

Our Coast Newsletter

Issue No. 1, September 2010

Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER
GHANA



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OUR COAST Newsletter

A biannual newsletter of the Hɛn Mpoano Initiative

Issue No. 1 September 2010

The Western Region is one of the ten regions of Ghana. It covers approximately 23, 921 square kilometers, and is bordered by the Central, Ashanti, and Brong Ahafo Regions as well as the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire and the Gulf of Guinea. It is the wettest part of Ghana, and contains the southernmost part of Ghana which lies at Cape Three Points in the Ahanta-West District. The region is inhabited by an eclectic mix of tribes comprising Ahantas, Nzemas, Sefwis, Brosas, Pepesas and the Wassas. Many other tribes from outside the region call this place home with two of the most prominent being the Ewes and the Fantes. The Region is known for having the largest collection of European trading forts, the highest tropical jungles, picturesque villages, vivacious festivals and a host of friendly people. Ecotourism opportunities abound here; places like the Busua, Axim and Ankobra beach resorts have become household names among tourists, both local and international.

The region is recognised as a repository for other things aside the people and the rich culture; and that is the varied diversity of natural resources comprising forest cover, mining, fisheries and marine resources; and more recently oil and gas. Most, if not all of these resources are located within the six coastal districts of Shama, Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) Ahanta-West, Nzema-East, Ellembelle and Jomoro. Notwithstanding the great economic potential, recent socio-economic records put poverty in these coastal districts as some of the worst in the country.



The Western Region has the ability to harness a lot of these resources to

IN FOCUS

improve the lives of its inhabitants, especially in the light of current climate change predictions, which forecast that coastal communities and for that matter coastal people will be the most vulnerable. Certain coastal districts which are already suffering from the effects of erosion and degraded shorelines include Shama and STMA, where countless dwellings are lost seasonally to high tides. Residents of the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis in addition to this, have to grapple with the rising cost of living due to recent economic developments in the area without a corresponding increase in job opportunities. A direct result of this has been the breakdown of sanitation and the environment in the metropolis which has led to the formation of urban slums. Generally, population in the entire region is quite high. At the rate of

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Hɛn Mpoano,
Hɛn Fie,
Hɛn Enyidado!

COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER
GHANA

Editorial

The coastal region which represents 6.5% of Ghana's land area and is home to about 30% of the population, harbours a variety of ecosystems and rich natural resources that provide goods and services which attract many people to the coast.

The western coast is endowed with the most significant biodiversity. The lagoons, contribute tremendously to Ghana's fisheries while the Amanzuri wetlands, Cape Three Points and Ankasa Reserves are important for biodiversity.

However, population increase, poverty and over-dependence on natural resources, haphazard development, weak governance and the imminent impacts of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise have become drivers that potentially threaten biodiversity and the already declining fish stocks, a situation which should be of concern to all.

In the light of the foregoing, the USAID since September 2009, has been supporting the Coastal Resources Centre and its partners to implement a 4-year pilot Initiative on Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance in the Western Region (branded as the Hɛn Mpoano Initiative), of which the long term goal is to improve governance of natural resources (including fisheries) for greater socio-economic benefit to the people.

The first year of the Initiative seeks to understand conditions that have led to present state of fisheries and natural resources governance within the six coastal districts of the Western Region. Early lessons suggest the need for a new approach to coastal governance along the entire coast of Ghana.

If the predicted 1-metre rise of sea level in the next 100 years is anything to go by, then it is imperative that coastal issues should begin to receive priority attention of government.

The recent floods in Shama and Sekondi-Takoradi, the accelerated coastal erosion in some districts, and loss of low lying area to the sea, high tides and rising levels of wetlands in the Jomoro District are early warnings yet.

With the first barrel of oil expected before the end of 2010 and the intensity of developmental activities, albeit haphazard, governance both at sea (fisheries and oil) and on land (planning, developments, etc.) should cease to be 'business as usual'.

With all the goings-on, a number of respected people and institutions have called for a new agenda that integrates coastal governance issues, rather than the present piecemeal attempts. A body, (a Coastal Commission, for example) with the authority and mandate for governance in the coastal regions of Ghana is long over-due.

Welcome to the first edition of the Our Coast Newsletter! It is our fervent hope that this timely Initiative would receive the needed support from all quarters, to indeed impacts lives along the coast.



Priority Coastal Issues

THE HɛN MPOANO INITIATIVE

The Western Region is indeed blessed with many natural resources. There is the need to protect and manage these vital resources sustainably to ensure that future generations are able to continuously benefit from it. This need is what necessitated the implementation of the 4-year Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance Initiative- named The Hɛn Mpoano Initiative. The Initiative is being implemented by the Ghana office of the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island, USA, with generous support from the USAID. CRC-Ghana has been in existence since September 2009; however, the Initiative was officially launched in November 2009, at the Takoradi Beach Hotel, by Hon. Betty Bosumtwi Sam- the Deputy Western Regional Minister and her Excellency Cheryl Anderson, the USAID-Ghana Missions Director. CRC is being partnered in the implementation of the Initiative by Friends of the Nation (FoN), WorldFish Center and SustainaMetrix. The respective roles of partners, as well as some new collaborations is discussed on page 9 in this issue. The Hɛn Mpoano Initiative would be implemented in several phases with Phase 1 being currently underway. Its primary targets are the people and the communities in the 6 coastal districts of the Western Region.

