



Water

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	2
Water, Sanitation and the MDGs.....	3
March, Water, Women.....	4
Managing Underground Water in West Africa.....	6
Special Report: West Africa's Many Water Wars.....	7
Special Report: New Dawn for Niger Basin Authority?	8
Seminar: Why Africans Reject AFRICOM.....	10
Monthly News and Current Affairs... 1	1
Readers' Feedback.....	11
Conversation.....	12

Cover photo: In an area of Ganvié, Benin, villagers go about their everyday activities: water is central for transportation. Source www.wateryear2003.org

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Editorial

Every Drop of Action Counts

Water lends itself to many uses, and with that come the challenges. Everybody needs it; every nation wants to control it and the resources it bears. In West Africa, contests over right to water resources pose real and potential crises that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the subregional body, has had to wade into, particularly to forestall future breakdown of order. But the intergovernmental organisation should be ready to do more than adopting conventions and leaving ratification and implementation to the whims of individual member countries and leaders.

As our interview personality from the West Africa programme of the Global Water Partnership avers in this edition, water can --and should--become a source of cooperation among countries in the sub region and not the foundation of division and violent conflicts. If the sub region remains the focus of the member states, the states can cooperate in putting water to its industrial and domestic uses as Nigeria, Niger and some other countries have shown is practicable through collaboration on hydroelectric power generation.

Climate change and desertification pose another challenge to cooperation efforts, nevertheless. Dwindling reservoirs of water and water resources due to over-fishing and receding water levels mean that for example, fishers in Lake Chad, from the countries that share the water body, are more likely than ever to come into open confrontation. It is left to ECOWAS to work out mobilisation mechanisms to ensure that stakeholders collectively understand the looming water challenge and attempt to mitigate the conflicts.

Celebrating the 2011 World Water Day observed on March 22, the Global Call for Action Against Poverty campaign drew attention to the increasing urbanisation of dwelling patterns and called on governments and nongovernmental institutions "to actively engage in addressing the problems around urban water management and to respond to [the] urban challenges." It said uncertainties caused by climate change, conflicts and natural disasters on urban water systems negatively impact this overwhelming gathering of human beings. In a separate response to the water challenge, the United States government's, Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and World Bank President, Mr Robert Zoellick, signed a memorandum of understanding on World Water Day to help bolster investments in the developing world's water sector.

The significance of all these is that water is a responsibility of all. Individuals should embrace more responsible use of water and water resources, while state and intergovernmental parties embark on efforts that will avert water-inspired violent conflicts. All this is feasible.

-Odoh Diego Okenyodo

Water, Sanitation and the MDGs



Introduction

Water is the most critical need of mankind on the planet earth, which explains why the first consideration in the search for human settlement is the availability of water. There is hardly any human activity that can be done without water. Humans have continued to suffer perennial water scarcity thereby predisposing them to all kinds of water borne diseases. More often than not, water hygiene and sanitation are often neglected by both governments and their citizens, yet they are at the core of about five of the eight goals in the Millennium Development Goals agreed to by world leaders in 2000. As fall out of the increasing rate of urbanisation and lean finances on the part of governments to meet up their core obligations in terms of the responsibility to provide, West Africa is currently confronted with the challenges of rapid urban growth, inadequate water supply and basic sanitation.

A 2009 report of the Global

Water Initiative (GWI) revealed that while more than 1 billion people lack access to improved water sources, more than 2.6 billion people lack adequate sanitation. The report argued further that at a regional level, West Africa has significant surface water and unquantified reserves of fresh water in very deep aquifers. However, West African countries are highly water-interdependent, with almost all the 15 countries sharing 25 trans-boundary river basins.¹

In a recent media release to observe the World Water Day 2011, the Global Call for Action Against Poverty campaign contended that for the first time in human history most of the world's population lives in cities with 3.3 billion people, and the urban landscape continues to grow, with 38% of that growth represented by expanding slums, while the city populations are increasing faster than city infrastructure can cope. As a result of this high urban expansion rate, investments in infrastructure have not kept up

with the rate of urbanisation, while water and waste services show significant underinvestment, the release further said.

