

WEST AFRICA OBSERVER

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- Land deals:
Are win-win partnerships possible?
- West Africa, one year after the crisis
- Food security: back on the political agenda
- Climate change: African disillusion
- Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Niger:
on the search for political stability



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The Sahel and West Africa Club

The OECD has considerably deepened its relationship with Africa. The OECD's policy dialogue is also developing at a regional level, in particular through the work of the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) which plays a bridging role between West African actors and OECD member countries. The SWAC is led by a Secretariat based in Paris, which is supported by a network of partners and experts from West Africa and OECD countries.

Its specificity lies in its approach, which combines direct field-involvement with analyses of West African realities. Together with regional institutions, governments, business and civil society organisations, the SWAC promotes the regional dimension of development, supports the formulation and implementation of joint or intergovernmental policies and thereby contributes to mobilising and strengthening West African capacities.

Editorial

The shocking images of the massacre of 28 September in Conakry will remain etched in West Africa's collective memory. It demonstrates that the repression of democracy can result in consequences of the worst kind. However, there are reasons for hope.



by Laurent Bossard,
SWAC Director a. i.

Beyond the victimisation and international condemnation, African mediation and political pressure now play a key role in reconciliation, although—of course—neither can solve everything. The increasing isolation of Niger, as admitted to by its authors, played an important role in the coup that ousted President Tandja. It is becoming increasingly difficult for a West African government to remain isolated from the African Community (African Union) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

If in 2009, West Africa had reason to worry about issues of governance and peace, it is worth remembering that a decade ago conflict in Sierra Leone and Liberia churned out images of horror on a daily basis (claiming the lives of nearly half a million people), Côte d'Ivoire had plunged into civil war; and a new rebellion broke out in Chad. Our vigilance and resolve aside, it remains important to remember the progress already made on the path to peace and stability.

Another reason for hope lies with the economy: one year after the global economic crisis, West Africa has seemed to fare better than expected. Much of this is due to the proactive crisis management by the UEMOA and Nigerian central banks, through their monetary policies and other counter-cyclical measures. One must also note the collective failure to predict the events that unfolded. Preliminary forecasts showed that Africa would not be affected by the financial tsunami and its collateral damage. A few weeks later the disaster seemed inevitable. In the end, the "crisis" is probably what Nassim Nicholas Taleb, a philosopher of chance and uncertainty, would call a "black swan"—an event that is unpredictable by design, but to which "human nature makes us concoct explanations for its occurrence after the fact, making it explainable and predictable."¹

Is the evolution of climate in West Africa another case of black swan syndrome? The fact is that long-term rainfall forecasts in West Africa (particularly in the Sahel), reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), indicate very contradictory trends, depending on the models used. It is impossible to know. Beyond Africa's disappointment at the Copenhagen Summit, the region's biggest challenge remains the familiar task of managing uncertainty.

Despite a fairly good harvest, the eastern Sahel could experience a food crisis in 2010. Prices are too high for the poorest fringe of the population who remain excluded from the market. Although considerable progress has been made during the last decade, nearly 10% of children under the age of five (30% in the Sahelian countries) are affected by chronic malnutrition.

Food security is back on the political agenda and is attracting international attention due to fears raised by sustained inflation in food prices and setbacks in the battle against hunger, but also because of concerns related to foreign land investments that have been largely covered in the media as of late. We constantly hear of foreign investment in thousands or hundreds of thousands of hectares; of massive food production projects, all destined for export, in countries that are regularly threatened by hunger.

Who would have thought, even a few years ago, that Africa - "the continent of hunger" - would be courted for its farmland? Is this another black swan? In any case, the topic is on the table and should be treated with caution and pragmatism. Denouncing "predatory multinationals" is necessary, but it is not sufficient. "Land investment can be beneficial if properly negotiated", as highlighted by some agricultural producers' associations; others advocate a more protectionist position: "The land must be preserved for future generations." What remains essential is to engage in the debate.

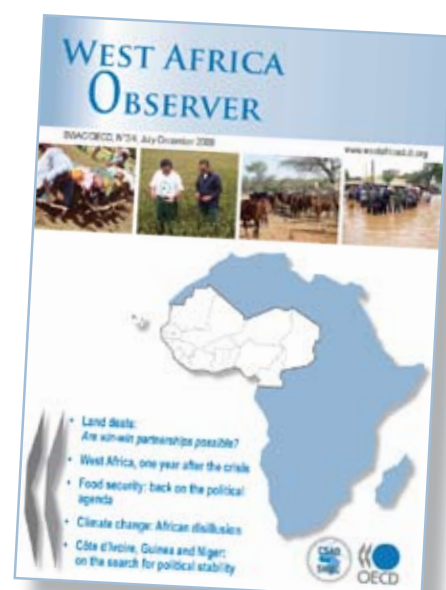
The West Africa Observer

Easy and quick access to key information on major political, economic and social trends in West Africa analysed from a regional point of view.

This issue is a double issue, mainly covering the period between July and December 2009. It also builds on information sources that were published in January and February 2010.

In 2010, the West Africa Observer opens its columns to African journalists and experts of the region who are invited to contribute to special focus issues.

We would also like to publish readers' views and invite you to send your comments to: julia.wanjiru@oecd.org



¹ *The Black Swan: The impact of the highly improbable*, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, 2007

Land deals

Plenty of information, yet reliable data is scarce

Not a week goes by without one seeing new media reports or studies on land acquisitions and related issues around the world.¹ Increased international interest in land has attracted large media attention and research worldwide. Nonetheless it remains difficult to obtain a realistic and reliable overview of land deals in West Africa. “Primary and secondary data on land acquisitions in Africa is scarce and of limited reliability”², confirms the first IIED/IFAD/FAO in-depth study on land acquisitions in Africa.

International attention has focused mainly on large-scale land transactions (> 1 000 ha) between international investors and host country governments. These transactions raise concerns about food security, transparency of negotiation processes, environmental sustainability and the protection of local rights, interests and livelihoods. However, a SNV study conducted in five West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Niger) revealed that plots larger than 1 000 ha are uncommon and are limited mainly to specific locations in Ghana and Mali.

Foreign investment in land has increased over the past five years but the share of land under foreign control in West Africa remains comparatively small. Land leases are more prevalent than land acquisitions in Africa. Though media tends to focus on China, the Gulf States and other “new actors” on the African continent, European investors remain just as active among the main investors.

1 Select Bibliography of press cuttings on biofuels, land rights in Africa and global land grabbing, by Robin Palmer Mokoro Ltd, 31 December 2009.
2 Land grabs or development opportunity? IIED/IFAD/FAO, June 2009.

Useful links

International Land Coalition: <http://www.landcoalition.org>

“Commercial Pressures on Land” is one of the International Land Coalition’s global initiatives aiming to promote a wide collaboration between civil society organisations, intergovernmental organisations and research based institutes. The website provides access to a large document database including analytical studies, briefing notes, policy papers, laws and many other resources. It also links to a dedicated blog to further discuss land acquisition issues.

FAO Land Tenure website: <http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/lt-home/en>

This website offers access to various FAO publications, studies, policy series, notes, guidelines and various other information sources on land tenure and related issues.

LandNet: <http://www.landnetwa.org>

This regional West African land network is specialised in land issues at the national and regional levels. LandNet is represented by four national member organisations (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Togo) and by individual members in more than 10 West African countries.

The Hub Rural: <http://www.hubrural.org>

The Hub’s goal is to assist West and Central African stakeholders (states, inter-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and development partners) to promote coherence in rural development programmes worldwide.



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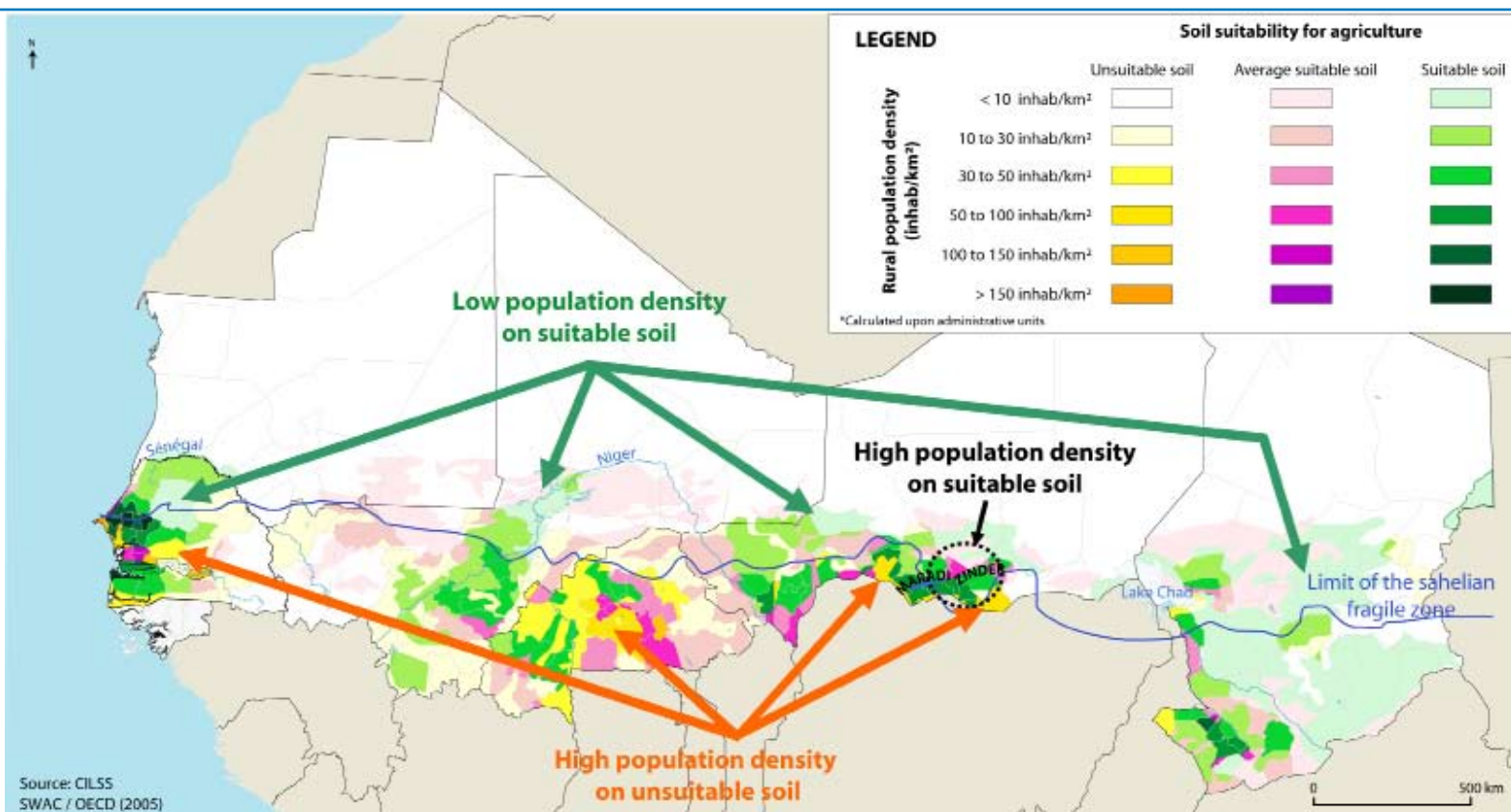
In contrast local populations throughout West Africa, including small family farms and local communities, are much more concerned about the ever-growing number of small and medium-size land transactions (100 ha – 1000 ha). Though these transactions sometimes involve foreign investors, they are concluded predominately between domestic or inter-continental investors and government authorities.

These investments sometimes result in purchased but uncultivated land, as properties are bought on speculation. It is even more difficult to quantify the scale of these land transactions at the local and national levels. The key role that domestic investors play in West Africa has received relatively little international attention. A region-wide monitoring system to capture and analyse data on small and medium-size land transfers could help shed more light on this issue.

Some examples of large-scale land deals announced in the media

Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 400 000 ha, leased by ScanFuel Africa Ltd, a Norwegian company (since 2007); ⇒ 23 700 ha, leased by BioFuel Africa, a Norwegian company, cultivating jatropha for biofuel production (since 2005); ⇒ Ghana signed a USD 40 million deal with a Brazilian company that will help the country to expand its shea nut production by constructing a processing factory (July 2009).
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 220 000 ha, Sime Darby, a multinational company based in Malaysia (2009); according to UN sources, Sime Darby recently signed a USD 800 million deal to take over the management of the Guthrie rubber and palm oil plantations. ⇒ 200 000 ha, Libya Africa Investment Portfolio, a Libyan company (since 2007).
Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 100 000 ha, MALIBYA, a Libyan company, rice plantations in the “Office du Niger” zone, at Macina in the Ségou region, July 2009.
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 233 000 ha, attributed by the Rural Council of Mbane to various private investors from Belgium and the UK (since 2002).

Sources: <http://www.hubrural.org>, <http://farmlandgrab.org>, <http://www.commodafrica.com>



Map: Regional Atlas on West Africa, chapter on "Ecologically Vulnerable Zone of Sahelian Countries", April 2006.

Abundant land?

Investors often perceive Africa as a large reserve of fertile unused land for the future (in comparison to Asia, in particular). They are also attracted by relatively cheap prices and favorable climate conditions.

The perception that land is abundant is not widely shared by West Africa's local actors (see ROPPA statement, page 10). Large tracks of land in West Africa, particularly in the Sahel, are non-arable (see table and map). Investors are mainly interested in the most fertile sections which are already being used or claimed by local actors. According to the International Land Coalition (ILC), "[Virtually no large-scale land allocations can take place without displacing or affecting local populations](#)".¹

Land availability also needs to be analysed against the background of a rapidly growing population. According to UN sources, the West African population increases some 6.6 million people per year.

Moreover, land is much more than a commercial good that can be traded on the world market. It is a socially and politically sensitive issue lying at the heart of African societies. "[Land is the most valuable resource of African countries](#)"², recall UEMOA member states at a meeting on land tenure in October 2009. Access to land needs to be guaranteed to ensure the livelihoods of the rural population.

