



Global Session

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Regional Statement

Sub Sahara Africa

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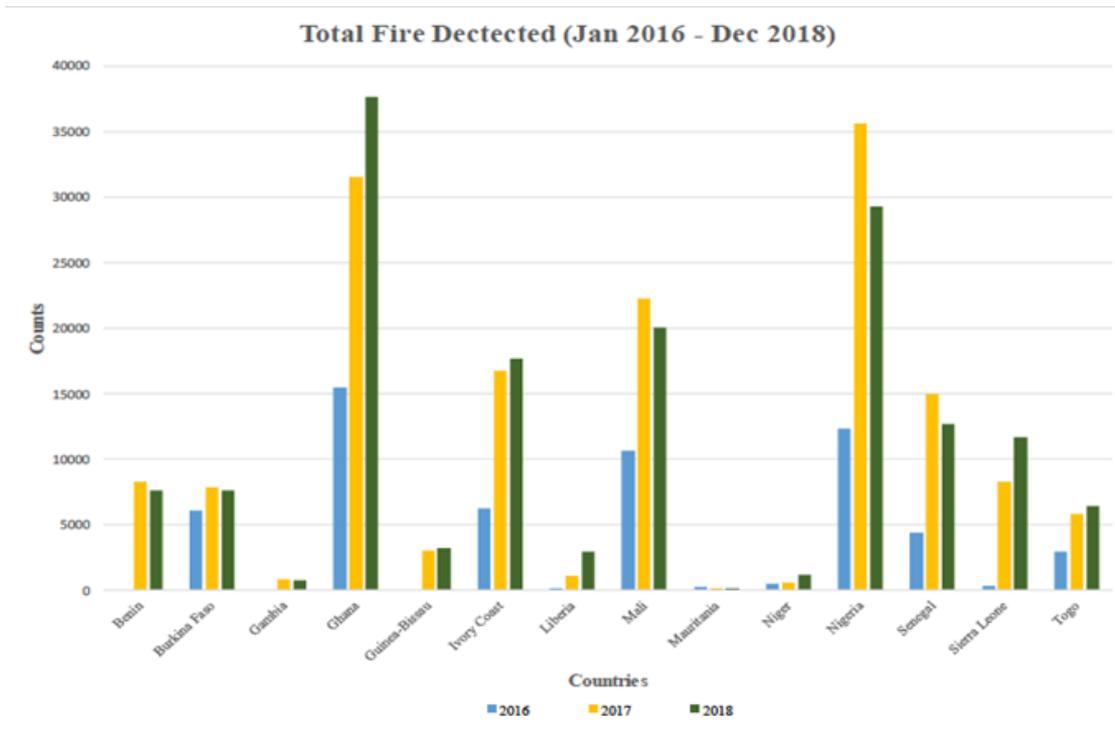
Introduction

- Fire is a requirement for maintaining the health of some ecosystems in Sub Sahara Africa but also poses a risk in terms of damage and danger to people, property and landscapes.



Introduction

- Uncontrolled fires continue to occur and impact negatively across the region.



Source: Kabo-bah et al. (nd) Sendai Framework Implementation – A Regional Assessment of Wildfires in West Africa. Earth Observation Research and Innovation Centre, University of Energy and Natural Resources Ghana

Introduction

- Fire is a useful tool most commonly used by communities to manage the landscape upon which they depend for survival.
- African countries recognize the importance of community involvement in Integrated Fire Management as fires directly impact their livelihoods.



Introduction

- Most countries in the region have institutions and agencies whose mandates relate to natural resource management and/or fire management.
- Capacity to adequately address the full scope of Integrated Fire Management requirements is variable.

