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ES/RD's Visit to the New Minister in charge of Environment in Ghana

On 25 August 2007, the Executive Secretary and Regional Director, Prof. Ibe visited the new Ghanaian Minister for Local Government in charge of Environment.

Prof. Ibe congratulated the Minister on his appointment to the new office and pledged the support of the IGCC for mutual benefit.

He introduced the GCLME project to the Minister and the evolution from project to Commission and urged the Minister to follow up with the process of implantation of the IGCC in Ghana

He further briefed the Minister about the responsibilities of his Ministry as host Ministry to the IGCC and the GCLME project and informed him about the UNIDO Director General's planned mission to Ghana at a date to be agreed upon.

The Minister was also informed of the principal objective of the DG's mission which is to discuss with the President, an initiative on Biofuels on a continent wide basis with priority focus on Ghana and secondly, to personally deliver to the President his letter of invitation as the Guest of Honour to the next General Conference of UNIDO.



Prof. Ibe in a handshake with Mr. Adjei-Darko.

2nd IGCC/UNIDO/IMO/IPIECA Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Development of Sub-Regional Contingency Plans and Sub-Regional Agreements for Co-operation in Cases of Major Marine Pollution Incidents, Ghana, 20-22 August 2007



The High Table at the Opening Ceremony. L-R: Dr. Chika Ukwé (UNIDO), Capt. A. O. Turkson, Principal, Regional Maritime Academy, Ghana and Chair of the Ceremony, Hon. Prof. Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi, Min. Harbours and Railways, Prof. Chidi Ibe, Exec. Sec., IGCC/Reg. Dir., GCLME, Mr. M. Thiam, Tech. Off., Marine Env. Division of IMO and Philippe de Susanne of IPIECA.

The week of 20-22 August was dedicated to the Second Meeting of the Tehnical Advisory Group on the Development of sub-regional contingency plans and sub-regional agreements for co-operation in cases of major marine pollution incidents. The Meeting which was held at the Kenneth Sherman Conference Hall of the IGCC was organized by the IGCC in collaboration with UNIDO, IMO and IPIECA.

The Meeting was organized back-to-back with the Meeting on the Revision of the Emergency Protocol to the Abidjan Convention, which was held at the same venue from 23 to 24 April 2007. Its main objectives were to finalize the draft sub-regional plan, the draft agreement for co-operation in cases of emergency, the draft terms of reference for the sub-regional center and other related documents.



SPEECH GALORE!!!



Hon. Prof. Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi, Minister for Harbours and Railways revealed that matters of the environment are very dear to his heart.



Capt. A. O. Turkson urged participants to pay particular attention to carrying out regular drills and simulation exercises to facilitate the implementation of the Sub-regional Contingency Plan.



Prof. Ibe welcomed all delegates to the two important Meetings and thanked them for their continued interest and support for regional activities being implemented from the vantage platform of the IGCC.



Mr. Malamine Thiam, Technical Officer, Marine Environment Division of IMO, speaking on behalf of Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos, Secretary-General of IMO, welcomed the participants to the meeting and also pledged the support of IMO.



Dr. Chika Ukwé, speaking on behalf of the UNIDO Director General, Dr. Kandeh Yumkella stressed the need to adopt plans that could be activated in case of any oil related incident and said he would recommend the plans to UNIDO for implementation.

The Meeting attracted participants from all the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem countries as nominated by their National Project Directors and national maritime Authorities. With a view to facilitating the future participation of all countries covered by the Abidjan Convention, the Meeting was also attended by relevant international organizations and ministries in the other countries of West and Central Africa, including South Africa.

Hon. Professor Christopher Ameyaw-Akumfi, Minister for Harbours and Railways officially opened the Meeting. He noted that the meetings were being held at a time when maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment were receiving renewed attention and active support from all countries. He applauded the collaboration between the IGCC, UNIDO, IMO and IPIECA to address concerns relating to the development of regional cooperation in cases of major marine pollution incidents within the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) region in West and Central Africa.



L-R: Dr. Niagne Martin Dibi, Côte d'Ivoire, Dr. Blaise Efendene, Cameroon and Chidi Nnadi of the Sun Newspapers, Nigeria.

FLASH BACK !!!

Guest Lecture on Maritime Safety



L-R on the High table are: Capt. Turkson, Principal - Maritime Academy, Mr. Phillip Lukuley from Sierra Leone and Prof. Chidi Ibe.

On 7 June, 2007 Prof. Chidi Ibe honoured an invitation from the Ministry of Harbours and Railways to give a lecture on Marine Safety at the 39th Board of Governors' Meeting of the Regional Maritime Academy, Accra, Ghana.

While speaking, Prof. Ibe cautioned that inspite of the safety regulations and the advanced state of sea-safety practiced by most maritime interests, the shadow of another maritime disaster happening is a reality that continues to haunt mankind. According to him, the reality today is that the Gulf of Guinea which in its widest extent covers the countries of all the members countries of the Board of Governors of the Regional Maritime Academy, is one vast pool of petroleum and gas.

While recalling past catastrophic incidents of plane crash and sea disasters, Prof. Ibe posed the following questions:



"Is maritime safety an issue? If it is, what should be done?" Prof. Ibe asked.

- do we have a dedicated, vigilant and efficient system that could quickly respond to any accident at sea with the aim of keeping down to the lowest possible level the human casualty as well as minimize and take measures to prevent, mitigate or eliminate danger to property and the environment?
- do we have the necessary preparedness for an in-depth analysis of the risk of maritime emergencies, and the identification of the structures best-suited to manage the response to ensure timely and efficient deployment of resources?
- have our respective Governments and Maritime Authorities devoted attention to the training of personnel likely to be involved and the testing of the response system through exercises?



Cross section of Naval cadets at the lecture



A Naval Cadet asking question at the end of the lecture.



L-R: Mr. Napoleon Gbolonyo and Dr. Jacques Abe of IGCC. Directly behind Dr. Abe is Capt. Georgina Jopap-Tackie, Maritime Consultant.

Prof Ibe concluded by stating that it is expected that the sub region would be better placed to intervene jointly in cases of major maritime accidents either in the territorial waters of a single nation or in cases of a transboundary nature affecting more than one nation.

He hoped that the ability to deal with such eventualities would be greatly enhanced by the member countries of the Sub Region taking steps to ratify International Conventions.

He therefore, urged the Ministers responsible for Maritime Affairs in the countries of the Sub Region to ratify the relevant Conventions as well as the respective multilateral Agreements on the RMRCC and the Sub-Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan.



Group photograph of some high level participants.