

## ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

### I. INTRODUCTION

One of the Agency goals is to manage environment for long-term sustainability. USAID places high priority on the environmental sector as it contributes to the Agency's goal of sustainable, broad-based economic growth. Wise use of natural resources and environmental protection are fundamental to USAID's assistance program. Ensuring the environmental soundness of every USAID program, project, and activity is a prerequisite for sustainable development. It is also a legal obligation under the Agency's regulations.

This environmental analysis is done in accordance with sections 117, 118 and 119 of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) which relate to overseas assistance affecting tropical forestry and biodiversity.

Section 117 of the FAA states that: "Special efforts shall be made to maintain and where possible to restore the land, vegetation, water, wildlife, and other resources upon which depend economic growth and human well-being, especially of the poor." This section also requires USAID to "take fully into account" the impact of its activities on the environment and natural resources of developing countries.

Section 118 of the FAA precludes assistance for certain activities that may affect tropical forests unless an environmental assessment indicates that the activity will contribute significantly and directly to improving the livelihoods of the rural poor and will be conducted in a manner that supports sustainable development.

Section 119 of the FAA aims at the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of endangered species. It specifies that USAID must ensure that ongoing and proposed actions by the Agency do not inadvertently endanger wildlife or plant species or their critical habitats, harm protected areas, or have other adverse impacts on biological diversity.

USAID missions are required under section 118 and 119 of the FAA to provide information on tropical forests as appropriate in their country development strategy. The information should contain an analysis of : (1) actions necessary in that country to achieve conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests; and (2) the extent to which the actions proposed for support by the Agency meet the needs identified.

This analysis does not cover all aspects of biodiversity in Guinea. However, the Mission believes that much of the desired information has already been developed through other works, especially the Biodiversity Monograph (*Monographie Nationale sur la Diversité Biologique*) prepared by the National Directorate of Environment with the assistance of the United National Environmental Fund. As the Mission has reviewed its program in light of these already completed works, any additional detailed reporting would only be redundant.

108

## II. ASSESSMENT OF PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND TROPICAL FORESTS IN GUINEA

USAID/Guinea conducted an agricultural sector assessment in March 1997, which included an assessment of natural resources in Guinea. The results of this assessment indicate that population growth and poverty have led to environmental degradation which threatens the conservation of biological resources and tropical forests in Guinea.

### 1. Increased Extensification of Agriculture on Marginal Lands

The large majority of Guinea's rural households are resource-poor smallholders who increasingly rely on extensive subsistence farming and inappropriate cropping patterns to keep up with their demand for food. More marginal lands are being farmed, more woodlands and forests are converted to agriculture by slash and burn practices, fallow duration is reduced, and investment in conservation measures and improved seeds is lacking due to insufficient revenues. As a result, soil fertility is depleted and erosion becomes more and more serious, causing continued loss of agricultural productivity and increased environmental degradation.

### 2. Degradation of Forest Resources

Guinea's woody vegetative cover consists of 10.6 million hectares of wooded savanna, 1.6 million hectares of dry forests, 700,000 hectares of dense forests, and 250,000 hectares of mangroves. These woody resources are very degraded due to partial conversion of forest land to crop agriculture, inopportune burning, and irrational resource harvesting. This destruction concerns not only the dense forests but also all gallery forests. According to the Forest Service, the deforestation in recent years has been at the average rate of 136,000 hectares per year, 36,000 of which belong to dense forests. A few decades ago, there were about 14 million hectares of dense forests. Today, only 700,000 hectares of these dense forests exist mostly in the Forested Guinea.

There are 162 forest reserves (*Forêts classées*) in Guinea with a total areas of about 1,182,133 hectares which account for 4.80 percent of the national territory. Unfortunately, most of these forest reserves have been devastated by resource-poor people who earn their living through illegal charcoal making, timber exploitation, and agricultural conversion of forest lands, and by the forest service's lack of human and financial resources to effectively protect these resources. The majority of the forest reserves are small in size, with only 19 percent being 10,000 hectares or larger. In fact, 72 percent of the forest reserves have less than 5,000 hectares in size. These smaller forest reserves, while important, make biodiversity conservation more difficult.

