

Chuumut!
The great priest
is supplicating
the water deities.

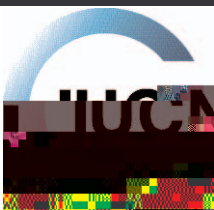
Here is a cock,
red on and cola
nuts. We want
some water in
compensation.

Water will not come!

Water will come!

Some have it to waste
while others are

Financing water and protection of the resource in West Africa



Newsletter on water and environment

Managing Editors

Lack of protection threatens the source of life for today and tomorrow!

Among natural resources, water remains the largest with a key role, including that of giving life. River systems help fuel our economy and nourish ecosystems sources of life. Food security, public health and economic opportunities all depend on natural and built infrastructure and the way we manage this shared resource. Our life itself is dependent on the access to drinking water.

The pressure of growing population and the competition between different users weigh on water resources. In this context, water is scarce, not because the quantity is diminishing, but because the needs are increasing, the quality of the resource deteriorates and the expected effects of climate

change may affect its availability. We know that this scarcity is due to several factors including lack of adequate infrastructure, but also poor coordination, bad governance, inappropriate legislation and inadequate funding of the water sector, all things that do not encourage enough to preserve the resource both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Scarcity and poor quality of the resource have a negative impact on the development of our countries and the efforts against poverty.

The international community has begun to realize the importance of better management of water resources

Workshop report

Journalists attend water financing workshop in Abidjan

By Edmund SMITH-ASANTE (*ghanabusinessnews.com / Ghana*) & Emelia ENNIN ABBEY (*Daily Guide / Ghana*)

A five-day workshop on water financing for thirty journalists from 11 West African countries and Mauritania opened in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire with an aim of empowering media professionals to facilitate sustainable practices and equitable sharing of benefits from the exploitation of water resources.

Countries that participated in the 7th sub regional capacity building workshop were Ghana, Togo, The Gambia, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Mauritania.

The workshop organised by the Global Water Partnership for West Africa (GWP-WA) in collaboration with the Central and West Africa Programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-PACO), was geared at building the capacity of the journalists and assist them understand the financial needs of different activities in water sector.

According to the organisers, the theme for the workshops "Water financing and protecting of the resource in West Africa", was informed by the fact that there is continuous population pressure on water resources in the sub-region in spite of recent efforts to deal with the challenge, while there are still regional deficiencies in coordination, governance, legislation and financing of the water sector.

They maintained that risks related to water, such as floods, droughts, conflicts, water-borne diseases and the like are not controlled, whereas the potential of water in

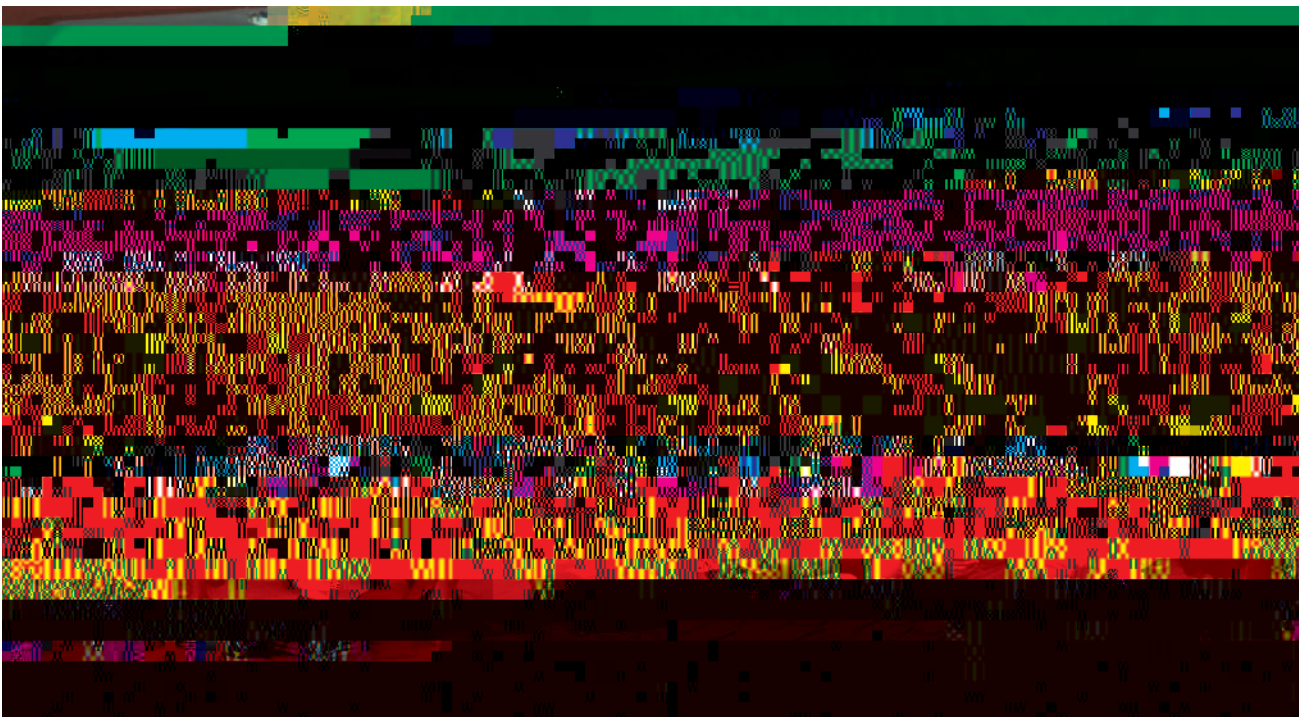
the West Africa region for hydropower, irrigation and ecotourism among others, is still under exploited.

