

THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB SECRETARIAT'S NEWSLETTER



Regular information on SWAC
work, publications and events.

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DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL

At the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Busan, African countries advocated a united position. I would like to share with you one key extract of the "African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness," which perfectly matches the vision and proposals the Club submitted in 2009 to the OECD Development Assistance Committee in support of an effective incorporation of the regional dimension into the development effectiveness agenda:



"Africa has strongly embraced a regional integration approach to securing its development goals based on inter and intra-African partnerships and solidarity in the pursuit of common priorities. Hence, the call for a clear incorporation of the regional dimension to Aid Effectiveness where the essential role of Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and organisations as primary mechanisms for South-South co-operation within the African Union architecture is reinforced. [...] Strengthening the capacity of RECs is a major prerequisite to achieving development effectiveness in Africa. The emerging global architecture will need to reflect the regional level."

Built on equal governance between West African regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS) and development partner countries, the Club's work clearly responds to this call and reflects the spirit of equal partnership put forward in Busan. It is the only international initiative whose core purpose is to enhance regional integration by working together with regional actors, supporting West African regional policies and promoting West African positions in global debates. As cross-border dynamics grow stronger and more complex, it is necessary more than ever to unite and further build synergies between regional organisations created by West African countries. For me, this is the *raison d'être* of the Club, and we are strongly committed to pursuing this goal in 2012.

The guiding principles of the Busan Declaration (ownership of development priorities by developing countries; focus on results; inclusive development partnerships; transparency and accountability to each other) are naturally reflected in the Club's activities. One good example for inclusiveness and ownership is the annual SWAC Forum, which brings together Members

and key stakeholders – public and private sector, civil society, development partners and the media – to discuss a priority development issue. Allowing participants to pool together their experiences, ideas and perspectives, the forum serves as a platform for identifying potential areas for consensus-based regional action.

The 2011 SWAC Forum “*West Africa and Brazil: Addressing Renewable Energy Challenges*” gave West African stakeholders not only the opportunity to reassert their interest in stronger co-operation with Brazil, but also provided opportunities for continuing dialogue. One concrete example of follow-up action, facilitated by the SWAC Secretariat, is the visit to Brazil in March 2012 of a group of West African farmers (Roppa members). The purpose of the visit is to learn *on site* about the challenges related to green fuel production.

The results of this mission will contribute to developing a joint position reflecting the viewpoints and concerns of West African agricultural producers. ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS will also continue to implement a regional agenda for renewable energy and energy efficiency in West Africa, in particular through its *Renewable Energy Observatory* to be launched by the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) in October 2012.

We will continue our work to closely monitor these evolving trends and new developments, and to report on them through our weekly NewsBriefs and our newly launched West Africa Gateway. We hope that by providing quick access to reliable information and knowledge on the region, this new collaborative information tool will prove to be very useful for your work and thereby contribute to effective development co-operation.

LAURENT BOSSARD

Director, SWAC Secretariat



WEST AFRICA AND BRAZIL ADDRESSING RENEWABLE ENERGY CHALLENGES



5-6 December 2011, Praia, Cape Verde

Hosted by the government of Cape Verde and jointly organised with the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), the 2011 SWAC Forum brought together around 100 participants including a large delegation from Brazil. Discussions contributed to deepening dialogue with Brazil and exchanging country-level experiences and information on West Africa's regional strategy for developing renewable energy sources.

The Forum provided an important opportunity to strengthen institutional and personal ties between West Africa, its traditional partners and Brazil, and it is crucial that this dialogue continues in the future. The SWAC Secretariat and ECREEE are firmly committed to encouraging and contributing to future debates.



ENERGY CHALLENGES

The development of the energy sector is a key challenge for all West African countries, oil producing and oil importing alike. The lack of access to reliable electricity sources heavily impedes progress in health and education, restricts small business growth, poses problems for food processing and storage, and seriously impedes industrialisation.

Average per capita electricity consumption in West Africa is 88 kWh per habitant compared to 563 for all of Africa and 2 596 for the entire world. Although overall 20% of households have access to electricity, there is a large gap in coverage between urban (as much as 40%) and rural areas (6 to 8%). In West Africa, energy prices also vary widely between not only urban and rural areas, but also between countries, which reveals the existence of sharp inequality in electricity and overall energy prices. The electricity grid is particularly sparse in rural areas because there are currently no decentralised power supply systems. Only 5% of rural households have access to gas or kerosene.

Widespread and unsustainable use of wood resources also poses a serious threat to the region; it not only contributes to deforestation and desertification but may also ultimately impact food production and food security. For most countries in the region, over 60% of the total energy consumption comes from traditional biomass, and over 90% of the population uses wood and charcoal harvested from local forests for domestic cooking.

In order to address these challenges, many West African countries have initiated power sector reforms geared towards the privatisation of state-owned, heavily bureaucratic electricity companies in the hopes of improving the efficiency of operations and increasing overall access.