Country	Total land area (m²)	Arable land (%)
Benin	112 622	23.5
Burkina Faso	274 200	17.7
Cameroon	475 440	12.5
Cape Verde	4 033	11.4
Chad	1 284 000	2.8
Côte d'Ivoire	322 463	10.2
The Gambia	11 295	27.9
Ghana	238 533	17.5
Guinea	245 857	4.5
Guinea-Bissau	36 125	8.3
Liberia	111 369	3.4
Mali	1 240 192	3.7
Mauritania	1 030 700	0.2
Niger	1 267 000	11.4
Nigeria	923 768	33.0
Senegal	196 722	12.5
Sierra Leone	71 740	7.9
Togo	56 785	44.2

Source: CIA, The World Factbook, 2010

¹ *Increasing commercial pressure on land: building a co-ordinated response*, discussion paper, Michael Taylor and Tim Bending, ILC Secretariat, July 2009, section on ten myths concerning pressures on land.

² Regional validation workshop on the study: « *La question foncière rurale face aux défis de l'intégration régionale dans l'espace UEMOA* », Dakar, 27-29 October 2009.

Complexity of land tenure systems

As in many other African countries, the land tenure situation in West African states is very complex. Informal/customary land rights based on tradition, culture and religion co-exist with modern property rights. Solving intricate land disputes often involves negotiation between diverse groups with very different legal and normative systems, including traditional chiefs, religious leaders, local authorities and government administrations.

Many West African states began establishing land legislation in the early 1990s in order to improve land management and transparency. However, the gap between theory and practice remains quite large. Some countries do have quite progressive, modern land legislations but struggle to implement them properly.

Tenure security in rural areas remains precarious. In many countries, the state can expropriate local land users for “public purposes”. In the absence of formal property rights, land owners cannot claim compensation when land is expropriated.

For further reading

- *Land policy development in an African context, lessons learned from selected experiences* (Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Sudan), Paul de Wit and al., FAO, October 2009.
- *Gouvernance foncière et des ressources naturelles, État des lieux en Afrique de l'Ouest*, Adam Kandine, FAO, November 2008.
- *La question foncière rurale face aux défis de l'intégration régionale dans l'espace UEMOA*, World Bank & UEMOA, Hubert Ouédraogo, August 2009.

Similar problems are related to nomadic pastoral land use which is common in the Sahel. “At present, the land used for transhumance does not belong to anybody. As a result, investors can buy it without livestock farmers being able to stop them. While a crop farmer can at least claim customary rights, a herdsman has none”¹, notes Prof. Alhousseini Bretaudeau, CILSS Executive Secretary.

Land policy reforms, currently underway in many West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, etc.) aim to respond to these challenges. “It is a grave mistake to pretend that somehow a new policy can be started from scratch, starting with the slate wiped clean. [...] How can widespread customary systems of land management be integrated into the formal structure of a modern nation state?”² There is growing recognition that land laws must build on local practices and thus involve the participation of local communities and concerned populations.

¹ SWAC newsletter, December 2009, www.oecd.org/swac/newsletter

² *Land policy development in an African context*, FAO, October 2009, page 4

Participative and inclusive approaches

Examples of recent initiatives to secure land tenure and improve transparency in land management, building on participative and inclusive approaches:

- **In Benin**, a “*Land Policy White Paper*” (« *Livre blanc de politique foncière* ») was validated at a workshop from 27-28 October 2009, including the participation of media professionals. The initiative, aims to “*ensure a secure access to land through an efficient land administration in order to facilitate investment and the creation of a real estate market using land as an asset convertible to cash*”. Among others, it proposes the setting-up of a land management information system: <http://www.mcabenin.bj/en/project/land>.
- **In Burkina Faso**, since the inception of the “*Agrarian and land reorganisation*” (RAF) in 1996, a dual system of legally defined state monopoly over rural land, combined with a legally recognized land management role for customary land owners has been put in place. Within the context of the land reform, a large consultation process has been conducted over the past two years. About 70 workshops involving civil society were organised across the country which led to the adoption by the parliament of a law on “*Rural land tenure*” in June 2009.



Draft overview of land laws and land tenure policies in West Africa countries

	Land laws	Land tenure policies
Benin	"Loi 2007-03" on rural land system based on customary system; the right for establishment and land property titles; 30 January 2007.	"White paper on land policy", validated in October 2009; recommends the elaboration of a land and property code; the decentralization of property services and the creation of a National Agency for Property and Land.
Burkina Faso	"Loi n°34-2009" on rural land tenure, 16 June 2009.	Policy to improve land tenure security in rural areas (Decree n°2007-610), 4 October 2007.
Cameroon	"Décret 2005/481" on decentralization, 16 December 2005.	Decentralization of the land entitlement procedures at the department level.
Cape Verde	External Investment Law (1993).	
Chad	"Loi n°24" on land property and customary law, 22 July 1967.	
Côte d'Ivoire	"Loi n°98-750" on rural land system, 23 December 1998.	Land Commissions within the framework of the Rural Land Plan (Plan Foncier Rural, PFR).
The Gambia		A Commission for law reform was established in 1983 by Act of Parliament n°3.
Ghana	In December 2008, a new act was approved by presidential decree to establish a Land Commission (Act 767, 2008); it integrates public services dealing with land issues under the auspices of the Commission and secure fertile land and potential new land resources.	"Land Administration Project"(LAP) to implement the National Land Policy document launched in June 1999.
Guinea	Décret D/2001/037/PRG/SGG", declaration of land policy in the rural sector; Land and Property Code defined by "Ordonnance 0/92/019, 30 March 1992.	
Guinea-Bissau	Land law of 1990, building on colonial law of 1961; "loi n° 5-98", 23 April 1998.	
Liberia	In 2009, an Act was signed establishing a Land Commission.	The tenure system is based on traditional customary law.
Mali	The "Ordonnance n°00-027- P-RM", 22 March 2000, ratified and modified by the "Loi n°02-08", 12 February 2002, taking into account decentralization.	Land Commissions are planned by the Outline Agricultural Act (LOA). In December 2009, a consultative process was organised to establish a democratic administration of land and property; its objective is to put in place a consensual system based on peaceful coexistence of modern and customary laws.
Mauritania	"Ordonnance n° 83-127" on land and property reorganisation, 5 June 2005.	
Niger	"Loi organique n° 2004-50", defining the organization and competences of the judiciary branch (Art. 55- 58), 22 July 2004.	Decentralised system of land administration (Loi sur les Principes d'Orientation du Code Rural de 1993) and creation of specialized judiciary institutions over land (tribunaux du foncier rural).
Nigeria	Land Use Act, Chapter 202 (1990).	Federal Land Information System (FELIS).
Senegal	"Loi n° 64-46" on national domain registry, 17 June 1964; "Décret n°96_1134" on decentralization, 27 December 1996.	The presidential "Décret n°2005-414", 19 May 2005, established a Commission in charge of preparing a land law reform; it does not involve the participation of local communities.
Sierra Leone	Local Government Act (LGA) n°1, 2004.	The LGA provides local committees with control over the Public Treasure.
Togo	"Ordonnance n° 12" on agricultural and property reform, 6 February 1974; "Loi 98-006" on decentralization, du 11 February 1998.	Half of the land belongs to private land owners; the other half belongs to the State.

Sources:

- *Gouvernance foncière et des ressources naturelles. État des lieux en Afrique de l'Ouest*, FAO, Adam Kandine, FAO, November 2008.
- *La question foncière rurale face aux défis de l'intégration régionale dans l'espace UEMOA*, World Bank, UEMOA, Hubert Ouédraogo, August 2009.
- *Land reform processes in West Africa*, a review, SWAC, August 2006, SAH/D(2006)560.
- <http://www.droit-africain.com>

Local perceptions: uncertainty and fear prevail

Lack of information and land tenure insecurity are the key issues that are raising local concerns related to land deals in West Africa. People usually discover in the news when a major land deal has already been concluded between an investor and the government. In the absence of clear, well defined legal frameworks and weak implementation capacity, negotiation processes often lack transparency. They rarely involve the participation of local communities. In the public mind, foreign investments in land are mainly perceived as threat to rural people's livelihoods. It is thus not surprising that such land deals provoke fears and sometimes hostile feelings among the concerned local populations.

BENIN



Aline A. Assankpon, editor for West and Central Africa of the pan-African magazine Continental

"Multinationals always choose the best land and then, as soon as it becomes impoverished, move on to other arable areas. Without wanting to sound pessimistic, you could say that the state and investors will gain in terms of the spin-offs, whereas the rural population, including land owners, will be the big losers in this venture."

Bio Séidou Baguiri, Director, Access to Land project, MCA-Benin

"The Rural Land Tenure Act has been making breakthroughs: there are now rules governing land acquired for profit. If such land has not been farmed for ten years, the State is authorized to expropriate and make it available to people willing to farm. It must be said that what we are seeing here is land speculation. Landless farmers are the poorest farmers of all. Some of the new provisions provide scope to manage and alleviate this commercial pressure."

BURKINA FASO



Larlé Naaba Tigré, Minister of the Moogho Naaba (Emperor), Member of the National Assembly, Chair of the association Belem Wend Tiga

"In the countryside, there are no boundary marks around the fields and no property deeds; a field will have been passed down from parents and grandparents and, every year, there are people who take over a few metres of their neighbour's land, causing disputes."



Michel Bolouvi, journalist, correspondent for the pan-African magazine Continental

"A new category of land owners has emerged, or is emerging. They are wealthy town-dwellers who, for a sack of rice or salt, or a few banknotes, will dispossess the traditional owners of vast stretches of land. This is a new development which, if we are not careful, will create a population of landless farmers in years to come."

CAMEROON



Charles Ngah Nforgang, journalist with the press agency JADE CAMEROUN, Central African Bureau of Syfia International

"Land is being sold without the involvement of the community or civil society. This makes it hard to indicate with any accuracy, as of today, the acreage of land that has already been sold to foreigners, or the nationality of the purchasers."



Bernard Njonga, agricultural engineer and Chair of the Association for the Protection of Community Interests (ACDIC)

"In our Association for the Protection of Community Interests, we are concerned about the discretion surrounding this matter. People in the community are not being informed. They derive no benefit whatsoever from the transactions. No steps are taken to address the risks or the repercussions. When land is sold to nationals, I am convinced that they will not import labour or export finished products. Output will automatically be sold on the local market."

A resident of Nanga-Eboko

"We were quite aware that the Chinese had looked at this piece of land a very long time ago and then moved on. We were all surprised to see them return in great numbers to take over an even larger area, where they grow rice and other foodstuffs. However, as it is government land, there is nothing we can do."

CHAD



Ngarmbassa Moumine, journalist and correspondent for Reuters

"In Chad, small farmers no longer have a stock of land at their disposal as they once did: this limits their opportunities for land clearance or set-aside and is undermining soil fertility and accentuating the drift from the land. [...] At the moment, everyone is after land in Chad, to such an extent that there is no free land for industry."

Oumar Saramadji, Director of Municipal Technical Services

"Pressure has been building up in recent years, owing to non-compliance with the law, land being allocated to anyone and everyone, laxity on the part of some politicians and anarchic land use. [...] Today, neither the mayor's services nor the land registry have any control over urban sprawl."

Original quotes are in French.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE



Yacouba Sangaré, journalist with the Côte d'Ivoire daily newspaper *Le Patriote*

"While some villagers are managing to make ends meet by renting out land to nationals, in a few years' time they will no longer be able to survive in the face of financially powerful managers, who buy up everything they see. So there is no certainty that nationals will one day be able to buy back the land they are selling. [...] Many small farmers, who have worked the land for several decades, are not pleased to have to compete with the 'big bosses' coming down from Abidjan with their 'pockets full of money'."

GUINEA-BISSAU



Mamadou Aliou Diallo, journalist with the Dakar newspaper *Walfadjiri*

"Guinea-Bissau seems for the time being to have been spared the phenomenon of large-scale land acquisition. Its chronic political instability, regularly giving rise to coups d'état, is a serious obstacle to foreign investment. All the more so because its own private sector is still reluctant to invest money in land, even today. The handful of national entrepreneurs involved in these transactions are mostly businessmen acting on their own behalf [...] Yet the legal and institutional arrangements in place to ensure tenure are a fairly good incentive for both domestic and foreign investors."

LIBERIA



Zoumana Zoom Dossou, journalist for worldwide radio RFI, the French press agency AFP and the pan-African magazine *Continental*

"Inter-ethnic disputes over land are a cause for concern; those over illegal sales of land are even more worrying. Regularly, the police are called in to deal with confrontations between ethnic groups. For the head of the Land Commission, the war is partly to blame: 'Most of the archives were plundered and destroyed during the war'. The problem is that, despite the lack of any material trace of ownership, land sales are still going ahead. Criminals are taking advantage of this by offering the same piece of land to several purchasers, each of whom receives the deeds."

MALI

Alexis Kalambry, journalist, Director of the Mali press group LES ECHOS.

"Farmers feel that the Office du Niger is experiencing problems because the system is precarious. We are on land that we have been farming for generations. But what can we do? The fields do not belong to us, and what we are seeing is that if someone farms his plot well and obtains a good yield, it is taken away from him for one reason or another."

Dialogue is under way on the Outline Agricultural Act (LOA). It will indicate how to achieve the type of land tenure that is least contentious and most beneficial for small farmers."

NIGER

Abdou Hima, Technical Co-ordinator for the Small farmers' platform

"The problems encountered stem from the legal and political system, because land management suffers from the accumulation of layers of legislation and other rules."

Depending on the situation, there will be a series of interventions, first by the head of the canton or tribe, applying traditional law (custom); then the administrative authority, applying modern law and, in many cases too, the religious authorities in the name of Islamic law. This accumulation may give rise to misunderstandings and problems, even disputes. [...] When a conflict arises, those involved first go before the head of the village, to reach an out-of-court agreement. If the problem persists, it will be dealt with by the courts, under modern law."

