

## **Report and Analysis from the Meeting of the Green Actors of West Africa Network**

**Supported by the Netherlands Committee of the IUCN (IUCN NL)**

**22 – 24 January 2006**

**Pacific Hotel, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

Green Actors, represented by focal points from national networks of environmental organizations in 10 West African countries, met in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso to better understand each country's priorities, determine how to coordinate action on issues of common interest to the Green Actors of West Africa (GAWA), the Netherlands Committee of the IUCN (IUCN NL) and the IUCN Bureau Regional de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (IUCN BRAO), formalize plans to implement the IUCN NL Regional Focal Point project and give IUCN BRAO the opportunity to share its experience in the region and inform GAWA about the range of opportunities available through BRAO.

This report contains six sections:

1. An annotated agenda
2. Analysis of the meeting outputs
3. GAWA work plan for 2006 – 2007 emerging from the meeting
4. Minutes from the work plan follow up meeting on 26 January 2006
5. List of participants and contact details
6. CD-ROM containing presentations and other meeting documents

### **Annotated Agenda**

#### **22 January 2006**

Field Excursion

Participants visited the Parc Animalier and the Barrage de Ziga.

Follow up from Aburi, Ghana meeting of IUCN NL partners

Participants who attended the meeting in Aburi in September 2004, met to find out how far they have come in implementing the action plan. Togo and Mali reported on their networking activities at the national level. Ghana and Benin presented several workshops that emerged from the discussion in Aburi. At the GAWA level, with IUCN NL support, the regional focal point organized country level assessments of most of the 10 countries and posted information about many of the green actors and the region on to the Web site. The participants at Aburi also decided to consolidate success stories from across the region in collaboration with IUCN NL. However, there was very little progress towards this deliverable.

Participants explained several reasons for this including: communication was unclear and there was a lack of understanding about what types of stories and organizations were eligible (i.e. only those working in tropical rainforests) and it is difficult to get people to take the time to write down success stories.

#### **23 January 2006**

Opening session

- Welcome by Ibrahim Thiaw, Regional Representative, IUCN BRAO

- Objectives (RFP) Tommy Garnett, Regional Focal Point for IUCN NL
- Regional Initiative (IUCN NL) Rietje Grit, Head of Small Grants Unit, IUCN NL

#### Country presentations

Each country was meant to give a presentation on the country level activities undertaken through the national network. However, some countries have not fully established their national networks and the level of information sharing has not been strong in some place. In some cases there was little that could be reported on the activities of groups not represented at the meeting. This made it difficult to establish national level priorities. See the presentations on the CD-ROM for details by country.

#### Presentation of IUCN NL Regional initiative/plan

##### - IUCN NL

Rietje Grit, Head of Small Grants Unit for IUCN NL, explained the current status of IUCN NL as it recently evaluated its small grants programs and focused on specific geographic regions to provide better quality grants that result in big impacts and provide more technical guidance to grantees to improve their capacity to manage projects. IUCN NL also described the challenges it faces defending both the need for small grants and the importance of environment in a poverty reduction dominated agenda. IUCN NL asked for assistance from GAWA in making a case for environment and small grants by sharing success stories. IUCN NL described its proposed approach for a funding cycle spanning 2007 – 2011 and asked for input from GAWA.

##### - IUCN BRAO

Aliou Faye, Country Head for Mail of IUCN BRAO presented the Forestry Initiative for West Africa – a regional forestry regional cooperation approach following the example of CEFDHAC. The approach includes capitalizing on opportunities to influence regional bodies such as ECOWAS. It was conceived because the forest provides goods and services including energy and biodiversity. The initiative is in the conceptual stage and IUCN BRAO is looking to engage GAWA in this project. Sub regional integration is at the heart of its implementation – it will not be country specific.

#### Technical Session: Lobbying and Advocacy (FERN)

Saskia Ozinga, Director of FERN, presented the components of advocacy and networking. FERN described advocacy as a three pronged process. Educate the public, raise the issue to the political agenda and present and lobby for solutions. Presenting solutions requires research (find all relevant information) and building coalitions. She warned against top down approaches and explained that networks are more likely to succeed if they grow organically and avoid formalizing operations before establishing working relationships and plans within the network. She posed three questions to GAWA regarding regional advocacy campaigns: what target groups at national level?, what skills are needed?, and what would be subjects for advocacy at regional level?

