

IS MINING THE FUTURE ?

Hi, we are here on an old gold mine site. Before, this was a big tree reserve of our country

This big hole and the other scattered 17 are what the mining company left us...

STOP
DANGER

tonakpa
12

Mining and protection of the environment and natural resources in West Africa

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S WORD

Page 3

REPORT/SYNTHESIS AND PANEL DEBATE

Waiting for gold to shine on the environment

Page 4

Biodiversity conservation at the centre of IUCN action

Page 5

MINE AND AGRICULTURE

Sabcé as a message

Page 6

MINES AND WATER RESOURCES

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly

Page 7

MINES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Reconciling economic development, environmental protection and social development

Page 9

Wind of hope

Page 10

Scrambling for Gold threatens environment

Page 11

An inefficient conflict regulator

Page 12

Bissa Gold, security is key

Page 14

Sabcé: what after the mine?

Page 15

what can be saved of the heritage?

Page 16

Sabcé, the irreplaceable reserve!

Page 17

High demand for fuel wood in Burkina Faso eroding conservation gains

Page 18

MINES AND HABITAT

A new youth for Yimiougou and Bissa villages

Page 20

Resettlement blues in Bissa Gold communities

Page 21

PORTRAIT

MAYOR CÉLESTIN ZOUNGRANA

Acquiescent and optimistic!

Page 22

Newsletter on water and environment

Managing Editors

Dam MOGBANTE (GWPWA)

Aimé J. NIANOGO (IUCN-PACO)

Editors' -in-chief

Sidi COULIBALY (GWPWA)

Marcello ROCCA (IUCN-PACO)

Technical support

Félicité MANGANG (IUCN-PACO)

Editorial Staff

Sani ABOUBACAR (Niger)

Raphaël KAFANDO (Burkina)

Grégoire BAZIÉ (Burkina)

Dzifa AZUMAH (Ghana)

Idrissa SANÉ (Senegal)

Mohamed Muhtar JALLOW (*Gambia*)

Assane KONE (Mali)

Lonsani SANOGO (Burkina)

Edmund Smith ASANTE (Ghana)

Alain TOSSOUNON (Benin)

Cheick B. SIGUE (Burkina)

Eden GADEGBEKU (Togo)

Illustration

Constant TONAKPA (Benin)

Printing/PAO :

Studio Yipin Créations / Imprimerie

Tél.: +226 50 47 60 79 / 70 20 65 38

Burkina Faso

Opinions expressed in this publication do not reflect the views of GWP-WA or IUCN



Global Water
Partnership
West Africa

February 2013

EDITORS' WORD



Aimé NIANOGO
Regional Director, IUCN-PACO

The role and importance of natural resources in the economies of West African countries are well documented. In fact, these economies and especially those of the Sahel, depend primarily on the exploitation of natural resources. Human activities (agriculture and food production, satisfying energy needs) and sometimes even their survival depend heavily on the capacities of nature, that is to say reserves of natural resources and climatic conditions.

It is also here that sand, gravel and all materials necessary for the construction of buildings are taken from. The sub-soils of countries in the sub-region are also rich in non-renewable resources but with high monetary value, such as metals and hydrocarbons.

Given the financial resources that the marketing of these resources generates, and the needs of develop-



Dam MOGBANTE
Executive Secretary, GWP/WA

ment financing, developing countries are engaged in more intense exploitation of these resources.

The dilemma is obvious, since the processes through which these resources are enhanced not only compete with other uses on land and water in particular, but are also sources of threats and attacks for our environment and our people if they are not regulated and controlled accordingly.

The accumulation of toxic wastes, air, soil and water pollution, noise, destruction or disturbance of natural habitats, deformation of landscapes are all negative effects of mining. Finally, abandoned mines and unrehabilitated quarries are areas that are both unproductive and dangerous for the environment, because of the acidic waters produced. The socio-economic status and environmental context in which the environment concerned by mining, during and after its lifespan, depends on upstream measures to predict and anticipate conflicts and social degradation.

The current boom observed in the mining sector clearly indicates that the dilemma between biodiversity conservation efforts and activities of extractive industries in West Africa is stronger. Most countries in our region have weak economies; they are affected by drought and desertification and are struggling for their economic development. It is true that all countries have laws and regulations on mining investment. Developing and adopting laws is one thing, but implementation remains a serious problem everywhere. Large financial capacities of mining companies leave States without much flexibility.

All actors need to mobilize to mitigate environmental impacts of exploration and exploitation activities in our countries and to ensure that the essential goods and services of ecosystems supporting the long-term development are conserved.

In this bid of ensuring essential goods and services, the media and parliamentarians play fundamental role. The media, because of their potential to inform and raise awareness, have the ability to educate and if necessary mobilize public opinion locally, nationally and internationally. Parliamentarians can in turn decide on appropriate draft bills and check the executive when necessary.

The role of IUCN as well as of Global Water Partnership West Africa is to inform, educate and advocate for dialogue between stakeholders who can facilitate sustainable practices and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the exploitation of resources. The very rewarding collaboration of our two organisations with the media started in 2011 led in 2012 to the organization of a capacity building workshop for the journalists and parliamentarians on "Mining and the protection of the environment and natural resources in West Africa" of which this publication is the outcome. It is hoped that this work, done in synergy between actors of the region, will allow for the sustainable exploitation of resources that complies with social and environmental imperatives that journalists present at the workshop advocated for in the articles collected in this magazine.

Report/synthesis and panel debate

Waiting for gold to shine on the environment

By Assane KONÉ (*Le Républicain/Mali*)

“Mining and protection of the environment and natural resources in West Africa.” This was the theme of a sub-regional capacity building workshop for the media, co-organized by IUCN and GWP/WA, from 1 to 5 October 2012 in Ouagadougou. With thirty journalists from eleven African countries, a panel discussion held on 2 October 2012 on the management of mines and the issue of environmental protection mobilized local elected officials and mining and environmental professionals and experts.

Honourable Amadou Dicko Diemdoda, Chairman of the Environment Committee of the National Assembly of Burkina; Honourable Hama Arba Diallo, MP and Mayor of Dori; Professor Boubacar Awaiss, Programme Coordinator of PREMI of IUCN; Mr. Frédéric Some, Head of the Environment Department of the Essakane gold mine; Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra, lecturer-researcher at 2IE and Mr. Djiri Dakar, Permanent Secretary of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), Burkina Faso exchanged with journalists about the management of mines and the issue of environmental protection.

In a brief statement, Mr. Edmund Smith -Assante, the moderator recalled the Ghanaian mining experience before pointing out that his country is still facing the challenge of traditional gold mining with its corollary of adverse social consequences.

While setting the stage for this discussion, the Deputy Mayor of Dori emphasized that in the context of a coun-

try like Burkina Faso, it is better to have gold than not having it. According to Honourable Diallo, even if gold mining is causing a lot of excitement in the Dori region, it is necessary to deal with the social problems generated by the activity. In the case of the Essakane mine, he said that collaboration with the mining company led to the building of social and community infrastructure. He however emphasised the need to apply social and environmental cushioning measures.

“This is indeed what the Essakane SA Company is trying to do with the Dori Council - developing and executing environmental management plans or social programmes,” said Mr. Frederic Somé, the representative of the Essakane mine.

For the lecturer-researcher, Abdoulaye Diarra, compromises are possible between economic and environmental issues in mining. However, to achieve this, he thinks that besides the political will there must be capacity building of actors responsible for environmental monitoring. In



the meantime, to play the card of transparency, the EITI Permanent Secretary, Mr. Dakar Djiri stressed that the fight of this global coalition for the publication of data at the level of mining companies and governments, could be through initiatives such as *"Publish what you pay"*.

After the various interventions of the panellists, participants raised concerns about school dropouts in the mining areas, the consequences of open pits and potential hazards associated with the transportation of chemicals across the country.

From the responses, it appears that efforts are being made to reduce environmental risks in the Essakane mine. Relevant recommendations were made to sensitize the local population on children's education, working with rural communities to develop social programmes and

refining provisions of the Mining Code for better consideration of environmental aspects. It emerged from the discussions that post-mining is being prepared during mining. However, they all unanimously wished that there should be some mobilization to tackle the phenomenon of "wild" gold-washing cohabiting with industrial mining which is growing in almost all West African countries.

