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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 2008 WORK PRIORITIES

“Attentive to SWAC members”

The conclusions of the [SWAC's Strategy and Policy Group \(SPG\) Meeting](#), held in Paris on 31 January and 1 February 2008, focus on the following three aspects: « *regional approach, political impact and innovation* ». These conclusions greatly influenced the SWAC team in the development of the [2008 Work Programme](#). In the coming months, the SWAC will aim to provide *more and better support to its members*. Several individual meetings with donors are scheduled for the coming months. Most recently, Mr. Normand Lauzon, SWAC Director, met with Representatives of the USAID Regional Office in Accra (Ghana) to actualize joint initiatives. The [Summary Record](#) also takes stock on the SWAC's financial situation. A restricted SPG meeting with the SWAC's financial donors will be organised on 16 June 2008. This meeting will evaluate the implementation of the financial mobilisation and cost reduction strategy as set out in the 2008-2012 Work Plan, as well as the implementation of the recommendations set out above.

[>> SPG Summary Record](#) | [SWAC Work Programme 2008](#)

AID EFFECTIVENESS AND REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

“The President and the SWAC Director present proposals to the DAC Chairman”

“Regional cooperation can be a remarkable tool for improving aid effectiveness. With regard to agriculture many of the production basins cross over borders and are subject to policies and projects conceived and implemented without coordination among the countries concerned. These distortions lead to additional costs and the lack of effectiveness. In the health sector, two hospitals situated on either side of the border will have the same medical specialty when complementary services could be provided. On a different scale, the same could be said for schools and health centres located in border zones. Post-conflict management and prevention programmes are often developed only at the national level whereas the spreading of instability is for the most part, transnational. Most natural resources management programmes stop at the border.”

This paragraph is an extract from the letter sent by Messrs. Charles Goerens and Normand Lauzon to Mr Eckhard Deutscher, Chairman of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. The letter continued by stating that regional cooperation needed to be included in the *Paris Declaration* with regard to international assistance. They completed the letter by setting out concrete proposals.

[>> download the SWAC letter](#)

EARLY WARNING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

The SWAC, along with the International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) and ECOWAS, is involved in preparations to operationalise early warning systems at the regional and international levels.

Preparatory Committee of the Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Meeting

The SWAC participated on 17 March 2008 in the Preparatory Committee of the Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Meeting to be held on 21 and 22 April at OIF Headquarters in Paris. The meeting aims to improve the co-ordination of actions undertaken by various regional and international organisations and institutions involved in conflict prevention. Actors such as United Nations Representatives, the African Union, the European Union, ECOWAS and the CEEAC participated in the brainstorming process. The SWAC, represented by Gwénola Possémé-Rageau, highlighted the essential role of civil society in crisis prevention and the need to involve civil society representatives in the formulation of conflict prevention policies.

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Launching of the Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN)

Conakry (Guinea), 17-22 March 2008

Within the framework of the official launching of the Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN – *French version*), ECOWAS organised two workshops addressing conflict prevention. The SWAC was represented by Mr. Massaër Diallo, Head of the SWAC's Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace & Security Unit.

Representatives of the Guinean government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Representatives of the armed forces, the President's Economic and Social Council, Guinean civil society representatives, ECOWARN local correspondents and USAID staff (ECOWAS' main donor in the area) attended the official launching ceremony. Discussions focused on the role of this early-warning system within the framework of current tensions in Guinea. Further launching sessions are scheduled for various countries in the sub-region to have a better understanding of this crisis and conflict prevention tool.

The first workshop (17-19 March) focused on gender-specificities of the ECOWAS Early Warning System. Drawing on the experience of the Intergovernmental Authority (IGAD), another sub-regional organisation which includes 7 East African countries, participants brainstormed on how to address the gender aspect within this system and its 94 indicators.

The second meeting (20-22 March) focused on the harmonisation of technical procedures to facilitate the implementation of the various existing African Early Warning Systems, notably those of the AU, IGAD and ECOWAS and to develop a compatible system.