FACTS ON THE HɛN MPOANO INITIATIVE

- A four-year initiative supported by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). and catalysed by The CRC.
- Primary target is coastal communities and local government in the six coastal districts of the Western Region.
- Goal is to support the government of Ghana in achieving its fisheries development objectives of poverty reduction, food security, sustainable management and conservation.
- Will address issues such as: over exploitation of fisheries resources and decline of fish stocks; weak capacity for governance of coastal and fisheries resources; threats to biodiversity assets; impacts of climate change etc.
- Some expected outcomes are: strengthened human and institutional capacity for coastal and fisheries management; informed constituencies; implementation of improved fisheries management strategies etc.
- Hɛn Npoano is set to evolve as an umbrella Initiative for all of Ghana's coastal areas with partnering organisations.

Interview with Awulae Annor Adjaye

"BRIGHT FUTURE FOR GHANA'S OIL INDUSTRY"

"The possibility of Ghana's oil industry turning into a Niger-Delta should not be overruled. But thanks to consistent dialoguing, arrangements and inputs being made by traditional authorities, government and other stakeholders in the industry, the situation is being averted and there is no cause for alarm". This comment was made during an interview session with the Paramount Chief of the Western Nzema Traditional Area, Awulae Annor Adjaye III, after he and 3 others returned from a USAID/CRC-sponsored Oil and Gas Study visit to the U.S. After a one week tour to some facilities in the State of California, Awulae Annor Adjaye believes Ghana is actually not ready for drilling in commercial quantities: *"Sometimes I just laugh at these oil companies when I tell them to get ready and they say they are"*.

For him, the trip to the U.S. is really an eye opener. In extending his gratitude to the planners of the program, Awulae Annor Adjaye stressed that it was a well streamlined program that arranged meetings with some regulatory bodies governing the oil sector; they met with officials of the U.S Department of the Interior, the Environmental Defense Center, and more importantly a fishermen's group, etc. Talking about his observations, Awulae explained that the oil and gas industry in California had in place a rapid assessment agency (Clean Seas) that quickly responds and detects problems (such as spillages and seepages) within a few minutes. However, the quick and positive response mechanism is unfortunately able to recover only 20% cost of the damage caused.

There is therefore the need to rather prevent these accidents in the industry due to the disastrous economic and environmental consequences (e.g. PB Oil spill – April 2010). They also have in place an efficient and effective database and tracking system where experiences are documented and lessons drawn to forestall or minimize future recurrences. According to him, drilling of oil in commercial quantities begins in the last quarter of 2010 and Ghana has not yet developed a National Development Plan with the gains of the oil revenue in mind. More so, the National Development Planning Commission that is responsible for drawing up the plan was reconstituted just this July 2010. According to Awulae Annor Adjaye, there are many issues that have to be taken on board which the good people of Ghana need to know in order to debate them. Ghana is yet to develop a policy governing the disposal of liquid and solid waste generated by the oil industries.

There are yet to be as well Acts on clean seas, pollution,... **"Ghana's oil industry has a bright future but how it is managed is what actually matters"**. Awulae Annor Adjaye cited that in their interaction with the fishermen group in California, he learned that the oil companies are in constant communication with native fishermen and coastal communities in terms of fishing areas and restricted zones. He also noted that these fishermen groups have seasoned lawyers who battle it out with the oil companies over their rights and it is what Ghana needs.

Awulae concluded that managing issues at the local level of governance is the best and that apart from empowering fisher folks to fight for their rights, traditional chiefs also need to be considered. He appealed that government must not undermine the authority of the traditional rulers and their inputs must be solicited and acknowledged for a fruitful decision making process. He noted **"personally I think it is a waste of time and resources for donors like the IMF to award projects to governments instead of the traditional rulers"**. For Awulae Annor Adjaye projects that government or politicians usually undertake from the administrative capitals do not trickle down to the rural communities. "Ghana cannot achieve a productive oil industry if traditional authorities are not actively engaged in decision making."



Awulae, Nana Bozza IX and other tour participants at URI

STUDY TRIPS

One of the enabling conditions for achieving the first order outcomes of the Initiative is through strengthened institutional capacity; and what better way to do this than by building the capacity of the people who work in these identified institutions.

STUDY TRIPS

Study trips and educational tours are ways employed by countless institutions to develop the people they are working with, and this Initiative is not any different. 3 separate study trips were organized by the CRC for Initiative staff and partners. The first was an oil and gas study tour which was undertaken by Kyei Yamoah and Don Kris Mevuta of the FoN, and Awulae Annor Agyaye and Nana Bozza IX, both traditional leaders from the Western Region. The aim of this tour was to study the lessons learnt from the California case, and perhaps apply these new knowledge in the emerging oil and gas industry in the Western

Region. From the informal feedback gathered, the tour was indeed informative and eye-opening, and could be very helpful for developments here in Ghana. This tour was undertaken in late May.