### **3. Degradation of Biodiversity Resources**

As people continue to expand their extensive farming to meet their demand for food, biodiversity resources are under pressure through the conversion of woodlands into agricultural lands causing the shrinkage of the wildlife habitats throughout the country, especially in the Fouta Djallon Highlands where the competition between smallholders and wildlife is extremely high due to high population density and shortage of arable land and where a number of endemic plants are observed between the altitudes of 700 and 1,000 meters. Moreover, the uncontrolled killings of wild animals by local hunters have drastically reduced the fauna population and put some species on the brink of extinction.

In the Maritime Guinea, the unsustainable harvest of significant amounts of fuel woods from the 250,000 hectares of mangrove is also a major problem for biodiversity conservation, in addition to the conversion of steep forest lands to upland rice cultivation by slash and burn practices.

In the Forested Guinea, the adverse environmental impacts from the conversion of forest to cropland are accelerating with the influx of more than 500,000 refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone and biodiversity conservation has been identified as being of highest priority in this region for both plants and animals.

One of the major biodiversity concerns is the Nimba Mountain Reserve located near the borders of Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast in the forested region. This reserve possesses a special characteristic of biological diversity due to the existence of different types flora and fauna that make up the tropical ecological systems at high altitudes. Classified as an integrated natural reserve in 1944, a biosphere reserve in 1980, and a world patrimony site in 1981, the Nimba Mountain Reserve consists of 145,200 hectares and is rich in plants and animals, some of which are unique in the world. However, its great biodiversity and its potential for eco-tourism have been threatened by a rapid increase of the population which is due in part to the influx of the refugees from neighboring countries and the immigration of people who seek job opportunities in the local mining sector. The destruction of natural forests and wildlife habitats to expand crop production has occurred and the killings of wild animals for food have been intensified. The GOG has created the Center for the Management of the Environment of the Nimba Mountain to protect the reserve. However, this center lacks necessary resources to carry out its mission effectively.

### **4. Weak Institutional Capacity for the Management of the Environment and Natural Resources**

In general, Guinea has established an adequate policy and legal framework for the management of the environment and natural resources including the conservation of

110

biological diversity and tropical forests. This framework is based on a number of important legislations, policy papers, and international conventions, among which are the following:

- The Tropical Forest Action Plan;
- The Forest Code and its implementing texts;
- The Environment Code and its implementing texts;
- The Code for fauna protection and hunting regulations;
- The Land Tenure Code;
- The Agricultural Development Policy Letter;
- The National Environmental Action Plan; and
- The Ramsar Convention related to humid zones of international importance, with regard to habitats of waterfowls;
- The African Convention for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; and
- The Convention on Biological Diversity.

However, the GOG does not have a functional coordination of all the activities concerning the environment and natural resources in various sectors. There are duplications of efforts and the concurrence for resources among different ministries within the Government. Currently, the Ministry of Public Works and Environment is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan and the application of the environmental regulations. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Forests is in charge of management of soil and forest resources. There is little coordination between these two ministries. Moreover, both of them lack the necessary technical and management capacity as well as financial resources to effectively administer their programs.

Although the current Forest Code allows for the participation of the communities in the management of forest resources, the application of that provision at the local level has been hindered by the weak capacity of public institutions and the ineffective organization at the community level to plan and carry out community-based natural resource management.

### **III. USAID/GUINEA'S STRATEGY ADDRESSING THE IDENTIFIED CONSTRAINTS**

The Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP) adopted by the GOG in 1989 recognized that the degradation of the ecosystems has advanced in all regions of the country and this would adversely affect the future of the national economy which depends to a large part on agriculture. The TFAP cited the rehabilitation of these forest reserves as the first, urgent task to be undertaken by the Government.

USAID's has helped Guinea address its environmental problems through two actions which aim at reducing the pressure on the environment: (1) increasing smallholders' income for sustainable natural resource management and (2) stabilizing population through family planning.

community actions on conservation of natural resources. They advise villagers how to prevent environmentally harmful bush fires and to rationally manage communal forests.

In order to expand the impact of the current NRM activity, USAID/Guinea proposes a natural resource management strategic objective under the new country strategic plan. This strategic objective aims to increase use of sustainable natural resource management practices by smallholders through increased household income and enhanced community-based natural resource management. The achievement of this strategic objective will help Guinea manage its forests optimally, conserve biological resources, and exploit its agriculture resource base for food production and income, on a sustainable basis.