In the light of the foregoing, the Global Call for Action Against Poverty advocated that various bodies such as governments, communities, organisations and individuals actively engage in addressing the problems around urban water management and to respond to the urban challenges. It also call on the attention of international communities on the impact of rapid urban population growth, industrialisation and uncertainties caused by climate change, conflicts and natural disasters on urban water systems.

In view of the central role that civil society can play in improving access to water, as well as sanitation, the Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS) was established in 2003 as a regional networking body to contribute to water resource management and sustainable provision of water and sanitation services in Africa. It works to

Continued from page 3

influence policy decisions and strategies affecting Africa in the water sector.²

Road Map to Effective Water and Sanitation

The foregoing serve as premise upon which the following efforts towards addressing the challenges of water and sanitation in the West African sub-region are proposed:

(i) Increasing the access of people to safe water and environmental sanitation in rural and semi-urban areas;

(ii) Reducing the prevalence of water-borne and sanitation-related diseases, particularly trachoma, guinea worm and diarrhoeal diseases through awareness and advocacy for the promotion of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation;

(iii) Ensuring ecologically, financially, and socially sustainable management of water quantity and quality through the establishment of concrete water policies at the national level, which will in turn feed into an existing sub-

regional water policy to be managed by ECOWAS.

The existing water policy for West Africa acknowledges the fact that reducing poverty is the major challenge facing the 15 countries in the region, and one of the underlying factors is lack of access to drinking water and basic sanitation for majority of the people. The policy, which has been approved and ratified by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers of Water, was facilitated by the Water Resources Coordination Centre of



It is a pleasant coincidence that the month of March marks both International Women's Day and World Water Day. This is an important link considering how crucial water is to women. It is estimated that in just one day, more than 200 million hours of women's time is consumed for the most basic of human needs: collecting water for domestic use.

This lost productivity is greater than the combined number of hours worked in a week by employees at some major global companies' summed up. Millions of women and children, particularly in Africa, spend several hours a day collecting water from distant but unfortunately often polluted sources. A study by the

International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) of community water and sanitation projects in 88 communities found that projects designed and run with the full participation of women are more sustainable and effective than those that do not. This supports an earlier World Bank study that found that women's participation was strongly associated with water and sanitation project effectiveness.

"And this March, from International Women's Day on the 8th to World Water Day on the 22nd, is a great time to recognise and celebrate the positive impact women can make for water. Through my work as a Conservancy freshwater scientist,

I've learned that water isn't just a world crisis, it's a women's crisis. In many societies, women and girls spend much of each day collecting and preparing water for cooking, cleaning, drinking and maintaining sanitation.

"Everyone has a role to play, but making a difference for water involves bringing people together and tackling complex issues—two things women are particularly good at," says Silk. "Women can be a force for steering sustainable use and conservation in households, classrooms, farms, governments and businesses around the world." —Kate Frazer is a senior writer for The Nature Conservancy based in Boston, MA

the ECOWAS, in collaboration with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). The policy further argues that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 will require a sustained effort to increase access to water and basic sanitation through investment in infrastructure, pollution control, as well as the strengthening of the existing integrated trans-boundary water basin management³. Water is central to the three health-related goals, the goal on environmental sustainability, reduction extreme poverty and hunger (through agricultural production) and women empowerment (as the female gender suffers a greater impact of poor water conditions).

For hygiene and sanitation interventions, the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank have designed a common water and sanitation programme known as Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST), which considers broad community aspects and people participation. These efforts are critical in view of the fact that lack of access to water and sanitation raises serious human security concerns, as it relates to the possible outbreak of pandemics. As highlighted by the following statement:

Pandemics are both crises and potential crisis drivers. As drivers, they can cause compound crises. Each iterative strike of a pandemic wave has the capacity to weaken society, and reduce the resources available to fight the next pandemic or other crisis threats. Pandemics in this sense can generate crises beyond health and poten-



tially make affected societies less resilient to the next sequence of crises. Their impacts upon health and economic systems and their effects on human security in general further explain their designation here as a crisis driver.⁴

These pandemics come via two routes; drinking of contaminated water due to inadequate sanitation which leads to disease and inadequate hygiene due to scarcity of water; as well as inadequate sanitation related disease and infections such as diarrhoea, scabies, leptospirosis, schistosomiasis, Ascariasis, hookworms and Giardiasis, which can be remedied by hand washing, paying proper attention to food and water preservation. Improvement and increased access to safe water and sanitation services, proper cooking, proper handling of water and washing hands before touching food greatly reduces the chances of these infections.