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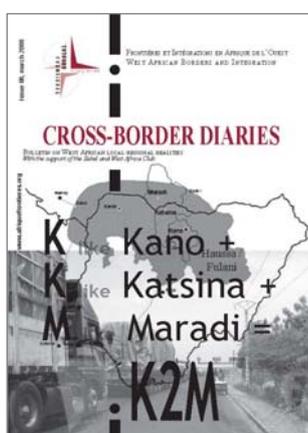
PUBLICATIONS



Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa: "Communicable Diseases"

For years, poliomyelitis, measles, neonatal tetanus, onchocerciasis, trypanosomiasis have devastated the West African population. Currently the war on these illnesses is being won. Other battles are being undertaken to fight still very active epidemics (meningitis, cholera, yellow fever), constant scourges like malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis as well as emerging diseases (in particular dengue and Lassa fevers).

>> [English version upcoming – www.atlas-westafrica.org](http://www.atlas-westafrica.org)



Cross-Border Diaries: "Kano-Katsina-Maradi"

Once is not always. Following the habitual wandering of our chroniclers along the African borders, this issue makes one stop in the States of Northern Nigeria and Southern Niger. Thanks to the combined efforts of populations, policies and donors, the ECOWAS Cross-border Initiatives Programme is gaining ground. This special issue financed by the European Delegation of the European Commission based in Niamey focuses on the implementation of three coordination platforms for improved movement of capital, populations and commercial trade. This area, with its great dynamic of flows, is described through its human, economic and security dimensions.

>> [download Issue No.8](#) (4Mb)

The Challenges of Democracy in West Africa

"What does democracy mean in West Africa in light of the 2007 electoral year?" As an introduction to the panel discussion on the 2007 electoral year in West Africa, organised by the SWAC in February 2008, this presentation analyses the significance and draws lessons from the 2007 electoral year. It raises numerous questions on the prospects for democracy in West Africa with the aim to stimulate debate.

>> [download this presentation](#) (French), by Massaër Diallo

"Rethinking Democracy"

The 2007 elections confirmed that in West Africa, as elsewhere, democracy is never a given. Constantly in the process of being built, citizens must always be vigilant. Based on analyses of the outcomes of the 2007 elections in West Africa, the document addresses a number of issues which are true challenges for democracy.

>> [download this document](#) (French), by Gwénola Possémé-Rageau

Table indicating West African Elections Results in 2007

There were many elections throughout the region in 2007: more than 10 countries, of which 9 are part of the ECOWAS zone, were holding legislative or presidential elections. This table presents major outcomes of this important electoral year in West Africa.

>> [download this table](#) (French)

Food Security Information Note No. 18:

“Better Functioning of Staple Food Crop Markets is Urgently Needed”

The food situation is precarious due to current tensions on some markets and some commodities. In particular, the market situation is troubling in some areas of Niger (east and north), the Gambia, the extreme north of Nigeria, northeast Guinea Bissau, southeast Mauritania, Senegal and Cape Verde. Urban centres and structurally deficient zones are also affected. Similarly, the already worrying nutritional situation, notably for children under 5 years of age, women breast-feeding and pregnant, should be monitored closely.

[>> download the Information Note No. 18](#)

UPCOMING EVENT

3rd Restricted RPCA Meeting

OECD Conference Room, Paris, 10-11 April 2008

This regular meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), jointly organised by the CILSS and the SWAC, will bring together the main actors of food security at the national and regional levels (CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA), government officials and policy makers from West African countries and OECD member countries as well as agricultural experts from international organisations, multilateral and bilateral technical aid agencies and civil society representatives.



It aims to provide a mid-term update and assessment of the 2007-2008 agricultural campaign and of the food and nutritional situation at the onset of the lean season with a view to proposing measures and actions to prevent and manage possible food and nutritional crises in West Africa. Exchanges will also focus on (i) markets, cross-border flows and price trends in the region, (ii) the process of the revision of the Food Aid Charter, and (iii) climate change and its impact on food security in West Africa.

[>> learn more](#)

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