

## 620km W/A gas pipeline begins supply Dec

Contributed by Hector Igbikiowubo  
Sunday, 25 November 2007

AFTER several months of delay, the multi-million dollars 620-kilometre West African Gas Pipeline is set to commence gas supplies from Nigeria to the neighbouring countries of Benin, Togo and Ghana as the march towards economic integration gathers momentum.

Mr Aderemi Oladapo, General Manager in charge of Operations of the West African Gas Pipeline Company Limited (WAGPCo), speaking at a sensitisation workshop organised by the company for stakeholders in Tema, Ghana explained that natural gas was expected to start flowing through the West Africa Gas pipeline project from Nigeria to Ghana from December 23 this year.

He said it would take four days for the gas to flow through the lines before reaching Ghana. This follows the completion of the installation of the offshore segment of the gas pipeline by WAGPCo, which is currently conducting safety awareness campaigns across the sub-region in readiness for its take-off.

Oladapo said a burst on the pipeline in Cotonou, Benin contributed to the delay of the completion of the project, but this has been rectified. He was optimistic that gas would definitely flow through the line soon.

He pointed out the need for stakeholders to educate their staff to observe safety measures at sea and ensure compliance with identified safety precautions, adding that a colossal amount was spent in repairing the lines.

He also said WAPCo would periodically organise series of such fora in the sub-region to remind stakeholders of the need to protect the lines.

Mr Opare Addo Nketsia, Technician Operator said WAGPCo conducted risk assessments posed by shipping and the collected data within the sub-region showed that fishermen were the worse offenders in the destruction of the equipment.

He mentioned possible causes of pipeline damage as the Ship Anchor Drag, illegal fishing method such as using dynamites, bottom trawling by inshore fishing boats as well as sabotage.

Advised officials in the maritime industry to be cautious in their operations to prolong the life-span of the pipelines, Nketsia stressed the need for Naval Personnel to monitor the coastline to ensure that fishing activities do not damage the pipelines.

Mr E. Oseni, Operations Supervisor warned that any damage to the pipelines would create socio-economic set back to the nation and the region and cautioned that disasters could occur through fire and loss of buoyancy.

To ensure absolute safety, Mr Oseni advised maritime officials to strictly adhere to the regulations and not to operate close to the boundary areas, which is between 42 and 72 meters depth and two to four nautical miles away from the line.

Participating countries operating the Gas Pipeline Project are Nigeria, which is the source, Benin, Togo and Ghana.

Participating stakeholders included fire personnel, officials from the fishing companies and the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO).

A study, commissioned by Chevron, estimates that 10,000 to 20,000 primary sector jobs will be created in the region by WAGP. New power supplies, fuelled by gas from the project, will stimulate the growth of new industry. The industrial growth has the potential to spawn an additional 30,000-60,000 secondary jobs. In addition to the \$1 billion in investment (WAGP and power facilities) already projected, the study sees approximately \$800 million in new industrial investment

occurring in the region.

The World Bank estimates that Benin, Togo and Ghana can save nearly \$500 million in energy costs over a 20-year period as WAGP-supplied gas is substituted for more expensive fuels in power generation.

Ghana estimates that it will save between 15,000-20,000 barrels per day of crude oil by taking gas from the WAGP to run its power plants. Chevron has signed a 20-year agreement to supply natural gas, via the WAGP, to a 220-MW power plant proposed in Tema, Ghana. Under terms of the contract, the plant will receive 40 Mmcf/d of natural gas.

It is also possible that the WAGP will be extended to markets in Cote d'Ivoire. Speculation has the WAGP eventually terminating in Senegal, but the current regional stability problems of several countries (Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone) that lie on the way to Senegal, will hinder any further extension of the WAGP.