

Bénin

CELEBRATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

Sports

To celebrate the Ramsar Conventions' 40th anniversary, the Benin Environment Authority organized a series of activities through its Community Management of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Project (PGCBMC). The Commune of Aguégués was chosen as the host for these celebrations. The activities organized for this event included a handball match that pitted the girls of the secondary schools of both municipalities, Aguégués and Avagbodji.

A boy's football match was also played. Two Ramsar/ABE cups were provided, along with a lot of water supply equipment and money to motivate the teams and municipalities

1 - Match Summary Handball: Secondary School (SS) of Aguégués vs Secondary School of Avagbodji

The opening match was that of Handball. This important match began at 03h00 pm. From the outset, the girls of the Aguégués SS took the initiative against their opponents. They made multiple surprise attacks. But the goalkeeper of the SS of Avagbodji was very inspired and skillfully prevented many of the offensive attacks by the girls of Aguégués. At the end of the first half, the score remained 0-0 but after the half time break, the domination soon changed sides. Taking advantage of new instructions from their coach, the girls of the SS of Avagbodji regained control of the match through the captain who in quick succession was able to score two goals after 10 minutes of play. An error in the defense of SS Avagbodji however allowed the young girls to reduce Aguégués score. But their joy was short-lived, because 3 minutes later the SS of Avagbodji scored 3 crucial goals that turned the game around. The score was 5 to 1 until 4 minutes from the end when the SS of Aguégués reduced the gap by scoring its 2nd and final goal.

2 - Summary of the football match: SS of Aguégués vs SS of Avagbodji

Before starting the game, the stadium of Aguégués was crowded with people. Officiated by Mr. Felix DONOU acting as referee assisted by: Jean-Eudes ZINSOU, Salami and Amadou who acted as linesmen. The match started in an atmosphere of great excitement.

There was a time constraint and the match was scheduled to take only one hour in total. During the first half of the match the young boys of Avagbodji showed great prowess and looked as if they would be victorious. Using effective offensive techniques, they dominated the game even though there were no shots taken. After 20 minutes they scored their first goal and the spectators invaded the terrain to show their joy and the match was delayed for a few minutes. When calm was restored, the referee threatened to blow the whistle and end the game if the spectators did not settle down. A few minutes later, he whistled the end of the first half.

During the second half, the SS team of Aguégués demonstrated a new rhythm in the game. Helped by a strong midfield, they scored their first goal 15 minutes later. The score did not change until the end of the match. The dreaded penalty shootout was inevitable. The referee brought together the 2 captains to set the course of this phase of play. After the penalty shots the Avagbodji team won by 4 goals to 2.

3 - Delivery of Cups and equipment

The official presentation of trophies was held under the auspices of Mr. Paul OUEDRAOGO, Senior Advisor for Africa Region of Ramsar Convention, representing the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention and the Coordinator of Community Management of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Project (PGCBMC). Mr. Paul Ouedraogo, on behalf of the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention and on his own behalf, thanked all participants. He recalled in a brief intervention, the objectives, challenges and opportunities related to the wetlands wise use and the role of Ramsar Convention to meet these new challenges of our century. For him to achieve its different goals depends upon a partnership development with all the actors. Finally, he reiterated the availability of the Ramsar Secretariat to support all initiatives aimed at protecting our wetlands.

The Coordinator of PGCBMC in the same vein emphasized the importance of the Convention on Wetlands and pledged to seek collaboration with the Ramsar Convention, the technical and financial support for the sustainable conservation of wetlands in Aguégués with the aim of reducing the threats facing them (human threats, water hyacinth and the thorny problem of dredging the sand lagoon).

The two (2) Cups were given along with the water supply equipment. The ceremony ended with these words of hope.





GEF



40^{ème} anniversaire de la Convention sur les zones Humides
d'importance internationale

(Convention de Ramsar) : 1971 – 2011

Compétition de football

Vainqueur

VIVE LE PGCBMC!











jj