In the face of the many challenges, the Chairman of the Environment Committee of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso reassured participants that parliamentarians were aware. The PREMI Programme Coordinator of IUCN, Pr. Awais reiterated the commitment of his institution to continue educating actors including the media to be critical of mining in various countries of the sub-region.

Biodiversity conservation at the centre of IUCN action

By Raphaël KAFANDO (*Sidwaya/Burkina Faso*)

Within the framework of the sub-regional workshop on mining and environmental protection that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and GWP/WA organized for journalists, Jean Marc Garreau, IUCN Programme Coordinator for Central and West Africa, gave a presentation on the IUCN approach in dealing with the issue in West Africa.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has always been very sensitive and very active on issues regarding compliance with environmental standards in the exploitation of mineral resources. Its action comes in various forms and is primarily intended to provide knowledge, assess the real situation, train actors, help weaker actors and build dialogue between all stakeholders.

In Mauritania, it has encouraged the setting up of an international panel on oil exploration and exploitation that has rendered valued results at national and international levels. In Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Guinea Conakry and Sierra Leone, IUCN has also worked on social and environmental impacts of extractive industries (oil, bauxite, phosphate, elimenite, zircon ...). In Guinea Bissau for example, IUCN's work led to the creation of a national working group on oil and extractive industries involving public institutions and NGOs that have signed an MOU with the Ministry of Natural Resources to play the role of facilitator and adviser on these issues.

In sensitive environments such as arid areas, IUCN works to disseminate environmental planning and manage-



Jean-Marc Garreau, regional Programme
Coordinateur, IUCN West and Central Africa

ment techniques to mitigate the negative impacts of mining operations. According to Jean-Marc Garreau, from studies carried out, the Union is trying to train mine actors. It is, for example, training officials of the mining sector, and managers of protected areas on risks of the sector. "One of our other roles is to build more dialogue between actors, understand legal and regulatory frameworks, visit sites, and assist the most vulnerable actors," he stated.

Mr. Garreau noted that IUCN has created a coalition of civil society and government actors of five countries to promote best practices. The aim is to mitigate or compensate for environmental and social impacts of mining in West Africa. One of the objectives of IUCN also cited by Jean-Marc Garreau is the work done by IUCN to influence the mining sector. In this regard, dialogue is established between IUCN and the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). "We are also working together to identify and promote best practices in the mining sector in order to encourage mining companies to take up their social and environmental responsibilities," he concluded.

Mine and agriculture

Sabcé as a message

By Grégoire B. BAZIE (*Lefaso.net/Burkina Faso*)

The Bissa Gold mine in Sabcé Rural Council (90 km north of Ouagadougou and 15 km from Kongoussi, headquarters of Bam province) is only at its construction phase and will soon, on 22 December 2012 if all goes well, be churning out its first gold bar. Agriculture is the sector that will suffer most with the coming of the mining company.



Flooded area in Sabcé

With the completion of a dam by the mining company, the Sabcé Rural Council has recorded floods that have caused considerable damage, including flooding of farms. This could have a negative impact on agricultural production in the council and on the population's food security.

The assessment of flood damage is not yet complete, but the Deputy CEO of Bissa Gold, Christian Ouedraogo, already considers the situation as an unfortunate "incident". For him, if further flooding occurs again, given the high rainfall this year, their effects would certainly not be of the same magnitude as when the dam is fully completed.

For now, the execution rate of the works is 99%. When flooding occurred in August, the execution of works for the dam was 95%. Consequences: waters overflowed beyond the area previously defined as flooded, causing damage in Sabcé farms and in the neighboring council of Mané.

1,250 people are affected. If the Deputy DG Ouédraogo admits his company's responsibility in the situation of the councils in question, he denies any involvement of Bissa Gold in other cases of flooding identified in the region. Thus, instead of 1,250 victims, it was reported that more than 5,000 people were affected according to Social

Works. A government delegation that came to inquire about the problem on the spot, insisted on harmonizing figures given, for appropriate action to be taken.

Apparently the issue has not yet been settled. However, whatever the outcome, the Sabcé floods has revived the debate on the impact of mining on agriculture. It is indicative of the negative effects that a mine could have on agricultural production and thereby on food security. Because, beyond the farms invaded by floods, the installation of the mine in Sabcé came at the expense of areas usually earmarked for agriculture in the area.

In this regard, the case of Niagré Naaba could not be more symbolic. The tribal chief saw his 55 hectares gone to the mine. For these scores of hectares lost, he has received only 7 million Francs as compensation for 10 hectares. For the rest, he is still preparing to build a file to enable him claim his rights. In addition, the perimeter of the mine (about 130 km²) stretches over vegetation suitable for farming. In a region generally known for its arid soils, it has harmful consequences for the sector and food self-sufficiency.

Having a mine is good. Nevertheless, it is even better if you can exploit it without affecting agriculture.

Mine and water resources

The good, the bad and the ugly

By Dzifa AZUMAH (Ghana news agency/Ghana)

Gold Mining is an ancient old trade, which had gone on in the West African Region for over hundred years. However recent studies by analyst have revealed that the region is expected to be one of the world's fastest growing regions for gold production over the next four years.

A significant quantity of this precious mineral is expected to come from Burkina Faso, which joined the hot chase just ten years ago with a lot of prospecting still ongoing. Burkina Faso has been declared the third biggest site for gold exploration in Africa and the fourth biggest gold producer in Africa.

A recent publication 'AllAfrica' revealed that the recent boom in the gold mining industry in the last three years has made the country one of Africa's leading producers and it is luring a whole generation into the sector for work. Children as young as six were reported to have left school in order to work in the mines – mainly artisanal ones where they crush stones, sieve dust and transport water around the site. Children who are still in school however visit the mines on their days off from school, influenced by their parents who have made money there.

The Gains in Mining

The report further quoted the Ministry of Finance as saying that, gold has become the top export commodity for Burkina Faso. In 2011, it earned Burkina Faso 127 billion CFA (US\$247 million). Between 2007 and 2011, it brought in 440 billion CFA, accounting for 64.7 percent of all exports and 8 percent of GDP. Production rose from 23 tonnes in 2010 to 32 tonnes in 2011. Gold mines are spread across the country's northern, western, south-western and central regions.

Likely Problems

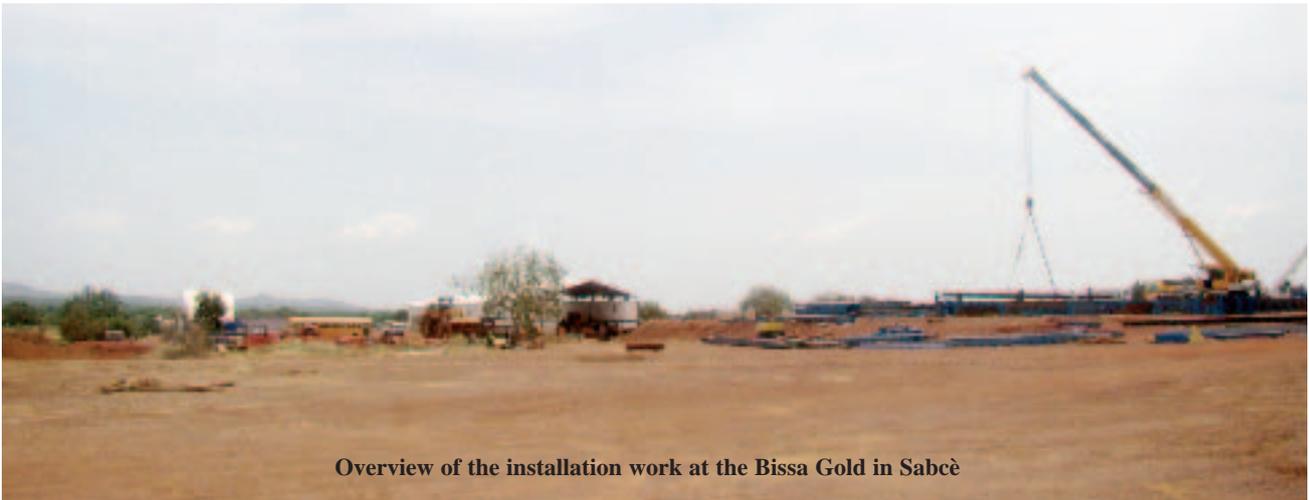
The likely problem for this country is the pollution of water bodies due to the activities of illegal mining or artisanal mining as they may chose to call it, in the use of hazardous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury, which have the capability of wiping out whole communities if not properly handled. The artisanal miners who have very little or no knowledge about the poisonous effect of these chemicals need to be educated as early as possible by stakeholders. The focus for now is "let's make fast money, whilst it last".

