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The Sahel and West Africa Club's monthly newsletter aims to provide regular information on ongoing SWAC activities, publications, upcoming events and other SWAC news.

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SWAC'S STRATEGY AND POLICY GROUP MEETING

Brainstorming on the SWAC's 2008-2012 Work Orientations

The SWAC's [Strategy and Policy Group](#) met on 13 and 14 September 2007 at its headquarters in Issy-les-Moulineaux, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Charles Goerens, SWAC President, with the participation of some of the SWAC's West African partners (ECOWAS, UEMOA, ROPPA, Paris-based ambassadorial representatives) as well as its funding partners ([> list of participants](#)). The meeting was opened by Mr. Mario Amano, OECD Deputy Secretary-General.



This workshop launched the beginning of a brainstorming process concerning the main areas of the SWAC's 2008 – 2012 Work Plan. The discussions were based in particular on the analysis of evolutions underway in West Africa and the lessons learned from the SWAC's work carried out during 2005-2007. SPG members highlighted the positive role played by the SWAC as an interface between West African actors and OECD member countries. According to SPG members' recommendations, the SWAC should continue to initiate constructive debates that help identify strategic questions on the region's future and facilitate exchanges between regional actors and OECD member countries. It should also continue to support regional institutions such as ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, etc. in their efforts to strengthen local, national and regional capacities, as well as civil society organisations and West African initiatives promoting medium- and long-term development.

The SWAC's four areas of concentrations ([Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives](#); [Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development](#); [Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security](#); [Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration](#)) remain relevant but due to SWAC's limited financial resources, actions need to be more selective and prioritise, taking into account realities and needs on the ground. SPG members appreciated the SWAC's efforts to approach private foundations and other potential funding partners to diversify its financial resources. They also acknowledged the improvement in the SWAC's institutional communications and encouraged the SWAC to work with ECOWAS on the establishment of a regional West African information portal.

On the basis of the discussions during the meeting and follow-up consultations, the SWAC will draft a working paper on the SWAC's strategic orientations that will be submitted for approval to the SPG meeting in January 2008. The summary record of the SPG meeting will be finalised shortly and shared with the participants for comments. [> learn more](#)

[> Images of the SPG meeting](#)

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WORKSHOP ON “FOOD SECURITY & CROSS-BORDER TRADE”

Katsina (Nigeria), 19-21 September 2007

The launching workshop of a cross-border initiative in the Kano-Katsina-Maradi (K2M) zone was jointly opened by H.E. Godwin O. Abbe, Nigerian Minister of the Interior and the Governor of Katsina State, H.E. Barr. Ibrahim Shema, represented by the Deputy Governor of Katsina State, H.E. Sirajo Umar Damari. The Nigerian Minister of the Interior reiterated Nigeria's support for all ECOWAS initiatives and programmes and more generally African integration.



The workshop brought together some 60 participants coming mainly from the Niger-Nigeria border region. Within the framework of three working groups, participants discussed operational proposals that involve local cross-border actors (public and private), the governments, ECOWAS and development partners. Drawing on outcomes of discussions, the participants decided to establish, under the auspices of the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Co-operation, three information platforms on cross-border activities, aiming to: (i) Improve market information systems; (ii) Enhance cross-border movement of cereals and livestock, and (iii) Improve ways and means of transferring capital between the two countries. Several international partner organisations already confirmed their willingness to support these initiatives. During the coming weeks a concept paper on the K2M initiative will be produced which will serve as the ground work for a feasibility study. The results of this study will be submitted to the initiative's financial partners in Niger and Nigeria. [> learn more](#)

[> Workshop Communiqué](#) | [> Workshop Programme](#) | [> Images](#)

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SYMPOSIUM ON “INNOVATIONS AS KEY OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION IN AFRICA”

Arusha (Tanzania), 17-21 September 2007

This symposium, organised by the African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility, brought together some 250 agricultural experts, scientists, researchers, NGOs, private sector representatives and policy makers from all over Africa to explore opportunities and constraints, and share knowledge and experiences in order to promote access to agricultural innovation as a key to the Green Revolution in Africa. The SWAC, represented by Mr. Jean Zoundi, Head of the SWAC’s “[Rural Transformation & Sustainable Development](#)” Unit, shared lessons learned from a regional initiative led by the SWAC from 2003 to 2005 on the “[Transformation of the Family Economy in West Africa and the Role of Agricultural Innovation](#)”. Mr. Zoundi contributed to the symposium’s debates with his presentation entitled “[The Challenges facing West African Family Farms in accessing Agricultural Innovation: Institutional and Political Implications](#)”.

