Strategy and Policy Group

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CLUB DU SAHEL SECRETARIAT
1998 - 2000

(Note of the Secretariat of the Club du Sahel)

Strategy and Policy Group (GOP)
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Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................... ............................................. 5

1. Promoting the African Voice in the Development Debate and Action ............................................................. .. 6
   1.1. Enhanced Co-operation with Networks of African Actors ................................................................. 6
   1.2. The West African Ministerial Lobby Group Initiative ........................................................................ ...... 6

2. Rural Development and Food Security .......................................................................................... .................... 6
   2.1. A Better Informed and More Participatory Approach to National Policies ............................................... 6
   2.2. Reducing the Impact of Drought ............................................................................................................... 7
   2.3. A More Coherent Approach to the Food Security Problem ...................................................................... 7
   2.4. UN Convention to Combat Desertification .................................................................................... ........... 7

3. Local Development and Decentralisation ....................................................................................... ................... 7
   3.1. A Tool for Decentralisation and Local Development .......................................................................... ...... 7
   3.2. Transfer to West Africa .................................................................................................... ......................... 8
   3.3 Co-operation and Debate with Development Agencies ........................................................................... ...... 9
   3.4. New Ways Forward for Development Co-operation .............................................................................. ... 9

4. Regional Co-operation ........................................................................................................ ............................... 9
   4.1. The Sahel in West Africa................................................................................................... ........................ 9
   4.2. Economic and Social Actors at the Centre of the Regional Integration Debate ........................................ 9

5. Aid Reform ................................................................................................................... .................................... 10
   5.1. Acting as a "Mirror" ....................................................................................................... ......................... 10
   5.2. Measuring Aid Flows: A Promising Initiative ................................................................................ ......... 10
   5.3. African Aid Managers’ Network .............................................................................................. ................ 11
   5.4. New Possibilities for Financing Development ................................................................................ ........ 11


Annex 1: Diagram of the Club du Sahel Area of Intervention .................................................................................. 13

Introduction

The Club du Sahel Secretariat is a structure of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development based in Paris, and consists of eight advisors and administrators, and four assistants. 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 Report describes the various actions undertaken by the Club Secretariat as part of its 1998-2000 three-year programme. The framework adopted by Club members in 1997 for this 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.

The Report summarises the work done on the five main themes for this period:

1. Promoting the African voice in the development debate and action. This has taken the form of enhanced co-operation with networks of African actors and the establishment of a West African Ministerial Lobby Group (Groupe Ministériel d'Animation et de Proposition — GMAP).

2. Rural development and food security. The West African Network of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers (ROPPA) has been established. The Secretariat has also supported the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in the monitoring of the Food Aid Charter and of the Food Crisis Prevention Network. With assistance from the Secretariat, the CILSS has produced a strategic framework for food security that the Heads of State approved in November 2000 in Bamako.

3. Local development and decentralisation. Work here focused mainly on the ECOLOC programme, "Managing local economies in West Africa", undertaken in close co-operation with the Municipal Development Programme (MDP).

4. Regional co-operation. The Secretariat has encouraged economic and social actors to make proposals based on accurate information about West African issues. The GMAP and donors held a number of meetings regarding this topic.

5. Aid reform. Here the Secretariat has sought to meet African partners' expectations by providing evidence on a number of aid practices (e.g. in Mali) and measuring aid flows in a number of countries, mobilising key actors (aid managers), and identifying avenues to explore (local financing of development).

1. Promoting the African Voice in the Development Debate and Action

1.1. Enhanced Co-operation with Networks of African Actors

In addition to working with the West African Enterprise Network (WAEN)\(^2\)(see section 6), 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 ROPPA (see point 2.1) and its support for the MDP\(^3\) (see section 3).

1.2. The West African Ministerial Lobby Group Initiative

In August 1999, at the initiative of the CILSS and Club du Sahel Secretariat, a group of ministers met in Dakar to form a lobbying group, the GMAP. The GMAP is intended to strengthen African leadership by initiating action to reform development co-operation. Its purpose is to improve the quality of dialogue between Sahelians and their international partners and to express ideas for which they are prepared to mobilise themselves and their partners for practical action.

The Group comprises a dozen or so ministers with various portfolios from coastal countries like Benin, Ghana and Nigeria as well as most of the Sahelian countries. It has met a number of times over the last two years, often with representatives of the international community, in Yverdon (September 1999), Washington D.C. (June 2000), Paris (October 2000) and Bamako (November 2000). At the Bamako meeting, the GMAP presented to the aid agencies attending a document on regional integration.