Conclusions

In coming to terms with the challenge of water provisioning and basic sanitation in West Africa, the state of water crisis that people confront on a daily basis entails walking long distances everyday to fetch enough water for

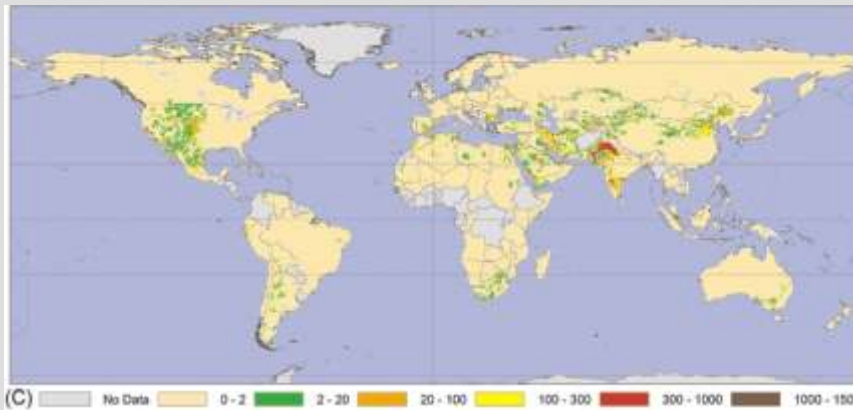
drinking and other uses. This situation calls for water management in terms of proper planning, distributing and optimum use of water resources under defined water policies and regulations at both the national and sub-regional levels. Thus, unless water concerns are integrated within broader national and sub-regional governance frameworks, the chances of having access to water and basic sanitation in West Africa by 2015 remain a mirage.

--Chris M.A. Kwaja

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- 2.ANEW (2008) Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation, available at <http://www.freshwateraction.net/aneu>.
3. Public Agenda (2011) A Look at the West African Regional Water Policy, available at http://publicagendaghana.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=638%3Aamakudom-agyemang-environmental-journalist&showall=1
- 4.King's College London (2009) Humanitarian Futures Programme, available at <http://www.humanitarianfutures.org/sites/default/files/Pandemics%20Report.pdf>

Managing Underground Water in West Africa



Global map of groundwater depletion, where 1000 on the legend is equal to one cubic kilometer of depletion per year

http://www.agu.org/news/press/images/pr_2010-30_lgr-image.jpg

Developers' response to lack of public water system has been to draw from the underground water supply through boreholes. These boreholes are either constructed in individual homes, or in some cases, gigantic boreholes are constructed to provide for a large number of residential and industrial establishments.

According to GroundWater 2011 conference brochure, groundwater "provides more than 50% of drinking water, 40% of industrial water and 20% of irrigation water. The low costs of installing and operating tube wells along with the resulting agricultural boom have been the main reasons for the considerable worldwide expansion of groundwater use over the past 40 years...unlike surface water, groundwater is not easily measurable and manageable. In most cases it is used by a large number of independent users, including farmers, who have direct and individual access to water. The same goes for diffuse pollutions."

In Swaziland, for example, it has emerged that the more boreholes are being drilled, the less water becomes available. Since 1986, over 3,000 boreholes have been drilled in the country, but over 40 per cent of the population does not have access to clean water and about 90 percent of the community water projects are no longer

functioning. This is because boreholes are being drilled too close to each other and thus users often have to wait for water to surface before being pumped out. Sadly, because the depletion of groundwater is not easily measured, there is very little awareness of this emerging problem and the need to manage the exploitation of groundwater resources. It is in recognition of this that the SADC has established a Groundwater and Drought Management Project to provide a regional perspective to groundwater management in Southern Africa such projects need to be replicated in West Africa.

