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## **Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C7-WA).**

### **Introduction**

Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW) is implementing a project with three partners, referred herein as consortium members, namely Fondazione Accademia Italiana della Marina Mercantile (FAIMM), Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), and West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) with support from the European Union (EU). The title of the project is “Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C7-WA). The aim of the project is to strengthen West African Coastal Communities’ resilience to cope with climate change and conflict by developing innovative tools related to conflict sensitive climate change (CC) adaptation and prevention of environmental crimes that exacerbate climate change impact on communities as well as monitoring of the impact of climate change as a driver of conflict.

To achieve this, the project intends to develop tools, based on innovative research and global best practices, which will be tested through the establishment of a Community Stakeholders Network, constituted with highly influential community stakeholders’ by AAPW. The CSNs will then be trained to deliver nature based innovative solutions to the climate change challenges in the region, through a large-scale capacity building program, targeting communities and local actors. Information about climate change and conflict will be used to update the ECOWAS regional framework for Conflict prevention and early warning.

While, the CSNs will be trained to advocate and mobilize resources to address the climate change challenges, the project will also finance climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions of the project targeted communities in the Niger Delta through a small-scale grant scheme. Thus, as part of the project, AAPW carried out community entry and stakeholders mapping as well as supported HOMEF one of the consortium partners to conduct a research. Findings of the research have been encapsulated in a report after validation by community representatives and copies made available for each community. Below are key points during the community entry and stakeholders mapping visit.

### **Okoroete & Iko Clan Climate Change Issues**

- Rise in sea level, sea surge, coastal erosion and flooding
- Increase in sea turbulence and unpredictable wind direction that cause boat mishaps and miss direction of fisher folk at sea
- Low fish catch due to sea pollution from crude oil spills, sea weeds that destroy fishing nets as well as unpredictable of fishing season

- Mangrove forest is threatened by Nypa palm invasion in the area; sea food that dwell in mangrove areas such as periwinkles, oysters etc are in extinction.
- Poor waste management
- Poor crop yield owing to unfriendly weather conditions and environmental degradation
- Insecurity (piracy, kidnapping, sea robbery, etc)
- Use of mangrove trees as main source of energy for cooking and processing of fish

### **Current Okoroete and Iko Clan Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies**

- Women buy fish from their husbands at an agreed price on credit and sell to others to make additional profit
- Most of the women who engaged in fishing as a livelihood are now involved in petty trading as the principal occupation
- Fisherfolks had to adopt multiple activities such as firewood selling, manual jobs, farming etc. as well as migration to cities for jobs
- Group fishing by fisherfolks to go out for fishing in the same area to check insecurity

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. As a community member, what adaptation and mitigation strategies would you recommend to each of the above issues if any?
2. What skills are available in the community that will be useful to the adaptation and mitigation strategies you have recommended?
3. What are the current adaptation and mitigation strategies in the community?
4. What can community members do collectively that are different or supportive to improve the current adaptation and mitigation practices?

### **Conclusion**

The visit of AAPW and HOMEAF this time, is to fulfil our commitment of presenting our research findings to the community. We will also commence the next step in the project implementation activity plan. As stated in the introduction. Setting up of Community Stakeholders Network as well as commence Tools development interactive session with selected representatives of the community. Particularly the CSN members.

**Godson Jim-Dorgu, Tega Edeki and Ken Omavuayenor. For AAPW**



Funded by the European Union

