



QUOTE OF THE ISSUE

"Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
Brundtland Report - 1987

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Natural Resources Management – Perspectives

Natural resources - land, minerals, fisheries, forest, wild life, and water - are a major source of wealth and power in Sierra Leone. Natural resources are central to the livelihoods of 70 percent of the population and dominate the country's economy. However, as a nation we are still grappling to find the formula to enable us to realize the full potential of these resources. As Bob Marley once said, "In the abundance of water the fool is thirsty."

With our industry and service sector in its nascent stage, natural resources will continue to be the driving force of our economy for decades to come. Consequently, access and control over resources is a major governance issue, especially for rural people, and it is the bread-and-butter issue on which democracy must deliver. Natural resource management is thus central to good governance and enfranchisement of rural peoples.

In general experience has shown that programs for natural resource management that integrate nature (environmental management), wealth (economic concerns), and power (good governance) have demonstrated promising results in Africa.

In the past decade Sierra Leone has made enormous strides in terms of social aspiration, mobility, communications, the restructuring of traditional authority systems, the role of the state, roles of youth and women, economic and technology options, new ideas, and forms of political organization.

Successful natural resources management strategies must take into account and leverage the broader economic dynamic that is shaping peoples' lives and choices in the country. Moving forward, environmental management has to be

increasingly linked to national development, social equity, and governance. The relationship between good governance and the environment is crucial. The stronger the democracy, the better the environmental management. Although the relationship clearly depends on a range of factors; democratic principles such as transparency, participation, accountability are fundamental for sound environmental and natural resources management. Development partners and the donor community alike are realizing that for effective environmental management, economic development and social well being, investing in democracy and good governance in developing countries is the best way forward.

In conclusion, it is important to note that creating development starting from the rural areas is a very complex and daunting task. It is important, however, to accept this complexity and avoid "one size fits all" solutions. No single approach - whether export agriculture, community based NRM, ecotourism or "biodiversity enterprises" - is a solution for everything. Natural resources management has to be seen in a broad development context. It will not solve all problems but it is a unique entry point for economic and political development in the rural areas of the country.

Lahai Samba Keita
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The views expressed by the author are his own professional views and do not reflect those of EPA.





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SEE PICTURE IN THE EDITORIAL
INTRODUCTION OVERLEAF

Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of Natural Resource Watch, a quarterly publication dedicated to providing accurate, timely and objective information on environmental and natural resources management issues in Sierra Leone. The publication is jointly funded by the Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA) and the PAGE project through a generous grant from USAID. This inaugural issue introduces the reader to some of the broader themes that subsequent editions will cover in more depth and in real time: forest management, fisheries, eco-tourism, mining, water resources, pollution and sanitation. Future issues will not shy away from some of the more controversial problems affecting our country's environment.

As Sierra Leone recovers from war and jump starts its development, the pace of change is accelerating, fueled both by outside investment and local initiatives. The credo of Natural Resource Watch is to ensure that this change takes place in a manner that provides full benefits to the people of Sierra Leone while conserving resources for future generations. Articles in this issue that reflect that credo include EFA's piece on eco-tourism at Tiwai Island, UNEP's discussion of the way forward with fisheries, WAPFOR's highlighting of the progress made in conserving the Western Area Reserve, and PAGE's introduction to forest co-management. We hope that this serves to remind us that we are at a tipping point as far as the management of the country's natural resources is concerned: the decisions we make today may well affect us for the next fifty years. But enough editorializing, please read and enjoy and feel free to send us any comments. We welcome your feedback.

James Dean - PAGE

EPA-SL, UNEP & CSOs Celebrate World Environment Day with Schools



Held on June 5th, World Environment Day (WED) is an annual celebration founded by the United Nations 39 years ago. Its purpose is to draw attention to the ways in which humans are endangering our own habitat and to the urgent need for us all to change our attitudes and behavior towards the environment. This year's World Environment Day theme was "Forests: Nature at your Service." The theme underscores the variety of life-sustaining services that forests provide and calls on us all to take action to protect these resources and move towards a greener economy. In Sierra Leone, forest clearance for agriculture, logging, cattle grazing, fuel wood collection, and mining have produced a dramatic drop in forest cover since the 1980s.