The GMAP is particularly concerned with (i) issues relating to regional integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), (ii) improving aid practices, and (iii) Sahel 21 (the CILSS programme). Thanks to the GMAP contribution, this programme has produced a regional food security strategy paper as part of poverty reduction. The programme was approved by the CILSS’ Heads of State Summit in November 2000.

2. Rural Development and Food Security

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

In 1995 and 1996, following a regional examination of development policy, the West African Long Term Perspective Study (WALTPS), the Club Secretariat reviewed the extensive literature on agricultural and food security issues in the Sahel. As a result of this review the Secretariat has since 1997 supported actors in civil society to enable them to improve their understanding of relevant policy debates and obtain the

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2. Since 1993, the Club du Sahel has supported the West African Enterprise Network and other networks in East and Southern Africa. The Secretariat has helped launch the programme and 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.
information and analyses necessary for them to participate fully in the debates. This longer-term support led in 2000 to the establishment of ROPPA, supported by a consortium of donors.

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 for the countries of the Sahel, launch of the Sahel crisis prevention network). From 1997 to 1999, the two partners 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 sent out.

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 the CILSS began work on a regional food security strategy, which was presented to the Bamako meeting in November 2000, a process the Club Secretariat is actively supporting.

2.4. UN Convention to Combat Desertification

As early as 1993, the Club Secretariat was active in the design and ratification process of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD). 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 this approach, pointing out the difficulties it faced in integrating with other environmental initiatives in the 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 have focused on national economies, but far less attention has been given to local issues and the interactive relationships between the performance of local and national economies.

The ECOLOC programme examines a field 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.

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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).
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 first three years of the programme, the Club Secretariat and the MDP have developed a method for evaluating and forecasting local economies applied in over ten sites. The case studies were financed by local offices of development co-operation agencies, and in some cases co-financed by municipal budgets. A summary document has been published on this method. A more comprehensive handbook (a file containing the summary and five technical documents) is at an advanced stage of preparation.

At the same time regional management of the programme by the MDP in West Africa has been strengthened.

In addition to the study phase, practical exercises to define local development strategies and identify actions to revitalise local economies are being initiated by local authorities with support from external partners. The monitoring of these experiences will be used as the basis for volumes II (Local Development Strategies) and III (Revitalising the Local Economy) of the ECOLOC Handbook.

### 3.2. Transfer to West Africa

The Club Secretariat and the MDP have circulated details of the ECOLOC approach in West Africa to broaden the debate. The MDP held regional seminars in Saint-Louis in 1997, Cotonou in 1999, and Windhoek in 2000 (scientific seminar at Africities 2000). These demonstrated local elected officials’ interest in the approach and provided useful remarks. Two national seminars have also been held (and financed) by the national decentralisation commission (CND) in Burkina Faso and the decentralisation and institutional reform mission (MDRI) in Mali. The Cotonou seminar was an opportunity to debate the ECOLOC approach with all the heads of national statistical services in West Africa.

This dissemination process will be facilitated by a current feasibility study financed by a special grant from the French development co-operation agency. The study is examining how to establish within the MDP a service centre for local economies and finances. This would enable the MDP to raise the resources for a programme of dissemination and capacity building in these two areas, on the basis of the experience of the ECOLOC programme. Application will be made for financing from the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).

To hasten dissemination in West Africa, further work is being done with support from the German development co-operation agency, including the development of user-friendly software for the demo-economic model and conceptual reinforcement of the model’s theoretical bases. The field survey methods are also being standardised and simplified in co-operation with the national school of statistics and applied economics (ENSEA) located in Abidjan and Afristat.

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6. Canada (Saint-Louis), France (Ségou, Bobo Dioulasso), Netherlands (Ségou, Kaya), European Commission (Daloa, Koro, 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 Côte d’Ivoire, etc.
3.3 Co-operation and Debate with Development Agencies

As mentioned above, a number of development co-operation agencies have financed ECOLOC studies as part of their support programmes for decentralisation in West Africa. Some are financing current consultation processes. The Canadian and French agencies have also financed the regional seminars held by the MDP.

The MDP and Club du Sahel have attended a number of discussion seminars on ECOLOC at the Canadian International Development Agency (Ottawa), the French Development Agency (Paris), the World Bank (Washington D.C.), with the German agency (Niamey) and with representatives of the urban offices of EU member-countries’ development agencies (Paris).

3.4. New Ways Forward for Development Co-operation

ECOLOC studies have also assessed and defined new ways for promoting regional integration (see para. 4.1.), expanding the local tax base (see para. 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. The Sahel 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 (six 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-Saharan 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 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. These proposals were discussed with and agreed by the GMAP. The ministers would like to participate in their implementation.