The second was this year's Summer Institute training course on Coastal Adaptation to Climate Change at the University of Rhode Island. This 3-weeks course, (from June 6-25) was attended by Dr Denis Aheto of the UCC, Balertey Gormey of CRC-Ghana and Steven Kankam of the FoN. This group is keen to share the vast knowledge attained during this course with the entire Initiative team, and are prepared to start implementing what was learnt.

The third training programme was undertaken by Godfred Asiedu Ameyaw of CRC-Ghana and George Hutchful of the Fisheries Directorate. They attended the Fisheries Summit hosted by CRC-URI in the months of August to September.

Flooding in the metropolis

There have been many floods experienced in the metropolis during the months of May, June and July and which was expected to continue into the month of September. The Daily Graphic carried a news item in their May 21 issue titled 'Floods hit Sekondi/Takoradi'. This news item reported that the central business district has been rendered unmotorable, and the gutters were choked, further exacerbating the floods. The Hen Mpoano Initiative wanting to draw attention of inhabitants to this issue, engaged the radio and TV drama series Kwame and Kwame to produce a 5-minute story on the floods; it was aired in early June. This show garnered much debate among callers to the show, with some blaming city authorities for issuing permits to developers to build on waterways, and others calling for a change in attitude amongst inhabitants to desist from dumping refuse in places where it would be washed into gutters during a rainstorm. Hen Mpoano went further to develop 1-minute

jingles in Fante which advised city dwellers to desist from actions that cause flooding notably, the dumping of plastic bags in gutters and on the street. In the latter parts of last year, FoN held a press conference, and used newspaper articles and radio talk shows to denounce the development of wetlands-educating listeners on the biological importance of these wetlands and the vastly important ecological services and functions that they provide to the urban area in terms of controlling floods and cleaning the air. This was in response to the alleged declaration made by the STMA in late 2009, that the wetland areas within the urban area would be developed. FoN and CRC also worked closely with the EPA to halt ongoing filling of wetland areas and to stifle illegal development.

The Initiative supported a one-day educational session with government

officials and DA members to highlight the importance of the three main wetland areas in Sekondi-Takoradi. The workshop was a success, in that several agencies will now work with FoN and CRC on management planning for the wetlands. The head of Physical Planning of STMA sits on the Hen Mpoano Initiative Advisory Council. He has recently and frequently stated in public that wetlands are not wastelands; and is teaming with the Initiative to ensure that they are conserved. With the continuous occurrence of floods in the metropolis during this rainy season, it is our fervent hope that our interventions (with particular reference to the above), have not come too late. With intensive education and the resultant change in attitude, we hope that the metropolis will soon start to enjoy the many ecological functions that wetlands provide.



The 'Green-Green' Menace in Our Western waters

For as long as many of our elderly fishermen in the Districts of Jomoro and Ellembelle remember, there have been outbreaks of a green filamentous plant called 'Green-Green', (or 'cotton' in the Ivory Coast); beginning in December and lasting an average of 2 months. This algae-plant disturbs the very near-shore fishing, notably those using beach-seine, as it blocks the netting and is extremely difficult to remove. The algae bloom is also a severe constraint for tourism development in the extreme western coastal areas as beaches are green and the water is not pleasant for recreational swimming.

This marine plant outbreak does not occur every year and its intensity varies from year to year. In years when the outbreak has been far reaching: 1991, 1997, 2000, and 2006; government agencies conducted studies that concluded that it was a well known algae named *Enteromorpha*, which is usually a symptom of higher than normal concentrations of nutrients in the water. Usually, these nutrients come from terrestrial sources of pollution.

During this past year, the *Enteromorpha* bloom was the greatest observed, both in terms of geographic coverage out to sea and in length of the bloom. In fact the bloom and the algae are still present some eight months later and to date in the Jomoro District.

Due to the impacts this has had on the livelihoods of fisher

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Greening the TWIN-CITY



Some areas to be greened

To many, the mere mention of Sekondi -Takoradi paints a vivid picture of a city well endowed in rich vegetation cover, and one that seems to be growing by day in its infrastructure. Both assertions are quite true, but the fact still remains that the Metropolis needs some bit of action to further green the environment. Greening Sekondi-Takoradi is undoubtedly a very promising prospect for many who wish to see this bustling metropolis in a much greener light. Now, almost all roundabouts and medians along major roads in the city are grassed and nicely shaped. Indeed the generation of the green entrepreneur is already here with the Department of Parks and Gardens taking up the role of greening some more public areas in the Sekondi Metropolis with support from CRC.

The activity will cover the re-grassing and refurbishment of some abandoned green areas in the metropolis. These areas include the Komfoase and Big Fish Roundabouts in Sekondi as well as some medians, traffic islands and the Parks and Gardens premises. The project hopes to rope in support from some private organizations, especially those housed near the targeted areas, in Public-Private Partnerships for maintaining these green areas over time. The project when completed, will contribute to the beautification of the Twin City as well as the provision of places of leisure and recreation.

The project if successful will extend to other parts of Sekondi-Takoradi. It is therefore, a very promising enterprise and a significant contribution towards biodiversity conservation, which is one of the key themes that the Initiative aims at promoting.