Deputy General Director of Bissa Gold, Dr Christian F Ouedraogo, who addressed the group of West African journalists attending a five day workshop on mining and the protection of the environment and natural resources in West Africa, to the mining site said "the chemical easily breaks down in water with the introduction of chlorine".

The fact that it easily breaks down with chlorine, does not rule out accidents. The accidental spillage of Cyanide in



Journalists visiting the facilities in construction of the mine



Overview of the installation work at the Bissa Gold in Sabcè

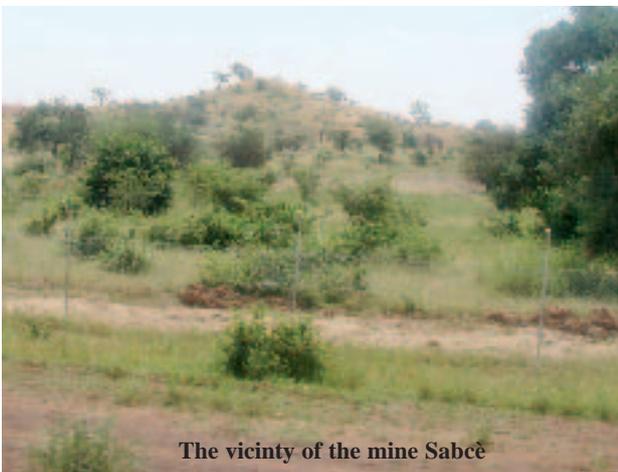
some water bodies, by some mining companies in other West African countries have resulted in the death of aquatic life and the need for the provision of alternative water sources.

The workshop which took the journalist to Bissa Gold was jointly organized by Global Water Partnership (GWP) and The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Effects of Cyanide on Humans

According to Wikipedia, the inhalation of high concentrations of cyanide causes a coma with seizures and cardiac arrest, with death following in a matter of minutes. At lower doses, loss of consciousness may be preceded by general weakness, giddiness, headaches, confusion, and perceived difficulty in breathing. At the first stages of unconsciousness, breathing is often sufficient or even rapid, although the state of the victim progresses towards a deep coma, sometimes accompanied by pulmonary edema and finally cardiac arrest. A fatal dose for humans can be as low as 1.5 mg/kg body weight.

The Chairman of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) West Africa, Mr Hama Arba Diallo admitted that mining has a lot of economic effects for countries such as Burkina Faso but at the same time degrading consequences for the environment especially in relation to



The vicinity of the mine Sabcè

water bodies. He said "there cannot be mining without water, since water is an essential aspect in mining," to which Dr Ouedraogo agreed. Water, the World say is Life. Without Water there cannot be life on earth for which reason, each country is working hard to protect this resource.

"Open, artisanal or illegal mining is being done at great cost to our countries and issue must be looked at critically because it is done in a disorganised manner," Mr Diallo said.

Since the 1960s when 'cyanide heap leaching' was introduced to the mining process, the toxic impact of gold mining has rocketed and the chances that there would not be any accidental spillage cannot be taken for granted.

The process, as described by Dr Ouedraogo, involves pouring a cyanide solution over crushed ore. The cyanide solution percolates, dissolves the gold and will be carried to the solution ponds. This technique requires the use of large quantities of highly toxic cyanide. The cyanide solution is either reused or stored in a tailing dam. The question then is what would happen if there is a flood as has become a regular feature in recent times?

What should be done in case of spillage

If it should happen and the fact of pollution is made known to Ghanaians, it might increase the cost of treating the water for human consumption, but the question is what effect would it have on irrigation, agriculture, ground water and water for domestic and industrial use?

There are regular incidents involving cyanide spillage in mining. 'Tailings' dams, where the contaminated waste water from the mining process is stored, are a frequent cause of serious environmental disasters.

The mine in its quest to promote both formal and informal education within the communities in which they are operating should endeavour to educate the people on the harmful effect of cyanide and mercury usage, which research has shown can kill within a short time. It is a social responsibility that they owe to the people as well as the state. Let's work for a better and safer world that renewable resources such as water would be kept safe for eternity.

Mines and socio-economic impacts

Reconciling economic development, environmental protection and social development

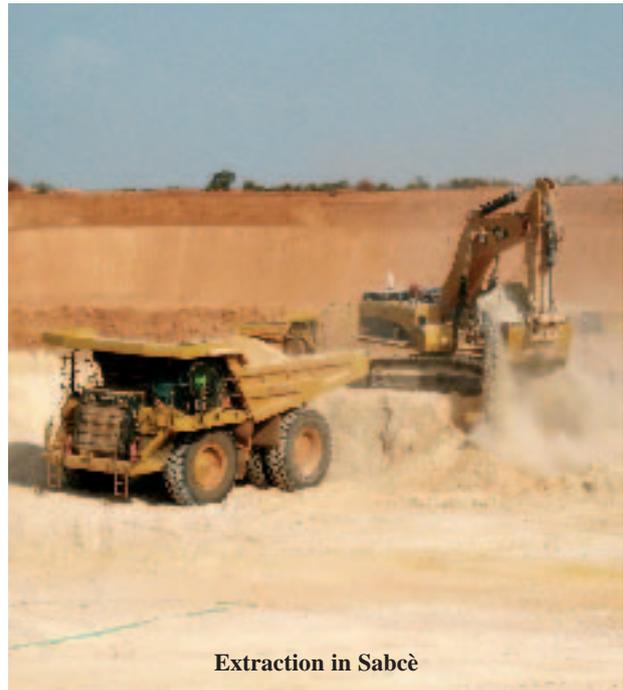
“We should look beyond environmental protection and target sustainable mining.” That is the conviction of Mr. Amidou Garane, a jurist specialized in environmental issues. He clearly made this assertion during a presentation on “legal instruments for the protection of natural resources through mining.” It was during the capacity building workshop for the media on mining and environmental protection.

Amidou Garane, a jurist specialized in environmental issues, is adamant: “because it helps reduce unemployment and provides revenue to States, mining is necessary for national development. It is however likely to have negative effects on the environment and human health if it is not carried out in a responsible manner,” he pointed out.

The main environmental and social impacts of mining that he mentioned included the displacement and resettlement of affected populations, pollution due to the use of chemicals and degradation of soils and landscapes. All States have put in place safeguards to try to reduce these inconveniences. Mining companies are compelled to respect the environment in mining and the rights of local populations, in order to reconcile economic development (mining) with environmental protection.

There are instruments that organize environmental protection in mining. National instruments such as the framework law on the environment or environmental codes determine the basic principles of environmental protection that apply to all environment sectors, including the mining sector. Mining codes and laws organizing mining operations (exploration, exploitation and trade) aim to create a safe business environment for investors.

At regional level, protocols, guidelines and regulations adopted within the regional community organizations are supranational instruments directly enforceable in the States. There is no global convention that is specific to the



Extraction in Sabce

protection of the mining environment, says Mr. Garane. Generally global conventions on the environment protect the environment as a whole including the mining environment.

According to the jurist, there are three kinds of hurdles that make it difficult to enforce legislation on the protection of the mining environment. Mining companies tend not to fulfill all environmental obligations due to high costs often requiring raising substantial financial resources. Weakness for supervisory institutions and NGOs and environmental associations to react against possible violations of environmental legislation also explain in part the shortfalls of mining companies.

“Beyond environmental protection in mining, we should aim at having a sustainable mining,” admonishes Mr. Garane. This, according to him, will help reconcile economic development, environmental protection and social development. “Mining must not only contribute to the national economy but should also be concerned about the protection of the environment. It must be part of a social equity perspective,” he concluded.



Dead tree in the outskirts of the town

Mines and socio-economic impacts

Wind of hope

By Idrissa SANE (*Le Soleil/Sénégal*)

The Bissa Gold mine raises all kinds of hopes in Sabcé. The mining company has received 20,000 job applications. Everyone dreams of making a fortune with the gold mine. But environmental concerns are undermined by the wind of hope. A report.

The convoy leaves Ouagadougou around 9 pm on Wednesday 3 October 2012. Hamlets scroll pass on either side of the road. After the gateway out of Fabr , the plain gives way to a chain of hills. We are now in an area with a different topography. Peaks alternate with valleys in a sparse shrubby area.