> [download the mission report](#) (*French*)

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RESURGENCE OF CRISES IN WEST AFRICA & MANAGING POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Within the framework of initiatives launched by the [Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security Unit](#) on the DDR and Post-conflict, Mr. Massaër Diallo, Unit Head, was invited to participate in a Radio France Internationale (RFI) broadcast, “Le Débat africain” on 16 September 2007, hosted by Madeleine Mukamabano. The debate addressed “*the Resurgence of Crises in West Africa*”. Contributing to the debate were also Mr. Saïd Djinnit (Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union), Mr. Gilles Yabi (International Crisis Group) and Mr. Cyril Musila (Consultant on conflict management).

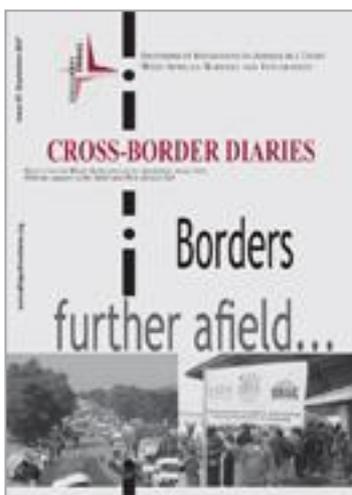
> [listen to the broadcast](#)

Mr. Diallo was invited on 17 September to participate in an introductory training session organised by the *École Nationale d’Administration* (ENA-France) on “Managing Post-conflict Situations”. Participants in this training session were French civil servants, foreigners, military and civilians. Mr. Diallo’s intervention was entitled, “*Conflict Typology, Dynamics and Prevention*”.

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PUBLICATIONS

Cross-border Diaries n°7: Borders further afield



The Diaries have decided to explore other boundaries and regions: those which have received a great deal of media coverage like the United States-Mexican border, others that have been planned out as in China, or which have been transformed into economic corridors in the great Mekong, those in regions exiting from crisis such as Kosovo, or where now exist regional highways like the “Maputo corridor” linking up South Africa with Mozambique. Common areas of interest in West African border co-operation: economic concerns highlighting complementarities, administrative impediments, cultural identity, inter-ethnic links to preserve, even under pressure. This exploration concluded that there is cohesiveness among all border peoples.

[> Issue No.7](#) (2,5 Mb)

Food Security Information Note No. 13:

Should satisfactory agricultural and food prospects be expected?

After a late start to the agricultural season in mid-July accompanied by irregular rains, rainfall was intense throughout the region during August and September. Significant flooding affected several countries in the Sahel and West Africa. The consequences due to flooding are currently being evaluated. The agricultural and food situation is generally satisfactory throughout the Sahel and West Africa. Agricultural product markets remain well-supplied. However, perspectives remain linked to rainfall activity at the end of the rainy season. More particularly, rain continuing at least until mid-October could be a serious determining factor. A selection of information sources and reference documents completes this monthly information note.

[> download the Information Note \(No. 13\)](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Workshop on Regional Instruments and Governance & Conflict Prevention Mechanisms

Dakar and Saly (Senegal), 16-19 October 2007

The SWAC's “Governance Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security Unit” is organising, in collaboration with ECOWAS, the West African Women's Group and the Youth Co-ordination Group, a workshop on the appropriation, dissemination and implementation of regional instruments and endogenous democratic and conflict prevention mechanisms in West Africa. The meeting's aim is to establish an action plan involving all concerned actors at the national and regional levels. [> learn more](#)

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All publications can be downloaded from the SWAC website: www.westafricaclub.org

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