branches

are an essential link for an efficient and sustainable running of the network. They are, in fact, the coordination unit relays in each country that collect data in the field and transmit them to a regional level for updating the coastal state. They will also play a key role in the development of the WACOM products and their dissemination and will select the sectors and targets for the program of capacity building.

In most countries, both the member institutions of national branches and the lead organization have been identified. These national branches will be progressively consolidated, through regular meetings to define their status, programs of activities and operational procedures.

## **Experience / Lessons Learned:**

The discussions generated by the SDLAO finding workshops in the different countries emphasized some needs that can facilitate the running of the focus groups:

- Drawing-up of terms of reference for national branches to accurately define their roles and activities as well as the expectations of the regional and national units;
- Identifying criteria and indicators in order to monitor the coastal state in West Africa, for proper planning of future activities;
- Assessing and providing operational resources for national branches by the different countries;
- Defining the procedures



## Focus :

### Interview with Ms. Nasséré Kaba, Principal Private Secretary of the Ivorian Minister of Environment, Urban Sanitation and Sustainable Development, member of the PRLEC and WACOM steering committee.



#### What were your responsibilities in connection with coastal issues, during your career?

During my career as a researcher at the “Centre de Recherches Océanologiques” from 1987 to 1997, I conducted research and consultation focused on aquatic ecosystems, particularly coastal wetlands (coastal lagoons, estuaries and mangroves). From 1997 until June 2011, I performed various positions in the Ministry of Environment of Côte d’Ivoire, cumulatively for a while, with the position of Acting Coordinator of the Regional Coordination Unit of the Abidjan Convention.

#### Can you give us some major innovations or decisions taken as part of issues entrusted to you?

As part of the issues I had to deal with, I remember the following:

- The current situation of the pollution by organochlorine pesticides facing the lagoon around Abidjan has allowed to detect unsuitable fishing grounds. This allowed us to establish a system for monitoring these areas against pollutants;
- Promoting biological control and mechanical control against floating aquatic vegetation on water bodies that are used for drinking and bathing;
- In the fight against water pollution, we built an outfall for discharging wastewater from the city of Abidjan into the sea;

- As part of the revitalization of the Abidjan Convention, we secured the transfer of the Secretariat of the Convention from Nairobi to Abidjan, the provision of a building equipped by the Government of Côte d’Ivoire and the hiring of a full-time regional coordinator.

#### During your regional involvements, what are the important partnerships and issues that you stepped up for promoting coastal areas management?

At the regional level, I was very involved in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in the coordination with the Abidjan Convention activities. In the same vein, I have also been much in contact with the NEPAD, Environment aspect, coastal area sub-programme for the consideration of the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions as the two main legal frameworks of coastal areas management in sub-Saharan Africa.

I also collaborated with IUCN through Wetlands International to the development of the regional strategy for the West African manatee conservation. Besides, my contacts with the PRCM, the MACO of the IUCN made possible the partnerships with the Abidjan Convention.

Finally, I would also like to talk about my involvement in the Guinea Current Large Ecosystem project, which allowed the Abidjan Convention to draw up a Protocol on pollution of the aquatic environment from land-based activities.

#### Today, according to your responsibilities, what are the priorities to which you think you should guide coastal policy in Côte d’Ivoire?

According to our duties at the Ministry of Environment, Urban Sanitation and Sustainable Development, the priorities to which we think we should guide coastal policy in Côte d’Ivoire can be set out as follows:

- Identifying sensitive coastal areas in terms of coastal erosion and protecting them by implementing

feasibility studies and the building of appropriate structures;

- Taking into account the vulnerability of marine ecosystems;
- Establishing a coastal observatory for the collection and the implementation of environmental and socio-economic database;
- Enhancing legislation and implementing regulatory documents relating to environmental assessment in terms of oil exploration and exploitation, as well as sand exploitation;
- Preventing oil spills and providing the means to effectively implement plans for adequate emergency response;
- Promoting environment-friendly eco-tourism on the coastline, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism;
- Regularly presenting (every two years) the report on the state of the coastal environment;
- Defining and implementing

#### In this context, what do you expect from the WACOM, and what do you hope to bring to the WACOM in return?

We expect the WACOM to be a broadcasting medium for the dissemination of our concerns to international audiences in charge of the coastal environment and to assist us in fundraising for the collection and dissemination of data and harmonization of management policies of the coastal area of the involved countries. In return, we hope to make available to the WACOM information about our activities in the coastal environment.

#### Do you have a thought or reflection to share with our readers?

Yes. Coastal areas provide many goods and services. Thus, we must take them as sensitive areas that deserve special attention and management.

## Articles from our correspondents

Mohamed Lamine Keita - PhD, Senior Research at the “Centre de Recherche Scientifique de Conakry-Rogbane (CERESCOR)”, member of the Regional Scientific Committee of the WAEMU and WACOM Regional Programme for the Fight against Coastal Erosion (PRLEC).