After two hours, here we are at Sabc . At the gateway, houses painted yellow contrast with habitations made of precarious materials below. A new day is dawning on the village that got its name from a fruit tree called "Sabc " in the local language.

"We have real expectations from this mine. We believe that the council can gain something, but for the moment, we have nothing," said the mayor, who received the delegation in a premises perched on an elevation. Some women and young people are hanging around to catch the least information. Dressed in a pair of trousers and a blue shirt of an English premier league team, Basile Ouedrago is one of the youths of the village. He is expectant. His dream is to make money from the mine. "I have been looking for work for several months, but I have not found anything yet. I do not despair; if the mining proper begins, I might work there," opines the young boy.

Employment of Sabc  youths is the common complaint. The discussions interest them in many regards. Everyone is expecting something. The opening of the mine has already boosted income-generating activities such as trade. The town is attracting all types of fortune seekers. There is a scramble for Sabc  gold - an Eldorado for thousands of young men and women.

"Presently, it is difficult to find a house to rent. People come from all parts of Burkina Faso to look for work in the mine. We plan to make a new housing estate," revealed the mayor enthusiastically.

Away from the group, Alhaji Idrissa Warmi, thin and tapered, is less euphoric. He is active in the consultation committee to protect the interests of the village and to advocate that youth concerns are taken into consideration. "Certainly some sons of our communities have been recruited, but this is not enough! We always have the issue of local youth employment on the table. The company is still recruiting but we do not know how the recruitment is done," laments the member of the organizing committee, El Hadj Idrissa Warmi.

"(...) Cyanide is used in the production of gold on the Bissa Gold site; the mine authorities have reassured us about the harmlessness of this input on our environment,



A community member expressing his views on the installation of the mine in Sabc 

at the end of the gold production line (...). One thing is certain, all mines degrade the environment; reforestation can never replace, for example, the occupation of the site of the Bissa Nature Reserve by an industry of the same name" he added.

Children see their future in gold

Dressed in a blue stripes white shirt, Inspector Salifou Sawadogou, medium height and thick set, is one of the few people who see the reverse of this wealth of nature. Absenteeism in schools is taking a disturbing turn. Many children choose between the classroom and gold panning. "Since the opening of the mines, two schools have been built with 6 classes each, but this year we recorded for the first time 21 absences during examinations. This is to tell you that there is a correlation between the start of mining activities and academic performance of students. Children work in traditional gold mining sites, some come back dozing, and others do not. There are many letters addressed to the Prefect on this subject," says Education Inspector, Sawadogo.

Twenty thousand job applications

Far from the village, there in the mine, in different places, excavators and cranes are in operation. The platform is in effervescence. Alas! "We no longer accept job applications, we have received 20,000. Some applications do not have any qualification," says the Deputy Director General, Dr. Christian F. Ouedraogo. The mine will employ between 500 and 700 people and about 30% of the jobs that do not require a qualification will be for sons of the mining area.

Mines and socio-economic impacts

Scrambling for Gold threatens environment

by Muhtarr JALLOW (*Gambia Info/Gambia*)

Sabcé is one of the provincial settlements hosting one of Burkina Faso's largest mineral deposits where gold mining is now taking centre stage of economic activities in the region.

During the visit it was reported that the people were scrambling for the gold and they were not only engaged in illegal mining but also public places are also being dug in search of gold deposit. The only trunk road from the capital city is also going to be relocated because it is believed that there is gold deposit under it.

Sabcé is estimated around 30,000 in habitants with a catchment area of 31 villages, they also have 29 primary schools, three health facilities and three community and social health posts,

However the area is reported to have high illiteracy level thus making them to become more vulnerable to the effects of the mining.

One of the environmental specialist during his presentation said that the literacy level of the local inhabitants remains significantly low, sometimes when you talk to the local miners about the danger of the use of these chemicals to their health they tell you that they value the money than living for many years in poverty thus making them to become more vulnerable to the mines.

According to the mayor of Sabcé, Célestin Zoungrana since the discovery of the gold deposits it brought significant changes in the lives of the local inhabitants. There has been increased growth in trade, it created more jobs to the locals and they also witnessed an increasing in population in recent times as a result of new migrant settlers

from other parts of the region. Furthermore before the discovery of the gold deposit 10 years ago, people were living on subsistence farming, livestock breeding, traditional gold digging and petty trading.

He maintains that any development comes with its own problem and one of their biggest fears at the moment is that students might drop out from school and engage in gold mining, increasing number of criminal activities, uncontrollable use of hazardous chemicals such as mercury and sanities by traditional gold diggers which could have devastating effects to the environment and the communities as a whole.

Mayor Zoungrana went further to explain that since November 2011 Bissa Gold which has sister parent organization in Russia started building the mines, they conducted surveys in area and started building houses to resettle the communities who were settling in mines located areas. The company is said to have good track records of mining operations in Guinea Conakry and other part of Assia and Europe. According to deputy director general of Bissa Gold SA, Dr Christian Ouédraogo despite progress in building the heavy sand mineral mines they also built houses that can accommodate up to 1250 families who are going to be relocated from their original settlements. He disclosed that the company owns 80 % of the shares and 10 % belongs to the government. According to him the life span of the mines is seven years which could be



Mine excavation

expanded, as research is still continuing in this gold rich region. The deputy director general **pointed out that the company** has acquired a land area of 130 kilometers square and is going to create between 500 to 700 permanent jobs for the citizens. However they have decided that greater percentage of the jobs will be given to communities who were directly affected. "The other skill jobs will be subjected to competition hence the reason why the company is providing skills training to the local communities", stated DR. Ouedraogo. He explained that production will be open air mining and they intend to produce up to 4.300 tones of gold per day with an annual plan of 6.5 million tones. "Knowing that gold mining requires lot of water to facilitate their work we built a dam and have put in place all safety measures to avoid linkages, along side they also built sewage facilities and incinerators for metal and bio degradable wastes" said Mr. Ouedraogo.

"WE have also provided money and seedlings to the communities to replace the forest cover and already we anticipate that after the closure of the mines we will open a bank account for the communities at the central bank, this was in agreement with the government" he added.

The chief of Nyagale Ouedraogo Tiwodo earlier on revealed that they had prior consultation meetings with the miners on the impact of the mines to the environment hence they were the ones who were administering the forest. "We also informed our people that a mine will be built and will stay for long and we also informed them that we have showed them places they need not touch and now they have started cutting the trees but we don't know what will happen next, but for the moment they have not touched our secret places", he cited.

An inefficient conflict regulator

By Aboubacar SANI (*L'Evènement/Niger*)

In the rural council of Sabcé, the company since December 2012 has started operations on the mining site located between the villages of Yémingou and Bissa in the Centre-North Region. Alas! The advent of this activity has not been smooth between the local population and the mining company. This situation lays bare the ineffectiveness of the Consultation Council of the Bissa Gold mining site in resolving any conflicts that may arise throughout the activity.

Youths of the villages of Yémingou and Bissa organized, on 7 July 2012, a protest against the recruitment procedure for local staff of the Bissa Gold SA Company, the company that holds the license to mine the Bissa Gold site. Angry, they took to the streets after the publication of the results of a recruitment test conducted by Bissa Gold SA. "After a competitive recruitment test, only five out of the initially announced 30 were selected. In order to

express their discontent loudly, young people then organized themselves because, according to them, it was not the first case," explained the Prefect of Sabcé, Kalaga Hamado.

However, the Bissa Gold Company did not have the same opinion on the matter. "We have given a quota of 30% to the population of displaced villages. It has to do with unskilled labour," insisted the Deputy Director General of Bissa Gold SA, Dr Christian Ouédraogo. According to him, among the thirty applications received, only four were capable of driving machines.

Regional authorities taking part in a meeting in the Sabcé Council were involved in the resolution of the crisis. "It was not easy without the involvement of the authorities of the region," acknowledged the Prefect of Sabcé. According to him, the crisis was defused after a meeting with youth representatives, local authorities and officials of the mine. "We have agreed to take the other candidates in other areas of activity such as mechanics," said the Deputy Director General of Bissa Gold SA.

The conflict occurred during the installation phase of the mine, which caused the displacement of indige-



Townhall of Sabcé



Community representatives at exchange meeting with journalists at sabcé townhall

nous peoples to other areas not far from their home villages, now occupied by the mine. The Consultation Council that brings together communities, administrative and customary authorities and the Bissa Gold SA Company, “temporarily” solved the problem. But the road is still long. Mining starts only in December and other conflicts may arise during this crucial phase.