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 (trader 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 on the basis of specific information.
The first exercise deals with observed trade flows between Nigeria and its neighbours. An updated paper was submitted to a panel of West African entrepreneurs for discussion at a workshop held jointly with WAEN 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, it is essential that national governments and inter-governmental organisations (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 partners, 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 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) 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.

Partners of the Club du Sahel 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 overseas remittances).

In 1999, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) of the OECD and the Club du Sahel published a report on aid effectiveness in Mali. *Improving the Effectiveness of Aid Systems: The Case of Mali* was based on an evaluation of donors’ activities, and to foster better management of aid by national and local structures. The report presents a full description of the methodology, findings and implications for a reform of the system in that country.

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 Strategic Partnership for Africa (SPA), 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 Initiative

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 the partner governments and the donor community. In this context, the aid reform process in Mali appeared as an opportunity for improving the situation. The Secretariat conducted an initial assessment of the quality of information on aid flows available in that country. The assessment included a methodology that could be applied elsewhere.

During the first quarter of 2001, similar case-studies are being completed for Niger, Burkina Faso, and Senegal, and a summary of these studies is being prepared.
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 will promote the formulation of African proposals, primarily on the difficult issue of aid information systems. Work on measuring aid flows could provide a basis for discussion in such a working group. The GMAP has been actively involved in this with the Secretariat.

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 how local actors see the financing of development. The Secretariat prepared a paper summarising these findings and identifying practical mechanisms for revenue, taxation and improving public expenditure. This area has not yet been explored and deserves greater attention over the next few years. External aid may 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, borrowing by local authorities, etc.


The Private Sector Development Support Programme (PSSP) is an autonomous programme of the Secretariat of the Club du Sahel, financed by 6 donors and supervised by a Steering Committee. Its mission is to support the initiatives of the new generation of private African entrepreneurs from the modern sector in order to: (1) develop regional business exchanges with the rest of the world; and (2) foster the capacity of the African private sector to analyse and make proposals in matters related to economic development.

The first phase of the programme involved the creation and expansion of the West African Enterprise Network (WAEN) in 1998, followed by that of a network in East Africa and Southern Africa. The three regional networks now consist of 600 entrepreneurs in 32 countries.

Donor agencies that supported the initiative and the networks themselves asked that the PSSP acquire management methods more in line with the OECD rules (administrative oversight, tendering for consultants’ contracts, commitment of funds, staff management, etc.) As a result, a new and final phase for the PSSP has been set up. The aim is to provide less technical assistance, to be more pro-active in the partnership as requested by the three networks, and to implement a reformed work programme with a smaller budget that will diminish over time. External support provided via this programme is limited to three years, following which (1) the management and implementation of the project will be fully African and based on the continent, and (2) the three regional networks will be self-sustaining financially and responsible for their own programming. They will be engaged in the establishment of an independent pan-African structure. To reach these objectives within that timeframe, a number of actions have been undertaken in recent months, including:

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 1 billion a year for proper maintenance, and yet the maintenance budget is only FCFA 19 million a year.

The creation of the AEN (African Enterprise Network), following the three networks' first joint meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2000. On that occasion they officially announced the setting up of a framework for exchanges and concerted action. The objective will be to seek convergence of interests between them, formulate a work programme on themes of common interest, and work towards a single structure to generate sustainable business relations.

Emergence of professional networks (clusters) for network members in each region working in similar activities, e.g. food processing, micro-finance, transport, new information and communication technologies, tourism, etc.

Co-operation between the networks (WAEN) and the Club du Sahel Secretariat on regional integration in West Africa, using the Secretariat's study of trade between Nigeria and its neighbours. This collaboration has led the English- and French-speaking entrepreneurs to develop an innovative approach on the most appropriate ways to limit the weight of trade constraints and to establish a concrete action plan in which the private sector will be directly implicated.

Relaunch of the West Africa Forum (FOA). The FOA is a consultation forum comprised of ECOWAS, CILSS, UEMOA, with the WAEN acting as secretariat. Its aim is to tackle, in a practical way, the major obstacles to the development of regional trade. To that end, WAEN has held an initial workshop on monetary transfers within the sub-region with assistance from the Club Secretariat and plans to launch the Observatory on Illegal Practices by the end of 2001.

