



**12TH IMISCOE CONFERENCE
RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND MIGRATION**

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**Call for Abstracts:
“Environmental Migration in West Africa”**

Conveners:

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Summary:

The West African region is one of the most dynamic sites in which to examine environmental migration. From the Sahel to its coasts, it is facing the many manifestations of climate change, including sea level rise, soil salinization, floods, drought, desertification, intensifying winds and heat waves (IPCC 2014; DARA 2013). Moreover, the consequences of climate change are only one part of current processes of environmental degradation that affect the region (Tacoli 2011).

While vulnerability differs within the region and within populations, mobility offers not only a survival strategy but also an adaptive response to environmental transformation in West Africa, building on a long history of internal and international mobility patterns. One of the specificities of West Africa is its high rate of intra-regional migration, facilitated since 1975 by the porosity of borders within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in addition to a plethora of factors that, along with natural disasters and environmental degradation, include socio-economic disparities, political conflicts, conflicts over land, and generalized violence. Additionally, conflicts over access to land are accentuated by large-scale land acquisitions that can further compromise food security whilst also affecting mobility patterns. With the threat of extreme climate change (+4C or even +6C) by 2100, environmental transformations will only compound the existing economic, demographic, political and social migration pressures, leaving populations increasingly vulnerable to the erosion of their lands and livelihoods and at risk for both sudden and slow-onset climatic events.

In order to grasp both the continuities throughout the region as well as its diversity, this panel seeks scholars working throughout francophone and anglophone West Africa on various aspects of environmental migration from both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Priority will be given to unpublished papers as a publication is an intended output of the panel.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 500 words to Caroline.Zickgraf@ulg.ac.be and Sara.Vigil@ulg.ac.be by **January 9th, 2015**.