



Zentrum für Entwicklungsforschung  
Center for Development Research  
University of Bonn



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## Press release

**on the occasion of the international conference on  
Global Change and Water Resources in West  
Africa. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso,  
August 25-28 2008**

Press and public relations  
Alma van der Veen  
Walter-Flex-Str. 3  
D-53113 Bonn  
Germany  
Tel.: ++49-(0) 228-73-1846 / -  
6124  
Fax: ++49-(0) 228-73-1889  
e-mail: [presse.zef@uni-bonn.de](mailto:presse.zef@uni-bonn.de)  
[www.zef.de](http://www.zef.de)

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### **Successful teamwork: German and African researchers work out joint options for action on urgent climate and water issues in West Africa**

*More than 200 researchers from all over the world will meet with African politicians and stakeholders to discuss the outcome of their research efforts at an international conference on 'Global Change and Water Resources in West Africa', taking place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from August 25-28 2008.*

**Ouagadougou, August 25 2008:** People in West Africa are especially struck by the impact of global climate change. Climate projections for the region indicate increasing weather extremes: more dry periods with a simultaneous rise in extreme precipitation. This poses a serious challenge to the survival of a population increasing in numbers with a growing demand for food, energy and water.

To support regional decision makers with responding to these challenges in an effective way, the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) started its GLOWA research program ('Global Change and the Hydrological Cycle') eight years ago. Two of the GLOWA projects work in and with West Africa: GLOWA Volta in Burkina Faso and Ghana and GLOWA Impetus in Morocco and Benin. The conference in Ouagadougou focuses on the research outcome of these two projects.

"The achievements of the GLOWA projects were only possible due to a very warm welcome by our local partners, who gave us all the support we needed. Our pioneering joint research efforts have given us a much better insight in how human activities perturb the water cycle and how societies in West Africa can mitigate negative outcomes or adapt to them" says Mr. Hartmut Grübel from BMBF.

“The GLOWA partnerships intended to work out practicable solutions for optimal water resources allocation and management considering possible scenarios of climate change that are socially and economically acceptable to the local partners and stakeholders”, adds Grübel.

“We especially welcome the efforts that the projects invested in building human and institutional capacity in West Africa”, says Mr. Charles Biney, Director of the Volta Basin Authority, based in Ouagadougou. “We do not only have a large number of young African people educated in the projects who will take over responsibility for ensuring a long-term and sustainable impact of this huge research effort. We also appreciate that the GLOWA scientists took a broader look at the problem setting and pushed regional political initiatives such as establishing the Volta Basin Authority”. (The Volta Basin Authority is a governance body founded by the six riparian countries of the Volta River, with the aim of improving trans-boundary management of the River’s water resources.)

Scientists in the GLOWA Impetus project have developed a regional climate model that shows that deforestation in sub Saharan Africa leads to decreasing precipitation. As a consequence, as further simulations indicate, the malaria epidemic belt shifts southwards to more populated areas. The GLOWA Impetus team also developed a Digital Atlas, providing support tools for local decision makers projecting impacts of natural and human induced change. By using satellite observations, scientists in the GLOWA Volta project have identified ‘hot spots’ of land cover and land use change in the Volta basin. With the support of a simulation model, developed jointly with local stakeholders, they can also show options to act, and the consequences of these options. Scientists of the GLOWA Volta team also developed a method to assess the onset of the rainy season, having positive implications for farmers and future food security in the region.

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The conference in Ouagadougou is hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and organized by the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of Bonn University, Germany.

The GLOWA Program is an umbrella program of the BMBF. It started in 2000 and consists of five regional research projects in Europe, the Middle East and West Africa.

More information at: [www.glowa.org](http://www.glowa.org).

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**Contact:**

Alma van der Veen

Press and Public Relations

# 226 75260002 or # 49 228 1846

Center for Development Research of Bonn University  
Germany