"In addition, many countries in West Africa suffer from high rainfall variability and their infrastructures and management capabilities are insufficient to mitigate. This problem hampers their development and their efforts to fight against poverty," IUCN-PACO and GWP-WA said.

The two organisations indicated that there is the need to create a multi-stakeholder response to the financial needs of different activities in the water sector, so that water resources are used and managed in a fair and sustainable way to reduce poverty, promote socio-economic development, regional integration and environmental protection.

Acknowledging the media as a major stakeholder, IUCN-PACO and GWP-WA said it is because it has the potential of information and awareness-raising, and also the ability to educate and if necessary mobilise public opinion at local, national and international level, that the workshop was organised for the West Africa media.

"The organisation of the present workshop aims to empower the professionals of the sector so that they can



Water resource protection

hard to raise awareness among all stakeholders including the industry and other large users. He is also involved in a study that will set an acceptable threshold of a user fee.

But, “this is a sensitive sector” warns Mr. Zoko. Any tax increase for water intake could lead to an increase in the water tariff. This was confirmed by the Director of SODECI who mentioned the possibility for the State to revise for

What would be the impact of this policy?

M.S.: Actually it is not ECOWAS; it is the Water Resource Coordination Center - a directorate of the ECOWAS Agriculture, Water and Environment Department- that cut down its budget. This budget reduction is due to the security emergency experienced by our countries as a result of the political crisis and other factors. So it is because of the emergency that the budgets have been drastically reduced.

Inf'O: But this necessarily has an impact ...

M.S.: Of course, it has an impact because a programme had been developed. They had planned some activities that they will no longer be able to implement this year, not even in the next two years because they have not even

Inf'O: What is the status of the legal framework of the water resource management policy in Côte d'Ivoire?

Protecting the Tinkisso Basin, one of the great tributaries of the Niger

By Raphaël KAFANDO (*Sidwaya / Burkina Faso*)

As part of the Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative (PREMI), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is implementing a project on “Restoration and payment for environmental services in the Tinkisso Basin” (REPASE).

The aim is to promote integrated management of the Tinkisso catchment area, in order to reduce climate change effects and increase benefits for communities living down and upstream the Tinkisso dam.

Tinkisso is the largest tributary on the left bank of the Niger River. It suffered most the rapid and deep degradation of ecosystems in its basin. Like many rivers on the African continent, the Niger River flows from this place.

That is why the International Union for the Conservation of Nature through the Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative (IUCN/PREMI), has proactively undertaken to implement a project on “Restoration and payment for environmental services in the Tinkisso basin” (REPASE).

By testing a new approach to combined ecosystem biophysical restoration and payment for generated environmental services (PES), the REPASE project intends to explore the feasibility of sustainable management of its catchment area, a requirement for poverty reduction and mitigation of climate change effects.

As a matter of priority, the project also aims at restoring the reservoir zone of the Tinkisso dam and mitigating the

impact of the dam on neighboring flooded lowlands. The project uses participatory and educational approaches in its implementation so as to create awareness among the local communities, of the harmful effects of the degradation process of the resources they depend on for their survival.