NIGERIA



Daouda Aliyou, journalist, correspondent with the African radio station AFRICA N°1

"With a view to diversifying its economy, until now based on oil, Nigeria is selling off large tracts of its land to local and foreign investors for the development of other sectors such as tourism and solid mineral ores, but this is to the detriment of the population who are losing the land they acquired decades ago ..."

"In Nigeria, land is often behind bloody disputes between growers and nomadic livestock farmers. The government is planning to establish three protected areas for use by 15 million livestock farmers. To that end the authorities will be delimiting 175 000 ha of land and building veterinary service centres and facilities for the nomads passing through. These measures will cost a total of USD 247 million."

SENEGAL



Cheikh Fadel Barro, journalist with the Dakar daily newspaper *La Gazette*

"Throughout Senegal, land has been an issue opposing the population and local elected representatives or the State. In Kédougou, local people are denouncing the sale of 18 000 ha of land to a Spaniard, with no information as to how it will be used. The same goes for the inhabitants of six villages in the rural community of Kaba Gaye in the department of Kébémér, who have protested against the sale by the Chair of the Rural Authority of 200 ha of their land to emigrants. The list of disputes caused by land distribution throughout the country is far from complete."

TOGO

Franck Ayawo Assah, journalist with the African press agency Panapress and correspondent for the pan-African magazine *CONTINENTAL*

"Togo has no Land Code, only the Decree of 24 July 1906, which dates back to the colonialist era. The Decree allows the state to expropriate in the public interest. However, because there is no Code, there has been abuse and, for decades now, numerous land owners have failed to receive any compensation for the vast stretches of their land requisitioned by the state. This has caused disputes between owners and those to whom the state has sold that land on for various uses."

West African Viewpoints



This document has been prepared by a network of West African journalists. Building on articles and interviews conducted in twelve countries of the region, it analyses land issues and trends, opportunities and risks for domestic and international investors as well as their impact on local populations.

> www.oecd.org/swac/viewpoints

Are win-win partnerships possible?

Yes, it is all a matter of negotiation!

by Mr. Mohd Sabo Nanono, Chairman Kano Branch,
All Farmers Association of Nigeria

There is no secret, African agriculture has great potential but is chronically lacking investment. The gap can be filled by foreign investors who are bringing the capital needed and also the technical expertise and management skills to set-up large-scale agribusiness operations which can ultimately also benefit local productions and boost the local market.

We need to break the myth that agribusiness automatically destroys family farms. On the contrary, in Nigeria we have proven over the past 50 years that both business models can peacefully co-exist and even complement each other. To improve the performance of the agricultural sector, we need to link agriculture more systematically to the industry. This can help mechanise production processes of manual subsistence agriculture, making it more profitable. It can also contribute to further develop the local processing of food crops and agricultural products for the local market to enhance value addition.

New technologies (drought resistant seeds, planting methods, etc.) need to be introduced if we are to respond to increased demographic pressure, soil erosion and the consequences of climate change. We need innovation to respond to these challenges!

It is true that independent funds and other “new actors” searching for investment opportunities have recently entered the “land market” buying up large sections of land for speculation. However, until now, the large majority of investors are not interested in owning the land itself. They want to use it to make money with production.

These investments can generate employment opportunities for local people and boost the local market. For example, several investors sub-contract to local agricultural producers. They put the financial means, set the general framework and purchase the agricultural machinery and tools needed to start their business. They then pass on the management to local producers to take care of the daily activities and the production management. Using the investor's land and equipment, local producers are thus responsible for producing a defined quantity of products that the investor commit to buy at a fixed price. While large-scale productions are usually produced for export, some parts of the production are also commercialized on the local market, depending on the type of product and quantity. For instance, biofuels are usually commercialized on the local market. This business model generates win-win solutions for both, investors and local populations.

There is no harm in renting land to foreign investors if leasing contracts are negotiated properly and also benefit the local people. In particular, if this land is currently underexploited and lacking investment in order to become productive. Moreover, the length of leases can be relatively short. Nobody obliges to rent land for a whole century. For example, the term of leases can be limited to an initial period of 20 to 30 years, renewable depending on the performance of this probationary period. It is all a matter of negotiation! Each case needs to be looked at individually on the basis of a careful cost-benefit analysis of foreign investment to reduce the burden of processing a long-term lease. Options for “out-growers” could also be further explored. This has worked well for tobacco and sugarcane plantations in some parts on Nigeria.

No, our land must be kept for future generations!

by Mr. Mamadou Cissokho, Network of Farmer Organisations
and Agricultural Producers of West Africa (ROPFA)

No African farmer takes advantage of this windfall. It is a business between governments and investors. That is why it is not sustainable. We know how the investors operate. When they want to set up a business somewhere, they act like we do when we want to catch a fish. They spend a little money before like we bait the hook to catch a fish. Once they have caught the fish, they stop spending money. With the agreement of the government authorities, these foreign investors set up in zones where there is already not enough land for the local population who has been there for generations. For example, at the “Office du Niger” area in Mali, a farm rarely covers more than three hectares whereas the Chinese receive 100 hectares. Obviously, this situation easily creates social tensions.

These investments bring us nothing in terms of knowledge and reinforcing capacities because these systems of production are not within our reach. This is over industrialisation and the poor people who work within it earn about a dollar a day.

Family farms are criticised for not investing enough to allow agriculture to take off, but it is never said why. They lose money working; it is difficult for them to cover their investment expenses and agricultural credit rates are extremely high, at about 12 to 15%. Instead of asking how to help family farms to invest, other people are asked to come and invest at their place.

Most foreign investors are looking to export to maximise their profits, even though our region remains seriously affected by food insecurity. We must first produce to feed ourselves and reach a level of food self-sufficiency. Markets must also be secured to sell our products and further develop the regional market to protect us against unfair competition, so that there will be work, stability and confidence towards public authorities.

A “responsible” government defines its agricultural policy in consultation with the concerned actors, farmers’ organisations, the producers, etc. The mobilisation of farmers’ organisations and rural communities is essential for improving the transparency and defending the interests of local populations who up to now have been largely excluded from the nebulous negotiations with investors.

Finally, it is necessary to break the myth pretending that Africa is a large reserve of land for the future. Although the land surface of the African continent is considerable, there is nevertheless not much arable land and the situation is getting worse with the progressive desertification and other consequences of climate change. Even if the states invested to cultivate land, there would still not be enough land to satisfy the growing demand of farmers. Population growth must also be taken into account. In 30 years, there will be 1.3 billion inhabitants in Africa. The demographic challenge is enormous! We do not have enough land. Our land must be saved for our future generations.

Commonly quoted opportunities and risks related to large-scale land transactions

Opportunities
⇒ Investment in agriculture (FDI) valorising unused land
⇒ Agricultural productivity increases also resulting in increased food supply for local markets
⇒ Technology transfer, know-how, innovation
⇒ Inclusive business models can lead to employment creation and other social benefits for local populations
⇒ Infrastructure investment from which all benefit

Sources: FAO, ILC, World Bank and others.

Risks
⇒ Displacement of local populations undermining existing rights
⇒ Risk of expropriation
⇒ Loss of livelihoods and opportunities for land access for local populations
⇒ Corruption due to lack of transparency in negotiation processes
⇒ Food insecurity
⇒ Environmental degradation > short-term interests of investors can lead to substantial damage
⇒ Low economic and social benefit > potentially leading to social and political instability
⇒ Unused land, blocked for productive use > speculation

A call for international guidelines on large-scale land acquisitions

Whether perceived as a risk or a development opportunity, there is growing consensus that international guidelines are needed to provide a framework for responsible international investment in land. Guidelines should help host countries and investors to comply with existing international human rights principles and promote inclusive business models that benefit local populations and protect their interests and livelihoods.

A series of initiatives with proposals for principles could serve as starting points to develop such a code of good conduct:

- The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Olivier de Schutter, proposes 11 principles for host countries and investors to address human rights challenges related to large-scale acquisitions of land and leases. These principles are to be considered as “minimum obligations” to comply with existing international agreements.
- The World Bank is currently developing a proposal for seven principles to secure land tenure, improve livelihoods and promote responsible agro-investment. The proposal builds on empirical evidence from an in-depth study of large-scale land acquisitions conducted in 20 countries which shall be published early 2010.
- The FAO and its partners are working on “*Voluntary guidelines for responsible governance of land and other natural resources*”. They shall set out principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices and provide a framework that states can use when developing their own strategies, policies, legislation and programmes.
- A “*Framework and guidelines on land policy in Africa*” has been adopted by AU Heads of State and Government in July 2009. Building on outcomes of a joint initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), launched in July 2006, the guidelines aim to strengthen land rights, enhance productivity and secure livelihoods for the majority of the continent’s population.

- “The FAO and the member states [need] to work towards common rules and legislative proposals which recognize the right for local people in every country to control farmland and other natural resources vital to their food security.” EU Parliament Resolution, November 2009.
- “Large-scale investments in farmland can work for the benefit of all parties concerned. But that presupposes that an appropriate institutional framework is in place [...]. It is a joint responsibility of both the host state and the investor to respect the human rights involved.” Olivier de Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, June 2009.
- “Many countries do not have sufficient mechanisms to protect local rights and take account of local interests, livelihoods and welfare. This is where international guidelines could provide a framework for national regulations, international investment agreements, global corporate social responsibility initiatives and individual investment contracts.” Annika Söder, FAO Assistant Director-General for the Office of the UN Co-ordination and MDG follow-up, October 2009.
- “International guidelines [could] help governments establish sustainable rights of access to land and other natural resources, create corresponding institutional structures, and also restrain corruption in the land sector.” GTZ Information brief, Foreign direct investment in land, 2009.

Once there is agreement on the precise content of such guidelines, the main challenge will be to develop mechanisms to implement these guidelines and effectively help rural communities to protect their rights. “If the goal is just to write a code of conduct, we can together write something on paper and promote it at the next meeting of the FAO, and so what? Nothing will come of it.”¹ comments Jean-Philippe Audinet, the Acting Director of the Policy Division at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) at the World Summit on Food Security in Rome. “Without detailed consultations amongst all interested parties any framework for negotiations will be futile [...] the primary objective in reforming the negotiation process should be the empowerment of local people”. According to Mr. Audinet, “The process for establishing international regulations for farmland acquisition could take up to three years”. Moreover, some analysts argue that voluntary guidelines will not be sufficient and that only legally binding obligations for states or international organisations could help protect local interests.

¹ *Regulations for Farmland Acquisitions Are Years Away, UN officials say*, 17 November 2009, Circle of Blue WaterNews, Reporting the Global Water Crisis.



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Regional responses

The difficulties and limits of an international agreement underline the need to advance at the regional level and design guidelines which are tailored to West African realities. As highlighted at the SWAC Forum on “*Pressures on West African land: reconciling development and investment policies*” (Bamako, 9 December 2009), concrete results are more likely to be achieved at the regional level.

According to Mr. de Schutter, “*West Africa could be a laboratory leading the search for solutions at the regional level. There is a danger that competition between countries to attract [necessary] investment in agriculture might make it futile to pursue initiatives solely at the national level as investors would gravitate towards countries whose legislative or regulatory frameworks for investment in land were the weakest or the least constraining.*” Fostering the leadership of regional economic organisations and promoting regional co-operation on this issue could avoid “*competition between the lowest bidders*” between countries.

Several initiatives and studies are currently underway, including the process of drawing up a “*West Africa Land Charter*”, launched by the CILSS in 2003 and UEMOA actions towards land security, the implementation of a territorial development policy and the development of a common market with the right of establishment. However, lack of funding remains a key challenge to ensure their full implementation. According to the CILSS, neither states nor regional organisations have the human or financial capacity to address the accelerating pace of this trend (weak land tenure administrations, lack of legislation and regional regulatory instruments).

Strengthening regional capacity is vital to providing effective assistance to states as they develop land tenure policies and promoting dialogue and partnerships between government and civil society.

ECOWAS, UEMOA and the CILSS have expressed their willingness to work together. Implementing these proposals within the framework of a West African road map could lead to the elaboration of regional regulatory frameworks for responsible investment in land.

Proposals for regional actions

Concrete steps could include:

- An inventory of regional initiatives which could be discussed at a joint ECOWAS/CILSS/UEMOA workshop aimed at harmonising efforts at the regional level and at outlining the main directions for a common approach;
- Introduction of information systems and monitor activities that would provide early warnings and the capacity to act pre-emptively;
- Renewed technical and financial support for development of the *Regional Land Tenure Charter*;
- A review of the legislative texts aimed at the introduction of local procedural mechanisms;
- Support for the development of land tenure policies in those countries that do not as yet have any.
- Assistance to states in relation to the promotion of land markets;
- Launching of a collaboration plan.

For further reading

- *Summary record, SWAC Forum, Bamako, 9 December 2009.* <http://www.oecd.org/swac/land>
- *Towards voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land*, FAO discussion paper, January 2009.
- *Large-scale land acquisitions and leases: a set of core principles and measures to address the human rights challenge*, by Mr. Olivier de Schutter, Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 11 June 2009.
- *Land Policy in Africa: A framework to strengthen land rights, enhance productivity and secure livelihoods*, AU, AfDB, UNECA, March 2009.

West Africa, one year after the crisis

On the way to recovery

Analyses of the global economic crisis' impact on developing countries have been divergent and sometimes contradictory. At the outset, many economists argued that Africa and other developing regions would not be affected by the financial crisis, due to less integration in the world economy. However, it was soon apparent that the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries were hit by a so called "third wave" of the global financial crisis. Oil-exporting countries suffered from the sharp decline in oil prices, driving fiscal accounts and balance of payments into deficit. Low-income countries were mainly affected through the collapse in global trade, as demand for imports dampened. Many analysts began to identify Africa among the hardest hit regions of the economic crisis in terms of human consequences, increased poverty, unemployment and deteriorating health conditions.

