**UNISDR Regional Sub Saharan Wildland Fire Network**

**West Africa Region**

**Introduction**

West Africa is mostly associated with rural livelihood activities such as land preparation for crop production. Interventions to curb bush fire in these livelihood activities will be national and local advise to member countries. Local level activities have involved the building of capacity of local fire volunteers, stakeholder analysis to clarify roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders at all levels and the planting of trees at the periphery of the fire prone forest reserves in some member countries to serve as firebreaks. At the national level wildfire management manuals for staff of government institutions, national wildfire policy and strategies have been developed and operationalized. Manuals and guidelines for community based fire management have been adopted by a number of countries in the West Africa region. Though the fire regimes of fire is most member countries are similar there is very limited opportunity for cross country information sharing on best practices and capacity building using regional reports. A sub regional local fire point is needed to facilitate and coordinate collaboration among member countries.

**Way Forward**

- Establishment of a center for coordinating information sharing and best practices in wildfire management in the sub region
- Facilitate sub regional project development
- Facilitate sub regional project development
- Standardize fire information reporting in the sub region

**Gap in scientific knowledge and policy**

- Inadequate scientific knowledge on fire behavior
- Lack of systematic efforts to collect weather data to assist in fire danger forecasts
- Low capacity for fire monitoring and fire damage assessment
- Absence of legislation to back national wildfire policies

**Community based activities**

- Training of community fire volunteers who form a network for early fire detection and suppression
- Community involvement in finding alternatives to the use of fire in agriculture
- Determination of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in fire management
- Planting of trees (as fire breaks) at the periphery of forest boundary, if fire prone forest reserves in some member countries

**Fire management strategies in member countries**

- Fire management manual for government institutions (e.g. Ghana)
- Community based fire management guidelines and manuals (e.g. Ghana)
- National Wildfire Management policy (e.g. Ghana)
- National Strategy on fire management and associated action plans (e.g. Burkina Faso)
- Use of incentives (award system in some districts in Ghana)
- Institutionalization of green fire break establishment, around fire prone forests

**Way Forward**

- Facilitate the recruitment and training of young fire volunteer squads and provision of fire fighting tools
- Facilitate the development of fire prevention materials based on the context of each member country

**Network Website and Link to the Global Wildland Fire Network:**

[http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/globalNet.html](http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/GlobalNetworks/globalNet.html)