The people are still attached to their sacred sites

It must also be said that the Bissa Gold mine site is located on the sacred sites of the people displaced to other villages. “It is because of these places that the opening of the mine has been delayed for several years,” said the Mayor of Sabcé, Zoungrana Mamoudou Pierre-Célestin. He explained that it was after several negotiations that the populations of Yimingou and Bissa villages accepted that the company should be established. They outlined conditions such as the demarcation of sacred places. “This has been done by the company,” said the mayor, who however added that it was necessary to remain vigilant to ensure that the commitments made by Bissa Gold to protect sites are respected. Protection of places of worship within the mining perimeter is a concern for indigenous peoples. “The destruction of sacred groves could create serious problems for both the people and the miners,” warned the conservator of the sacred groves of Sabcé Council, Yangré Naaba.

Challenges for the Consultation Council

Until then, the Consultation Council had carried out its activities only during the installation phase of the mine. It was involved in identifying the resettlement site for displaced people and construction of houses, among others. “Other problems, however, remain unresolved,” admitted a member of the council, who stated that “problems can arise in the start-up phase of the mine.” It is, according to him, the issue of sacred sites and the resettlement of the populations, which, in his opinion, did not take into account the number of children, but rather the number of family heads and their wives. “For the moment, we have not yet filed complaints about compensation, or conflict,” said the Mayor of Sabcé. Still, for the Prefect of Sabcé, this Framework must be reviewed for it to properly adapt. “Even though it exists, this framework does not work efficiently to be able to deal with potential conflicts,” he said. Regarding the issue of recruitment, it seems resolved, at least for now, since any job seeker will now be required to present a certificate of residence. Over 2,000 applications have been filed at the Bissa Gold SA Company, which provides between 500 and 700 permanent jobs.

Mines and socio-economic impacts

Bissa Gold, security is key

Assane KONÉ (*Le Républicain/Mali*)

Ouagadougou hosted from the 1st to the 5th of October 2012, a sub-regional capacity building workshop for the media on the theme "Mining and the protection of the environment and natural resources in West Africa." Under this joint IUCN and GWP/WA initiative, journalists from eleven African countries, on 3 October 2012, visited the Sabcé Rural Council, where, after a meeting with the Mayor of the locality, they visited the Bissa Gold mine that is under construction.

"The technical-economic and environmental feasibility study indicates that the Bissa Gold mine will not have any harmful impact on the environment." The statement was made by Dr. Christian Frederik Ouedraogo, Deputy Director General of Bissa Gold SA. According to him, the necessary cushioning measures have been identified to minimize the impact of mining operations on the environment and the living conditions of local populations. "A waste park has been designed to accommodate the following mineral waste: water, fine oxidized and sulfide ore, cyanide and some heavy metals, especially iron, copper, zinc, aluminum and other metals in smaller quantities such as arsenic, nickel and probably bismuth", he said. He then added that after detailed geotechnical study of the site, the park has been planned to accommodate up to 9.8 Mt to 10.5 Mt. In addition to steps taken to use cyanide only within the treatment plant in a closed system, the Deputy Director announced the stocking of calcium hypochlorite, which will be used to decontaminate sites in case of accidental pollution and to treat waste water that may be discharged into the wild. "Cyanides, unlike mer-

cury, quickly degrade under the effect of ultraviolet rays in the environment," he added. He concluded by guaranteeing that runoff in the catchment area of the park will be diverted and evacuated elsewhere through a ditch which will encircle the park and those accumulated will be pumped and reused in the plant.

Waste management on the Bissa site

"An engineered landfill site is under construction and retention basins of waste from septic tanks are constructed," said Dr. Christian F. Ouedraogo for whom waste is managed in four ways at the Bissa site: biodegradables are stored in compost pits used in the production of organic manure, metals are gathered in one place for possible recycling and other inert waste in minor amounts such as glasses, neon are stored for landfill on the site. Furthermore, he indicated that staff awareness was raised on the collection and sorting of waste on the site and on the management of waste oil leaks and other liquid wastes. "The Bissa Gold SA Company wants to become a model in social and environmental responsibility," he said. In this regard he spewed out a litany of activities to be carried out including reforestation, creation of groves and village forest areas. "The Bissa Gold reforestation campaign has from 2011 to 2012 made it possible to plant nearly 20 000 trees of various species," he asserted.

For the 2012 campaign, focus is on providing seedlings to locals to plant for their personal gains. Notwithstanding, Dr. Christian F. Ouedraogo said that environmental management and rehabilitation of the site will be carried out in accordance with the standards, terms and conditions prescribed by the Mining Code. However, he admitted that the actual impacts during decommissioning will depend on the level of success of mitigation measures applied during the operation phase. "The timing of the closure of the site will reduce damage to the environment, taking into account as early as possible potential impacts and integrating the most appropriate remedial measures," he stated.



Line treatment of the water used in the extraction cycle

Mines and socio-economic impacts

Sabcé: what after the mine?

By Lonsani SANOGO (*l'Indépendant/Burkina Faso*)

The discovery of gold in the natural reserve of the Sabcé Council located in the Bam Province of the Centre-North region of Burkina Faso is whetting appetites. Things went quickly between the Bissa Gold SA mining company, the Government of Burkina Faso and the people of the council. If mining is giving much hope to the local populations, post mining is already generating apprehensions.



Ten years before the arrival of Bissa Gold SA in 2006, artisanal gold mining was an activity in the Sabcé area. The only mining company established in the area, Bissa Gold began its operations in 2011. The lifespan of the mine is seven years. With a surface area of 130 km², the mine has affected the forest reserve of Sabcé Council and 700 ha of farmlands of the two villages have been directly affected. The nature reserve, "the lung of Sabcé", was the only area from where 80% of the people fetched firewood. In the near future, satisfying energy needs may become very difficult.

The people must change their habits and turn towards using improved stoves or alternative energy since they can no longer access firewood.

In compensation, a reforestation programme is in gestation according to the divisional chief of service of the environment and sustainable development, Abdoulaye Bambara. For livestock needs, the issue is not addressed and water resource management is a key concern. The mine uses a lot of water and it has built a dam to supply the plant with fresh water. 4.5 million m³ of water will be

used per year to power the mine whereas the resource is not sufficiently available. The impacts of mining on water in the short or long term raise questions. Dr. Christian F. Ouedraogo, Deputy Director General of Bissa Gold SA believes that the tailings has been the subject of feasibility and geotechnical studies, and the transportation of these residues takes place in a closed circuit ...

The post-mining issue is not under the control of the people. However, the closure of the mine at the end and the rehabilitation of the site will be managed in accordance with the Mining Investment Code of Burkina Faso, according to Christian Ouedraogo. The Council relies on the creation of community funds provided in this perspective. With the support of the mining company, the Council has created another forest that it has demarcated, but the seedlings are likely not going to succeed because of the soil type. The company is training locals in trades such as soap waxing, weaving and charcoal. The mine will create 500 permanent jobs in an area where the local youth population is estimated at 2,000 people, the main targets of unskilled labour of the mining company.

Mines and forest

What can be saved of the heritage?

by Alain TOSSOUNON (*Le Municipal/Benin*)

In Sabcé, the Nature Reserve, which was the only forest area, is now endangered. The cohabitation between gold mining and the reserve has become impossible since the coming of the mining company that has claimed the entire reserve.

Yagré Naaba is the customary conservator of the Sabcé grove. This place has been for ages home to a nature reserve. The only area that, for all the communities estimated at 26,000 persons, according to the Mayor of Sabcé, is the “lung” of the Council. From time immemorial, all his life, the conservator has remained closely linked to the reserve. “In terms of customs, I was the one managing this landscape,” he said. Guardian of the temple, he says that this reserve is also home to a sacred forest. It was an ideal place where communities gathered every year to perform various rituals.

