

## SUMMARY REPORT

Strategy and Policy Group Meeting  
Saturday 2 July, 2005

Hôtel Marina, Cotonou – Benin



July 2005/Or. Fre.

Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD  
Le Seine Saint-Germain, 4 Boulevard des Îles  
92130 ISSY-LES-MOULINEAUX (France)  
Postal Address:  
2, rue André-Pascal  
75775 Paris Cedex 16  
Tel.: +33 (0) 1 45 24 89 87  
Fax: +33 (0) 1 45 24 90 31  
[www.oecd.org/sah](http://www.oecd.org/sah)





<b>Contents</b>
-----------------

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>I. PRESENTATIONS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1. <i>The Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC)</i> .....	2
2. <i>ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance</i> .....	3
3. <i>The Forum of Political Parties, the Media, and Civil Society</i> .....	3
<b>II. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>DOCUMENTS MADE AVAILABLE TO DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS DURING THE MEETING</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE SPG MEETING (JULY 2005- COTONOU- BENIN)</b> .....	<b>10</b>



## INTRODUCTION

---

For the first time in the Club's history, the **Sahel and West Africa Club's (SWAC) Strategy and Policy Group (SPG)** met in Africa in Cotonou, Benin. As requested by the Club's development partners, this meeting's objective was to have an exchange of views on themes of common interest, notably on the *Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa* which had just taken place, putting aside administrative and budgetary issues for the autumn meeting. SPG Members had been invited to participate at this Forum's restitution session as well as at the closing ceremony, as observers.

The SPG meeting was introduced by Mrs. Thérèse Pujolle, the Club's President, Mr. Normand Lauzon, Director of the SWAC, Mrs. Sunhilt Schumacher, the SWAC's Deputy Director, and Mr. Massaër Diallo, Head of the Governance, Conflict Dynamics Peace and Security Unit. Mr. John Igue, President of the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa and its Executive Secretary, Mr. Boubacar Bâ, were invited to intervene as partners in the Forum's organisation. Twelve representatives<sup>1</sup> from eight countries participated at this meeting.

As most of those representing the Club's donor countries were posted in the region and were participating at the Club's SPG meeting for the first time, it was considered necessary to briefly summarise the SWAC's orientations before presenting the broad lines of work emerging from the Forum and responding to questions.

The meeting was organised around three themes:

- 1. The Sahel and West Africa Club;**
- 2. ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance;**
- 3. The synthesis of the work undertaken at the Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society in West Africa.**

Each presentation was followed by an exchange of views with the development partners of which a summary is presented in Part II of this document.

---

<sup>1</sup> List of participants attached.

## I. PRESENTATIONS

---

### 1. *The Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC)*

The Director, Mr. Norman Lauzon, made a brief presentation of the Sahel and West Africa Club.

- He reaffirmed the idea that an interdependence and interaction between different local, national, regional and continental levels exists;
- He underscored the importance of the Club's close partnership established with ECOWAS, without neglecting the relationships with other partners like the CILSS, the WAEMU or ROPPA;
- He indicated that one of the Club's constant concerns was to ascertain that its initiatives and actions complement those of the development partners;
- He insisted on the regional approach to the Club's work.

Presenting the SWAC's four main areas of concentration, Mrs. Sunhilt Schumacher reiterated that these were only frameworks which enable the Club to evolve in function of the demands expressed by regional and development partners.

The four areas of concentration are:

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

Within these areas of concentration, there are a certain number of initiatives underway:

- Within the framework of their partnership, the ECOWAS and SWAC Secretariats have decided to launch a strategic thinking initiative oriented towards *West African Regional Development Perspectives and ECOWAS' role*. Accordingly, the Secretariats organised a symposium in Abuja within the framework of ECOWAS' 30th anniversary bringing together people representative of West African society. Among the issues at the heart of the concerns expressed at this meeting were: the future of youth and migration; agricultural transformation; food security; strengthening the regional market, among others. A summary record is being prepared and will be sent to SPG members at the beginning of September.
- In order to help better understand West Africa's regional dimension, the SWAC has just published with ECOWAS a *Regional Atlas on Transportation and Telecommunications* and will soon produce a *Comprehensive Atlas on Regional Integration*. Representatives present received the first edition of the Regional Atlas on Transportation and Telecommunications. All these documents will soon be available on the website: <http://www.afriquefrontieres.org>.
- At ECOWAS' request, the SWAC is involved with the promotion of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, currently ratified by only nine States in the region.