#### Information Sessions:

##### Landscape Restoration

Jean Marc Garreau, Regional Programme Coordinator of IUCN BRAO discussed landscape restoration in West Africa where a considerable amount of forests have already been lost and forest restoration is a priority. However landscape restoration must take into account all different users of the landscape. IUCN BRAO has been implementing an approach to bring together these various stakeholders, some who are

hostile to one another, to restore the forests. One major lesson learned in the process is that once the community becomes aware of the goods and services they stand to acquire from a standing forest, their cooperation is forthcoming. The distinguishing factor in the landscape restoration approach is that the entry point is targeting the services provided by the forest ecosystem versus only focusing on individual trees.

#### Mangrove Network in Africa

Abdoulaye Diame of WAAME in Senegal gave a brief history of the associate and the activities undertaken so far, which included linking conservation and poverty alleviation. He also recognized that GAWA is an opportunity to engage thematic networks / initiatives in the region.

### **24 January 2006**

#### Summary of Day 1

Toussaint Hinvi of Benin Nature from Benin recapped Day 1.

#### Discussion on the definition of GAWA

Tommy Garnett, Regional Focal Point for IUCN NL led a discussion on the definition of GAWA. Priorities which emerged included improving communication between the countries represented in GAWA, coordinating advocacy directed at regional and international entities, capacity building, GAWA was initiated in the region and is separate from IUCN NL regional approach to small grants.

#### Session on Financial Management and Monitoring

Chris Bonnar the Financial Administrator from IUCN NL explained that a well planned project is an integral part of the project document and how to make a budget fair, accurate and true (FAT). He provided a handout on helpful tips for financial management. Mark van der Wal, the Senior Project Leader of IUCN NL, explained the importance and outputs of monitoring at the project and programme level. He discussed how monitoring is a capacity building / knowledge sharing tool.

#### Small Group Sessions on GAWA and its Priorities and Large Group Discussion

The participants split into three groups: operationalizing GAWA, capacity building and advocacy. In plenary, the groups presented their deliberations.

#### Countries Stated Interest in GAWA

Representatives stated their interest in participating in GAWA and presented their ideas on what GAWA can and cannot achieve.

#### Closing Session

While many ideas were discussed throughout the meeting, there was little consensus on precise activities GAWA will undertake at a regional level. Thus, a post meeting session was scheduled for Thursday at 0800 where the Regional Focal Point was to present a draft regional work plan based on the thoughts expressed throughout the meeting and the participants were to provide their comments.

### **Analysis of the Meeting Outputs**

The following section of this report analyzes the results of the meeting against the expected results which included:

- Better understand of each others priorities, current work and potential opportunities
- Concrete ideas to enhance synergy of GAWA and impact of their activities
- Input into national and regional capacity building strategies (i.e. video training course, lobby project with FERN)
- Input from GAWA in IUCN NL programming for 2007 – 2011 and GAWA has a clear understanding of IUCN NL's priorities in the region for 2006 – 2007
- IUCN NL has a clear idea of priorities for GAWA for next period
- Improved understanding of monitoring tools and how GAWA can support the process (especially through the opportunities provided under the RFP project)

### **Better understanding of each others priorities, current work and potential opportunities**

Generally, there was better understanding of the current work of GAWA partners present in the meeting. There were also some attempts to bring forward what the other partners within their respective countries were doing. It became evident that participants found it difficult to bring forward consensus priorities and elaborate on the work others were doing because there was apparently little exchange of information within country. The participants represented a very wide range of specializations and intervention approaches, which provide a great opportunity for capacity exchange within GAWA. Most countries were just beginning the discussion on national networks, which will take various forms with respect to their respective country contexts.

Another useful outcome was the opportunity for partners and personnel/officials of IUCN NL to meet face to face with IUCN BRAO. This culminated in mutual acquaintance and inspired the need for cooperation in the region. IUCN BRAO came to understand the GAWA concept and gave its fullest support to the definition of GAWA's identity. The Regional Director of IUCN BRAO served as the facilitator during the first day and other IUCN BRAO personnel provided knowledgeable presentations about BRAO's role in the region, approach to landscape restoration (a priority within West Africa), and Forestry initiative. IUCN BRAO's facilitation was pivotal to creating a better understanding about the various national contexts supporting GAWA.