Under this new strategic objective, smallholders will be assisted to increase their agricultural income through increased land and labor productivity and through improved marketing of farm produce. Environmentally sound, yield-enhancing technologies will be made available to smallholders through extension activities carried out by Peace Corps volunteers and agents working for the PVOs, NGOs and government services associated with this strategic objective. Participatory training in farm management will be provided to smallholders.

Opportunities for community-based enterprises to provide non-farm income to villagers identified under the ongoing activity will be further developed and replicated in other areas. Special attention will be given to women and other land poor villagers.

Enhanced community-based natural resource management will be effected through strengthening local capacity to plan and manage natural resources and through increasing co-management of communal natural resources. Successful interventions in management of communal natural resources under the ongoing activity will be replicated in new areas by the Peace Corps, PVO, Guinean NGOs, and the Forest Service. Effort will be focussed on promoting the co-management of forest resources not only in the Fouta Djallon, but also in other regions in Guinea. USAID will work with the GOG to ensure that the present policy environment favorable to the participation of the local populations in the management of natural resources will be maintained.

## **2. Stabilization of Population through Family Planning**

As rapid population growth is identified as one of the major causes of the environmental degradation. As 80 percent of Guineans are living in the rural areas, USAID's health strategic objective which aims to increase the use of essential family planning, maternal health and STD/AIDS prevention services and practices will certainly have an impact on the conservation of natural resources and biological diversity.

## **IV. OTHER DONORS'S ACTIVITIES CONCERNING PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY**

*USAID/Guinea Strategic Plan FYs 1998 - 2005*  
*May 12, 1997*

---

112

The accelerating environmental degradation and the regional importance of the Fouta Djallon Highlands with respect to the sources of the three major rivers in West Africa have attracted commitments from several donors to help Guinea in the area of natural resource management.

### 1. Soil, Water and Vegetation Conservation

The European Union's *Programme Régional d'Aménagement des Bassins Versants du Haut Niger et de la Haute Gambie* started in 1991 with a funding of ECU 37.5. Its second phase will begin in 1998 with a funding of about US \$ 50 million. The project focuses on the long-term protection of the two watersheds: Upper Niger and Upper Gambia. It is concerned primarily with natural resource management, with emphasis on soil conservation, waterpoint improvement, and improving vegetative cover through agroforestry and brush fire management in Middle, Upper and Forested Guinea.

The *Projet de Gestion des Ressources Rurales* which started in 1996 with a total funding of 25.2 million DM from the German Development Bank (KfW) and GTZ will continue until the year 2003. This project supports natural resource management and environmental protection by improving agriculture in populated areas and rehabilitating natural forests in Forested and Maritime Guinea.

United Nations Environmental Fund's [UNEF] *Projet Développement Rural Moyenne Guinée* objective is to preserve and manage natural resources while improving the lives of the rural population in Middle Guinea. United Nations High Commission for Refugee's [UNHCR] *Projet de Reboisement UNHCR en Guinée Forestière* is rehabilitating land degraded by refugees in Forested Guinea.

### 2. Biodiversity Conservation

European Development Fund supports biodiversity conservation with two activities, the *Projet de Conservation des Chimanzés en Guinée* and the *Parc National du Haut Niger*. The later project is a study for creating a park in Upper Guinea. The United Nations Development Program [UNDP] supports scientific studies of the biodiversity rich Nimba mountains area of Forested Guinea with the *Protection de l'Environnement et de Gestion Rationnelle de Ressources du Monts Nimba*. The project includes training and extension for a pilot farm.

With the financial assistance of United Nations Environmental Funds, the National Directorate of Environment is developing the *Monographie Nationale sur la Diversité Biologique* which provides a comprehensive assessment of the state of biological diversity in Guinea.

### 3. Institutional Support

The Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA] supports the *Centre de Études et Recherche en Environnement* at the *Université Abdel Nasser de Conakry* with geographic information system [GIS] training and equipment. GTZ's *Projet Conseiller Forestier* provides a technical consultant to DNFF for a period of one year, and possibly up to three years, to help develop the Forestry Code. UNDP's *Élimination des Substances Appauvrissement de l'Ozone* is a project to train customs officials in how to identify and dispose of substances that have been identified as harmful to the ozone layer.

114