World Environment Day was more like "World Environment Week" with activities taking place from June 1st - 5th. Over 150 countries took part in the festivities around the world. The Environment Protection Agency in Sierra Leone (EPA - SL) proudly arranged the largest WED celebration held here in 20 years.

Staff and members of the EPA, Civil Society Organizations, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the school nature clubs celebrated in six cities: Moyamba, Kenema, Koidu-Sefadu, Magburaka, Makeni and Freetown. The School Nature Club Teacher Coordinator for Koidu Secondary School, Mr. Bockarie Diawo, announced that "Our environment is at threat because of the bad practices of human beings on the earth..." and added that "...we must lead the fight against such practices on the environment." The celebration attracted hundreds of students from different schools, teacher coordinators, market women associations and council members. Among the celebrations, there were float parades with banners and t-shirts carrying different environmental messages, and debates and quiz competitions between nature clubs. The event was a success and helped to raise awareness amongst the youth.

Sarah Turay - UNEP



James Dean - Chief of Party
Promoting Agriculture,
Governance and the
Environment (PAGE)



Mangrove Ecosystems Under Threat due to Human Activity

Through its internship program, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) carried out studies on mangroves to document the depletion of these important ecosystems. Mangrove forests are found in coastal areas, usually on tidal flats and at the mouths of rivers. Mangroves are commonly stilted shrubs but trees can reach 20m in height. Along creeks, trees are larger and the forest cover is more dense, resulting in a “gallery forest” effect.

The three main species found in Sierra Leone are: the Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora Mangle*), the most tolerant of high salinity and found in the first zone, closest to the water. They are easily identifiable by their tall prop roots extending from their trunks. The Black Mangrove (*Avicenna Germinans*) is slightly smaller than the Red and has a different root structure. The White Mangrove species (*Langucularia Racemosa*) is found on higher ground than the Red or Black Mangrove.

The Buttonwood (*Canocarpus Erectus*) is an upland species that is not considered a true mangrove.

Like all wetlands, mangrove forest ecosystems are of major ecological and economic importance. They act as a cleansing system, recycling nutrients and organic matter brought down by rivers and streams. They provide feeding and breeding grounds for many fish and crustaceans as well as a roosting habitat for a number of important bird species. Mangroves stabilize the land and help to prevent coastal erosion while providing fodder for domestic animals.

Mangrove swamps are extremely important to human communities. Traditionally, they have been used for food production (oyster, swamp rice, mudskipper). The mangrove plant itself provides medicine (the bark of mangrove trees is boiled to treat toothache), fuel wood, and construction material for dwellings (wattle houses). Mangroves protect the coastal areas from erosion and siltation problems, preventing property damage and sometimes even the loss of human life.

Despite the value and importance of these fragile ecosystems, Sierra Leone’s coastal mangrove forests have been subjected to enormous pressures and threats within the past decade. Mangroves in the western urban and rural coastal areas have been severely depleted. This is due to urbanization, infrastructure development, quarrying, salt extraction, fuel wood collection for smoking fish and the proliferation of invasive species. The absence of appropriate legislation as well as climate change effects are also factors. The problem is accentuated by population growth, the poverty of local communities and the unequal distribution of resources.

Climate change related factors such as a rise in the sea level as well as erosion of land by the sea and increased sedimentation have affected the fringing mangroves in the coastal areas.

Chani Waters



A Destroyed Mangrove Ecosystem on Land Reclaimed For Construction, Aberdeen

A balance needs to be struck between the needs of the local coastal communities and the ecological potentials of the remaining mangrove ecosystems. This issue is causing a renewed national and international ecological interest in Sierra Leonean mangrove forests, supporting existing efforts to protect them. These efforts are not yet sufficient but there are ongoing attempts to create strategies, based on biology, ecology and economics, geared towards sustainable management of our mangrove ecosystems. This is vital in order to protect this rare, fragile, widely degraded but important ecosystem from extinction. Research needs to move towards recognition of human or natural factors that will lead to setting sustainable use limits. Cooperation at different levels is required and we need to act now to save our mangrove forests from further destruction. So let’s join together to save the coastal mangrove forests of Sierra Leone!