### **Concrete ideas to enhance synergy of GAWA and impact of their activities**

Due to confusion about what GAWA really means and what it does, the meeting was spent clarifying the identity and direction of GAWA. There is still no consensus on GAWA's identity. However, the following conclusions were reached:

1. GAWA is a coalition of national environmental networks in West Africa
2. National networks must be free to develop in the national context which means they will develop at different paces, with different capacities and using different structures
3. GAWA will not be formalized (i.e. through the establishment structures or hiring of staff)
4. GAWA is open to any interested parties and will continue efforts with those groups who are willing to support and subscribe to the goals of GAWA.

The following proposed objectives are on the table for discussion among GAWA:

- To make the linkage between national and regional level actors
- To influence or develop regional environmental policies, through regional organizations such as ECOWAS, West African Development Bank, West African Economic and Monetary Union

- To share information and experiences among the members
- To facilitate capacity building of GAWA
- To influence donors policies

GAWA will approach other networks in the region to find out how they established contact with regional bodies such as ECOWAS.

It is crucial for all members of GAWA to recognize that they are in fact the network themselves. GAWA does not exist in an office someplace. GAWA will not fundraise by itself. GAWA stands for Green Actors of West Africa. We (environmentalist from Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo) ARE the Green Actors. Green Actors are represented through national networks of environmentally minded groups. GAWA is a framework for Green Actors to harness the power of collective action. GAWA can function without external support so long as the Green Actors believe that sharing ideas and plans and working together with fellow groups outside their own country is valuable.

**Input into national and regional capacity building strategies (i.e. video training course, lobby project with FERN)**

Despite planned and / or funded capacity building activities, including the video training course and exchange visits, the participants did not provide direct input into these strategies. For example, there was no discussion about the theme for the upcoming video training workshop during the meeting nor did GAWA provide ideas for national level capacity building strategies.

Instead, the meeting proved useful in this regard by clarifying the overall, broad concept of GAWA, which recognizes that sharing experiences and communicating generally among Green Actors is one of the most obvious benefits of linking together through a network.

GAWA was cautioned to be very clear about what it means by capacity building and not rely too heavily on the phrase “capacity building” in formulating a regional strategy.

Following the meeting, a concept for a short documentary was shared among GAWA members for comments and input. If accepted by the members, the concept will be used to demonstrate video production in the February training course.

- Input from GAWA in IUCN NL programming for 2007 – 2011 and GAWA has a clear understanding of IUCN NL’s priorities in the region for 2006 – 2007

GAWA provided some input into IUCN NL programming for 2007 – 2011, most importantly reinforcing communications and advocacy as priorities. IUCN NL explained it has been providing small grants globally for 11 years and is now facing several challenges including: demonstrating the relevance of environment in the context of the poverty reduction agenda; competing for funds which requires IUCN NL to prove small grants have a big impact and produce results; focusing its efforts geographically to improve the quality and impact of grants; and meaningfully contribute to capacity building among its grantees. In West Africa, a focal region for the small grants programme, IUCN NL is pioneering a regional approach to grant making by decentralizing aspects of monitoring, capacity building and coordination to a local NGO (EFA). IUCN NL recognizes that the idea for a regional network of environmental NGOs

in West Africa emerged out of bringing together some of the IUCN NL small grant recipients to identify how IUCN NL can maximize its efforts across the region. The idea for GAWA came from within the region and exists beyond IUCN NL's regional approach. Maintaining this important distinction, GAWA has and will continue to benefit from various communications and monitoring opportunities, including educational opportunities (exchange visits, video and advocacy training, electronic knowledge exchange), supported by the IUCN NL Regional Focal Point project.

IUCN NL is formulating a new funding proposal to its donors for 2007 – 2011. IUCN NL's mission for its next grant making phase is "Reverse the trends of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting conservation and sustainable use for the benefit of people and enhancing capacity and providing financial support to civil society."

