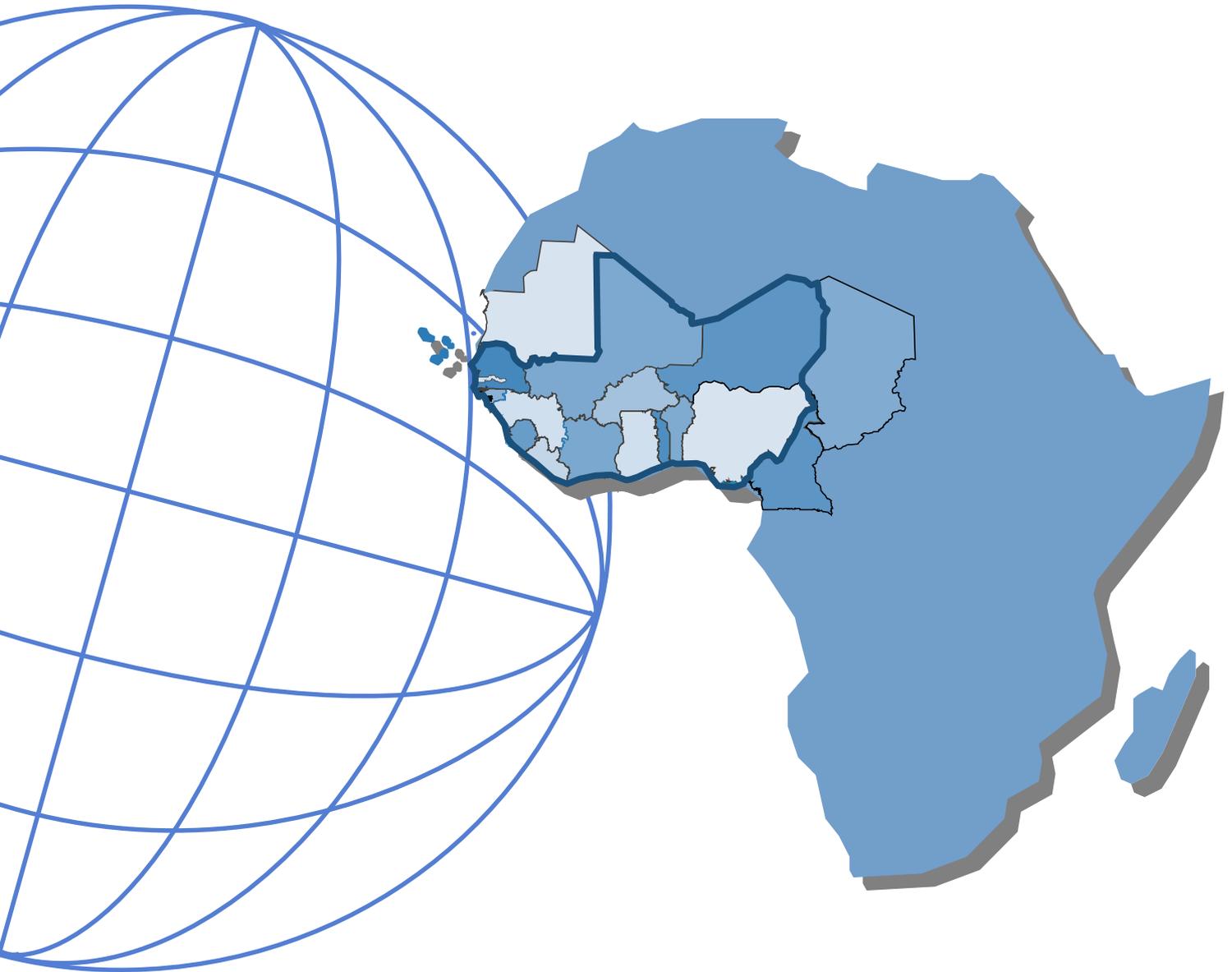




SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB / OECD

## REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING AID EFFECTIVENESS



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## Introduction

On 19 March 2008, the President and the Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) sent a letter to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Chair on ***Regional Co-operation within the International Aid Architecture*** (Annex 1).

The feedback on the proposals outlined in this letter was positive. The members of the SWAC's Strategy and Policy Group (SPG, - the SWAC's Governing Board) and the OECD Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members (CCNM) encouraged the SWAC Secretariat to deepen this reflection in consultation with other OECD Development Cluster members. The issue was raised during the high-level DAC Meeting of 22 May 2008, and discussed in depth with the DAC Chair and other colleagues of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD/DAC).

Drawing on these consultations, this document briefly outlines in the first part the rationale of this ambitious and innovative initiative. In the second part, it presents action proposals that would build on the know-how and resources of the OECD Development Cluster (DCD/DAC, DEV and SWAC) and the SWAC's main three West African partner organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS → Annex 2).

The proposed initiative could be discussed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that will be held in Accra (Ghana) from 2 to 4 September 2008. The initiative aims to produce short-term, measurable results in a pilot region (West Africa); outcomes could also feed into a more general reflection on regional aid effectiveness and thereby provide useful lessons for the preparation of the 4<sup>th</sup> High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness scheduled for 2010.

