



SWAC/OECD
SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA
CLUB



CILSS
PERMANENT INTERSTATE
COMMITTEE FOR
DROUGHT CONTROL IN
THE SAHEL



22ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FCPN:
***SYNTHESIS OF PRESENTATIONS AND
DISCUSSIONS***

Rome (FAO), 12-13 December 2006



CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SITUATION IN THE SAHEL AND IN WEST AFRICA: RECORD PRODUCTION IN THE LAST THIRTY YEARS.....	7
2.1 RESULTS OF THE 2006-2007 AGRICULTURAL CAMPAIGN: RECORD CEREAL PRODUCTION IN THE LAST 30 YEARS	7
2.2 AT-RISK ZONES AND ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN AND/OR ENVISAGED	9
2.3 SITUATION IN COASTAL COUNTRIES	12
2.4 EVOLUTION OF CEREAL AND CATTLE MARKET PRICE AND FOOD PROSPECTS IN 2007.....	12
2.5 FOOD AID IN THE SAHEL, WEST AFRICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD	13
3. REGIONAL FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION MECHANISM AND MONITORING TOOLS FOR THE FOOD SITUATION	14
3.1 MONITORING WEST AFRICA'S CROSS-BORDER MARKETS: RESULTS OF JOINT MISSIONS ON MONITORING CROSS-BORDER MARKETS IN WEST AFRICA	14
3.2 FORECASTING UPCOMING FOOD CRISES.....	16
3.3 TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NUTRITIONAL ASPECTS AS REGARDS MONITORING AND EARLY WARNING....	16
4. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FCPN'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND WEB-SITE DEVELOPMENT	18
4.1 SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS	18
4.1.1 Food situation analysis and monitoring methods and tools.....	18
4.1.2 Mobilisation of financial resources	20
4.1.3 National and regional development policies for sustainable food security.....	20
4.1.4 Political and institutional mobilisation.....	20
4.1.5 Information and communications.....	20
4.2 THE FCPN WEB-SITE.....	21
5. OTHER FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES	23
5.1 TRIANGULAR COOPERATION AND COMBATING DESERTIFICATION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE SAHEL.....	23
5.2 PRESENTATION OF SARDI	24
5.3 LAND TENURE AND FOOD SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA.....	24
6. VENUE AND ITEMS PROPOSED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE AGENDA FOR THE FORTHCOMING 2007 ANNUAL MEETING	25
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25
7.1 CONCLUSION.....	25
7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS	26
ANNEX 1: AGENDA OF THE MEETING.....	29
ANNEX 2: OPENING ADDRESS BY MR CAROL VOYER, CIDA DIRECTOR.....	32
ANNEX 3: OPENING ADDRESS BY MR NORMAND LAUZON, DIRECTOR OF THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB	34
ANNEX 4: INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY MR MUSA MBENGA, CILSS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY..	37

**ANNEX 5: INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HE MR YAHYA N’GAM, AMBASSADOR OF THE ISLAMIC
REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA TO THE FAO 39**

ANNEX 6: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS..... 41

Abbreviations and acronyms

ARI	Comprehensive Atlas on Regional Integration
BCV	Banques Céréalières Villageoises (Village Grain Banks)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CILSS	Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CNSA	Conseil National de Sécurité Alimentaire (National Food Security Council)
CPC	Comité des Partenaires du CILSS (Committee of CILSS Partners)
CSA	Conseil Sécurité Alimentaire (Food Security Council)
DIAPER	Diagnostic Permanent (Permanent Diagnosis)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCPN	Food Crisis Prevention Network
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture
HKI	Helen Keller International
IFDC	International Fertiliser Development Centre
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organisation
INSAH	Institut du Sahel (CILSS) (Sahel Institute)
INTERFAIS	International Food Aid Information System (WFP)
MIFRAC	Mission Française de Coopération (French Cooperation Mission)
MISTOWA	Market Information System and Traders' Organisation in West Africa
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ROESAO	Réseau des opérateurs économiques du secteur agro-alimentaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (West African Network of Economic Operators in the Food Industry)
SISAS	Systèmes d'Information sur la Sécurité Alimentaire au Sahel (Sahel Food Security Information System)
SNS	Stock National de Sécurité (National Safety Stock)

SWAC	Sahel and West Africa Club
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (West African Economic Monetary Union)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAMIS-NET	West-African Market Information Network
WAHO	West African Health Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

The 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN) in the Sahel and West Africa was held in Rome (Italy), at the FAO headquarters, on 12 and 13 December 2006.

The meeting was inaugurated by HE Mr Yahya N'GAM, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's Ambassador to the FAO (Italy – Rome), representing HE Mr **Silly Gandega**, Minister for Rural Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the CILSS Coordinating Minister, who was unable to attend the meeting. The meeting brought together almost 70 participants, including: (i) delegates from certain CILSS member countries (CSA Food Security Council/Mauritania, CNSA (National Council for Food Security)/Senegal, CNSA/Gambia, PM/CCA/Niger, MDA/DPA/Chad, CNSA/Burkina Faso, SP/CONACILSS of the Gambia, Burkina Faso and Islamic Republic of Mauritania), (ii) representatives of technical and financial partners (France, USAID, EU, CIDA, Italian Cooperation), (iii) senior officials and experts of international and sub-regional organisations (SWAC, CILSS, FAO, WFP, WMO, FISCR, FEWS NET, IBIMET), (iv) representatives of farmers' organisations and inter-professional associations (ROPPA, Interprofessional Committee for Cereals/Burkina Faso), (v) representatives of humanitarian agencies (MSF), as well as (vi) the media (RFI).

A press conference was held with some of the national and international media based in Rome to exchange and provide better information regarding the region's food situation. Moreover, the presence of a Radio France Internationale journalist offered the opportunity to hold interviews with some of the major food security actors.

The meeting aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- Taking stock of the agricultural, food and nutritional situation in the Sahel and West Africa
- Carrying out strategic thinking and discussing food and nutritional crisis prevention and management tools
- Reviewing the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations of previous meetings and the FCPN's activities
- Exchanging experiences and sharing knowledge on the various initiatives taken in the sub-region.

Several presentations were made at the opening ceremony:

- Introductory and welcome address respectively by: Mr Henri Josserand, Chief of FAO's GIEWS, Mr Musa Mbenga, CILSS Executive Secretary; Mr Carol Voyer from the Canadian Cooperation agency, the CILSS Partners' Committee Chairman, and Mr Normand Lauzon, the SWAC Director
- **Opening speech by** HE Mr Yahya N'GAM, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's Ambassador to the FAO, representing HE Mr **Silly Gandega, CILSS Coordinating Minister**.

In his welcome address, Mr **Henri Josserand**, Chief of FAO's GIEWS, emphasised the FAO's commitment to the organisation of the FCPN meeting as well as the richness of the exchange of views among the Network's members.

Mr Musa Mbenga, the CILSS Executive Secretary, first thanked the FAO Director General for holding the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa in Rome, at the FAO headquarters. He then thanked the Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club, which had enabled a rapprochement between decision-makers, technical and financial partners and development actors. The CILSS Executive Secretary highlighted the FCPN's important role. He briefly presented the 2006-2007 food situation, which is expected to be good for Sahelian countries with the exception of Chad and Guinea Bissau, notably due to conflicts.

Mr Carol Voyer, from the Canadian Cooperation agency and the CILSS Partner's Committee Chairman, expressed his pleasure at the organisation of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa, which would enable all the Network's members to propose relevant solutions in order to ensure sustainable food security for the Sahel and West Africa. Mr Carol Voyer paid tribute to the efforts made by the Sahel and West Africa Club, which led to the CILSS and SWAC joining efforts to work on the Network's sustained functioning. He expressed his satisfaction with the strengthening of studies on markets and trade, the activities dealing with the integration of nutritional aspects in the assessment of the food situation, the launching of the production of a food balance sheet in some countries, the implication of coastal countries in the Network as well as the creation of the FCPN web-site. He ended his presentation by expressing the hope that a credible and well-attended-to network would be built – one that would work all year round and whose financial partners would make a long-term commitment.

Mr Normand Lauzon, the SWAC Director, placed special emphasis on the advantages of the FCPN's reactivation as well as the need for regular monitoring of the proposals and recommendations on food security. He also highlighted the fact that an essential and primary aspect of food crisis prevention was better control and use of water. Hence, in our approaches, strategies and advocacy, priority has been given to concrete actions in the field on this issue. Mr Lauzon recalled the SWAC's interest in cross-border trade in particular in the Kano – Katsina - Maradi (K²M). He also took the opportunity to thank MIFRAC and the French Embassy in Burkina Faso for their support in the creation of the FCPN web-site in collaboration with the SWAC. The SWAC Director stressed the fact that the population would increase by 100 million inhabitants in the region by 2025 and that more than 65% of the overall population would be under 25 years old. The fundamental questions raised by the high population growth projected were the following: *What should be done to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population? What actions need to be taken with regard to production and accessibility? How can the nutritional and market aspects be better taken into account? How can complementarity be ensured between the decisions taken and activities at local, national, regional and continental level? And, once again, how can better control and use of water be ensured?*

HE the Ambassador, representing HE Mr Silly Gandega, the CILSS Coordinating Minister, paid special tribute in his opening speech to the experiences and joint action taken by the CILSS, with the support of international organisations such as the FAO, WFP, the OCHA bureau, FEWS NET, the Sahel and West Africa Club and, recently, the ECOWAS West African Health Organisation. He praised the initiative aiming to integrate nutritional aspects in the assessment of food situation. Before declaring the Network's 22nd meeting open, HE the Ambassador conveyed his thanks to all CILSS partners, particularly Italy, France, the European Union, Canada and USAID, whose help had made it possible to organise the meeting and ensured that the regional watch facility functioned coherently.