Article by Joseph Sapunka Turay - FAO

For comments, enquiries and questions call +232 77 885434





New Forest Co-Management Practice Benefits Communities

The Promoting Agriculture, Governance and the Environment program (PAGE) funded by USAID includes an important Natural Resource Management (NRM) component. PAGE is helping forest communities around the Kambui Hills in Kenema District and the Wara-Wara Mountains in Koinadugu District to derive greater benefits from their forest resources by organizing a new system known as “forest co-management.”

In this system, co-management committees of local community members collaborate to manage forest resources with technical assistance provided by PAGE. Communities in and around those forests come to an agreement on how best to manage farming, logging, hunting, water use, and fishing in their forests. In the Wara-Wara Mountains, more than 700 forest users, traders, farmers and cattle herders have already registered to form a Forest Management Committee (FMC).

PAGE NRM Specialist Scott Bode claims that communities will realize greater economic benefits and exercise a greater sense of responsibility by practicing of forest co-management. The system aims to protect natural resources by training forest users and farmers in sustainable harvesting of forest resources and improved agricultural practices.

In the village of Kondebothun, in the Gbolambayama section of Nongowa Chiefdom, for instance, forest co-management group members have engaged in large-scale tree planting in their community forest. They are also exploring inland valley rice cultivation.

“We are beginning to realize that forests have value, many things that were unknown to us about the importance of forests and their benefits and their management are now known,” said Vandi Koroma, Forest Co-Management Chair, Kambui FMC.



Co-Management Leader Vandi Koroma nurses seedlings to develop sustainable community forest in Kondebothun village, Nongowa Chiefdom, Kenema district.

The forest co-management campaigns use the slogan “My forest is your forest.” Shared management of forest resource is a key step toward insuring that bio-diverse habitats are protected.

The forest management plans call for local involvement in forest protection - fire management, protection of wildlife and its habitat, and protection of sensitive ecological areas - in exchange for controlled use of forest resources for sustainable commercial cultivation and harvesting of timber, firewood, bamboo, honey, medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products.

Article by Unisa Mansaray - PAGE

Leading International Forestry Institutions Call for More Community-based Forest Management



Yataya community, Koinadugu district discusses co-management by-laws

The Collaborative Partnership on Forests’ (CPF) is comprised of 14 international organizations specializing in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. On this year’s Earth Day, the group came to speak as one to send an unequivocal message.

“Organizations working to protect and manage the world’s forests are calling for governments across the globe to increase communities’ role in forest management. Doing so could contribute to lifting close to a billion people out of poverty, as well as improve the health and vitality of forests”

(Press Release by IUCN Friday, 22 April 2011).

<http://www.tff-indonesia.org/en/others/collaborative-partnership-on-forests>



A successful example of this community-based approach is the Landscape Management for Improved Livelihoods (LAMIL) project in Guinea. The project was financed by USAID and was implemented through a number of partners - Chemonics, Winrock International, the World Agroforestry Center and the Center for International Forestry Research - between 1993 and 2008. It has had a profound influence on the environmental sustainability of four large government forest reserves. Prior to 1993, local people were forbidden from using the forest resources and illegal logging, poaching and land clearance for agriculture were leading to deforestation.

The LAMIL project helped develop a system of co-management, partnering local communities with the government forestry department so that the forest reserve is managed jointly and benefits flow directly to local people. The results have shown that local people in Guinea are willing to manage these forests sustainably. Frances Seymour, Director General of the Center for International Forestry Research is optimistic about this approach: "The project illustrates how changes in how forests are governed can lead to win-win outcomes for forests and people."

The co-management work that PAGE is piloting here in Sierra Leone is based largely on the Guinean model and the principles are the same: participation, transparency, renewed rights and responsibilities over natural resources, with support and technical assistance being provided by the project.