Renewable energy policies in West Africa

The development of renewable energy offers new opportunities for addressing West Africa's various energy challenges. Efforts to gradually move away from the unsustainable use of biomass and fossil resources are already underway in certain countries. However, most West African countries have not yet adopted a policy on renewable energy, so projects are conducted on an *ad hoc* basis without sustainable funding sources. They are implemented without any connection to national energy strategies, most of which are either obsolete, non-existent, or have underdeveloped standards and regulations. Access to energy, a secure energy supply, and climate targets cannot be achieved in the coming decades without major investments in renewable energy and the energy market. South-South co-operation between Brazil and West Africa is a great opportunity to advance plans that were devised to help overcome these challenges.



Mahama Kappiah
ECREEE Director



Jorge Borges
Minister of
Foreign Affairs,
Cape Verde

"The key challenge for the development of renewable energy sources is the level of knowledge about these technologies in the region. People still have a very old-fashioned mindset about renewables; they assume that the technology is not fully developed, is very expensive, which keeps it from being used in a poor country. Because prices have dropped significantly in the past few years and the technology has matured and is now a lot more reliable, the situation is a lot different today. So, we must first get this message across and build capacity in Member States so that people can be better informed about renewable energies. Second and most importantly, we must put in place appropriate policy frameworks; there are no requisite policies in the region to support the growth of the renewable energy industry. Lastly, we need to address financing. There is currently no innovative financing mechanism for renewable energy development."

"Our goal is to be a country that does not depend on fossil fuels. To reach this goal, we have set out a series of steps within Cape Verde's Energy Development Programme. By 2020, we aim to meet 50% of our energy needs through renewable energy sources. We are already aiming for 25% in 2012. Cape Verde has a well-established, strategic vision for renewable energy, and we are ready to share our experiences with other countries of the region. [...] We would also like to take advantage of the experiences of Brazil, a champion in the use of different renewable energy systems, so that we might bring technology, expertise and know-how to our region in order to establish and concretise our agenda."



> Watch the key messages of the Club Forum on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/SWACoecd?>



Georges Faye
*Technical
advisor, Ministry
for Renewable
Energy, Senegal*

to create one coherent programme. Since all UEMOA member countries are also members of ECOWAS, why not use the ECOWAS White Paper as a point of departure for developing one common energy policy for the entire region?"

"Senegal is highly dependant on oil imports, which has a heavy, negative impact on its trade balance. Because its factories have out-dated equipment, the country currently suffers from frequent power outages, and this has triggered a series of public riots. The Senegalese government has, therefore, created a Ministry for Renewable Energy in order to find alternatives to current energy sources that are responsible for recurring economic and social problems. [...]

We need to have one common regional policy on renewable energy. CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA have all created their own energy programmes, but where will we stand if they each implement their programmes separately? We need to work together



Ibrahima Sylla
*Engineer,
Ministry in
charge of Energy
and Environment,
Guinea*

"Guinea has been an active participant in all ECOWAS activities. We have often shared information on renewable energy issues with Mali and Niger, particularly concerning the improvement of household cooking facilities. In the future, we plan to strengthen ties especially with Mali in order to capitalise on its experiences with biofuel development."



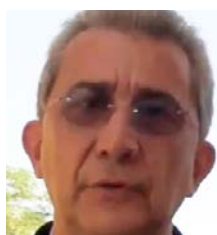
**Emmanuel
Kofi Buah**
*Deputy Minister
of Energy, Ghana*

"I think we made a lot of progress in Ghana as regards the energy sector. To achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, we need to develop a reliable supply for power. We thus focus our efforts on creating sufficient generation capacity, putting into place a strong distribution and transmission network and developing a balanced energy mix. In fact, just the past month (November 2011), we passed a renewable energy law which sets clear incentives to encourage the private sector to invest in this sector.

[...] As Ghana makes progress, we also need to integrate our strategies with our regional partners so that we can all move along in the same direction together."

Learning from Brazil's experience

Brazil is the world leader in renewable energy, and has more than 35 years of experience in the field. In this country of 206 million people, renewables account for 45% of total energy consumption. Biofuels made up 26% of Brazil's energy consumption in 2010 (compared to a world average of 2.3%). West Africa can learn from this experience as it seeks to develop its own regional renewable energy policies.



**Antônio Carlos
Kfourri Aidar**
*Control Direc-
tor, Fundação
Getúlio Vargas
(FGV)*

This production, however, must be combined with food production, because we can never forget that it is also crucial to ensure food security for all of West Africa."

"Brazil believes that West Africa, like all regions of the Tropical Belt, possesses a wealth of natural resources that are favourable to the production of biofuels as well as alternative energies such as wind, solar and hydro power. We think, however, that biofuel production has some advantages over alternative energy development. Wind energy does not provide additional employment, and it is also cheaper to produce biofuels than hydro-electricity. West African countries are well endowed with resources for extensive biofuel production.



**Maria Dulce
Barros**
*Ambassador
of Brazil,
Cape Verde*

"Africa has much to gain from its natural resources and its climate, and we could definitely reproduce and transfer Brazil's experiences to West Africa. An experience, however, is an experience, and it has to be adapted to the local context, which is why local authorities have a lot of responsibility in the strategic choices that are to be made."



**José Manuel
de Souza Dias**
*Assistant Direc-
tor, Technology
Transfer, Embra-
pa Agroenergia*

"West Africa has a rich potential to develop renewable energy, in particular biofuel. Most important, however, is that it develops an energy balance that includes several energy sources. Today, we are able to design integrated models with sugar cane and sweet sorghum for internal production while also making overall improvements to food, biofuel and electricity production. [...] I believe that some countries in Africa could receive some technical assistance or technological transfers from Brazil that would help adapt these technologies and equipment to the African context."