2. Agricultural, food and nutritional situation in the Sahel and in West Africa: *Record production in the last thirty years*

2.1 Results of the 2006-2007 agricultural campaign: Record cereal production in the last 30 years

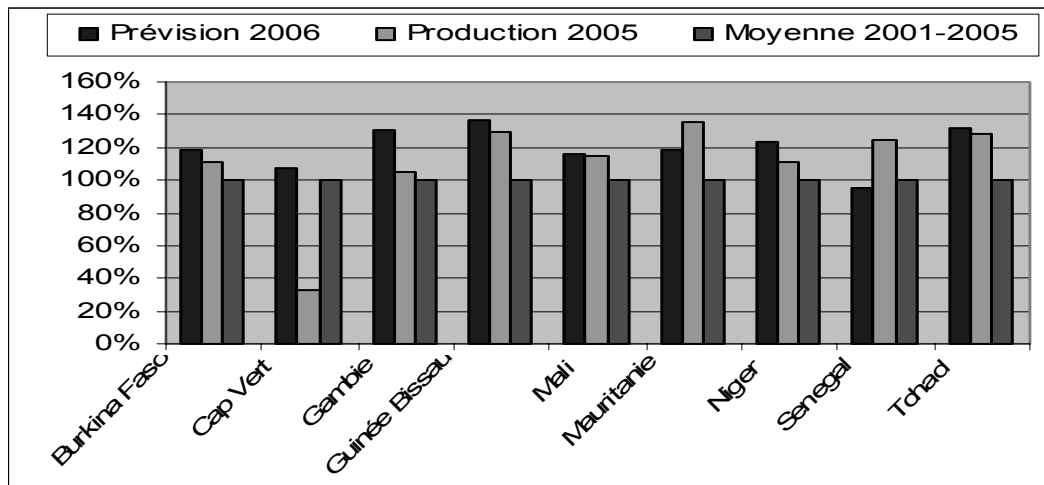
Despite a slightly late start, the 2006-2007 agricultural campaign has been marked by generally abundant rain, spread out evenly both in terms of time and space, starting around 10 July. The situation continued until October in some areas. The plant health situation was relatively problem-free and most water points were well refilled. The overall condition of pastureland was also satisfactory for animal feed. The overall animal health situation had also remained fairly calm.

However, in other areas, the rains came to an early end, stopped from time to time or led to floods. The water level in some dams and reservoirs remained lower than normal. In some other areas, production was affected by pest attacks (grasshoppers, caterpillars, aphids) as well as granivorous birds in certain rice growing areas.

The total cereal production forecast for CILSS member countries for the 2006-2007 agricultural campaign was estimated at **15,062,600 tonnes** by national survey mechanisms. The record production level represented a 3% increase as compared to 2005-2006 and 19% as compared to the average for the last five (5) years. In particular, a significant increase in rice production in several countries was noted, following special programmes conducted there (including the use of the NERICA variety). Sorghum production also rose considerably due to the producers replacing certain cash crops (cotton, groundnuts) by grains, including sorghum, essentially due to the delayed cropping season. The production level is forecast to reach 19% higher than the average for the last five years. Cereal production per capita is estimated at around 232 kg, which represents an almost 10% increase as compared to the five-year average.

As compared to the previous year, gross production will be higher in all Sahel countries, except Mauritania and Senegal (see Graph 1), which will experience a drop of 13 and 23% respectively.

Graph 1: Variation in gross projected production as compared to the 2005 agricultural campaign and the 2001-2005 average (basis: 100).

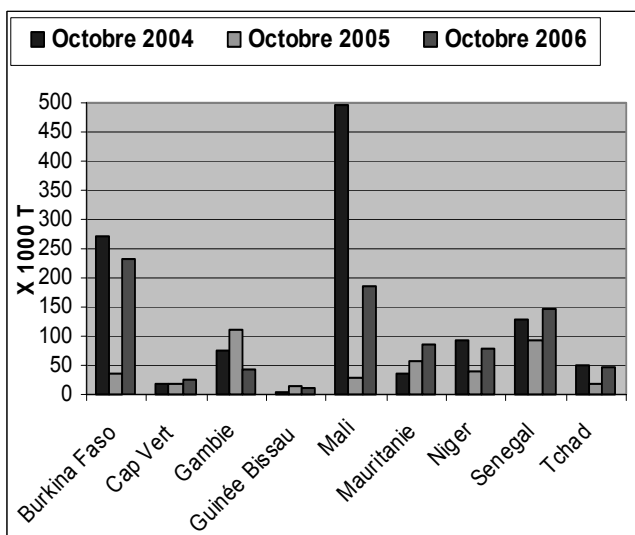


Source: CILSS/AGRHYMET

The livestock situation was also satisfactory, with the rains continuing during the last ten days of September in the pastoral zone. The out-of-season crop situation was also positive, which could strengthen the food balance in the region.

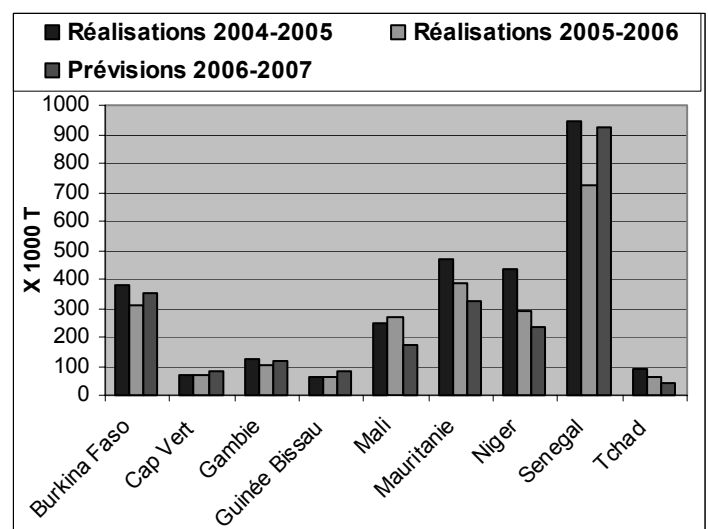
Total food availability (net production + stocks + imports) is estimated at 15,523,700 MT against an estimated requirement of 13,529 700 MT. Of this amount, local production would account for 12,338,500 tonnes, stocks for 855,200 MT and imports for 2,330,000 tonnes, of which 114,200 tonnes would be in the form of food aid. The available stock distribution as on 31 October 2006 and projected imports in 2006-2007 are given in Graphs 2a and 2b.

Graph 2a: Cereal stock level (farmers, private and public sector) in Sahel countries at the end of October 2006



Source: CILSS/AGRHYMET

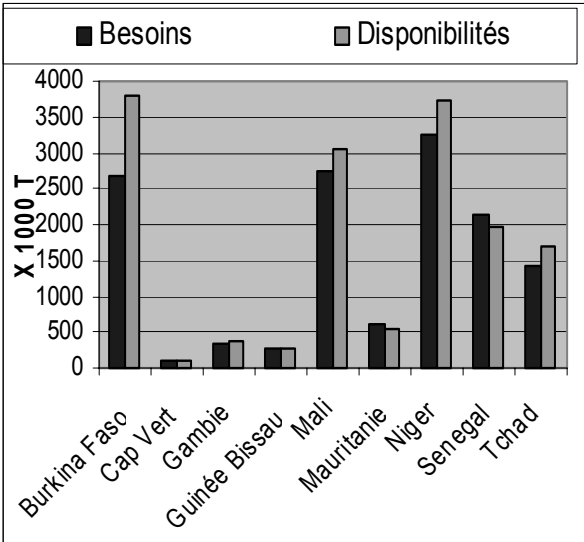
Graph 2b: Projected 2006 imports and actual imports in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006



Source: CILSS/AGRHYMET

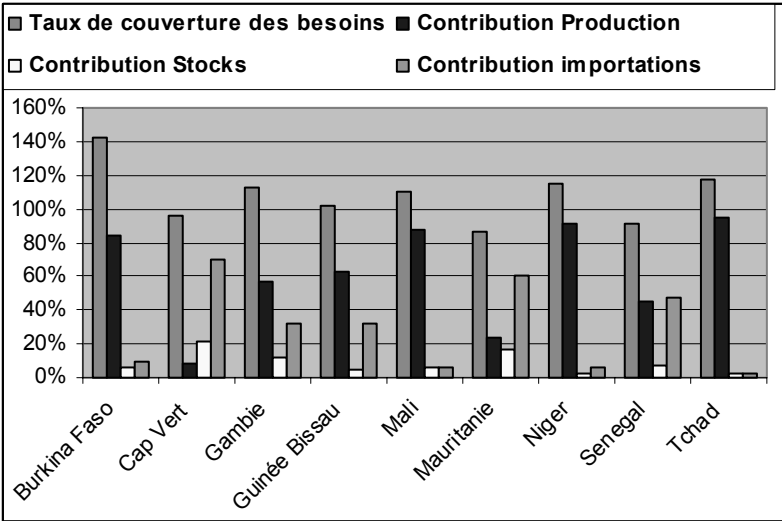
However, availability is very unequally distributed between countries and even within countries (see Graph 3a). Burkina Faso alone records more than half the regional surplus with 1,099,300 tonnes, whereas Cape Verde, Mauritania and Senegal face a deficit of 4,500 tonnes, 83,300 tonnes and 187,100 tonnes respectively. However, their situation does not give rise to concern as these are structurally deficit countries and their commercial supply and distribution system is able to absorb the deficits (see Graph 3b). In fact, commercial imports have always been an essential component of supplies to meet these countries' needs.

Graph 3a: Cereal demand and availability levels by country for 2006-2007.



Source: CILSS/AGRHYMET

Graph 3b: Demand coverage by country and contribution of production, stocks and import components to the 2006-2007 cereal balance.