New dynamics have also been created towards close collaboration among technical departments of conservation, water, agriculture and livestock development, which come together under the project.

The water flow in Tinkisso is highly variable in volume and duration and large sand deposits and marshlands obstruct the bottom of the dam, modifying the water flow in flood areas.

The status of the basin upstream the Tinkisso basin is illustrative of the degradation of the Niger River complex. In this section of the basin, the degradation of ecosystems is affecting the well-being of communities and increasing their vulnerability to climate change. More particularly, the degradation of the Tinkisso catchment area has resulted in the silting of the small Tinkisso dam which no longer produces much electricity but for few hours per day.



Tinkisso is the largest tributary on the left bank of Niger River.

Water resource protection

Responsibility of the private sector

By Raphaël KAFANDO (*Sidwaya / Burkina Faso*)

According to the United Nations Organization, water use by the industry will double by 2025 because of the relocation to and expansion of industries in developing countries.

In view of this, regions like West Africa should make further efforts to find the required funds for preservation of water resources, and to do this, one solution is to get the contribution of the private sector, one of the biggest water users.

Water is a limited natural resource that is required for life and ecological systems. It is essential for economic and social development. Unfortunately, water is increasingly threatened by the combination of rapid population growth and urbanization, which create an ever growing demand for water in regions like West Africa.

Also, ecosystems, productive and regenerating environments of the resource are threatened, polluted and even destroyed most often, hence the need for finding solutions to ensure the protection of the resource.

In Burkina, the orientation law on water resource management was passed in February 2001, thus formalizing management principles. "The provisions of the law contain a number of principles such as the 'extractor-payer' and 'polluter-payer' principle as indicated by the Regional Coordinator of the Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative (PREMI), Mr. Maxime Somda.

He informed that based on this provision, another law was passed with the title of "financial contribution to the water sector". This legal provision sets up a para-fiscal tax paid by big extractors of water resources to the water agencies (structures in charge of the sustainable management of the hydrographic basins of Burkina). He further indicated that the first decree issued relates to water uptake.

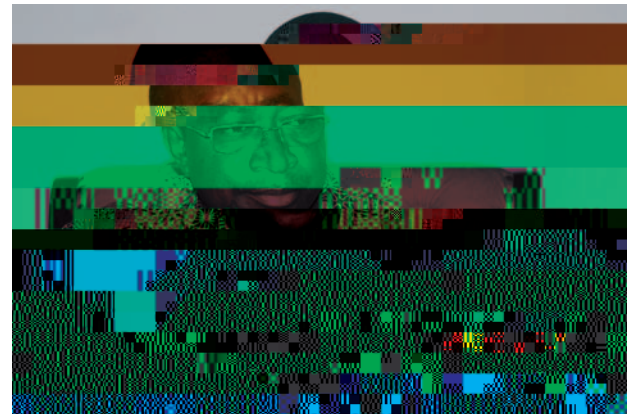
The decree helps to enforce the "extractor-payer" principle and includes not only water taking but all activities that cause a modification of water patterns.

According to this decree, a FCFA 1 fee should be paid for one cubic meter of water taken. The National Water and Sanitation Office (ONEP), which receives this tax pays FCFA 700 million in average to the Nakambe Water Agency that manages the basin from which ONEP takes water to supply the city of Ouagadougou.

Mr. Somda indicated that for Burkina to be able to set such a rate, a financial and economic study was conducted with the National Water and Sanitation Office (ONEP) to determine the rate that should be applied without any impact on the consumer bill. However, he stressed that for now, only ONEP pays the tax.

Other big users are being sensitized to make them pay the tax. "But to prevent any impact of the taxes on the unit cost of services delivered by the company, the Government is working with extractors to find suitable rates", testified the Regional Coordinator of PREMI, Mr. Maxime Somda.

He added that another decree has been issued to establish a police of water. Work is being done to enforce this decree. He went on revealing that reports on the police of water have been validated and will be submitted to the National Water Board which brings together all water stakeholders (state, private sector, NGOs etc.).



The Regional Coordinator of PREMI/IUCN, Mr. Maxime Somda : "The law in Burkina provides for a number of principles such as the 'extractor-payer' and the 'polluter-payer' principle.

In addition, the law provides that no tax should be paid for domestic water uses. The consumer can therefore use up to 2000 m3 of water per day without paying any tax. This means that the law has maintained the social nature of water.