Advocacy (includes enhancing strategic capacities of green actors (video training) to make a strong and convincing green voice) and communication (includes exchanging competencies in the region) are top priority for the IUCN NL Regional Focal Point project and will remain priorities in the next phase. Suggested funding themes within the small grants programme for 2007 – 2011 include: good governance in the natural resources sector, restoration of forest landscape restoration, building the institutional capacity of green actors, enhancing the involvement of civil society in protected areas management, human animal conflict resolution, enabling environmental advocacy. Participants agreed that these themes were of priority with the notable addition of gender mainstreaming in environment. IUCN NL agreed and welcomed any additional input from GAWA members.

GAWA will be able to provide additional input into IUCN NL's programming and help build the case for small grants programmes through the monitoring and exchange visits planned for 2006. A recommendation emerging from the meeting is to formalize the Terms of Reference for all monitoring and exchange visits which will require documenting success stories and lessons in both written and visual media.

GAWA has a clearer understanding now of IUCN NL's priorities in the region (communications and advocacy, which included elements of capacity building) for 2006 – 2007. Coming to understanding on the distinction between GAWA and IUCN NL's regional approach was a key output of the meeting which paves the way for GAWA to now define itself and agree on activities for 2006. It must be stressed that reaching this level of understanding about the distinction between GAWA and IUCN NL consumed a significant portion of the meeting, but was necessary to move forward constructively.

### **IUCN NL has a clear idea of priorities for GAWA for next period**

IUCN NL understands the broad priorities for GAWA over the next year which includes capacity building and advocacy, despite a lack of clarity about what GAWA is and its specific work plan for the next few years.

GAWA broadly prioritizes capacity building and advocacy. There is strategic overlap between the priorities of IUCN NL and GAWA – especially in the realm of using communication tools to strengthen the green voice across the region. Within capacity building, GAWA defined three themes agreed to be priority in the region:

1. information and communications technologies
2. institutional management
3. gender mainstreaming.

Exchanges visits were identified as a primary tool to foster capacity building in the region where significant competencies already exist.

GAWA is enthusiastic about advocacy and prioritized three advocacy activities for the next period.

1. Practical guide which includes case studies on practical examples of lobby from the region
2. Hold a three day workshop on the art of advocacy (a training of trainers)
3. Reinforce the two learning activities through follow up testing the approach with ECOWAS and EU and US-based groups.

GAWA identified fisheries unions, plastic wastes, poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and the EU country strategy papers review process as three possible targets for regional advocacy campaigns. IUCN – BRAO has some experience conducting advocacy campaigns with private companies and offered to share its experience with GAWA in this regard.

### **Improved understanding of monitoring tools and how GAWA can support the process (especially through the opportunities provided under the RFP project)**

Chris Bonnar, the Financial Administrator IUCN NL and Mark Van der Wal, the Senior Project Leader for the Tropical Rainforest Programme (TRP/ IUCN NL), presented some of the generic problems faced in the appraisal and monitoring of projects and possible ways to minimize them. It was recognized that the problem commences in the elaboration of the proposal itself and follows through the project implementation. Most people end up using the proposal as a 'conceptual framework' rather than an implementation and monitoring tool. From their conceptualization, project proposals form the basis of monitoring as it provides the baseline from which future changes could be measured.

The budget is normally treated as an appendage, rather than an integral part of the proposal. The budget must be detailed, 'Factual, Accurate, and True' (FAT) in nature. It must have a clear cash flow schedule complemented by a management account, which is usually done more frequently (monthly, weekly, etc.) All budgets should be done in Excel where possible and the IUCN format is compulsory for all project proposals sent for appraisal. In financial reports, currencies used must be clearly stated, including exchange rates to the Euro. In cases where changes in the original budget become inevitable, clear notes must be made to explain deviations from original plan. IUCN NL must be contacted, even through email, to seek approval if these unforeseen costs should occur.

In the case of monitoring at project level and at portfolio level generally, IUCN NL office is not the only ones involved. Many more opportunities are utilized, such as peer monitoring, joint monitoring; requesting representatives from other institutions going to areas close to the project location, support NGO, etc. This approach was adopted not only to utilize resources efficiently, but also to enhance credibility to the outside world, create more regional perspective on successes or failure, learning from other experiences, creating opportunities for exchange visits resulting in capacity building. The monitoring process is design be a learning process, offer quality control, increase impact, enhance communication and increase visibility of project.