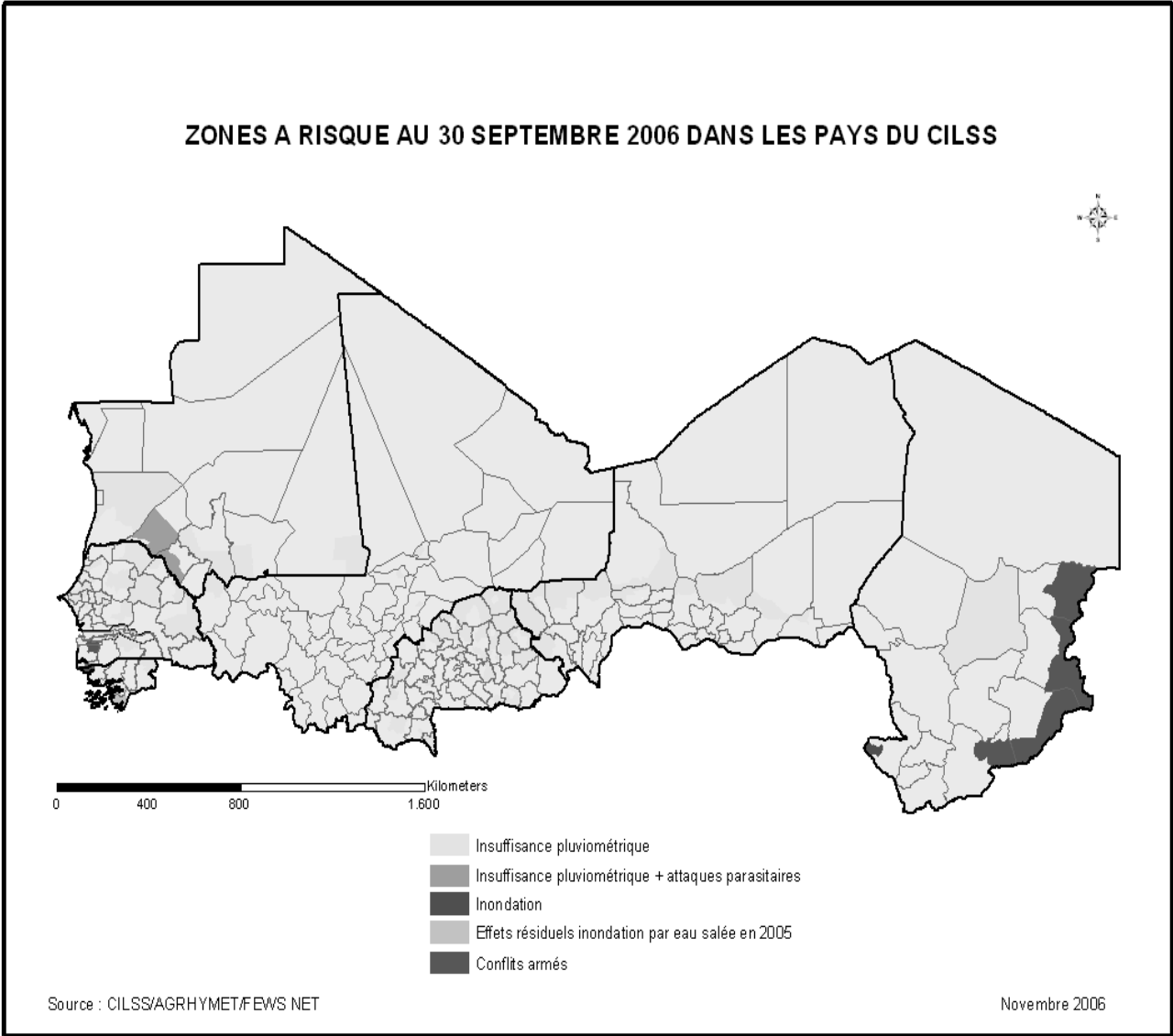


Source: CILSS/AGRHYMET

2.2 At-risk zones and actions undertaken and/or envisaged

Despite the fairly good grain availability in the region, production in some areas was affected by the delay in seedling growth and the break in the rains after 10 September. Areas like these can be found in all the region's countries and information mechanisms are studying the situation in-depth in order to better target the population groups affected, define their needs and the appropriate actions to be taken.

Map 1: At-risk zones as on 30 September 2006 in CILSS member countries.



The table below shows the various areas identified in October in the Sahel's countries as being vulnerable:

Country	Cyclically deficit areas	Number of villages or estimated population
Burkina Faso	Several departments of the Sahel, the North-Centre, North and provinces	6,500 farmers but definite figures to be determined after assessment.
Cape Verde	Arid areas in the Fogo Islands, Santo Antao, Santiago, Sao Nicolau, Boa Vista and Maio	212 risk-prone areas with 92,305 inhabitants
The Gambia	Casamance refugees' host area	6,000 households in 46 villages along the border with Senegal
Guinea Bissau	Following areas: Pitche, Pirada, Biombo, Tite, Empada, Catio, Bedanda, Cacine and Sao Domingo for Casamance refugees	<i>To be clarified</i>
Mali	Mopti region (Wadouba, Dirma); Kayes region (Djelebou, Sahel, Karakoro and Koussané); Timbuktu region (Kondi)	<i>To be clarified</i>
Mauritania	Bassikounou area, Affolé in H. El Garbi, border strip in Aftout, Walo area (Brakna, Gorgol), northern Trarza and northern enclaves.	<i>To be clarified</i>
Niger	Eastern Tillabéry region and northern part of the country's agricultural region	<i>To be clarified</i>
Senegal	Matam area (Matam-Linguère-Tambacounda triangle); Casamance; Kaffrine, Podor and Bambey Departments; Northeastern and Eastern stretches of the country.	<i>To be clarified</i>
Chad	Batha, Kanem, BET, flooded areas in Léré, Djouf Al Ahmar Department and border regions in conflict areas (Darfour and CAR)	<i>To be clarified</i>

With regard to the food situation, participants at the meeting found certain shortcomings in the identification of at-risk zones and vulnerable population groups. In this connection, two recommendations made during the meeting are worth mentioning:

- Refine the analysis of at-risk zones by adding the number of at-risk people as well as the actions required to deal with the problem. The organisation of a joint CILSS - FEWS NET – FAO – WFP mission to help national bodies (Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau and Chad) identify at-risk zones and vulnerable populations. An analysis of the Dawanu market will be necessary. These analyses would have to be carried out in early 2007, well before the West African food security follow-up meeting scheduled for March.
- Compare the interventions of States and partners and the at-risk zones identified by national food situation monitoring bodies (by superimposing them). Such an analysis is important because experience has shown that in some cases, food-insecurity related interventions do not always take place in the at-risk zones identified by national food situation monitoring systems.

2.3 *Situation in coastal countries*

Agricultural production, particularly cereal production, has been deemed satisfactory in other non CILSS member West African countries, such as **Benin, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire** and **Liberia**. Agricultural produce availability is therefore fairly satisfactory throughout the West African region. In **Nigeria**, the projected cereal production for 2006 was 27,899,000 tonnes as against 25,870,000 tonnes in 2005 and 24,178,000 tonnes in 2004. This production level represents an almost 8% increase over the previous agricultural campaign. During the 2006-2007 agricultural campaign, tapioca production in Nigeria was estimated at around 46 million tonnes – almost a 10% increase over the 2005-2006 agricultural campaign. The good production level is due to the positive agricultural and meteorological conditions prevailing during the campaign. In Nigeria's case in particular, the good production level is also an outcome of the federal agricultural policy of supporting farmers by promoting the use of mechanisation, and providing improved seeds as well as other inputs (fertilisers, plant safety products, etc.). In fact, the federal government and some Nigerian states have made considerable efforts to ensure that fertilisers are available on time and accessible at subsidised prices.

However, the avian flu had a devastating effect on poultry production and consumption in Nigeria. The fall in demand for poultry led to a reduction in the demand for corn, which accounts for 80% of the poultry industry's consumption. The demand for corn as animal feed is estimated at 1,100,000 tonnes in Nigeria. If rapid measures are not taken to help the poultry industry recover, the instability of corn prices could eventually lead to a drop in production.

2.4 *Evolution of cereal and cattle market price and food prospects in 2007*

The 2005 campaign was marked by an unprecedented increase in cereal prices in the region. But the good cereal production recorded during the 2005-2006 campaign led prices to fall in August-September 2005. Two other important factors also influenced the regional market's operations – on the one hand, an improvement in Naira-CFA Franc parity and, on the other, the avian flu (with outbreaks in Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire), which led to a fall in corn demand in the sub-region.

This situation led to a decline in price that continued until December 2005 and beyond in some markets. Prices then stabilised during the year, despite the late start of the agricultural campaign in the Sahel in July 2006. The cereal surpluses produced and low price levels made it possible to re-build food security stocks that had been exhausted following the problems faced in 2005.

The record production in the 2006 growing season contributed to strengthening market supply levels and to a reduction in prices. In September 2006, main market prices fell appreciably, following the considerable increase in cereal supplies. Towards the end of November 2006, in Mali, corn prices fell by 40-60%, depending on the market, in the Koutiala circle. In Burkina Faso, there was an exceptional fall in cereal prices between July and November 2006, estimated at 138% for field corn in Ndorola, 90% for field sorghum and 89% for local millet in Gassan. Over the same period, millet prices fell by 47% in Maradi, Niger.

However, it must be pointed out that the current price level is clearly lower than for the same period in the previous year, though it is nonetheless close to the five-year average in most markets.

In other non-Sahel West African countries too, in particular Nigeria and Benin, cereal prices have fallen as compared to the previous year. However, current cereal prices in Nigeria are considerably higher than those observed in certain border markets in Niger. In Maradi (Niger) for instance, millet is 20% less expensive than in Kano (Nigeria) on the regional Dawanu market. The situation has improved due to the good harvests recorded in Maradi, better Naira-CFA Franc parity and the storage policy adopted by the Nigerian authorities for greater food security and in support of farmers' incomes. Thus, there could be a reversal in flows between the Sahel and Nigeria, in particular if the Indian demand for cereal for the brewing industry is confirmed in Nigeria.

With regard to cattle, it appears that cattle sale prices appreciated considerably in the Sahel's markets. Cattle/cereal terms of trade were in favour of cattle breeders. Three important factors contributed to this situation – the availability of cattle feed, the absence of cattle diseases and sustained demand from coastal countries.

In 2007, regional market trends should be comparable to those witnessed in 2006, with stable prices, close to the average cereal price, guaranteeing better accessibility for the most disadvantaged groups. With regard to cattle, prices could go higher than their 2006 levels and the last five-year average. However, these trends could accelerate or slow down depending on several factors, the most important ones – calling for close monitoring – being the following:

- Changes in CFA/Naira/Dollar parity
- Changes in corn demand in the poultry sector
- Cereal stock situation and prices on the Dawanu market in Nigeria
- Trends in restocking national food security stocks in Sahelian countries
- Application level of the Nigerian federal government's food storage policy
- Cash crop production and trading levels.

At the end of the discussions, the participants recommended that the price and market analyses should be refined, taking into consideration the prices paid to producers and the effects of price variations on consumers. Such analyses would help clarify the two aspects prices entail, i.e. revenue for producers and expenditure for consumers.

In the light of the facts above, the recommendations made were the following:

- To continue to support food stock building (public, traders, producers, cooperative) in order to control any drastic fall in prices, which could have a negative impact on agricultural production
- To enable producers' groups to have access to lines of credit (micro-finance) in order to strengthen structural food security
- To improve agro-pastoral product trade and transfer conditions by removing all obstacles related to the free circulation of goods, persons and services
- To ensure regular monitoring of cereal and cattle markets and cross-border flows.

2.5 Food aid in the Sahel, West Africa and the rest of the world

In 2005-2006, all the food aid provided by donors in different forms (cereals, local purchases and other imported products) to the CILSS countries was estimated at 348,000 tonnes, representing a reduction of 80,000 tonnes (19%) as compared to the previous campaign. Food aid in terms of imported cereals, not including local purchases, was estimated at 270,000 tonnes. 45% of the food aid provided to Sahelian countries was distributed through the WFP. In 2005-2006, Niger was again the main beneficiary of food aid to the CILSS

countries, but there was a 34% reduction in the quantities received, as was the case for all Sahelian countries, except Mali. Food aid in the form of cereal supplies during the 2005-2006 campaign consisted of direct transfers (59%), local purchases (13%) and triangular purchases (28%). WFP provided 88% of emergency food aid and 37% of project assistance. The United States contributed 58% project assistance, of which almost two-thirds was for sale, 35% for emergency aid and 31% for programme assistance. Japan provided 62% of the programme assistance, while Germany offered 7% emergency aid and 5% project assistance.

