Ministerial Lobby Group

ACTIVITIES OF THE CLUB DU SAHEL SECRETARIAT 1998-2000

Special Meeting with the Ministerial Lobby Group (GMAP) and Development Agencies, Members of the Club du Sahel, on the Occasion of the Bamako 2000 Meetings of the CILSS

Bamako, 23-24 November 2000
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ACTIVITIES OF THE CLUB DU SAHEL SECRETARIAT 1998-2000

A Summary — November 2000

Introduction

The Club du Sahel’s Secretariat is comprised of 12 staff (professionals and support staff) based at the OECD in Paris. Its budget is some $1.5-2 million a year, financed by voluntary contributions from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and the World Bank.

This paper gives an overview of the Club Secretariat’s activities as part of its 1998-2000 three-year programme. It is, however, in no sense an activity report (full annual reports are available).

The difficulties, hesitations, doubts and back tracking or failures experienced in pursuing these activities are not described here, or are only touched on briefly. However, every institution working in the development co-operation field experiences them; the Club du Sahel and its Secretariat are no exception.

1. Promoting the African Voice in the Development Debate

The framework adopted by Club members in 1997 for the 1998-2000 work programme defines the main purpose of the Club du Sahel as "strengthening the capacities of all partners by improving the quality of information and their capacities to analyse, formulate and manage development". This function has been integrated in all the Secretariat’s activities over the last three years.

1.1. Enhanced Co-operation with Networks of African Actors

In addition to working with the West African Enterprise Network, the Club Secretariat strengthened co-operation with and support to other regional networks. The "technical" issues addressed and presented in sections 2, 3, 4, and 5 below, reflect this concern. Recent Secretariat achievements are its contribution to the establishment of the West African Network of Farmers' Associations and Agricultural Producers (see section 2) and its support for the Municipal Development Programme (see section 3).

2. Since 1993, the Club du Sahel has supported the West African Enterprise Network and other networks in East and Southern Africa. During this time the Secretariat has helped launch the programme but it was subsequently formalised. A new phase of this programme is underway, with a view to making the networks autonomous within the next two years or so.
3. The MDP is a regional association managed by representatives of national associations of local elected officials in West and Central Africa.
1.2. The West African Lobby Group Initiative

In August 1999, at the initiative of the CILSS and Club du Sahel Secretariats, a multi-sectoral group of ministers met in Dakar to form a ministerial lobbying group (Groupe Ministériel d'Animation et de Proposition — GMAP) intended to strengthen African leadership by initiating action to reform development co-operation within the informal context of the Club du Sahel.

Its purpose is to improve the quality of dialogue between Sahelian with their international partners and to express views on topics where they are prepared to mobilise themselves and their partners for practical action.

2. Rural Development and Food Security

2.1. A Better Informed and More Participatory Approach to National Policies

In 1995 and 1996, following the West African Long Term Perspective Study, the Club Secretariat reviewed the extensive literature on agricultural and food security issues in the Sahel. As a result of this review the Secretariat concentrated its efforts, beginning in 1997, on support to civil society to enable them to improve their understanding of relevant policy debates and obtain the information and analyses necessary for them to participate fully in the debates. This longer-term support\(^4\) led in 2000 to the establishment of the West African Network of Farmers’ Organisations and Agricultural Producers, supported by a consortium of donors\(^5\).

2.2. Reducing the Impact of Drought

Together with the CILSS, the Club Secretariat has been working on a new approach to forecasting and managing food crises (Food aid Charter to the Sahel, launching of the Sahel crisis prevention network). From 1997 to 1999, in collaboration with the CILSS, the Secretariat continued to monitor implementation of the Charter and to assess and make proposals for information systems. Since 1999, the Club Secretariat has taken a less direct role in the network, since the CILSS is now able to lead it. Occasional expert missions are still fielded.

