

# **Regional Preparedness for Effective Oil Spill Response and Remediation - Environmental Sensitivity Mapping and Challenges of Environmental Degradation**

**Moses Mensah**

Institute for Quality, Energy and Environmental Management  
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana  
e-mail: [mymens@gmx.net](mailto:mymens@gmx.net)

The full production of crude oil in the off-shore area around Cape Three Point towards the end of 2010 raises, besides the anticipated “blessings” of economic development, the need to interrogate the level of preparedness as far as the environmental protection of the coastal habitat is concerned in the light of existing data and their relevance at the regional level. The environmental sensitivity map for the coastal area of Ghana which was undertaken in 2003 – 2004, long before the discovery of commercial quantities of oil in 2007, established that 30 % of the coastline has been ranked as having a high sensitivity with vulnerable ecosystems with only 3 % ranked as having a very high sensitivity. On the West Coast, however, oil is not unique – Sao Tome, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Chad, Sudan, Nigeria and Sierra Leone all have oil. All these countries have their national oil spill contingency plans with some having undertaken sensitivity mapping and ranking. This paper seeks to explore the preparedness in the event of an oil spill at the regional level and the need to undertake comprehensive technical collaboration to update and harmonize existing data. This will have to be accompanied by sensitization and training of the coastal inhabitants as well as their involvement in protecting the coastal habitat and combating an eventual oil catastrophe.