The USA has planned to initiate reforms in PL 480 criteria and operating rules in early 2007. PL 480 defines the law regulating the food aid provided by the USA. Hence, the team responsible for preparing the reform proposals will have to take into consideration the principles set out by the Sahel's Food Aid Charter, particularly with regard to the emphasis on local purchases or food aid substitution, for instance, by funding food security support measures (EWS and SIM or information systems, cereal banks, etc.), as the European Union had done in the 1980s.

3. Regional Food Crisis Prevention Mechanism and monitoring tools for the food situation

3.1 Monitoring West Africa's cross-border markets: Results of joint missions on monitoring cross-border markets in West Africa

Following the food crisis that struck Niger and other Sahelian countries in 2005, several intervening parties raised the issue of the role played by cross-border markets and trade in the difficulties recorded in access to cereals. Due to the situation, a joint SWAC/OECD, WFP, FEWS NET, CILSS, OCHA, UNICEF and RESIMAO mission was undertaken in the Katsina Kanon Maradi zone (K²M) in order to:

- Better understand cross-border cattle and cereal trading and its impact on food security
- Prepare a Niger-Nigeria cross-border cooperation procedure, if necessary, for these two systems (and food security).

The mission's report, published in July 2006, confirmed that food security in the region was henceforth influenced by several factors and situations that were not limited to any single national territory. Cereal markets develop in the light of several various factors, such as world cotton prices, the euro/dollar exchange rate, oil prices, etc. This means that the food security issue in the region needs to be broached on the basis of an integrated, regional approach.

The mission's report also stressed the important role that the local cross-border level could play in the prevention and management of food crises.

In order to make the best use of the report's conclusions and its synergy with the region's cross-border trade monitoring system, the SWAC/OECD, the CILSS, FEWS NET and WFP will continue to investigate, in order to:

- Mobilise local actors and national and international decision-makers about the dual cross-border cooperation/food security approach
- Determine the local implantation of the future cross-border trade and market monitoring system in the K²M zone

- Initiate a first cross-border food crisis prevention and management initiative
- Define concrete actions on the ground for food security through food crisis management and prevention.

A joint operation and action plan to be implemented in order to achieve these objectives was presented to the participants. It included the following core activities:

- January 2007: Joint political awareness-raising mission for informing, sensitising and mobilising national authorities and Donor Agency representatives in Niger and Nigeria;
- February 2007: Joint technical mission in the Kano-Katsina-Maradi region to inform the various actors (local actors, public and private sector actors) about the progress achieved in the K²M initiative and at the same time, to enable local actors to discuss, amend and validate cross-border cooperation initiatives recommended by the July 2006 mission report. The mission would also help identify key actors and, with their participation, define their role within a cross-border market and trade monitoring mechanism. It would also explore other local food-security related initiatives to be taken into consideration and would explore the logistics involved in holding a cross-border workshop to validate the actions to be taken;
- End February 2007: Organisation of a cross-border workshop bringing together all the partners and actors. It would offer the opportunity to:
 - Present, discuss, complement and validate the mission report with local actors
 - Present and discuss the CILSS/FEWS NET/WFP market and trade monitoring initiative
 - Listen to the proposals made by local actors on the issue of: *“How the local cross-border level can contribute to food crisis prevention and management and project implementation”*
 - Present and discuss cross-border cooperation initiatives
 - Define tangible ways of including the food crisis prevention and management theme in the Niger-Nigeria Joint Commission’s usual agenda and that of other forums or initiatives
 - Decide upon the operational measures to be taken in the short term with regard to food crisis prevention and management at local level and project implementation through cross-border cooperation.

At the end of the process, a document on a joint cross-border food security cooperation programme and plan of operations will be developed and distributed.

In addition to the K²M initiative, the CILSS – with the support of the *Mission Française d’Appui* au CILSS (MIFRAC, a French CILSS support mission) and in collaboration with the WFP/ODD and FEWS NET – initiated a diagnostic study on the cross-border systems and markets, to develop a proposal for a cross-border trade monitoring mechanism. The report on Stage 1 was discussed in Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) on 4-6 December 2006 by the Steering Committee (CILSS, FEWS NET, MIFRAC, WFP/ODD, RESIMAO) set up for this purpose. The initial results broached:

- The cross-border trade monitoring mechanism’s institutional implantation
- Cereals and cattle would be among the first products to be monitored, followed by oil seeds and tubers.
- Around fifty markets have been identified for data collection.

The Stage 2 report will have to take into consideration the Steering Committee's amendments and observations before the regional validation workshop is held, in early 2007.

3.2 *Forecasting upcoming food crises*

The Projected Food Crisis Calendar (*CPCA - Calendrier Prévisionnel des Crises Alimentaires*) developed by the AP3A and SVS projects (projects executed by the CILSS, through the AGRHYMET Regional Centre's activities), is a new approach to early warning systems in the Sahel region. The principle is based on conceptual development (the information requested and not the information available) related to technological development, by going from the classical monitoring of the agricultural campaign to the forecasting of food crises.

On the operational level, the CPCA has set up:

1. A "reference framework" for users (emergency aid decision-makers and Multi-disciplinary Working Group or MWG executives) that takes crisis typology into consideration (spatial level and risk factors), along with the information format and planning (information targeted according to the crisis typology). The CPCA is based on the convergence and integration of the results of analyses: CILSS documents, those from other sources and new analysis documents. The framework aims at determining at-risk zones and is a tool used to identify vulnerable zones.
2. A "web-based information engine" enabling the dissemination of and easy access to appropriate information. This tool would enable dynamic access to information on the food security status by two users' communities (emergency aid decision-makers and technical executives with different levels of technical knowledge and information requirements). It is an integrated system with two usage levels – the first meeting decision-makers' needs and the second enabling technicians to conduct analyses.

For the participants, the Food Crisis Calendar was to be associated with the "lines of defence" theory which had been developed by the Network and which stipulates that responses to food crisis responses should be based on the four following priority levels:

- Local (farmers' stocks, cereal banks)
- National (inter-regional trade, local purchases, national food security stock)
- Regional (regional trade with surplus countries, triangular operations), and, finally,
- International (imported food aid). At this level, donors' response times should not be underestimated.

With harmonisation and coordination in mind, several participants stressed the need to conduct a new census of the various information systems and their methodologies, specificities and commonalities, as had been done a few years ago within the framework of the FCPN's SISAS Working Group.

3.3 *Taking into account nutritional aspects as regards monitoring and early warning*

Sahelian countries have witnessed record rates of chronic malnutrition. Moreover, the trend has increased gradually in the sub-region over the last twenty years. Chronic malnutrition leads, in particular, to delayed infant growth (35% or higher prevalence on an average), which increases the so-called "visible" malnutrition – essentially acute malnutrition (i.e. clinical malnutrition) that leads to death without rapid intervention (medical intervention, for instance).

The Early Warning Systems (EWS) set up in CILSS member countries do not operate in the same way (expert systems, household surveys, different variables collected at the grassroots administrative level, etc.). They are based on their ability to provide decision-making support information at the right time, to help determine appropriate and targeted measures. The nutritional crisis in Niger illustrated the difficulty in providing reliable information on the basis of a probabilistic food insecurity risk. During the last Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN) meeting, held in Paris in December 2005, one of the final recommendations was aimed at improving the functioning of EWS, notably by envisaging ways of including nutritional information in the surveillance and warning criteria, among other data. Field missions in seven CILSS member countries were organised to develop orientations for the implementation of this initiative. Following these missions, the following observations were made:

- Food security and health/nutrition information sources are available in all the countries visited (Demographic and Health Survey –EDS/DHS, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey -MICS, household poverty surveys, health data, but also regional or micro-economic data published by NGOs), but the data is not put into perspective, nor is any causal analysis done.
- Due to the lack of routine seasonal nutritional data collection, there is no information available on trends in acute malnutrition rates during the lean period or during crises, when the difficulty in clearly defining the notion of “seriousness” and initiating the appropriate emergency measures.

It is therefore important to define and harmonise nutritional indicators, along with proposing warning levels as well as appropriate actions for each situation. It will only be possible to use nutritional indicators for triggering warnings by dissociating nutritional monitoring (cross-cutting study based on monitoring and assessing long series of data) from early warning mechanisms (study of current data), and the quality of monitoring data collected determining the feasibility of the early warning process. This implementation of this initiative would refer to the NUSAPPS approach (Nutrition, Food Security and Public Policies in the Sahel), based on a technical, scientific and programme-based partnership aimed at the analysis and pooling of responses.

There is a lack of any long-term vision or steering of the various interventions in the region's countries today. They are not clearly reflected in policies, if there are any, or even if they are under review. In order to incorporate them at policy level, it is recommended that actions led by the CILSS in support of the countries should:

- Improve food security analyses, including those relating to nutrition, by putting all of the various data collected in this regard into perspective notably the causal factors;
- Provide the countries with data collection and nutritional analyses' protocols that would inform public policies on poverty alleviation.

This initiative, led by the CILSS in collaboration with the IRD, WAHO and HKI, shall begin as early as 2007 with funding obtained through the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ECHO, FEWS NET, FAO and WFP have expressed their interest in participating in this initiative.

The FCPN meeting also offered the opportunity to present other initiatives related to nutritional issues. The WFP thus made a presentation on child malnutrition prevention and care in the Sahel. The key elements in this presentation addressed mortality indicators in Africa. The infant mortality rate in the Sahel is estimated at 216 per thousand – the highest in the world. 56% of these deaths take place before children reach their first birthday. Rates of

chronic malnutrition are widespread and very high. Acute malnutrition rates in children under 5 years of age are as high as 18% in some Sahelian countries, whereas the critical level according to WHO is 15%.

Faced with this situation, the WFP project aims at designing and implementing integrated nutritional programmes for children under 3 years old, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The programme will be implemented by adopting a multi-sectoral approach based on prevention and rehabilitation. Health, ambulatory and/or community-based approaches will be promoted. WFP also intends to stimulate partnerships between Governments, the United Nations system, NGOs, financial partners and communities.

4. Assessment of the implementation of FCPN's recommendations and web-site development

4.1 Summary assessment of the implementation of recommendations

In order to operationalise the monitoring and implementation of these recommendations, as proposed during the Extraordinary FCPN meeting in April 2006, the 112 recommendations were reviewed and re-worked to include the following factors: (i) reformulation of certain recommendations to make them more accurate and feasible, (ii) elimination of repetitions, and (iii) elimination of recommendations not falling under the FCPN's domain. Thus, the number of activities related to the recommendations fell from 112 to 31. Considerable efforts were made to ensure that these recommendations were sufficiently accurate so as to be translated into concrete actions, while at the same time identifying responsibilities in order to simplify the monitoring of their implementation. They were grouped under 5 headings¹:

- ✓ Food situation monitoring - analysis methods and tools
- ✓ Mobilisation of financial resources
- ✓ National and regional policies
- ✓ Political and institutional mobilisation and
- ✓ Information and communications

The assessment of the implementation of the recommendations since April 2006 revealed that more than 10 of the 31 recommendations were being or had already been implemented (see Annex on the Assessment of the implementation of recommendations for more details). A summary reviewing the recommendations under each of the 5 themes was presented.