Beyond Guinea there are numerous successful examples of community-based natural resource management practices. In Niger, Farmer-assisted Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is a set of practices farmers use to foster the growth of indigenous trees on agricultural land. FMNR has contributed to increased woody-vegetation cover in the Republic of Niger. The results have been impressive over the last 30 years; over 200 million trees have regenerated on 42 million hectares of farmland. Economic analysis estimates that FMNR raises the annual gross income of the region by between 17 and 21 million USD and has contributed an additional 900,000 to 1,000,000 trees to the local environment on an annual basis.

Ultimately these success stories demonstrate that supporting local participation in forest governance and promoting sustainable forest management practices can lead to the goal of environmentally sustainable economic development.

Scott Bode - PAGE

Eco-Tourism Supporting Community Development and Conservation

Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary

Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary sits in the heart of the Upper Guinea Rainforest on the mighty Moa River, in the Southern part of Sierra Leone. It is surrounded by eight communities in two chiefdoms; Barri and Koya. Tiwai is a pioneering eco-tourism site in Sierra Leone, combining tourism, biological research, community development and nature conservation. Before the war, Tiwai (Big Island in Mende) was already recognised as a botanical and zoological research hotspot. The island was home to a Field Research Station run jointly by Njala University, Hunter College (New York) and the University of Miami, coordinated by Professor John Oates. In March 2000 after a decade of conflict, Tommy Garnett of the Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA) visited the island and found its research station and facilities in a state of disrepair, but he was struck by the beauty and power of the place.

The island is richly populated with a variety of animal and plant life making it attractive for tourists and researchers alike. It houses the second highest concentration of primates in the world, including rare and endangered species such as the Diana Monkey and ten other primate species. The rare and elusive Pygmy Hippopotamus is also resident. There are 135 known bird species as well as reptiles, bats, insects and diverse plantlife.

EFA has promoted Tiwai as a research and tourist destination

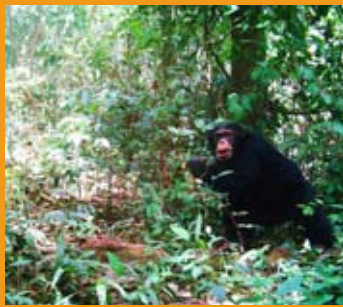
Chani Waters



A local Tiwai community member crosses the Moa River to Tiwai Island

since March 2000 and although there have been challenges, the project is proving successful. While funding is limited, facilities are steadily improving and Tiwai is attracting more and more international attention. April Conway from Georgia University is currently researching the Pygmy Hippo and Kate Arnold (PhD) is studying monkey communication on the island. Visitor numbers are increasing yearly and Tiwai is now well established as one of the leading eco-tourism attractions in Sierra Leone.





Top: A community member attending the arts and crafts training, 2010

Below: A wild chimpanzee pictured by a camera trap at Tiwai courtesy of April Conway, Georgia University, USA

www.tiwaiisland.org

Funding from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Netherlands (IUCN-NL) and Irish Aid have supported the island in various ways. EFA was instrumental in revising and strengthening the community-led governance system for the island which is managed by the Tiwai Island Administrative Committee (TIAC). TIAC represents communities from Barri and Koya Chiefdoms, Government, universities and conservation organizations. All funds raised go towards staff salaries and maintaining the facilities, as well as supporting a Community Development Fund, to help finance community initiated programmes.

Diversification of incomes, building capacity at a local level and raising awareness about the sustainable use of natural resources are important elements of this project.

In late 2009 and early 2010, EFA facilitated arts and craft training workshops for 32 local community members.

According to Mr. Joseph Lumpkin, arts and crafts tutor; *“There is a lot of potential to market products that are made from materials that are unique to Tiwai and its surrounds. Some products are now available for sale on the island and several trainees have taken their newly learned skills and started practicing them in their communities.”*

The last cycle of donor funding for Tiwai ended in December 2010. While EFA is actively seeking other sources of support, it is also striving to ensure that income from the ongoing research and eco-tourism activities will enable Tiwai to become self-sustaining, and that the community people will take over management of the Island. With this in mind EFA aims to facilitate the development of a management plan for the island to ensure successful achievement of community-based ecotourism at this unique site, going into the future.

