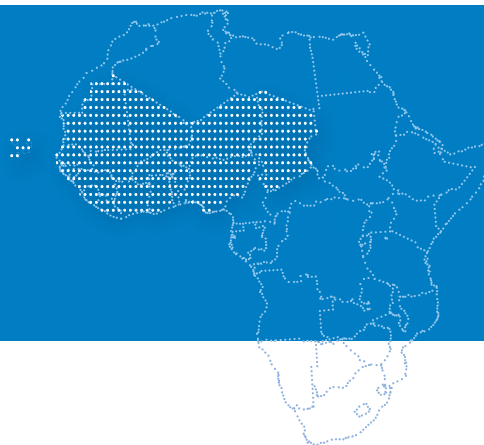


SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB

Newsletter

WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION



Cheikhe Hadjibou Soumaré, *UEMOA Commission President*
and François-Xavier de Donnea, *SWAC President*

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Lake Chad, northern Mali: Progress and uncertainty

Two major geopolitical threats hovered over West Africa in the first part of 2015: the potential failure of the presidential election in Nigeria, on the one hand, and that of the peace negotiations in Mali on the other. Today a sense of relief prevails, but it is accompanied by apprehension.



Laurent Bossard
*SWAC Secretariat
Director*

President Goodluck Jonathan kept his promise by accepting the election results and facilitating what will be remembered in history as the first political transition in his country. As for the new President Muhammadu Buhari, he followed through with his election commitment by giving new impetus to the fight against Boko Haram. Nigeria took command of the multinational force, the headquarters of which is currently being established in N'Djamena. One can only applaud the Nigerian offensive as well as the successes of the Chadian and Nigerien armies since the beginning of the year. However, the war against Boko Haram is still far from over, as evidenced by the recent deadly attacks in Chad and Niger attributed to the sect.

Around Lake Chad, the prospect of war was taking root where a terrorist hotbed was developing. Too long considered an internal problem in Nigeria, Boko Haram is now fully established on the regional stage. Will Nigeria one day join the Sahel G5? Will it be fully integrated into the action plans of the Sahel strategies of the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS? These questions should be addressed. For after the restoration of security, the eternal questions of youth employment, education, health and development will remain.

These concerns should now be the top priority on Mali's agenda because the peace process there remains extremely fragile. How is this going to happen? On 20 June, the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) finally signed the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Thus all stakeholders of the Algiers negotiations have now endorsed the accord.

In accordance with article 36, work is underway to identify “the rapid recovery, poverty reduction and development needs” in the north. This work should be completed three months after the signing of the agreement, namely by 20 September. A “funding conference” around a “specific development strategy” should be convened two months later.

The “early recovery” concerns of the northern population must be put on the table as quickly as possible. Without a doubt, it would be politically sensible and technically efficient to build on the consistency and programming framework offered by the “National Resilience Priorities” (NRP) document, designed within the framework of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) - Sahel and West Africa. Otherwise, two risks arise. The first – as is so often the case in post-conflict interventions – is the disorder of emergency that leads to a proliferation of well-meaning but unco-ordinated initiatives, working according to different criteria and methods, sometimes leaving out areas and people in need. The second is the difficulty in establishing a link between emergency response and long-term development.

Beyond emergency and resilience, combatting poverty and promoting development in the north, can only be

fully addressed at the national and regional levels. Northern Mali has never prospered as well as when it was integrated, socially, economically and politically on both its southern and northern fringes, the “sacred alliance of the lands of salt and of kola”, of which Amadou Hampâté Bâ spoke so eloquently. The identity of “Azawad” is based primarily on its ancient function as a gathering place and a link, for mobility and exchange, and not on the notion of a defined and bounded territory.

The recent beginning of Ramadan 2015 bears witness to the development potential that lies in economic co-operation with Algeria. In the online diary *Algeria 360°*, Mohamed Malek Benmalek, President of the Chamber of Agriculture of Tamanrasset Province, noted a steep rise in meat prices and regretted not being able to import more meat from Mali and Niger. “Neither Mali nor Niger has slaughterhouses of the standard that could possibly supply Tamanrasset, not to mention the north. Yet the cattle potential in these two neighbouring countries is impressive, and if investors get involved in that niche, fresh beef would sell at a quarter of its current price.” When will there be a slaughterhouse in Gao or Timbuktu? When will there be a road to Tamanrasset?

Cross-border co-operation should undoubtedly figure prominently in Mali’s reconstruction and development strategy. The SWAC Secretariat is pursuing its work on the matter as it continues to support the Global Alliance for Resilience. It

Cross-border co-operation should undoubtedly figure prominently in Mali’s reconstruction and development strategy.

also continues its work of persuasion and debate with those who have the challenging task of defining and implementing regional policies.

Around Lake Chad as in northern Mali and in the rest of the Sahara-Sahel, it is the region’s resilience capacity – in the broadest sense of the term – that is being challenged. Over the past decades, the regional dimensions of resilience have made much progress, though much remains to be done.