4.1.1 Food situation analysis and monitoring methods and tools

The recommendations under this theme were based on four main methodological tools:

- ✓ Implementation of the harmonised framework for analysing vulnerability and the food situation
- ✓ Taking markets into account, in particular, monitoring prices and assessing the trade in agricultural products
- ✓ Review and assessment of the Food Aid Charter and the Statistical Data Quality Charter
- ✓ Training and capacity building of national departments.

Three of the four activities above are already underway. The review and assessment of the Food Aid Charter could not be done in 2006 due to the lack of funds.

¹ A complete, detailed document on all the recommendations and the progress achieved in their implementation is available upon request

A harmonised vulnerability analysis framework: Tests have been conducted in three countries – Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Three more countries are undergoing the tests: Cape Verde, Mauritania and Senegal. Specific activities such as the harmonisation of loss rates, seed estimation and milling coefficients to be applied to cereals have been undertaken. A presentation and validation workshop was held in Dakar in July 2006. For the first time, Niger started including the peri-urban population in its surveys of 12,000 households.

Senegal's experience was presented to illustrate the transition from cereal balance sheets to food balance sheets. The tool is based on a certain number of products (about 40) – vegetable products, animal products and beverages. Their experience was shared with the other CILSS member countries and coastal countries in order to encourage them to apply the same procedure. Four more countries were preparing their projected 2006-2007 food balance-sheets and the results would be available in March 2007: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Cape Verde.

Consideration of markets and trading assessments: FEWS NET, WFP, the CILSS and the SWAC are also carrying out other pilot experiments to assess cereal and cattle trading between Niger and Nigeria in the Maradi-Katsina-Kano zone. The SWAC has already conducted studies on cross-border trade between Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire (Sikasso-Korhogo-Bobo Dioulasso zone). The CILSS and the IFDC/MISTOWA/CILSS project are jointly holding two meetings per year, bringing economic operators together. The CILSS has also conducted other analyses in cross-border areas (Malanville-Benin, Kamba-Nigeria and Gaya in Niger; Cinkansé-Togo, Bakwu-Ghana, Bitou-Burkina Faso; etc.).

Food Aid Charter and statistical data quality charter: Due to the lack of funds, this activity could not be undertaken. Should the Charter's contents be reviewed or should the communication on the Charter be improved, particularly among the States, donor agencies and other actors who are not FCPN members? A consensus was reached on the basis of three factors:

- Carry out an assessment of the application of the Charter's principles in at least two countries in 2007 – Niger and Mauritania
- Review the various previous assessments. The review would be used as a basis for re-working the charter in the future, if necessary, and
- Ensure widespread dissemination and information about the charter, particularly in non-signatory countries that nonetheless contribute to food aid in West Africa.

The United States envisages revising, at the beginning of 2007, the PL480, a law which governs, among others, American food security. It was proposed that the negotiators be reminded of the principles of the Food Aid Charter (signed by the United States) so that they could be taken into account.

As for the statistical data quality charter, the reference document was finalised and dispatched to the agricultural statistics departments of the various countries for application. The process is underway in Burkina Faso. The results will be available in 2007.

Capacity building of national survey and early warning departments: With the help of USAID funding, the CILSS provided its support in 2006 in order to breathe new life in the Gambia's agricultural survey mechanism. For almost 5 years now, FEWS NET has been providing training on the use of satellite images and price analysis tools in the 5 countries in which it works.

4.1.2 Mobilisation of financial resources

Several CILSS member countries have made a remarkable effort to incorporate the funding of national agricultural surveys in the national budget. Of the nine CILSS member countries, seven regularly include agricultural campaign monitoring costs in their national budgets. Guinea Bissau does not yet do so. Niger mentioned that several partners (including Germany and Switzerland) make a financial contribution for agricultural surveys and SIMs for EWSs. However, some countries continue to face difficulties. National budget allocations for agricultural surveys are difficult to mobilise or are received late, after the production assessment period is over. Moreover, some countries still do not have the equipment necessary to ensure better information analysis and processing.

4.1.3 National and regional development policies for sustainable food security

Some of the activities planned under this theme are being undertaken, in particular the analysis on re-building food security stocks. The Institut du Sahel (CILSS) is overseeing the analysis in order to gain a better understanding of various actors' performance (producers, private operators and public agents). The study could serve as a basis for strategic thinking on analysing food security stock rebuilding. Other activities have not yet been implemented. These are, in particular:

- The definition of a national security stock acceptable to all the actors involved in food security
- The establishment of a mechanism favouring village stock-building and encouraging stock building by traders.

4.1.4 Political and institutional mobilisation

Two of the activities planned within the framework of political mobilisation could not be undertaken in 2006. These were:

- The organisation of an awareness-building mission on the application of the UEMOA's and ECOWAS' regulatory texts, and
- The organisation of awareness-building missions to the States to encourage them to provide the necessary information in a timely fashion.

It was proposed that ECOWAS be the institution responsible for implementing these two recommendations. No further details could be obtained on their implementation as no ECOWAS representative was present during the meeting.

Other activities – such as the organisation of an extraordinary Council of Ministers' meeting in case of crises, as well as the issue of monitoring State decisions that could impact on markets – should to be undertaken if required.

4.1.5 Information and communications

Some communication-related activities have to be undertaken from time to time, depending on the circumstances. These include, in particular:

- Organising a press conference in the event of a crisis

- Disseminating the CILSS, UEMOA and ECOWAS policy strategy document
- Dispatching reports on technical meetings on the food situation to the concerned Ministers
- Organising a special Food Crisis Prevention Network meeting in case of a food crisis.

Other activities underway include, in particular:

- Setting up a Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN) web-site (see Section 5 for more details)
- Making better use of the international press for better food crisis information and management. Indeed, a Radio France Internationale (RFI) journalist also contributed to the FCPN's work. A press conference bringing together major international media organisations based in Rome was organised. It provided an opportunity to inform the press about the campaign's results.

During the meeting, it was recommended that the consistency between donors' policies and actions and those of the State be analysed. Such an analysis would enable development partners' interventions to be sustainable. In this regard, West African States needed to define clearer guidelines.

4.2 *The FCPN web-site*

The food crisis in some Sahelian and West African countries in 2005 once again highlighted the information and communication difficulties that hamper rapid responses and decision-making. Moreover, conflicting assessments of the situation damage it further.

Several initiatives were undertaken by different actors after the crisis to better understand the situation. Why did a food crisis occur yet again? Was this crisis any different to previous crises in the region? What were the shortcomings in communication and decision-making? What were the nature and the extent of the crisis? The last question led to considerable controversy, with no clear answers about the actual situation being available at the appropriate time in order to facilitate decisions and actions to help vulnerable population groups.

It was in this context that the Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) decided to combine their efforts to set up and manage a web-site on Food Security and Food Crises based on the recommendations made during the smaller Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN) meeting held in April 2006 in Paris.

The web-site aims at meeting 4 objectives:

- ✓ Improving information dissemination in order to facilitate decision-making
- ✓ Creating a space for shared information
- ✓ Establishing an on-line documentation area
- ✓ Providing a link between the various sources.

As a facility providing permanent monitoring and large-scale dissemination of information, the web-site aims at becoming the primary source for all individuals, organisations or institutions in search of reliable and objective information on the food situation in the region.

The web-site was developed in three stages:

- Review of information on food crisis prevention and management in West Africa available on the Internet

- Production of a conceptual note along with specifications for developing the site
- Choice of technologies to be used and the technical construction of the web-site based on the conceptual note and specifications.

A review of information available on the Internet helped define the value added by the FCPN's web-site as well as its usefulness for the Network's members and other partners concerned by food security. In the light of these preliminary analyses, the key purpose of the FCPN's website would be: gathering, synthesising, capitalising on and ensuring availability of information, covering a wider range of themes and a greater geographical area. The web-site's architecture and organisation were presented and discussed during the meeting.

In terms of its organisation, two options were presented:

1) The minimum level, which includes the following activities:

- ✓ Continuous monitoring and regular synthesis of information on food security in the region
- ✓ Special invitees every month and regular interviews with food security actors and experts
- ✓ Translation of summaries
- ✓ Responses to users' questions
- ✓ *Pressroom* Management
- ✓ Web-site maintenance and administration.

2) The ideal level, which would add the following aspects to the minimum option:

- ✓ Selective analyses and theme-based studies
- ✓ Responses to questions posted on the website and management of exchange and discussion forums
- ✓ Updates of synthesis data on country profiles.

In terms of the web-site's architecture, the main observations made during the debate were on the addition of a "**training**" section on the food situation follow-up tools and methods. This section could be used to place training courses online. The other point of discussion was the addition of a section on "**Job vacancies**".

Further, the participants made the following suggestions concerning the contents:

- Regularly offer the Network's former members the opportunity to express themselves and share their experiences, thereby enriching the FCPN's records
- Avoid information overload on the web-site in order to ensure that the information provided is used by policy decision-makers
- Find a decentralised information production mechanism with contribution from different countries
- Bear in mind the web-site's operational and life costs, and therefore the issue of its sustainability
- Enable interactivity with different partners' web-sites.

Several institutions present at the meeting expressed their willingness to cooperate and contribute to the web-site, in particular: the European Commission, WFP, FAO, FEWS NET and France.

5. Other food security initiatives

5.1 *Triangular cooperation and combating desertification for poverty reduction in the Sahel*

A presentation was made on the experience of the triangular approach in the implementation of the Desertification Control for Poverty Reduction (DC PR) Fund. It was highly appreciated by the Network's members insofar as it helped improve the living conditions of vulnerable population groups in the Sahel. It is based on the following principles: participatory Micro Project (MP) identification and preparation, the approval of MPs at the grassroots' level, ownership by local communities, support by an intermediary consultative body, capitalisation and dissemination of lessons learned and standardisation of procedures among countries and regions.