# Impacts of the natural and anthropogenic degradation factors on the Guinean coastal

From the morphological view, the Guinean coast is mainly composed of silt and characterized by low energy. It proves to be very dynamic in relation to hydro-climatic conditions. Physical degradations that are observed are mainly due to erosion. The factors that are responsible for these degradations are either natural (geological, hydrodynamic) or anthropogenic (extraction of sand and gravel, destruction of the vegetation cover, large infrastructures on the coastal streams, uncontrolled or inappropriate developments on the northern coast, unplanned urbanization).

- In the South, **Kakossa** a rice-growing plain with an area of 30 km<sup>2</sup> was destroyed in 2012 in the locality of **Kiranènè** located 5 km from the inlet where the RAZC<sup>1</sup> project has diked 3115 ha.



View of the effects of coastal erosion in Kaback

The analysis of the information obtained by the “Centre de Recherche Scientifique de Conakry-Rogbane (CERESCOR)” following the field visits in 2012 has enabled quite a number of observations:

- Upwelling causes serious problems for local populations; entire villages such as **Mampaya** (which was inhabited since 1970) and **Kassa** disappeared. Others like **Daoro**, **Gamblan** are threatened by coastal erosion;



View of an unsuitable bridge for water regulation in Kiranènè



View of a clogged sea wall

Some management infrastructures have not played the role of devices for discharging stagnant water that was assigned to them on the rice-growing plains, either because they are inadequate, or they are badly maintained.

Infrastructures made do not always take into account the specificities and hydro sedimentary dynamics of the mangrove environments. This is what is surely the basis for failures of some development projects. Indeed, the comparison between the 1953 coastline and that of 1992 was used to assess the effects of the erosion phase of the waterfront that has been continuing for four decades.

<sup>1</sup> Resilience building and adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change in Guinea vulnerable coastal areas



## Selected readings

- SDLAO synthesis  
[https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/doc\\_communicant\\_sdla0\\_pr.pdf](https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/doc_communicant_sdla0_pr.pdf)
- UICN :  
[http://www.iucn.org/fr/propos/union/secretariat/bureaux/paco/programmes/programme\\_marin\\_et\\_cotier\\_maco/projets/thematique\\_aménagement\\_integré\\_du\\_littoral\\_/érosion\\_cotiere\\_et\\_schema\\_damenagement\\_du\\_littoral\\_ouest\\_africain/](http://www.iucn.org/fr/propos/union/secretariat/bureaux/paco/programmes/programme_marin_et_cotier_maco/projets/thematique_aménagement_integré_du_littoral_/érosion_cotiere_et_schema_damenagement_du_littoral_ouest_africain/)
- Facebook CSE :  
<https://www.facebook.com/Csesenegal>
- Twitter CSE :  
<https://twitter.com/Csesenegal>
- Gestion de l'érosion et aménagement littoral : l'exemple de Lacanau, dans les Landes, en France :  
<http://www.mairie-lacanau.fr/actualites/environnement/453-erosion-cotiere.html>
- Observatoire National de la Mer et du Littoral en France:  
<http://www.onml.fr/accueil/>

## Opportunities

### ■ The WACOM, a stakeholder of the CIREM

The International Centre for Research and Education in Mbour (CIREM) is settled in the premises of the Ecological Centre in Mbour, owned by the IRD. This consortium dedicated to academic training and high-level research aims mainly to the mathematical sciences and climate observation today. It was offered to the CSE and UICN to involve the coordination of the WACOM in this new international center.

The CIREM is established in a natural coastal environment and historical building perfectly preserved. The centre includes an underground seismograph that is part of the global network of reference seismographs. It is located just a few minutes from the Diass new international airport, which will be operational in late 2014, the CIREM can be reached from Dakar in less than one hour driving thanks to the new highway opened to traffic in August 2013.

It offers meeting rooms and can accommodate dozens of people on short-term residence and will host the WACOM next regional meeting.

### ■ Workshop on coastal governance

A meeting was held in July 2013 in Saly Portudal to discuss the modalities of the participation of Senegalese stakeholders

in the implementation of the Coastal Act being validated by the Parliament and the Government.

Local elected representatives, institutions and media have highlighted the need for a formal framework for exchange and dialogue, and the need to consider implementation mechanisms at the local level. The elected officials especially need technical support for the preparation of their local development plans and their strategies for coastal risk management. A multi-stakeholder initiative in this direction is being developed with the support of IUCN.

#### AGENDA

October – November 2013:

SDLAO finding workshops in Togo and in Guinea Bissau

#### EVÉNEMENTS

##### ■ November 2013

Regional Coastal and Marine Forum organized by the PRCM ([www.prcmarine.org](http://www.prcmarine.org)) in Dakar <http://www.forumprcm.org/fr>

##### ■ October 21 to October 27 2013

3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Marine Protected Areas IMPAC3, Marseille (France) <http://www.impac3.org/fr/>