## 2. *ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance*

- Mr. Massaër Diallo, Head of the SWAC's Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security Unit gave a brief historic overview. In 1998, ECOWAS member States decided to set up ECOMOG, a permanent military cooperation structure. One year later, following various peace keeping operations by the regional body in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, member States decided to create a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. This Mechanism deals specifically with addressing conflicts and other types of causes. In 2001 in Dakar, with a view to strengthening this legal framework, the States decided to add a supplementary protocol enabling the taking into account of the deep-seated political causes of conflicts, instability and insecurity and providing the region and its actors a consensual and converging legal framework. Hence the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance which aims to strengthen peace, democracy and stability in the region.
- The Protocol is composed of 50 articles organised in 3 Chapters. It focuses notably on the convergence of the member States' Constitutions from which the "**Common constitutional principles**" are deduced. The Protocol sets out the respect for freedom and civic and political rights. It raises the issue of the separation of military and civic power. It sets out all of the principles on the States' secularism. It emphasises the importance of poverty reduction. The Protocol calls for member States to eliminate all prejudicial, degrading and discriminatory practices towards women, children and the youth.
- At ECOWAS' request, the Sahel and West Africa Club is involved in the promotion and dissemination of the Protocol which today has been ratified by 9 States enabling it to enter into force. In the coming months, the SWAC with ECOWAS will launch an advocacy initiative for the Protocol's implementation.
- Mr. Massaër Diallo concluded that the Forum significantly helped promote ECOWAS' Supplementary Protocol of which the broad lines were presented by General Diarra, ECOWAS' Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence and Security. A copy of the complete text and a presentation note (see Annex) were distributed to each participant. Finally, one of the recommendations set out in the Forum's Final Declaration focuses on its ratification and implementation.

## 3. *The Forum of Political Parties, the Media, and Civil Society*

- The SPG meeting took place directly after the *Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society*. The Forum was organised by the Sahel and West Africa Club in partnership with the Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa, from 28 July to 1 July 2005 in Cotonou. This Forum was endorsed by Presidents Alpha Oumar Konaré President of the African Union Commission and President Mamadou Tandja, President of Niger and current President of ECOWAS. One of the Forum's main objectives was to facilitate dialogue at the regional level between three groups of actors (political parties, the media and civil society) through their decompartmentalisation.
- This Forum was a significant event for the region. It was the first time that three types of actors were brought together from 18 West African countries in order to initiate a dialogue and exchange of views on their experiences on the strengthening of democracy and the building of peace.

This Forum was also consistent with the partnership approach set up by the Sahel and West Africa Club more than a year ago with ECOWAS, who actively participated in the Forum's work.

- Mr. Massaër Diallo clarified the selection process which the Sahel and West Africa Club followed in order to limit the number of participants with the overall concern of inviting the most representative groups in the region, being aware for example that there are over 900 political parties in West Africa. The exactitude of the criteria enabled a very balanced selection. From each country there were two representatives from the first two incumbent political parties and two from the top-leading opposition parties (four people in total); four representatives of civil society coming from women's leadership, youth, union or employers organisations and NGOs, and/or an opinion leader. Among the organisations invited, there was one representative from the traditional chieftainship of Côte d'Ivoire as well as a representative of employers from Cameroon. Concerning the media, two representatives were invited: one from the public media and one from an independent media or close to the opposition.
- The Forum was introduced by the respective interventions of Professor Bathily, ECOWAS Parliamentary, on the state of democracy in West Africa and General Diarra of ECOWAS on the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. This Forum achieved several objectives: decompartmentalising actors and initiating dialogue, raising awareness of the Supplementary Protocol.
- The debates took place in plenary sessions and in workshops (two workshops on political parties, two on civil society and one on the media) on the basis of several interventions focusing on the role and responsibilities of political parties, the media and civil society in the building of peace and strengthening of democracy (see Annex).

Several essential points emerged:

- **Workshop on political parties:** representatives concentrated on the way to improve the conditions of the democratic process and sought to examine whether democracy as practiced in western countries was applicable as such in Africa. They also concentrated on other forms of democracy practiced in traditional Africa and explored ways in which to adapt them within the current context.
- **Workshop on civil society:** representatives emphasised the great number of initiatives within each country, which should lead to the reorganisation of these initiatives. They insisted on the importance of developing the spirit of citizenship notably through civic education. They reaffirmed the need to use national languages in order to attain a more significant population base and get messages across.
- **Workshop on the media:** It has been recommended to set up regulatory bodies at the national as well as regional levels. There were long discussions on training journalists and the need to be familiar with the ethical rules. Media representatives also reaffirmed the need to remain attentive to the defence of freedom of the press.
- The frank and direct exchanges during the plenary sessions and the workshop resulted in the adoption of a Final Declaration, a consensual text between different actors present at the Forum (see Annex). Among the proposals retained: the Forum's sustainability, the organisation of a similar forum at the national level, the promotion of recommendations contained in

the Final Declaration to Heads of State of ECOWAS, Cameroon, Mauritania and Chad for follow-up and application.

