

EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
Earth Observation Applications and Economic Benefits (5)

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OCEANS POLLUTION IN AFRICA: NATURE AND IMPACTS

Abstract

Africa is the second largest and most populated continent after Asia. Geographically it is located between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Most of the Africa's most populated and industrialized cities are located along the coast of the continent facing the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, example of such cities include Casablanca, Dakar, Accra, Lagos, Luanda and Cape town all facing the Atlantic Ocean and cities like East London, Durban, Maputo, Dar-es-salaam and Mogadishu are all facing the Indian Ocean.

Due to the geographical locations of these Coastal Cities and the activities in them lead to the incessant and rapid increase in the pollution of the oceans as a result of domestic, industrial, port operations, petroleum exploration activities others includes dumping of toxic wastes and improper waste management culture.

NATURE OF POLLUTION OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

i. The petroleum exploration activities going on along the coast of "Gulf of Guinea" region and Angola continuously causes oil spillages in the process of drilling, bunkering and discharging of petroleum products in the Atlantic Ocean.

ii. The incessant degreasing of the Sea Ports "Quay Aprons" along the Coastal cities of Lagos, Luanda, Cape Town etc are continuously polluting the Atlantic Ocean with chemicals.

iii. Local wastes generated from the houses located in the coastal cities are always finding their ways into the Atlantic Ocean.

NATURE OF POLLUTION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

i. Unlike the Atlantic ocean where petroleum is the major pollutant, the Indian Ocean is polluted by Toxic / Radioactive waste suspected to have been coming from the developed nations as reported by the United Nations Environmental Programme after the Tsunami disaster in December 2004 especially along the coast of Somalia.

ii. The degreasing of the Quay Aprons at Port Elizabeth, Maputo, Dar-es-Salaam and Mongolism Sea Ports are also another major source polluting the Indian Ocean.

PROBLEMS GENERATED AS A RESULT OF THE OCEANS POLLUTION

i. Recent report released by the renown non governmental organization on environmental pollution the Netherlands based Climate Justice Programme under the aegis of friends of the Earth indicated that the coastal region of Nigeria along accounts for 16 percent of the world's total flare in view of the above coupled with the increasing oil spillages in the African Gulf of Guinea region resulted in the rapid decline in fish, plankton, shrimps and other sea lives along the Coast of Africa facing the Atlantic Ocean.

ii. In the more recent time the revering dwellers living around the Coast of Gulf of Guinea region and Somalia's Coast have been complaining of increasing cases of child respiratory illness, land degradation, well pollution, infertility and premature death.

iii. Geological strata of the Atlantic Ocean are adversely destroyed by the seismographic activities going on around the Gulf of Guinea region and Angola in particular.

iv. The general means of livelihood of the revering dwellers are often threaten by the pollution.

POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF AFRICA

Apart from the governments of the federal republic of Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Senegal and Tanzania that have either established institutes of Oceanography or Environmental Protection Agencies, the majority of the African governments have shown no signs of checking the menace.

POSITION OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

The Netherlands based Climate Justice and the Nigeria Environmental Rights Action are the only non-governmental organizations out of very many that have shown signs of fighting this incessant increase in ocean pollution in Africa.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above situation I came up with the under-listed suggestions/recommendations:

i. International organizations who's work that are related to Ocean and Pollution should send their teams of researchers to come and investigate the trend of this menace and proffer a possible lasting solution.

ii. The United Nations should use its capacity to educate and convinced the African Union to pass a resolution making it compulsory on all the African Coastal Countries to set up ocean regulatory bodies in their respective countries.

iii. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) should assist with her technical know how to educate the various Sea Ports in Africa on how to be degreasing their Quay Aprons without necessarily causing Ocean Pollution.

iv. The organization of the petroleum exporting countries (OPEC) should use its capacity to find a way in controlling the incessant oil spillages going on in the African Gulf of Guinea region since many of the Gulf of Guinea Countries are its members.

v. The World Health Organization (WHO) the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) should also jointly send their team of researchers to come and investigate the trend of this pollution especially along the Coast of Somalia and Gulf of Guinea and proffer possible lasting solution before it becomes too late.

CONCLUSION

We cited on how the Oceans are polluted in Africa in relation to the petroleum, industrial and Sea Port activities in addition to the Toxic waste Trafficking, however some governments and non-governmental organizations are trying in fighting the menace, but the increasing nature of Ocean pollution in Africa is calling for assistance.

It was in view of this situation I came up with the above listed suggestions/Recommendations, which I believe if implemented and adopted it will help in reducing the pollution otherwise the pollution of the Oceans will ever remain on the increase.