Lobbying for communication work (print and broadcast media) to improve the perception of the Africa of entrepreneurs.
Annex 1: Diagram of the Club du Sahel Area of Intervention

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:


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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETINGS</th>
<th>PLACES - DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des Membres du Club du Sahel</td>
<td>Paris, 5 and 6 February 1998 (am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des partenaires financiers du Secrétariat du Club du Sahel</td>
<td>Paris, 6 February 1998 (pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Meeting on the review of the international aid system in Mali</td>
<td>Paris, 2-3 March 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des coordonnateurs nationaux REAO</td>
<td>Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire), 12 March 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier &quot;décentralisation et renforcement des capacités locales au Sahel&quot;</td>
<td>Bamako (Mali), 23 - 25 March 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des coordonnateurs nationaux REAO</td>
<td>Ouagadougou (Burkina), 16 May 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion du Comité de Pilotage de la CASP</td>
<td>Paris, 24 June 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des coordonnateurs nationaux REAO</td>
<td>Bamako (Mali), 15 September 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des partenaires du CILSS</td>
<td>Paris, 9-10 November 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des coordonnateurs nationaux REAO</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal), 20 November 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion restreinte sur le thème de l’interaction du système d’aide avec le processus de décentralisation et de développement local dans le Sahel</td>
<td>Paris, 30 November-1st December 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Meeting of the Network for the prevention of food crises in the Sahel</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal), 3-4 December 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblée générale du REAO</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal), 5-7 février 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion du Groupe d’Orientation des Politiques et Programmes du Club du Sahel</td>
<td>Paris, 8 et 9 (am) February 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des partenaires du CILSS sur l’évaluation externe des programmes majeurs politiques du CILSS</td>
<td>Paris, 10 February 1999 (am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier malien sur la relance des économies locales</td>
<td>Sikasso (Mali), 27-28 April 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journées de réflexion à l’ACDI sur les enjeux du développement local</td>
<td>Hull (Canada), 12-14 May 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion régionale du SAEN (Southern Africa Enterprise Network)</td>
<td>Mauritius, 16 May 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion régionale du EAEN (East African Enterprise Network)</td>
<td>Mombassa (Kenya), 28 May 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion régionale du REAO</td>
<td>Banjul (Gambia), 16 June 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEETINGS</td>
<td>PLACES - DATES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Préparation des ateliers 3 et 4 (développement local et décentralisation) pour la Conférence d’Yverdon</td>
<td>Paris, 8-9 July 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conférence of the Club du Sahel</td>
<td>Yverdon-les-Bains (Switzerland), 22-24 September 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion régionale du SAEN</td>
<td>Windhoek (Namibia), 25 September 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion FOA (Forum Ouest-Africain)</td>
<td>Bamako (Mali), 29 September 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Seminar on Local Economy and Finances</td>
<td>Cotonou (Benin), 20–23 October 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion du Comité de Pilotage du PASP</td>
<td>Paris, 24 October 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Première réunion d’interconnexion des 3 réseaux (REAO-EAEN-SAEN)</td>
<td>Bujumbura (Burundi), 2nd October 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Meeting of the Network for the prevention of food crises in the Sahel</td>
<td>Washington, 17-18 November 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion régionale du SAEN</td>
<td>Manzini (Swaziland), 3-4 December 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion du Groupe d’Orientation des Politiques et Programmes</td>
<td>Paris, 6 December 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion de restitution de l’étude ECOLOC de Bobo Dioulasso</td>
<td>Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso), 2-3 February 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion régionale du SAEN</td>
<td>Madagascar, 3-4 March 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the Ministerial Lobby Group (GMAP)</td>
<td>Paris, 8-9 March 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting of the Steering Committee of the PASP</td>
<td>Paris, 14 April 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion avec le Groupe Ministériel d’Animation et de Proposition</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal), 24-25 May 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy and Policy Group (SPG) Meeting</td>
<td>Washington, 14-16 June (am) 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion informelle sur l’avenir de la région des Grands Lacs</td>
<td>Paris, 29 June 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the Ministerial Lobby Group (GMAP) and Development Agencies</td>
<td>Paris, 2 (pm) – 3 October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réunion des 3 réseaux (Conférence du Millénaire)</td>
<td>Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), 15-16 October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Ronde sur le financement du Réseau ouest-africain des Organisations Paysannes</td>
<td>Paris, 24 October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the Ministerial Lobby Group (GMAP)</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal), 28-29 October 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Meeting with the Ministerial Lobby Group (GMAP) and Development Agencies, Members of the Club du Sahel</td>
<td>Bamako (Mali), 23 (pm) – 24 November 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atelier de réflexion REAO-Club du Sahel sur les échanges entre le Nigeria et les autres pays d’Afrique de l’Ouest</td>
<td>Cotonou (Benin), 2-3 December 2000</td>
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</table>

Below is a list of significant Club du Sahel publications relating to its three-year work programme 1998-2000.

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

- Official Text of the Food Aid Charter (leaflet).
SAH/GOP(2001)3

- 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 Dioulaso, Club du Sahel/PDM, February 2000, 10 p. — no reference number (French only).


REGIONAL CO-OPERATION


REFORM OF DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES


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 reference number (French only).

