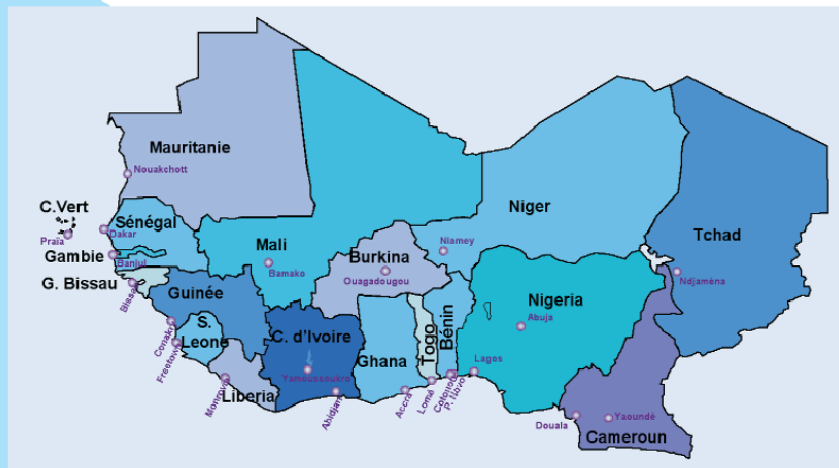


**OECD's ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION THROUGH THE  
WORK OF THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB  
TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION**



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Club du Sahel et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest/OCDE  
Le Seine Saint-Germain, 4 Boulevard des Iles  
92130 ISSY-LES-MOULINEAUX (France)  
Adresse postale :  
2, rue André-Pascal  
75775 Paris Cedex 16  
Tél: +33 (0) 1 45 24 89 87  
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 24 90 31  
[www.oecd.org/sah](http://www.oecd.org/sah)

## Brief overview of the region

Some indicators of West Africa region			
<b>1. A growing population and essentially young</b>		<i>(ii). Increase of the importations of food products 1980 - 2000</i>	
		Rice :	<b>121,6%</b>
<i>(i). Population (en million)</i>		Meat (beef + chicken) :	<b>86,7%</b>
1960 :	<b>85</b>	Wheat meal (flour) :	<b>101,5%</b>
2003 :	<b>290</b>		
2020 :	<b>430</b>	<i>(iii). A persistent food insecurity in the West Africa Sahel zone</i>	
<i>(ii). Youths (&lt; 20 years) :</i>	<b>55%</b>	Population living under 1,840 Kcal/day in 2002 :	<b>36%</b>
		Population living in chronic food insecurity in 2002 :	<b>23%</b>
<b>2. A region in strong urbanization</b>		<b>4. An agricultural production depending on natural resources and not very intensive</b>	
1960 :	<b>13%</b>		
2000 :	<b>40%</b>	<i>(i). Average yield of Maize (2000) :</i>	<b>1,38 t/ha</b>
2020 :	<b>65%</b>		
		<i>(ii). Average yield of Rice (2000) :</i>	<b>1,04 t/ha</b>
<b>3. An agricultural production in growth but not sufficient to meet the demographic growth</b>			
		<i>(iii). Chemical fertilizer use :</i>	<b>nearly kg/ha</b>
<i>(i). Increase 1990 - 2000</i>			
Population :	<b>32%</b>	<i>(iv). Exploitation rate of irrigable lands:</i>	<b>9,3%</b>
Maize Production :	<b>12,3%</b>		
Rice Production :	<b>26,7%</b>		
Total cereals :	<b>25,4%</b>		
Beef Meat Production :	<b>29,4%</b>		

## OECD's interest in the region's problems

OECD's interest in the development of Africa and the West African region in particular date back almost thirty years.

Already in the 1970s and in response to the problems of food security and development in general, OECD Member countries and their counterparts at the CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) decided to create the Club du Sahel in 1976. This led to a moral commitment for OECD countries to increase aid to Sahelian countries but also to support them on the road to development.