- The Final Declaration adopted in the plenary session was read at the Forum's closing ceremony. The Final Declaration lays down certain principles notably on the inviolability of Constitutions, civil society's vital role, the separation of functions between Heads of parties and Heads of State, and the freedom to work as a journalist within a free and open environment.
- Although it is too soon to make an assessment of the Forum, the first reactions received from participants at the Forum were very positive. The participants expressed the opinion that the Forum went much beyond their expectations. Several countries decided to explore the possibility of organising such a forum at the national level, which is already the case in Mauritania. The SWAC was satisfied and stated that a dynamic has emerged that would enable the Forum to be appropriated by the actors themselves, responding thus to the demands of appropriation expressed by participants and the Strategic Watch Club.
- A certain number of actions and initiatives were launched within the framework of the Forum. Among them:
  - Restitution at the national level of the Forum's work and the Final Declaration by various actors present;
  - Organisation at the national level of a similar forum;
  - Promotion at the regional level of this approach aiming to decompartmentalise the various actors within society;
  - Wide dissemination of the Final Declaration for its follow-up and application;
  - Sustainability of the Forum through its appropriation by various West African actors; the forms and ways in which the SWAC could be involved as a partner remain to be clarified.
- The Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa was invited to make a presentation of its activities. It has been asked to mediate in Togo, where during the Forum, members of the Strategic Watch Club went with political representatives to meet with President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe. This Club should also play a role in Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia where representatives of these countries have expressed the desire to meet with them. Furthermore, the President of the Strategic Watch Club, Mr. John Igué, announced that his organisation now has an Executive Secretary, Mr. Boubacar Bâ, which will enable them to be more operational.

## II. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

---

Ambassadors or their representatives participating at the SPG meeting reaffirmed the importance of a structure such as the Sahel and West Africa Club in order to, informally, have an exchange views and to fuel strategic thinking on the region. They had several opportunities throughout the morning to ask questions and make comments. A summary follows:

▪ **Promoting national languages:**

- *Could the promotion of national languages given high priority during this Forum and set out again in the Final Declaration be a source of tensions within countries where many languages are spoken, as in Benin, for example?*

The SWAC insisted on the need to use national languages as a communications vehicle, without making a choice to use one language over another. It was observed at the political level that it was essential to use these languages in order to reach all of the electoral bodies in a country. It was emphasised that it was essential for Constitutions to be understood by everyone. Some countries have already taken initiatives in this respect. Finally, using and promoting local languages must be a means to move decentralisation forward.

▪ **Regional organisations:**

- *Certain representatives asked that the SWAC explain its decidedly regional approach and to give an update on its relationship with ECOWAS.*

While recognising the necessary complementarity between the local, national and regional levels, the Club reaffirmed its regional approach to its activities. It was explained that there were many horizontal issues which could be dealt with at the regional level: transportation, telecommunications, cross-border cooperation, the management of regional public goods, food security, locusts, etc. It was recognised that regional organisations in Africa as in western countries have difficulties due to administrative red tape. Nevertheless, the SWAC hoped that the partnership developed with ECOWAS would contribute to supporting ECOWAS in its strategic thinking on its role in the region and its relationship with its partners. The Club also emphasised that other existing regional non-institutional organisations like ROPPA or the MDP needed to be supported.

The SWAC underscored that the Forum was an important event for ECOWAS. It enabled ECOWAS to meet for the first time with actors representing three significant segments of West African society who asked questions and asked ECOWAS to be accountable. Furthermore, ECOWAS participated financially in this Forum which is an encouraging sign for this organisation's future.

The SWAC announced that it is going to launch other initiatives with ECOWAS such as the creation of an internet site on West Africa which would include Mauritania, Chad and Cameroon.

▪ **Commission for Africa:**

- *Has the SWAC been involved with the work of Prime Minister Tony Blair's Commission for Africa and in what way?*

The SWAC explained that it was involved in the consultation process and that it had provided comments to the Commission but had not participated directly in the drafting of the document.

The SWAC had then insisted on the need to give a more contrasted and balanced image of Africa, giving high priority to the changes and progress made on the continent over the last 30 years as well as the strategic interest Africa represents for developed countries.

▪ **Follow-up to the Forum:**

- *How will the SWAC follow-up this initiative?*

It is useful to recall that the Forum has asked that the SWAC ensure the sustainability of this initiative. The SWAC indicated that it must examine the lessons learned from the organisation of such an event before being able to respond to this question. Nevertheless, the Club was pleased to note that it had played a facilitating and promoting role and that the participants at the Forum wished to take on this initiative and follow it up at the national and regional levels. The SWAC proposed to contribute intellectually if necessary and to further participate according to the forms and modalities which remain to be clarified.