The resistance of the private sector

Unlike Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire has not issued any enforcement decrees even though the legal framework has been developed. This delay is due to the political unrest in the country.

The Head of the Regulatory Department at the Directorate of Water Resources in Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Zoko Bawa said that the private sector was involved in a study that was aimed at knowing how ready these structures were to pay taxes for their water use.

"It is on the basis on these thresholds that we are going to set the rates. The main difficulty is that many companies believe that paying a tax will negatively affect their budget," he said.

This argument is confirmed by the Abidjan Production Director at the Côte d'Ivoire Water Company (SODECI), Mr. Olivier François Gosso.

"We do agree to the 'extractor-payer principle', but if there is any tax to be paid, this may be reflected in the water bill", he warned.

Mr. Gosso said that he is aware of the need to protect the resource for future generations but wished that all stakeholders would play their respective roles: the state, the consumer and the company.

He suggested that given the fact that it is the Ivorian State that defines the water policy and sets prices, the state should create the required legal environment for the enforcement of the law.

This means that political will is required in all countries in West Africa to compel every stakeholder to play his role in the protection of water resources.

Water financing

Ivorian gov't owes FCFA 24 bn in accumulated water bills

By Edmund SMITH-ASANTE (ghanabusinessnews.com / Ghana)

The Ivorian government as at 2010 owed the country's water company, SODECI (La Societe de Distribution d'eau de Cote d'Ivoire), CFA 40 billion (US\$79,207,804.60) in unpaid water bills alone.

This amount comprised unpaid bills from schools, hospitals and government establishments over many years.

But although the Ivorian government has since that year began paying up the debt it owes the privately owned utility company, there still remains a huge chunk of the money to be paid.

Revealing this, Mr Seydou Dembele, Head, Government Expenses, Water Resources Department, Cote d'Ivoire, said "Government has now paid a big part of the money and it remains now FCFA 24 billion [US\$ 47,512,183.55]."

Explaining how government accumulated a debt of FCFA 40 billion, he said in 2009 a total debt of FCFA 11 billion was incurred, which reduced to FCFA 10 billion in 2010, then further to FCFA 9 billion in 2011 and then FCFA 10 billion in 2012, all adding up to FCFA 40 billion.

The Ivorian government official however added that some of the huge debts have been incurred as a result of wastage and illegal connections.

Speaking on the topic "Funding mechanisms of water: the different scenarios", Mr Dembele disclosed that as a result of illegal connections, about FCFA 3 billion is lost to the state annually, while 100 km of pipes are destroyed.

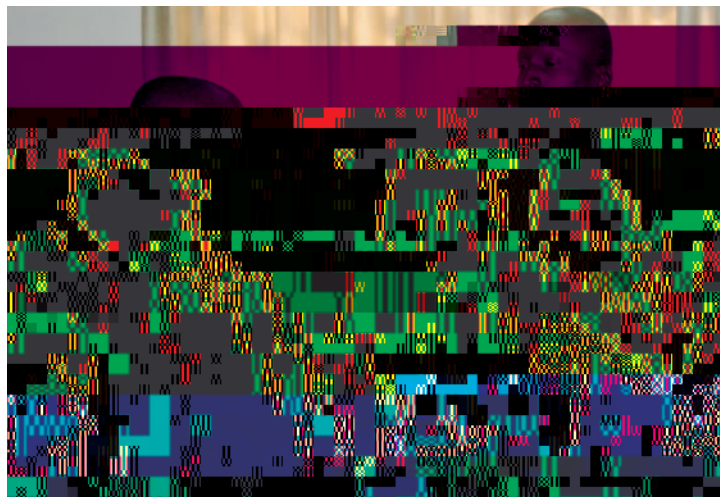
He lamented that when people are arrested for doing illegal connections they are not prosecuted but just left to go because there are no laws to punish them. For the illegal connections that people make there are no metres, hence the inability of the service providers to determine the volume of water used and bill them, he said.

In an interview on July 2, 2013, he divulged that in order to stop the stockpiling of the debt again, government has begun paying FCFA 600 million as its water bill every month to the utility company.

Touching on the population without access to water, he said the country is currently experiencing a 30% deficit.

Mr Dembele said to deal with the deficit; government has received funding from the Islamic Development Bank, Arabic Development Bank and World Bank, but all that is not enough to meet the needs of Abidjan residents, adding that FCFA 48 billion is needed to supply everyone in just the capital with water.