After a decade of economic growth, with rates exceeding the world average of 5.5%, the African Economic Outlook (AfDB/UNECA, OECD, May 2009) expected Sub-Saharan Africa's growth prospects to decline in 2009 to 2.8%, less than half of the 5.7% estimated for 2008. Growth forecasts were continuously revised throughout 2009, painting an increasingly worrying picture. The 2009 IMF Regional Economic Outlook (October 2009), estimated that economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009 would shrink to 1% only. Unsurprisingly, Sub-Saharan African countries are not on track to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

However, it is not all black and white. These region-wide estimates mask strong disparities between countries. Our initial analysis of the crisis' impact on West Africa (see West Africa Observer 2) highlights that West Africa's economic prospects were globally better than expected, with some countries maintaining or even increasing their growth rates (ex. Côte d'Ivoire).

Thanks to prudent macro-economic policies in the past years, many countries have established effective means (maintenance or rising of public spending, supportive monetary policy, fiscal measures, etc.) to counter the effects of the global economic downturn. These efforts were also supported through activities such as international policy responses and increased concessional lending. It is thus worth taking a closer look at West Africa's major economies in order to better understand the impact of the crisis.

Country	GDP at market prices (USD 2005)*			
Year	2008	2009c	2010d	2011d
Benin	5.0	3.1	3.3	4.8
Burkina Faso	4.9	3.6	4.6	5.2
Cameroon	1.4	2.6	3.2	3.2
Cape Verde	3.3	4.4	5.4	5.4
Chad	0.8	2.7	3.0	3.0
Côte d'Ivoire	2.3	3.2	4.0	4.1
The Gambia	6.1	4.6	5.0	5.1
Ghana	7.3	4.1	4.6	17.5
Guinea	3.0	2.0	2.6	4.1
Guinea-Bissau	2.9	2.1	3.4	3.4
Liberia	-	-	-	-
Mali	5.1	3.9	4.7	4.8
Mauritania	2.2	2.5	4.1	5.0
Niger	9.4	1.6	4.9	5.3
Nigeria	5.3	4.3	4.8	5.1
Senegal	2.5	2.1	3.4	4.2
Sierra Leone	5.3	4.0	4.7	6.5
Togo	1.0	1.7	2.0	3.2

Source: World Bank, Global Economic Prospects 2010

c) Estimate | d) Forecast



Nigeria, solid growth despite reduced oil revenues

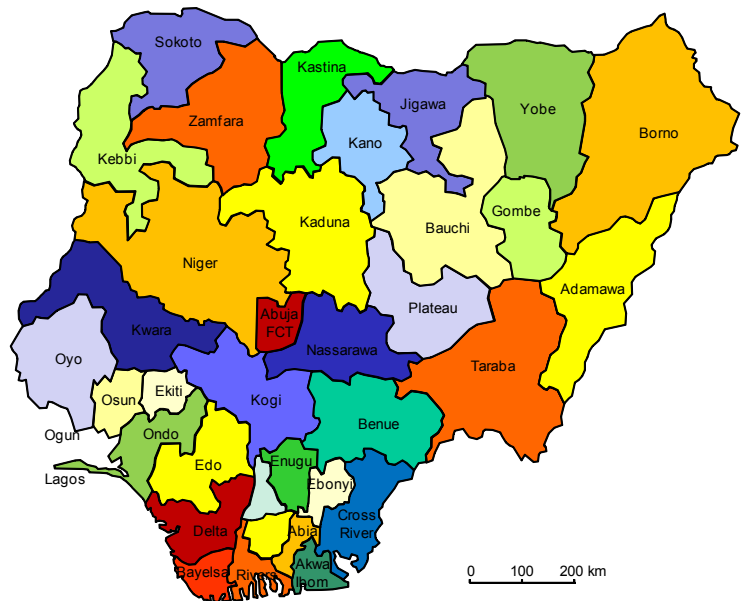
As the region's economic giant, and Africa's second largest economy, Nigeria seems to have weathered the global economic crisis remarkably well. As an oil-exporting nation, Nigeria was expected to be affected most severely within the West African region. Despite lower oil prices, a reduced activity in oil exports, disrupted by security-related problems in the Delta region, Nigeria maintained relatively strong economic growth thanks to strong performances in the agriculture sector. An IMF staff mission in July 2009 revealed that Nigeria entered the global financial crisis from a *"position of strength"*. Oil savings, high international reserves and a well-capitalized banking system helped Nigeria respond proactively to the crisis.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) estimates that the GDP expanded 4.5% and 6.7% in the first two quarters of 2009, compared to 5.3% the previous year. This is well above the average of other oil-exporting countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where GDP is expected to drop from 6.3 to 2.8% (World Bank, Global Economic Prospects 2010).

"What do these growth prospects mean if they do not produce concrete results that can be felt by the people?", asked Mr. Rasheed Akinkuolie, Minister for Economic, Trade and Investment at the Nigerian Embassy in Paris. *"We need to focus public expenditures on social spending in education, health, social services, infrastructure and job creation. This is what will make a difference in people's lives."*

Indeed, the situation of Africa's most populous country (158 million inhabitants), with its 36-state governments (see map) and 774 local government administrations, is quite complex. While some states are well-managed and/or enjoy comfortable budgets boosted by oil revenues, others face similar difficulties as many low-income countries of the West African region. Access to potable water remains a major challenge in the Northern provinces; power outages are frequent throughout Nigeria; transport infrastructure varies enormously within the country; unemployment remains a tremendous burden for social development and represents a potential source of violence, crime and corruption. The list of development challenges is still long. Most of these problems are not new and can thus not be related to the global economic crisis.

Enhancing development and reducing poverty are key objectives of the government's vision for 2020 which aims to place Nigeria amongst the top twenty world economies by 2020. Economic diversification to reduce dependency on oil revenues is Nigeria's key challenge. Agriculture currently accounts for almost one third of GDP and about two-thirds of employment. Moreover, domestic demand for agricultural products helped mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis. Oil will nonetheless remain the key sector of Nigeria's economy in the future. The IMF expects a pickup in oil revenues in 2010 that should enable some scaling back of domestic borrowing.



Map: Sahel and West Africa Club, 1994.

Nigeria's banking sector recovering from turmoil

When Mr. Lamido Sanusi became the new CBN governor in June 2009, some analysts questioned his political wherewithal to implement a bank reform leading to radical change. On 14 August 2009, his decision to remove the Managing Directors and Executive Directors of Nigeria's top five commercial banks (Afribank, Intercontinental Bank, Union Bank of Nigeria, Oceanic International Bank and Finbank), accounting for 30% of Nigeria's deposits, proved his resolve. *"The Central Bank has a responsibility to act to protect all depositors and creditors and ensure that no one loses money due to bank failure. The Bank also needs to move decisively to remove this principal cause of financial instability and restore confidence in the banking system."* (Address by the CBN governor).

An audit revealed that the banks had accumulated high-levels of non-performing loans ranging from 19-48%. This was attributed to *"Poor governance practices, lax credit administration processes and the absence or non adherence to the bank's credit risk management practices."* As *"Changing the management alone will not resolve this problem"*, the CBN also had to inject 400 billion nairas (EUR 1.95 billion) in order to stabilise these institutions.

According to Mr. Akinkuolie, the bank reform now seems to be on the right path. *"People were angry, because the banks did not do their job properly. The big banks were reluctant to give loans to small and medium size companies; interest rates were extremely high; many banks were managed like private properties, with life-long seats for some managers in the Administrative Boards. This has changed now."*

Nigeria's banking sector seems to have emerged stronger after the crisis with 19 banks ranked among the top 100 African financial institutions, including three banks within the top 10.

For further reading

- World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2010*.
- IMF - Nigeria: 2009 Article IV Consultation-Staff Report, November 2009 and Public Information Notice (PIN) No. 09/125, 28 October 2009.

For further reading

- Address by the governor of the CBN, 14 August 2009.
- Africa's top 100 banks 2009, annual rankings, published by the African business magazine, N. 357, October 2009.
- Central Bank of Nigeria: <http://www.cenbank.org>

The UEMOA economies, hit by the global recession

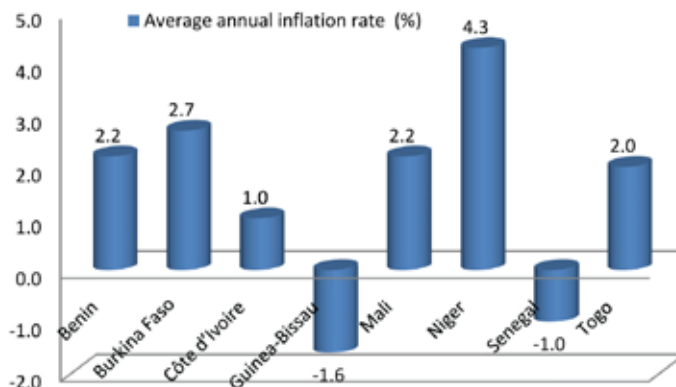
by Mr. Hamza Ahmadou Cissé,
Director of the UEMOA Commission President's Cabinet



The economies of UEMOA member states had to contend with an unfavourable global economic climate in 2009. All were affected by the international economic and financial crisis, particularly by the decline in price for raw materials exports and by the reduced financial flows from the rest of the world. The initial growth rate forecast of 4.7% amounted to only 3%, compared to 3.7% in 2008. Construction and public works, wood processing, textiles and commercial activities were among the sectors hardest hit.

Despite this situation, inflationary pressures eased following the sharp price increases reported in 2008. The average annual rate of inflation in UEMOA countries amounted to 1.1% compared to 7.4% in 2008, mainly due to low growth in food product prices and a decline in transport prices as a result of lower oil production costs in most member states.

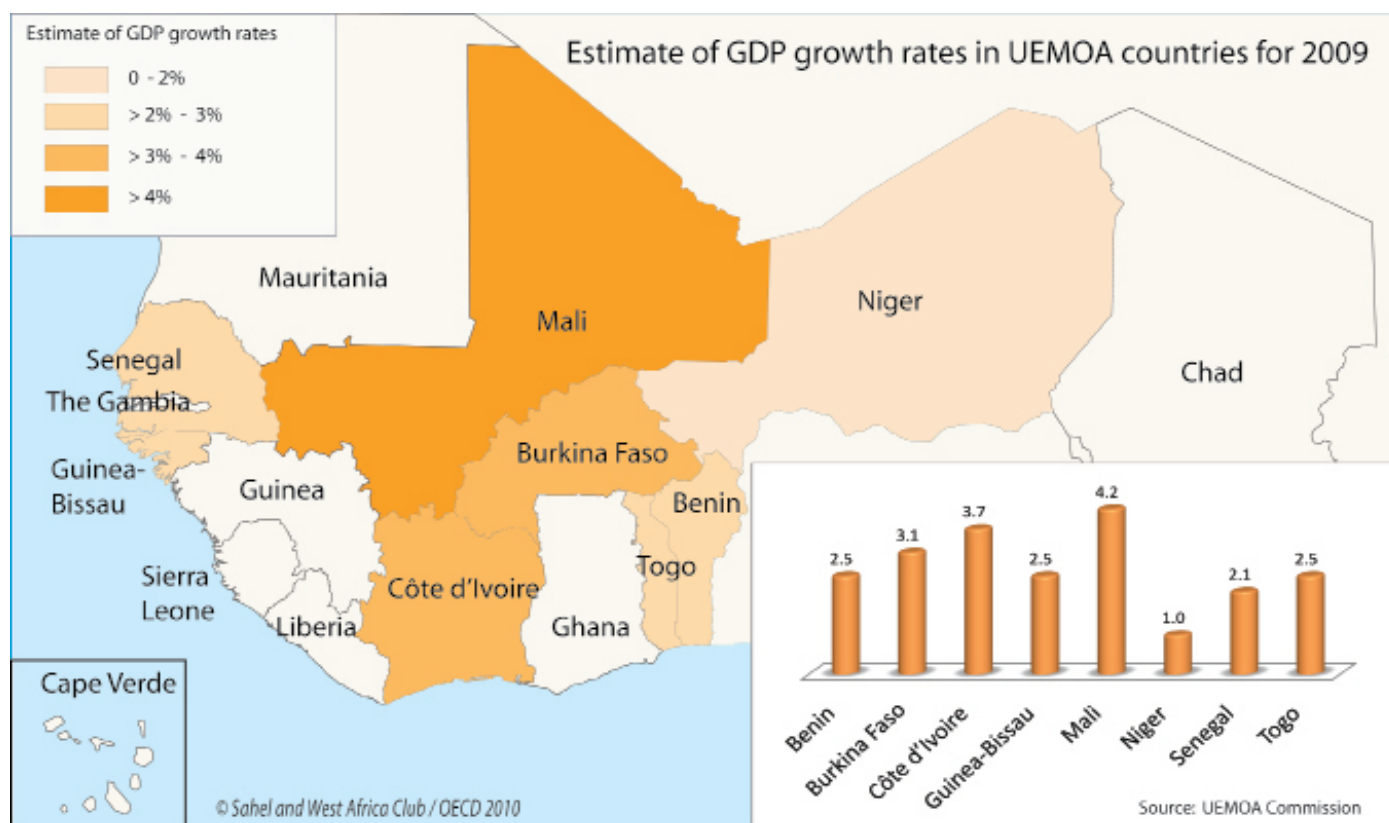
Budgetary deficits in public finances worsened, due primarily to efforts to soften the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable populations. The overall deficit excluding donations amounted to 7.0% and 3.1% of nominal GDP respectively, compared to 4.8% and 2% in 2008. The basic budget balance amounted to 0.1% of GDP compared to 0.9% in 2008. The overall outcome of this situation was a poor performance in terms of convergence. Côte d'Ivoire and Mali were the only states to satisfy the four primary convergence criteria.