2.3. A More Coherent Approach to the Food Security Problem

The Sahel 21 process led by the CILSS was supported by the Club Secretariat in 1997 (preparation of syntheses and analyses of relevant regional information). In 1998 and 1999, the CILSS developed its own promising approach with broad-based consultation among Sahelian civil society groups. On this basis, in 2000, the CILSS began work on a regional food security strategy, a process the Club Secretariat is actively supporting.

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4. In particular, funds and logistical support for holding forums of farmers’ platforms.

5. Support and financing for the network’s founding meeting, technical support to produce a procedure manual for the regional support fund, support for the organisation of the donor meeting (October 2000).
2.4. UN Convention to Combat Desertification

As early as 1993, the Club Secretariat was active in the design and ratification process of this Convention. From 1995 to 1999, together with the CILSS, it lobbied extensively for ratification of the CCD by the region’s countries and supported the formulation of National Action Plans (NAPs). In 1997, the Secretariat also began a process of assessing implementation of the CCD, pointing out the difficulties it faced in integrating with other environmental initiatives in CILSS countries (competition between "plans" supported by various national structures and donors). CCD implementation is now being monitored in Sahelian and West African countries by the CILSS.

3. Local Development and Decentralisation

3.1. A Tool for Decentralisation and Local Development

The 1998-2000 work programme focuses mainly on the ECOLOC programme, "Managing local economies in West Africa", undertaken in close co-operation with the Municipal Development Programme (MDP-West). This programme is based on the premise that decentralisation offers a new opportunity for development in Africa. But for this opportunity to be exploited, local actors, both public and private, must have sufficient access to information to establish a coherent, clear and predictable framework for action. Since independence, statistical offices focus on national economies, but far less attention has been given to local issues and the interactive relationships between performance of local and national economies.

The ECOLOC programme occupies a terrain not previously addressed: how to design at local level a tool for decision-making and negotiating, based on reliable socio-economic data and a consultative process. The challenges are to 1) revitalise potential wealth-creating and job-producing sectors; 2) increase local tax revenues and investment; 3) make aid more effective.

In the three first years of the programme, the Club Secretariat and the MDP have developed a framework for producing local economic accounts applied in over ten sites financed with financing from local offices of development co-operation agencies, and in some cases by municipal budgets. At the same time regional management of the programme by the MDP in West Africa has been strengthened.

As follow-up, practical exercises in defining local development strategies and identifying actions to revitalise local economies are being led by local authorities with support from external partners. Experiences from these exercises will be used as the basis for volumes II (local development strategies) and III (Revitalise the local economy) of the ECOLOC Handbook.

6. Canada (Saint-Louis), France (Sikasso, Bobo Dioulasso), Netherlands (Ségou, Kaya), European Commission (Daloa, Korhogo, Odienné, San Pedro); the studies of Dagana and Richard Toll were financed by those municipalities and the Club Secretariat.

7. The MDP now provides its own support for the launch and follow-up of new studies (Louga region, two studies in Benin, two in Guinea, etc.).

8. Some 80 local experts (native to the site or the country) have taken part in the studies, and a small number of them are now able to help train others.

9. Such as the regional development agency in the Saint-Louis region.

10. France and the MDP in Ségou and Sikasso, EC at sites in Ivory Coast, etc.
3.2. **New Ways Forward for Development Co-operation**

ECOLOC studies have also assessed and defined new ways for promoting regional integration (see section 4.1.), expanding the local tax base (see section 5.4.) and analysing urban-rural linkages. These ideas will be developed together with interested Club members (North and South) into operational field-tested tools.

4. **Regional Co-operation**

4.1. **Sahelian Stakes in West Africa**

Club du Sahel members asked the Secretariat to propose ways of integrating the Sahel more effectively into West Africa and the world at large. The Secretariat’s analyses show that over half the population and wealth of West Africa is concentrated in a 450 000 sq.km strip along the Gulf of Guinea (6 per cent of the region’s area). Current trends could lead by 2020 to two-thirds of West Africa’s wealth being concentrated in this small area. And yet the Sudano-Sahelian area of West Africa has potential that, with a concerted strategy, could, if not reverse these trends, at least promote more balanced regional development with better use of West Africa’s resources for the regional market.