Today, people are drawing so much water from below and adding much of it to the oceans through evaporation, pollution and precipitation thus accounting for about 25 percent of the annual sea level rise across the planet. According to a study 'A worldwide view of groundwater depletion' published in the Geophysical Research Letters, a journal of the American Geophysical Union, "the rate at which global groundwater stocks are shrinking has more than doubled between 1960 and 2000, increasing the amount lost from 126 to 283 cubic kilometres (30 to 68 cubic miles) of water per year. Because the total amount of groundwater in the world is unknown, it's hard to say how fast the global supply would vanish at

this rate".

The implication of this trend especially to farmers and households in West Africa is that over the coming years, underground water tables would be fast shrinking that it would become increasingly hard for their local technologies to reach it; where the water can be reached, the costs would be simply too much for locals to bear. We are therefore heading towards a severe water crisis in which private water prospecting would likely become the common but expensive means of getting water. Nations in the sub region would therefore need to explore mechanisms for improved management of available water sources especially surface and rain water. Additionally, we must carefully plan, manage and monitor the exploitation of underground water sources to ensure that they do not run dry.

-Nengak Daniel

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1. 'Groundwater Depletion Rate Accelerating Worldwide' American Geophysical Union: http://www.agu.org/news/press/pr_archives/2010/2010-30.shtml

2. Emeka Chiakwelu 'Nigeria: The Lack of Drinking Water and Dangers of Water Boreholes' : http://www.australia.to/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1752:nigeria-the-lack-of-drinking-water-and-dangers-of-water-boreholes&catid=104:emeka-chiakwelu&Itemid=141

3. The SADC Groundwater and Drought Management Project: <http://www.sadc-groundwater.org/>

4. Water Crises and Constraints in West and Central Africa: The Case of Côte d'Ivoire Jean Biémi: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-31125-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

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West Africa's

Many Water Wars



Lake Chad. Photo courtesy <http://www.travelphotoguide.com/2006/11/chad-lake-chad.html>

As a fugitive resource which flows through a hydrologic cycle, water is described by Stefan Kirchner as a resource that does not “pay attention to political boundaries and conflicts that often result between differing political units.” This, short of saying that communities, states and regions go to war over water, points to a significant correlation between water scarcity and conflict.

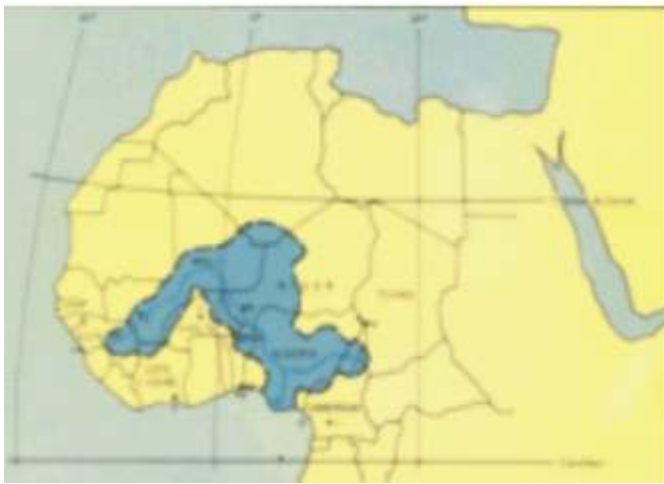
West Africa is not immune to adding to the list of many water conflicts around the globe. All countries in the region, with the exception of Cape Verde, have been identified to share about 25 trans-boundary water-courses. A statement by UNICEF in 2010 reveals that

only six (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cap Verde, Ghana, Guinea and Mali) of 16 countries in the region are on track to meeting water target of the Millennium Development Goals) in 2015.

At the level of inter-state relations, Rivers Benue, Mano, Niger, Senegal and Volta are the biggest internal waterways within the West African sub-region, while Lakes Chad and Volta are also a huge potential for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses. While the strategic importance of these rivers makes them a clear stimulant for high levels cooperation, it also portends a source of conflicts (small or large scale) to the various countries they traverse. This is more revealing in the

New Dawn for Niger Basin Authority?