Source : UEMOA Commission, 2009

Economic prospects

The situation is expected to improve significantly in 2010. The rate of economic growth could reach 4%, assuming an improved economic situation and a more peaceful socio-political climate. Likewise, the emphasis placed on increasing cereal production, rice in particular, offers the prospect of regular market supply and therefore good control over consumer prices. Given the situation in the Middle-East, uncertainties remain over the future trend in oil prices. With regard to public finances, favourable trends in the real estate sector could lead to improved revenues. Current reforms to budgetary management in different states could also help to improve control over expenditure. As a result, 2010 may well see reduced deficits and improved convergence within the Union.



UEMOA policy responses

Global economic recovery can be attributed to the major initiatives undertaken to support the economy. In the Union's case, these measures included boosting agricultural production, absorbing energy deficits and settling domestic arrears payments. Furthermore, targeted actions have been undertaken in order to help the hardest hit sectors and to improve the financing of economic activity.

To counter the increase in imported food prices, the West African Development Bank (BOAD) allocated F CFA 13.3 billion to UEMOA member states, i.e. F CFA 1.67 billion per country, to finance short-term agricultural projects. In a similar move, the BCEAO made resources worth F CFA 13.3 billion available to states and the Commission, for its part, released F CFA 12 billion. In addition, the BCEAO has provided funding worth F CFA 59.7 billion towards eight agricultural projects. These projects will help to significantly increase agricultural production, enhance the technical and organisational capacities of farmers, establish a rural credit system, and ensure supplies of high-quality seed, fertiliser and small agricultural equipment.

With regard to energy policy, the Council of Ministers of the Union has adopted a regional strategy known as the "*Regional Initiative for Sustainable Energy*" (RISE). The institutional and financial frameworks of this initiative have been established so that work can start on emergency activities designed to address issues of electricity supplies.

With the support of the BCEAO, member states mobilised resources worth a total of F CFA 707 billion in 2009 as part of the required actions regarding payment of domestic arrears. These resources were mobilised through the allocation of SDRs by the IMF and through the use of financial market instruments and securitisation operations. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers established a committee to study the feasibility of providing member states with access to new development financing mechanisms through international financial institutions (AfDB, IMF, World Bank).

Lastly, the member states committed to financial reforms that should help generate more revenues and steer public expenditure towards priority sectors. Only an approach of this type would allow states the flexibility to support the sectors affected by the crisis and to provide a stimulus for economic activity as a whole.



Monetary policy

The Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) has closely monitored the financial sector and has taken specific action to increase credit supply capacity of institutions throughout the sector. Accordingly, it has reduced its leading rates by 50 base points and has likewise reduced the level of mandatory reserve coefficients applicable to banks in several states. It has also taken the necessary steps to ensure sufficient and regular liquidity for financial establishments.

Vulnerability to international trade fluctuations and dependency on external resources, are the key factors which explain the impact of the crisis on UEMOA countries. Increasing economic integration remains the most appropriate strategy to keep the Union on course in the current context of globalisation while meeting the development challenges.

Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire, UEMOA's largest economy, stays on the path of economic recovery thanks to increased oil production, agriculture and agricultural-processing. According to IMF estimates, economic growth is expected to reach 3.7% in 2009, as compared to 2.3% in the previous year. Côte d'Ivoire benefits mainly from the rise in international cocoa prices which have increased 30% since 2007. Political stability and normalization (in particular the holding of presidential election) will be crucial in regaining the confidence of reluctant foreign investors.

Ghana

Ghana's overall economic situation is relatively good, despite record inflation hikes that reached 21% during the crisis. Strong global demand and high prices for Ghana's two main exports, gold and cocoa, helped to buffer the impact of the downturn. Nonetheless, Ghana's fiscal deficit expanded to an estimated 15% of GDP. A three-year IMF loan of USD 600 million helped strengthen international reserves of the Central bank and stabilized the cedi. Ghana is often presented as a successful model for African democracy, with two peaceful political transitions in 2000 and 2008. Political stability is indeed important with regard to a positive business and investment climate. Economic growth in Ghana will further be boosted by increased oil production in 2011.

No new deadline for a regional EPA agreement

Two years after the initially set deadline of 31 December 2007, negotiations on the regional Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and West Africa (ECOWAS member states plus Mauritania) are still ongoing. Despite solemn declarations of intent and good will, no agreement has been reached. Hopes to sign an interim EPA by October 2009 did not materialize. What is today's state of play?

Key differences remain on West Africa's market access offer. The percentage of tariff liberalisation of the region's goods, the list of products which shall be excluded from market liberalisation, the length of a moratorium period are issues on one side, while financing for the *EPA Development Programme* (EPADP) is an issue on the other.

Following a series of negotiations between the European Commission and their West African counterparts, some progress has been made on both issues:

- At a meeting in Abidjan (23-24 October 2009), West Africa presented a revised market access offer which reclassifies a large number of products (including animal vegetable, mineral, chemical and wood products) from the exclusion to liberalisation list.¹ It offers tariff liberalisation for 67% of the region's goods and calls for up to 25 years transition periods for some products. The European Commission is aiming to reach 70% product coverage and faster implementation. Further consultations are necessary in order to revise the region's market access in goods offer before negotiations can begin with the EU.
- The content of the EPADP was further defined during another meeting in Abidjan (10-13 November 2009). The European Commission estimates that the level of necessary EPA support is more than EUR 3 billion over current EU pledges. It committed to seek additional funding sources and work on a new proposal. West Africa requests some EUR 9.5 billion for the funding of the EPADP.

Building a "Lasting partnership between the EU and West Africa" is the key objective of this regional EPA. However, as pointed out by Darlan Marti, "Whether perceived or observed, there is a persistent impression among ACP negotiators that EPAs are about European interests".¹ Mr. Ablassé Ouedraogo, ex-advisor of the ECOWAS Commission President on commercial negotiations, openly questions the usefulness for West Africa to sign such an agreement at all.² He doubts that the European Commission will be able to mobilize additional funding for the EPADP and thus does not see the need for West Africa to accelerate market liberalisation.

The implementation of tariff liberalisation commitments taken by West Africa depends on progress made with the implementation of the EPADP. A fair deal should be possible. Negotiators on both sides are optimistic that a mutual beneficial agreement could be reached "soon". Nonetheless, no new deadline has been set for the completion of the EPA negotiations.

The next series of negotiations is scheduled for March and will include a regional preparatory task force on 18-19 March; a technical experts meeting from 22-25 March; and a senior officials meeting on 25-26 March.

¹ Author of the report: *Updating the EPAs to today's global challenges*.

² *Un expert plaide la suspension des négociations*, 10 February 2010, <http://www.ouestaf.com>.

For further reading

- *Trade Negotiations Insights*, EPA update, Melissa Julian, August – December 2009, <http://www.acp-eu-trade.org/tni>
- *Updating the EPAs to today's global challenges*, essays on the future of economic partnership, Agreements, edited by Emily Jones and Darlan F. Marti, Economic Policy Paper Series 09. German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2009. http://www.gmfus.org/doc/GMF7257_Final_Ebook.pdf
- *Comparative study on free exchange agreements involving PED and PMA*, final report, Gret and AFD, October 2009.

¹ Trade Negotiations Insights, EPA update, by Melissa Julian, November 2009

A slight drop in remittances

Despite the global economic and financial crisis, bonds of solidarity between Diaspora and their families and communities back home remain very strong. Many Africans can count on the continued support of family their fellows living in OECD countries.

Figures published by the World Bank Migration and Remittances team in November 2009 indicate a drop in officially recorded remittance flows to developing countries from a total of USD 338 billion in 2008 to an estimated USD 317 billion in 2009. This 6.1% decline is smaller than expected. The estimates do not include informal transfer channels, which are particularly dense in Africa. The true size of flows is thought to be almost twice as much as official estimates.

Africa is doing better than many other developing regions. Remittance flows to Sub-Saharan Africa fell about 2.9% only, amounting to an estimated total of USD 21 billion (USD 12.8 billion in West Africa).

The effects of remittances on poverty, inequality and economic development were analysed at the *Second Conference on International Migration and Development*, held in September 2009. Although remittances have not reached their maximal impact on development in Africa, it is widely acknowledged that remittances do have a positive impact on development. However, the impact is unequal; remittances are not necessarily channeled to the most vulnerable populations and vary considerably from country to country. The issue is quite complex and requires further research within an African context in order to leverage the development impact of remittances.

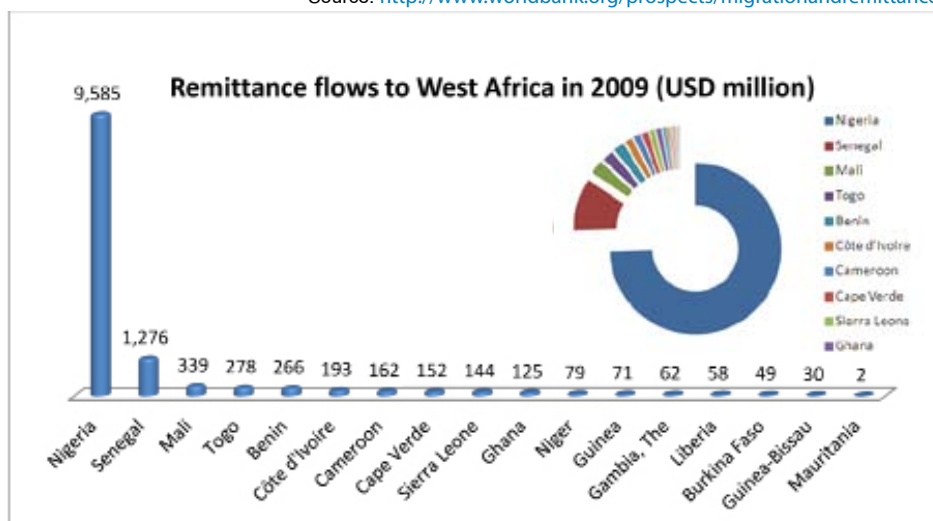
Within the context of a gloomy outlook for the world economy which is only slowly recovering, the World Bank outlook for 2010 and 2011 remains prudent. Remittance flows to developing countries are expected to remain almost flat in 2010, with a modest increase of 1.4% and grow by 3.9% in 2011.

Remittances to West Africa

Source: <http://www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances>

Overall, the situation in West Africa is quite positive. The global economic crisis had an undeniable impact on the labour market and consequently on earnings of African Diaspora. However, African Diaspora seems to prefer cutting their living costs and expenditures in the host country in order to be able to maintain the same level of financial contributions to relatives at home.

In West Africa, the bulk of remittances goes to Nigeria (74%). As a country heavily dependant on oil exports, remittances from Nigerian Diaspora are an even more important source of development financing. The second most important beneficiary state in West Africa is Senegal (10%). Pessimistic forecasts by Senegalese government officials (see West Africa Observer 1), expecting a sharp fall in remittances by close to 10%, did fortunately not materialise. According to World Bank estimates, remittance flows to Senegal almost reached the same level as in 2008 (USD 1 288 million against USD 1 276 million in 2009). Similarly, small economies (Cape Verde, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, etc.) that are heavily dependant on remittance flows were able to maintain remittance incomes almost at the same level.



For further reading

- *Migration and remittance trends 2009*, Migration and Development Brief 11, November 2009: <http://www.worldbank.org/prospects/migrationandremittances>
- People Move Blog: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/peoplemove>
- *G8 L'Aquila commitments*, July 2009.
- *Sending money home to Africa, remittance markets, enabling environment and prospects*, IFAD, November 2009
- *Reorienting remittance research on Africa: The importance of market competition and regulation to leverage the development impacts of remittances*, Tim Cheston, in *Migrant Remittances*, vol. 6, n.2, Aug. 2009.

Transfer costs

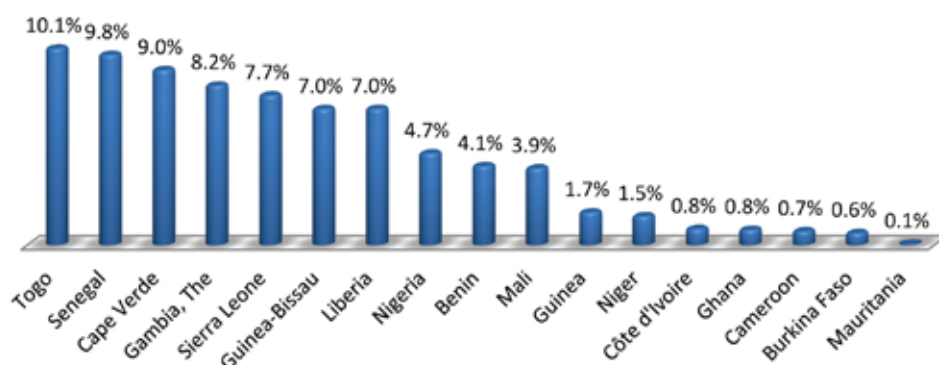
In times of crisis, facilitating cheaper, faster and more productive remittances needs to become a top priority for policymakers. G8 members committed at the L'Aquila summit (8-10 July 2009) to "*Reduce the average cost of remittances at the global level from the approximately 10% applied at present to 5% within 5 years*" which would translate into "*A reduction of about 50%, which calculations suggest would add an additional USD 13-15 billion to migrants' earnings*".

To date, money transfer costs remain extremely high, varying between 5% and 20% of the transferred sum. The remittance market is dominated by a few service providers, notably by the market leader Western Union covering 40% of remittance transfers worldwide.