This Sahelian area is the centre of West Africa’s current and future agricultural production. It is a crossroads of regional trade and an area of intensive migration and trade in goods between the Sahelian countries and the world market, and between the Sahelian and coastal countries. The specific economic and social dynamics of this cross-border area have made it possible to transcend borders. And yet, except for major roads between Sahelian capitals and coastal ports, this area is still under-equipped and under developed. The Club Secretariat’s initial proposals, after local analysis and debate, could provide a basis for regional investment plans to help this area provide a regional counterweight to the current international trade-driven centre of gravity.

4.2. **Economic and Social Actors at the Centre of the Regional Integration Debate**

One of the Club du Sahel’s traditional roles is to support regional networks of economic and social actors. These farmers, entrepreneurs and local elected officials experience regional reality in their daily lives (trading networks, farm produce markets, migration, etc.). The Club Secretariat has observed these relationships on the ground including interactions between English-speaking countries (Ghana, Nigeria) and French-speaking countries. One innovation in the 1998-2000 work programme was to encourage these actors to react to and comment on observed trends.

The first such exercise deals with observed trade flows between Nigeria and its neighbours. An updated paper will be submitted to a panel of West African entrepreneurs for discussion in December 2000.

Although monetary integration and the establishment of common tariffs and regulatory frameworks for finance and insurance remain the prerogative of national governments is is essential that national governments and IGOs encourage local actors to participate in regional co-operation and integration. Club du Sahel members are now convinced that this approach, rather than complicating the process, is likely to simplify it and make it “real” through concrete proposals expected from these actors. This is a promising avenue for future Secretariat support.
5. Aid Reform

In Banjul in 1997, Club members, Sahelians and development co-operation agencies approved a critical analysis of past approaches and, in the Banjul Memorandum, explicitly agreed to change them. This declaration designated the Sahel as a pilot area for the DAC (Development Assistance Committee) 21st century targets, and for the Sahelian objective in the Banjul Declaration of the Forum of Sahelian Societies that development co-operation be managed increasingly by Sahelians in the future.

Club members also agreed to jointly seek ways and means of reducing the Sahel’s dependence on Official Development Assistance (ODA), by encouraging other sources of financing, such as local savings or non-ODA external resources (private investment and foreign remittances).

5.1. Acting as a "Mirror"

The Club Secretariat has not found it easy to play this role. There are many forums (particularly the DAC and the Special Partnership for Africa, PSA), and the Club must avoid duplicating their work. At present the Club is concentrating on field observation so as to provide concrete examples of improved practice.

5.2. Measuring Aid Flows: A Promising Start

One of the central issues in transferring aid management to Africans is measuring aid flows: "If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it." This area has not received sufficient attention, probably because it is complex and requires a working partnership between a central government and donors. Mali’s aid reform is an opportunity for improving the situation. The Secretariat conducted an initial assessment of the quality of information on aid flows available in Mali. The assessment included a methodology that could be applied elsewhere.

Where conditions are propitious other assessments could be completed, thus providing case-studies, experience and ideas that could be shared among participating governments and donors.

5.3. African Aid Managers’ Network

Another potential work area involves facilitating technical discussions between African aid managers. Consultations with countries in the region have confirmed interest. This proposed network is to promote the formulation of African proposals, primarily on measuring aid flows.

5.4. New Possibilities for Financing Development

Findings made in the context of the ECOLOC programme (see section 3.1.) provide evidence and data on the question of how local development is financed\textsuperscript{11}. The Secretariat prepared a paper summarising these findings and identifying practical mechanisms for revenue, taxation and improving public expenditure\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{11} A city like Saint-Louis du Sénégal has an economy with a "local GDP" of FCFA 50bn; the municipal budget is FCFA 0.5bn, only 1 per cent of that; private buildings in the city are valued at FCFA 60bn; land taxes amount to less than 0.5 per cent of that value; public infrastructure is valued at FCFA 21bn, and would require FCFA 1bn a year for proper maintenance, and yet the maintenance budget is only FCFA 19m a year.