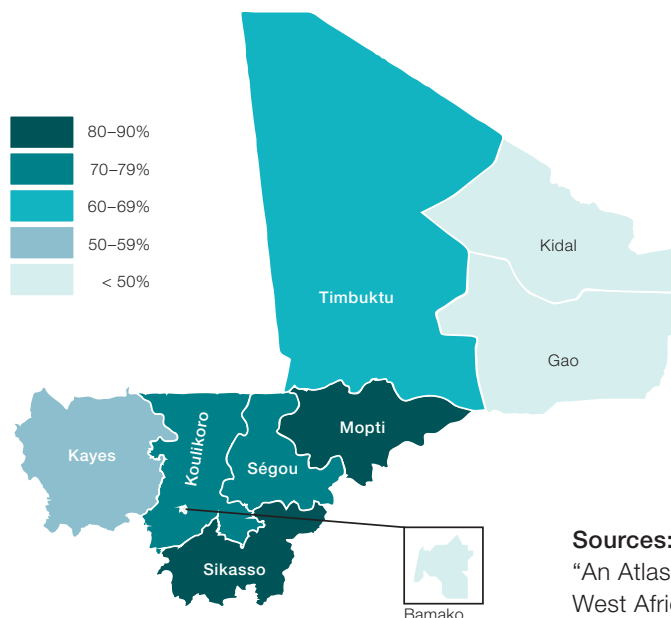
This is one of the messages we aim to deliver during the 2015 Sahel and West Africa Week, which will be held from 26 to 30 October in the European Pavilion of the Expo Milano Universal Exhibition.

Laurent Bossard

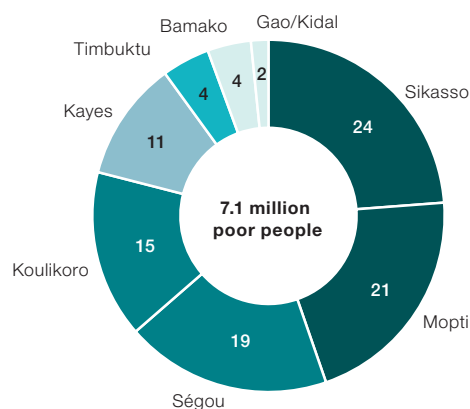
SWAC Secretariat Director

POVERTY IN MALI

Percentage of population living below the poverty line



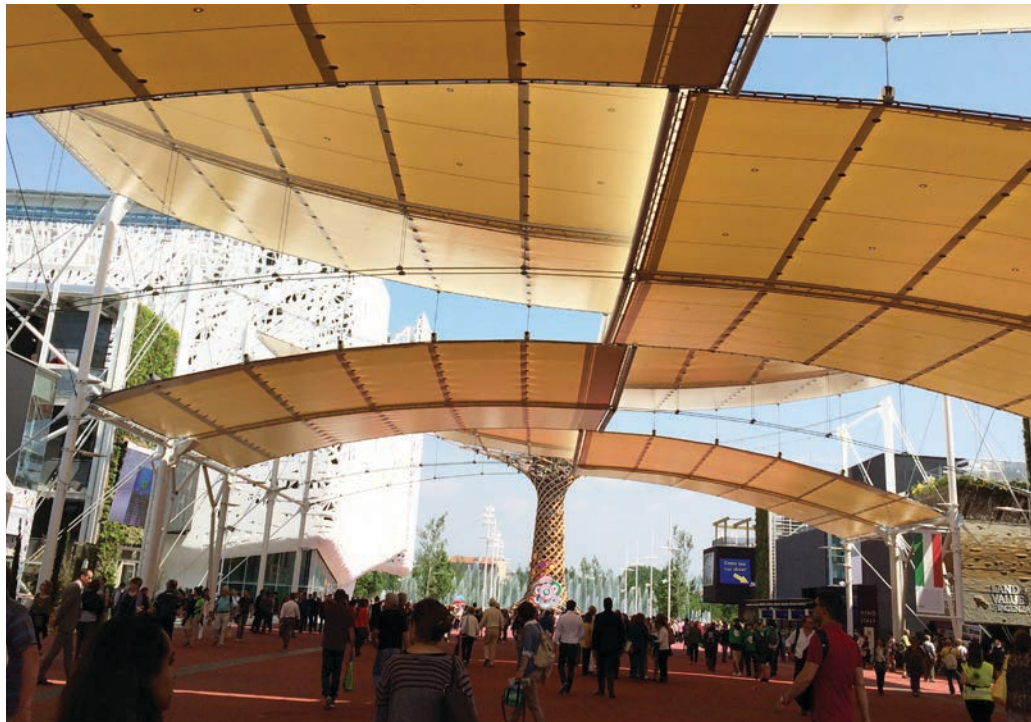
Distribution of the poor by region (% of total poor population)



Sources: The World Bank Group (2013); map extracted from “An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security”, West African Studies, OECD (2014).

SWAC at Expo Milano 2015: Share your ideas and get involved!