THE SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

The Small Grants Scheme has been instituted as part of the Initiative's overall strategy of engaging community and civil society groups. Its goal is natural resources conservation, community empowerment, education and awareness creation and coastal climate change adaptation measures amongst others. The scheme started with an initial call for concept papers. Forty three civil society groups responded and twenty were invited to present proposals for funding. Thirteen proposals have so far been funded. It is hoped that the grant will be expanded in Phase II of the Initiative to accommodate the many good concepts that it was unable to fund in this first phase.

LIST OF SMALL GRANT RECIPIENTS AND PROJECTS THEY ARE UNDERTAKING

- Parks & Gardens, Sekondi - Restoration of Green Areas in STMA
- Esemaman Development Association- Promoting Conservation of Beaches in Shama
- Crisis Actions Solutions (CASOLS)- Essei Lagoon Ecological Restoration Project, Sekondi
- Ghana Instinct- Cycling through Paradise (CTP Eco Biking at Cape III Points)
- Ghana Wildlife Society- Domunli Conservation and Ecotourism Development Project, Jomoro
- Master Care Ministries- Rehabilitation of Stalls for Fishmongers in Shama
- Foundation for Action and Development- Towards our understanding of Population and Sanitation at Ngyeresia.
- Conservation Foundation- Mangrove Restoration and Restoration Project, Ahanta-West District
- Organization for Livelihood Enhancement Services (OLIVES)- Improving Household Nutrition through Local Poultry Production Systems, Ahanta- West District
- SNV, Takoradi- Promoting and Marketing Tourism Products in Coastal Communities
- Rural Environment Care Association- Enhancing local Participation in Wetland and Mangrove Conservation/Management, Ellembelle District
- Anoomasatu- Alternative Livelihoods for Coastal Females/Teenage Mothers, STMA
- Nzimitianu Community Biodiversity Project Association- Community Wetland Conservation Project, Jomoro District

FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES

With coastal populations growing at the rate of 3% per year, it is essential that resources are developed and effectively managed to sustain the growing numbers. One such resource is fisheries. There is the fear that sea level rise (due to climate change) could severely alter the productivity of fisheries ecosystems. Poverty in coastal areas is already pervasive, and there is the high probability that it will negatively affect fisheries.

Fish is an important component of the daily meals of Ghanaians in general and more so among coastal inhabitants; the HEn Mpoano Initiative has identified depletion of fish stocks as one critical issue and is already putting the enabling conditions in place to address this; and this is



Some fishmongers at work

OUR COASTAL DISTRICTS

SHAMA

Shama covers an area of approximately 215km². Its shoreline is characterized by severe erosion which is controlled by gabions and boulders. The population of Shama was estimated at 88,314 as at 2008. Growth rate at 3.5% is higher than the regional and national averages. The economy revolves around fishing, farming and petty



Herrings landed at Bosumtwi-Sam Fishing Harbour, Sekondi

indeed a crucial step. Considerable effort must be made by both government and civil society organizations to make sure that the food security of future generations is assured, to reduce or perhaps eliminate abject poverty. To ensure fish security is to guarantee this, because fish is not only consumed domestically by these fisher folks but is also a source of livelihood for them.

One major outcome of this Initiative is the diversification of coastal livelihoods and improvements in the fishery value chain. If this is achieved, then we would have come a long way in ensuring that food security is achieved for present and future generations in the region.



Some fishermen mending their nets at Elonyi.

trading. Erosion threatens to property and biodiversity; prevalence of teenage pregnancy and high fertility; as well as the decline in fish stocks are some issues identified. One unique thing about Shama compared to the other districts is that, the role of traditional authorities in fisheries management is quite prominent.

STMA

The Metropolitan Assembly covers a small area of size 49.78km². The latest population estimate of the area puts it at approximately 404,000. Over 50% of the inhabitants of STMA are employed in the service sector. The perception of people interviewed was that there has been a general trend towards rising cost of living due to food and housing price hikes within the Metropolis. Other identified issues include the weakening of traditional institutions for fisheries management, poor sanitation, and low enrollment in basic schools in coastal communities. The Essei and Butua Lagoons, and the

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Whin River Estuary are 3 main wetlands.

AHANTA-WEST

Total land size is about 591 km², with a population of 95,140 as at the last census. About 65% of the population is employed in the agricultural sector. The district's only forest reserve; the Cape 3 Points is also the closest primary forest to the sea in Ghana. This same area happens to be the most southern part of Ghana. Some issues prevalent in this district include inadequate supply and black marketing of premix fuel; and the destruction of mangroves. Chieftaincy disputes are also rife coupled with rising social problems due to the emerging oil and gas industry.

NZEMA-EAST

This district which is rich in vegetation cover, occupies a total land size of 20,474 km². Current

population projections peg it at 90,000, at the national growth rate of

2.7%. Both timber and non-timber forest

products are heavily extracted, and there are indications of higher utilization of available land for hospitality industries in view of the oil find. The environment is characterized by insanitary conditions. Issues identified include the poor quality of fish caught, absence of credit facilities and weak local institutions. Many inhabitants called for the regulation of the fisheries sector.