At the 8th Summit of Head of States and Government in April 2008, the Water Charter of the Niger Basin was adopted with far reaching implications for the Niger Basin Authority. The Niger Basin Authority (NBA) membership is cross-regional; it has a total of nine members with 7 in West Africa--Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and the other 2 member countries in Central Africa: Cameroun and Chad. Its headquarters is in Niamey, Republic of Niger. All these countries depend on the basin water resources for agriculture, energy supply, drinking water, breeding and navigation needs. As a shared and variable resource, the basin water access



and use cannot be devoid of tension and threat of conflict between the states if there is no equity management. In order to mitigate this, states sharing the River Niger came together to form the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) to allow permanent place for dialogue between them.

Despite spreading over two regions with asserted regional economic community development norms and practices somewhat (ECOWAS in West Africa and ECCAS in Central Africa), the Niger Basin Authority had to struggle, largely aided by donor support and benevolence.

Before now, the Authority was clearly incapable of fulfilling its original mission of promoting cooperation among member states for integrated management of the Basin water resources. This intrinsic incapacity also lay in the organisation expanding its mission to all fields of multilateral cooperation including energy, agriculture, livestock production, fishing, fish farming, sericulture, forest harvesting, transportation, communication and industry, at times where political will for financing had been very weak on the part of member-countries.

An unprecedented progressive paradigm shift that has occurred to the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) since inception in 1980 was the successful conclusion of the organisation restructuring two years ago, as clearly there is a witness of the reversal of the ugly

West Africa's Many Water Wars

Continued from page 7

case of River Niger (the largest of them all) which, even though, has its source in Futa Djallon Mountains in Sierra Leone, traverses 4,000kms across Guinea, Mali, Niger, Benin to converge with River Benue in Lokoja, Nigeria, where it flows further southward into the arteries of the Niger Delta region to empty itself into the Atlantic Ocean.

Much of the disputes that these major rivers and lakes precipitate are premised on the strategic significance of water resources, the nature of desertification/climate change in West Africa and the accompanying policy responses by governments, and the degree of growth of agricultural development goals and objectives of the countries they traverse.

Since 1960s water conflicts in West Africa have varied from concerns precipitated by individual countries' expressed intention to use sections of these regional rivers that cross their territories to cross-border movement of population in search for fresh

water. A highlight of inter-state water conflicts thereby triggered in the region includes:

- ✍ Nigeria-Chad exchange of military fire over use of Lake Chad, including fishing rights of communities in the area;
- ✍ Nigeria Mali exchanges arising from the former's expressed anxiety over the latter's attempts to tap from River Niger (Taoussa Dam) for rice irrigation and other agricultural uses;
- ✍ Nigeria-Niger exchange over the latter's construction of Kandadji Dam;
- ✍ Nigeria-Guinea Bissau exchange over the latter's construction of Fomi Dam;
- ✍ Ghana-Burkina Faso tension over the latter's decision to build a dam blamed for low water deficits at Akosombo and disruption of electricity supply in Ghana;
- ✍ Senegal-Mauritania conflict over water shortage in the Senegal River Basin Development Authority

New Dawn for Niger Basin Authority?

Continued from page 8

situation, member states began to take very responsible steps while maximising support from donors. In that respect, one most indelible mark impressed upon the basin in what could be considered a new dawn has been the restructuring of the Organisation, with a focus on capacity development of its Executive Secretariat, establishment of enabling national mechanisms and strengthening the collaboration with the civil society to effectively and efficiently manage the abundant resources of the basin for economic and social development of the communities and citizens in member states.

In concrete terms, the NBA adopted a strategic Plan up to 2027. What a far projection into the future! Between 2008 -2027, a total of 639 projects worth CFA 3.645 trillion are earmarked for member states. These initiatives, according to the then Executive Secretary, O. Ogunmola, are geared towards "the development of infrastructure for water storage, conservation and utilisation for agriculture, hydropower, fisheries, as well as agro-forestry, silting, erosion control, poverty eradication and socio-economic development of the populations of the basin." In order to mitigate the incapacity, rather the failure of the past, a Fund Mobilisation Unit is now established at the Secretariat in

charge of fundraising for autonomous and sustainable financing of the projects and programmes of the Basin primarily from member-states who called upon themselves to paying their dues promptly and who have seen to the enhancement of conditions of work and life at the Secretariat.