At the invitation of the European Union, SWAC's aim in participating at the Expo Milano is to raise the public's awareness of the Expo's theme, "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" with a particular focus on the perspective of West Africa and its key players. We aim to promote a better understanding of the complex issue of food security in West Africa and to examine stakeholder actions, policies and partnerships in the food security and development agendas of the region. What does the Milan Charter mean for West Africa? What is the current state of women's empowerment? How can climate-smart agriculture work for the poorest populations? We want to learn from your experiences and invite you to share your thoughts on our website and blog. Your ideas and viewpoints will feed into the preparation of our Sahel and West Africa Week.



Tree of Life from Cardo/Decumano crossing

SAVE THE DATE

SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA WEEK

The 2015 edition of the Sahel and West Africa Week will be held in Milan:

- ▶ **26-27 October: The SWAC Forum** will focus on ongoing transformations in the region and their implications for food security, nutrition, resilience and sustainability.
- ▶ **28 October: The SWAC Strategy and Policy Group Meeting** will discuss current and future SWAC work.
- ▶ **29-30 October: A special session of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA)** will take stock of three decades of joint work, successes and challenges. Network Members will share experiences with other regions.

→ Website: www.oecd.org/swac-expo-milano

→ Blog: <https://swacexpo2015.wordpress.com>



→ discover our brochure:
<http://issuu.com/swac-oecd>

Call for contributions

What is the current state of women's empowerment in West Africa?

In her most recent blog post, Donatella Gnisci, SWAC Advisor - Expo Milano 2015, reports on the experiences shared by Senegalese women at a recent conference held in Milan: "Women who count" (28-29 May). For these women, empowerment is about "taking control", "speaking up and acting for yourself." Their key priorities are to promote the economic empowerment of women and strengthen women's organisations and networks that are influential and effective in bringing about societal and economic change. Some of the testimonies also highlighted that simply swapping gender roles will not help end poverty and hunger. While African women are progressively in better positions to take leadership, set agendas and steer processes, a large number of challenges and obstacles persist. What is the current state of women's empowerment in West Africa? **Please share your ideas, comments and insights.** Your inputs will feed into a background paper and policy brief which we will use to further stimulate debate in Milan and beyond.

→ contact: donata.gnisci@oecd.org

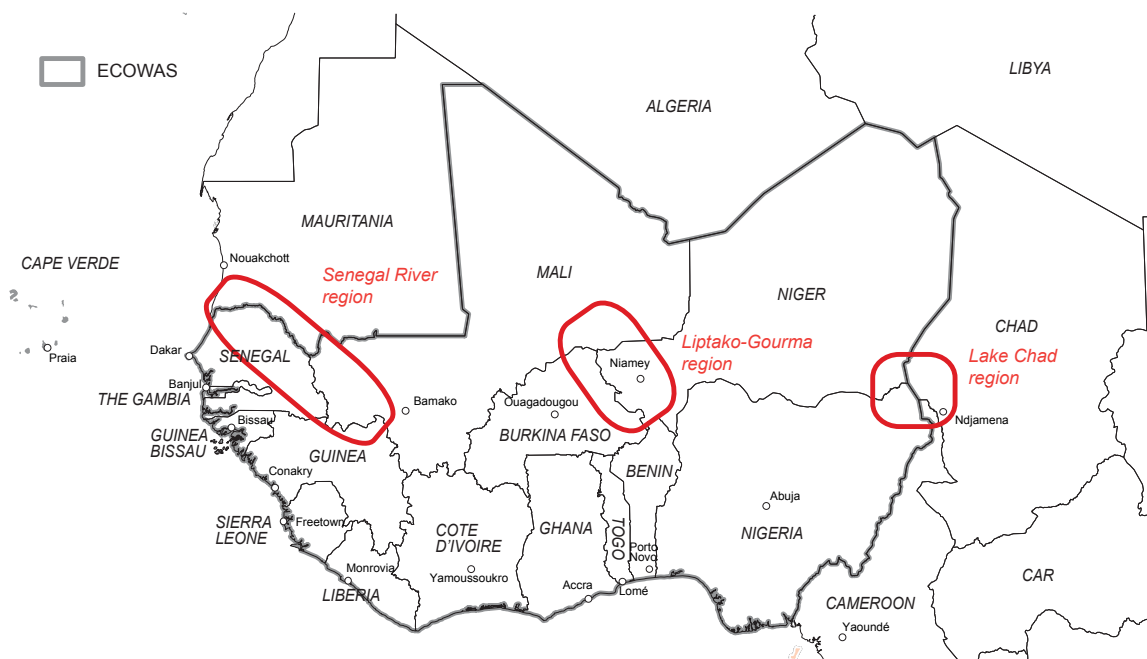
Official Participant



MILANO 2015
FEEDING THE PLANET
ENERGY FOR LIFE



Cross-border co-operation: Regional analysis and case studies



Within the SWAC Secretariat's 2015-16 strategic thinking cycle, a mapping study is currently being conducted on high-potential cross-border areas in West Africa. It is based on ten indicators including the proximity between population centres, access to urban centres and border markets, production centres, linguistic areas and the existence of cross-border co-operation mechanisms. In parallel, at the local level, the team will conduct three case studies on the Liptako-Gourma Authority, the Senegal River Basin Development Authority (OMVS) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) (→ see map above).