The need to establish monitoring schedules including the identification of people to be involved became overtly necessary. This will take into consideration the technical nature of the project to be monitored and the objective for its monitoring at that instant. The results of these monitoring processes are linked to searchable project database and could be used for learning and advocacy purposes.

**GAWA Work Plan 2006 – 2007**

Domain	Proposed Activities	Expected Outputs	Time Frame	Primary Responsible	Funding Source
Advocacy	1. Development, administering and analysis of Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responses from individual partners (NGOs and/or networks)</li> <li>▪ Framework for developing the toolkit</li> </ul>	April 2006	Saskia (FERN); individual NGOs; national networks	
	2. Making a tool-kit for advocacy work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A number of NGOs confident in starting advocacy work at regional and international level;</li> </ul>	Oct- Nov 2006	Saskia (FERN)	IUCN NL (under negotiation)
	3. Training in two countries in campaigning and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The start of one or two regional campaigns (possibilities include plastic telephone cards; mining or fisheries activities or EC development aid-country strategy papers or other donors);</li> </ul>	Nov – Dec 2006	Regional Focal Point (RFP) organisation – negotiation funding Saskia – Training	IUCN NL (under negotiation)
	4. Organising a tour to Europe or other regions (?);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct contacts established between NGOs and international institutions (possibilities are EU, ECOWAS, ADB)</li> <li>▪ Direct linkages between NGOs interested in international advocacy within West Africa and between West Africa and other regions (notably in Africa and Europe)</li> </ul>	March 2007	Regional Focal Point (RFP) organisation – negotiation	IUCN NL (under negotiation)
	5. Fact sheet on ECOWAS (how does it work; what are its powers and how to influence it);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A good understanding of possibilities (or lack thereof) of ECOWAS;</li> </ul>	June 2006	Toussaint Hinvi of Benin – Develop a general questionnaire; Eben Moses of Liberia, assisted by Josea Dosou of Benin - Compilation and analysis; national networks/ individual NGOs	Own contribution GAWA members

	6. Developing a position paper on environmental issues of regional importance, e.g. Gender, telephone cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A consensus position on the regional issues of concern;</li> </ul>	September 2006	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mining – Selly Kamara (Guinea)</li> <li>Telephone cards – Mr. Sidibey (Mali); assisted by Idrissa Ziba (Burkina faso)</li> <li>Gender – George Ahadzi (Ghana); assisted by Fatmata Fofanah (Guinea);</li> </ol>	Own contribution GAWA members
Communication	Video Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved Do-it-yourself filming</li> <li>Basic Understanding of the editing process</li> <li>Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of audiovisual products</li> <li>Planning skills – moving from an idea to an effective product</li> <li>Script writing</li> <li>Budgeting</li> <li>Organising filming/shooting schedules</li> <li>Strategic use of audiovisual materials</li> <li>Improved coordination of the Cam Guard Network within the region</li> </ul>	Last Week February – 1 <sup>st</sup> Week March 2006	EFA	IUCN NL (funded)
	Maintain Website and Associated Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information (profiles, activities planned/undertaken, country reports, annual reports, etc.) provided</li> <li>Independent Website established</li> <li>Links to individual GAWA partners created</li> <li>Webmaster/ Input mechanism established</li> <li>Information on environmentally friendly opportunities of public interest are included in the</li> </ul>	Ongoing	EFA	IUCN NL (funded) GAWA contribution for future upkeep.

		website, e.g. Tourism			
	Write and send in success stories of individual projects/ initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Success stories compiled and communicated</li> </ul>	31 <sup>st</sup> March	EFA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further discussion on the identity of GAWA</li> <li>Drafting a one pager on what GAWA is</li> <li>Presenting this paper to press at right moment in time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clearly defined network understood by all members;</li> <li>GAWA being recognized by outside world as a NGO coalition.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Tommy Garnett; top be assisted Idrissa Ziba and Sam Nketiah	Own contribution GAWA members.
Capacity Building	Country Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a database on the physical environment, opportunities, etc., of GAWA countries</li> </ul>	Ongoing	All partners	IUCN NL (funded)
	Gender Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a database of women working on environmental initiatives, with a view to increasing the role of women in environmental management and related projects.</li> </ul>	September	EFA	To be verified
	Peer Monitoring/ exchange visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The opportunity for learning from other experiences is created</li> <li>Quality of projects implemented in the region is enhanced</li> <li>Monitoring/exchange visit schedules are established</li> <li>Monitoring results made available on the website to utilise lessons learnt and for advocacy purposes.</li> </ul>	ongoing	IUCN NL to provide a list of priority projects	IUCN NL (funded)
	Training on issues specifically identified by national networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A compilation of training needs not addressed by existing projects implemented by individual NGOs and forwarded to the Regional Focal Point</li> <li>Series of trainings carried out mostly by local experts/consultants</li> </ul>	Ongoing in 2006	All partners	IUCN NL (funded)