CHAD TO JOIN ECOWAS?

BY ELVIS KODJO

Chad is a Central African country and a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), - but why should not it also become a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)? Although the idea has not been officially announced, the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Moussa Mahamat Dago indicated on 19 January 2012 in Abidjan that the issue was currently being considered.

Emerging from several decades of unrest, Chad understands more than any other African country that “*African integration is necessary for its development*”, stated Mahamat. He also underlined that Chad, which has already developed close relationships with four ECOWAS member countries, has a geographic location that would allow it to be a member of both ECOWAS and ECCAS and that such a dual membership “*would not be contradictory.*” It would not be the first time that a country was a member of two regional economic communities.

Chadian authorities have been considering this possibility because they see it as a way of securing the best possible future for their country. After thirty years of war, explained Mahamat, Chad continues to evoke the image of an unstable and violent country. Under the leadership of President Idriss Déby, the country has launched serious diplomatic efforts over the past decade to erase this dark past and to attract investors to this “*huge construction site, endowed with a vast potential that is just waiting to be exploited.*” Despite some attempts to foster a rebellion, Mahamat stressed that President Déby has succeeded in putting Chad on the path towards development.



Since the start of oil production in 2005, Chad has become the 9th largest African oil producer and has improved its network of roads, which has expanded from 200 to more than 3 000 km. Plans for a new, ultramodern airport are underway, and a railroad linking the country to Cameroon will soon be constructed. While being a veritable construction site, Chad also has 40 million hectares of arable land. In order to encourage the effective use of this land, Mahamat indicated the country “*has equipped itself with a particularly attractive investment code*” and is looking to secure the best opportunities for itself by diversifying its economic partners in both Central and West Africa.

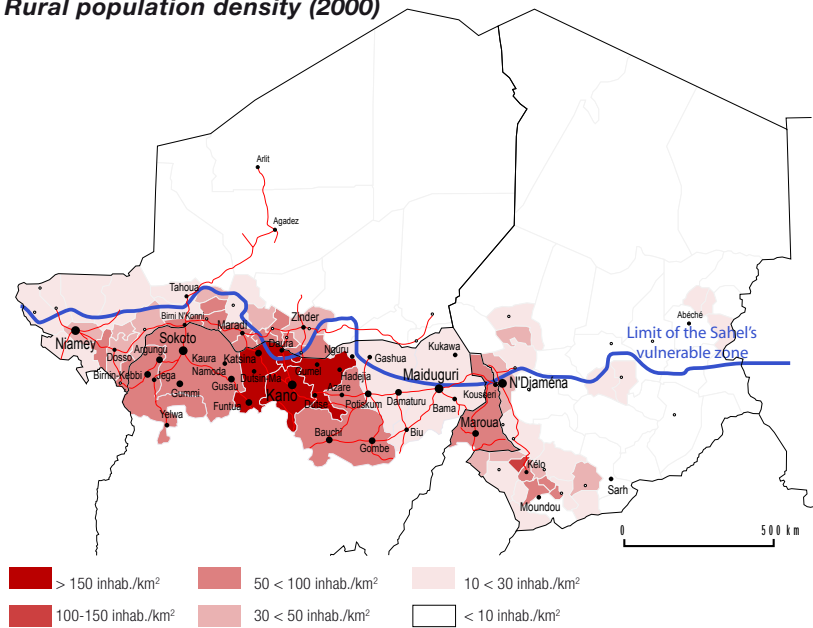
AT A GLANCE

Capital	N'Djaména
Land area	1 284 000 km ²
Independence	11 August 1960 (from France)
Official languages	Arabic, French
Spoken languages	Sara (in the South), > 120 local languages
Life expectancy at birth	49.6 years
GDP per capita (PPP)	USD 1 518 (2010)
Annual real GDP growth	8.4% (average over 2002-10)
Currency	CFA Franc (Central Africa)
Membership	ABN, ACP, AfDB, AU, CEMAC, CBLT, CILSS, Cen-sad, ECCAS
Human Dev. Index 2011	Rank 183 (out of 187 countries)
2012 World Bank Doing Business Indicator	Rank 183 (out of 183 countries)
2011 Corruption Perception Index	Rank 168 (out of 182 countries)
2011 Ibrahim Index of African Governance	Rank 52 (out of 53 countries)

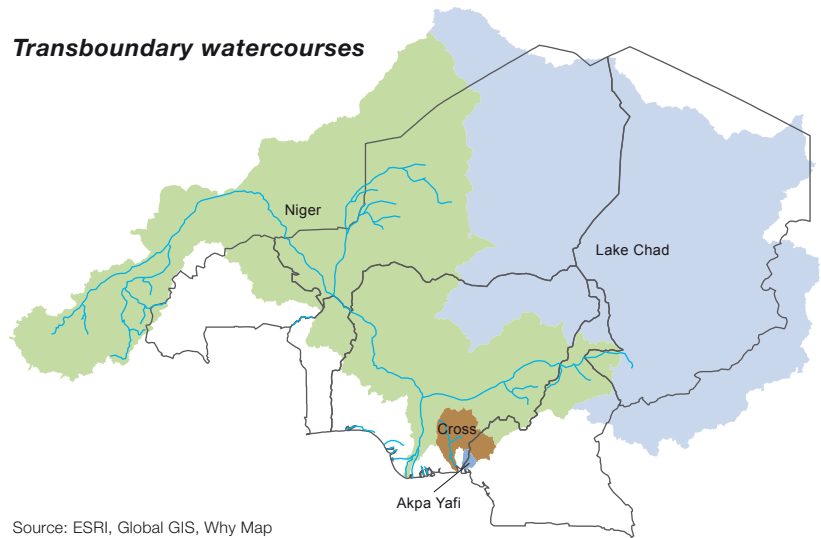
DID YOU KNOW?