Speaking on the investments made by government in the water sector, he said all pumps are bought by the state, while the various communities making up the population



Seydou Dembele (on the right), Head, Government Expenses, Water Resources Department, Cote d'Ivoire

pay 10% of the cost of producing potable water.

In spite of the debt owed by government to the water company, Mr Francois Olivier Gosso, Director of Production, SODECI, Abidjan, indicated during a tour of the company's Djibi water treatment plant that they have never experienced any stoppage in production.

Adding to this, the agreement with government is that the state takes charge of investment in the company, while the company takes care of water supply to the nation.

Whereas in 2008 water coverage in Cote d'Ivoire was 61%, it is currently at 66% and the MDG target it hopes to achieve by 2015 for its estimated population of 20 million, is 82.5%.

SODECI has provided over 30 years of service in water supply to Cote d'Ivoire's urban community, starting with a lease contract which lasted for approximately 25 years. This was converted into a concession in 1987. The World Bank and other international financial establishments have also been working in partnership with the water agency through financing of investments in water supply.

Cote d'Ivoire's rural population is served by ONEP (the National Office of Drinking Water) a state owned institution which is also in charge of investments in the water sector, although SODECI was in charge of water pumps before 1987.

Otherwise from the outside, it does not look like the conventional treatment plant with very huge circular containments filled with dirty foul water drawn from rivers awaiting purification for distribution to piped communities.

This is because the water that is treated at the plant for use is taken from 80 metres deep underground and not from surface water sources like rivers or streams that are easily polluted.

Covering a moderate area, the automated ultra-modern Djibi water treatment facility rather has a number of blue-painted metal tanks placed high off the ground amidst different sizes of interconnected metal pipes that will require climbing before seeing the contents.

Interestingly though, this compact assemblage of metals cost about CFA 20 billion to set up and also supplies an average of 340,000m³ of water to the people of Abidjan daily.

Indeed, facilities like these are responsible for putting Côte d'Ivoire in the limelight as far as water and sanitation are concerned. Currently the country is regarded as offering the best water and sanitation services for urban areas in Sub-Saharan Africa, while available figures say overall, 63 per cent of the urban population received piped water in 2006 as against 39 per cent in 1988, with 90 per cent of households having access to safe water other than the 65 per cent in 1988.

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Facility Visit

During a tour of SODECI's Djibi water treatment facility Wednesday, July 3, 2013, Mr. Francois Olivier Gosso, Director of Production, SODECI, Abidjan, operator of the plant said in 2012 alone, the company was able to produce 140 million m³

"I have a meter. I am a subscriber, but no drop is flowing from my tap," Hammar Cissé, the head of a community in Koumassi, a municipality in Abidjan of about 500,000 residents said on Wednesday July 3rd, 2013.

The elderly head of the community indicated that to have water, he calls on "those who have parallel systems" (legally connected pipelines from the Water Company and personally sourced water).

"At different levels, all African potable water production and distribution companies are affected by this situation", said François Gosso, president of the Task Force that is working on the issue at the African Water Association (AfWA).

He indicated that the proportion of non- invoiced water in Africa, ranges from 15 to 70%, while the average proportion is estimated at 40 to 50%.

Non invoiced or non- accounted for water is caused by "direct illegal connections and leakages among others. This water represents the "balance between the amount of water that enters in the supply system and the amount that is invoiced to subscribers."

For now, 40% to 50% of loss is a real wastage that the AfWA wants to combat with the support of USAID. "Before making new investments, we should first reduce losses. We will first take stock of what we are producing, what we are distributing and then look into how to reduce losses," said Gosso.

The AfWA, which brings together 80 members from thirty countries, has initiated the auditing of water distribution companies by sending them questionnaires. But although the auditing exercise is still in process, Mr. Gosso says an initial classification has been made.

This comprises the companies that have no approach to address the issue of non- invoiced water, those that have plans but no resources to implement them and finally, the companies that have a deep understanding of the non- invoiced water problem.

During the visit to Koumassi, the head of one community in the municipality mentioned the high cost of the meter, while the representatives of the Koumassi municipality also raised the issue of high water bills.

Meanwhile, those who live in area and are yet to be connected to the water supply system are also complaining.

In response to the residents of his municipality, the first deputy mayor of Koumassi, Mr. Kouassi Aboua blamed the situation on the Government: "It is the Ivorian Government that is the competent water provider, but decentralization is not yet being implemented," he said.

