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REPORT ON UNEP/ECA MISSION ON EVALUATION AND
ASSESSMENT OF AND ADVICE ON NATIONAL
ENVIRONMENTAL MACHINERIES IN SELECTED AFRICAN
COUNTRIES (PROJECT FP/0302/75/13)

GABON (30 JANUARY to 2 FEBRUARY 1976)

AND

GHANA (3-7 FEBRUARY 1976)

GABON (30 JANUARY TO 2 FEBRUARY 1976)

1. The mission to Gabon was done in short notice in replacement of Gambia because the need was felt to study a case of a Ministry of environment. Owing to short notice given to the Gabon Government it was not possible to make adequate contacts with relevant Government officials. Nevertheless, the mission established that Gabon has a ministry - Ministère de la Recherche Scientifique Chargé de l'Environnement et de la Protection Nature (17/4/76).

2. As has been found in other countries that have been visited, Gabon is beset with lack of adequate personnel, lack of integration in natural resources, planning and utilization and also lack of broad base appreciation of the environment and its stewardship. However, key among the priority problems confronting the ministry and on which it has some conceptual plans are: -

Marine Pollution

Gabonese Coast stretches for 800 km and is sustaining erosion from natural phenomenon. No efficient action has been taken to stop erosion so far and a great number of plastic containers are noticeable along the coast; the coast is also threatened with pollution deriving from wastes from ships; industrial activities and off-shore oil drilling.

A survey on the means to reduce these kinds of pollution will be done within the National Anti-Pollution Centre which is being created.

The need of protecting the marine environment will become more acute with the settlement of cellulose plant under construction on Como estuary. Gabonese Government will have to envisage protection measures to preserve the aquatic ecosystems and genetic resources of Como River on more than 100 km (i.e. from the complete site to the mouth of the river). In that aspect, consultation of experts from UNEP will be needed if agreeable.

3. Conservation (Parks and Reserves)

The Environment Department is being set up and operational structures adapted to a legislation intended to protect and conserve fauna and flora.

Creation of parks and reserves is the continuation of action taken during colonial days. The immediate problem is to multiply the existing reserves such as Wanga-Wangue, Monkalaba, Oforic-okanda, Ndende, Petit Loango, Selte Kama etc. by setting up new adapted unities similar to the action undertaken for zoological gardens.

4. Environment and development

A national plan for the development of environment is envisaged and will soon be submitted to the government's approval. In fact no studies have started yet but environmental problems are already taken into account as far as the improvement of human settlement and quality of life is concerned.

GHANA (3-7 FEBRUARY 1976)

5. Ghana has an Environmental Protection Council established on 1st September 1973 by decree No. 239.

Functions of the Environmental Protection Council:

6. The functions of the Environmental Protection Council are:

- to generally advise the Government on all environmental matters relating to the social and economic life in Ghana;
- to co-ordinate the activities of all bodies concerned with environmental matters, and to serve as a channel of communication between these bodies and the Government;
- to conduct and promote investigations, studies, surveys, research and analyses, including personnel training, relating to the improvement of the environment in Ghana and the maintenance of sound ecological systems;
- to serve as the official national body for co-operation and liaison with national and international organizations dealing with environmental matters;
- to undertake such studies and submit such reports and recommendations on environmental matters as the Government may request;
- to establish general environmental educational programmes with a view to increasing awareness among public opinion regarding the environment and individual and collective roles in its protection and improvement;

- to ensure the observance of proper safeguards in the planning and execution of all development projects, that are likely to interfere with the quality of the environment, without prejudicing Ghana's economic and social promotion;

- to perform such other functions as the Government may assign to the Council, or as incidental or conducive to the exercise by the Council or all or any of its foregoing functions.

Administrative Composition of the Council:

7. The Environmental Protection Council consists of the Executive Chairman who is appointed by the National Redemption Council, which is responsible for the routine administration of the Government under the general direction of the Supreme Military Council. The Supreme Military Council consisting of seven members, is the highest legislative and administrative authority ruling Ghana.