- Chad is the largest country in West Africa (1 284 km²), followed by Niger (1 267km²) and Mali (1 240km²);
- It has the second weakest density of population (following Mauritania); more than two-thirds of the population (72.4%) live in rural areas;
- Despite persisting food security concerns, agricultural GDP in 2010 grew by 13%, and consumer prices fell by 2% (IMF);
- Chad approved the “Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management” (November 2011) and signed the co-operation framework (2 March 2012) to formalise the creation of a regional network of national food security stocks (RESOGEST) > page 12;
- The oil boom pushes GDP annual growth prospects up to 7% in 2012 (IMF);
- Nevertheless, Chad still depends on oil imports to cover its energy needs. Chad’s first oil refinery, a joint venture with China National Petroleum Company, has suspended production only a few months after its opening (June 2011);
- Niger has reached an agreement with Chad on 29 February 2012 to ship crude oil from its Agadem field for export through the Chad-Cameroon pipeline;
- Chad is a candidate to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). It has until 15 April 2012 to implement the EITI standard and complete an EITI validation in order to become an EITI compliant country;
- Chad is one of the few African countries to have broken off relations with Beijing (1997) after recognising the government in Taipei. The two countries restored diplomatic relations in 2006;
- Chad’s military expenditures (6.6 % of GDP in 2008) are far above the region’s average. The army counts some 25 000 soldiers;
- The security situation in Chad has considerably improved over the past years, in particular in Eastern Chad thanks to a joint Sudano-Chadian border control force;
- Over 70 000 people fleeing violence from Libya have been repatriated to or via Chad, with the help of international agencies. According to UNHCR estimations for January 2012, Chad hosts more than half a million refugees and internally displaced people (130 000 IDPs, 288 000 Sudanese refugees, 75 000 refugees from the Central African Republic);
- Despite progress made, the poverty situation and social welfare are still far below the region’s average.

Rural population density (2000)

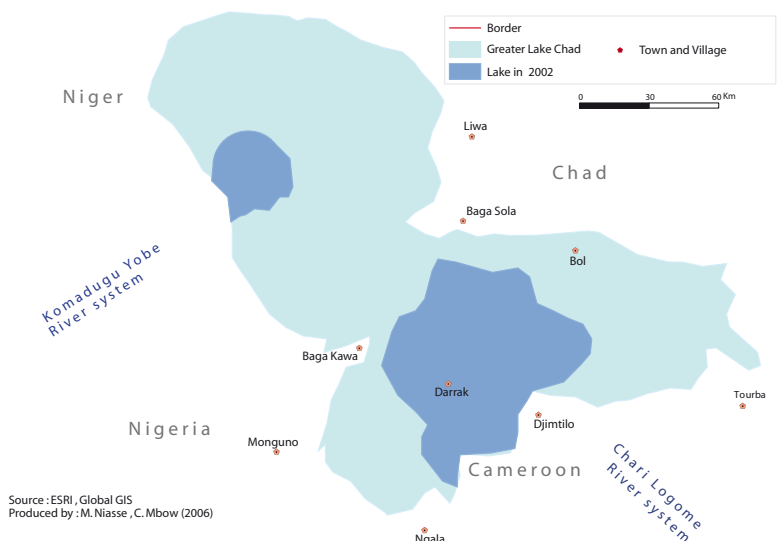


Transboundary watercourses



Source: ESRI, Global GIS, Why Map

The shrinking Lake Chad



Source: ESRI, Global GIS
Produced by: M. Niassé, C. Mbow (2006)

The maximum flooded area of Lake Chad decreased from 37 000 km² in the early 1950s to 15 000 km² in the early 1990s. Populations have tended to follow the “migration of the Lake”.

WEST AFRICAN FUTURES

SETTLEMENT, MARKET AND FOOD SECURITY

2ND WORKING GROUP MEETING

27-28 October 2011, Paris, OECD Conference Centre

Based on analyses of settlement dynamics, urbanisation and regional trade and its relation with food security, staff of the Secretariat presented possible interpretations in terms of agricultural transformation and food security prospects. The

participants discussed issues raised in the notes produced by the Secretariat and identified themes to be integrated in the analysis. Next steps and follow-up, in particular working sessions with the regional organisations and their partners were set out.



Yaya Sow
Ambassador of ECOWAS to the EU and the ACP group



Claude Tchamda
Price statistics expert, AFRISTAT



Dieudonné Ouedraogo
Professor at the Superior Institute of Demography, University of Ouagadougou

"I think that we need to make concrete recommendations and suggest solutions that would help regional organisations in making decisions."



