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*The Sahel and West Africa Club's monthly newsletter aims to provide regular information on ongoing SWAC activities, publications, upcoming events and other SWAC news.*

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## EXPERTS MEETING ON THE AU BORDER PROGRAMME

The Commission of the African Union (AU) organised, in collaboration with the Sahel and West Africa Club and the National Borders Directorate of Mali, a meeting of African experts on the establishment of an AU Border Programme at the continental level. About 50 experts coming from all African regions (representing various African Ministries for Regional Integration, regional economic communities, etc.) participated in the two-day meeting from 8 to 9 March 2007 in Bamako (Mali). Experts from Europe, regional and international organisations also took part in the meeting. An initial draft including recommendations for AU member states was elaborated. Drawing on the concrete experience of the West African region, the draft paper highlights local cross-border co-operation initiatives as a tool for constructing a regional space. Furthermore, it proposes a series of concrete legal and institutional mechanisms to facilitate cross-border co-operation and highlights the need to create regional cross-border co-operation funds to be managed by Africa's regional economic communities. The conference organisers also discussed the organisation of the Pan-African Ministerial Meeting on Cross-Border Co-operation to be held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on 21 May 2007. [> learn more](#)

**Contact:** [marie.tremolieres@oecd.org](mailto:marie.tremolieres@oecd.org)

## SWAC MISSION TO ECOWAS TO FOLLOW-UP THE ECOWAS RETREAT

SWAC Director, Mr. Normand Lauzon, met during his three-day mission from 19-22 March 2007 in Abuja (Nigeria) with Dr. Ibn Chambas, President of the ECOWAS Commission; the Vice-President, Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda; and six new ECOWAS Commissioners in individual work sessions to discuss the implementation and funding of joint ECOWAS-SWAC activities in 2007, as set out in the [co-operation framework between ECOWAS and the SWAC](#). Discussions were very productive and the new ECOWAS Commissioners expressed great interest in further deepening collaboration with the SWAC.

In particular, ECOWAS Commissioners requested SWAC support to facilitate capacity-building and the strengthening of ECOWAS' new institutional structure. SWAC Heads of Unit will follow-up discussions by working directly with the relevant ECOWAS Commissioners. Mr. Lauzon also met with Dr. Adrienne Diop, Head of the ECOWAS Communications Team to discuss the development of a joint website on West Africa.

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### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE RURALSTRUC PROGRAMME**

Mr. Jean Zoundi, Head of the SWAC's "Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development" Unit participated in the Advisory Committee Meeting of the RuralStruc Programme, a World Bank initiative on "Agriculture for Development", held on 23 March 2007 in Washington D.C. The programme shall (i) analyse implications of the restructuring within agro-food markets and its consequences for the overall economy; and (ii) produce comparative data on various stages of the liberalisation and integration process. Two West African countries, Mali and Senegal, are participating in the first phase of the RuralStruc Programme. The Advisory Committee meeting analysed outcomes of the first phase of the programme and discussed priorities for the second phase.

**Contact:** [jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org](mailto:jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org)

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### **41<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE CILSS MINISTERIAL MEETING**

The SWAC was represented by Mr. Zoundi at the 41<sup>st</sup> ordinary session of the CILSS Ministerial Meeting on 26 and 27 March 2007 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). The "Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel" (CILSS) is a SWAC key partner. Joint CILSS-SWAC activities are outlined in the [Framework for Co-operation](#), signed on 31 October 2006. In particular, the SWAC co-animates with the CILSS the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN). The network brings together West African policy makers and leading international agricultural experts from international organisations, specialised NGOs, producer groups and researchers. At the Ministerial Meeting the Ministers appointed Mr. Alhousseini Bretaudeau as new Executive Secretary of the CILSS. Mr. Bretaudeau is a Malian citizen and researcher of the Rural Polytechnic Institute (IPR) in Katibougou (Mali).

**Contact:** [jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org](mailto:jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org)

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### **3<sup>rd</sup> ECOWAS MINISTERIAL MEETING ON BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSECURITY**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> ECOWAS Ministerial meeting on biotechnology and biosecurity took place from 26 - 30 March 2007 in Accra (Ghana). Three Ministers per country (Agriculture, Environment and Science & Technology) attended the meeting to examine and adopt the ECOWAS Action Plans on biotechnology and biosecurity. The SWAC was invited to participate at the Ministerial meeting as an observer. The SWAC team has conducted a regional consultation process with West African actors and a regional analysis of the agricultural biotechnology experiences in West Africa, resulting in two publications: "[Agricultural biotechnology and the Transformation of West African Agriculture: Synthesis of the Regional Consultation with West African actors](#)" and "[Agricultural Biotechnology Experiences: What are the stakes for West Africa?](#)". Within the context of the meeting, Mr. Zoundi had the opportunity to further discuss with the new ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, Mr. Ousseini Salifou, joint ECOWAS-SWAC activities in the field of agriculture and rural development.