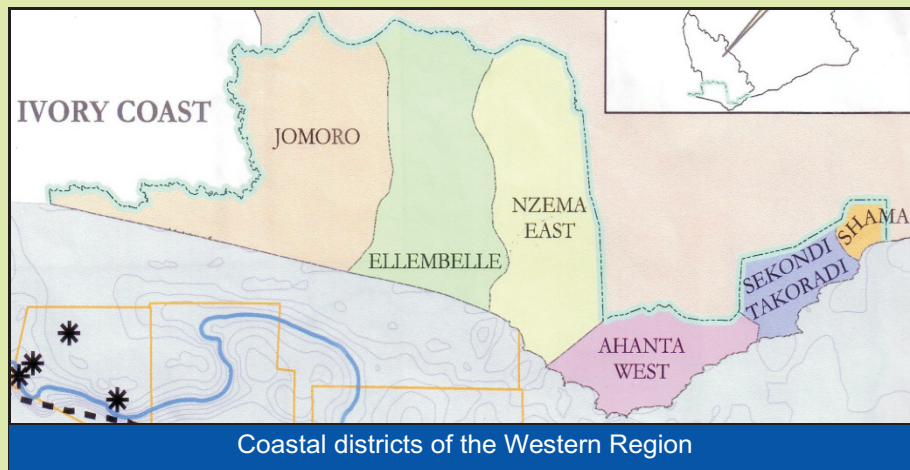
ELLEMBELLE

It is one of the newly created districts. It covers a total land area of 1,486km². The Ankobra River and Amanzule Wetlands are main water bodies. The population was pegged at 114,839 as at the 2000 census. There is an eclectic mix of ethnic groups which include Nzemas, Ewes, Ga-Adangbes and Mole-Dagbanis. Decline in the traditional authority in fisheries

management, and fish-related migration which is driving over-fishing were identified as issues here. Others are threats to wetlands and estuaries, and coastal erosion.

JOMORO

The total land area is 1,344km² and borders the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire to the west. The population as at 2007 was estimated at 139,304. The district is home to the celebrated Ankasa Rain Forest Reserve and the Amansuri Wetlands; as well as the famous village on stilts- Nzulezu. Issues of importance identified in this district include inadequate toilet facilities with about 70.4 person using toilet facilities outside their homes. The incidence of algae bloom in the marine waters here is severely affecting fishing efforts. One remarkable thing here is the strong presence of the Eco-brigades, who keep the beaches relatively clean.



Coastal districts of the Western Region



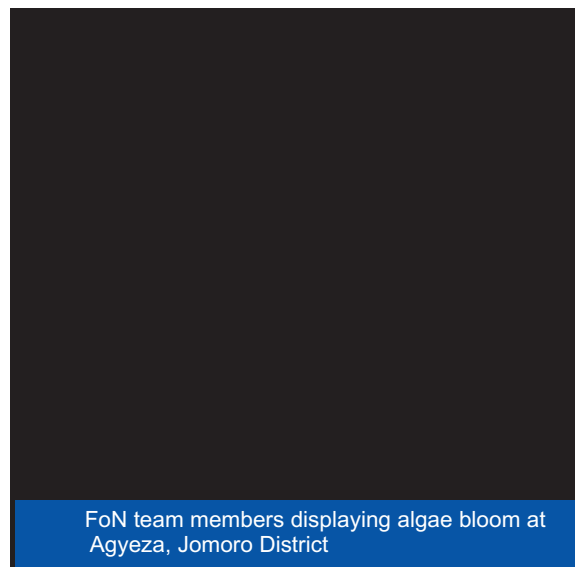
FoN / CRC staff with fisherfolks at Nkotompo

'Green Green'

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folks and local communities; CRC has helped to sound the alarm at the national level with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), the MEST (Ministry of Environment, Science, and the GC-LME (Guinea Current – Large Marine Ecosystem Program). As the nutrient source for the algae blooms are thought to originate from the Ivory Coast, CRC sent a delegation to the Ivory Coast to assess the extent of the bloom in Ivorian waters and to discuss developing a joint action-research program with the Ivorian Fisheries Service and the associated Oceanographic Research Center. Later this year, a bilateral research program will begin to research means

for addressing this problem. CRC will provide ongoing technical support through refined analysis of the algae that allows for the identification of the nutrient source, whether is from the Aby Lagoon, Abidjan's lagoons; or if it is from run-off associated with human waste, agricultural products, industrial sources; or from a change in the upwelling off the coast. Needless to say, there is momentum both within Ghana and Ivory Coast for addressing this important issue to the fishermen and communities on the west coast. Through this newsletter, and diverse radio shows transmitted on Tuesdays throughout the western coast, CRC/the Initiative will keep people informed on developments.



FoN team members displaying algae bloom at Agyeza, Jomoro District

Mark Fenn took office as the Program Director of CRC in August 2009. Having previously worked as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Burkina Faso, a Project Coordinator for AFRICARE, also in Burkina Faso, and then as a WWF Technical Advisor to Madagascar National Parks for a total of 18 years; he is no stranger to Africa and some of the issues that affect coastal communities. He is of the firm conviction that CRC will raise fisheries governance issues in such a way as to engage broad stakeholder participation

towards identifying scenarios and implementing them for a better future for present and future generations. To him, this future depends on a healthy and resilient environment, and local economies.