This work is being conducted at a time when cross-border co-operation is very much on the international agenda, particularly in the context of stabilisation strategies for the Sahel and the Sahara-Sahelian areas. The Japanese International Co-operation Agency is supporting a programme implemented by UNDP in the areas

of Bassikounou (Mali-Mauritania), Liptako-Gourma (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) and Lake Chad. The European Union, ECOWAS and UEMOA recently agreed to establish a trust fund of several hundred million euros especially targeted for remote and border areas. Among other things, the fund will support the implementation of the ECOWAS/UEMOA/CILSS Sahel Strategy, which heavily emphasises cross-border co-operation. The African Union, within the framework of its Border Programme, has plans to organise a Euro-African conference on cross-border co-operation.

We can only welcome this trend, which could support - finally on a large scale - locally initiated projects formulated and implemented by private and public actors from two or more

countries occupying border areas. If we really start listening to local actors, they will no doubt formulate comprehensive programmes addressing the full range of their concerns -

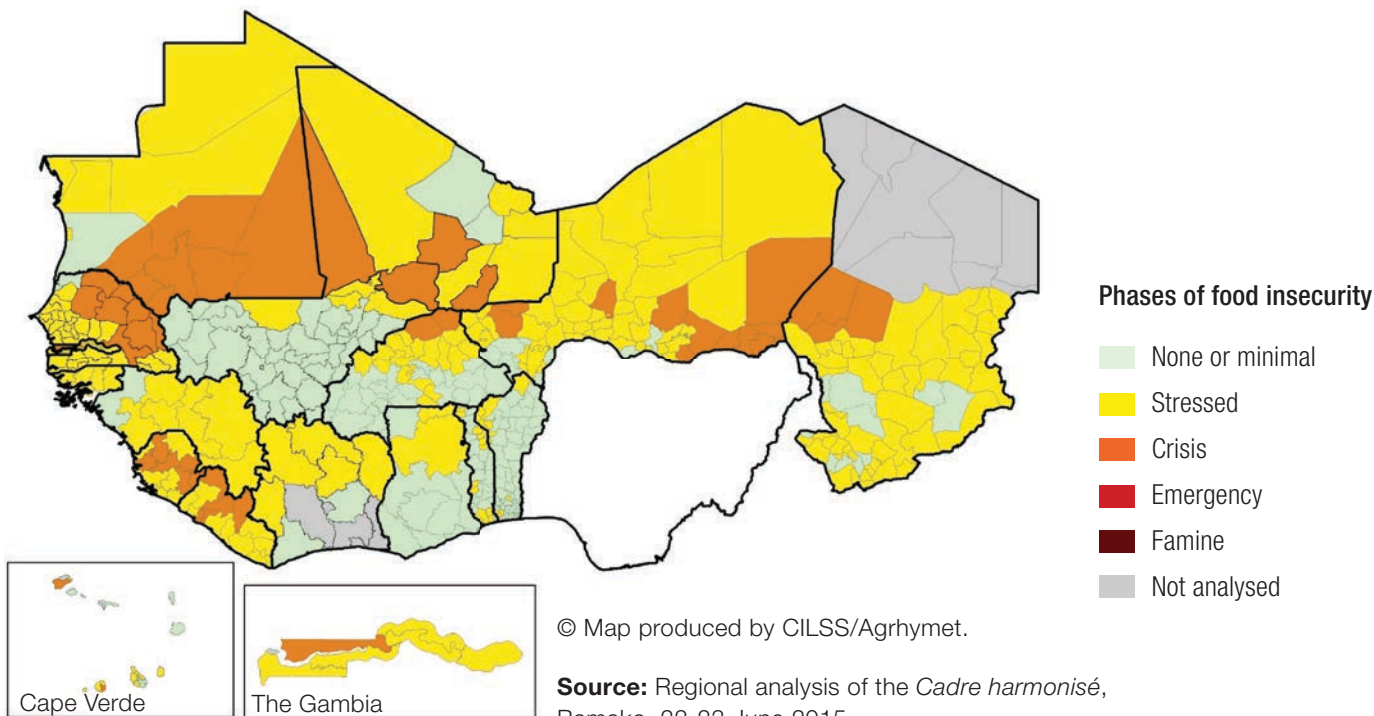
"Imagine if the concept of borders gave way to that of border-countries. We would see areas of fusing, of suture and exchange, which would allow border peoples take charge of common schools, security posts, markets or health centres."

agriculture, trade, security, etc. - as shown by some current experiences. Alpha Oumar Konaré, then President of the Republic of Mali, said in the early 2000s: "Imagine if the concept of borders gave way to that of border-countries. We would see areas of fusing, of suture and exchange, which would allow border peoples take charge of common schools, security posts, markets or health centres."

→ www.oecd.org/swac/ourwork/cross-border-co-operation.htm

Food and nutrition situation in June-August

Regional experts meeting, Bamako, 22-23 June 2015



As the lean season approaches, regional experts are urging West African countries and their development partners to take steps to strengthen in-country capacity to establish early warning systems and response plans for potential food crises in all West African countries. The recommendation comes following the technical meeting of the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC), held from 22 to 23 June in Bamako.

