

THE FUTURE OF THE SAHARO-SAHELIAN AREAS FROM A TRANS-REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

28 NOVEMBER 2013, ABIDJAN CÔTE D'IVOIRE, GOLF HOTEL

08.00 Registration of Participants

08.30 **Opening**

François-Xavier de Donnea, President Sahel and West Africa Club
Charles Koffi Diby, Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Côte d'Ivoire

09.30 - 12.45 **SESSION 1: POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC TRENDS OF SAHARO-SAHELIAN AREAS**

Moderator: Santiago Martínez-Caro, Director-General of Casa África

09.30-09.45 **Presentation 1: Instability and regional geopolitics**

Speaker: Olivier Walther, Visiting assistant professor at the Division of Global Affairs, Rutgers University (USA)

Most past conflicts in the region were geographically localised; current crises, however, are transnational, pointing toward a transnational resolution. Does this by itself explain the intensity of current crises? After a review of the factors and actors involved, the implications of recent political events (coups d'état, revolutions) for the relations between North and West Africa will be discussed. Which responses fit which geographical dimensions? What is the role of borders?

09.45-10.10 **Presentation 2: A geographic history based on mobility**

Speakers: Denis Retaillé, Professor at the University of Bordeaux/CNRS and Ali Bensaâd, Lecturer at the University of Aix-Marseille

The growth and diversification of mobility in the Saharo-Sahelian region renew and multiply the junctures between the North African and Sahelian banks of the Sahara. What role do networks play in the development of mobility and how does mobility shape territories (structuring or destructuring)?

10.10 – 10.25 Coffee break

10.25 – 10.40 **Presentation 3: Nomadic communities and their socio-economic evolution**

Speaker: Laurent Gagnol, Research associate at Laboratoire PACTE – UMR 5194, University J. Fourier of Grenoble

Analysis of the identities and socio-political organisation of nomadic communities (pastoral, agro-pastoral, trader, caravanner, etc.) allows us to better understand the recent evolutions of their livelihoods. Yet, with their future dependent on regional and global challenges, these constantly evolving nomadic communities are important factors in the stability of the region. How can we transform risks into opportunities in the effort to consolidate relations between North and West Africa?

10.40 – 11.40 Debates

11.40 – 12.15 **Panel 1: “Security and development” initiatives and transnational challenges; what are the views of the research community?**

Moderator: Santiago Martínez-Caro, Director-General of Casa África

Speakers: Lori-Anne Théroux-Bénoni, Senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies Dakar Office, Salim Chena, Associate editor of Dynamiques internationales, and Peter Cole, Consultant

Question for the panel: Are the political dialogue and action mechanisms of the “Sahel strategies” and “security and development” initiatives in the region adapted (temporally, geographically, and operationally) to current tensions?

12.15 – 12.45 Debates

12.45 – 14.15 Lunch break

14.15 – 18.45 **SESSION 2: ECONOMIC REALITIES, POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND OUTLOOK FOR CO-OPERATION IN THE SAHARO-SAHELIAN AREAS**

Moderator: Djimé Adoum, Executive Secretary of CILSS

14.15 – 14.30 **Presentation 4: History of political and economic relations**

Speaker: Antonin Tisseron, Research fellow at the Thomas More Institute

Since the end of the 1990s, a renewed interest among North African countries in their southern neighbours can be observed, in the form of economic and trade agreements, security co-operation, and regional organisations. Nevertheless, trans-Saharan trade remains weak. How to construct or reconstruct a common space?

14.30 – 15.00 **Panel 2: How to strengthen economic relations between Saharo-Sahelian countries?**

Moderator: Djimé Adoum, Executive Secretary of CILSS

Speakers: François Yatta, United Cities and Local Governments Africa (UCLG)

Mohamed Ayadi, Secretary General Trans-Saharan Road Liaison Committee

Questions for the panel: What medium- and long-term economic interests do the countries on the two banks of the Sahara share? What potentials can they rely on, where to invest, and what dialogue mechanisms should be used for an adequate and sustainable response? What is the political outlook for trans-saharan co-operation?

15.00 – 15.45 Debates

15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 17.00 **Panel 3: How to articulate regional and international strategies?**

Moderator: Michel Reveyrand de Menthon, Special Representative of the European Union for the Sahel, (EEAS, European External Action Service)

Speakers: Lapodini Marc Atouga, Commissioner DAEWR - ECOWAS,

Ibrahima Diémé, Commissioner DFSME - UEMOA,

Pierre Buyoya, High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel,

Peter Robert Sampson, Head of Mediation Support/Advisor, United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA)

Panelists from international and regional organisations will discuss how shared co-operation can be built on the basis of existing and future initiatives. In particular, the panel will discuss the spatial and temporal dimensions to be considered and how they can be integrated and operationalised in security and development activities.

17.00 – 18.30 Debates

18.30 **Closing**

Conclusions