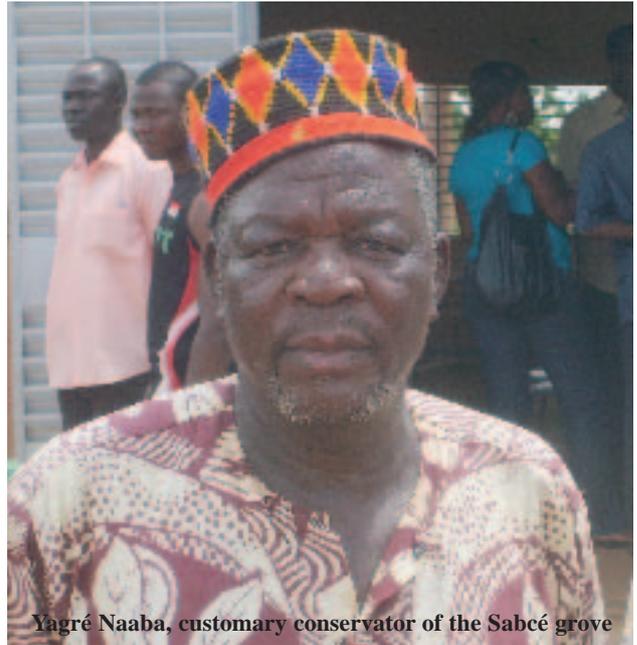
However, this harmonious life between the reserve, the sacred forest and communities, is now witnessing real disturbance. This is simply because of the coming of the mining company to exploit gold discovered inside the nature reserve. Just one year after launching its operations on 29 September 2011, everyday the reserve loses its trees and shrubs. Today, if a few plants still litter the edges of the mining site that is under construction, the interior has given way to the administrative buildings for the staff and plant facilities. Furthermore, the vegetation cover has simply disappeared giving way to ore pits that are under construction.

Gradually, the nature reserve that hitherto was the only firewood reservoir is becoming a vast expanse of bare land with pits intended for prospecting the precious metal. “*With the mine, they have taken away everything,*” laments the chief. After him, the guardian of the modern temple, the chief of service for the environment and sustainable development of Sabcé, Mr. Abdoulaye Bambara, also has concerns. “We have a lot of problems concerning firewood. This is because nearly 80% of the communities harvested wood from the reserve,” said he.

According to Christian Ouedraogo, the Deputy Director General, of the Bissa Gold mining company, before the start of operations, about 200,000 trees were uprooted from the reserve that has long resisted drought. “Despite the bad weather and all, it is a reserve that remained for us and had trees of some distant generation.”

An irreplaceable ecosystem

As work is progressing, the vegetation cover is disappearing increasingly. However, in a context where the soils are arid, “it is not possible to reconstitute this ecosystem in 10 or 20 years,” says the chief of service for the environment and sustainable development of Sabcé, Bambara Abdoulaye. This is simply because in the region, reforestation experiences have always had little success. “On



Yagré Naaba, customary conservator of the Sabcé grove

arid lands, it’s complicated. Reforestation is done but we do not have good results,” he explains. To minimize destruction of the ecosystem, the Bissa Gold Company brandishes its reforestation action in the face of the lack of a real reforestation programme. Thus, according to the Deputy Director General, from 2011 to 2012, nearly 20,000 seedlings were planted in addition to seedlings distributed to the local populations. On the part of the Council, the Mayor said that the council has also created a council forest. However, there is no shortage of skepticism for the unfavorable conditions of greening the region. In addition, the chief of service for the environment and sustainable development, Abdoulaye Bambara, pointed out that “no matter the reforestation that will be done, it will take 2 or 3 years to see the trees grow.” Questioned, the Deputy Director General of the Bissa Gold SA Company said that you cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. Nevertheless, beyond the cake, it is the entire unique nature reserve in the region that is disappearing with the progress of mining operations.

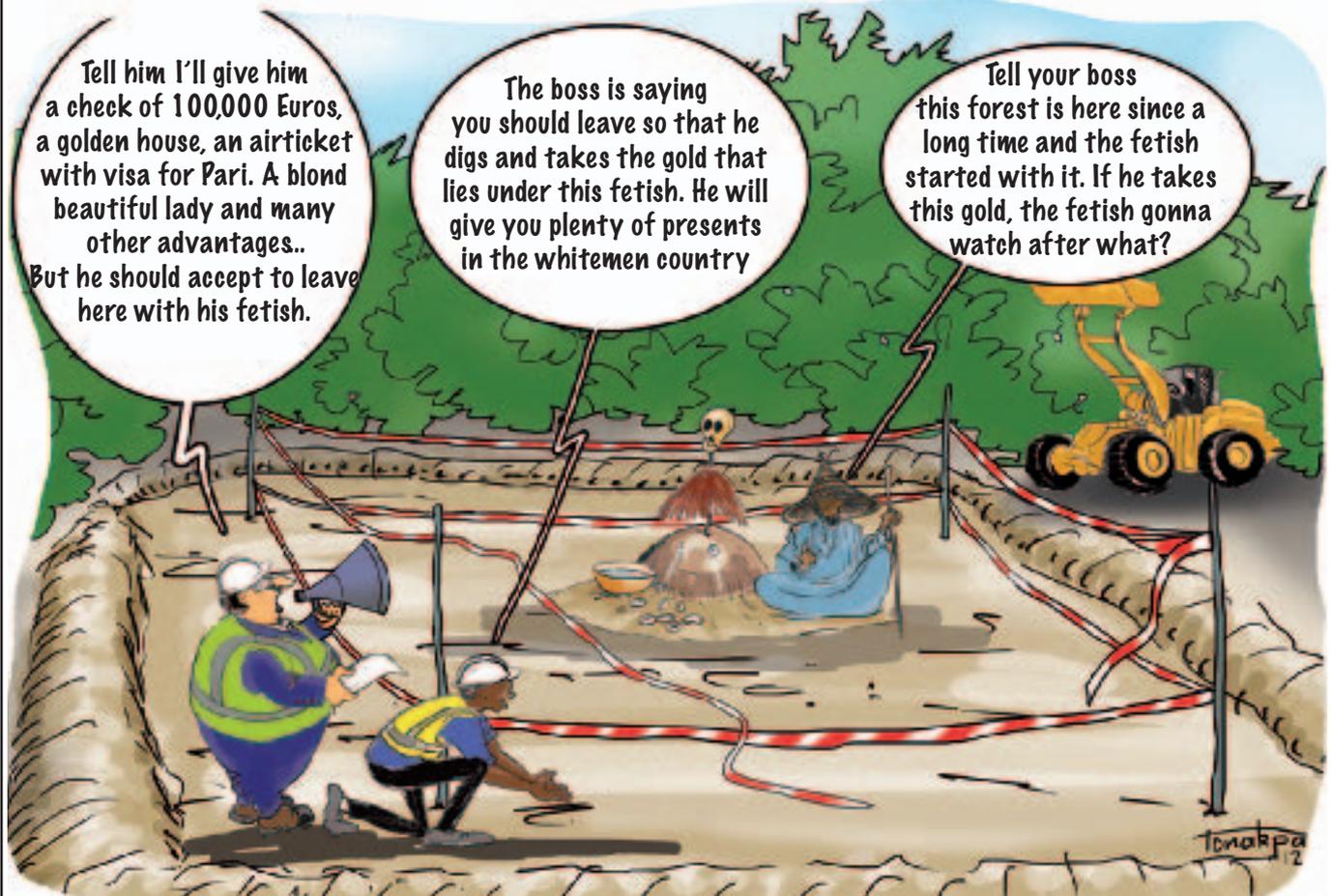
The first gold bar is expected in December. Local communities and local authorities look on powerless. Condemned already to learn to live without the reserve, they should be prepared to leave nothing as a legacy to their offspring. With the mine, this heritage will soon be something of the past.

Mines and forest

Sabcé, the irreplaceable reserve!

By Raphaël KAFANDO (Sidwaya/Burkina Faso)

Sabcé lives the gold fever since September 2011. Consequently, hectares of forest will disappear to leave room for gold mining.



"I am 53 years old; this sacred forest was here before I was born. It is there that we have our fetishes and from where we draw part of our livelihood." With a sad face and worried look, Mr. Diallo Yaado of Sabcé already regrets the fact that the green lung of his council will disappear for the sake of gold mining. Environmental inclinations are engraved in the collective memory. Formerly, says Yaade Diallo, the place was the last sanctuary of medicinal plants essential to perpetuate traditional medicines. Villagers also harvested wild fruits such as shea, nere, grapes ... from there. In addition, he says that the inhabitants from time to time carry out small game-hunting in the forest. Facilities are already sprouting out of the ground and hillsides. Several square kilometers will now be under the authority of the leaseholder, Bissa Gold. Mountains of earth have already been extracted from the basement for the construction of pits, whereas the mine will be operational only in December 2012. According to the chief of service for the environment of Sabcé,

Abdoulaye Bambara, this area is the main source of firewood for the council. "This is where the population gets its supply of dry wood, now I'm afraid it the few trees that we have will be felled because people have no other sources of energy" he complained. According to him, the 55ha of forest is the only place in the council that could withstand the effects of climate change and wanton tree felling.