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ing and resource management.

He explained that water is very important in life for its various uses which requires that everybody must be responsible for its protection. "If water is life, protecting it is a responsibility for everyone".

Ndri added that the theme of the workshop was apt, particularly when most of the countries in the region are financing water through the IWRM.

In his view, coordinator, Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative (PREMI) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Mr. Maxime Somda, posited that natural resources play important role in the economy of West Africa.

Somda noted that among all the resources, water plays an important part in the lives of the people but the resource is being affected by pressure of population, human action and the climate change phenomenon.

He stated further that water as a social resource needs to be protected, saying that stakeholders should realise the economic importance of water so as to protect it. "This is why we need to use need approach to pay for it".

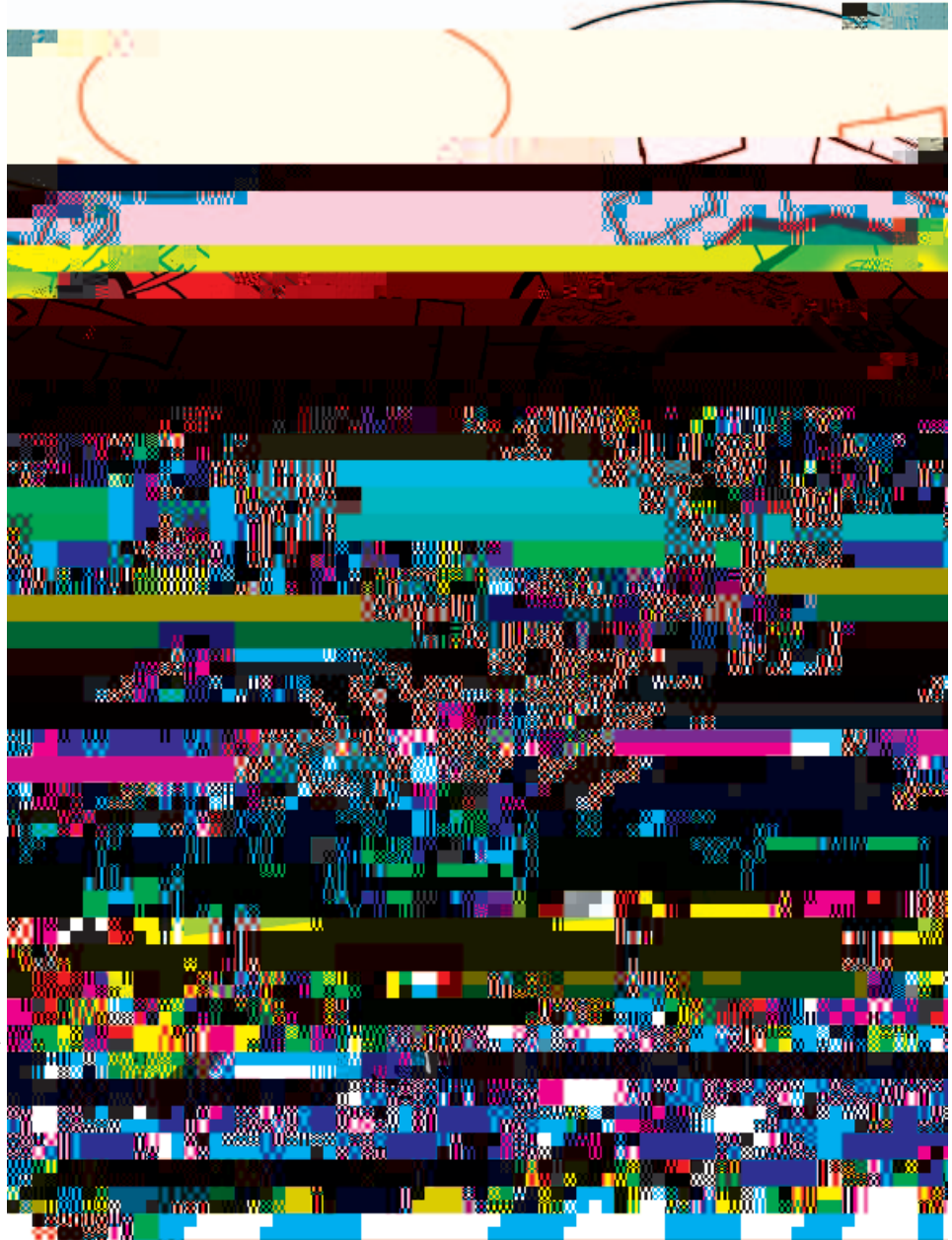
Prof. A. B Goula, a lecturer on Hydrology at the University of Abidjan, explained that water has resource and use. According to him, the use is everything related to the clean water, while the resource is the natural resource everybody can go and use.

