Fidèle Gautier Ahounan and Lazare Tia
Selected for Geography Fellowship in West Africa

[Washington, D.C., 11-Jun-13] — The Association of American Geographers (AAG) is pleased to announce that Fidèle Gautier Ahounan from Félix Houphouet-Boigny University and Lazare Tia from the Institute of Tropical Geography, Félix Houphouet-Boigny University have been selected to participate in the MyCOE / SERVIR Initiative in West Africa for a 10-month fellowship program to conduct research that addresses the theme of Women in Climate Change and Food Security using geographic technologies. A total of 18 undergraduate and graduate students and their mentors were competitively selected from among nearly 100 applications for the program based on the feasibility and quality of the proposed research/education activity. In all, 32 participants will directly benefit from the MyCOE / SERVIR Initiative in West Africa.

The MyCOE / SERVIR Initiative is a partnership between the AAG's MyCOE program and the NASA SERVIR program to help university students living and studying in developing regions conduct long-term research or educational activities in response to sustainable development needs in their countries. Participants in the MyCOE / SERVIR Initiative will receive a modest stipend and mentoring. They also will receive geographic data and SERVIR resources to help them conduct their three- to six-month long projects. Over the life of the fellowship, fellows will have the opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with approximately 60 other teams from around the world that will be selected through MyCOE / SERVIR global initiatives.

The West Africa fellowships have begun with online networking among the participant cohort, which includes students from Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria. The group will meet from 21-31 July 2013 with a multi-day capacity building and GIS training workshop in Accra, Ghana. A three- to six-month research period will follow with support from fellows' own mentors and expertise provided by the program. Fidèle Gautier Ahounan's proposed project is entitled: "Use of geospatial data to support women and sustainable agriculture under climate change conditions in Northern Côte d'Ivoire". In 2013, fellows will prepare and conduct a local public diplomacy or outreach activity to share their results with stakeholders in their community over a course of four months.

MyCOE (My Community Our Earth: Geographic Learning for Sustainable Development) is a U.S. Type II Public-Private Partnership established in 2001 in conjunction with the United Nations World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. It provides geographic perspectives, learning resources, and technological tools to encourage youth to engage with their local communities around global sustainability themes. Additional information is available at www.mycoe.org.

SERVIR, the Regional Visualization and Monitoring System, is a collaborative venture among the NASA Earth Science Division Applied Sciences Program, USAID, and worldwide partner institutions. It helps governments and other stakeholders use Earth observation and geospatial technologies to make decisions about disasters, ecosystems, biodiversity, weather, water, climate, health, and agriculture. Visit www.servirglobal.net for more information.

The Association of American Geographers is a scientific and educational society with a current membership of over 11,000 individuals from more than 60 countries. Its members are geographers and related professionals who work in the public, private, and academic sectors to advance the theory, methods, and practice of geography. The AAG is a founding partner of MyCOE and has served as secretariat since its inception. Go to www.aag.org to learn more.

For more information about MyCOE / SERVIR, see www.aag.org/mycoe.servir or contact the Project Director Patricia Solís at psolis@aag.org.

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