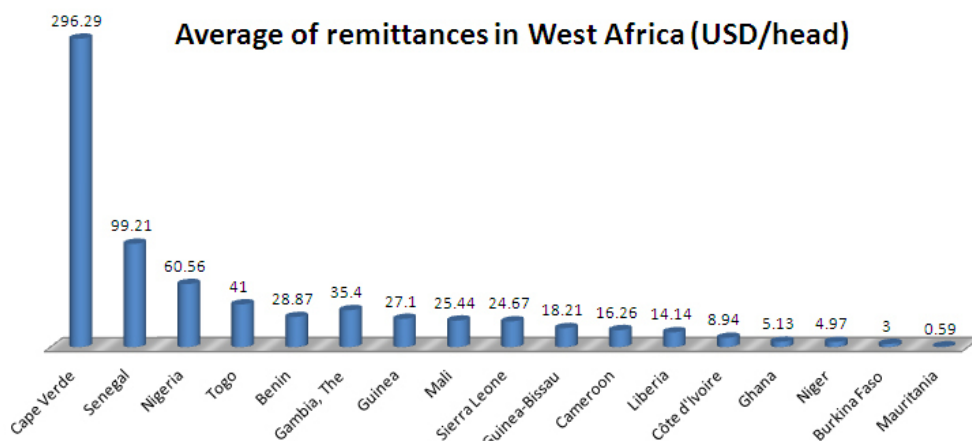
As the banking density and number of clients in West Africa are still very weak (apart of Nigeria), informal money transfer systems are being developed to reduce these costs. For example, the Malian Diaspora has set-up an extensive network of meeting places, known as "*foyers maliens*", in their host countries that facilitate money transfers. They are relatively fast, effective and much cheaper than official service providers. New technologies (mobile phone networks) are being used to facilitate money transfers.

More competition between remittance transfer service providers could help improve the quality of services, reduce transfer costs and make them more secure and effective.

Remittances as a share of GDP, 2008



Average of remittances in West Africa (USD/head)



Aid flows to West Africa remain stable

Many low-income countries in West Africa were concerned that developed countries would cut development aid in response to the global economic financial crisis.

Statistics from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) indicate that overall official development aid (ODA) did not fall during the crisis and will again reach record levels in 2010. This is however still less than promised five years ago by the world's major aid donors during the Gleneagles and Millennium + 5 summits. "Africa, in particular, is likely to get only about USD 12 billion of the USD 25 billion increase envisaged at Gleneagles, due in large part to the underperformance of some European donors who give large shares of official development assistance (ODA) to Africa".¹

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats>

During the 2007-2008 period, aid flows to West African countries have remained relatively stable (see graph). Strong country-specific variations in Cameroon and Nigeria can be explained by exceptional debt relief operations that took place before 2008. Similarly, a substantial part of increased funds to Liberia in 2008 are due to debt relief (45% of the amount in 2008).

As many aid programmes are scheduled on a multi-year basis, the crisis did not have an immediate impact on aid flows. However, it is still too early to make a full assessment of the situation.

Useful links

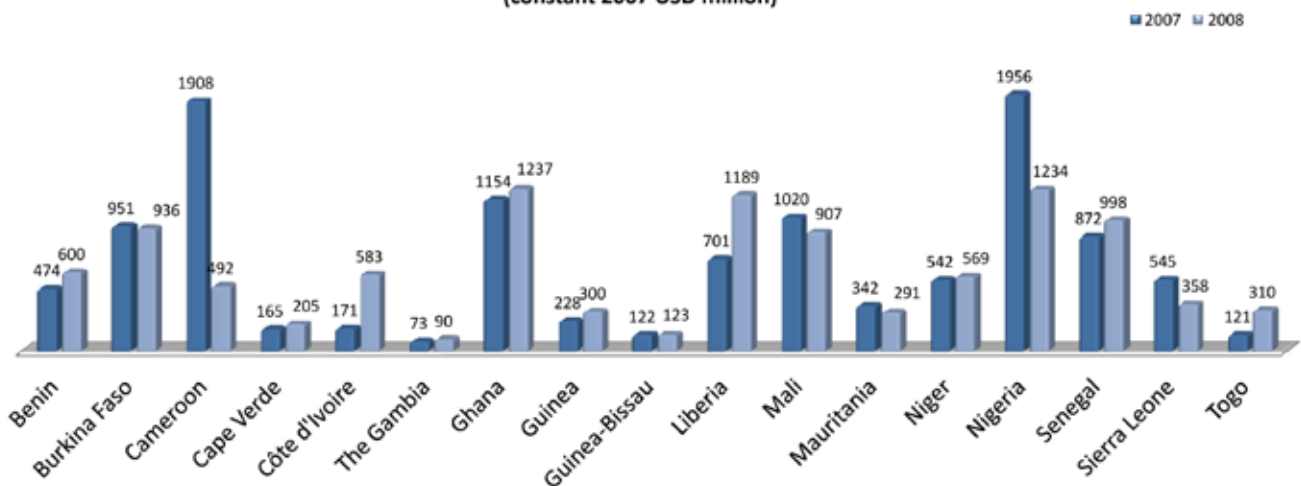
- DAC Statistics: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats>
- International Development Statistics Database: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline>
- African Economic Outlook: <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/data-statistics>

Net ODA disbursements from all donors
(constant 2007 USD million)

Country	2007	2008
Benin	474	600
Burkina Faso	951	936
Cameroon	1 908	492
Cape Verde	165	205
Côte d'Ivoire	171	583
The Gambia	73	90
Ghana	1 154	1 237
Guinea	228	300
Guinea-Bissau	122	123
Liberia	701	1 189
Mali	1 020	907
Mauritania	342	291
Niger	542	569
Nigeria	1 956	1 234
Senegal	872	998
Sierra Leone	545	358
Togo	121	310
Total	11 347	10 422

Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats>

Net ODA disbursements from all donors to West Africa
(constant 2007 USD million)



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats>

Food security, back on the political agenda

Widespread malnutrition despite a fairly good harvest

The agricultural campaign 2009/2010 has been overall satisfactory, confirms the 25th Annual meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), which brought together the main food security actors of the region from 8-11 December 2009 in Bamako (Mali). Food production almost reached record levels of 2008. Provisional cereal production for 2009/2010 in West Africa, with the exception of Liberia and Sierra Leone, is estimated at 51 million tonnes (16 million tonnes in the Sahel). This production level signals a drop in the Sahel (-9%) whereas it has risen in the coastal countries (+4%). "West Africa and the Sahel have great agricultural potential which could allow the region to feed itself and even to export surplus food. More investment, better instruments for market regulation and a kinder international context would allow this potential to be fully realised", says the CILSS Secretary-General Prof. Alhousseini Bretaudeau.¹

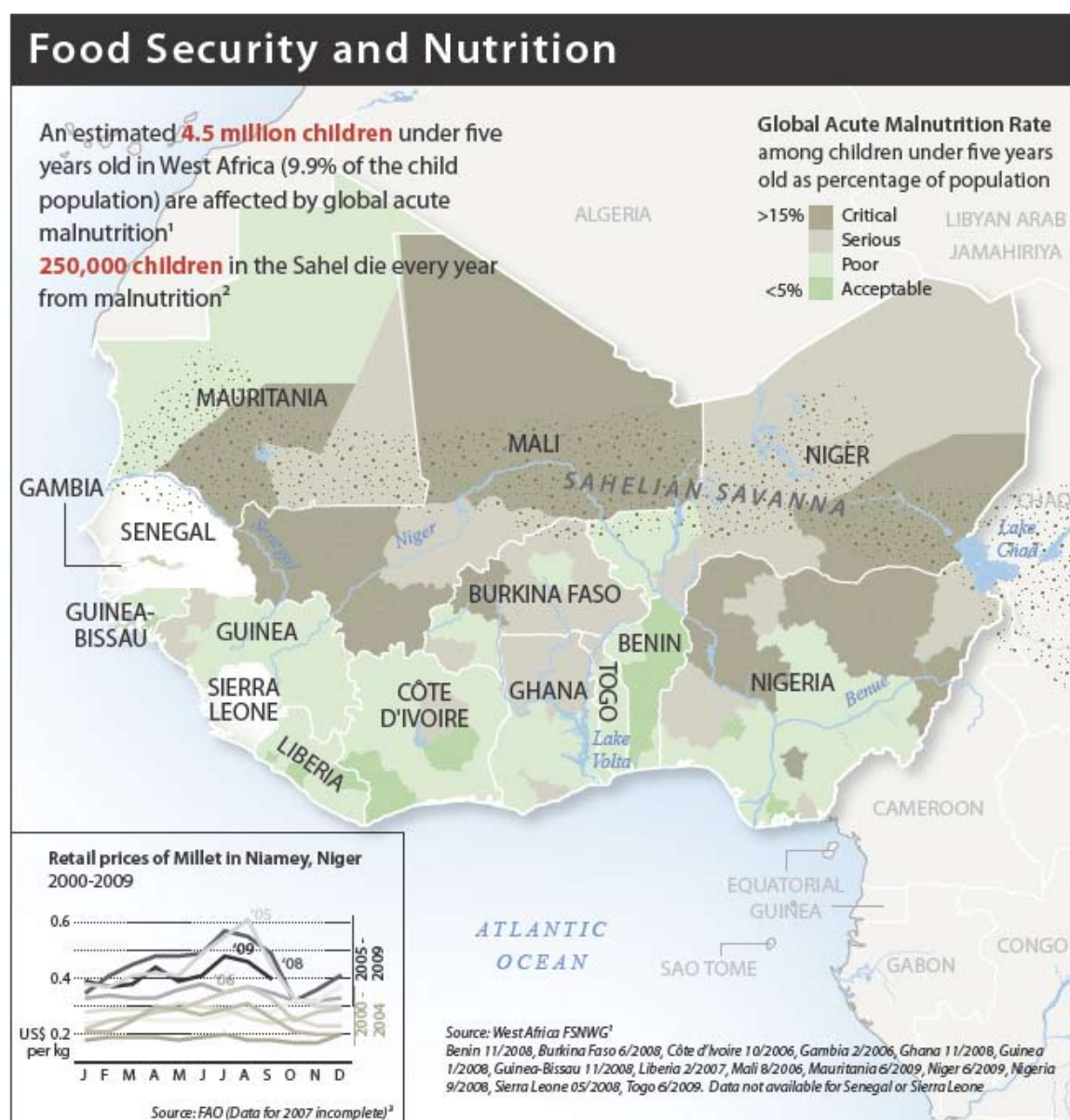
¹ "The achievements of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA)", Interview with Prof. Alhousseini Bretaudeau, CILSS Secretary-General, SWAC newsletter, December 2009.

Despite this relatively good harvest, food security remains a key challenge for many West African countries. As West Africa's population is growing rapidly (6.6 million people per year), agricultural production needs to be expanded considerably in order to increase food supplies.

According to UNOCHA estimates, published in October 2009, 4.5 million West African children under the age of 5 (9.9%) suffer from severe malnutrition. Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) are particularly affected with more than 30% of children under the age of 5 moderately or severely underweight. An estimated 250 000 children die every year from malnutrition in the Sahel. Currently, none of the West African countries is on track to achieve MDG goal 1 to "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger".

For further reading

- *RPCA Final Communiqué*, 11 December 2009, <http://www.food-security.net>
- *UNOCHA Humanitarian Profile*, October 2009, <http://www.reliefweb.int>
- *MDG Monitor*, <http://www.mdgmonitor.org>



A critical agro-pastoral situation in Cape Verde, North-east of Mali, Niger and Chad

"The agro-pastoral prospects are good on the whole in the humid countries and in the zones to the west of the Sahel. They are poor or sub-standard in the zones of the eastern Sahel. The prolonged drought has reduced the harvests to the north-east of Mali, in the agro-pastoral zones of Niger and Chad as well as to the North of Nigeria.

The risk of a threat from the desert locust in Mauritania which is a source of concern for the harvests seems to be under control for the time being. The possibilities of off-season farming will be limited in the zones affected by a protracted stoppage of rains because there are low water levels in the water points and the water retention lakes as well as excessive floods.

The poor prospects for agro-pastoral production to the east of the Sahel coupled with the high price of cereals and the possibility of a deterioration of the terms of trade for cattle/cereals in the coming months risk to seriously compromise the food security of the most vulnerable households, particularly during the next lean period which risks starting earlier than expected. This mainly concerns the livestock breeders, agro-livestock breeders as well as the poor urban dwellers that depend on the markets to satisfy their main food needs."

> Extract of the RPCA Final Communiqué, 11 December 2009

The RPCA's recommendations

Network members recommend to:

- **Policymakers** to increase support off-season farming by providing inputs (improved seeds and fertilizers) and to facilitate the implementation of actions and/or measures aimed at acquiring cattle feed, livestock mobility as well as the free circulation of livelihood products in accordance with the regional accords.
- **Stakeholders** (decision-makers, NGOs, aid agencies and development partners) to monitor the co-ordination of actions and/or measures directed at facilitating the access of the most vulnerable populace to basic food, supporting the malnourished and strengthening of the means of existence of the most vulnerable population.
- **Regional information systems** to start in January 2010 a rapid and well tuned analysis of the food and nutritional vulnerability in order to better target the populace affected and to propose appropriate responses so as to mitigate possible crises and strengthen the adaptation capacities particularly among the vulnerable pastoral populace.
- **The CILSS** to accelerate the setting-up of a network of companies/offices in charge of managing the national food security stocks.
- **West Africa's regional organisations** to give the CILSS the means necessary for extending its monitoring activities throughout the West African region.