**Contacts:** [jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org](mailto:jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org) or [leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org](mailto:leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org)

## FOLLOW-UP ON UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN 2007 IN WEST AFRICA

Mr. Massaër Diallo, Head of the “Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security” Unit was invited to participate in the debate (Débat africain) on “Stakes, risks and challenges of the electoral year 2007 in West Africa” that was broadcast by Radio RFI on 11 March 2007. The debate is part of a series of regular meetings that the SWAC is holding with media representatives with regard to the numerous elections that will take place this year in West Africa. A detailed presentation on this initiative will soon be available on the SWAC website. [> listen/download the debate](#)

**Contact:** [massaer.diallo@oecd.org](mailto:massaer.diallo@oecd.org)

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## CULTURAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE EU & AFRICA

“Diversity makes the Difference – European Foreign Policy and Culture” was the topic of an European Public Conference, organised under the umbrella of the German EU Presidency in the Hague (the Netherlands) on 9 March 2007. The Conference brought together some 300 participants, aiming to launch a broad cultural and strategic debate across sectors and departments as well as across public and private, national and European boundaries. Mr. Raymond Weber, Head of the SWAC’s “Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives” Unit participated in the cultural debate with two presentations focusing on the cultural co-operation between the EU and Africa. Mr. Weber highlighted the need to further develop artistic and cultural exchanges between Africa and Europe. He also advocated strengthening the cultural dimension in development policies and international relations within the EU and its member countries, but also between the EU and African countries [> read the presentations](#)

**Contact:** [raymond.weber@oecd.org](mailto:raymond.weber@oecd.org)

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## SWAC WORK ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Lauzon participated in the second meeting of the Friends of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held on 27 March 2007 in Geneva, organised by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development. The meeting aimed at facilitating the preparation of the Global Forum that will take place in Brussels in July 2007. The SWAC encourages West African strategic thinking on migration and supports the ECOWAS Commission in the process of defining a joint approach by Members states on international migration. In 2006, the SWAC and ECOWAS co-produced a chapter of the [Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa](#) on “Migration” (5Mb) which presents the major West African migration dynamics. The SWAC also produced an analytical document entitled “[The Socio-Economic and Regional Context of West African Migration](#)”, reflecting West African perceptions of migration. The SWAC Deputy Director, Mr. Laurent Bossard, will participate in Dakar (Senegal) from 10 to 12 April 2007 in the first meeting of the West African experts group in charge of drafting a joint proposal that could serve as a basis for discussions at the ECOWAS Ministerial Meeting on Migration to be held in Bamako in May 2007.

**Contact:** [laurent.bossard@oecd.org](mailto:laurent.bossard@oecd.org)

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: REVIEW OF THE FOOD AID CHARTER OF THE SAHEL

The CILSS and the French Embassy in Burkina Faso have launched a request for proposal concerning the assessment and review of the Food Aid Charter of the Sahel. The Charter is a code of good conduct for streamlining food aid management in the Sahel, formally approved in 1990 by CILSS member countries and OECD donor countries. The review will assess the implementation of the Food Aid Charter in at least two of the following countries: Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, the Gambia. It will also examine previous assessments to provide a basis for the Charter’s revision. The working language is French only. Deadline for applications: 6 April 2007. [> learn more](#)

**Contact:** [jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org](mailto:jeansibiri.zoundi@oecd.org)

## PUBLICATIONS

### Rural Environment in West Africa

The SWAC produced, in collaboration with the FAO, a working document on the rural environment in West Africa. Agricultural activity remains the great consumer of land and resources in the rural environment, but generates increasingly fewer jobs. Communities and areas are diversifying in terms of land cover and economic activities; more people are attracted to urban/sub-urban and coastal areas hoping to find employment. This publication will soon be synthesized in a new chapter of the Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa. It examines the transformation of the rural environment and illustrates with numerous maps the issues linked to territorial coverage and management, production dynamics and reviving rural areas.

[> download the document \(French only\)](#)



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### Food Security Information Note, N°7, March 2007

This edition of the Food Security Information Note confirms the positive trend and overall satisfactory food situation of the 2006-2007 Agricultural Campaign. The Food Security Information Note provides a short overview of recent developments of the general agriculture and food situation in the Sahel and West Africa. It also presents key issues and proposes information sources and selected background documents. [> download the information note N°7](#)

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### Launch of the OECD Gender website

In commemoration of International Women's Day (8 March), the OECD launched a new website focusing on gender issues: [www.oecd.org/gender](http://www.oecd.org/gender). The SWAC will regularly contribute to OECD's work on gender, in particular by publishing the results of workshops, organised in collaboration with the West African Women's Group.

**Contact:** [gwenola.posseme-rageau@oecd.org](mailto:gwenola.posseme-rageau@oecd.org)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Food Crisis Prevention Network meeting, Paris, 5-6 April 2007

The Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the SWAC are co-organising a meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa (FCPN) at the OECD in Paris from 5 to 6 April 2006. About 40 agriculture and development experts from West Africa and OECD member countries will discuss and assess the nutrition and food situation of the 2006/07 Agricultural Campaign, with a view to taking appropriate measures, in particular, for the at-risk zones and vulnerable populations facing food insecurity. The official launching of the FCPN website ([www.food-security.net](http://www.food-security.net)) is foreseen within the context of the meeting at the press conference at the Foreign Press Centre (CAPE, Maison de Radio France) in Paris on April 6, at 3pm. [> learn more](#)

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**All publications can be downloaded from the SWAC website: [www.westafricaclub.org](http://www.westafricaclub.org)**  
**If you wish to receive a paper copy or the electronic version of this newsletter, please contact [julia.wanjiru@oecd.org](mailto:julia.wanjiru@oecd.org)**

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Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD  
Mailing Address: 2 rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France Tel: +33 (0) 1 4524 8200  
Visiting Address: Le Seine Saint-Germain, 4 bd des Iles, 92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux - France  
Phone: +33 (0)1 45 24 90 13 Fax: +33 (0)1 45 24 90 31  
Email: [normand.lauzon@oecd.org](mailto:normand.lauzon@oecd.org) / [www.westafricaclub.org](http://www.westafricaclub.org)