Participants noted that, with some exceptions, markets in the region are generally well supplied, with grain supplies reinforced by carry-over from stockpiles in the Central commercial basin and cross-border flows. The exceptions include conflict areas in northern Mali, northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin. Prices for staple goods remain at or near the average prices over the past five years. With regard to the livestock sector, the experts said there is cause for concern due to the late arrival of the rainy season and the depletion of pastures in some parts of the Sahel.

→ www.food-security.net

The experts warned that despite the good harvests approximately 7.5 million people will face food and nutrition crises between June and August, including 4.5 million in the Sahel region. In addition, some 2.8 million refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) put further stress on the already fragile food situation in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria. National response plans have

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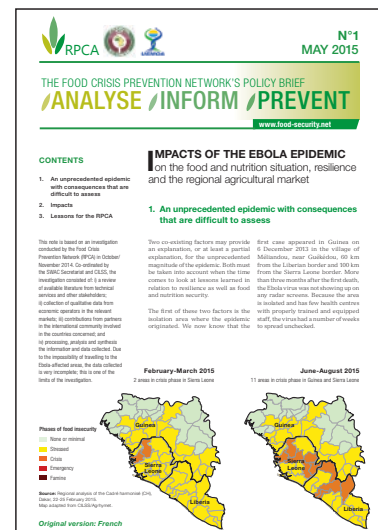
been developed in these countries as well as in Senegal, but governments lack the financial resources to ensure efficient implementation. Within the framework of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), the PREGEC system brings together regional food security experts for regular consultations to monitor and analyse the food and nutrition situation in the region. The next technical meetings are scheduled for September and November.

The map shows elevated vulnerability in areas facing security crises (northern Mali and the Lake Chad basin) and areas hosting large numbers of refugees and displaced persons (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger). Areas near centres of the Ebola outbreak (Liberia and Sierra Leone) also register higher risks of food insecurity and malnutrition.



Ebola: The RPCA analyses the impact of the epidemic on food security

Lomé, 2-4 March 2015



This note is based on an investigation conducted by the RPCA in October/November 2014. Co-ordinated by the SWAC Secretariat and CILSS, the investigation consisted of: i) a review of available literature from technical services and other stakeholders; ii) collection of qualitative data from economic operators in the relevant markets; iii) contributions from partners in the international community involved in the countries concerned; and iv) processing, analysis and synthesis of the information and data collected. Due to the impossibility of travelling to the Ebola-affected areas, the data collected is very incomplete; this is one of the limits of the investigation.

The restricted Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) meeting focused on assessing the impact of the Ebola epidemic on the food and nutrition situation, resilience and the regional agricultural market. The SWAC Secretariat summarised the key findings of an investigation conducted in October-November 2014 and identified key lessons and implications for the Network. Ms Jacqueline Sultan, Guinean Minister of Agriculture,

presented lessons learned from the management of the Ebola crisis in Guinea (→ page 7). Network members took stock of other priority work areas such as the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve and the external assessment of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management. The event was hosted by the government of Togo and gathered some 200 participants.

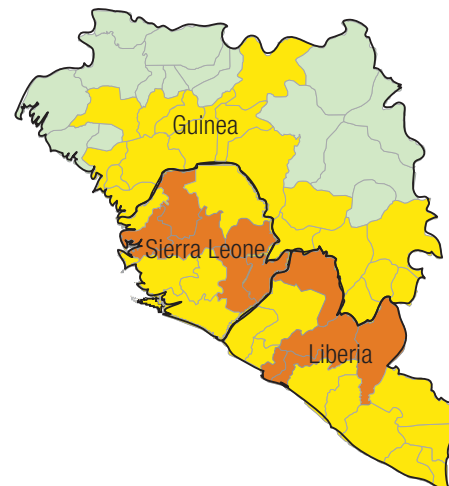
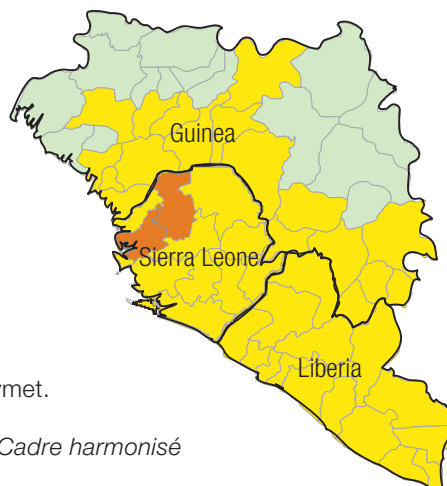
→ www.food-security.net

February-March 2015
2 areas in crisis phase in Sierra Leone

June-August 2015
11 areas in crisis phase in Guinea and Sierra Leone

Phases of food insecurity

- None or minimal
- Stressed
- Crisis
- Emergency
- Famine



© Map produced by CILSS/Agrhymet.

Source: Regional analysis of the *Cadre harmonisé* Dakar, 22-25 February 2015.