The Club's importance for the development of the region led to the extension of its mandate in 2001 to cover all of West Africa which includes the countries in the CILSS and ECOWAS zones, as well as Cameroon, for a total of 18 countries – its name then became the “*Sahel and West Africa Club*”.

In terms of its approach, the Club works in network with West African actors, government representatives, civil society, and research and development agencies. It works closely with development partners of West Africa but particularly it maintains direct partnerships with regional economic and producers' organisations such as ROPPA, the CILSS, the WAEMU and ECOWAS.

The Sahel and West Africa Club's specificity is its capacity to mobilise West African actors, to make African voices heard, and to listen attentively to its partners in Africa and OECD Member countries. For the OECD, the Sahel and West Africa Club is a window opening on to the West African region.

As a facilitator, moderator and leader of open constructive and impartial exchanges, the Club plays a bridging role, an interface between actors of the region and OECD Member countries. The Club's main objectives are to:

- Help identify strategic questions related to medium- and long-term development in West Africa;
- Contribute to mobilising and strengthening African capacities within a network approach;
- Support initiatives and efforts by West Africans to promote medium- and long-term development in the region;
- Facilitate exchanges between regional actors and OECD Member countries;
- Promote constructive debates that lead to innovative decisions, within and outside the region aimed at building a better future. These decisions concern notably the policy enabling environment, concrete actions to be undertaken on the ground; mobilisation and allocation of resources; implementation of new partnerships leading to immediate results and paving the way for a better future.

In order to meet this challenge, the Club focuses its efforts on four areas of interest for the region and the international community:

- Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives;
- Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development;
- Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration;
- Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security.

Through these various objectives and areas of concentration, the Club seeks to promote a balanced reading of the evolutions in West Africa and to improve the understanding and confidence between various partners. The Club therefore rejects the pessimistic vision of West Africa by basing its actions on the fact that Africans have a perception of their region and can contribute to seeking solutions for its development.

Through the OECD and regional actors, several initiatives concerning the development of the region have been launched, notably:

### ► In the area of Food Security

Faced with this challenge which is one of the greatest hindrances to development of the region, the Sahel and West Africa Club works together with various regional partners such as the CILSS, the WAEMU, ECOWAS, ROPPA, etc. to develop sustainable food crisis prevention and management mechanisms for the region. Among the successes over the last 20 years are:

- Setting up, in 1985, the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN). Jointly led by the Club and the CILSS, this network constitutes a consultation framework for all actors of the region and development partners in order to analyse the food situation as well as organise and coordinate interventions in the area of food security

- Adoption of the Food Aid Charter in 1990 at the CILSS Heads of State Summit held in Guinea-Bissau and which today constitutes a reference framework for all institutions as regards the coordination and management of aid, but particularly as a promotion tool for sustainable food security
- Supporting regional actors in order to develop and implement agricultural policies aimed at food security.

### ► In the area of Agricultural and Trade Policy

The OECD, through the Sahel and West Africa Club, works closely with the WAEMU, ECOWAS and ROPPA in the development of regional policies as well as supporting their implementation. ECOWAP, adopted in January 2005 by ECOWAS in Accra, constitutes a reference tool as regards agricultural development and the Club is greatly implicated in supporting its implementation. A concrete example of the Club's commitment is the joint initiative underway of *"the challenges and potentialities of livestock with the perspective of strengthening the Sahelian and West Africa regional market and the fight against poverty"*. This initiative, carried out under the auspices of ECOWAS and in partnership with the CILSS, the WAEMU and ROPPA, represents an important challenge in the capitalisation on opportunities in the region and its insertion within the increasingly liberal global market.

Other areas such as fisheries and aquaculture also constitute serious opportunities for the region in terms of food security, poverty reduction, natural resource management and regional trade. The OECD through the Club also places much effort on these issues within the framework of initiatives involving notably the private sector and other institutions such as the FAO. All of this is implemented within an approach valorising South-South cooperation through partnerships between West Africa and Asia.