This experience is based on a well-formulated institutional framework, going from the local to the national and sub-regional level, with a large number of actors participating in implementation. The main beneficiaries are in villages: village and local producers' associations, cooperatives, women's associations, villages or village groups, socio-professional associations and local governments. A ZARESE (Zone at high Social and Environmental Risk) Financial Management Committee (CZGF - Comité ZARESE de Gestion Financière) defines local rural development guidelines, approves of the MPs it wishes to implement and ensures local-level follow-up. With the help and support of partnerships between NGOs and Producer Organisations and decentralised cooperation, the CZGFs coordinate the funds' activities at the ZARESE level. They promote local consultation and establish local development guidelines, define the fund's intervention priorities and select the MPs to be funded by the fund. The National Steering Council (CNP - Conseil National de Pilotage) defines micro-project eligibility criteria and examines their consistency with national sectoral policies and national investment action plans. With the support of the technical secretariat, the CSRP has been entrusted with coordinating, promoting, guiding and monitoring the fund at the regional level, as well as assessing MPs in the field. The initiative was designed on the basis of the relationship between the Vulnerability – Desertification – Poverty trio. It also set up a good support/consultancy mechanism for preparing MPs and for innovations.

MPs of almost Euros 3.75 million were approved and executed over a two-year period. Approval is underway for new MPs of about Euros 3 million. It takes about 1 to 4 months between the submission of MPs and the signing of the agreement with the beneficiary.

It emerged from various discussions that Producer Organisations truly appreciated the experience and felt that it met their expectations in terms of project design and the accountability of end actors. The meeting recommended that the initiative be pursued and requested the CILSS and its partners to undertake the necessary advocacy and sensitisation actions among the concerned governments, in order to meticulously prepare the internalisation and appropriation processes necessary for such mechanisms, which meet the demands expressed on the ground. The meeting asked that a special emphasis be placed on the sustainability of the MP fund for the well-being of the concerned Sahelian populations. The advocacy approach promoted by this activity seemed necessary, given the lessons drawn from the Canadian MP Support Fund for controlling desertification. A great deal of enthusiasm and interest had been shown in the project initially, both by beneficiaries and policy decision-makers, but it all lost momentum once Canadian funding ended.

5.2 Presentation of SARDI²

The CILSS and its technical and financial partners, particularly FAO, WFP and IFAD, launched the SARDI (Sahel Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative) initiative. It is in line with the NEPAD's agricultural sector initiative aimed at the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy in the Sahelian region through short-term actions, including food crises risk reduction and rehabilitation, as well as medium and long-term actions to improve farm productivity, providing impetus to agricultural markets and support regional integration policies. The following are the results expected from the SARDI initiative:

- Improvement in water supply (small-scale irrigation as well as other water management techniques) and land management
- Significant increase in production capacities as well as produce diversification
- Implementation of income-generating activities for the very poorest
- Setting up safety stocks to be managed at local level
- Improvement in nutritional status as well as market access (roads, market infrastructure)
- Stabilisation of regional markets in the Sahel and West Africa
- Setting up an Early Warning System in well-targeted zones as well as risk management measures (micro credit, village storage, crop insurance).

5.3 Land tenure and food security in West Africa

The presentation entitled "Land tenure and Food Security" recalled the objectives and results of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) organised by the FAO in March 2006 in Brazil. This presentation provided an opportunity to discuss land-related constraints, issues and challenges in West Africa. It emerged, in particular, that:

- Agrarian reform and rural development are essential for social cohesion, food security and poverty reduction
- Land tenure situations vary greatly according to countries
- Effective action must begin at the local and national level through dialogue and negotiations, and
- Political will is important to bring about change.

The trends with regard to land are its scarcity, a rise in land-related disputes, migration, inequalities and vulnerable groups, informal land transactions, unregulated emerging real estate markets that may further weaken vulnerable populations, and institutional and legal reforms. These ongoing changes in the land sector could lead to breakdowns if the appropriate attendant measures are not taken.

The FAO and the SWAC are working together on analysing "West Africa's changing rural landscape". This analysis is one of the first examples of the work being done on monitoring rural development and agrarian reform indicators, as recommended by the above-mentioned Conference. The document will be published within the framework of the Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa being developed by the SWAC. The participants confirmed the importance of these issues for the region's food security, illustrated in particular by land

² Sahel Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative

disputes and disputes between shepherds and farmers. Some of the participants suggested that the recommendations made in Praia in 1994, and reiterated in Praia+9 in 2003 in Bamako, and in the recent Praia+9 Assessment Workshop held in Bamako in 2006, be taken into account. More specifically, the FAO proposed to Network members to work together on the relationship between land, food security and vulnerability. In addition, it was recommended that the land issue should be included in the FCPN meeting's agenda on a regular basis (for example, once every two years).

6. Venue and items proposed to be included in the agenda for the forthcoming 2007 annual meeting

At the invitation of Mr Jean-Pierre Haklin of the European Commission, **Brussels was suggested as the venue for the next meeting to be held at the end of November 2007.** It was suggested that a 3-day meeting be held, to have enough time to examine the agenda items closely, as well as to better understand the host institution – the European Commission.

Several items were proposed for inclusion on the agenda:

- 1) Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), food security and production in West Africa
- 2) Relationship between malnutrition and food security
- 3) Appraisal of SIM/EWS funding
- 4) Assessment of the application of the Food Aid Charter's principles in Mali, Niger and Mauritania. Such an assessment should be done soon enough for the results to be presented during the Brussels meeting in 2007
- 5) Retrospective review and conduct of donors who did not sign the Food Aid Charter
- 6) Markets and access to food. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of the notion of markets. Prices will be viewed both from the perspective of income (for producers) and that of expenditure (for consumers)
- 7) Standardisation of intervention mechanisms for vulnerable groups.

The establishment of an Organising Committee to prepare for the next FCPN meeting was proposed, to ensure better organisation. This Committee would consist of the CILSS, the FAO, FEWS NET, the SWAC and the European Commission.

In addition, it was suggested that the analysis of the review of the implementation of recommendations should be addressed first during forthcoming FCPN meetings. Furthermore, it was proposed that the annual meeting should be held in November rather than in December, in order to facilitate better participation by everyone as the month of December was often too busy.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The annual FCPN meeting provides an excellent opportunity for an exchange of views on the Sahel and West Africa's food situation among the Network's members.

With an estimated production of **15,062,600 tonnes** in the 2006-2007 agricultural campaign, the participants realised that a **cereal production record** had been set in the Sahel as compared to the last thirty years. The production level represented a 3% increase as compared to 2005-2006. Consequently, prices fell sharply in some markets. In Burkina Faso for instance, field corn prices dropped by an estimated 138% between July and November 2006 in Ndorola, by 90% for field sorghum and 89% for local millet in Gassan. **It was a good opportunity to consolidate and even strengthen surplus management gains.** In addition, the good production level made it even more urgent to better understand the dynamics between prices, production, consumption and income, as well as the causes for changes in commodity price trends.

As regards nutrition, the importance of better nutritional status monitoring was stressed. In fact, nutrition entails two aspects: on the one hand, a short-term dimension leading to the confirmation of urgent needs and on the other, a long-term aspect related to fundamental problems (poverty, lack of access to health, education), calling for responses and actions with medium and long-term effects. The meeting point between these two aspects, relevant for the FCPN's work, is a better understanding of the causes of malnutrition.

Another novelty about the meeting that is worth mentioning is the review of the implementation of food security recommendations. The FCPN members were able to note that several recommendations had been or were being implemented. However, it was essential for Network members to remain mobilised and pursue the actions underway, but also to contribute to the other recommendations that had yet to be implemented.

On this account, the institutions present at the meeting had the opportunity to indicate the activities for which they were willing to provide their assistance. For example, FEWS NET reiterated its availability to support efforts for (i) better understanding market operations as well as price dynamics, (ii) gathering information on nutrition and early warnings, and (iii) improving analytical capacities through the harmonised framework for vulnerability analysis. The FAO and FEWS NET, WFP and the French MFA reiterated their willingness to contribute to the work underway for a transition from cereal balance sheets to food balance sheets, nutrition, charter assessment, etc.

7.2 Recommendations

During the meeting, several proposals for action (recommendations) were made by the FCPN members.

At-risk zones. Two proposals were made in this regard:

- On the one hand, it was suggested refining the analysis by indicating the number of persons at risk and the actions necessary to deal with the situation thus diagnosed. The work should be done as early as possible in early 2007 before the food situation follow-up meeting scheduled in March.
- On the other hand, it was important to compare the States' food security intervention zones with the at-risk zones identified by food situation monitoring mechanisms. These analyses are useful because there may sometimes be discrepancies between the States' food security intervention zones and the at-risk zones identified by other actors.

Funding information systems. In order to adjudicate between the participants' divergent views, an appraisal of the funding of Information Systems (SIM/MIS) and Early Warning Systems (EWS) in the Sahel and West Africa was recommended. The purpose would be to identify to what extent the States funded SIM and EWS mechanisms.

Food Aid Charter. Some activities were proposed in 2007:

- Assess the application of the Charter's principles in at least two countries: Niger and Mauritania
- Conduct a review of the different past assessments. The review would be used for a possible re-reading of the Charter, and
- Ensure the widespread dissemination of the Charter and information about it, particularly among non-signatory countries that also provide food aid in West Africa (Japan, Arab countries, etc.)
- Remind negotiators involved in the revision of the PL480 law governing American food aid, of the principles of the Food Aid Charter (signed by the United States). The revision is foreseen for the beginning of 2007.

The FAO, the European Commission, the French Cooperation Agency and FEWS NET expressed their willingness to contribute to these activities.

Consistency between agricultural policies and support for development partners. To ensure that the aspect of sustainability is better incorporated in all activities, an analysis of the consistency between donor activities and national and regional agricultural policies was proposed. The purpose of such an analysis would be to ensure that activities initiated by development partners are taken over and sustained by the States (particularly funding).

Nutrition. Continue analyses for a better consideration of nutritional aspects in food situation monitoring activities and a better understanding of the inherent causes of malnutrition. These concerns are shared by several Network members and call for special collaborative efforts by different organisations.

Land – food insecurity and vulnerability. It was suggested that the CILSS, the SWAC, the FAO, FEWS NET, WFP, etc. work together on the relationship between land, vulnerability and insecurity in the Sahel and West Africa. The Praia (1994), Praia+9 (Bamako meeting in 2003) proceedings, as well as the different meetings that took place in 2006 would serve as a starting point. Indeed, the land issue was becoming increasingly critical and would certainly emerge more frequently in the FCPN's discussions as it strongly influenced the possibilities of improving of production systems and their sustainability, as well as the capacity of households to produce food and feed themselves. Furthermore, it was proposed that the land issue should be included in the FCPN meetings' agenda on a regular basis (once every two years, for instance).

FCPN web-site. Several Network members (FAO, WFP, European Commission, Canadian cooperation agency, FEWS NET and Ibimet) stressed the benefits and usefulness of a website that would be a single, practical place, identifiable by various search engines, for providing information from a large number of web-sites. An upgradeable approach would be the most promising and would guarantee success.

OCHA – FCPN cooperation for consolidated appeals. It was proposed that the CILSS Secretariat and the SWAC contact OCHA to request that the FCPN be consulted in the preparation of consolidated appeals.

