

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR RESILIENCE INITIATIVE – SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA (AGIR) EXPERTS GROUP MEETING

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The meeting of the Group of Experts of the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR- Sahel and West Africa) was held from 7-8 November 2012 at the OECD Conference Centre, in Paris. It brought together about 50 representatives: African governments (Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger); regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS); bi- and multilateral donors (Belgium, World Bank, United States, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, European Union); agricultural producers' organisations, civil society, private sector and other West African organisations (ROPPA, Billital Maroobé Network, FIAB – Network Interface, SOS-Sahel, The Rural Hub); international NGOs (CONCORD, World Vision Group-Oxfam-Save The Children); research institutions (IFPRI); and UN bodies (UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, OCHA, WFP). This meeting was facilitated by the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD) with the objective of building a consensus on the content of a roadmap for the Alliance. The agenda focused on two issues: the overall structure of the draft roadmap and next steps. Preceded by four consultations (18 June, Brussels; 23 July, Brussels; 10 September, Abidjan; 22 October, Ouagadougou), this session of the Group of Experts was the first to bring together all of the stakeholders.

The Alliance

Regarding the general philosophy of the initiative, the participants unanimously reaffirmed AGIR's anchorage around the support for the implementation of the regional agenda for food and nutritional security in order to increase and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable people. The Alliance clearly supports West African policies and strategies, relying on the region's political leadership as well as the governance structures for food and nutritional security that it has put in place. From this point of view, West Africa is incontestably ahead of other African regions. At the regional level, UEMOA and ECOWAS, supported by CILSS, their common technical branch in the area of food security and the fight against desertification, implement structural programmes – many of which are currently being executed. They also provide joint mechanisms of co-ordination and action to the international community. The Alliance is a political partnership in the medium- and long term and a vehicle for strengthened co-ordination in support of resilience.



The implementation of the roadmap, currently being finalised, should in time permit a reduction in the malnutrition that plagues the region, by financing, from national and regional budgets, as well as international funds, the region's economic and social policies. As part of a broader perspective that goes beyond food and nutritional security, it integrates other crucial sectors (health, education, infrastructure, etc.) contributing to the resilience of the most vulnerable households and families. It also integrates other dimensions related to the strengthening of the regional market of food and agricultural products and of the value chain. It respects the principle of subsidiarity between the local, national, regional and international levels.

Orientation of the roadmap

The roadmap, which will be submitted at the meeting on 6 December, will state above all a political engagement for the long term. In accordance with the spirit of subsidiarity, which is enshrined in the Alliance, this strategic and political framework must also be endorsed by West African governments that wish to be actively involved and to apply the principles and orientations of the Alliance at the national level.

The roadmap must also:

1. Specify its geographical scope, which is the Sahel and West Africa: on the one hand, the Sahelian ecological zone covers the northern areas of coastal countries, and on the other, part of the long-term solutions lie in macro-regional approaches.
2. Specify a time horizon for the implementation of AGIR actions.
3. Be based on an analysis of the root causes of food and nutritional insecurity, which is essentially outlined in the draft roadmap submitted to the Group of Experts. It should however add new or additional issues relating in particular to climate change, socio-economic changes associated with the increase in extreme poverty, demographics, nutrition, job creation and the market (defined as the value chain linking producers to consumers in rural and urban areas); the impact of global fluctuations in agricultural and food prices; food reserves and the management of agricultural risk.
4. Rely on a shared definition of the term resilience, namely "the capacity of vulnerable households, families and systems to cope with uncertainty and the risk of shock, to withstand and respond effectively to shocks, as well as to recover and adapt in a sustainable manner."
5. Define a general objective: "To structurally and sustainably reduce food and nutritional vulnerability by supporting the implementation of Sahelian and West African policies". Specify that the most vulnerable populations¹ are the primary targets of the Alliance.

¹ Vulnerability is defined according to socio-economic criteria that take into account the income of the individual and the household as well as their means of subsistence. In the Sahel, the category of very poor households represents at least 20% of the total population, or 12 million people according to the latest estimates. The people most at risk of mortality and malnutrition are children under the age of 2 and pregnant and nursing women, most often amongst the poorest households.

