

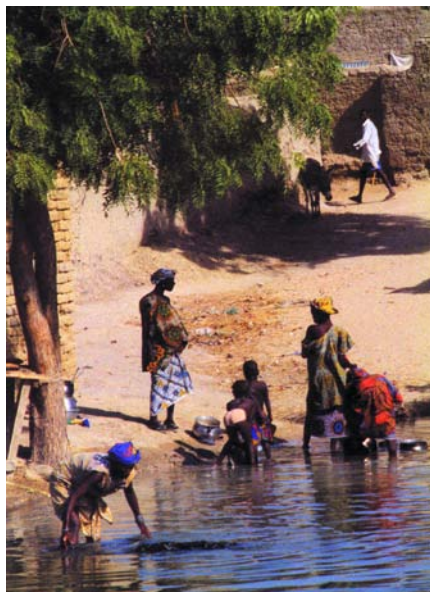
The Wetlands and Livelihoods Working Group of Wetlands International

Wetlands International is an independent global non-profit organisation dedicated solely to the wise use and conservation of wetlands. Well-established networks of experts and close partnerships with key organisations provide Wetlands International with the essential tools for catalysing our sustainable development activities worldwide. Since the Millennium declaration, in which poverty-environment issues are clearly recognised, Wetlands International, has incorporated into its activities the development, implementation and demonstration of innovative approaches and mechanisms for dealing with poverty-environment issues in wetland management and conservation. This includes a focus on the values of wetlands for environmental and food security, and their potential for poverty reduction. Wetlands generally being very productive ecosystems that play a crucial role in the water cycle are considered to be disproportionately important both for biodiversity conservation as well as for food security and other livelihood support functions, particularly for the poor.

Our Working Group on Wetlands and Livelihoods was established in August 2004 at an inception workshop at Wetlands International's HQ in the Netherlands. This workshop involved participants from the development assistance and environmental sectors and aimed to create a cross-fertilisation of ideas and perspectives on wetlands and poverty-environment issues.

Objectives of the Wetlands & Livelihoods Working Group

- 1. Strengthening the understanding of the dynamic relationship between poverty and wetlands, including:**
 - development of better communications between poverty reduction and environmental organisations for enhanced collaboration on poverty-environment issues.
 - identification of the priority poverty- environment issues in wetlands.
- 2. Highlighting priorities for strategic interventions in regard of the contribution of wetlands to poverty reduction.**
- 3. Promoting new partnerships between the poverty reduction and conservation organisations including:**
 - consideration of obstacles preventing the wise use of wetlands
 - compilation of experiences on how to effectively address poverty-environment issues in wetlands
 - compilation of information on practical experiences and constraints.



*Inner Niger Delta, Mali
Photo: Marcel Silvius*

Organisations or individuals interested in joining the Wetlands and Livelihoods Working Group, please contact the coordinator Ms Kemi Awoyinka (kemi.awoyinka@wetlands.org).



Kemi Awoyinka
Wetlands and Poverty
Alleviation Officer
Wetlands International
P.O. Box 471
6700 AL Wageningen
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 317 478854
Fax: +31 317 478850
E-mail: post@wetlands.org
Website: www.wetlands.org

The International Working Group on Wetlands and Livelihoods

The proposed programme of the Working Group on Wetlands and Livelihoods is relevant to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Goal Seven of ensuring environmental sustainability, by contributing to reverse the loss of important wetlands resources.

As many of the poor in developing countries are directly dependent in wetlands and their resources it is in the direct interest of poverty reduction to maintain and restore wetlands on which these people and their cultures depend. Although, it should be understood that wetlands do not necessarily provide a way out of poverty, the degradation of wetlands summarily lead to increased poverty. Moreover, as poverty is one of the main vectors of wetland conversion and deterioration it is in the interest of wetland conservation to develop integrated approaches to wetland management and poverty reduction. Thus, the Working Group will focus on:

- *Helping local organisations to identify and set best practices i.e win-win options.*
- *Assisting the integration of the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands into poverty reduction strategy development.*
- *Facilitating cooperation and policy processes at all levels thus stimulating structural change to both traditional development and conservation approaches.*
- *Mainstreaming wetlands in national poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral development strategies.*

The activities of the International Working Group are targeted at enhancing the capacity of various organisations including:

- **The wetland and biodiversity conservation sector**
- **The development assistance aid sector**
- **The private sector**
- **Non-governmental organisations**
- **Local government and science agencies**

For further information about the operations and membership of the Working Group, please fill in the following detachable section or contact the Working Group Coordinator Kemi Awoyinka at kemi.awoyinka@wetlands.org :

NAME

POSITION

ORGANISATION

ADDRESS

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EMAIL

TELEPHONE

FAX



Kemi Awoyinka
Wetlands and Poverty
Alleviation Officer
Wetlands International
P.O. Box 471
6700 AL Wageningen
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 317 478854
Fax: +31 317 478850