The causes and consequences of changes in production price, household consumption and producers' income. The meeting participants recommended a study be carried out focusing on a better understanding of the dynamic between prices, production, consumption, income as well as causes of changes in basic product price trends. This recommendation is based on the fact that sometimes the market produces contradictory effects depending upon the household category. Good harvests for example bring about a drop in prices which means less income for producers whereas consumers can purchase food products at a lower price. An analysis of trends over a long period of time enables a better understanding of the deep-rooted causes and consequences of these (regional and global) price fluctuations on production and household consumption.

Prices paid to producers. Participants at the meeting suggested refining price and market analyses by taking into consideration the prices paid to producers (their income) and the effect of price variations on consumers (consumers' expenditure). ROPPA could contribute to this initiative by making the best use of its member Producer Organisations.

State-level advocacy for internalising micro-projects. The meeting recommended the pursuit of activities concerning the Desertification Control for Poverty Reduction (DC PR) Fund. However, the CILSS and its partners were requested to undertake State-level advocacy activities in order to sensitise the concerned governments so that they prepared the internalisation and appropriation processes meticulously to enable the sustainability of the Micro-Project (MP) Fund. Advocacy was a necessary approach as the Canadian Fund for MPs experience in the DC sector showed that despite the beneficiaries' and political decision-makers' enthusiasm, the activities launched by it were not pursued once Canadian funding ended, due to the lack of resources.

Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting

Tuesday 12 December 2006

↳ **Morning**

08.30 – 09.00 Welcome, Participant registration, Coffee

09.00 – 10.00 **Session 1: Opening and Introduction**

Introduction by Henri Josserand, FAO, Chief, Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS).

Words of welcome by:

- Mr. Musa Mbenga, CILSS, Executive Secretary
- Mr. Carol Voyer, CIDA, Chairperson of the CILSS Partners Committee (CPC)
- Mr. Normand Lauzon, SWAC / OECD, Director
- Mr. Silly Gandega, Minister of Rural Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania/Coordinating Minister of the CILSS

Presentation of the meeting's objectives and programme by:

- Jean Sibiri Zoundi, SWAC/OECD, Head of the Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development Unit

10.00 – 16.00 **Session 2: Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Situation in the Sahel and West Africa**

Chair: Jorge Oliveira, USAID/WA

10.00 – 11.15
(15 minutes per presentation)

- Results of the 2006-2007 agricultural campaign: **Brahima Sidibé**, Head of the Information-Research Department (CILSS/CRA)
- At-risk zones and actions undertaken and/or envisaged in these zones: **Amadou Mactar Konaté**, Food security expert, PREGEC/Instruments Division (CILSS/ES)
- Complementary information on coastal countries: **Henri Josserand**, Head of GIEWS
- Evolution of cereal and cattle market prices and food prospects in 2007: **Salif Sow**, Africa Coordinator (FewsNet) supplemented by **Ibrahim Laouali**, Regional Representative (FewsNet), **Moussa Cissé**, Regional Programme Coordinator in Support of Market Access (CILSS), FAO and WFP
- Food aid in the Sahel and West Africa and overview of global food aid: **Georges Simon** (WFP/INTERFAIS)

11.15 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 13.00 *Debates and comments*

13.00 -14.30 *Lunch*

↪ **Afternoon**

- 14.00 - 15.00 Debates, comments (cont'd) and synthesis on actions to be undertaken
Session 3: Regional Food Crisis Prevention Mechanism and Follow-up Tools of the Food Situation
- Chair:** Dr. Amadou Moustapha, DG, INSAH/CILSS
- 15.00 - 15.15 **Presentation 3.1:** Results of the joint missions on monitoring cross-border markets in West Africa: **Philipp Heinrichs**, Economist (SWAC), **Moussa Cissé** (CILSS), **Ibrahim Laouali** (FewsNet)
- 15.15 – 16.00 Debates and comments
- 16.00 – 16.15 Coffee break
- 16.15 – 16.30 **Presentation 3.2:** Forecasting upcoming crises: **Brahima Koné**, Head of Technical Support Department (AGRHYMET)
- 16.30 – 17.00 Debates and comments
- 17.00 – 17.15 **Presentation 3.3:** Taking into account nutritional aspects as regards monitoring and early warning: **Hervé Delsol**, Ministry of Hydraulique Agriculture and Fishery Resources and **Yves Martin Prével**, Researcher (IRD)
- 17.15 – 18.00 Debates and comments, summary and conclusions by the Chairperson
- 18.30 **Welcome cocktail**

Wednesday 13 December 2006

↪ **Morning**

- Session 4: Assessment of the Implementation of the Recommendations on Food Security**
- Chair:** Normand Lauzon, SWAC, Director
- 09.00 – 09.20 **Presentation 4.1:** Assessment of the implementation of the recommendations on food security from 2000 to 2006 and update on the harmonisation framework
- 09.20 – 10.30 Debates and comments
- 10.30 – 11.30 **Coffee break and Press Conference (Iran Room)**
- 11.30-11.50 **Presentation 4.2:** Presentation of the Independent FCPN web-site project: Implementation situation, content, responsibility of Network members
- By **Matthias Lange** (CILSS/ES) and **Léonidas Hitimana** (SWAC/ OECD)*
- 11.50 – 12.45 Debates and comments; conclusions and synthesis
- 12.45 -14.00 *Lunch*

↳ **Afternoon**

Session 5: Initiatives concerning Food Security, Information and Various Issues

Chair: Musa Mbenga, CILSS, Executive Secretary

14.00 – 14.20 **Presentation 5.1:** Land and food security in West Africa

By the FAO: Stéphane Jost, Paul Matthieu, Henri Josserand

14.20-15.00 Debates and comments

15.00 – 15.20 **Presentation 5.2:** Regional WFP/UNICEF Initiative on taking account of malnutrition in food and non-food assistance programmes in the Sahel: Actions and initiatives underway

By the WFP/UNICEF

15.20 – 16.00 Debates and comments

16.00 – 16.20 **Presentation 5.3:** Triangular cooperation and combating desertification in order to reduce poverty in the Sahel

By **Bonavia** (Director, Italian Cooperation Agency, Burkina Faso), **Dramane Coulibaly** (PRA/SA-LCD-POP DEV Coordinator)

16.20 – 17.00 Debates and comments

17.00-17.45 Questions and comments:

Ex: Exchange of views on the agenda and location of the next FCPN meeting

17.45 – 18.00 Coffee break

18.00-18.30 **Session 6: Closing**

Chair: Roy Stacy (FewsNet)

FAO (Henri Josserand)
CILSS (Musa Mbenga, Executive Secretary)
SWAC (Normand Lauzon, Director)
CPC (Carol Voyer, President of the CILSS Partners Committee)
USAID, Jorge Oliveira
CILSS/INSAH, Moustapha Amadou, General Director, INSAH
Minister Coordinator of the CILSS (Silly Gandéga)
FewsNet (Roy Stacy)

Annex 2: Opening Address by Mr Carol Voyer, CIDA Director

Your Excellency, Mr Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritania

Executive Secretary of the CILSS

Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted at the organisation of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa, which will enable all Network members to look for relevant solutions for sustainable food security in the Sahel and West Africa.

We can all be pleased with the Network's many achievements since our last annual meeting in December 2005 in Paris, i.e.:

- The opening up of the Sahel and West Africa Club, which led to the CILSS/Club tandem's reconstitution to ensure the permanent coordination of the Network.
- The progress achieved by the information mechanisms on cereal and cross-border markets.
- Market studies and cross-border trade in food security in the Sahel and West Africa.
- The consideration of nutritional aspects in Early Warning Systems.
- The confirmation of several coastal countries' ability to present their ex-post cereal balance sheets according to the CILSS model.
- The more or less successful transition from a cereal balance sheet to a food balance sheet by the CILSS member countries.
- The preparation of a web-site model, independent of the Network.

Despite all these achievements, we must acknowledge that a great deal remains to be done for the Network to be more credible, and for it to be the recognised reference for the food situation in West Africa. Indeed:

- The lack of adequate financial support continues to hamper the harmonised framework's implementation process in the CILSS countries.
- The capacity building of national survey mechanisms remains a worrying issue because of the lack of adequate funding.
- The structural aspects of food security are not sufficiently taken into consideration to enable the Network to be as proactive as it wishes in crisis prevention.
- Expanding the Food Aid Charter so that it becomes a real Charter for the Crisis Prevention and Management Network and food aid still remains a pending issue.

I believe that all these items, which are included on the agenda for our discussions over the next two days, will lead to conclusions that should make the Network start down the road to achieving the wishes I had expressed last year. These are:

A network that is credible and well-attended
A network that is operational throughout the year
And a network that enjoys its financial partners' long-term commitment.

Thank you.

Annex 3: Opening Address by Mr Normand Lauzon, Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club

Your Excellency, the Coordinating Minister,
Mr Executive Secretary of the CILSS,
Mr President of the CILSS Partners' Committee,
Dear Colleagues,

After our meetings in December 2005 and April 2006 in Paris, we meet again for the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the FAO for agreeing to host this important meeting. While preparing for the meeting, we had an exchange of views several times with Henri Josserand and his colleagues. On behalf of the Sahel and West Africa Club, I wish to express all our gratitude for their support in organising this meeting.

Most of you will remember that during the Food Crisis Prevention Network's (FCPN) meeting in Paris in December 2005, it was suggested that the CILSS and the Sahel and West Africa Club jointly organise a meeting in the first quarter of 2006 on the food situation in the West African region.

During the December 2005 meeting, it was also suggested that the SWAC should invest greater efforts in the Network's activities, as has been the case during the last three decades. The recommendation was part of a series of others aimed at making our Network dynamic. It was a decisive turning point in our commitment to food security in the Sahel and West Africa.

Thus, and in addition to the Club's commitment to the joint management of the Network with the CILSS, it is currently working with regional actors through common initiatives covering a wide range of activities aimed at sustainable food security in the region. These activities are being undertaken in close collaboration with key food security actors, FCPN members (FEWS NET, FAO, WFP, civil society organisations such as ROPPA, etc.), as well as cooperation agencies and other field actors.