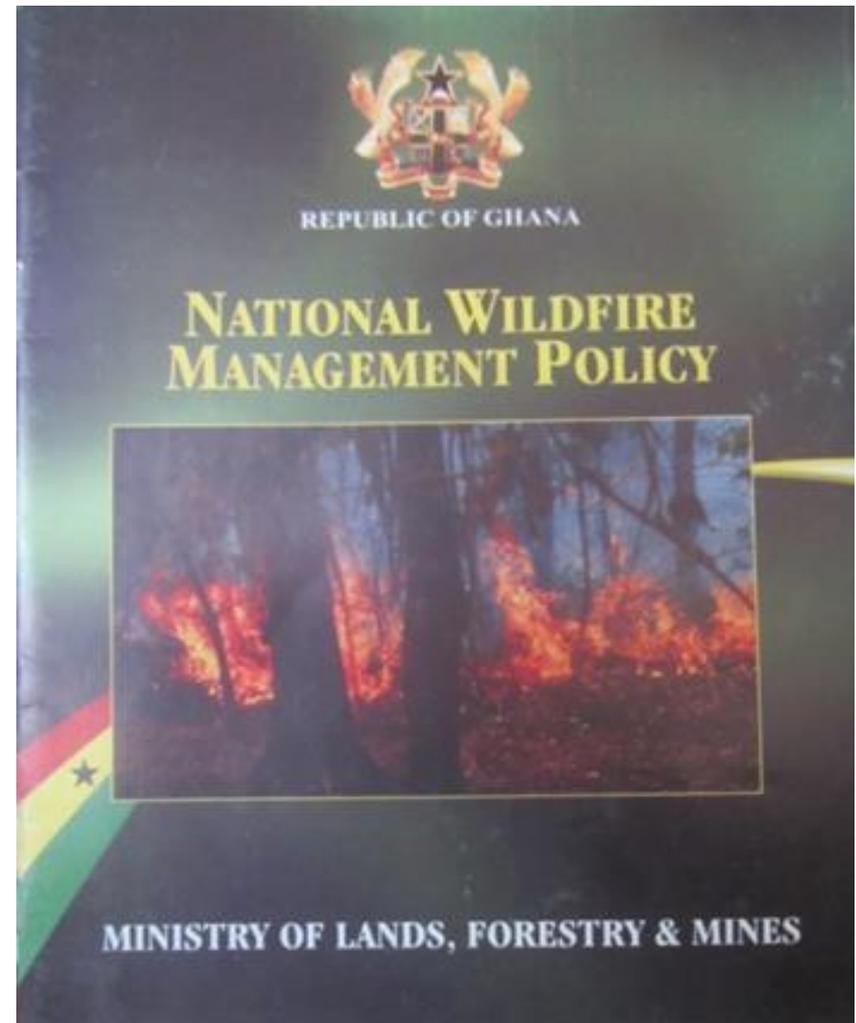
Specific landscape fire problems of the region

- There have been localized improvements and efforts to encourage community ownership but standardized firefighting and fire management resources remain scarce.



Specific landscape fire problems of the region

- While some countries in the region have enabling fire policy and legislation others do not.
- Existing legislation in some countries does not support Integrated Fire Management.



Specific landscape fire problems of the region

- The judicial systems of most countries are not well equipped to prosecute offenders when it is warranted.



Specific landscape fire problems of the region

- There are insufficient long-term fire research projects in sub-Saharan Africa based on which fire management decisions can be made.
- Traditional knowledge and practice is largely not included in formal land use development planning and fire management planning in most countries though some progress has been made in West Africa.

Gaps/shortcomings in landscape fire science, management and policies

- No comprehensive fire management programmes in many member countries.
- Apparent disinterest and lack of political will to tackle the issue of wildfires.
- There is a low knowledge base and research output combined with a low interest amongst young people.

Gaps/shortcomings in landscape fire science, management and policies

- There is lack of investment for the development and implementation of early fire detection systems and rapid response.
- Weak balance in capacity development projects and fire science needs.
- Difficulty in sustaining donor-funded projects in many countries.

Main advances achieved

- Contribution of an article in the Journal “Fire Management Today” focusing on community efforts in fire management, the gains made and the challenges.
- Distributed copies.



Main advances achieved

- Fire prevention education programmes.



Main advances achieved

- Training on pre-suppression actions and concepts of fire suppression.



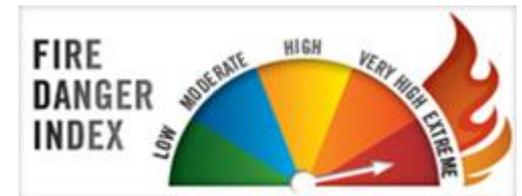
Main advances achieved

- Restoration of fire degraded areas through public-private sector partnership and community involvement in some countries.



Proposals for solutions/action to be taken

- Deployment of an effective early warning system.
- Technology of early fire detection should be transferred to countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Integrated wildfire management to include climate smart agriculture and viable alternatives to the use of fire should be developed.



Proposals for solutions / action to be taken

- Establishment of wildfire management forum for exchange of information and lessons concerning best practices.
- Establishment of fire reporting system across the region to aid fire management decisions.
- Establishment/expansion of long-term experimental research in different ecosystems.

Proposals for solutions/action to be taken

- Train next generation of fire experts to replace aging ones.
- Promote effectiveness of community involvement in wildfire management through the provision of basic firefighting tools.



Proposals for solutions/action to be taken

- Improved private /public sector collaboration in recognition that wildfire is a multi-sectoral problem which requires multi-sectoral solutions.
- Promote cross-border cooperation agreements.



Conclusion

- Wildfire continues to be a threat to the sustainability of natural resources in the region in spite of gains made in creating institutional systems for integrated fire management.
- The gains made in these countries should be sustained through both national and international efforts.

Recommendations

- A regional meeting should be convened every two years to discuss progress of work on fire management, share lessons and challenges and facilitate transfer of technology.
- Improve relationship and co-operation between the scientific community, practitioners and policy makers.
- Community volunteer groups should be encouraged, supported, and incentivized to assist with fire prevention and management.

Thank You