Seyni Hamadou
Officer in charge of agriculture, UEMOA Commission

"Unfortunately, the question of demography was not taken as a primary focus for the work of the Department of Natural Resources. [...] We hope that the West African Futures programme will help us analyse these underlying dynamics so that we can then take them into account in our work on food security issues in the sub-region."

"We were delighted by the positive approach of the WAF programme to the main problems facing the region. We continue to believe that continued urban growth and a thriving informal economy will not have a negative impact on development. We hope that when the Programme is completed, results will be made widely available.

[...] There are three major problems with statistical data: availability, financial resources and comparability. On the one hand, there is data produced by the United Nations and clarified in international definitions, and Africa is a very specific case for them. On the other hand, there are the clear-cut positions of different national administrations, which, for one reason or another, do not want to budge."

"I believe that the West African Futures programme is first and foremost a tool to raise awareness among OECD member countries, in order to ensure that they better take into account settlement patterns in their development co-operation with the region, be it at the bilateral or multilateral level."



Ismaël Fofana
IFPRI, West and Central Africa Office, Dakar

"For a long time, we have made political decisions without knowing what their exact impact would be. [...] Moreover, implementation continues to be a serious challenge; there have been many policies in the past that were defined and then ultimately never implemented."

> [Watch the interviews on YouTube:](#)

<http://youtu.be/Fvk-mlbYQA7E>

<http://www.oecd.org/swac/waf>



West African urbanisation trends

WAF no. 1, June 2011

This briefing note addresses the problems of data reliability, varying definitions and consistency and comparability between information sources. Estimates of West Africa's urban population differ widely between UN data and those of the Africapolis study on urbanisation trends.



Harmonisation of West African settlement data

WAF no. 2, July 2011

West African countries have sufficiently similar characteristics as to prompt comparisons between national situations. Such comparisons are possible only if the data are uniform. This note calls attention to the need, within a regional approach, to pursue the consistency and harmonisation of settlement data.



Economic concentration and settlement

WAF no. 3, August 2011

Drawing on the World Bank's World Development Report 2009, "Reshaping economic geography", this note analyses the ongoing transformation of the rural-urban relationship in West Africa. Building on the argument advanced in previous briefing notes, it places the link between urbanisation and economic growth in a food security perspective.



Agricultural and non-agricultural population

WAF no. 4, September 2011

The agricultural population does not exclusively live in rural areas; agricultural producers can also be found in urban settings. Similarly, a significant proportion of rural dwellers are not food-producers. The relative proportions of food producers and non-producers vary with the size of the urban agglomerations and also depend on the level of economic development. This note highlights the difficulty of measuring and monitoring the ratio between agricultural and non-agricultural populations (PP/NPP ratio), an essential indicator for managing food security policy.



Regional trade and food security

WAF no. 5, October 2011

Regional food markets and trade are crucial to West African food security. This paper aims to highlight statistical inconsistencies and how they can impact perceptions of food issues. It illustrates the need to consider the regional and informal dimensions of trade when designing food security strategies.



Informal economy and food security

WAF no. 6, November 2011

It would be misleading to address food security without taking into account a large part of the economy that provides jobs, income and essential services for the urban population and for the non-agricultural population in rural areas. Despite its important role, however, the informal economy is still poorly defined, poorly measured and consequently, poorly incorporated into food security policies. This note assesses the overall size and importance of the informal economy in the West African region and takes a closer look at the way it operates.



REGIONAL SETTLEMENT STATISTICS AND FOOD SECURITY POLICY DESIGN

15-16 February 2012, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

This technical workshop organised by the SWAC Secretariat within its WAF programme and hosted by the UEMOA Commission, brought together experts from AFRISTAT, CILSS (AGRHYMET, INSAH), FAO and UEMOA to discuss food security policy design issues related to a lack of homogeneous and coherent data at the regional level and imprecise statistical concepts and definitions. Participants drafted a list of priority recommendations and follow-up activities to improve regional data problems and their impact on food security policies.

Proposal 1: Developing synergies between regional organisations

Facilitate discussions and strengthen synergies between ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, AFRISTAT and the FAO. Dialogue platforms could help improve co-ordination with regard to data needs, concepts and sources of information and define thematic and spatial responsibilities. The SWAC Secretariat has a key role to play in facilitating this process.

Data harmonisation should take into account ongoing programmes:

- **ECOAGRIS** (Agricultural Information System, launched by the ECOWAS Commission in March 2012);
- **SIAR** (Regional Agricultural Information System of UEMOA Member countries covering four domains: food security, agricultural sector, international commercial negotiations and markets);
- Harmonised datasets are produced by **CILSS** and its specialised agencies (**AGRHYMET, INSAH**);
- **AFRISTAT**, harmonised and simultaneous population and housing censuses project;
- **FAO CountrySTAT** programme.

Proposal 2: Creating a harmonised regional database

Regional representatives proposed to set-up a **regional database on agricultural, demographic and settlement statistics**, jointly managed by regional organisations. A special unit should be responsible for ensuring coherence between the various datasets and updating data and their respective status (estimated, calculated, definitive; harmonisation ex-post vs. ex-ante).