This area also deserves greater attention over the next few years. External aid could only cover a small share of the region's investment needs in the decades ahead. The issue of reforming local tax systems needs to be explored. This, in turn, will involve difficult but not insoluble issues such as more participatory local budgetary practices, improving the quality of public expenditure, especially for the poor, and borrowing by local authorities, etc.
Annex 1: Diagram of the Club du Sahel Space

The Club du Sahel is a forum for informal exchange and brainstorming between partners from the North and the South, both public and private. It seeks to increase the impact of development aid by encouraging a more rapid transfer of the management of development co-operation to Southern partners, by supporting these partners in the design of their own development strategies and proposing tools to achieve this.

Half-way between the field and major international fora, the Club is a place where development co-operation issues and innovative practices can be addressed based on concrete examples and discussed directly with development actors, public and private and including those from the civil society. The diagram above shows in schematic format the “space” that the Club du Sahel occupies in the exchange between the South and the North and the Club's partners, its networks and its main areas of activity.

Included in this folder are:

- **Overview Brochure**: The Club du Sahel – A Forum for Reflection and Dialogue
- **Key sheets on Activities**: Aid Reform, Local Development, Regional Integration and the Private Sector Support Programme.
- **Key sheets on Partnerships**: The CILSS – the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, the Ministerial Lobby Group, the Programme for Municipal Development and the West African Enterprise Network.

Below is the list of Club du Sahel’s significant publications related to its three-year work programme 1998-2000.

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY/RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES**

- Official Text of the Food Aid Charter (Brochure).
♦ Réflexion sur des outils de coopération intégrant le monde rural et le monde urbain dans un cadre unique d’action. Contribution to a seminar by the German co-operation, November 2000 (French only).

DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT


Contribution à la définition de la suite du processus ECOLOC à Bobo Dioulasso, Club du Sahel/PDM, February 2000, 10 p. — no Cote (French only).


REGIONAL COOPERATION


REFORM OF DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES


Aide, financement du développement et dépendance dans les pays sahéliens, October 1998 — 35 p. — no Cote (French only).

Dépendance et mondialisation, October 1998 — 10 p. — no Cote (French only).
♦ L’appui à la décentralisation en Afrique sub-saharienne : la perspective des agences d’aide, November 1998 — 67 p. — no Cote (French only).
♦ La formation au service de la décentralisation au Sénégal. Coordination de l’aide et maîtrise locale, September 1999, 80 p. — no Cote (French only).
♦ Finding Problems to Fit the Solutions. Twenty Years of Aid to the Sahel, 1999 — 341 p.
♦ Les séminaires au Mali, image et réalités, June 2000, 35 p., — no Cote (French only).
Annex 3: Financial Contributions of Development Co-Operation Agencies to the Club du Sahel

**Contributions to Club du Sahel Secretariat, 1998-2000**

*In FF Millions*

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**Share of Donors’ Contributions in Club du Sahel Secretariat, 1998-2000**

- **Canada**: 19%
- **Germany**: 11%
- **France**: 13%
- **Japan**: 5%
- **Italy**: 3%
- **Netherlands**: 13%
- **Portugal**: 1%
- **Switzerland**: 11%
- **United Kingdom**: 4%
- **United States**: 11%
- **World Bank**: 2%
- **Austria**: 2%
- **Belgium**: 2%
- **Denmark**: 3%
- **Others**: 11%
Contributions to the Private Sector Support Programme, 1998-2000
In FF Millions

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- United-States: 20%
- Switzerland: 25%
- Japan: 2%
- France: 8%
- Belgium: 22%
- World Bank: 23%
Annex 4: Main Expenditures Items of the Club du Sahel Budget

Share by Main Types of Expenditures in Club du Sahel Secretariat, 1998-2000

Share by Main Types of Expenditures in the Private Sector Support Programme, 2000