This supplements the Club's direct commitment in the sectoral "cotton" initiative, which also represents a stake and a priority for the region and on which discussions are ongoing in the WTO within the framework of the Doha Round.

### ► In the area of regional integration

The OECD via the Club is also concerned by this issue which represents an important stake for the region and part of the mandate of regional economic organisations such as ECOWAS and the WAEMU.

The Club's commitment to this issue is reflected in:

- The development of an approach to cross-border cooperation in the region, which today has been adopted by ECOWAS to implement its regional economic integration policy. In this regard, ECOWAS is prepared to set up a *Task Force* as regards cross-border cooperation within its organisational mechanism
- The support of ECOWAS and other actors of the region for the implementation of the Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) which is an important initiative for economic integration in the region. Several pilot operations are currently underway or in the process of being launched such as: Mali - Côte d'Ivoire – Burkina Faso; Senegal – Guinea-Bissau – The Gambia; Niger – Nigeria; Mali – Mauritania
- Co-production with ECOWAS of an Atlas on Regional Integration (ARI).

Through the Club's action, this cross-border cooperation issue seems to have taken on an African dimension and the African Union could soon sponsor an Africa-Europe Conference on cross-border cooperation.

### ► In the area of governance, conflict dynamics, peace and security

These issues have also become very worrying for the region because they influence economic development.

The OECD via the Sahel and West Africa Club is also involved with regional actors on this issue. Among the key elements to this commitment are:

- Joint implementation, with ECOWAS, of initiatives aimed at dynamics of exit from crises and reform of the security sector in West Africa. This has also involved historical analysis of deep-seated causes of conflicts, the setting up of dialogue mechanisms between actors (political parties, media, civil society, etc.), early warning systems and conflict prevention, but also disarmament, demobilisation and reinsertion (DDR) approaches
- support ECOWAS in the **adoption of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance** and the implementation of a strategy for its ratification

Other present concerns for the region such as youth, migration and governance are also part of the joint initiatives that the Club is implementing with actors of the region.

### ► As concerns long-term development perspectives

The WALTPS (West Africa Long Term Perspective Study) produced by the Club in 1998 is an important reference as regards what West Africans think of their region. This is reflected in OECD's commitment to the region's future. This willingness has been expressed over the last few years by the implementation of actions among which are:

- the co-organisation by the Club and ECOWAS of a symposium on the medium- and long-term development perspectives of the region at ECOWAS' 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration
- the implementation of initiatives aimed at the development of the private sector and the promotion of South-South cooperation within the framework of strengthening investments for social needs as well as productive sectors.

The importance of this prospective vision for West Africa has led the Club and ECOWAS to decide on the co-production on a regular basis of an analytical report with the contributions of the ADB, the WAEMU, the CILSS, etc. on the development perspectives of the region, its institutions, and in particular, ECOWAS.

## Major questions raised which deserve joint strategic thinking and concerted actions

West Africa is a region undergoing social, cultural, political and economic changes.

Beyond the Club's efforts and those of its partners of the region, a pivotal question remains: *Where and how will the 430 million West Africans live in 2020 when there were only 290 million in 2003?* With more than 55% of the population less than 20 years of age, the following question must also be asked: *What are the future prospects for the youth? How can the well-being of populations of the region be improved and how to ensure better security for all?*

Through this central question emerges a series of other questions:

- What policies (agricultural and trade) should be implemented and how should they be implemented in order to attain the first MDGs, namely reducing hunger and poverty?
- What is the future for the rural environment, which today represents more than three quarters of the population who suffer from extreme poverty and food insecurity?
- What mechanisms are needed for sustainable peace and human security in the region in a context where conflicts and all other forms of violence are evermore present in the region?
- What strategies are needed for greater regional integration faced with globalisation?

In addition to the strategic thinking and necessary analyses to be carried out on these questions in the future, the challenge remains also within the capacity of the OECD, regional partners and the international community to implement concrete actions linked to decision-making for investment in favour of development of the region.