Prof. Goula added that no country in the region has been paying much attention to the protection of water resources.

Communication officer, GWP/ WA, Mr. Sidi Coulibaly, also stressed that in the last five years the organisation has been helping countries in the region to develop their national IWRM, which he said, some have completed while other have not.

He added that it is clear that some of the countries may not meet up with the MDG target on water supply in their countries.

IUCN/PACO representative, Mr. Marcelo Rocca, explained that there is a lot of financing need in water management but not enough for protection of water



resources. "If we do not protect water, it will be impossible to get it in the future," he said.

He explained that this why IUCN felt it was important to pay attention to water resource management.

Water Finance and Management

Experts opined that water should finance water. They hinged their position on the principle of Payment for Environment Services (PES) which stipulates that users of environmental services should pay for it.

This principle which excludes domestic consumption of water but includes the polluter pays principle, targets people who use water for irrigational purposes, dam construction, mining activities and construction work among others

It is to address this situation that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Regional Water Partnership for West Africa (GWP/WA) are using “awareness creation as a strong weapon to wipe the phenomenon out”.

However, “there is still a long way to go” to achieve the target set, experts have acknowledged. As for now, the only alternative to uproot the phenomenon, according to experts who were panelists at a discussion on the theme: “Water financing and protection of the resource in West Africa” held in Abidjan in July 2013, is “enhanced governance and more adequate financing of the water sector and the promotion of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM).

This may also be supported by the enforcement of Cote d’Ivoire’s law Nb 98-755 of December 23, 1998 on the water code, article 45, which stipulates that “Any waste of water is prohibited. The Government may use a regulation to set the obligations of individuals, public and private networks and facilities in order to prevent this wastage”.

Article 120 also states that “Any waste of water is punishable by law with a sentence of one (1) to six (6) months in jail and a fine ranging between FCFA three hundred and sixty thousand (360,000) to FCFA ten (10) million or either of these two penalties only”.

Yet, such mechanisms according to the experts who were drawn from various municipalities, Water Ministry, development partners and Africa Water Association, have some limitations. The absence of a sound institutional framework in the water sector prevents the enforcement of this law.

It is therefore obvious that a sustainable solution is dependent upon improved governance and more adequate funding for the water sector and the promotion of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM).

Disclosing the level of wastage incurred annually in water distribution, Olivier François Gosso, Production Director of the Côte d’Ivoire Water Distribution Company (SODECI) for Abidjan, stated that public institutions and departments, notably Government universities, military camps were the worse offenders, emphasizing that the situation constituted a genuine hindrance to the protection of water resources.

“The water wastage rate has reached a level estimated at

Governance

Carrying bowls, buckets and other containers on their heads, women with their children, stormed the premises of the Côte d'Ivoire Water Company. (SODECI). ...to shout out « enough is enough »:

The widespread illegal water connection by residents in most urban areas in Cote d'Ivoire costs the Ivorian economy FCFA 3 billion (US\$59,610,4334) annually.

According to SODECI, the main water company responsible for the supply of water to the urban parts of Cote d'Ivoire, about a quarter of the water it produces is lost to the illicit practice.

Francois Olivier Gosso, director of production at SODECI, in an interview with journalists who attended the 7th capacity building workshop for media professionals from 11 African countries and Mauritania in July 2013, revealed 25 per cent of water produced is lost through illegal connections which costs the company FCFA 3 billion each year.

During the five-day training the participants considered the

Uncontrolled Urbanization

How do uncontrolled settlements threaten the water table? In other words, how can uncontrolled urbanization set the roots for ground water reduction and pollution?

Urbanization and human activity in new neighborhoods have an impact on the water cycle. One huge change that can happen is the increased extraction of water from the water table.

Thus, uncontrolled urbanization creates a growing need for

the precious commodity in such a way that water is pumped from ground waters for various uses. “Very often, the water drawn is more than the recharge capacity,” explains Dr Kouadio Ernest, an Ivorian expert of ground water. He indicated that this leads to a decline in the water table levels.