Chani Wates and Tommy Garnett - EFA

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) dispatches Monitoring Mission to Kono District to Assess Mining Operations and Practices

Though the mining industry is considered to be key to development and poverty alleviation in Sierra Leone, there is a growing concern that mining activities take place without sufficient environmental or social responsibility.

There are close to 30 companies operating in the Kono District according to the most recent statistics but not all of them are operating within the guidelines set by the Sierra Leonean Government. Given that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a watch dog over these activities, it sees this matter as a serious concern.

From the 21st to the 24th of June, 2011, the EPA conducted a monitoring visit to the Kono District, in order to re-assess mining activities there and to investigate some concerns raised by parliamentary representatives of the district, leaders of the Chiefdom and others about unsustainable mining practices by some companies.

The EPA will have to consider temporarily halting operations in the case of serious offenders. The agency would, however, prefer to work in close partnership with the relevant stakeholders in order to better organize mining activities and work towards sustainable management of mineral resources.

‘Preventing Deforestation - Understanding Timber and Fuelwood Markets in Sierra Leone’

In April 2011, Energy For Opportunity (ENFO) started a seven-month study on the timber and fuelwood markets in Sierra Leone in order to reveal patterns of energy use in the country as well as understand their contribution to land cover change. This project is being funded through the FAO’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Support (FLEGTS) programme. Considering that no major research has been undertaken on forest cover in Sierra Leone since the 1990s this an important knowledge gap to fill.

Energy For Opportunity’s head researcher, Mr. Hiemstra-van der Horst, a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne in Australia, is leading a team of six local researchers who have been trained in research methodologies as part of the capacity building element of the project.

A final report on this initial phase is due in October or November.

For more info contact Simon Willans: simonwillans@gmail.com



Conservation of the Western Area Peninsula Forest Reserve (WAPFR) and its Watersheds

The Western Area Peninsula Forest Reserve, Freetown's major source of water, is currently under serious threat due to human activities. The "Conservation of the Western Area Peninsula Forest Reserve and its Watersheds (WAPFoR)" aims to tackle this problem. The project will renew the demarcation of the Western Area Forest Reserve and establish zonal management plans. It also promotes active participation by communities bordering the reserve both to protect the forest and to ensure that local people benefit from services rendered by the reserve. The project will pilot innovative pro-poor financing mechanisms for forest conservation such as carbon finance and eco-tourism.

This project is financed by the European Union and Welthungerhilfe and is implemented in partnership with civil society actors, the Environmental Forum for Action (ENFORAC) and in cooperation with the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS)

Based on satellite image analysis, ground truthing, and discussions with stakeholders the project team discovered that the original forest reserve area has decreased by about 3,200 ha, 20% of the original area of the reserve. Contributing factors to this loss of pristine rain forest are intensive settlements widening the urban area around Freetown, fuel wood production, agriculture, timber production and stone mining.

Addressing His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and all the Ministers in the current government, the WAPFoR project has successfully proposed a new forest reserve boundary of 17,900 ha including the Banana Islands. The proposed boundary seeks to preserve the remaining pristine rain forest, orient the boundary of the steepest terrain to ensure natural protection from encroachment, protect water catchment areas, avoid settlements, create buffer zones and address the need to allocate land for urban and rural development.

Without the water retention and storage capacities of the forest, erosion would lead to sedimentation that would affect the Guma and Congo dams, the main sources of drinking water for the population



Erection of the first Boundary Pillar of new Forest Reserve boundary by Vice-President and Minister of MAFFS, in Hamilton, during National Tree Planting Day - 9th of June, 2011



of Freetown. The project team has identified 61 water catchment areas including four that have a higher water catchment capacity than the Guma Valley catchment. A decentralized water supply system has been proposed based on a network of mini-dams to supply water to the surrounding population. So far, the project has successfully established and improved water systems in River Number 2 Community, Tombo and Moatham.