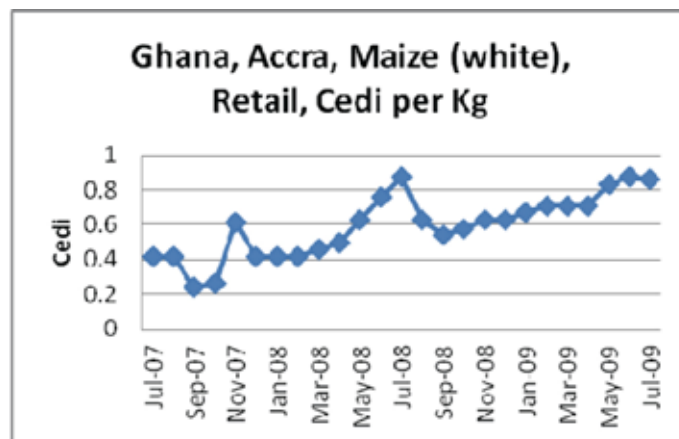


High food prices persist

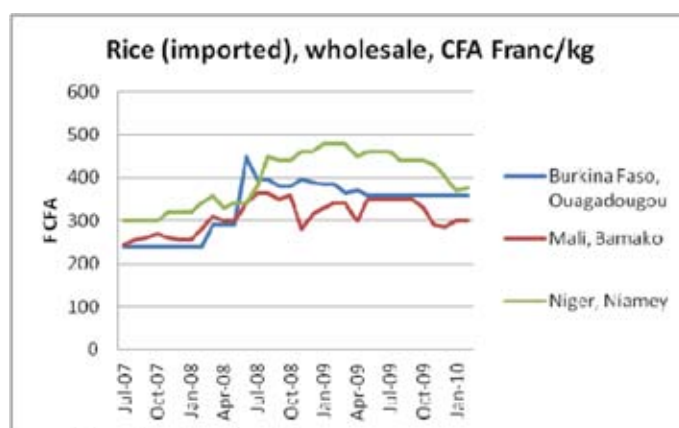
The decline in world food prices has had no discernible impact on high domestic prices which are well above 2007 levels. Despite efforts to increase production, rice continues to be one of West Africa's major imported food products. The cost of rice remains very high in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali (see graph). Local food products such as millet, sorghum and maize also remain above the 2007 average. For example, the price of maize in Ghana (Accra) in July was more than double its level in July 2007. However, higher food prices do not automatically translate into higher incomes for farmers, as prices of farm-input and other production-related costs have also increased. "Expected reduction in Nigeria's cereal production could lead to new cereal price rises across West Africa", warns the FAO. "Safety net interventions, such as targeted distribution, sales at subsidized prices, food for work or cash for work activities, will be required during next year lean season".

For further reading

- *Crop Prospects and Food Situation Report*, FAO, November 2009
- *Global Information and Warning System, on food security and agriculture (GIEWS)*, Price tool:
<http://www.fao.org/giews/pricetool>



Source: tradenet.biz: <http://tradenet.biz>



Source: Afrique Verte: <http://www.afriqueverte.org>

A few more international commitments

Hunger and food security are both back on the political agenda as reflects the large number of high-level forums and experts meetings dedicated to this global challenge (see table). Focusing on "*How to feed the world in 2050*", the FAO World Food Summit, held in Rome from 16-18 November 2009, brought together some 300 experts and scientists on agriculture and food security. TV spots around the summit recalled sad facts on food security: one-sixth of the world's population, over 1 billion people, suffers from hunger; 40 million people die of hunger and poverty every year, including an alarming statistic of one child every six seconds. "*Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security*" were defined to implement new strategic objectives set during the summit.

Despite all calls for "*decisive and urgent actions to eradicate hunger from the world*", the summit lacked concrete commitments. "*The final declaration of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security neither sufficiently analyses the reasons for the failure to eradicate hunger nor does it make concrete proposals on how to step up the fight against hunger*," states the EU Parliament resolution of 26 November 2009. Moreover, it "*expresses disappointment at the lack of specific financial pledges and the poor attendance by G8 high-level representatives, in this context, calls on all Member States to redouble their commit.*" In fact, the summit was marked by the absence of leaders of the world's wealthiest nations. Apart from host country Italy, none of the G8 Heads of State or Government attended the summit.

According to the FAO, an investment of EUR 30 billion per year would be necessary to ensure food security for a world population that will reach 9 billion by 2050. Considering the human lives at stake, this seems to be a relatively small amount of money compared to the vast sums spent on bailouts during the global financial crisis. Mobilising new financial pledges continues to be a difficult task. Countries represented at the L'Aquila Summit (G8 + 19 countries including Nigeria and Senegal) on 10 July 2009, committed to a "*goal of mobilizing USD 20 billion over three years*" building on a "*Co-ordinated, comprehensive strategy focused on sustainable agriculture development, while keeping a strong commitment to ensure adequate emergency food aid assistance.*"

The share of official development assistance (ODA) allocated to agriculture, particularly by the European Union, has steadily diminished since the 1980s, falling from 17% in 1980 to 3.8% in 2006. The trend is reversing but much more needs to be done in order to promote international agricultural investment and to build a global food security response.

For further reading

- "*L'Aquila*" Joint Statement on Global Food Security, L'Aquila Food Security Initiative, 10 July 2009.
- *Declaration of the World Summit on Food security*, Rome 16-18 November 2009.
- *EU Parliament Resolution of 26 November 2009 on the FAO Summit and food security.*

Regional Partnership Compact for Agricultural Development

The “*Regional Partnership Compact for the Implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Policy and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme*” (ECOWAP/CAADP) was signed on 12 November 2009 at the International Conference on Financing Agricultural Policy in West Africa, held in Abuja (Nigeria). The Compact expresses the adherence of all stakeholders to the orientations, objectives and institutional and financial dispositions of ECOWAP/CAADP, recognizing it as the sole referential framework for intervention and co-ordination of support to the agricultural sector. The Conference marks the end of a three-year consultation and formulation process of National Agricultural Investment Programmes (NAIPs) and the Regional Programme for Agricultural Investment (PRIA). Three regional mobilisation programmes have been defined. Their implementation will cost some USD 900 million for the next five years.

Institutional framework

- Strengthening the guiding and co-ordinating capacities of the ECOWAS Commission office in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water resources;
- The creation of an Inter-departmental Committee for Agriculture and Food in charge of co-ordinating policy reforms;
- The establishment of a Consultative Committee for Agriculture and Food that includes the main actors of the agricultural and food sector;
- The establishment of a Regional Technical Agency for Agriculture and Food to which the ECOWAS Commission will delegate the implementation of the regional programs.

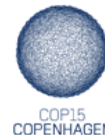
Financing mechanism

The financing mechanism is based on the creation of a Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food. It will be housed in the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). Its management rules will permit the pooling of resources and the transparency of their utilisation.

Key events on food security (July-December 2009)

1 July	13 th African Union Summit, Sirte, on “ <i>Investing in agriculture for economic growth and food security</i> ”.
8-10 July	G8 Summit, L'Aquila: discussions on African development around four issues (food security, health, water, education); adoption of the “ <i>African Food Security Initiative</i> ” aiming at mobilizing USD 20 billion within the next three years.
8 September	Agreement on Food Security between Israel and ECOWAS, Abuja; signed at the end of Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman's Africa tour, this agreement aims at strengthening economic and technical co-operation with Africa.
12 September	24 th CILSS Day, on “ <i>Reliable agricultural statistics for a better management of food security in Sahel and West Africa</i> ”.
12-14 October	FAO, High-Level Expert Forum, How to Feed the World in 2050; in preparation of the World Food Summit in Rome, experts examined policy options that governments should consider adopting to ensure that the world population can be fed.
14, 15 and 17 October	35 th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS); the CFS considered reforms to enable it to play a more effective role in the global governance of food security.
16 October	World Food Day: this year's theme was “ <i>How to ensure food security in times of crisis</i> ”.
22 October	Extraordinary Meeting of ECOWAS Ministers of Regional integration, Agriculture, Trade, Economy and Finance, Abuja: validation of the project to set-up a regional agency for agriculture and food and the creation of a regional fund.
30 October	11 th Meeting of the High-Level Task Force of the Global Food Security Crisis, New York, discussions examined the revitalization of the Committee on Food Security and progress made within the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.
5 November	ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit on Food Security, Abuja, in preparation of the World Food Summit in Rome.
12 November	International Conference on Financing agriculture policy, Abuja: approval of the “ <i>Regional Partnership Compact for Agricultural Development in West Africa</i> ”.
12 November	12 th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of West Africa, Ouagadougou, on “ <i>Food Security in West Africa</i> ”.
16-18 November	World Summit on Food Security, Rome, approval of “ <i>Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security</i> ”.
21 November	China-Africa Forum on industrial co-operation, Beijing, on “ <i>Equality, mutual trust and win-win partnerships</i> ”.
8-11 December	25 th annual Food Crisis Prevention Network Meeting (RPCA), Bamako, on “ <i>Markets, Local Product Processing and Food Security</i> ”.
14 December	NEPAD Sub-regional workshop, Dakar, on “ <i>Application of biosciences research oriented towards Africa's food security challenges</i> ”.

Climate change: African disillusion



UNITED NATIONS
CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONFERENCE
2009

High expectations, few tangible results

Africa, like the rest of the world, had high expectations of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen from 7 to 18 December 2009. "Africa's problems did not change with the Copenhagen summit because in reality they are both deeper and more complex", noted the group of West African experts at a debriefing session held after the Conference in Abidjan (see West Africa's response).

A common African position

In the run-up to the Conference, African policy-makers established a common position to ensure that the voice of the continent was heard more clearly. Focusing primarily on the issues of financial compensation and technology transfer, this statement of position demanded that "The developed countries which are responsible for most historical emissions compensate developing countries for the damage they have caused to the climate over past decades"¹ and also sought "Financial assistance to install infrastructure that uses clean energy", declared Mr. Jean Ping, Chairman of the African Union Commission. According to Burkina Faso's Minister of the Environment, Mr. Salifou Sawadogo, the African consensus rests on three issues: "Firstly, the Kyoto Protocol must be maintained because we do not want any new legal instruments. We then want to have predictable and unconditional financing of around 65 billion dollars a year. Lastly, we would like to consider the related issues of energy and transfers of technology."²

In response to these ambitious aims, the conclusions of the Copenhagen summit were unconvincing: "I don't believe that we will get any aid [...]. We need to count on our own resources, because the G8 promised us USD 50 billion of aid which we have yet to see,"³ commented the Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade. The group of West African experts also recommended that these financial commitments be viewed with prudence.

1 APPA, 15 December 2009, <http://www.apanews.net/spip.php?article113663>

2 *Copenhague : les Africains sur le point de claquer la porte*, 14 December 2009, Jeune Afrique, http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ART-JAWEB20091214130443/edition_digitale.php

3 *Conférence de Copenhague sur le climat : la déception de l'Afrique*, <http://www.afrik.com/article18305.html>

The Copenhagen Accord

Financial commitments

The final Copenhagen Accord provides for the following collective commitment by developed countries:

- In the short term, developed countries undertake to: "Provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments through international institutions, approaching USD 30 billion for the period 2010-2012 with balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation. Funding for adaptation will be prioritized for the most vulnerable developing countries, such as the least developed countries, small island developing states and Africa."
- In the medium/short term they undertake to: "In the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, developed countries commit to a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries." A significant portion of such funding should flow through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund.

Transfer of technology

- In order to enhance action on development and transfers of technology, it was decided to "Establish a Technology Mechanism to accelerate technology development and transfer in support of action on adaptation and mitigation that will be guided by a country-driven approach and be based on national circumstances and priorities."

Torrential rains

Between July and September, heavy rains caused substantial flooding across the sub-region. Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal were hit particularly hard. According to UNOCHA estimates, some 770 000 people were affected including 264 000 people in Senegal, 150 000 in Burkina Faso and 79 000 in Niger. Though Sierra Leone estimates only 1 455 victims, it recorded the largest number of deaths at approximately 100 people.

Torrential rains flooded Burkina Faso's capital city of Ouagadougou on 1 September, making some 150 000 people homeless and causing substantial material damage to road equipment, public facilities, hospitals, schools and housing. To deal with this dramatic situation, the government has set-up an emergency plan that includes 110 emergency shelters and a relocation plan for victims (F CFA 8.6 billion ~EUR 13.1 million). An additional F CFA 9 billion (EUR 13.7 million) was collected through a national solidarity campaign. "The natural disaster that struck Burkina Faso on 1 September has further strengthened the bonds of solidarity between Burkinabè. As soon as the disaster first started to unfold, people spontaneously took victims into their own homes until the government could step in and take charge", says Mr. Luc Adolphe Tiao, Ambassador of Burkina Faso in Paris. In addition, the international community contributed F CFA 7 billion (EUR 10.6 million). The last time Burkina Faso experienced such high levels of precipitation was in 1919. The debate continues as to whether or not these torrential rains are a direct consequence of climate change.

See: SWAC Interview with Mr. Luc Tiao, Ambassador of Burkina Faso in Paris, September 2009, www.oecd.org/swac/viewpoints



West Africa's response

After the Copenhagen summit, a restricted group of West African experts, representing the main research structures in the region, met on 15 January 2010 in Abidjan to stake initial stock of the situation and propose actions to pursue at the level of West Africa. The group stressed the need to develop a West African strategy and to formalise a regional network within the ECOWAS area in order to better defend the interests of the region at the African and international level. The ECOWAS Council of Ministers is expected to adopt a "*Sub-regional action plan to reduce vulnerability to climate change in West Africa and Chad*" (SRAP-RV-WA), drawn up by the AGHRYMET Regional Centre, in March 2010 in Accra. The CILSS plans to set up a "*Research Group on the environment and climate in West Africa*" (RGEC-WA) modelled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Useful links

- Official site of the UNFCCC: http://unfccc.int/portal_francoophone/items/3072.php
- Work by the OECD on climate change: <http://www.oecd.org/env/cc>
- Work by the SWAC on climate change: <http://www.oecd.org/swac/climatechange>

West African research institutes

- African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD): <http://www.acmad.ne>
- Aghrymet regional centre of the CILSS (AGHRYMET): <http://www.agrhymet.ne>
- Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS): <http://www.oss-online.org>

Main lessons learned

- The common African position: "*For the first time African countries are speaking with one voice*"; this is a positive development and one that must be pursued.
- The high level of media coverage of the summit enabled the main actors concerned by the challenges of climate change to be better informed.
- The Copenhagen Accord has no legal standing and must be seen as the beginning of a process moving towards an agreement committing the international community.
- Despite the efforts made, African Delegations remained under-represented compared with their counterparts from developed countries.
- Africa's contribution to the work of the IPCC is too small.
- More scientific studies are needed of the uncertainties associated with climate change and the sectoral impacts at different temporal and spatial horizons.
- The West African research sector needs to be more closely integrated and networked (through focal points) in order to provide better information for African policy-makers and more effective input to the negotiating process.
- West African states need to further develop their funding absorption capacity (technical capacities for setting up projects, capacity for scientific analysis, monitoring and evaluation strategies).
- A West African vision needs to be developed by the ECOWAS in order to better define the specific interests of the region at the African and international levels and to improve the synergies between the many initiatives under way.

