



Côte d'Ivoire

Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment

United Nations Environment Programme

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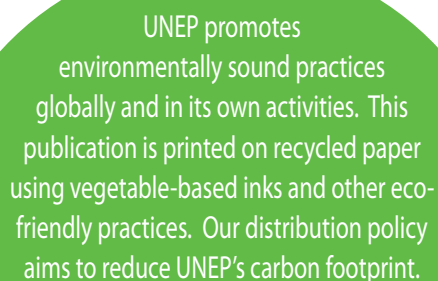
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Foreword

Rich in natural resources, Côte d'Ivoire is a country with a strong history of economic prosperity. Using its fertile land for cocoa and coffee production, economic growth of Côte d'Ivoire surpassed any other in the region between 1960 and 1979, a period known as the "Ivorian miracle". However, economic decline and over a decade of internal conflict has rolled back these gains and damaged the nation's environmental resource base.

As Côte d'Ivoire moves towards reconciliation and sustainable development, sound management of the country's natural wealth will be critical for inclusive economic growth, social cohesion and political stability. This multi-disciplinary, environmental assessment aims to help guide the country towards a more prosperous and environmentally sustainable course.

Focusing on critical issues such as forestry, the system of national parks, urban expansion challenges in Abidjan, and the Ébrié Lagoon, this report offers a series of public policy interventions to help reshape the country's environmental situation. It calls for renewed efforts to halt widespread deforestation and for the protection and management of areas with significant conservation value. It also outlines how investments in ecological restoration can help support the country's economic recovery. With a young population, relatively low population density and a favourable climate,



Côte d'Ivoire has the potential to reverse environmental degradation and emerge as a leader on green economy solutions.

UNEP remains committed to supporting Côte d'Ivoire as it moves ahead with implementing the report's recommendations. With a new sub-regional office in Abidjan, UNEP looks forward to future collaboration with Côte d'Ivoire to assist the nation in charting a path to sustainable economic growth.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Achim Steiner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Achim" and last name "Steiner" clearly distinguishable.

Achim Steiner

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Director
of the United Nations Environment Programme

Foreword

The decade of crisis recently experienced by Côte d'Ivoire and its undoubted impacts on the environment have led the Ivorian Government to embark on such an ambitious environmental assessment exercise for the first time.

This exercise reinforces the vision of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Alassane Ouattara, which is “to ensure a healthy environment for all by anchoring sustainable development in society, so that each citizen is a responsible actor and contributes to harmony between environmental quality, economic dynamism and social equity.”

Besides the will to be acquainted with and analyze the environmental impacts of the 11 years of crisis faced by our country, we thought it appropriate for the Government to have some idea of the changes that have affected the diverse environmental ecosystems of Côte d'Ivoire for more than half a century.

It is in this spirit that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has called upon the services of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide our country with the required technical assistance to carry out this post-conflict environmental assessment.

We welcome the quality and experience of the multidisciplinary team made available to our country to cover all aspects of the environmental assessment, also taking into account the social and institutional dimensions without which our efforts to manage the environment in a sustainable way would be in vain.

While international experts have played a key role, it is important to emphasize the particularly crucial contribution of national experts to the success of this initiative.

This report is of a high quality in so far as it fulfils the fundamental criteria of a good scientific research based on reliable data and experimentation.

The terrestrial, maritime, lagoonal and aerial techniques as well as remote sensing and other Earth Observation Science used for the assessment are further proof of the rigour of the science-based process which underlies the report's observations and findings.

The articulation of the report along interconnected themes, such as forests and national parks, the Ébrié



lagoon, the mining sector and the urban environment, strengthen our understanding of the interactions between the ecosystems studied and their importance for our country's socio-economic development.

The essence of the report lies in a series of realistic recommendations intended for Ivorian policymakers and particularly the strong correlations between the measures to be taken to sustainably manage our environment and the opportunities available to us to transform our country into an emerging country by 2020, by taking the environment into account.

Three of the recommendations have especially captured my attention. The first one concerns the reform of the forest sector and national parks. We have been delighted to learn that it is possible to partially or totally recover 80 % of the forest coverage lost since independence by implementing a deliberate and rigorous rehabilitation policy of the Ivorian forests, illustrated by the programme “Agriculture with zero deforestation” launched by the President of the Republic at the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2014.

The second recommendation relates to the reversing of the trend towards the current unsustainable development of the city of Abidjan. Once again, we have been pleased to learn from the report and the wise suggestions of the experts that it is possible to restore the environmental quality of Abidjan, which is home to 5 million people, through the implementation of a true national urban policy.

The third recommendation is related to the Ébrié lagoon, which in its current state symbolizes the decline of a city once compared to the town of Geneva in Switzerland. We are glad to note that the situation is not irreversible and that it is possible to stop spills of all kinds in the lagoon, whose environmental load capacity is currently greatly overburdened. We are of the opinion that the lagoon system of Côte d'Ivoire, unique in the world in terms of its size and functions, can provide opportunities in the areas of trade, fisheries, recreational activities, urban transport, tourism etc., whilst at the same time improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of our economic capital.

As we can see, this report is different from other reports in the sense that it lays the foundations of a radical change in the management of the environmental challenges faced by Côte d'Ivoire,

without which the emergence that we aspire to will not be possible.

I wish to conclude by passing on the Government's sincere thanks to UNEP and all experts involved in the drafting of this report.

We applaud the quality of the relations between our country and UNEP, which has just opened an office in Côte d'Ivoire, hosting the Sub-Regional Office for West Africa and the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, which do tremendous work.

We firmly commit to rigorously implementing the post-conflict environmental assessment report's recommendations as part of the drive towards of ongoing socio-economic development, in order to ensure that the Côte d'Ivoire becomes an emergent country by 2020.



Dr. Remi Allah-Kouadio

Minister of the Environment, Urban Salubrity
and Sustainable Development of Côte d'Ivoire

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