His personal observation is that, people in the Western Region are very much aware of the right way to do things with regards to issues of coastal governance but will only be spurred into action if others do same; so the challenge will be to create a wave of voluntary compliance.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Mark Fenn

BIODIVERSITY THREATS ASSESMENT OF THE WESTERN REGION

The Western Region has many wetland systems, some of which are freshwater habitats unlike the eastern coast of the country where the lagoons are typically brackish. Lagoons of importance in the Region are Tano/Aby/Ehy Lagoon at the coastal border between Ghana and Ivory Coast, and the Amanzule Lagoon. While five wetlands in the country are designated as Ramsar Sites, none are located in the Western Region.

A committee was tasked to assess the threats to the abundant biodiversity that exists in the region, (a few are mentioned above). This team of experienced researchers has recently produced the Biodiversity Threats Assessment report in which they also identified the priorities for biodiversity conservation in the Region.

Threats

Overexploitation of marine fisheries resources due to overcapitalization of the fishing industry, use of small mesh nets in the beach seine fishery and other illegal fishing methods

- Loss of coastal habitat through establishment of monocrop plantations; destruction of wetlands for infrastructure development; solid waste disposal; harvest of mangrove forests;

beach sand mining and tourism development

- Pollution of the marine and coastal environment from domestic and industrial solid waste, siltation, sewage disposal, mining waste, pesticides and fertilizers

- By-catch of endangered species like seabirds, sea turtles, sharks, dolphins and manatees from the use of nonselective gears in the fishing industry

- Weak governance, legislation and institutional framework due to the fragmented nature of environmental legislation and lack of political will to enforce legislation

- Development of oil and gas resources which has the potential to increase conflicts with the fishing industry over the use of marine space, and its potential negative impacts on coastal and marine habitats

- Climate change and sea level rise which has the potential to severely impact the shoreline and further weaken the resilience of coastal habitats, biodiversity and human communities

- Spread of invasive species such as the water hyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes* in the wetlands and blooms of the green alga *Enteromorpha flexuosa* in

the marine coastal waters could significantly hamper fishing activities and affect the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Current priorities for terrestrial and marine biodiversity conservation in the Region

- Establishing Marine Protected Areas and Coastal Ramsar Sites at the Amanzule wetlands and Esiam beach, and the Ahunli and Belibangara lagoons, because of their special biodiversity features

- Addressing harmful algal blooms and invasive aquatic plants in wetlands and coastal marine habitat

- Undertaking fisheries management reform to ensure compliance with fisheries regulations

- Protecting endangered species such as marine turtles, cetaceans and manatees

- Completion, adoption and implementation of Policies, and Strategies and Action Plans for biodiversity conservation.

The Hen Mpoano Initiative is incorporating these findings into its work plans for the next phases of the Initiative.

Partnerships

The Initiative has some very important partners who have been working hand in-hand with CRC to realize the goals of the Hen Mpoano Initiative in this first year of implementation. One such notable partner is the **USAID**, which is funding the Initiative. The United States Agency for International Development has been working on development issues in the country since the early 1960's. The Hen Mpoano Initiative is one of their latest projects from the food security and biodiversity portfolio. To ensure the successful implementation of this crucial project, the first in the country; staff from the economic growth section of the USAID have come down at various times since the inception of the project to offer technical and administrative advice on the Initiative implementation.

Another partner worth mentioning is our very own Friends of the Nation (**FoN**). FoN is an environment and advocacy NGO based in the Western Region, and our on-the-ground partner for the Initiative. For the purposes of Phase 1, the FoN has been responsible for the district characterization that will feed into the Our Coast report; and also for the establishment of the oil and gas platform. FoN is also primarily responsible for much of the initial communications (notably wetlands conservation) that is still underway. Headed by Don Kris Mevuta; FoN is at the forefront of much of the community engagements we hope to embark upon over the four-year period and beyond.

Another partner of the Initiative is **SustainaMetrix**, a



Brie Finegold of WorldFish and Kyei Yamoah of FoN visiting some communities in the Shama District where sand winning is rife.

research and sustainable development organization based in Baltimore. The CEO of SustainaMetrix, Glenn Page has been the lead trainer at the 3 Initiative training workshops, and is also responsible for the production of the Our Coast report. He has been working with the technical staff of CRC and FoN to come out with this report. The last partner is **WorldFish Center**, a research and policy development organization with headquarters in Penang, Malaysia. Since January, we have had a flow of their very experienced team of scientists coming down and working at the communities, landing sites and governmental offices to identify the issues and develop policies on gender mainstreaming, value addition, monitoring of catch and aquaculture among others. It is intended that their findings and policies will map out the course for the interventions that we would be undertaking in subsequent phases.

Collaborations

The Hen Mpoano Initiative has found some synergy between our activities and those of certain institutions in the Western Region, and is therefore collaborating with them to achieve the common objective. SNV is one such institution. The Netherlands Development Organization has been actively working in Ghana since 1992. CRC and **SNV** are collaborating to do the following: support for the DMO (Destination Management Organisation), providing tour guide training, supporting the TTDCs in the 5 communities of Butsi, Busia, Princesstown, Akwidie and Miamia and providing district level tourism planning etc.

