

Regional Expert Group Meeting

On Sargassum Invasion in West Africa

11th – 13th November 2015

Best Practices and Proposed Regional Management Strategy

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Outline of Presentation

- Construct of the Expert Group
- Meeting Overview
- Causes/Origin of Sargassum Invasion
- Impacts of the recurring Seaweed infestation
- Best Management Practices
- Proposed Regional Strategy
- Recommendations

- Mr. Abou Bamba
- Mr. Vincent Sweeney
- Dr. Jacque Abe
- Dr. Yacouba Sankaré
- Dr. Koffi Komoé
- Dr. Yvette N'Guessan
- Mrs. Jewel Kudjawu
- Dr. Koffi Komoé
- Mr. Sékou Camara
- Mr. Sheck Abdul Sheriff
- Mr. Samsideen Oyeboode
- Mr. Mamadou Ndiaye
- Mr. Gnandi Kissao
- Dr. Zacharie Sohou

➡ Construct of the Expert Group

➤ Meeting Overview

Day 1 - Information sharing on seaweed infestation in our region

Day 2 – Drafting of Best Practices/Regional Management Strategy & Field Visit

Day 3 – Closing of Expert Group Meeting - Way forward

➤ Causes of Sargassum Seaweed Invasion

Presently , the exact conditions responsible for the unusual bloom of seaweeds is unclear, however the causes of the proliferation of the massive seaweeds are suggested to be the following:

- Warming and changing of ocean temperature due to global climate change
 - Increased land-based nutrients and pollutants washing into the ocean (sewage discharge, marine litter etc.)
- Maritime traffic and oil exploration as potential vectors driving the proliferation of massive seaweeds in recent times