The SWAC stated that it had used 75 000€ from its core budget to finance this event and that it was going to slow down other of the Club's activities. Under these conditions, the Club could not commit to participating financially in the short-term to a new event such as this.

▪ **Medium- and Long-term Development Perspectives:**

- The SWAC stated that, as regards development, donors are always very impatient to see the results of their contributions, having to be accountable to their taxpayers in their country. While recognising the crucial need to produce results over the short-term, the SWAC underscored that its role is however to facilitate strategic thinking with a view towards concrete decision-making for development in the region over the medium-term.

## CONCLUSION

---

- The Club's President and the SWAC's Director thanked the representatives for agreeing to participate at this first SPG meeting in Africa. It enabled a certain number of SPG members to examine Africa's situation in situ and for the Club to meet representatives of SPG members posted in the region.
- This meeting enabled a substantive exchange of views on subjects of interest for the region and development partners without having to deal with budgetary and administrative considerations.
- Another thematic meeting such as this will take place in Spring 2006 in West Africa as has been requested by SPG members at its November 2004 meeting. The modalities will be defined at the next meeting in Paris in November 2005, exact date still to be confirmed.

## DOCUMENTS MADE AVAILABLE TO DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS DURING THE MEETING

---

- ✓ Sahel and West Africa Club Presentation Note
- ✓ Information Note on the *Forum of Political Parties, the Media and Civil Society*
- ✓ Forum's Agenda
- ✓ Thematic Interventions presented at the Forum:
  - "Role and Responsibilities of Political Parties in the Building of Democracy and Peace in West Africa", Massaër Diallo, SWAC
  - "Place and Role of Civil Society in the Building of Democracy and Peace", John Igué, Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa
  - "The Media, conflict, Peace and Democracy in West Africa", Chérif Elvalide Sèye, Strategic Watch Club for Peace in West Africa
- ✓ Presentation Note on the "Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance", SWAC
- ✓ "Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good governance", ECOWAS
- ✓ Regional Atlas on Transportation and Telecommunications in West Africa
- ✓ Synthesis Document on the *Review of retrospective and prospective studies on West Africa* (May 2005)
- ✓ "The Desert Locust Outbreak in West and North Africa", Assessment of the situation, conclusions of the 30 September meeting and future perspectives (October 2004)
- ✓ Presentation Note on "Land, Agricultural Change and Conflict in West Africa: Regional issues from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire" – Outline for Phase I: Historical Overview (March 2005)
- ✓ Information Note No. 6: "Land, Agricultural Change and Conflict in West Africa: Historical review to contribute to future debate and action"
- ✓ Border Diaries No. 2
- ✓ "Security and Insecurity: West African States", Antoine Raogo Sawadogo, SWAC

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE SPG MEETING (JULY 2005- COTONOU- BENIN)**

(12 participants representing 8 countries)

Participant	Country	Title	Organisation
Mrs. Barbara KONZET	Austria	Attachée to the Embassy of Austria in Abidjan	Embassy
Mrs. Micheline DOFFAGNE	Belgium		Ministry of Cooperation and Development
Mrs. Edith GOUIN	Canada	Development Representative for West and Central Africa	Canadian International Development Agency
Mrs. Thérèse PUJOLLE	France	President of the Sahel and West Africa Club	SWAC
M. Francis DEFRANOUS	France	Counsellor	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris
Dr. Peter PIECK	Germany	Regionalgruppe Sahel/ Westafrika	GTZ
Mrs. Reiko KAWAMURA	Japan	Counsellor	Permanent Delegation of Japan to the OECD
Mr. Toshiro TAKAHARA	Japan		JICA, Benin
Mr. Bram VAN OJIK,	The Netherlands	Ambassador	Embassy of The Netherlands in Benin
Mr. Massaer DIALLO	SWAC	Head of the Governance Unit	OECD
Mrs. Donata GNISCI	SWAC	Political Scientist	OECD
Mrs Gwéniola POSSÉMÉ-RAGEAU	SWAC	Strategic Planning and External Relations Advisor	OECD
Mr. Normand LAUZON	SWAC	Director	OECD
Mrs. Sunhilt SCHUMACHER	SWAC	Deputy Director	OECD
Mr. Franck IGUÉ	SWAC	Head of Communications	OECD
Mrs Soura DIOP	SWAC		
Mrs. Jamila YAHI	SWAC		
Mrs. Gabriella LUTHY	SWAC		