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Pollution Tolls in Cameroon Estuarine System: The Quest for an Integrated Approach

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The Cameroon estuarine ecosystem is of immense socioeconomic and biogeographic importance. This ecosystem harbors more than 2 million inhabitants and the countries' industries are disproportionately located in this zone. The Wouri estuary in Douala alone is the main gateway in and out of Cameroon. The latter handles more that 95 percent of Cameroon's maritime trade. Moreover, the estuarine zone is the seat of the rich and diverse mangrove ecosystem. The mangrove serves as a spawning milieu for marine organisms; the reason many people from all over central Africa converge here to earn a living through fishing. Despite being of environmental and economic significance, non-point and point source pollution is gradually gaining momentum. Surging population coupled with pollution from industrial and domestic wastes, pollution from shipping and oil terminals, sea level rise, overfishing, deforestation and sprawl, will further excess deleterious effects on the estuarine milieu. This paper makes an attempt in identifying the various sources of marine pollution in the Wouri estuary as well as the causes. The negative effects of polluted substances were identified by collecting and studying the relevant literature. Pollution at the coast is increasing at an alarming rate and addressing this problem has been a difficult task. The review looks at the definition of coastal pollution, discusses the causes, impacts and preventive measures. Finally it makes an appraisal of Cameroon's estuarine ecosystem, pinpoints the lacunas in current management approach. Though efforts have been made to address compelling pollution challenges, they have been government-dominant and largely enshrined in the sectorial approach. The integrated estuarine approach (IEA) built on integrated coastal management (ICM) is recommended as a management strategy to curtail estuarine pollution. The IEA though a prototype, is also expected to shape management within the academic arena.

Biography

Yvette Baninla has completed his Masters from Xiamen University and is now doing her PhD in Researh Center for Eco-Environmental Sciences, CAS.

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