New and simple indicators to monitor settlement dynamics are needed. For example, demographic and consumption data provides information on food accessibility and its impact on food security.

The quality of raw data must also be improved. Prior to data collection, concepts need to be reexamined and appropriate updating mechanisms for survey results need to be put in place.

Modelling can be used in order to temporarily fill the absence of coherent and harmonised agricultural and settlement data. Participants asked for a training session on the population matrix and the demo-economic model used by the SWAC Secretariat.

Proposal 3: Harmonising population censuses

Harmonisation of population censuses (periodicity, sequencing) at the regional level would also need to be coupled with agricultural censuses. This combination would help redefine priorities in terms of data collection and formatting.

More regular and faster data collection: Given the strong demographic and settlement dynamics at work in West Africa, it is important to be able to monitor these transformations more closely by conducting more regular censuses and by reducing lead times between data collection and the official release of findings.

Proposal 4: Developing integrated food security policies

Food security goes beyond agricultural policies and regional organisations therefore need to design integrated food security policies that pay more attention to other sectors which impact food security (infrastructure, urban planning, population policies, etc.).

Proposals on how to facilitate the development of these integrated food security policies need to be further explored. Findings of the SWAC analyses conducted within the WAF programme could be linked up with results from the INSAH programme of CILSS on demography and food security.

FOOD SECURITY: A REGIONAL CHARTER FOR WEST AFRICA

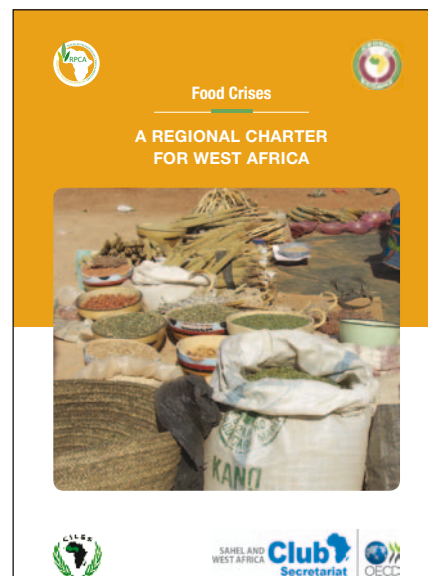
14-17 November 2011, Conakry, Guinea

Building on regional and national dialogue workshops held within the 17 countries covered by the Charter, the “Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management” was approved on 17 November 2011 by the Ministers of Food and Agriculture of the 15 ECOWAS member countries, as well as Mauritania and Chad.

The Charter reflects a new regional ambition to prevent food crises, while managing them effectively where they occur. Emphasizing the role of regional organisations, it underlines that alternatives to food aid should be sought or chosen wherever possible. The Charter also places special focus upon the structural dimension of food crises. In the long run, concerted, effective, and sustainable preventive actions should help enable the region to phase out the need for food aid.

The Ministers recommended that the ECOWAS Commission makes practical arrangements for the approval and the effective implementation of the Charter, notably:

- The development and funding of a programme to disseminate the Charter’s text in all signatory countries, taking into account local languages and the differing socio-cultural environments;
- The creation of the evaluation and monitoring mechanism for the Charter’s implementation at the national and regional level;
- The development and funding of a capacity building programme for national food security systems and civil society in light of their active participation in the Charter’s implementation.



The Charter goes beyond the original text of the Food Aid Charter (1990), evolving from co-ordinated food aid management towards a food crisis prevention and management tool advocating mutual responsibility. It also opens itself up to regional organisations and non-state actors, and expands its geographic coverage from the Sahel to all of West Africa.



From left to right: Laurent Bossard, SWAC Secretariat Director and Alpha Condé, President of Guinea.

A REGIONAL NETWORK OF FOOD SECURITY STOCK BOARDS (RESOGEST)

29 February - 2 March 2012, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



From left to right: Jean Marc Telliano, Minister in charge of Agriculture, Guinea; Abdoulaye Combari, Deputy Minister in charge of Agriculture, Burkina Faso and Prof. Alhousseini Bretraudeau, CILSS Executive Secretary

RESOGEST

Today, food stocks at the local, national and regional level are an important part of food crisis management strategy. Some stocks play a stabilising/price regulation role in the local markets. With its varying agricultural output, the Sahel and West Africa region has surplus areas coexisting with deficit areas practically every year. This issue has led regional actors to consider the importance of a network of food stock boards in the Sahel and West Africa. This network, called RESOGEST, is meant to become an intergovernmental, supranational, non-profit agency under public law that will neither replace nor duplicate the work of the national boards.

The co-operation framework, adopted on 2 March 2012 at a Ministerial meeting, formalises support for the national boards in charge of managing national food stocks through a regional solidarity mechanism that covers the 15 ECOWAS members countries, Chad and Mauritania. Regular information-sharing is one important activity of this regional network.

Acting as interface between local, national and regional food reserves, the RESOGEST constitutes one of the major pillars of the West Africa Food Stock Strategy in compliance with the principles of the Charter for Food Crises Prevention and Management. (page 11). Technically facilitated by CILSS, it also supports the creation of a Regional Food Reserve under the aegis of ECOWAS.

In June 2011, the G20 picked up some of the proposals made during the Outreach session "Agricultural and Food Price Volatility" organised by the SWAC Secretariat and the OECD with the support of the G20 French presidency, and decided to support a pilot project in West Africa for the creation of a Regional Food Reserve.

