

Ecologically Sensitive Sites in Africa

Volume IV: West Africa

Ghana
Guinea-Bissau
Liberia
Nigeria
São Tomé e Príncipe
Sierra Leone

Compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre

For



The World Bank

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ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE SITES IN AFRICA

PREFACE

During the last two decades, there has been growing evidence that environmental degradation in its many forms constitutes a threat of growing significance to economic development. In addition, the rapid evolution of the environmental agenda has led to an increased understanding of the interdependence among economic activities and their environmental consequences, both within and between countries. The economic and physical interdependence between nations is illustrated by the emergence of new kinds of environmental problems, such as the deterioration of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, tropical deforestation, and the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes.

The Bank has been active in the field of environmental protection and, in the last decade, has financed numerous projects containing environmental components as well as several free standing environmental projects, which have had solely environmental objectives, such as reforestation, watershed management and pollution control. Through the introduction on new directives on environmental assessment, environmental action plans, forestry policy, the global environmental facility, resettlement, indigenous people and wildlands, the Bank has definitely distinguished itself as a leader in environmental protection.

Despite the above efforts, it became evidently clear that the Bank's response did not match the changing realities in the degree of effort devoted to environmental matters or in the approaches actually used. This combined with a few well publicised cases in which World Bank projects actually had some negative environmental consequences - such as contributing to the destruction of tropical rain forests and posing threats to wildlife populations, indigenous people, and established human settlements, prompted the Bank to rethink and adjust its policies toward environmental management. In its recent reorganisation, the Bank management decided to bring environmental concerns more systematically into the mainstream of its operation by establishing a Vice Presidency on Environmentally Sustainable Development.

This new action reiterates the Bank's commitment to bringing environmental issues into the mainstream of the lending operations and policy work. Partly influenced by global events such as the Rio Summit and from the Bank's own experience in environmental work, there continues to be a general consensus on five priority areas which will require the Bank's special attention and also the attention of its member countries. These include destruction of natural habitats; land degradation; degradation and depletion of fresh water resources; urban, industrial, and agricultural pollution; and degradation of the "global commons". Although these five areas have been addressed in the Bank's operations through various country focused environmental action plans, through coverage of environmental issues in country economic and sector work, and through actual lending operations, there has been expressed concern by task

managers on the availability of environmental information on which to base certain decisions.

This publication is made in response to requests from task managers in the Africa region who wanted to know the location and properties of the ecologically sensitive sites in Africa to which they could refer while implementing Bank projects in the region. This publication is also made to assist task managers to comply with the Bank's Operational Policy Note No. 11.02 on "Wildlands: Their Protection and Management in Economic Development". The publication has been compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, UK in collaboration with the Africa Environment Division of the Technical Department at the World Bank. It contains the most up-to-date available data and we hope it will find wider application beyond the Bank's operations.

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