



Workshop on Environment Statistics

(Dakar, 28 February to 4 March 2005)

ECOWAS PAPER

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been recognized that issues relating to environment are better tackled at regional level. The Community therefore found it necessary to initiate regional cooperation in this area according to its Revised Treaty, particularly in its chapter 6 relating to cooperation in environment issues. The Article 29 of the Treaty stipulated that Member States are committed to protect, preserve and improve the natural environment of the region and cooperate to combat natural disasters.

The objective of this paper is to give an overview of the regional situation in terms of policy and data availability on environment.

II. REGIONAL PROGRAMMES ON ENVIRONMENT

West Africa faces the twin challenges of ensuring the preservation and enhancement of its delicate environment on the one hand, and the management and sustainable development of the natural resources of the region, on the other. The Community work programme thus covers issues such as:

- Formulation of Environmental Policy for West Africa
- Integrated management of water resources
- Regional programme for desertification control
- Regional programme for control of floating weeds
- Socio-economic development of trans-border zones freed of onchocercosis.

Formulation of Environmental Policy for West Africa.

The regional policy on environment being prepared aims at the adoption, at both national and regional levels, of appropriate strategies, policies and programmes for the protection and improvement of the environment and the creation of relevant institutions for these purposes. The environmental policy should cover the control of erosion,

deforestation, desertification, locusts and other environmental hazards. Concerted regional action would also be envisaged concerning policy measures aimed at the prohibition of the importation, transportation, deposition or disposal of toxic and other hazardous waste in any national territory. The regional policy would therefore also cover the establishment of a regional surveillance system to prevent and discourage any such acts within the region.

Integrated Management of Water Resources

The region has long recognised the need to coordinate the use and management of its many shared water resources. This has given birth to a number of sub-regional organisations for the development of river and lake systems. To fill the need for an overall regional approach, the Community has adopted the programme for an integrated management of the water resources in West Africa. The objective of the programme, therefore, is to effect the transition from the sectoral and partial management of our water systems to an integrated and participatory management of these resources, in accordance with the international principles adopted at the Dublin Conference in January 1992 and endorsed at the UNCTAD conference in Rio the same year.

The Executive Secretariat is in the process of establishing the institutional framework of the programme.

Pilot Programme for socio-economic development in cross-border zones freed of onchocercosis

As a natural follow-up measure designed to build upon the success of onchocercosis eradication campaigns in the region, ECOWAS is collaborating with FAO in a pilot programme for promoting the socio-economic development of cross-border areas that have been rid of the onchocercosis scourge. The objective of the programme is to develop the rich and vast socio-economic potential of these zones, and contribute to other regional programmes such as food security and poverty alleviation.

The programme has been started on a pilot basis in Burkina Faso and Ghana with technical supervision provided by FAO and funding from Belgium. A regional coordination unit has been established in Ouagadougou.

Sub-regional Programme of Action for Desertification Control

Within the framework of the strategies and plan of action of the World Conference on Desertification in 1992 at Rio de Janeiro, all the relevant IGOs in West Africa have been brought together to formulate and implement a regional programme for desertification control. ECOWAS and CILSS are assigned the coordinating role for the programme.

Programme on the Control of Floating Weeds

The invasion of water bodies (lagoons, lakes and rivers) by floating weeds in the region had become a nuisance and extensive enough to warrant detailed studies on the phenomenon between 1994 and 1996. ADB sponsored those initial studies and continues to support this Community programme. The principal objective of the programme is to free the affected water bodies of the floating weeds which obstruct water transport and destroy other aquatic flora and fauna.

The monitoring of these programmes will require a regional information system on appropriate indicators.

III. Statistical data availability in ECOWAS

The Statistical Policy adopted by ECOWAS Head of States and Government Conference in 1996 has provided for the coverage of environment statistics in the scope of statistical activities.

Some attempts have been made to collect environment statistics within the framework of the ECOWAS annual data collection exercise. Variables concerned are mainly those reflected by the following table:

Variables	Availability
Area of Forests Listed	No adequate response
Area of Pastures	No adequate response
Area of Reforestation / Afforestation	No adequate response
Area of Deforestation and Clearing	No adequate response
Burnt Area	No adequate response
Mechanized Area	No adequate response
Fertilizers	5 countries (Gambia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal)
Pesticides	No adequate response
Area with Fertilizer Application	No adequate response
Area with Pesticides Application	No adequate response
Rainfall	Available

As one can easily notice, this exercise is yet to yield the expected result. More specifically, at regional level, there is little or no reliable data available on the extent of environmental degradation. However, this deficiency at regional level does not mean that there are no data at national level on environment statistics. This situation could rather demonstrate a deficiency in the national statistical system to organise appropriately data.

IV. Conclusion

The deliberations of the workshop will help clarify issues relating to environment statistics, and define relevant indicators for national and regional policies.

We would like to suggest the formulation on regional plan of action for the strengthening of capacities of countries to produce and disseminate environment statistics.