## **Minutes of Meeting of GAWA to Finalise Work Plan 2006**

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2006

Attendance:

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Organization</b>
AMEGANKPOE	Claudia	Benin	EcoEcolo
DOSSOU-BODJRENOU	Josea	Benin	Nature Tropicale
HINVI	Touissaint	Benin	Benin Nature
ABOUBACRINE	Saoudata	Burkina Faso	Tin Hinan
ZEBA	Idrissa	Burkina Faso	Naturama
AHADZI	George	Ghana	Green Earth Organization
NKETIAH	Sam	Ghana	Tropenbos/Gh
CAMARA	Selly	Guinee	Association Gestion pour la Recherche et la Promotion de Technologies de Gestion de l'Environnement
FATOUMATA	Fofana	Guinee	ONG COGEDE
EBEN	Moses	Liberia	CEEP
NOMOKO	Moriba	Mali	Association Malienne pour la Conservation de la Faune et Environnement
SIDIBE	Cheikna	Mali	ONG DONKO
GRIT	Rietje	Netherlands	IUCN NL
DIAME	Aboulaye	Senegal	WAAME
DIOUF	Semou	Senegal	SAPPAT
COLE	Eugene	Sierra Leone	Environmental Foundation for Africa
GARNETT	Tommy	Sierra Leone	Environmental Foundation for Africa
WILKINS	Evy	Sierra Leone	Environmental Foundation for Africa
DZOGBEDO	Agbenyo	Togo	Les Amis de la Terre Togo
NDJIMA	Jules	Togo	Les Compagnons Rureaux
OZINGA	Saskia	United Kingdom	FERN

**Chairman:** Tommy Garnett; Environmental Foundation for Africa – the Regional Focal Point Organisation for IUCN in West Africa (RFP)

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome
2. Main Business
3. Closing Courtesies

#### ***1. Welcome***

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 08:05 hours. He reminded all that the meeting was specially recommended by the body to present the proposed GAWA regional plan derived from the priorities that emerged during the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January

2006 meetings. He urged all to be focused and constructively critical in order to achieve a good quality working document.

## **2. Main Business**

The work plan, which was distributed overnight, was tabled for comments. It was agreed that issues should be addressed progressively down the table, by domains and activities recommended.

On the area of funding, it was observed that we should not depend on IUCN NL. The Chairman, however, pointed out that some of these activities have either been funded by IUCN NL or interest has been expressed along these lines by the same donor as already indicated in the plan. Generally, it must be understood that the network is comprised of its members and those members, through their national networks can compliment funds from existing donors and other potential donor sources. A case in point regarding this approach was the solar training offered in the region. The travel costs and living allowances were funded for the trainer, whilst the networks took care of his accommodation and other hospitalities once he was in their country.

Another suggestion was to have a region-wide project, e.g. Environmental Education or a wider scope of the solar training, wherein national networks can complement funds required.

At this point, it was observed that the discussion was getting bogged down on funding and funding strategies. A motion was moved thus: We must concentrate on the proposed plan to ensure that it is reflective of our common direction and not just on funding strategies. The motion was unanimously agreed on and the meeting proceeded.

### Advocacy

The timeframe to start the related activities, especially developing advocacy tool kit and training of two countries, seemed too late in the year. A consensus was reached that it should start in April and conclude in November 2006. However, members were reminded of the basic commitments needed for the outputs to be realized, i.e., two or three case studies. This would require prompt responses to the questionnaire/ outline to be disseminated by Saskia against April.