8. The Environment Protection Council has:

- a representative for the Council for Scientific and Industrial research;
- The University Institutions in Ghana;
- the Attorney-General's Office;
- the Ministry of Health;
- the Ministry of Industries
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- the Ministry of Agriculture;
- the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation;
- the Tourist Control Board;
- the Meteorological Services Department;
- the Ministry responsible for Lands;
- the Ministry responsible for Works;
- and two distinguished citizens of Ghana with special interest and experience in the environmental matters nominated by the Government to represent the public interest.

Fields of Activity and Organization of the EPC:

9. The Environmental Protection Council has essentially two main areas of activity: a scientific one and a purely administrative one.

Regarding the scientific organization of the EPC, there are 15 sub-committees and three committees with the Council:

- a biological committee
- a physical committee
- and a social and general committee.

10. A scientific Co-ordinator and a Senior Research Officer are responsible for the scientific activities of the Council.

11. On the Administrative side, the Secretary of the Council, assisted by a Senior Assistant Secretary and an Assistant Secretary, supervises the administration of the EPC.

Appointment of Members and Budget:

12. The members of the Council, other than the Chairman, hold office for a term not exceeding two years but are eligible for re-appointment and only the Chairman is entitled to a remuneration in respect of his membership. The Council may however pay its members and to participants attending the meetings of the Council, such travelling and other allowances as the Council may determine.

13. The EPC receives grants from the Government each year. The Council also receives subventions from well-wishers and operates its own banking accounts.

Environmental Problems facing the EPC:

14. The Environmental Protection Council has organised seminars on Human Settlements and Traffic problems and has participated in Habitat meetings in both New York and Cairo. Ghana has also prepared a Country Report and produced a film to be shown during the Habitat Conference.

Energy:

15. The attention of officials was drawn on the needs to diversify and to develop non-conventional sources of energy, especially in rural areas where the extensive use of charcoal is threatening the forests.

16. Regarding the hydro-electric energy, it would be suggested to UNEP to undertake an approach with a view to promoting subregional co-operation in the exploitation, the use and the coordination of development policies between Ghana and its neighbouring states, especially Togo, Benin and Upper Volta.

Health of People:

17. Two UNDP multinational projects on onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis and tripanosomiasis control, covering also Ghana are implemented.

18. Urban and district Councils are responsible for urban and rural sanitation. The EPC is collaborating with them through promotion of environmental education. This co-operation would be more efficient if it were extended to a joint plan of action, including projects to be supervised by the EPC and the Councils.

19. The EPC certainly knows the necessity for sanitary facilities for the most part of the population, but is currently unable to resolve this question without any external assistance.

20. Accra also has a water supply system which was commissioned in 1912 and is no longer sufficient for the actual needs and growth of its population.

Environmental Education:

21. Ghana has strong institutions with highly qualified manpower and educational resources such as the University of Ghana Legon, the University of Cape Coast or the Kumasi University of Science and Technology, making it possible to implement programmes of research and development. The only problem is the strong need for funds to implement those programmes.

22. There is also a committee in EPC in charge of the environmental education which makes use of the existing mass media (radio, T.V., Newspapers).

Miscellaneous

23. There is a Water Resources Research Unit within the EPC, working on priorities such as sea water and underground water.

24. A legislation on water pollution is given high priority. Among the sources of pollution on the Ghanaian coast is oil, emanating from tankers. The EPC officials welcomed the UNEP

idea of a mission on marine pollution covering all the concerned countries in the region.

25. Another source of pollution concerning a great number of West African countries is the lagoon pollution. The EPC would also appreciate an integrated approach of the problem and is ready to collaborate with UNEP.

NAMES OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Gabon

1. Mr. François OWONO-NGUEMA, Ministre de la Recherche Scientifique, Chargé de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature.
2. Mr. Albert N'Zamba,, Conseiller Technique, Ministère de la Recherche Scientifique, Chargé de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature
3. Mr. Gerald G. WATERSON, Représentant Résident du PNUD
4. Mme. TYR, Chargée des Programmes PNUD

Ghana

1. Mr. G. FELICIANO, UNDP Resident Representative
2. Mr. TAYLOR, UNDP Programme Officer
3. Prof. A. E. BOATENG, Executive Chairman of the Environmental Protection Council
4. Mr. F. K. A. JIAGGE, Secretary of the Environmental Protection Council
5. Miss Joyce ARYEE, Public Relations Officer of the Environmental Protection Council