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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
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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)

IVORY COAST (7-17 FEBRUARY 1976)

The National Environment Commission

Formation

1. Decree No. 73-31 of 24 January 1973 establishes the National Environment Commission to deal with all questions related to the improvement of living conditions, to the protection of nature and the human environment in general.
2. The activities of this Commission are carried out on the initiative of the Minister of Planning who is also the co-ordinating authority. The terms of reference are broad and attempt to cover national and global environmental concerns. The Secretary-General to the National Environment Commission is appointed by Presidential decree.
3. Composition of the National Environment Commission is representative of all government departments and disciplines.

The National Environment Commission has formed four sub-committees.

(a) The terms of reference of the Sub-committees

The Sub-committee for the Protection and the Management of Sites is called upon to study and suggest means of action for the preservation of natural sites and of the traditional patrimony from the scientific, cultural and tourist points of view.

(b) The Sub-committee for the Management of Natural Resources and the Fight against Pollution is called upon to review the measures required to secure the management and maintenance of the natural resources, and in particular the measures to be adopted in order to arrest soil degradation, ensure the regeneration of forests and avoid their disorderly exploitation, to control the chemical and bacteriological pollution of rivers, underground water, reservoirs, the coast and lagoons, to ensure an efficient protection and a rational exploitation of the sea-bed. This sub-committee consists of a group on Forestry and a group on Water Resources. Membership to these is very broad and not exclusive. However, one gets the impression that everybody is involved but nobody is committed.

(c) The Sub-committee of Industrialization is called upon to propose measures required to integrate environmental policies into the global ones of Development and in particular to reconcile short-term growth with the preservation of natural resources. This Sub-committee is also responsible for the review of industrial projects from the point of view of the protection of the environment and of anti-pollution norms which could and should be imposed on operating enterprises. It also devotes its attention to the effects on the Development of the Ivory Coast of anti-pollution measures in the developed countries and of measures which could be adopted at the international level, in particular, those concerning the possibilities of a decentralization of industrial activities in the Ivory Coast. Finally, the possibility could compete with synthetic products which are polluting or which no longer satisfy foreign demand.

- (d) The Sub-committee for Documentation Training and Information is called upon to gather relevant documentation, scientific research on nuisances, the ecological equilibrium, the fight against the pollution of the environment, to supervise the training as environmental specialists and to propose the measures required to make the public aware of environmental problems.

The Commission as well as the Sub-committees can consult with and solicit permanent cooperation with Government Services, statal, para-statal and private institutions and, in general, with any person expected to facilitate their work.

The Priority Action Programme of the National Environment Commission

The Sub-committee for the Protection and Management of Sites:

4. Its action programme is based essentially on two priorities, namely the protection of the environment in the rural habitat and the protection of trees and the flora in general.
5. The protection of the environment in the rural habitat should secure better living conditions for the rural population by providing guarantees for decent housing, acceptable conditions of hygiene and comfort for the preservation of the natural beauty of the environment, the culture, originality and the harmony of day-to-day life. The immediate purpose is to make an inventory of the initiatives taken in the rural sector, analyse identified obstacles, study existing projects and promote the efforts.
6. To this end, the Regional Fund for Rural Development (FRAR) has launched a programme aimed at defining a policy of rural habitat in collaboration with the RNETD. The project started at the end of 1974 and had Senougou and Malinke regions as its main beneficiaries. When the mission visited the Ivory Coast, this project seemed to have financial difficulties, apparently due to inadequate budgetary planning. A request for assistance may be submitted to the United Nation's Foundation for Human Settlements and Habitat in order to reactivate the project.
7. The action programme of the Sub-committee is supported by an assistance project of assistance with AVB (Authority for the Bandama Valley) within the framework of its programme of self-help housing since 1975. The two UNDP projects in question, should, in principle, merge as from the end of 1976 (references made to new projections concerning the UNDP programme for 1977-1981).
8. The UNEP mission visited the two projects and discussed, at length, with the project staff, the possibilities of cooperation with the Foundation with a view to launching a programme of self-help housing covering the entire country. This programme has, from the outset, the support of RND (National Bank for Agricultural Development), but it will probably not be possible to start it without external financial assistance.
9. The protection of trees and the flora in general in the towns as well as in the villages constitutes the second priority.

