REGIONAL COOPERATION, MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE PROTECTION OF COASTAL CITIES AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE: THE INTERESTS OF THE SUB-REGION OF THE GULF OF GUINEA AND ITS LONG CHAIN OF COASTAL CITIES

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I- GENERAL INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM STATEMENT

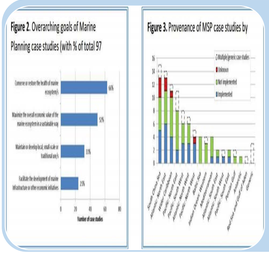
1- Coastal cities are known to be the most populated and the hub to the economic growth of their nations. Majority are port-cities with ongoing heavy maritime economic activities;

Source: Dr. ONGUENE, Oceanographer and Lecturer at the University of Douala, Cameroon. Images showing impacts of climate change in Kribi and Douala, two Cameroon's coastal cities.

3- The International Marine Environmental Law, is establishing through the international community legal climate/ocean action plans (e.g. Marine Spatial Planning) to be implemented at the national level;

4- However, the transboundary nature of the coastal environment and the challenges thereto, is an impediment to an effective Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) by any individual State.

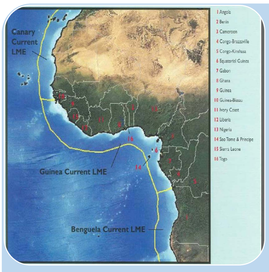
III- RESEARCH GAPS



1- Lack of acknowledgment and uses of MSP in existing national and local marine frameworks:

- The importance of MSP is still to be fully considered in actions towards the protection of coastal cities, particularly those of the Gulf of Guinea, against climate change impacts.
- The strategic role that MSP plays in the implementation of the 17 SDGs (**SDG 14 in particular**) is still absent in the decision-makers' policy and regulatory instruments of our coastal cities.

Source: World Ocean Council, "International Ocean Governance: Marine Planning Brief", International Business Alliance for Cooperate Ocean Responsibility, November 2014.



2- CCGG need to cooperate at a regional level for more effectiveness in fight against climate change and ocean acidification:

- Effective implementation of MSP as a tool for the protection of the chain of CCGG will require collaborative efforts at the sub-regional level.
- For the protection of the cities from climate change and the implementation of SDG14, the strengthening of existing marine legal and institutional frameworks as well as the creation of multidimensional and multisector platforms of cooperation whereby all concerned stakeholders are involved becomes key.

Source: Kobenan Kouassi ADJOUMANI et al., «Protection de la biodiversité marine enjeu locale ou global», Ministère des ressources animales et halieutiques, République de Côte d'Ivoire, OCEANPOLIS, Brest, France, p.5.

V- RESULTS

1- THE IMPORTANCE OF MARINE SPLATIAL PLANNING TO CCGG

With the intensification of spatial squeeze in CCGG due to present and future impacts of CC, MSP, because of its integrated nature is proving to be the sustainable tool that these coastal cities would benefit from for obvious reasons:

MSP will enable CCGG and their respective national governments to develop and implement an overall coordinated management plan based on ecosystem approach, while enhancing in the process the different activities, uses and services of their individual and common coastal zone;

MSP is a framework for marine management, that allows all marine interests and stakeholders to be given due consideration, while solving the problem of overlapping of competence;

MSP enables national and local decision-makers to have a holistic view which will take into account all aspects and all sectors of the governance of their coast, thus create a platform of avoidance of conflicts of all kinds ("human-human conflicts or human-environment conflicts);

MSP will enable these cities to effectively implement their rights and duties towards the sustainable exploitation and protection of their coastal areas as reflected in important global conventions, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Paris Agreement.

2- THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE USE OF MSP ON THE STUDY AREA

The complexity of the coastal environment of these cities, requires regional cooperation, as recommended by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):

The good governance of the coastal environment cannot be achieved by individual efforts of coastal cities or States, but rather by collective regional actions;

The regional level of governance has proven to be a strategic lever for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, often taking action "closer, further and faster" than institutions at the international or national level;

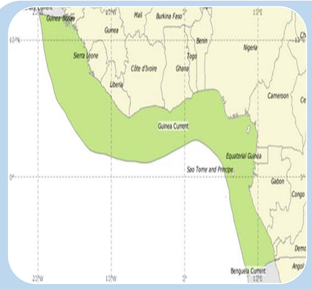
Regional cooperation will enhance the sustainability of CCGG by creating a platform of cooperation, coordination and harmonisation of all frameworks of all sectors and scales (e.g.: governments and academia);

Regional cooperation offers the possibility for these cities to use the International Law principle of "mutual supportiveness" that is of key importance in the fight against CC and the guarantee of sustainable development;

Hence, effective integrated marine action plan against climate change, such as MSP, requires cooperative efforts, because in the words of Albert Salman, Director General of Coastal & Marine Union – EUCC, "the more partners the better".

My contact

II- CHALLENGES OF COASTAL CITIES OF THE GULF OF GUINEA (CCGG)



Source: http://onesharedocean.org/LME_28_Guinea_Current

1- CCGG contribute to the vitality of national and regional economies, and are home to marine ecosystem services such as fisheries, tourism and maritime transportation;

2- With 31 percent of its population living along the coastline, and generating 56% of total GDP (http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/10/21/west-africa-is-being-swallowed-by-the-sea-climate-change-ghana-benin/), CCGG are expected to experience Sea levels faster than the global average (West African Economic and Monetary Union, 2014).

4- Stressors such as the fast growing population (10 million/year : State of the World's Cities Reports, 2010/11) and poor coastal urban planning are causing great concern to their sustainability.

http://strangesounds.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/coastal-erosion-senegal-3.jpg

http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/10/21/west-africa-is-being-swallowed-by-the-sea-climate-change-ghana-benin/

The stressors are magnified by the impacts of climate change (CC) and ocean acidification…

- Sea level rise leading to overtopping and the destruction of low barrier beaches that limits coastal lagoons of cities such as Douala, Cotonou, Lagos and Dakar;
- Changes in precipitations which affect the rivers feeding these lagoons and risks of flooding for CCGG;
- These changes alter the physiology of fish species, reduce calcification rates in calcifying organisms and cause dramatic changes in the food chains and webs.
- resulting ripple effect affect the livelihoods that depend on all the ecosystem services that this area provides.

IV- METHODOLOGY

This work is carried basically through the inductive and deductive methods.

The pressure of urbanisation, rapid and vast growth of their populations, and alarming impacts of CCGG are at high risks of more foreseen and unforeseen outbreak of crisis.

MSP has emerged as a major tool in the 21st century in the fight against potential impacts of CC and the associated rising sea levels in coastal areas, and other related consequences such as insecurity

The protection of coastal cities using MSP would be effectively attained only through a common regional multisector and cross-boarder stakeholder involvement.

The complexity of ocean governance, even through MSP requires collective efforts for it to be efficient.

Source: Quartz Africa, "(DON'T) SEND DOWN THE RAIN: It's only just started, flooding is going to get a lot worse in Nigeria", https://qz.com/1054825/climate-change-in-nigeria-floods-in-lagos-abuja-niger-delta-are-going-to-get-a-lot-worse/

VI- RECOMMENDATIONS

For the effective implementation of the found results of this study, the following policy recommendations would be useful:

- **The establishment of strengthened collaboration platforms, which will involve all stakeholders: a "public-private partnership" regional cooperation that gives the frontline to regional sea bodies such at the Abidjan Convention's Executive Secretariat;**
- **The creation of a regional consultative body for CCGG, wherein exchange of knowledge and monitoring of the MSP measures shall be carried out;**
- **The creation of strategic regional partnerships between local/national coastal governments and universities and research institutes would certainly help in attaining sustainable development, since academia are hubs of development and innovation ;**

VII- REFERENCE

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