CRC has also found common grounds with the International NGO CARE. These two organizations are collaborating in two main areas. One is, they are both providing financial and institutional support to strengthen and empower the WERENGO. The other is in the area of coastal planning, where the two are working together to develop a landscape and seascape plan for the districts to be incorporated into their MTDPs.

CRC is also working with the Italian NGO, **RC**- Ricerca e Cooperazione in the area of general support for tourism development in the West Coast. One significant outcome of this has been CRC's support for the launching of the RC-sponsored West Coast DMA website - www.ghanawestcoast.com. CRC and the University of Ghana, (**UG**) Department of Fisheries are working together to conduct a Critical Habitats Assessment of the Western Region.

Finally, CRC is collaborating with the University of Cape Coast, (**UCC**) to do the following: mangrove conservation, develop case studies on CBFMCs, Illegal Fishing, Traditional Authorities and Premix; as well as the mapping and assessment of climate change vulnerabilities in coastal communities.

CRC anticipates having a fruitful collaboration which would perhaps develop into full blown partnerships in latter phases of the Initiative.

2010 WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY PROGRAMME HELD



Residents of Sekondi-Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana, just like the world over, marked the World Environment Day 2010 in style. A colourful ceremony was held at the Essei Lagoon grounds purposely to draw attention to wetlands and biodiversity conservation. The program was jointly organized by the Coastal Resources Center, (CRC) and Friends of the Nation (FoN). Under the theme 'Many Species. One Planet. One Future', this year's event celebrated the incredible diversity of life on Earth. The WED 2010 program at Sekondi-Takoradi however bordered the theme, "Wetlands Maintain Life." It was marked with 7.5km fun run, a brief official ceremony and planting of symbolic mangroves.

Fun Run

Participants of the fun run



Planting the symbolic mangrove during the ceremony.

numbered about 60 and included students as well as some veterans. The run started at 7am at the Essei Bridge through to the Gyandu Park past the Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital and back to the Essei Bridge. In all 6 trophies were presented to winners. Ernest Adjei emerged as the overall winner.

Official Ceremony

The brief ceremony kick started just after the fun run in front of the Essei Lagoon. In a welcome address, the Program Coordinator of CRC, Kofi Agbogah, reiterated the need to preserve our wetlands. He mentioned that for the purposes of the program, FoN and CRC had fixed some sign posts besides the 3 lagoons (Essei, Ngyamboa Baka and Biuwen) in Sekondi to draw the attention of passersby to wetlands in the locality. The Member of Parliament for Sekondi, Papa Owusu Ankomah giving a speech at the program, lamented the metropolis' wetlands that are gradually being filled for building constructions. He lauded the CRC and FoN for their efforts at drawing attention to the importance of wetlands noting that they act as buffer for water bodies

preventing soil erosion and flooding. He also noted that wetlands remove and store greenhouse gases from the Earth's atmosphere, slowing the onset of global warming. As part of the ceremony two Senior High Schools, Adiembra and St. John's Senior High Schools engaged each other in a public speaking contest on "managing the country's waste". Both sides made strong points on the proper disposal and management of waste, but the chaps from St. Johns school carried



Participants in the Fun Run taking off

the day with their strong arguments. Both schools received some wonderful prizes.

Mangrove planting

Two symbolic mangroves were planted at the bank of the Essei Lagoon that day. The Director of CRC-Ghana, Mark Fenn, planted one of the mangroves and indicated that mangroves were essential ecological features that serve as primary habitats to hundreds of species of birds, fish, mammals and insects which must be preserved. On that note, the program was brought to an end. The CRC and FoN are looking forward to a more interesting WED celebration next year.



Mr. Ahmed Sulley, the Metropolitan Environment and Sanitation Officer, presenting the first female student winner with her award

WERENGO UPDATE

Strengthening the WERENGO (Network of Western Region NGOs), is one of the early actions that the Hen Mpoano Initiative undertook. The first activity was the organization of a meeting during which a cursory analysis of the organization as it stood was done. The newly-elected executive was introduced to the sitting which comprised CRC staff and a representative from CARE. At the meeting it emerged that out of the 70 or so members, only about 15 were active. The first annual meeting for the year came off at the premises of the Church of Latter Day Saints at Takoradi on the 11th of May; with quite an impressive turnout. The meeting got underway with each member present, expressing their personal hopes for the WERENGO. The general theme that stood out was the hope that WERENGO would become an integral umbrella organization working together to support development in the region.

What WERENGO needs now is a strong commitment from the general membership; once this is achieved, everything else will fall in place. The way to do this is for the entire membership to put their trust in the executive board and for the executive board to recognize that they get their mandate from the members; it is a two way street.

Under my chairmanship, I will promote transparency through effective communication within all spheres of the organization as this is crucial to the success of WERENGO.

-Yaw Owusu-Sekyere (Chairman)

The first Initiative training workshop for WERENGO, which was on proposal development came off on the 15th and 16th of June, during which participants were taken through the essentials of developing good proposals so as to be able to take advantage of the funding opportunities' that the Initiative's small grants program presents, as well as the others that exists in their numbers up in Accra and beyond. It is also worth mentioning that CRC and CARE are in



Representatives of some member organisations sharing ideas during a work session

partnership to help the WERENGO to reorganize itself, build the capacity of members and to empower the organization to become the proactive umbrella organization that members hope it will be.

