



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

REGIONAL
SEAS

*Onshore impact of offshore
oil and natural gas development
in the West and Central African Region*

UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 33

Prepared in co-operation with



UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

UNEP 1984

Note: This document has been prepared jointly by the Ocean Economics and Technology Branch of the United Nations Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (UNDIESA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under project FP/9503-79-16 as a contribution to the development of the Action Plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the West and Central African Region. The assistance of Mr. U. H. Chukumerije in the preparation of the report is gratefully acknowledged.

This document has been previously issued as UNEP/17.22/INF.8 (16 January 1981).

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For bibliographic purposes this document may be cited as:

UNDIESA/UNEP: Onshore impact of offshore oil and natural gas development in the West and Central African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 33. UNEP, 1984.



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PREFACE

Ten years ago the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972) adopted the Action Plan for the Human Environment, including the General Principles for Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution. In the light of the results of the Stockholm Conference, the United Nations General Assembly decided to establish the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to "serve as a focal point for environmental action and co-ordination within the United Nations system" (General Assembly resolution (XVII) of 15 December 1972). The organizations of the United Nations system were invited "to adopt the measures that may be required to undertake concerted and co-ordinated programmes with regard to international environmental problems", and the "intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that have an interest in the field of the environment" were also invited "to lend their full support and collaboration to the United Nations with a view to achieving the largest possible degree of co-operation and co-ordination". Subsequently, the Governing Council of UNEP chose "Oceans" as one of the priority areas in which it would focus efforts to fulfil its catalytic and co-ordinating role.

The Regional Seas Programme was initiated by UNEP in 1974. Since then the Governing Council of UNEP has repeatedly endorsed a regional approach to the control of marine pollution and the management of marine and coastal resources and has requested the development of regional action plans.

The Regional Seas Programme at present includes eleven regions ^{1/} and has over 120 coastal States participating in it. It is conceived as an action-oriented programme having concern not only for the consequences but also for the causes of environmental degradation and encompassing a comprehensive approach to combating environmental problems through the management of marine and coastal areas. Each regional action plan is formulated according to the needs of the region as perceived by the Governments concerned. It is designed to link assessment of the quality of the marine environment and the causes of its deterioration with activities for the management and development of the marine and coastal environment. The action plans promote the parallel development of regional legal agreements and of action-oriented programme activities ^{2/}.

At the third session of UNEP's Governing Council (1975), a number of West and Central African States requested UNEP to study the problems of marine and coastal pollution of their region. As a result of that request, UNEP's exploratory mission visited fourteen States of the region during 1976. The mission's report identified the major environmental problems of the region and recommended the development of a regional action plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the region.

^{1/} Mediterranean Region, Kuwait Action Plan Region, West and Central African Region, Wider Caribbean Region, East Asian Seas Region, South-East Pacific Region, South Pacific Region, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Region, East African Region, South-West Atlantic Region and South Asian Region.

^{2/} UNEP: Achievements and planned development of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and comparable programmes sponsored by other bodies. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 1. UNEP, 1982.

After considering the report of the mission, the fifth session of the Governing Council (1977) decided that "steps should be undertaken for the development of an action plan and a regional agreement to prevent and abate pollution" in the West and Central African region.

The preparatory work on the development of the action plan and the regional agreement included several expert group meetings, missions and surveys^{3/} leading to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (UNEP/IG.22/7) convened by UNEP in Abidjan, 16 - 23 March 1981 as the final stage of the preparatory work leading to the adoption of the (a) Action Plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the West and Central African Region, (b) Convention for the Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, (c) Protocol concerning co-operation in combating pollution in cases of emergency, and (d) a set of conference resolutions.

This document is one of the surveys prepared as a contribution to the development of the Action Plan.

3/ For details see:

- Report of the Executive Director on preparatory activities for an action plan for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment in the West African Region. UNEP/IG.22/4. UNEP, 1981.
- UNIDO/UNEP: Survey of marine pollutants from industrial sources in the West and Central African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 2. UNEP, 1982.
- UNESCO/UNEP: River inputs to the West and Central African marine environment. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 3. UNEP, 1982.
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- UNDIESA/UNEP: Ocean energy potential of the West African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 30. UNEP, 1983.
- UNDIESA/UNEP: Environmental management problems in resource utilization and survey of resources in the West and Central African Region. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies No. 37. UNEP, 1984.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The present profile of commercial energy production and consumption in the West African Region, is dominated by oil and natural gas liquids. During the period 1971-75, the average annual production of oil and gas accounted for almost ninety-nine per cent of the total production of commercial energy in the region. Production of crude petroleum and natural gas, however, was concentrated in five of the nineteen countries (Angola, Congo, Gabon, Nigeria and Zaire) that constitute the region and is dominated by Nigerian production.^{1/} Of the five producers during this period, only three were net exporters of oil (Nigeria, Gabon and Angola) while the remaining two producers and fourteen non-producers were part of a large group of oil importing developing countries (OIDC's).

For the group of oil importing developing countries, the sum effect of the oil price increases on their economies since 1973 has been severe. The price rises, world economic recession, and lack of deflationary policies in several of them have led to large increases in their current account deficits. Since imported energy (in this case consisting almost entirely of imported oil) is required for the industrial sectors of their economies, a reduction in energy supply in the short-term, will result in lower economic growth because non-productive uses of oil are minimal. For these countries, the new level of petroleum prices has two principal long-term implications:

(1) In the short-term, given their limited ability to conserve oil or substitute other energy sources for petroleum, they must continue to borrow the foreign funds needed to finance oil imports or else reduce their rate of economic growth;

^{1/} See Annex 1 for production, reserves and movements in 1977-78 of petroleum in the region.



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