The Sub-committees for the Management of Natural Resources and the Fight against Pollution:

10. This Sub-committee gives first priority to the protection of the two most vulnerable natural resources - namely the lagoons and forests.
11. The Sub-committee is particularly concerned with the pollution of the lagoons in the Abidjan region and its effect on public health. A sanitation programme has been implemented in cooperation with UNDP and WHO. It has been followed up by an emergency operation by UNDP/IRD for the protection of the Bay of Cocody and Biétri lagoon. Furthermore, this emergency project covers a study undertaken by the Centre of Oceanographic Research with a view to determining the effects of urbanization and town Research with a view to determining the effects of urbanization and town planning on the development of the lagoon environment. These two complementary programmes should make it possible to define the measures required to preserve the resources and the quality of the lagoons. The Sub-committee has been directed to assist the Government authorities in preparing for such measures.
12. In the southern part of the Ivory Coast, the forests have shaped the way of life and the traditions of the people for centuries. Today, they contribute towards the progress of the Ivorian economy by the provision of timber for the forest-paste industries. Ecologically the forest provides a screen, protecting the soil from erosion, enhancing its renewal as well as establishing a hydro-thermic equilibrium. This natural equilibrium is now threatened by the progressive interference of man in the forest, resulting in a reduction of timber production, of the regenerative capacity of the soil and the disturbance of the hydraulic cycle. For a long time, a relementation concerning the classification and exploitation of forest resources prohibited itinerary agriculture, thus making the protection of the forest possible. Recently however, several classified forests have been allocated to agriculture. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the Sub-committee continues to encourage the Government Authorities to protect and preserve the forest and to follow the recommendations of the station at Tai (Institute of Tropical Ecology) which has just been opened.
13. The legislation concerning water resources represents a third priority. There is a decree dated 5 March 1971 which makes provisions for the management of water resources in former French West Africa. This decree was followed by a ministerial directive (Arrêté d'Application No. 99 29TP of 15 December 1955) concerning underground water and by decree No. 68-528 of 7 November 1968 regulating the provision, preservation and utilisation of water resources in the Abidjan region. It is therefore necessary to readjust this legislation to the prevailing conditions. To this effect, a request for assistance has been submitted to UNEP for implementation in due course by the authorities concerned.
14. Finally, the pollution of the territorial waters and the beaches by hydrocarbons also forms part of the priority programme of interest to the sub-committee.

Sub-committee for Industrialization

15. This Committee is geared to the problems of industrial pollution. It identifies various categories of industrial effluents relevant to existing and future industrial projects, analyses their effects and proposes technical and legal measures while commenting upon the costs and advantages of these methods to the national economy and the well-being of the population. Another objective is to improve the quality of the industrial environment and identify the means of arriving at such improvements in cooperation with the working groups called upon to examine the legislation concerning the water resources and the lagoons in the Abidjan region.

16. The Sub-committee is also trying to make the students in schools aware of environmental matters by organising competitions, games etc. A drawing contest among school children was organised before the Environment Week on environmental themes. The winners were offered a trip around the country.

17. Further, the Ministry of Education's interest in environmental problems should be pointed out. The Minister recently suggested that problems related to the environment and to pollution should be included in the biology and ecology classes at all levels.

18. The IVth Sub-committee further intends to set up a National Association to be entitled "Youth and Nature". This Association will have the task of making the public aware of the importance of the protection of nature by undertaking practical actions as a contribution to the national effort.

19. Another task of the Sub-committee consists of making an inventory of the legal texts regarding the protection of the environment as well as preparing a bibliography of studies and research useful to the National Environment Commission and other agencies for their future activities.

20. It is also in charge of relations on behalf of the National Environment Commission with international organisations, particularly UNEP.

Names of people contacted

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5. Mr. Léon TANON, Directeur-Adjoint du Projet PNUD - IVC 74/001
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14. Mr. Barthelémy AMAT, Socio-économiste, Sous-Commission de la Protection et de l'Aménagement des Sites, C.N.E.
15. Mr. Edgard BOUTILIE, Urbaniste, Sous-Commission de la Protection et de l'Aménagement des Sites, C.N.E.
16. Mr. Abdou VIEYRA, Directeur de la Pisciculture, S.E.P.E.N., Président de la Sous-Commission de l'Aménagement des Ressources Naturelles et de la Lutte contre la Pollution, C.N.E.
17. Mr. Bertin NOVO, Directeur de l'Environnement Industriel au Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé des Mines, Président de la Sous-Commission du Développement et de l'Industrialisation, C.N.E.
18. Mr. Sidi Yahia THANON, Inspecteur Général du Ministère de l'Education Nationale, Président de la Sous-Commission de la Documentation, de la Formation et de l'Information, C.N.E.
19. Mr. Gérard SOURNIA, Géographe, Responsable de la Sous-Commission de la Documentation, de la Formation et de l'Information, C.N.E.
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21. Mr. Sylvain JAMET, agro-économiste, DATAR
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