Commitments

The national food security stock boards commit to:

- Constitute in each country a reserve (at least 5% of the national food security stock) which could be mobilised in the form of a loan or a gift in response to an acute food crisis occurring in another Sahelian or West African country;
- Promote cereal trade between surplus and deficit countries through triangular operations (purchase/sales/loans) and stimulate sub regional trade in agri-food products;
- Assess agricultural and food needs of vulnerable populations in order to provide reliable country-level information on demand and supply (deficits or surpluses);
- Take into account consensual analyses of the food situation produced by the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (March, September and November);
- Share information on logistical arrangements and the timeframe between observed food needs and food supply.

27TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FOOD CRISES PREVENTION NETWORK (RPCA)

8-10 December 2011, Praia, Cape Verde



The meeting brought together key food security actors who jointly prepared an assessment of the 2011-2012 agropastoral season and food prospects. They also considered the state of progress of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management and discussed the issue of “food processing and food security”; the development of the food processing industry still poses serious challenges. Recommendations for next steps in each area target governments, regional organisations, and West Africa’s technical and financial partners.

Food situation

The grain output forecast for the 2011-2012 season in the Sahel and West Africa stands at 55.4 million tonnes, representing an 8% decrease compared to the previous year’s output but a 4% increase from average output over the last five years. Total grain output in the Sahel stands at 16.6 million tonnes, a decrease of 25% from the previous year’s harvest and of 2% from the five-year average due to rainfall and water shortages. The Sahel has a gross grain deficit of 2.6 million tonnes. If regional markets were functioning properly, there should be a net grain surplus of 419 368 tonnes in the Sahel, but as it stands now, some countries will experience severe shortages. Chad and Mauritania in particular are experiencing a 50% and 52% decrease in grain output respectively from the previous year’s harvest and a decrease of 23% and 38% from the five-year average.

A risk of food crisis in vulnerable areas

Acute malnutrition rates are already high in deficit areas such as Tillabéry and Diffa in Niger, Timbuktu in Mali, Matam in Senegal, certain areas of Burkina Faso and Mauritania, and Chad’s Sahelian belt. The agricultural and fodder production deficits recorded in the 2011-2012 season in certain areas of the Sahel have significantly lowered the incomes of pastoral and agropastoral communities. The situation could evolve into a food crisis in the coming months if mitigation measures are not taken before the next lean season, which may come earlier than usual.



For more information on the food situation, read the RPCA policy note. An update of the food situation will be produced during the restricted RPCA meeting (Paris, OECD, 12-13 April 2012).

<http://www.food-security.net>

SWAC STRATEGY AND POLICY GROUP MEETING (SPG)

7-8 December 2011, Praia, Cape Verde



Following a presentation of key achievements in 2011, SPG Members approved the 2011 activities and budget implementation report. They also discussed the formulation of the next Mandate and the possible creation of a high-level position of a “Special Representative of the SWAC President” who would be in charge

of lobbying to enhance the political import and strategic impact of the Club. EU Representatives actively participated in the debates; discussions to formalise the EU adhesion to the Club are underway. The OECD Development Strategy, currently under preparation, was also presented at the meeting.

SWAC VISIT TO THE NEW UEMOA COMMISSION AND CILSS

15-16 January 2012, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso



UEMOA Commission President Cheikhe Hadjibou Soumaré and SWAC President François-Xavier de Donnea

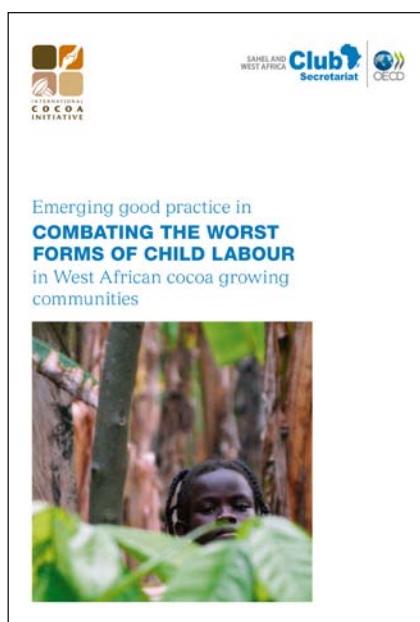
SWAC President Mr. de Donnea and Director Mr. Bossard met with the newly appointed President of the UEMOA Commission, Cheikhe Hadjibou Soumaré as well as with the CILSS Executive Secretary Prof. Bretaudeau. Soumaré intends to make “food security” a top priority for the UEMOA Commission (as illustrated by the creation of the High-level Committee for Food Security on 13 February 2012). This priority is obviously fully compliant with

CILSS priorities. The next RPCA meeting will provide an opportunity for UEMOA and ECOWAS to assert their political leadership role in this field. The joint organisation in December 2012 of the “*Week of the Sahel and West Africa*”, a series of key events (SWAC Forum, RPCA meeting, SPG, CILSS donor co-ordination meeting, etc.) that are mostly dedicated to the topic of “Food Prospects”, will help to build further synergies between various food security initiatives.