Lessons from Guinea

Interview with Ms Jacqueline Sultan, Minister of Agriculture, Guinea

What lessons do you draw from the Ebola epidemic in Guinea?

This crisis has been a huge lesson, learned through a great deal of pain obviously. This is an unexpected event that we had no knowledge of, a completely new disease for us. We thought it was something that could happen only in Central Africa, and suddenly it was discovered in West Africa, with all of the hysteria and misconceptions that come with it.

Ebola has made us aware of the weakness of our health system and our lack of readiness to respond. Beyond the shortcomings of our health services, we were also confronted with the lack of understanding in our entire population. We had to integrate this dimension into the sensitisation system. Obviously we were extremely cautious before deciding on the approach to take to combat and control the epidemic. Until then, in Central Africa, Ebola had developed in very confined, remote rural areas. This is the first time we have seen the epidemic leave its area of origin, travel a thousand kilometres and take root in a capital city.

Guinea struggled and debated for months over more or less random approaches to control the disease. There were no laboratories, community services, etcetera, that were ready to act. This trial and error approach lost us at least six months which allowed the epidemic to spread over a large part of our territory and beyond the borders.

It does not really matter where the epidemic originated. The fact is that it exploded in our country and in neighbouring countries - Sierra Leone and Liberia - but prompted different reactions from partners and brotherly countries. In Guinea, we felt a little alone; at times there was a feeling that some research organisations came to see but were not there



to respond and give us answers. In Liberia, on the contrary, there was an extremely strong, fast and powerful response from the United States with the arrival of the Marines and a comprehensive approach. Britain, meanwhile, attended to Sierra Leone.

There were three different responses in three countries that were suffering the same epidemic.

There were three different responses in three countries that were suffering the same epidemic.

What was the role of the media?

The media, both local and international, have contributed to sensationalising the epidemic. Perhaps they had no other news at that time. Whatever the reason, we have been the object of great stigma in the eyes of international opinion, yet without benefit of an effective reaction in relation to what Guinea, a country in danger, a country in distress, might expect. We had extremely alarming news clips, stigmatising countries, giving sometimes contradictory information

from various partners who did not necessarily have practical knowledge of this disease. The media frenzy is also explained by the fact that this was a first for the world, to see that Ebola could not be circumscribed and could cross barriers, jump continents and become a global health problem.

How would you explain public distrust toward the treatment centres?

We understand this reaction because it reflects a lack of information and conflicting discourses. Initially, Ebola was presented as a lethal disease with a quasi 100% death rate, which provoked great distrust in our health services. People thought that they would die in the hospital once they had Ebola. In Guinea, we have a survival rate of 57%. It was something new that even major laboratories and international health agencies had not expected at all. This shows that Ebola in West Africa is a whole other epidemic, different from that of Central Africa, and therefore requires a different approach. This is the lesson that we are learning in West Africa and in Guinea: This epidemic is different. "No 100% death rate, you can recover if you seek medical attention early on", was a primary message!

Who are the victims?

Rural areas paid the highest price. I also want to underscore that we had a lot more deaths of women, because it is women who cared for the sick and for children. When there is an epidemic, women are always on the frontline.

How would you assess the reaction from partners?

I think that there is an important lesson to draw. The partners came, each with their methodology, each with their approach, and there was no co-ordination. There was an extraordinary loss of time. Each reflected in his corner without a common vision of the whole, without the capacity to benefit from the help of partners. Treatment centres arrived eight months after the decision was taken to establish them. The very lengthy procedures made it so that help arrived a little late to address certain emergencies.

In addition, while local healthcare was absolutely urgent, the relocation of patients was favoured initially. Besides, being transported from one place to another was also a vector for spreading the disease.

Finally, each partner raised funds individually with its own agendas instead of developing a common agenda. We know that similar initiatives – for example health monitoring systems – were conducted in parallel, without co-ordination and at very different costs. I think this also is one of the important lessons. Millions of dollars were mobilised, but we do not have a clear vision of how this money was spent. This is what created a veritable business,

and we regretted the lack of co-ordination of our partners' actions.

We would have liked to have AGIR to better co-ordinate a common response, an alliance whose main purpose would be to react to such crises by providing a unifying framework for action.

In this instance, we would have liked to have AGIR better co-ordinate a common response, an alliance whose main purpose would be to react to such crises by providing a unifying framework for action. That is why we are calling on all stakeholders to ensure that the operational capacity to respond to such crises is quickly established. I believe that there are lessons to be learned in terms of approach, and AGIR is an inspiration.

Interview led by Julia Wanjiru,
SWAC Secretariat, Lomé, 4 March 2015

Resilience: West African countries make progress in defining priorities

Sixteen Sahelian and West African countries have started formulating national resilience priorities (NRP) within the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR). Niger and Togo have already adopted their NRP documents, developed through inclusive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders. Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Mali are currently validating their resilience priorities and six other countries should be at this phase in the first half of 2016. This is just the first step of a dialogue process that must be pursued in the long-term in order to consolidate a multi-sector approach within AGIR. The AGIR Technical Unit, set up by ECOWAS and UEMOA, and based at CILSS, is providing guidance and permanent methodological support to the governments. On 2-3 July, it organised a training workshop for Cape Verde, The Gambia, Liberia, Mauritania and Nigeria building on shared experiences from countries that are advanced in the process.