"This forest is irreplaceable!"

Officials of the mine are making sure that measures are taken to mitigate the impact of the destruction of this biodiversity. "We replant to mitigate this problem. In 2011, we planted nearly 20,000 trees of various species. For the 2012 campaign, the focus is on providing locals with plants for individual reforestation," reassured the Deputy Director General of Bissa Gold, Dr. Christian Ouedraogo. However, the Mayor of Sabcé, Pierre Célestin Zoungrana is clear "This forest is irreplaceable." He justified this by



Overview of the mine approaching Sabcé

the fact that the land of the area is already degraded and the success rate of reforestation is quite low. As for the customary conservator of the Yangrin Naaba forest, he nevertheless requires compensation because, as he says, "When we started the compensation process, they just refunded the parcels of land that I farmed on and they considered that the forest did not belong to me, meanwhile I was appointed as conservator of the customary grove. I demand that the mining company compensates me or else, we as traditional chiefs will not accept this injustice." As infrastructures are sprouting from the ground, the community reserve is gradually disappearing. Meanwhile, the population is observing with resignation the sure and slow death of thousands of trees that have for a long constituted their "green mine."

High demand for fuel wood in Burkina Faso eroding conservation gains

By Edmund SMITH-ASANTE (*Ghanabusinessnews/Ghana*)

Although conservationists globally have been campaigning over the past few years for the use of alternative sources of energy such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) other than fuel wood, indications are that it is still very much in vogue in the Sahel country of Burkina Faso.

Indigenes living on the outskirts of the capital Ouagadougou especially, use firewood as their main source of energy in their households.

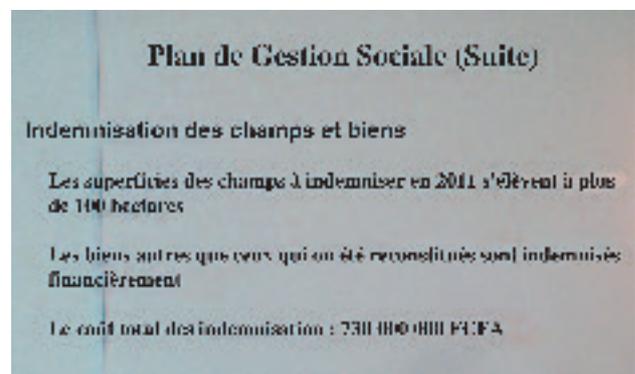
This came to light, when a group of journalists from 11 West African countries of Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Niger, Togo, Benin and Cameroon, undertook a field trip Wednesday, October 3, 2012, to the Sabcé District as part of a workshop jointly organised by Global Water Partnership, West Africa (GWP-WA) and the International Conservation Union (IUCN-PACO).

In an interaction with community members and officials of the Sabcé District, it was gathered that a reserve from which members of the community have over the past years obtained all their fuel wood needs has been lost to the mining company, because it falls within their concession.

But although the community has been given seedlings by the mine to plant, it will not be until some years that the trees will mature for them to fell as firewood, while most parts of the lands around the community are not fertile enough for any agricultural activities.

Indeed, Mayor of the Sabcé District, Pierre Celestin Zoungrana, in an interaction with the journalists numbering 30, stated that the reserve has many old trees because it has been able to withstand very harsh weather and droughts in the past years and so has always provided firewood for the surrounding communities as well as fodder for cattle farmers.

For his part, Ouedraogo Tiwodo, the Chief of Niagre, who was also in charge of the reserve, said they have depend-



ed on firewood all their life because that has been the only source of energy available for their use.

But the Environment Officer at the Sabce Environment Department, Mr. Bambara Abdoulaye, agreed that there will indeed be a challenge for the community members who have only known firewood as their source of energy, since the seedlings given to them will take years to mature into trees for use, while another major challenge is whether the trees would be nursed till they are grown because of the scarcity of water.

There however seems to be no way out of this absence of fuel wood, although it is defeating the calls worldwide for sustainable use of the world's remaining forest resources and the use of alternative forms of energy like solar, wind and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).



Fuel wood

“Gas is even not enough for the people in Ouagadougou - because the population has grown big now in Ouagadougou it is very hard now to find the bottle – I myself I store them – I have about three bottles that I store, because it may finish and you can’t find it; it is very difficult,” a resident of the Burkinabe capital, Madam Safietu Barry stated.

She divulged that in the whole of Ouagadougou, there are only two private companies that supply gas, hence supply is not able to match demand.

Meanwhile, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), as at 2010, only 20.6% or about 5,649,000 ha out of Burkina Faso’s total land area of 27,360,000 was forested, with 109,000 ha being planted forest.

Statistics from the UN say there was a drastic change in forest cover between 1990 and 2010 in Burkina Faso, as a result of which the country lost an average of 59,900 ha or 0.87% per year. In total, between 1990 and 2010, Burkina Faso lost 17.5% of its forest cover, or around 1,198,000 ha. The country’s forest cover (excluding planted forests) per 1000 ha from 1990 to 2010 was as follows: 1990 -

6840, 2000 – 6190, 2005 – 5871 and 2010 – 5540.

Burkina Faso’s forests contain 292 million metric tons of carbon in living forest biomass, while biodiversity and protected areas have some 636 known species of amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles according to figures from the World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Of these, the Centre says 0.3% are endemic, which means they exist in no other country, while 1.4% are threatened. Burkina Faso is also home to at least 1100 species of vascular plants and 11.5% of the country is protected under IUCN categories I-V.

Clearly, Burkina Faso’s unplanned use of forest resources has led to the deterioration of all forest areas around Ouagadougou.

However, an FAO Corporate Document Repository, titled “Forests, fuels and the future: Wood energy for sustainable development”, says the situation has prompted a Government decision to develop effective management techniques.

According to the FAO, the project which it is executing and is financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), aims to develop a national pro-

gramme for the sustainable and integrated production of wood and non-wood forests products, particularly fuel wood and charcoal.

In an area of 150 km around Ouagadougou, 80,000ha are being managed with the active participation of local people using simple techniques to implement silvicultural (the practice of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values) operations.

Although with support from the FAO, the Government of Burkina Faso has introduced a planned and more rational approach to forest resources, which the FAO says has resulted in resource conservation and protection, as well as a 50 per cent income increase for local people, who are now able to fulfil urban demand for fuel wood and charcoal, there is still more to be done to halt the rapid deforestation of the country.

It is only hoped that plans that are underway for the management of a further 570000ha in Burkina Faso will be hastened, together with other interventions to reverse the trend from 1990 to 2010.

Mines and habitat

A new youth for Yimiougou and Bissa villages

By Edmund SMITH-ASANTE (*Ghanabusinessnews/Ghana*)

As they leave their mud huts for hard blockhouses, the populations of Yimiougou and Bissa villages – the two affected by the establishment of the Bissa Gold mine - are preparing to embrace a new lifestyle.

Permanent houses of various sizes, all painted in yellow and white. In Sabcé, two new villages have emerged thanks to the introduction of the gold mine. Planned to resettle people displaced by the mine, they are made of permanent materials. Out of the 371 homes built, 198 are assigned to Yimiougou village and 173 to Bissa. They will house approximately 350 households affected by the installation work of the mine. In addition to dwelling houses, socio-sanitary facilities including two new mosques, two youth centres, chapels, houses for catechists and a school with a complete cycle were built. The total cost amounts to more than two billion CFA Francs. Delegates of the population inspected the resettlement site chosen by Bissa Gold to ensure that the installed villages will no longer be displaced because of the mine. Nevertheless, for now, it is in trickles that villagers are getting to their new homes. The occupancy rate of the houses is 50% for Bissa and about 15% for Yimiougou. "Given the fact that tar will not be diverted this year, they are not too eager to move. Nevertheless, Bissa lies within the demarcated perimeter of the mine and is surrounded by a fence. That is why we are putting pressure on

them to leave the area," says Christian Ouedraogo, Deputy Director General of Bissa Gold.