### *Fact sheet*

It was agreed that the fact sheet on ECOWAS must be developed against June 2006. Each country represented should approach their ECOWAS country office or their representing body to enquire about their regional Environmental policy (the way it works, the extent of its powers of enforcement, possibilities to influence it, etc.) and other possible opportunities. Toussaint Hinvi of Benin agreed to develop a generic questionnaire for approaching the local offices against 15<sup>th</sup> February 2005. Eben Moses of Liberia volunteered to coordinate the process of compiling the country fact sheets and producing a synthesized regional fact sheet. He will be assisted by Josea Dossou of Benin. The process is expected to finish June 2006.

### *Position Paper*

Local priorities perceived to have impacts of regional dimensions will be developed by country networks and sent, if possible, in both languages to the Regional Focal Point (EFA). It was, however, strongly advised that non-availability of translation possibility should not hinder the process of communication as the capacity to do this is available to

EFA. Already, three thematic areas of regional significance had been identified for further research;

- i. Mining – To be led by Selly Kamara of Guinea
- ii. Telephone cards proliferation and quality – to be led by Mr. Sidibey of Mali and assisted by Idrissa Zeba of Burkina Faso
- iii. Gender – To be led by George Ahadzi of Ghana and assisted by Fatmata Fofanah of Guinea

The gender studies will complement the gender audit, soon to be commissioned by EFA in Sierra Leone.

#### *Video Training*

On the video training, the chairman distributed a 'Video Documentary Concept' for members to reflect and comment on as they prepare to send someone to the February training. The clause in the initial invitation, requiring trainees to be bi-lingual does not apply anymore as Huub, the trainer has been confirmed to be bilingual and Josea of Benin will also be there to assist. Representatives were asked to finalise their nomination of trainees by the week ending on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2006. Final documentations will follow soon after.

#### *Website*

Training on the use and maintenance of the website will form part of the training to be conducted in Freetown. On the completion of the website, it will include features like links to individual organisations and a domain name will be created. Meanwhile, representatives were asked to remind other partners to send their country and NGO profiles. Also, every institution that had sent in information should verify their information already published on the web. Finally, the recommendation to create a 'list serve' was re-emphasized.

#### *Success stories*

Even through GAWA is independent from IUCN NL, it is beneficial to have a good relationship with IUCN NL and we would like to continue to help with collection of success stories. Evyenia Wilkins of EFA will lead the process, which will include dissemination of the format, sending reminders to partners and collating the stories. The deadline for receipt of success stories for this initial period will be 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. IUCN NL will facilitate translation of the entries.

#### *Network understood by all members*

On drafting the operations framework for GAWA and defining its identity, Tommy Garnett was asked to take the lead and assisted by Sam Nketiah of Ghana and Idrissa Zeba of Burkina Faso.

#### *Country Assessments*

The formats for country assessments had already been sent out to partners and some of the assessments had already been done. Representatives were urged to conclude these assessment so that they could be published on the web to provide factual information about their countries' environmental status.

#### *Monitoring schedule*

IUCN NL will give RFP a list of priority projects to visit and the RFP will create a monitoring schedule and institutions will be invited to visit other projects as peer monitors.

*Training on issues specifically defined by national networks*

This was specifically referring to the 3000 Euro budget line on the IUCN NL Regional Focal Point Initiative budget for 2005/6 ear marked for training identified by national networks. Information on how to access this funding was sent to every institution that has been representing their countries. The RFP will write an email and give a deadline with status report on institutions that have already held trainings and those that are preparing to implement theirs. If training priorities are not defined against the deadline, the funds will be redirected to address other priority issues.

**3. Closing Courtesies**

The chairman thanked everyone for their valuable input to something that is theirs. He encouraged all to start thinking seriously about fundraising for GAWA through national networks and how we can support each other in this initiative.

The chairman underlined that EFA is not in this for money, but for the potentials that the initiative has in addressing the environmental issues we have been pursuing as individuals, but with little success. This commitment is evidenced by the fact that he is not paid by IUCN NL to play this role, but rather EFA is provided with an operating budget, from which payments are made to specific individuals providing technical assistance and day to day coordination of the activities of the network. Leadership of GAWA will circulate among the participating countries once the operating framework has been established and consolidated.

Finally, he thanked everyone for their frankness and wished all safe journey back home.

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