Allow me to give two recent examples that highlight the SWAC's interest in the food security issues:

- In May 2006, the CILSS, the SWAC, FEWS Net, OCHA, WFP, RESIMAO and the UNICEF together visited the Kano-Katsina-Maradi region for about ten days to assess the cross-border dimensions of food security issues along with local actors. This mission by seven FCPN member institutions represents a concrete and operational translation of the joint approach. It is the very essence of networking. The SWAC is well-disposed to pursue the joint work outlined during the May 2006 CILSS/SWAC/FEWS NET/OCHA/WFP/RESIMAO/UNICEF mission, as well as to explore other cross-border cooperation dynamics in food security in the region. The work also raised a lot of interest within the international community represented in Niamey, particularly USAID, the EU and UNDP.
- Quite recently, the SWAC actively contributed to the Forum on Food Sovereignty organised by the "Réseau des Organisations professionnelles de producteurs agricoles" (ROPPA) or Agricultural Producers' Professional Organisations' Network, under the aegis of the President of the Republic of Niger, HE Mr Amadou Tandja. The meeting was held in Niamey on 7-10 November. The Forum provided a framework for

exchanges on the fundamental food security issue (or rather food sovereignty) between producer organisations, policy decision-makers as well as regional organisations such as ECOWAS and UEMOA. During the meeting, the SWAC had the opportunity to point out that food sovereignty should not be envisaged solely at the national level but that it should be based on complementarities among the region's countries. Indeed, the food situation varies according to countries. Therefore, it is necessary to define our understanding of food sovereignty together, while taking relations between producers and consumers into consideration.

These examples also show that food security objectives can be achieved only if at least the two following conditions are met:

- First, it is essential that Network members play an active role, particularly in implementing the recommendations. The Network should not just be a place for exchanging ideas, but must also promote decision-making and concrete actions.
- Second, it is fundamental to conceive of food security in the broadest sense of the term, especially in terms of complementarity among the region's countries. Agricultural production is not the same in all West African countries and intra-regional exchanges could be strengthened for better food security in the region. Burkina Faso's food security admittedly depends on its own production but equally on that of its neighbours such as Ghana. Niger and Chad cannot think of food security without taking Nigeria into account. Thus, food security fits into a much wider framework than a purely national perspective.

Since April 2006, the network has taken a step forward by setting up a monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the food security recommendations issued almost six years ago. Most of you will remember the work done then, which consisted of appraising all food security-related recommendations issued since 2000. The report produced at the time grouped the recommendations into 5 categories: (i) food situation monitoring tools and methods, (ii) financial resource mobilisation, (iii) recommendations concerning national and regional policies, (iv) political and institutional mobilisation, and (v) information and communication. Food crisis prevention is not limited merely to the formulation of recommendations. It also calls for concrete actions as well as the active contribution of all actors. The follow-up of the implementation of these recommendations falls within this framework. In fact, the Network must see to it that the recommendations and suggestions do not remain unheeded.

Apart from getting an update on the food situation, the present meeting will also offer the opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the recommendations by identifying their relevance, the person or institution responsible as well as their implementation costs.

I am convinced that in the last eight months following our last meeting in April 2006 in Paris, several initiatives have been undertaken and the network must take pride in that. To give just one example, the SWAC and the CILSS pooled their human and financial resources to develop the Network's web-site, as proposed in April 2006. I would further like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Mission française de coopération (French Cooperation Mission) at the CILSS, as well as the Embassy of France in Burkina Faso, for providing their financial support for the web-site's development. I do hope that the web-site will be a useful reference tool for objective and reliable information on food security in the region.

Thus, 2006 was marked by sustained joint efforts between the Network's members and these efforts should be pursued. However, although considerable efforts have been made, it is certain that 112 recommendations cannot be implemented in an 8-month span. Much remains to be done. Reciprocal exchanges by the Network's members must continue, in order to ensure food security for all.

One of the main objectives of this meeting will be to identify what we have achieved and where we need to go, in concrete and pragmatic terms, in order to ensure food crisis prevention and management that has an impact on a significant part of the region. On that account, it is fundamental to take nutritional aspects, production and accessibility, markets, relations between cities and rural areas, as well as relations between agriculture and livestock farming into consideration. Something that cannot be ignored in food crisis prevention and which should be a priority is better water management and use. We must give this issue priority in our approaches, strategies and advocacy for concrete actions in the field.

I am certain that we will be able to progress thanks to the work we are putting in, for let us not forget that our region's population will be up by 100 million by 2025, with those under 25 years old accounting for more than 65% of the total. Population growth is yet another food security related challenge for all. *What should be done to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population? What actions need to be taken with regard to production and accessibility? How can the nutritional and market aspects be better taken into account? How can complementarity be ensured between the decisions taken and activities at local, national, regional and continental level? And, once again, how can better control and use of water be ensured? All these questions are worthy of our attention.*

I therefore wish you success in all our work.

Annex 4: Inaugural Address by Mr Musa Mbenga, CILSS Executive Secretary

Your Excellency, the Minister of Rural Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Coordinating Minister for the CILSS,

Your Excellency, the Food Security Commissioner of Mali,

Your Excellency, the Food Security Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania,

The Representative of the FAO's Director General
Director, Sahel and West Africa Club
Mr Roy Stacy, Representative of the Sahel's Veterans
President of the CILSS Partners' Committee
The Representative for French Cooperation
The Representative of USAID's West Africa regional bureau
The Representative for Canadian Cooperation
Your Excellency, the Representative for Italian Cooperation
Your Excellency, the Representative of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the European Union
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps
The WSP Representative
The Representative of FEWS NET in Washington
The Representative of the Regional Office of the International Federation of Red Cross Societies
The Representative of OMM (National Meteorological Service, Benin)
The Representative of the OCHA office
The Honorary President of ROPPA
The Representative of the CIC Burkina
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the CILSS member countries
Invitees from the Republic of Ghana
To all participants in their official capacities and posts
Ladies and Gentlemen, our Invitees,

First of all, allow me to thank the FAO Director General for having agreed to host the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa in Rome, at the FAO headquarters, this year. It is a great pleasure for the CILSS and its partners to meet at the headquarters of the FAO, a longstanding partner of the CILSS, to speak about food security in West Africa, within the framework of our Network, which is so close to our hearts.

Allow me to also thank the Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club, who has made it possible for decision-makers, technical and financial partners as well as development actors to come together here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Network, which brings food security actors together, is a large and operational crisis prevention and management mechanism within which technical and financial partners play a very important role.

It is also a forum for information sharing on food availability, market dynamics and the situation of vulnerable populations in particular. Thus, different development scenarios of the current food situation have emerged and will be used as the basis for proposals for action to be submitted to different actors during regional consultations such as the one that has brought us together today.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, beyond the dialogue on the food situation that will enable us to anticipate and better coordinate interventions by States, aid agencies and NGOs, the Network is also giving us the opportunity to think more deeply about how to improve prevention tools and mechanisms in the sub-region.

This year, the meeting has come at a time when the Sahelian region has recorded good harvest prospects. The agricultural survey was conducted normally in our countries, except for Guinea Bissau and Chad, where a delay in funding prevented us from using the survey mechanism. However, joint CILSS-FAO-Government missions, supported in certain countries by FEWS NET, the FAO and WFP, produced quantified projected cereal production data.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the FAO, FEWS NET and WFP for the excellent work they jointly undertook in all the countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As regards food situation analysis and assessment tools and those for monitoring vulnerability, today we have a consensual tool i.e. the harmonised framework for the analysis and identification of at-risk zones and vulnerable populations. The framework is currently being applied in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger and is in a test phase in Cape Verde, Senegal and Mauritania.

Your Excellency, Mr Minister,
Dear CILSS technical and financial partners,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apart from food crisis prevention and alleviation mechanisms, prospective thinking has been initiated on structural causes and the rehabilitation in sensitive and high-risk zones.

On this issue, the CILSS and its technical and financial partners – especially the FAO, WFP, and IFAD – have started the SARDI Initiative (Sahel Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative).

This initiative is directly in line with the NEPAD initiative in the agricultural sector, aimed at the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy in the Sahel through both very short-term actions for food crisis risk reduction and rehabilitation as well as medium and long-term actions for improving agricultural productivity, revitalising agricultural markets and supporting regional integration policies.

I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to support this process for sustainable development in West Africa.

We would also like to invite all the actors working in food security to join us in the march towards the well-being of our populations.

I would not like to end my comments without thanking all the financial partners who have spared no efforts to support us in this process, particularly USAID and the Mission française. They have all our gratitude for their constant support of our dear institution.

It is on this hopeful note that I wish our network all success.

Thank you for your attention.

Annex 5: Inaugural Address by HE Mr Yahya N’GAM, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the FAO

The Representative of the FAO and the United Nations’ specialised institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps,
The CILSS Executive Secretary,
The Director General of the Sahel and West Africa Club,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the CILSS Member States,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of Development Partners,
Honoured Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, allow me to thank the FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, for having agreed to be our hosts in its premises in Rome on the occasion of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa.

Once again this year, this important meeting has included presentations in its agenda that will enable us to share the information available on the agricultural and food situation, market developments and the specific situation of at-risk zones and vulnerable groups.

Apart from a dialogue on current economic conditions that will allow us to anticipate and better coordinate interventions by States, aid agencies and NGOs, the Network’s annual meeting will give us the opportunity to continue our discussions on improving food crisis prevention mechanisms in the Sahel. It is also an appropriate framework for exchanging views about fundamental issues such as nutritional surveillance in West Africa. We also need to take stock of the implementation of the recommendations on food security we made in 2000.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, the meeting is taking place at a time when the CILSS member countries have recorded a 15,062,600-tonne cereal production at the end of an overall satisfactory 2006/2007 agricultural campaign.

But this good harvest should not make us forget that the Sahel remains a sensitive ecological zone, where rainfall has a major impact on agricultural yields.

That is why we need to refine food crisis prevention and management mechanisms and tools in the Sahel, by improving data quality, taking into consideration the nutritional aspects of food security and improving cross-border trade monitoring.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting is an opportunity to strengthen the performance of the regional food security monitoring facility, which involves all the committed actors in the sector in West Africa. The food insecurity phenomenon is a major concern for our leaders and for Sahelian populations, fighting every day to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indispensable to create synergy between our interventions, because the phenomenon is multi-dimensional. It includes aspects associated with history, geography, ecology, trade and even sociology. To deal effectively with such a complex issue, we have to pool our efforts in

defining policies, methodologies and tools as well as in coordinating actions on the ground. That is why it is a great pleasure for me to salute the joint initiatives taken by the CILSS in the sub-region, in association with bodies such as the FAO, WFP, OCHA, FEWS NET, the Sahel and West Africa Club and, more recently, the ECOWAS West African Health Organisation.

I am certain that all the workshop's participants will work hard during these two days in order to make significant strides in our discussions on an issue as crucial and topical as food crisis prevention and management.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the CILSS partners, especially Italy, France, the European Union, Canada and USAID, without whose cooperation it would not have been possible to organise this meeting or to ensure the regular functioning of the regional watch facility.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to the CILSS's various technical partners: FEWS NET, USAID, the regional WFP bureau and the FAO, who have always supported us and continue to place their trust in us.

While wishing you all success in your work, I officially declare open the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa.

Thank you.

Annex 6: List of Participants

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