Origin of the Sargassum Seaweeds

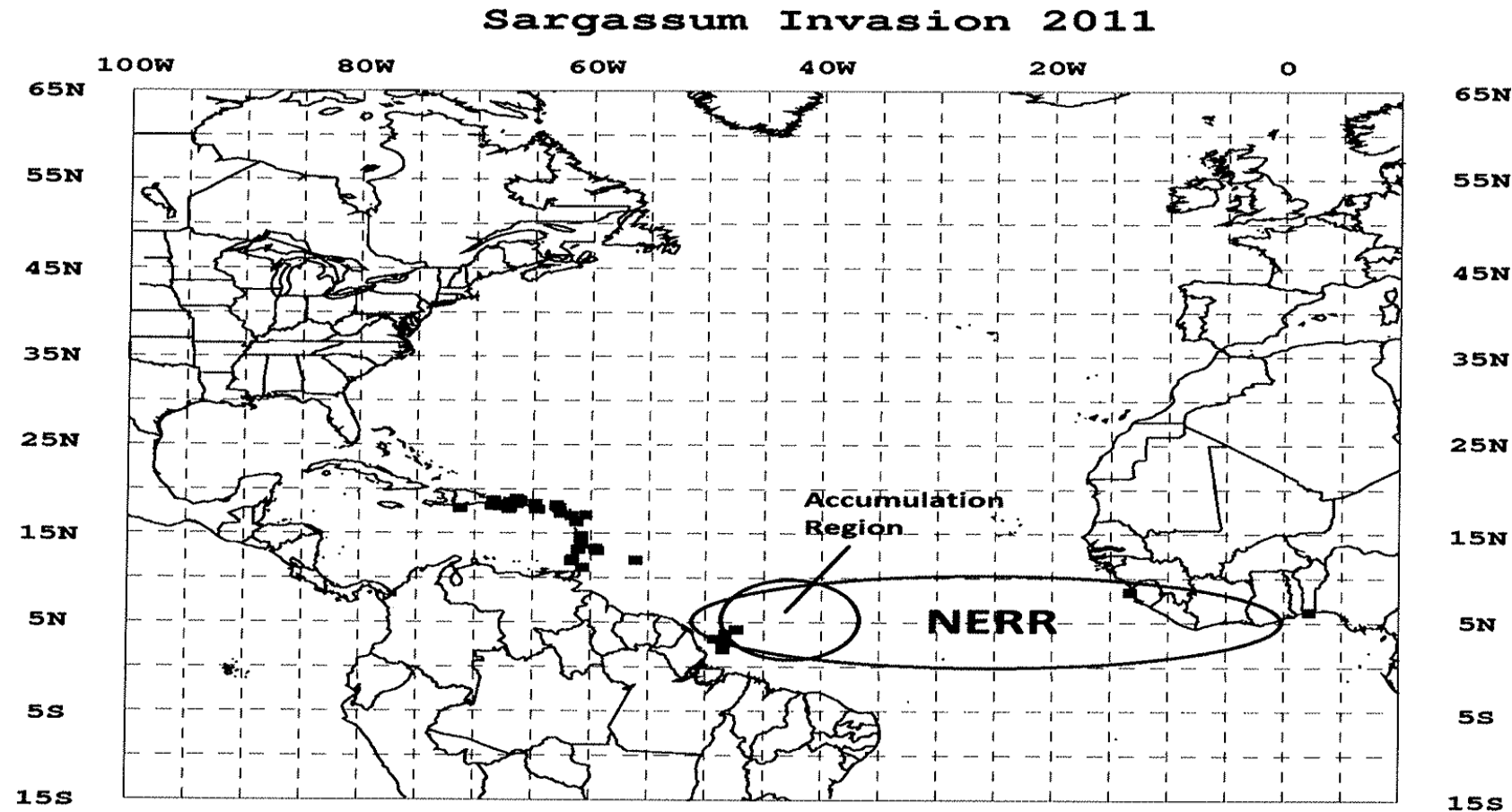


Figure 1. **Black Squares:** Locations of reported sightings of large quantities of *Sargassum*.
(Note the two locations in West Africa)

NERR: North Equatorial Recirculation Region.

Accumulation Region: North Brazil Current retroflexion and large eddies.

➡ Origin of the Sargassum Seaweeds

It accumulate over the summer forming a massive rafts extending hundreds of k



And estimated that more than 1 million wet tones of Sargassum is exported into the Atlantic each year

➤ Impacts of recurring Seaweed infestation

Socio-Economic effects (fishery and tourism industries)



➤ Impacts of recurring Seaweed Infestation

Ecological effects (As large quantities of seaweed rot, they consume oxygen)



➤ Best Management Practices

1. Creation of “green brigades” or contracting of a waste management company

- Empower a national entity that will be responsible for mobilization
- Provide induction training on the collection and management of seaweeds

3. Mechanized Tooling

- Using of modern and adapted seaweed collection tools/mechinery

4. Setting-up seaweed farms in affected coastal communities

- Providing a storing facilities

➤ Proposed Regional Strategy

1. Establish an Early Warning System through the use of satellite images

- Informing coastal communities and responsible national entity
- Having prior knowledge on the kind and expected volume seaweed

2. Value-Addition of Seaweeds (inclusive green jobs wealth creation)

- Building capacity in the value-chain processing/transformation of seaweed
- Mapping sectors for potential use
- Encourage local community participation

3. Set-up a monitoring and surveillance mechanism for tracking purposes

4. Sharing of expertise between/among affected communities/countries

➤ Proposed Regional Strategy

5. Conducting Research/**Divorcing from assumption – factual based**

- Understanding the biochemistry and physiology of Sargassum
- Establishing regional research centre on seaweed
- Identifying the main drivers of seaweed (petroleum/Climate/pollutant etc.)
- Conducting studies on the **socio-economic** & **ecological** impacts of seaweed

6. Putting in place an information management system

- Knowing the human and mechanical resources needed
- Sector need mapping (service and demand)
- Sargassum reporting system...production/distribution of PI materials

➤ Recommendations

In the context of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals **13** (combating climate change and its impacts and **14** (conserving and sustainably use of the the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), and in the framework of the United Nations negotiations of new global agreement for biodiversity management in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the Abidjan Convention Secretariat should scale-up intervention and play a lead role in providing needed technical supports in response to the Sargassum infestation in West Africa. The Abidjan Convention is our regional instrument since 1981 that has been protection, managing, developing and implementing environmental initiatives for the 22 contracting countries of the Convention on the cost of West Central and Southern Africa. We are therefore counting on the Abidjan Convention to follow-up on delineated “Best Practices” and proposed “Regional Management Strategy” on seaweed management including the tracking of the following recommendations:

➤ Recommendations

1. Encourage affected countries to lend from the proposed regional strategy to formulate and implement adaptive National Action Plan and Strategies for the better management of the influx of seaweeds at national levels.
2. Support the implementations of demonstration projects in each affected countries.
3. Promote Private Sector investment - no charity it is an investment opportunity, thereby transforming and environmental disaster into wealth.
4. Call on the Abidjan Convention to formulate a Protocol on Sargassum and its ratification by affected countries in the region.

➤ Recommendations

5. Identify sources of funding at both national and global level to support national/regional programmes on Sargassum.
6. Encourage multilateral dialogue by ensuring that Sargassum is discussed in the upcoming 2016 United Nations Environment Assembly, thereby bringing the menace and opportunity of Sargassum to the attention of the global environment community.
7. Encourage active participation of national governments in affected zone.
8. Promote the need for regional research to facilitate “expert study” with the aim of identifying major factors driving the spread of Sargassum in the region.

➤ Recommendations

9. Encourage affected countries to have at least 1 seaweed clearing machine
10. Organize an Annual Expert Group Meeting to share information, building knowledge, and promote “best practice” .
11. Call for at the November 2015 Bureau Meeting of the Abidjan Convention the need to organize a Pan-African summit on ocean governance under the auspices of the Africa Union to help develop regional corporation on contemporary and emerging ocean governance challenges.

➡ Conclusion

With the availability of this technical working group and their individual expertise, coupled with a strong political will from affected countries, we remain optimistic that days are bound to come when seaweed will not only be considered as an emerging environment challenge, but as a “new normal” of green wealth creation opportunity.