6. Define specific objectives by fine-tuning the draft submitted to the Group of Experts. The definition of specific objectives will provide the opportunity to specify the target groups (with particular attention to women) and the correlated indicators for each objective. Specific objectives and priority actions will take into account the additional or complementary proposals formulated by the Group of Experts² and will be formulated and apply by time-scale and level:

- Short/medium- and long term ;
- Local level (including the promotion of endogenous systems of crisis prevention and resilience), national and regional levels. The objectives at the local and national levels will be designed as frameworks to be adapted at a later stage; the roadmap does not aim to define in depth what precisely should be done in each of the concerned countries. The regional level will be much more precise, based on the implementation of the ECOWAS/UEMOA agenda.

7. Identify for each specific objective, priority interventions, measurable indicators and the expected results for a defined period. It will also be necessary to identify the overall indicators for the long term, which will serve as general benchmarks to measure the impact of the Alliance.
8. Specify the governance of the Alliance based on the principles of alignment and of subsidiarity on the basis of the proposals made in the draft roadmap submitted to the Group of Experts.

It was also agreed that:

- The "gender approach" will be mainstreamed in all interventions, whether for agricultural or non-agricultural investment programmes aiming to improve people's incomes and well-being;
- Special attention will be paid to pastoralism;
- As highlighted in the position paper of the regional organisations, the role of CILSS will be further strengthened as the technical agency of ECOWAS and UEMOA, and more specifically in the acceleration of the implementation of the Enhanced Harmonised Framework (EHF);
- The co-ordination of partners from the international community should be specified.
- The fine-tuning of specific objectives, identification of priority interventions and of indicators at different levels, will give more substance to the operational content of the Alliance.

² Especially in the areas of population and nutrition policies, clearly distinguishing correlated issues in terms of food, climate change, market, employment, income and opportunities for diversification, the gender dimension, local/community mechanisms for early warning and solidarity in the face of food crises, pastoralism, mechanisms for the management of conflicts related to the use of natural resources and land governance in general, access to basic social services (health, education, hygiene, sanitation, etc.), food reserves and agricultural risk management.

Next steps

The official launch of the initiative is scheduled for 6 December in Ouagadougou within the framework of a high-level meeting during the 28th annual meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA). Discussions are underway for the ceremony to be chaired by H.E. Mr. Blaise Compaoré, Head of State of Burkina Faso, in the presence of his counterpart from Chad and acting president of CILSS, the president of Niger who is also the Chairman of the UEMOA High-Level Committee on Food Security as well as the president of Côte d'Ivoire and current president of ECOWAS (the president of Togo might also attend). Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Co-operation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, is also expected to attend. This high-level of regional political representation indicates that co-operation agencies and other international institutions and stakeholders of the initiative should also be represented at a sufficiently high level.

The next steps are summarised as follows:

1. On the basis of suggestions made during the meeting, the Club Secretariat will produce a revised version of the roadmap by 19 November, to be circulated for amendment by participants of the meeting. The objective is to have a supporting document for a political statement by the beginning of December.
2. The designation of focal points within co-operation agencies, institutions and stakeholder organisations of the initiative to monitor the process.
3. The establishment of a technical group within the RPCA in charge of developing/fine-tuning the specific objectives, priorities, indicators and operational framework for monitoring and evaluation, drawing on the Political Statement of Ouagadougou. The results of this work will be examined and validated in April 2013 during the restricted RPCA meeting. The second day of this meeting will be entirely dedicated to the meeting of the AGIR Group of Experts.
4. Organisation of inclusive dialogues (involving agricultural producers, civil society, the private sector, government representatives, etc.) in the target countries, with a view to the application of the priorities identified in the operational frameworks for action, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This inclusive dialogue process could take place during the period from May-November 2013.

The participants welcome and encourage pursuing this inclusive approach. While expressing a positive view of the role that the Secretariat of the Club will continue to play in the facilitation and animation of the process, the participants also reaffirmed the need to emphasise the lead agent role of the European Union in the international mobilisation around the initiative.

SWAC Secretariat, Paris, 13 November 2012.



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