Predicated on this institutional arrangement is a legal framework referred to as the Water Charter of the Niger Basin adopted by the 8th Summit of Head of States and Government in April 2008. Essentially, the Charter will help to foster concerted and cooperative use of the basin, prevent possible conflicts around the shared resource and serve as reference document for national scheme development in member countries.

While the future of NBA and its member countries appears promising, regional economic organisations and the civil society supported by relevant UN bodies must continue to forge ahead stabilisation initiatives by guaranteeing democratic elections and transitions in member countries in one hand and quickly addressing the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire from escalating to neighbouring states and setting indeed a dangerous precedence for the entire region.

Paul Yao Ahiave

West Africa's Many Water Wars

Continued from page 8

(OMVS) which was created by Mali, Mauritania and Senegal to develop and implement water infrastructure programme, including the construction of the downstream Diama Dam and the upstream Manantali, leading to violent skirmishes that have become complicated by regular Black AfricansPaler-skinned Moors in Mauritania; and

Mali-Mauritania conflict over cattle herders' refusal to allow the latter to cross border to water their cattle at a well.

One important issue about the character of water interdependency and its propitious conditions for tensions and increased conflict risks in West Africa is their climate change-induced character which varies in degrees, depending on size and location of proliferated dams in the region and the corresponding effects on the flows, conditions of access and use of water resources.

As serious as the concerns about the many water conflicts in West Africa seem, their threats to regional integration can be mitigated. Nigeria has conveniently addressed this through supply of electricity to Niger Republic. However, the country's deepening epileptic power supply problem arising from long decaying infrastructure and the low water deficits to Kainji Dam, continue to impact negatively on the future of its

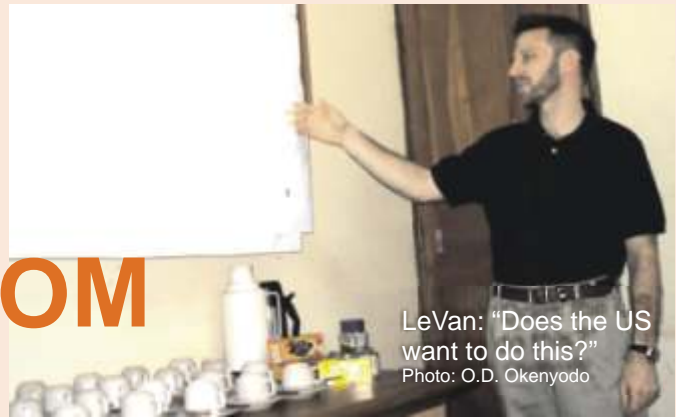
electricity aspiration.

Nigeria has also co-founded the Nigeria-Chad Joint Commission to promote peaceful and beneficial use of Lake Chad, even though this has not prevented exchanges of military crossfire between it and Chad. Initiatives around regional frameworks for cooperation and integration have also given birth to the Mano River Union and the Organisation for the Development of Niger River Basin; though both organisations have proved largely moribund and ineffective owing to factors of under-funding.

Notwithstanding the challenges above, the panacea to achieving necessary peace and beneficial management of trans-boundary waters in West Africa is for all hands to be on deck through a collective submission to collective regional interests as against individual selfish interests. ECOWAS remains the best platform under which such efforts can be anchored. With ECOWAS's new water policy, it is hoped a West Africa free from many water wars is possible.

--Dauda Garuba, *Nigeria Programme Coordinator, Revenue Watch Institute (RWI)*
E-mail: dgaruba@revenuewatch.org

Why Africans Reject AFRICOM



LeVan: "Does the US want to do this?"
Photo: O.D. Okenyodo

On the 4th of March 2011, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) held a seminar on 'Political Economy of African Responses to the U.S Africa Command.' The session witnessed an exposition on the rationale and background on the United States Government's Africa Command, the Department of Defence, DOD's rationalisation of the command, Africans' reactions to the establishment of the command, and the political economy explanation for those reactions. Dr. Carl LeVan, Assistant Professor of the American University, Washington DC, delivered the presentation.

It would be recalled that in 2007, US President, George W Bush had announced the conception of a new military command for Africa known as AFRICOM. Surprisingly the proposed plan received a wide range of negative responses. While some African governments were diplomatic on the subject, others and their press have never sat on the fence on the matter. Dr Carl LeVan's research was a content analysis of over 500 newspaper articles on the subject, specifically from the African continent, correlated with economic growth in the various countries where the articles were published.

