



Press Release

Climate Scientists and Policy Makers Anxious Over the Vulnerability of Communities in West Africa



Abidjan: 17 February, 2020. Concerns over the negative impacts of climate change on local communities have galvanized some 200 sustainable development experts from across West Africa who are meeting in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, to discuss climate adaptation strategies. The forum is organized under the joint umbrella of the African Union Commission's GMES and African Programme, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, ECOWAS and the Ivorian Geography Association which is also observing the 12th edition of its Geography Days. The

theme for this year's advocacy centres on *Climate Change - from vulnerability to adaptation*.

"West Africa has a rich ecology and coastal habitat which is under threat", said the Ivorian Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Professor Joseph Seka SEKA, who addressed participants at the opening of the three-day meeting. The region's vulnerability is manifested in perennial flooding and coastal erosion, among other hazards. According to Professor Seka SEKA, these phenomena must be tackled through adaptation strategies, integrated management and concerted international action.



The African Union Commission's GMES and Africa Programme is a key actor driving continental initiatives on the management of the environment and mitigation of the impacts of climate change. At the Abidjan meeting, the Commission's Director of Human Resources, Science and Technology, Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, cited the multifaceted negative effects of climate change which require both indigenous as well as collective awareness and responsibility to resolve. This, he posited, is crucial for the attainment of the aspirations pronounced in the African Agenda 2063.

The forum is a platform for participants to analyse the causes and impacts of climate change on livelihoods, and to strengthen knowledge on solutions, including adaptation, mitigation and resilience building. It will also feature discussions on how GMES and Africa's successes in entrepreneurship and partnership building can be valuable lessons for similar continental programmes operating in natural resource management and climate governance.