NOTICE

Old and New USAID Projects in the Western Region

- The USAID-funded BCS (Behavioral Change Support) project is being managed by the John Hopkins University and implemented by CARE in the Western Region.
- The WASH-UP Project is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the USAID. Its partner in the Western Region is CHF international.
- The USAID is hoping to open the Takoradi office of the ADVANCE Project by the close of this year. This Agricultural and Value Chain Enhancement project is aimed at transforming the Ghanaian Agric sector through increased competitiveness. Implementing partner is ACDI-VOCA.
- FOCUS is one other program the USAID is desirous of introducing in the Western Region this year. This program focuses on Family Planning and Health and will be implemented by the John Snow International.
- LOGODEP is a local governance and decentralization program which will soon open its doors in the region also.

Next Issue of the Our Coast Newsletter

Volume 1, No. 2 will be published in December, 2010 and will include articles on climate change, wetlands conservation in the Western Region, as well as profiles of the Advisory Council members.

Library

- The following publications by the Hen Mpoano Initiative are available at the CRC-URI website crc.uri.edu:
 - ICFG Training Report 1&2
 - Biodiversity Threats Assessment Report
 - ICFG Semi Annual Report
- CRC offices at Adiembra and Accra have a collection of books, documents and publications on coastal management and other related topics.

Hɛn Mpoano Advisory Council

The Initiative is working with various institutions and people. Some of these institutions are the Ministry of Environment Science and Technology, the Fisheries Directorate, Local Assemblies etc. However, it was quite difficult to place the Hɛn Mpoano Initiative firmly within any of these institutions, hence the need for an inter-institutional body to oversee the activities and policies of the Initiative. This group of people, on whom the Initiative relies for advice and guidance comprise:

- **David Yaro**- Regional Coordinating Director
- **Nana Kojo Kondua**- Chairman, GNCFC-W/R
- **Irene Heathcote**- Regional Director, EPA
- **Awulae Agyefi Kwame**- Omanhene of Nsein Traditional Area
- **Ebenezer Dadzie-Paintsil**- Metro Planning Officer, STMA
- **Moses Kofi Sam**- Regional Director, Wildlife Division
- **A. A. Addo**- Regional Director, Fisheries Directorate
- **Agnes Bema Adenu-Mensah**- Dep. MD, Nyame Yie Cold Store

The environment is Allah's creation. The creation of this earth and all its natural resources is a sign of His wisdom, mercy, power and His other attributes, and therefore serves to develop human awareness and understanding of this creator.

(Quran: Ar-Ra'd, 13: 2-4; 21:79)

OUR COAST Newsletter

A biannual newsletter of the Hɛn Mpoano Initiative

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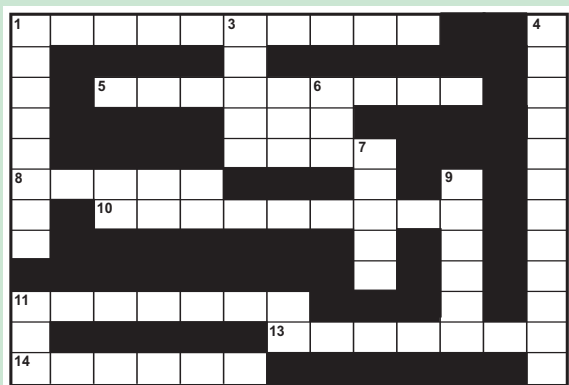
3.2%, it is higher than the national average of 2.7%, which led population experts to predict that the current population could double within the next 22 years- these facts makes deliberate PHE (Population, Health and Environment) policy interventions, matters of high priority for the region especially in line with the MDGs.

An integrated approach to managing the issues of climate change, fisheries and coastal degradation, high population etc is essential to achieving to harnessing the full potential of this very unique region for national growth.

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HɛN MPOANO crossword puzzle no. 1



- 11. Umbrella body for network of NGOs in Western Region. (7)
- 13. HABITAT
- 14. Local Environmental Monitoring Group in Western Region (6)

DOWN

- 1. A network of wetlands (pristine), both freshwater and brackish lagoons, at Esiam in the Ellembelle District of Western Region. (8)
- 3. Largest Lagoon in the Ahanta West District of the Western Region (5)
- 4. Diversity of plant and animal life in a particular habitat. (12)
- 6. Ghana's 'black gold' discovered recently. (3)
- 7. Western region's most eastern coastal district. (5)
- 9. One of the two main vegetation types in Ghana. (6)
- 11. Initials of an ICFG international partner. (3)

ACROSS

- 1. What an upwelling creates at the bottom of the food chain. The condition triggered by excessive nutrient levels, and occurs at extreme western coast of Western Region. (5.5)
- 5. Destination Management Area, Western Region. (4.5)
- 8. International donor agency of the Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance Programme. (5)
- 10. Fante version of ICFG (3.6)

Quotes

God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place - and the gathered waters be called 'seas'..... God saw that it was good.

(Genesis 1:9-10)

One man does not paddle a canoe to sea.

(African proverb)

Earth is not a gift from our parents, it is a loan from our children.

(Kenyan proverb)

Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned, and the last fish been caught will we realise we cannot eat money.

(Cree Proverb)