His study was prompted by the overwhelming absence of studies on consequences of economic prosperity, against the abundance of studies on the causes of economic growth. Twenty-two African countries without oil, he noted, have maintained about 2% growth

since 2000 compared to -0.7% in 1990s. When countries do well, what are their consequences on foreign policy? Citing leading newspapers from South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria that had bluntly urged their government to reject the proposal to have AFRICOM's headquarters on African soil, and others like Liberia that expressed unbridled support for it, the study posited that countries with favourable economic growth were more hostile to AFRICOM while low-growth economies tended to support AFRICOM and even offer to serve as headquarters for it.

According to Dr LeVan, the debate and the scepticisms bother mostly around the "areas of responsibilities" and several factors that might have precipitated the negative response from Africa; chief among which has been whether the intended plan is a change or continuity in US policy? While the DOD had maintained that the later is not the case, certain factors and statements appeared to contradict same.

The DOD had argued against the notion that the proposal was based on its interest in counterterrorism brewing from Africa and China's growing influence in the region and securing access to oil. Some analysts rather, attributing the negative responses to 'public relations blunder', claimed the DOD did not do a good job of its roll out campaign. Ironically, LeVan contended, scholars, Americans inclusive, have countered that PR-blunder analysis of the problem with

AFRICOM, arguing that it is not a message problem but rather a mission problem.

After the half-hour presentation, some of the questions and discussions dwelt on the operationalisation of aid dependence. Professor Abdulhameed Ujo commented on limitations of the content analysis as methodology in African political science research and conclusion based on economic variables. West Africa Insight editor Odoh Diego Okenyodo, who chaired the session, also talked about the limitations of media reports in Africa heavily influenced by moneybags with insular interests, and unavailability of editorial contents on the internet for search, as some newspapers maintain different web and print copies while others have no websites.

In conclusion, Dr LeVan asserted that tests on alternative explanation for African responses based on a political-economy hypothesis reveal that African politics remains embedded within economic relations, premised on the realisation that most aid-dependent countries with high level of US foreign aid had and were likely to support AFRICOM.

The seminar which held at the CDD Conference room had about twenty participants in attendance, including Professor Ebere Onwudiwe, Professor Abdulhameed Ujo and Dr Jibrin Ibrahim, political scientist and Director of the CDD.

-Oluchi Agbayim

Monthly News and Current Affairs



March 8th 2011, marked the 100th anniversary of the International Women Day celebration all over the world. Organisations, governments and women around the world choose different themes to reflect global and local gender issues. The United Nation chooses a theme every year, 2011 Global UN theme is: Equal access to education, training and science and technology: pathway to descent work for women. The event was commemorated first time on the 19th March 1911 in Australia, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland following its establishment during the socialist international meeting the prior year. More than one million women and men attended the rallies. By 1975, United Nation began celebrating 8 March as International Women's Day.

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/>

African Leaders Choose Ouattara

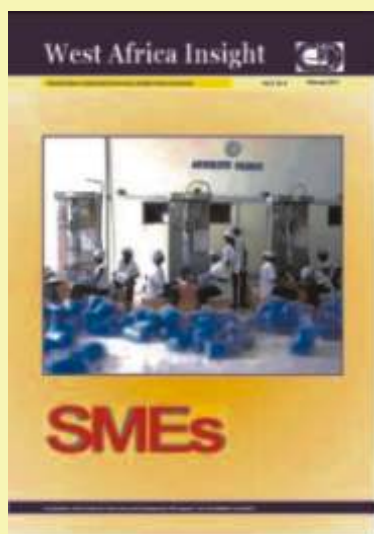
A High level Group comprising of panel of five African heads of state on Thursday 10th March confirmed that the AU considered Mr. Ouattara as the elected president of Cote d'Ivoire, after the elections of 28 November and asked the Constitutional Court of this country to organise its inauguration, the commissioner for peace and security of the AU, Ramtane Lamamra, told press.

Meanwhile anger and violence continue to reign in Ivory Coast as incumbent President Gbagbo refuses call to step down. The veteran president has vowed to hang on to power, an act which threatens peace and security and leaves the nation hanging at the brink of civil war.