TOGO'S EXPERIENCE



Noël Bataka

Secretary-General, Ministry of Agriculture, livestock and Fisheries, Togo

“Togo’s approach consists of engaging the different actors involved in resilience in Togo to take ownership of the process by participating actively and taking on responsibly in their particular fields of work. The inclusive dialogue process was led by stakeholders within their respective groups and through a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectorial platform that we have established (ministries of agriculture, environment, social action, grassroots development, education, territorial management, rural equipment but also non-state actors such as civil society, agricultural producers’ organisations and the private sector). We made sure that all actors used the tools and methods drawn from the

AGIR Regional Roadmap to analyse and assess existing policies, strategies, programmes and projects within their bodies. By participating in this exercise, the various actors developed a better understanding of the Alliance’s objectives. This greatly helped them in elaborating their own priorities in their respective fields of work. Ultimately, the role of the ministry of agriculture was to facilitate the sharing of information and synthesis of inputs in the National Resilience Priorities (NRP) document. As a result, the NRP has become not a “ministry of agriculture document”, but can rightly be called a “document of Togo”. It covers the resilience priorities of all Togolese stakeholders, state and non-state actors alike.

Did you know?

Inspired by AGIR, strengthening resilience is a key focus of the EU's Regional Indicative Programme 2014-2020 and the majority of the National Indicative Programmes (11th European Development Fund - EDF), approved on 6 July, involving a budget worth EUR 1.8 billion.

SWAC Strategy and Policy Group

OECD headquarters, Paris, 11 June 2015

The SWAC Strategy and Policy Group (SPG) had the honour to welcome UEMOA Commission President Cheikhe Hadjibou Soumaré among its participants. In his statement, he congratulated fellow Members on the excellent quality of collaboration and acknowledged the SWAC Secretariat's role in raising the visibility of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) and the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR), as well as the usefulness of SWAC's perspective studies.

Following a presentation of the SWAC Secretariat's intermediary activity report, the SPG reflected on current and possible new services the Secretariat intends to offer to Members.

1. Support to analysis and policy/strategy formulation;
2. Facilitation of dialogue and networking;
3. Support to information-sharing and visibility; and
4. Access to OECD networks and data, in particular to the OECD iLibrary.

In a side-event, Mr Damien Helly presented a compared analysis of current Sahel strategies based on work conducted by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), which contributed to raise the debate on the persisting security-development challenges of the region.

The SPG meeting also provided an opportunity to present SWAC's participation in Expo Milano 2015. The next Strategy and Policy Group meeting is scheduled to take place at the Expo on 28 October (→ page 3).

→ www.oecd.org/swac/members

1. **Cheikhe Hadjibou Soumaré**, UEMOA Commission President
2. **Cheikhe Hadjibou Soumaré**; **François-Xavier de Donne**, SWAC President; **Ibrahima Dieme**, UEMOA Commissioner; **Djibo Bagna**, President, Governing Board, ROPPA; **T. Jean de Dieu Somda**, Special Representative, SWAC President
3. **Damien Helly**, Deputy Head, EU External Action Programme, ECDPM
4. **Yves Haesendonck**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the OECD, Belgium; **Laura Strens**, Attachée, North and West Africa Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
5. **Yaya Sow**, ECOWAS Ambassador to the EU and the ACP Group
6. **Pierre Duquesne**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the OECD, France



Austria's regional strategy for West Africa: Key priorities and challenges



Interview with Mr Stefan Scholz, Head of Department, Programming & Planning of Development Co-operation, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (BMEIA), Austria



actively promoting buy-in by all aid-sending ministries and aligning their engagement with our development programmes. Secondly, we are working hard on establishing a results-oriented performance management framework (“strategic results management cycle”). Needless to say, our regional strategy is complementary with our co-operation programme that we have jointly developed with Burkina Faso, our longstanding priority partner country in West Africa.

Finally, let me also mention that the SWAC Secretariat's work inspired us in the first place to develop a regional strategy. Its team assisted us with its data, knowledge and expertise.

2015 is an important year for development; many global debates aim to shape the post-2015 development agenda. How will this influence Austria's partnership with West Africa?

What are the key priorities of Austria's engagement with West Africa? How are they translated into action on the ground?

Our key priorities in West Africa are renewable energy, resilience and food security as well as conflict prevention and peacekeeping. All these issues are based on the principles and values espoused by the Federal Act on Development Co-operation, which stipulates that we shall strive to combat poverty by promoting economic and social development.

To meet these challenges we have developed a wide modality mix, ranging from bi- and multilateral co-operation to research, private sector and NGO co-operation.

Austria is currently preparing a regional strategy for West Africa. What are the key objectives? Why have you chosen to develop a regional vision for your co-operation programme?