Communities such as Waterloo, Hastings and Tombo have already agreed on the environmental protection of WAPFoR by signing by-laws to be observed by the communities themselves. The project team is now focusing on the identification and support of livelihood alternatives for vulnerable groups such as former charcoal producers and wood cutters. Their activities have already been considerably reduced. The Forest Ranger responsible for the Hastings area reported that out of 300 former fuel wood producers, only 7 were still seen in the forest. Considering success stories such as this one, the project team is optimistic about its progress in achieving protection of the WAPFoR.

Jochen Moninger - WAPFoR





Sierra Leone Seas Project



Women selling smoked fish, a Sierra Leonean delicacy

In April and May 2011, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) began the Sierra Leone Seas project, an effort to assess the current status and potential role of marine resources in development and peace-building in Sierra Leone. UNEP hosted a visiting researcher from Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, California, who conducted interviews with dozens of resource managers and users, in order to identify the major priorities, challenges, and opportunities around marine resources.

The assessment found that current efforts are focused on five major themes: 1) Improving governance of marine resources, 2) educating and empowering local communities, 3) understanding the marine resources, 4) addressing illegal fishing, and 5) improving health and sanitation practices.

The assessment also identified three general recommendations for organizations working in the sector. The first recommendation was to increase communication and collaboration. A tremendous amount has been accomplished with regard to infrastructure, training, technology, and institutions, and Sierra Leone is now poised to make great strides in optimally managing its marine resources. However, stakeholders in Sierra Leone must also increase communication and collaboration in order to achieve sustainable marine resource management. The challenges of overlapping efforts and fragmentation can only be addressed through consistent communication and stakeholder engagement on all levels of resource users and managers.

The second recommendation was to increase transparency, as there now exists the opportunity to clarify the processes around marine resource management, increase accountability from civil society and industry, and maximize the resource management for the greatest number of people.

The third recommendation was to decentralize management approaches. In decentralizing some aspects of management to non-government groups, Ministry resources can be supplemented with outside assistance. This approach could also provide a positive role for various stakeholders, as well as improve monitoring, control, and surveillance of the resource itself. The Sierra Leone Seas project is ongoing, and the initial assessment has been completed.

By Katy Seto - UNEP

(For a copy of the expanded report, please contact Oli Brown, UNEP Programme Coordinator in Sierra Leone at oli.brown@unep.org)

CSSL to Celebrate 25 Year Anniversary in September

The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) was founded in September 1986, in response to the need for a local organisation committed to promoting conservation and management of the country's natural resources.

Since its inception, CSSL has worked tirelessly with the Government and other NGOs on environmental issues in Sierra Leone. The Society is a BirdLife partner in Sierra Leone and gets its core support from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), a United Kingdom based organisation.

Having overcome many challenges along the way, CSSL will celebrate 25 years of existence in September 2011. Members of the Society hope to celebrate the occasion in diverse ways and will reach out to all corners of the nation with radio announcements, jingles and drama. A more detailed plan will be out by August 2011, stay tuned!!

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Contributions to the October Issue

We want to hear your voice!

Send articles not longer than 350 words, facts and figures and upcoming events before 15th of September, 2011 for inclusion in the November issue, to:

Chani Wates - chanwaldo@gmail.com

Unisa Mansaray - unismans@yahoo.com

Boiima Manyeh - elma20010@yahoo.co.uk / info@efasl.org.uk

Facts and Figures

In Sierra Leone deforestation rates have increased 7.3% since the end of the civil war

Sierra Leone has 2,090 species of higher plants, 147 mammals, 626 species of birds, 67 reptiles and 35 species of amphibian

PROJECTS:

In 2010, Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary conducted a census of Chimps in the wild in Sierra Leone. They discovered that there are around 5,500, over double previous estimates of 2,000. This is good news but also redoubles the need to protect their endangered habitats.

Robert Travers, a sustainable tourism expert, was fielded by PAGE to do a value chain analysis of tourism in Sierra Leone in February 2011. His findings were compiled into a report which made some valuable recommendations - contact Unisa Mansaray for the full report - unismans@yahoo.com

