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LIBREVILLE - Gabon's main electrical utility said that it will have to schedule power outages in the capital Libreville because of low water levels at its hydro-electric plants.

Instead of continuing to randomly cut off neighbourhoods of the capital, SEEG starting September 4 will announce "rotating load shedding of an average length of three hours, two to three times a day," it said in a statement read out on state television.

SEEG already warned at the end of the rainy season in June that reservoir levels at the Kinguele-Tchimbele dam, which produces half of the capital's power, were insufficient.

Local media have reported that SEEG owes some 15 billion CFA francs (\$25-million) to Aggreko, a British company that provides services at the plants and that has threatened to stop operating.

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As mining and logging spread across Gabon's Mbembe watershed, they threaten the river that nourishes the capital city, Libreville, and also drives the city's turbines. USAID and the Global Environment Facility are helping the government of Gabon and the Wildlife Conservation Society entice electricity users into paying to maintain the watershed for their good and the good of others.

Leading up to the meeting, Ecosystem Marketplace commissioned this series of articles to shed light on issues relevant to these meetings and that part of the world.

Carbon and Land-Use: The Economies of Cocoa, Timber and Agriculture examines the role that carbon payments for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) can play in promoting sustainable land-use practices West Africa.

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