COCOA: CHILD LABOUR GUIDEBOOK LAUNCH

23 November 2011, Brussels, Belgium

Public and private stakeholders from the West African cocoa sector attended the presentation of the guidebook. The author, Sue Upton, highlighted the social and cross-sectoral dimensions of child labour and called for a holistic approach that takes into account local contexts. The release of the guidebook marks the end of a three-year project, launched in 2008 at the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Co-operation of Belgium and with the support of SWAC members. The project contributed to the promotion of a complementary regional approach to child labour based on existing experiences and best practices. The guidebook will be largely disseminated by the International Cocoa Initiative, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the SWAC Secretariat.



Building on work conducted by the SWAC Secretariat in collaboration with the International Cocoa Initiative, this guidebook gathers together experiences and ideas from representatives of governments, organisations and agencies active at different stages along the cocoa supply chain as well as from men, women and children living in cocoa growing communities. It outlines seven key recommendations and identifies some emerging good practices from existing interventions in the hope of contributing to their wider application. It reflects on the different roles and responsibilities of key actors in order to encourage greater clarity, co-ordination and collaboration in the coming years.



West Africa Gateway

www.westafricagateway.org



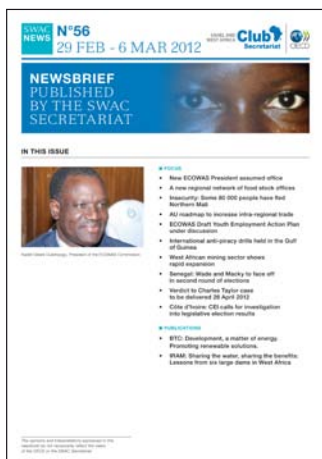
In response to a lack of transparent and reliable information on the region and within the framework of SWAC's monitoring activities provided for its Members, the SWAC Secretariat launched in November 2011 an information gateway dedicated to the West African region. As an online resource centre offering easy-access to reliable information on the region, the West Africa Gateway provides a large diversity of services, including weekly NewsBriefs to which one can subscribe via email or RSS feed, a regional database, a map centre, a document library, a contact database, an events calendar, thematic dossiers, West African viewpoints, interviews etc. The data uploading is still ongoing, and more content will be added and updated throughout 2012. The Gateway is also dedicated to sharing information and promoting work produced by Club Members. A first consultative mission was conducted with UEMOA, CILSS, SDC, ACDI/CIDA, GIZ and ISSP from 20 to 24 February 2012 in Ouagadougou in order to promote this new collaborative tool, collect first-hand data and establish a network of focal points. More consultative missions are planned, in particular with ECOWAS.

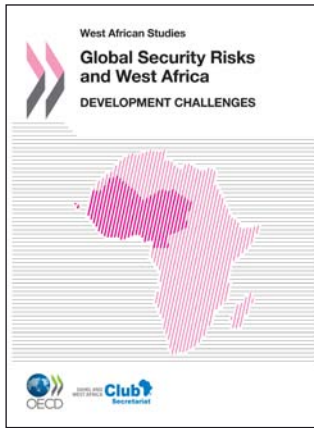
Content

- Weekly NewsBriefs
- Country profiles
- Regional slideshow
- Personality profiles
- Thematic dossiers
- Contact database
- Document library
- Data & Statistics
- Maps & Graphs
- Jobs, consultancies
- Events calendar
- Viewpoints, interviews



Weekly NewsBriefs and RSS feeds to keep track of regional trends





Global Security Risks and West Africa: Development Challenges

OECD West African Studies, January 2012

This SWAC publication explores current global security issues, their development in West Africa and their potential impact on regional stability. It takes a close look at issues such as terrorism and trafficking, climate change, and the links between security and development. Some of these issues are still the object of heated debate. This book draws attention to the risk of oversimplified analyses and biased perceptions of security risks. It also highlights the need for co-ordinated policies and dialogue between West Africa, North Africa and OECD countries.



Are economic free zones good for development?

West African Challenges, no. 4, November 2011

François Bost, Geographer, Senior Lecturer at Université de Paris-Ouest-Nanterre- La Défense

There are 29 free zones today in 11 West African countries, which can be broken down into free trade zones (6) and export processing zones (23) and to which may be added some 450 “free points”. “Rather than being the driving force for development in West Africa, free zones seem to be simply one among several components of a more general development strategy that has yet to be precisely defined”, concludes François Bost. How, then, can these zones be transformed into effective drivers for development? This paper summarises the key findings of the “World Atlas of Free Zones” (Atlas mondial des zones franches).



China and Nigeria: a powerful South-South alliance

West African Challenges, no. 5, November 2011

Margaret Egbula, Qi Zheng

China’s growing involvement in the African continent has drawn intense scrutiny from traditional partners and raises the question of whether or not collaboration is beneficial for African countries and their development goals. No bilateral China-Africa relationship is evolving faster, or impacts more people, than the one between China and Nigeria. The Asian giant going global meets the African giant who aims to become one of the world’s top 20 economies. This paper, co-authored by two young professionals from China and Nigeria, analyses the political, economic and social impact of this powerful South-South alliance.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), 12-13 April 2012, OECD Conference Centre
- Strategy and Policy Group meeting, 11 June 2012, Paris, OECD Conference
- Colloquium on Security and Development, 12 June 2012, Paris, OECD Conference



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