All the more so that with the non-compliant constructions, roads, waterproof roofs among others, the runoff after rainfall increases and little water is absorbed by way of siltation.

As a result, the water table is less frequently recharged. In addition, constructions disrupt and modify the runoff channels. With the continuous reduction in ground water reserves, pumping results into a higher risk of aquifer pollution at the local level.

In these new types of settlements, stand pipes are not well protected and therefore the water is exposed to pollution by nitrate, a chemical contained in toxic waste that was disposed of in large quantities in several locations in the city of Abidjan in August 2007. This is a real threat looming on the quality of the ground reserves of the precious commodity.

The specific case of the Ivorian capital, Abidjan, which hosts more than 20% of the population according to the 1998 general census, is quite worrisome. Indeed, water supply for treatment plants is done from a sedimentary basin that lies from west to east of the country i.e. from Sassandra to the border with Ghana.

The basin covers a surface area of about 9,700 km² and includes an aquifer that is commonly known as the “Abidjan water table”. This water table has been the main resource for potable water supply to the city and peripheral urban centers for more than 30 years.

Pr. Jean Patrice Jourda, a lecturer and scientist in water and environmental sciences and techniques at the University of Abidjan, also believes that uncontrolled urbanization makes the water table thick, preventing it from being recharged.

He explained that soils that are stripped by houses do not facilitate good filtering of waste water

The sky is heavily cloudy above our

Access to potable water

Access to safe drinking water Illegal connections, a sad reality in Koumassi

Sani ABOUBACAR (L'Evènement / Niger)

In some communities in Koumassi, water is a scarce commodity. Yet some residents just use the resource illegally.

Water is the main natural resource that is indispensable to any kind of life on earth. This resource is however threatened by human actions. This is the case in the Koumassi municipality where, instead of being connected to the potable pipe water system, some people hide to draw water from pipes. An illegal act which has an impact on the quantity and quality of water resources. The Koumassi municipality is characterized by the existence of under-developed neighborhoods with poor drinking water infrastructures, the so-called « makeshift settlements».

The visible underground users

Clandestine use of water is now a reality in this municipality and the first deputy Mayor, Kouadio Aboa acknowledged this fact straight away: *«this can be observed in certain neighborhoods. By the side of the people who are legally connected, other persons make illegal connections to have access to water»*, he explained.

Old Cissé Hama, the head of Malian citizens at the Houphouët Boigny neighborhood, popularly referred to as “Grand Campement” shares the view of the deputy mayor. *«These underground users are visible. They are not hiding*

and have installed equipments to illegally draw water and sell it. At the start, the 20 liter jerrican was sold at CFA F 25, today it costs CFA F 50 to 100», he bitterly lamented.

This Malian citizen who has been living for long now in this area of Koumassi where « underground users» dictate their law, is among the many other subscribers of the Côte d'Ivoire Water Company who hardly and seldom benefit from the resource. *«We never have water. These people divert water and therefore, it never reaches our place. To have access to water, you have to stay awake until late in the night. Sometimes, we spend three or four days without a drop of water coming from our taps»*, complained Cissé Hama. The Koumassi municipality is the third most densely populated area in Abidjan. It hosts over 500, 000 souls today. Population pressure seems to be the primary cause of this challenging access to safe drinking water. *«In the past, people were not many here. We used to have water»*, said Toui Bi Seye René, a customary chief at “Grand Campement”. He explained that *«the population has inflated»* and because meters are installed outside compounds, dishonest persons take advantage of that to make illegal connections. The first deputy mayor acknowledged the uncontrolled spread of certain neighborhood in his municipality, to the extent that even unplanned areas are occupied.



One of the « makeshift settlements » in Koumassi where access to safe drinking water is a challenge.

As a result, an illegal pipe water business developed at the expense of duly connected consumers. This is the case of Cissé Hama who believes that clandestine water highjackers are diverting their water. To him, there is no doubt that SODECI is sharing the responsibility for this situation. *«When I complained about this practice to SODECI, one of their workers answered saying that “if you can afford to have your own engine, then get it”*, he remembered.

Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative (PREMI)

The Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative – PREMI - seeks to promote integrated natural resource management to reduce poverty and adapt to climate change in West Africa.

It aims at greater consistency in a wide range of activities developed by IUCN and its partners at local, national, and regional levels in West Africa. Through this programme, IUCN intends to strengthen the capacity of the region, demonstrate the importance of taking into account the value of