In line with our key priorities, the main objectives are:

- Improving access to energy that is affordable for the region's poor and that is reliable and safe with regard to health and the environment, as well as promoting and up-scaling energy efficiency solutions that are adjusted to the local context.
- Pursuing an integrated, sustainable resource management approach, ensuring food security and promoting local economic development.
- Creating the preconditions for lasting peace, security and development.

The regional strategy is firstly motivated by a desire to ensure programmatic coherence of all Austrian ODA actors in a “whole-of-government approach”,

“One of the most essential transformational shifts for the Austrian development co-operation is definitely the commitment to “Leave no one behind”.

One of the most essential transformational shifts for the Austrian development co-operation is definitely the commitment to “Leave no one behind” and consequently the challenge of inclusion, which has always received a great deal of attention from the Austrian public.

We fully subscribe to what is highlighted in the post-2015 development agenda: “After 2015, we should move from reducing to ending extreme poverty, in all its forms. We should ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status – is denied universal human rights and basic economic opportunities.”

Austria re-joined SWAC at a key moment, just after ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS became full Members. What motivated Austria's decision?

Over the years – and especially at a time when both the Austrian development co-operation as well as SWAC, underwent structural changes – we always maintained our strong ties built on mutual trust and continued dialogue.

Having shared interests, similar experiences in co-operating with West African institutions, as well as a common perception of existing challenges, it was a logical move to become a full member again. The membership and active participation of regional organisations, the possibility to network with other donors and partner countries alike, as well as the thematic focus of SWAC's work programme, were key elements for our decision.

In a few words, what is your vision for the future of the region?

Our future vision would be a West Africa that has successfully and sustainably reduced poverty, in socio-economic as well as in ecological terms, as well as an enhanced ability for a peaceful balance of interests and increased regional integration.

Interview led by Anna Pietikainen, SWAC Secretariat, Paris, 11 June 2015

AGIR and Africapolis at the European Development Days

Brussels, 4 June 2015

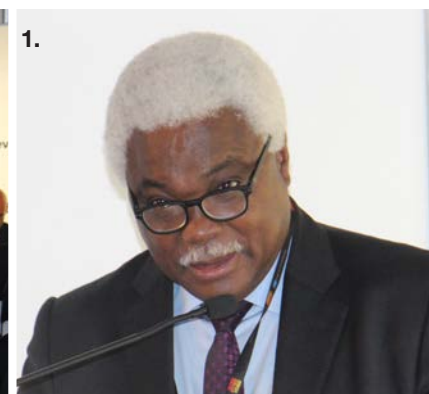
The SWAC Secretariat presented Africapolis, the most comprehensive and only comparable dataset on urbanisation in West Africa, at the European Development Days (EDD15) within its report lab on "Food security, resilience and structural change in West Africa". An interactive presentation engaged the audience in a discussion with policy makers working on food security and resilience, in particular on the implementation of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) - Sahel and West Africa.

Recognising the importance of urbanisation and settlement patterns in food and nutrition strategies, AGIR has placed poor urban dwellers among its target populations. It aims at building the resilience of poor urban and rural dwellers alike. "We are making fast progress; almost all West African countries have launched inclusive dialogue processes to define their respective resilience priorities", declared Martin Issa Bikienga, Co-ordinator of the AGIR Technical Unit. "Priority must be placed on harmoni-

sation and alignment; AGIR provides us with a common framework for action", underlined Philippe Thomas, Head of the DevCo Food Crisis Sector from the European Commission. This opinion is also shared by SWAC President Francois-Xavier de Donnea who said that "Improving co-ordination and harmonisation will both be critical for the success of the Alliance". The session was moderated by Jean-Pierre Elong-Mbassi, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA).

→ www.oecd.org/swac/events/agir-africapolis-edd15.htm

- 1. **Jean-Pierre Elong-Mbassi**, UCLGA Secretary-General
- 2. **Philippe Thomas**, Head, DevCo Food Crisis Sector, European Commission
- 3. **Martin Issa Bikienga**, Co-ordinator, AGIR Technical Unit
- 4. **Philipp Heinrigs and Thomas Allen**, Economists, SWAC Secretariat



SWAC in the Media

www.oecd.org/swac/swac-media.htm

- ▶ **Video report on the RPCA/AGIR meeting in Lomé**, WARI Magazine, March 2015 (French)
- ▶ **Nigeria is the winner, West Africa too!**, OECD Insights Blog, 10 April 2015
- ▶ **Cross-border criminal networks: Mobile threats call for mobile responses**, Les Grands Dossiers de Diplomatie n° 26, April/May 2015 (French)
- ▶ **Togo, an unchanging electoral geography**, Le Monde Afrique, 11 May 2015 (French)
- ▶ **Changing demographics pulling up agriculture**. Great Insights Magazine, Vol. 4, Issue 4., June/July 2015
- ▶ *Forthcoming*: **Challenges for the transformation of West African agricultural systems**, Grain de Sel, July 2015 (French)

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Togolese woman wearing a traditional costume, RPCA meeting, Lomé, 2 March 2015



About SWAC

The Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) is an international platform for policy dialogue and analysis devoted to regional issues in West Africa. Its mission is to enhance the effectiveness of regional policies and partner support.



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