Over 370 people have been killed in clashes since late 2010 in Côte d'Ivoire, the UN says.

<http://www.pisqa.com/03/cote-divoire-au-confirms-the-election-of-ouattara-gbagbo-intransigent/>

Readers' Feedback



Thank you for this delightful soft copy of the West Africa Insight newsletter! It was really well crafted. However, I want to make two suggestions:

1. Apart from the interview segment, I believe it should have a write up by a Subject Expert reflecting on the thematic area for each edition. The aim will be to clearly distil out the cross-cutting issues in relation to CDD's charter (i.e. Democratic Governance, Gender, Peace and Security) as well as the tie up of the linkages with the Millennium Development Goals. Let us not forget, 2015 is just next door.

2. Since the West Africa Insight Newsletter cannot be inordinately large, nor attempt to capture EVERY relevant information, and considering that e-versions of the newsletter like this one, will be a periodic traffic across the web, it may be good to add a box... maybe on the back page with 4-6 relevant 'weblinks' for additional information and further reading. A "click" can further enrich our reading.

Best wishes!

Dr. Francis Ohanyido, FRSPH, MD, CEO/Team Leader, Africa, Synergy PMP, Abuja. ohanyido@ohanyido.cjb.net

Water Can Aid Cooperation--Mogbante

Mr Dam Mogbante is West Africa Coordinator of the Global Water Partnership with an office based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. This abridged version of a chat with Odoh Diego Okenyodo reveals the steps being taken to bring West Africa towards efficient management of its water resources.



Dam Mogbante

How much of water shortage would you say West Africa suffers from?

The sub region has, in global terms, substantial water resources, but at country, and local levels, some places experience chronic shortages due to uneven distribution of rainfall and water over time and space, underdevelopment of potential water resources and poor management of existing resources. Critical shortages of water occur in the dry seasons and this is one of the challenges we should face to meet water supply for domestic, industrial, irrigation and hydropower uses.

Has integrated water resources management (IWRM) approach generated the kind of partnerships that demonstrate potentials to alleviate water-related suffering in the sub region?

Absolutely. When we talk about water, we must go beyond its primary use and see its overall contribution to development and poverty reduction. From the West

African Conference on IWRM held in March 1998, our region has had the privilege to foster the political will that led to the adoption of West African Regional Action Plan for IWRM (WARAP-IWRM) by the Heads of States and Government in December 2000. This process led to the establishment of the Permanent Structure for Coordination and Monitoring of Water Resources with all its organs. Partnerships are well established, and enabling environments exist for synergy around capacity building of organisations to improve trans-boundary cooperation.

If the new water policy adopted by ECOWAS should be useful, unlike other policy instruments which have been lying disused, what should we all do?

Strengthening of collaboration and the flow of information, as well as sharing of experiences are some key elements. The ECOWAS Commission for Agriculture, Environment and Water and WRCC should ensure the consistency of this policy with those defined by each member country and strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders so that they can understand and use it.

Visitors to West Africa are advised against drinking tap water due to fear of water-borne diseases. When will the health risks associated with drinking water come to an end in this sub region?

But the people in the region drink

this water. This alarmist view has something positive, though: it reminds us that there is concern and we are committed both on the quantity and the quality on water supply needs. But it seems that this situation is being improved by water companies, and at household level with the impact of information campaigns, training, and education on hygiene and sanitation because these practices alone decreased the risk of diarrhoea by 42%.

Do you see water having the potentials becoming the subject of conflicts among West African countries in the next 10 years?

Frankly, in the next 10 years I do not perceive a great risk. However in the longer term, if left unchecked, conflicting interests could lead to situations of crisis; that is why tools such as the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses are in place and GWP, WWF Green Cross and other organisations are pushing for its ratification. Let me congratulate Nigeria, Guinea Bissau and Burkina Faso for having shown the way to other countries in West Africa by ratifying the Convention.

Basin organisations such as the NBA, the LCBC, VBA, the regional integration organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA) and the existing IGOs (CILSS, CREPA, etc.) are working to that end. The essence of these efforts is to make shared water a factor of cooperation and not a source of conflict.