

Post-Crisis Environmental Assessment

Under the Post-Crisis Environmental Assessment pillar of the Disasters and Conflicts sub-programme, UNEP offers technical assistance to countries where critical ecosystems or natural resources have been directly or indirectly degraded, damaged or destroyed by conflicts and disasters. Field-based assessments using sound science and state-of-the-art technology identify environmental risks to human health, livelihoods and security with the aim of integrating environmental needs into relief and recovery programmes.

UNEP Experts to Assess Toxic Waste Dumping in Côte d'Ivoire

In September a UNEP team of experts completed a scoping mission to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, at the request of the national government, to carry out an initial assessment of 16 sites in the country's capital affected by the dumping of toxic waste in August 2006. A costed workplan for a complete environmental audit has been submitted by UNEP to the government and is pending approval.

The 2006 Côte d'Ivoire toxic waste dump provoked a serious health crisis in the country. A ship registered in Panama, the *Probo Koala*, chartered by the oil and commodity shipping company Trafigura Beheer BV, offloaded toxic waste at the Ivorian port of Abidjan. The waste was then dumped by a local contractor at sites in and around the city of Abidjan.

The gas released by these chemicals is blamed for the deaths of 17 people and the injury of over 30,000 Ivorians, with injuries that ranged from mild headaches to severe burns of skin and lungs. Almost 100,000 Ivorians sought medical attention due to the effects of these chemicals.

The substance was claimed by Trafigura to have been "slops", or waste water from the washing of the *Probo Koala's* tanks. Other reports, however, say that substance was in fact more than 500 tonnes of a mixture containing fuel, caustic soda, and hydrogen sulfide. The *Probo Koala*

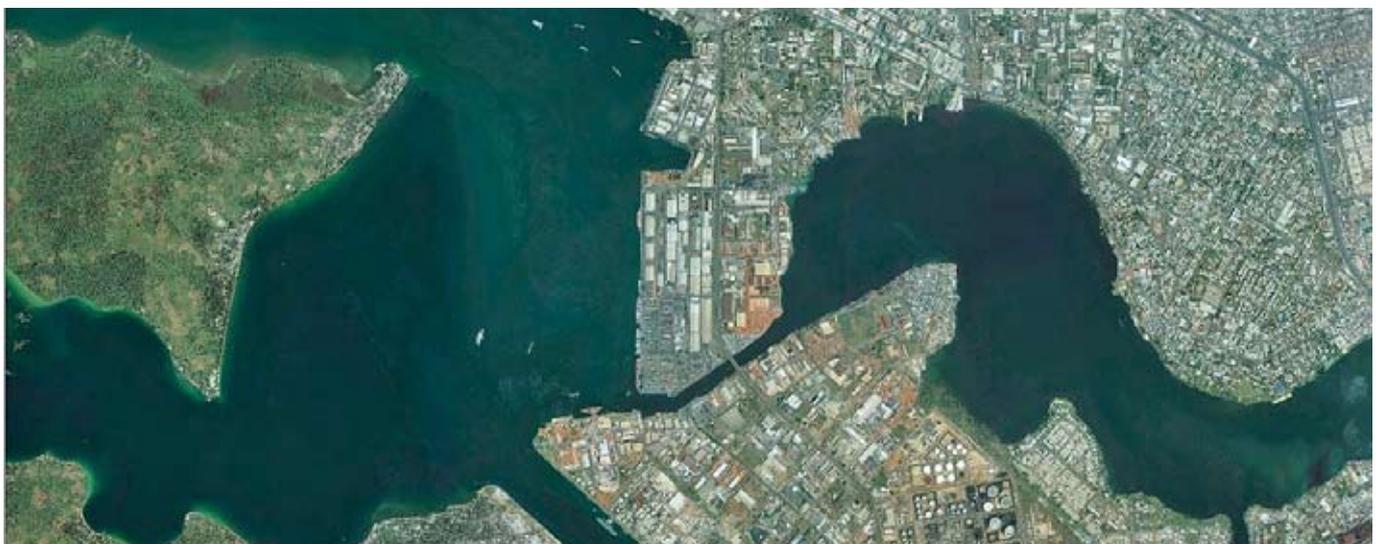
had been turned away by several countries before releasing the toxic waste in the Port of Abidjan.

In spite of the subsequent clean-ups of the sites, there is still significant and widespread concern within the local community about the persistent health and environmental impacts of the waste dumping. Due to a combination of environmental contamination, public health impacts, legal implications, compensation and politics, the issue remains highly political in this West African nation.

It is within this context that Côte d'Ivoire made a request for UNEP to undertake an independent scientific assessment of the environmental situation in Abidjan in areas impacted by the waste dumping.

The UNEP audit of the environmental consequences of the toxic waste disposal in Abidjan from the *Probo Koala* will focus on identifying potential residual environmental contamination in the various impacted locations. This audit will assist the government in completing the clean-up process if there is any contamination left and assist the community in bringing the contamination issue to a close if the sites are indeed remediated and free of toxic substances. The assessment will be thorough and will use internationally recognized methods, tools and laboratories, similar to assessments conducted by UNEP in other countries. Results are expected in 2013.

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Toxic waste was dumped at 16 sites around Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire



Welcome to the Environmental Emergencies Centre

The Environmental Emergencies Centre seeks to build the capacity of high-risk low and middle-income countries to respond to environmental emergencies

UNEP/OCHA to Provide Vital Training on Dealing with Environmental Emergencies

While the UN family benefits from well-established mechanisms to respond to emergencies and humanitarian crises, there is an urgent need to enhance the national capacity for environmental emergency preparedness and response planning, particularly in vulnerable low and middle-income countries.

Consequently, the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit (JEU) has developed the **Environmental Emergencies Centre (EEC)**, a free online tool aimed at increasing the capacity of high-risk, low and middle-income countries to respond to environmental emergencies. Acting as a virtual resource, the EEC hosts numerous tools, guidelines and reports, provides relevant environmental emergency updates and supports discussion and documentation sharing. The EEC also facilitates national level workshops.

Training modules include:

- Beyond Response: introduction to environmental emergencies. This 3-hour eLearning and 3-day face-to-face training was developed in partnership with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). It has been developed in English and is currently being translated into French and Arabic. (The training was pilot tested in Abuja, Nigeria in November).
- Introduction to Industrial Accidents: prevention, preparedness and response. Developed in partnership with UNEP's Division of Technology Innovation and Economics (DTIE) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). A 3-hour eLearning session and 3-day face-to-face workshop, which will be available in English, French and Russian.

- Introduction to the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool. A 3-hour eLearning session available in English.
- Disaster Waste Management: tools and guidelines. A 3-hour eLearning session developed in consultation with a review panel. Training is available in English.
- Mainstreaming Environment in Humanitarian Response. A 3-hour eLearning session being developed in English in consultation with the World Wildlife Fund and Groupe Urgence Rehabilitation Development.

The aim of the online learning series is to strengthen capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to environmental emergencies, by:

- Raising awareness of environmental emergencies and the associated risks and impacts;
- Solidifying understanding of the national and international response systems to environmental emergencies;
- Dissemination of and building capacity to utilize a range of available tools and resources for preventing, preparing for and responding environmental emergencies.

The target audience of these training platforms includes anyone involved in the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery of environmental emergencies, such as national disaster managers, policy/decision makers, senior officials in government ministries, environmental experts and stakeholders who may be at risk of environmental emergencies in their profession (industry) or personal life (community member in high risk area). The Environmental Emergencies Centre is live at www.eecentre.org and is scheduled for official launch in May 2013.

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