The mine promises to improve access to drinking water, by developing pipelines, a borehole and installing solar pumps to supply taps in schools. But to have electricity, the displaced have to turn to the State. Bissa Gold has limited the installation of solar panels to some schools to enable adults to attend evening literacy classes.

Some families are complaining

These new owners lament the narrowness of the space allotted to each family. Among them is Kelsim Ouedraogo, a farmer. "Some had a small house. Others who are heads of families with children had no house. Where do you think they should sleep? Can I sleep in the same room with my wife and my 20-year-old child?" he asked. He believes that polygamists are those suffering most. In addition, said Mr. Ouedraogo, not all "833 inhabitants concerned by the displacement have had the right to housing. There are at least 200 persons still waiting."



New houses of Yimiougou

Mines and habitat

Resettlement blues in Bissa Gold communities

By Edmund SMITH-ASANTE (*Ghanabusinessnews/Ghana*)

Housing almost ready to welcome families displaced, new housing provided by Bissa Gold

The Bissa Gold SA mine has not begun operations yet but indications are that two major communities – Bissa and Yimiougou, 90 km from Ouagadougou, which have been displaced by the mine and so have been relocated, are already expressing some misgivings.

Their misgivings are on the change in their cultural setting in view of the way the resettlement buildings have been put up and also the taking away of their main livelihood, which is farming.

Despite many livelihood improvement projects embarked on by the mine for the indigenes, some are still expressing dissatisfaction because they no longer have farms from which they can feed their families and earn a living.

The indigenes also see the buildings put up for them as very inconvenient because they have very little space and also do not have the traditional and cultural settings they have been used to for many decades.

For now, Bissa Gold SA has put up 350 housing units for 1,250 households in both Bissa and Sabce.

Speaking on behalf of the communities at a forum with an international group of journalists, Ouedraogo Tiwodo, the Niagre Naaba, said although they knew the prospecting was only meant for few years and so were comfortable with the presence of the miners, they had to go into consultation with them when they found gold and decided to mine. He said little did they know however, that they were going to be relocated for them to mine.

Later in an exclusive interview, during which the chief disclosed how the relocation had impacted on their lives, he intimated; “When a man lives with a woman, anytime you want to meet with your wife everyone is aware of it,” referring to the fact that although in their former commu-

nity the man had a separate dwelling from the woman, they now have to live together in the same building at the new settlement, which is culturally unacceptable.

He stated further; “I had 55 hectares of farmland but they took it from me. I asked for a farmland from acquaintances in other villages but they said ‘no, you have sold your piece of land to the mines so we cannot give you a piece of land to farm.’”

The Chief of Niagre said it was only his brother who accepted to give him one hectare of land to farm on and that is what he used during the recent farming season to grow millet and groundnut. “And this is not even enough to feed my family,” he exclaimed.

“I have many children and family members so one hectare is not enough to feed them,” he stressed.

According to the community leader, whereas at first there was food security, in that there was enough for all family members with surplus to sell whenever he was hard up, now there is not even enough to go round the family of 12.

Touching on compensation for the crops that were on his farm before the land was taken, Ouedraogo Tiwodo explained that for now, he has only received CFA 7 million for 10 hectares out of the 55, because he has only been able to produce the papers covering that portion, with a promise that as soon as he is able to produce the papers covering the remaining 45, he will likewise be compensated.

The people say they also depended on a reserve for their fuel wood needs which is now part of the concession allocated by government to the mining company.

Portrait

Acquiescent and optimistic!

By Edem GADEGBEKEU (*Togo*)

A few weeks before the end of his first term, the Mayor of Sabcé, Mamadou Pierre Célestin Zoungrana, sixty years old, apparently flexible in his stance but realistic, is a visibly happy man. He has for six years been at the helm of Council that parted with a portion of its land (about 130 km ²) for the establishment of a mining company, Bissa Gold.

Calm and gentle a man, Mayor Zoungrana, who was elected in 2006 under the banner of the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) is a flamboyant business magnet.

Before vying for the office of Mayor of Sabcé (about 90 km from Ouagadougou, 26,000 inhabitants), the man had made a fortune in trading in petroleum products, bakery and hotel businesses in Burkina Faso.

Since 2006, he is leading two lives: that of an influential business operator and that of the chief authority of Sabcé, a town with 31 villages.

Several factors favour the re-election of Peter Zoungrana at the head of the council found in the northern part of Burkina Faso. If, of course, he seeks a new term in early December. Not only has Sabcé joined the closed circle of gold-producing towns on the African continent, but the council can also show-off some infrastructure such as the construction of schools. The latest is the fourth health centre that is being constructed. During his six years at the helm of the city hall of Sabcé, the builder Zoungrana also initiated the construction of schools in all the villages of the council, "even though he regrets that as at now this locality still has but one government high school".

Before the opening of the Bissa Gold mine, Sabcé had in the past been a gold mining area. The coming of the Nordgold subsidiary in Sabcé has upset some social habits, in the opinion of many people. Rising cost of living and local population growth.

However, despite the current or future changes in behaviour, Pierre Zoungrana wants to remain optimistic and positive, even though he is realistic. "(...) Farms (less than a tenth of the total area of the municipality) were razed to establish the mine. Our relations with the management of Bissa Gold are good until proven otherwise. Among the employees of Bissa Gold, you can count recruits from our council (...). Farmers displaced because of the installation of mining infrastructure were resettled and compensated. The same remains to be applied to breeders,



Mamadou Pierre Célestin Zoungrana, Mayor of Sabcé

"says Mr. Zoungrana, addressing the issue of advantages and disadvantages of Bissa Gold for the council he leads. "Our council cannot avoid the establishment of the Bissa Gold mine, because it is a state license that has been issued (...). It will be impossible to reconstruct the original ecosystem of Sabcé after operating the Bissa Gold mine, but the minimum

Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative (PREMI)

The Poverty Reduction and Environmental Management Initiative – PREMI - seeks to promote integrated natural resource management to reduce poverty and adapt to climate change in West Africa.

It aims at greater consistency in a wide range of activities developed by IUCN and its partners at local, national, and regional levels in West Africa. Through this programme, IUCN intends to strengthen the capacity of the region, demonstrate the importance of taking into account the value of ecosystem goods and services in regional development plans, policies and strategies to reduce poverty and adapt to climate change in a bid to improve wealth creation and economic growth.

The programme includes, among others, support for multi-actor dialogue on some important regional development issues for the years to come. He puts environmental concerns and climate change at the centre of decision-making processes at national and regional level for sustainable development.

The IUCN Central and West Africa Programme (PACO) has received funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to implement the PREMI over a period of four years (December 2008 - December 2012).

For more information: www.iucn.org/premi



Water, Climate and Development Programme in Africa (WACDEP)



The Water, Climate and Development Programme in Africa (WACDEP) aims to promote water security as a key element of sustainable regional and national development and to contribute to climate change resilience for economic growth and human security. This five (5) year programme has been developed by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) in collaboration with the Council of African Ministers of Water (AMCOW) to support the implementation of the commitments expressed by African Heads of State in the **Sharm-el Sheikh Declaration in Egypt of 2008**. WACDEP in West Africa will be implemented in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Volta Basin.

The year 2012 was marked by the implementation of the inception phase activities of the Programme.

Activities have concerned information and awareness raising, participatory identification and planning of specific activities in Burkina Faso, Ghana and at the Volta basin level.

The monitoring and guidance committee was set up and the baseline study on water security and climate resilience has been realized and validated in Burkina Faso.

The WACDEP/Burkina Faso has been officially launched in Burkina Faso by the representatives of the ministry of agriculture and hydraulic, the ministry of environment and sustainable development, the other key partners of WACDEP in Burkina Faso.

The year 2013 will be devoted to the actual implementation phase of the activities of various components of the Programme with larger budgets and the Programme will be officially launched in Ghana at the regional level in the Volta basin.

The Programme WACDEP is designed to be implemented through four (4) components with eight (8) work packages which are:

Component 1: Investments in regional and national development

- Work Package 1: Regional and Transboundary Cooperation
- Work Package 2: National development and Sector Plans
- Work Package 3: "No/low regrets" Investments
- Work Package 4: Project Preparation and Financing

Component 2: Innovative Green Solutions

- Work Package 5: Demonstration Projects

Component 3: Knowledge and capacity development

- Work Package 6: Capacity Development
- Work Package 7: Knowledge and awareness

Component 4: Partnership and Sustainability

- Work Package 8: Partnerships and Sustainability