Source: Summary record of the technical meeting on: "*Debriefing after the Copenhagen Summit and preparation for the regional meeting on climate and its impacts on West Africa*", Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), 15-16 January 2010.

Key events on climate change (July-December 2009)

3-4 August	Cape Verde: Alliance of parliamentarians and local elected representatives from West African coastal countries (Appel) to combat climate change in Africa.
24 August	1 st meeting of representatives of the Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).
30-31 August	Meeting of the Committee of the 10 on climate change, Tripoli (Libya).
15 September	Report by the World Bank on development and climate.
16 September	Lomé Declaration on protection challenges to climate change in West Africa.
22 September	Mini-summit on climate in New York, alongside the UN General Assembly.
9-11 October	7 th World Forum on Sustainable Development, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).
27-30 October	9 th EURAFRIC forum on water and energy in Africa, Lyon (France).
17 November	2 nd meeting of the CAHOSCC, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).
24 November	Justice-Climate plan for the most vulnerable countries (Borloo Plan -France).
7-18 December	Copenhagen summit
14 December	⇒ Debate on " <i>Security impacts of climate change in the Sahel region</i> ", organised by the SWAC Secretariat, the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office and French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.
15 December	⇒ Extraordinary meeting of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) on climate change.

Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Niger on the search for political stability

Côte d'Ivoire presidential election, postponed again

At long last everything seemed to be back on track for Côte d'Ivoire's election. By the end of June, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) completed voter identification and registration. In all, some 6.5 million voters were registered, amounting to an increase of 2.5 million voters since the previous regional elections held in July 2002. In another positive development, combatants from the New Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FNCI), the coalition of rebel movements, symbolically handed over the keys to the areas under their control to the central government.

However, the delays soon started to mount up. First there were issues with the electoral register. Both the media and politicians questioned the eligibility of 2.7 million names on the electoral register denouncing them as "ghost voters" or "suspicious cases". After a three-month delay, voter registration began on 22 November. In the words of CEI President Robert Mambé, the election had been officially "delayed slightly." Following this setback came the 6th meeting of the *Permanent Consultative Framework of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement*. Originally scheduled for the end of October, it was eventually held on 3 December. The Ivorian President, the other candidates and the "facilitator", Blaise Compaoré, were unable to decide on a definite date for the election. In President Gbagbo's view, the way forward was clear, all that was needed was to "Correct the electoral registers and resolve a few details of a military nature".

The postponements were apparently justified on the grounds that "It is not possible to organise free, democratic, transparent and credible elections unless security has been restored throughout the entire country". The election date of 29 November, in which everybody had wanted to believe, was now forgotten. In January 2010, there was talk, though with little conviction, of a new election date between the end of February and the beginning of March. The United States expressed its disappointment in the fact that the "long awaited" elections in Côte d'Ivoire had once again been postponed. France could understand a "slight delay", but expected the election to go ahead in March 2010. The United Nations alternated between encouragement at the progress made on the electoral register and disillusionment over the repeated postponements.

In early January the CEI was marred in scandal as its Chairman was accused of fraud. The papers now speak about an "electoral process which has ground to a halt" and even though the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has been renewed for only four months in order to hasten the organisation of the election, the wheels of electoral machine continues to turn in slow motion.

For further reading

- Special feature article in Jeune Afrique: "Côte d'Ivoire: déclin électoral?", 1 September 2009, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com>
- Revue pour l'intelligence du monde, December 2009, 44-page supplement: overview of the political, economic and social situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Guinea, - returning to calm after the violence

Although progress seemed to be made in the transition to democratic governance (resumption of voter identification and registration operations, announcement of a date for the election), the massacre of 28 September plunged Guinea into horror. According to the Guinean Human Rights Organisation, 157 people were killed and 1 253 wounded in what was supposed to have been a peaceful demonstration against Captain Moussa Dadis Camara's presidential candidacy. On 5 October, ECOWAS appointed President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso with the mission of resolving the crisis. While the United Nations prepared to set up an international Commission to look into the massacres, the junta government released the results of its own enquiry exonerating Dadis Camara and accusing his aide Aboubacar Sidiki Diakité, alias Toumba Diakité.

Guinea was then placed under embargo: ECOWAS imposed an arms embargo, and the African Union banned Dadis and his entourage from travelling freely in Africa. The first attempts at mediation by Compaoré in Ougadougou in November proved fruitless. On 4 December, popular discontent boiled over with the attempted assassination of the leader of the junta by his aide Toumba. General Sékouba Konaté, the Vice-President of the military Junta, took over in his stead. Dadis Camara was moved to Rabat and admitted to the Royal Clinic of the Mohammed V military hospital.

The international community unanimously condemned the massacre of 28 September. Although the European Union left it to the African Union to decide what sanctions to impose on the Guinean junta, it stated its willingness "to contribute to a peace-keeping mission". France officially broke off all military co-operation. The United States, for its part, imposed restrictions on travel within its borders to certain members of the military junta and the government.

Sékouba Konaté made a gesture of good will by proposing a consensus government. As a result, an accord to end the crisis was signed on 15 January in Ougadougou under the auspices of Blaise Compaoré. The agreement provides for the creation of a *National Transition Council*, the formation of a "Union Government" led by a "Prime Minister, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, to be provided by the Forum of Active Forces". The agreement also calls for democratic elections to be held within six months. On 18 January, Jean-Marie Doré was appointed Prime Minister of the transitional government; he is one of the most senior members of the opposition. The junta and the opposition then established two commissions to negotiate appointments to posts and to set up a consensus government team in the month of February.

For further reading

- Humanitarian reports by UNOCHA, <http://ochaonline.un.org/guinea/RapportsHumanitaires/tabid/3151/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
- Special feature article on Guinea: "Guinée: l'Etat sauvage", 6 October 2009 : <http://www.jeuneafrique.com>

Niger's constitutional crisis

Niger's government and opposition parties have been at loggerheads since August 2009 when a controversial Constitution was adopted, granting President Mamadou Tandja, whose mandate was due to expire in December 2009, an extension until 2012. Tandja won an overwhelming victory in the constitutional referendum on 4 August despite some dubious turn-out rates. The media have described the ordeal as a "consummate coup d'état".

The President's main priority was victory in the legislative elections on 20 October. The opposition declared a boycott of these elections in September. ECOWAS sent a delegation to Niamey in an attempt to persuade President Tandja to postpone the elections to no avail. Following the elections a victorious Tandja dismissed his boycotting opponents from a Parliament largely dominated by the ruling the National Movement for the Development of Society (MNSD) party.

The international community denounced the constitutional changes which had been deemed illegal by the opposition and by Nigerien civil society at large. ECOWAS and the Union Interparlementaire de la Francophonie suspended Niger in October, while the United Nations called to freeze bank accounts and impose sanctions on several of Niger's political leaders.

The European Union was the first international body to take concrete action by suspending approximately USD 23 million in funding to Niger. The EU had threatened since July 2009 to cut European credit lines that were being used to finance the regime. At the end of December, the United States in turn suspended its Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) programme.

President Tandja remained unmoved despite the international isolation and growing domestic discontent. Ever defiant, Tandja gave himself the right, under the referendum of 15 December, to remain in power for another three years. ECOWAS delegated a mediator, General Abubakar Abdulsalami, to try and find a way to resolve the situation.

After ten years in power, Mamadou Tandja was removed on 18 February 2010 by a military junta. The coup d'état led by three colonels who established the "Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD)", dissolved the government and appointed a new President, Salou Djibo.

For further reading

- *Niger, la démocratie confisquée*, Report by the FIDB and the Nigerien Association for the Defence of Human Rights (ANDDH), February 2010, http://www.fidh.org/IMG/article_PDF/article_a7522.pdf
- Le Niger de Mamadou Tandja, special feature article in the *Courrier international*, 27 Oct. 2009, <http://www.courrierinternational.com>

Key events on democracy, peace and security (July-December 2009)	
9 July	Liberia: Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommends to bar President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of any official duties for thirty years. She is accused of having financially supported the regime of Charles Taylor.
18 July	Mauritania: presidential election: victory of General Ould Abdel Aziz in the 1 st round with 53% of the votes. He took power in a coup in August 2008.
26 July	Guinea-Bissau: presidential election: after the assassination of President Nino Vieira in March 2009, Malam Bacai Sanhá won the 2 nd round of the election with over 63% of the vote.
4 August	Niger: the referendum to adopt a Constitution that permits unlimited presidential term limits, allowing President Mamadou Tandja to remain in power until 2012, the new Constitution marks the beginning of the 6 th Republic.
31 August	AU Tripoli Declaration: African leaders commit to a series of measures to accelerate conflict resolution and to build peace.
28 September	Guinea: "Conakry massacre": Military troops fired on demonstrators who had gathered to protest against the candidacy of Dadis Moussa Camara, chief of the military junta, in the presidential election.
5 October	Guinea: Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaoré was sent by ECOWAS to find a resolution to the crisis. He again plays the role of "facilitator" to Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.
19-23 October	AU special summit on refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in Africa, Kampala (Uganda): adoption of a convention to serve as the "First legal framework in the world"; to promote and strengthen regional and national measures to prevent or mitigate, prohibit and eliminate root causes of internal displacement as well as provide for durable solutions."
20 October	Niger: legislative elections: victory of President Tandja's party "National Movement for the Society of Development – (MNSD)", with 76 out of 113 seats. The opposition mainly boycotted the election. The international community does not recognise the legitimacy of these elections.
26 October	Sierra Leone: The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) concludes trial proceedings for the former rebel leaders of the civil war started in 2004. The three defendants were sentenced to terms ranging from 25 to 52 years.
2 November	Côte d'Ivoire: Postponement of the presidential elections scheduled for 29 November. The elections have been postponed six times since they were first scheduled to take place in 2005.
5 November	Mali: A plane with narcotics on board crashed. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) discovered cocaine on a Boeing plane coming from Venezuela.
23 November	Nigeria: A seriously ill President Umaru Yar'Adua traveled for a "health check-up" to Saudi Arabia. Three days later, the diagnosis revealed an "acute pericarditis", an infection of the lining surrounding the heart.
23 November	Benin: pirate attack against an oil tanker. Despite the death of a crew member, the pirates did not take control of the ship.
26 November – 17 December	Terrorism: Hostages taken by the Al Qaeda Organisation in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). One French and three Spanish nationals as well as an Italian couple were abducted. AQIM demands the release of four Islamists arrested in northern Mali.
3 December	Côte d'Ivoire: 6th meeting of the Permanent Consultative Framework of the Ouagadougou Agreement: The meeting between President Laurent Gbagbo, the opposition candidates Henri Konan Bédié and Alassane Ouattara, and the mediator Blaise Compaoré did not result in an agreement to facilitate the electoral process.
4 December	Guinea: Assassination attempt against Moussa Camara Dadis by his aide, Aboubacar Diakite aka "Tumba". General Sékouba Konate has replaced Dadis while he seeks medical attention in Morocco.



Forthcoming events

4 March	Togo, presidential election , opposing Faure Gnassingbé (current president) and Jean-Pierre Fabre (main candidate of the opposition).
4 March	"Joining up Africa" , Forum on regional integration in Africa, organised by DFID, AfDB, EU, UA, UNECA, World Bank, London (UK).
9-11 March	EURAFRIC Forum , to promote exchange and partnerships between European and African firms in the water and energy sectors, Brazzaville (Congo).
13-17 March	25th Ordinary session of the UEMOA Inter-parliamentary Committee , Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).
19-23 March	African Women's Economic Summit on <i>"Investing differently in women"</i> , Nairobi (Kenya).
20 March	International Day of the Francophonie : The International Organisation of Francophonie will celebrate its 40 th anniversary under the sign of <i>"Diversity for Peace"</i> .
22 March	UN World Water Day on <i>"Clean Water for a Healthy World"</i> .
22-26 March	Africa Rice Congress 2010 , on <i>"Innovation and partnerships to realize Africa's rice potential"</i> , Bamako (Mali).
24-26 March	ECOWAS Regional meeting on civil society organisations , Lomé (Togo).
25 March	OECD Workshop on "Migration in West Africa: Governance and Links to Labour Markets" , organised by the OECD Development Centre, in partnership with UNDP, Dakar (Senegal).
25-28 March	International Conference on ICT for Africa : highlighting synergies of collaboration between African countries and other developing countries, Yaoundé (Cameroon).
4 April	Senegal: celebration of its 50th anniversary of independence .
17-25 April	Summit of Heads of state and governments of CILSS member countries , N'Djamena (Chad).
19-23 April	UN Conference on cocoa (UNCTAD) , to negotiate a new agreement replacing the International agreement on cocoa (2001), Geneva (Switzerland).
5-7 May	World Economic Forum on Africa: "Rethinking growth strategy in Africa" , organised by private sector companies, Dar-es-Salam (Tanzania).
20 May	Cameroon: celebration of its 50th anniversary of independence .
20-21 May	1st "B to B" Forum between business managers of UEMOA and the rest of the world , organised by Africallia (Burkina Faso) and Futurallia (France), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).
27-28 May	African Development Bank, Annual General Assemblies ; release of the "African Economic Outlook 2010", Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire).
24-31 May	Africa-France Summit : meeting of African and French Heads of State and government, Nice (France)
31 May-4 June	1st Conference of GIM-UEMOA (Inter-banking and Monetary Group) following the launching of the Payment Systems Reform, Bissau (Guinea-Bissau).
11 June	10th International Forum on Africa Perspectives organised by the OECD Development Center, with the African Development Bank and the French Ministry of Economy, Industry and Employment, Paris (France).

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