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UITNODIGING

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U wordt vriendelijk uitgenodigd op de openbare verdediging van het proefschrift van

Albert AHENKAN

'Poverty Reduction and Human Health Improvement Strategies in Developing Countries: The Role of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) Farming in Ghana'

Op **vrijdag 23 september 2011** om **14 uur** in auditorium **R. Vanden Driessche** van de Faculteit Geneeskunde & Farmacie Laarbeeklaan 103, 1090 Brussel

Situering van het proefschrift

Eradicating poverty and improving nutrition and health and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are among the greatest global challenges facing the world today. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have been widely promoted among conservation and development organisations as a potential solution to the current high rates of malnutrition, poor health of rural populations and the spread and intensification of poverty, especially in the developing countries. Despite their importance, NTFPs have received very little attention in research, development planning and human health improvement strategies in Ghana. Their vital role in empowering rural and forest dependent communities and their linkage with poverty reduction, nutrition and health has not been adequately investigated. This study was conducted in Bibiani-Bekwai and Sefwi Wiawso Districts of the Western Region of Ghana with the objective of examining the potential contribution of NTFPs farming to human development through the enhancement of nutrition, human health, food security, poverty reduction and sustainable management of forest resources. The results of the study reveal that the farming of NTFPs on a permanent basis will enormously help to create more sustainable employment and income-generation opportunities in rural and forest dependent communities, enhance food security, nutrition, human health, livelihoods and empower rural women in the study locations and Ghana in general. The study provides an appropriate model to facilitate the diffusion of effective strategies for promoting NTFPs farming and improving nutrition and health, poverty reduction in Ghana.

Curriculum Vitae

ALBERT Ahenkan was born on 27 March 1971 in Sunyani, Ghana. He graduated with a BA Honours Degree in Sociology and Geography at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana, in 1998. He started his career as a project officer at FAWE Ghana Chapter in 1999. In 2002, he joined the International Centre for Enterprise and Sustainable Development (ICED), Accra, Ghana as a project manager. Between 2004 and 2006, he studied at the Human Ecology Department of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium and obtained a Master's Degree in Human Ecology. From 2007-2011, he pursued his doctoral studies in Human Ecology with financial support from the Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR). Albert Ahenkan has published a number of articles in international peer reviewed journals and also managed a good number of development projects on livelihood improvement, food security, poverty reduction, community water and sanitation and sustainable forest management.