## I. Rationale

### 1.1. Regional Aid in the Paris Declaration

The SWAC letter to the DAC Chair is based on the following observation: regional aid – the aid given to groups of developing countries or their respective regional organisations – is not mentioned in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness<sup>1</sup>. The Paris Declaration is based on a negotiation and mutual commitment between donors and partner countries. This approach reflects the nature of development aid, which is mainly the product of *sovereign states* establishing ties of solidarity between them.

The Declaration seems to apply exclusively to the “***partner countries' national development strategies***” which in paragraph 16 (→ footnote 2) includes “*poverty reduction and similar overarching strategies as well as sector and thematic strategies*”. It is nowhere mentioned that *partner countries* define and implement ***regional development strategies*** with the support of ***various donors***.

Indeed, it is the specification “*national*” which is problematic. If paragraph 16 simply made reference to “*partner countries' development strategies*”, regional (and even local<sup>2</sup>) policies or initiatives could easily

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<sup>1</sup> The Paris Declaration, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred Ministers, Heads of Agencies and other Senior Officials adhered and committed their countries and organisations to continue to increase efforts

<sup>2</sup> The word “local” is also not mentioned in the Paris Declaration. However, decentralisation can be part of a “national development strategy”. The Declaration refers in several sections to the need to develop participatory approaches within national strategies and thus takes into account the opinions of local populations and their elected officials.

be included within these strategies. In practice, donors providing regional aid and partner countries' regional organisations make efforts to comply with the core principles of the Paris Declaration, though the Declaration itself does not formally request them to do so:

- ▶ **OWNERSHIP:** “partner countries commit to exercise leadership in developing and implementing their **national development strategies** through broad consultation processes” (§14.1);
- ▶ **ALIGNMENT:** the principle of alignment is mainly based on the development of **national** systems for aid management, the strengthening of public financial management capacity and national procurement systems (→§ 16-31);
- ▶ **HARMONISATION:** the principle of harmonisation is mainly based on the implementation of common arrangements, **at the partner-country level** for planning, funding, disbursement, monitoring, etc. (§ 32-42);
- ▶ **MANAGING FOR RESULTS:** this principle is based on compliance with the **assessment frameworks of partner countries to assess progress against national development strategies** (§ 43-46);
- ▶ **MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** this principle is based on **national development policies** (§47-50).

Admittedly, it would be useful to adjust some formulations of the Paris Declaration. For example, paragraph 3 (i) could be reformulated as follows: “*strengthening partner countries’ national and regional development strategies*”. Similarly, paragraph 3 (ii) could become: “*Increasing alignment of aid with partner countries’ and regional organisations’ priorities, systems and procedures and helping to strengthen their capacities*”. These modifications would formally include regional issues in the analysis and work on aid effectiveness, and thereby validate/recognize what is already being done – or tried to be undertaken in practice. The SWAC Secretariat is aware that this objective is ambitious, and intends to work on it over time together with the DAC, West African regional organisations, and their respective member countries. Ultimately, however, it would be necessary to achieve an even more ambitious objective: recognizing regional co-operation as a tool for promoting the development of each country and thereby improving aid effectiveness.

## **1.2. Regional Co-operation in the Process of African Development**

*“Integration is no doubt a vital tool for accelerating the economic, social, cultural and political development of African countries; because affirmation of a common will to come together and for integration is likely to alleviate and indeed eliminate the sources of violent conflicts. Furthermore, enlargement of national markets and harmonization of regulatory frameworks will help create an environment conducive to profitability of investments in the Continent. Clearly, other measures will be necessary to wipe away the poverty phenomenon and place Africa on the fast track of home-grown development. However, integration is an obligatory and unavoidable approach for weak countries, given the difficulties associated with globalization. African micro-nation-states in the making are for the most part anachronistic, lacking in visibility and credibility; States without a hold on history; States without clout vis-à-vis contemporary forces dominated by more powerful leader states and multinational entities. Africa must form vast and viable internal markets to overcome this difficult situation. Such markets will pave the way for inter-African division of labour according to relative domestic and external advantages, and confer on these huge collective entities a genuine power of negotiation with the markets already constituted on other continents”.*

This extract from one of the founding documents of the African Union<sup>3</sup> analyses very clearly one of the greatest paradoxes of the globalisation process. Today the most developed countries are accelerating the process of building regional capacities in order to face the challenge of globalisation, whereas the poorest countries seem fated to deal individually with the double-challenge of development and international competition. Drawing on the AU's Constitutive Act, the African Union identifies eight key ideas; the first four concern regional integration:

*“The first key idea is that political integration should be the raison-d'être of the African Union (...). The disintegration of authoritarian regimes offered the hope that political integration would be progressively achieved between democratic States respectful of human rights and keen to forge equitable societies which would have no room for exclusion, racism and any form of discrimination, particularly discrimination against women.*

*The second key idea is that (...) as a matter of fact, in the context of globalization and intense regionalization both in the North (European Union, NAFTA) and in the South (MERCOSUR, ASEAN), regional integration should be placed on Africa's priority agenda (...).*

*The third key idea is that the integration process should be geared to stimulating or reenergizing the role of States. This role should be re-evaluated in light of the experience of the Asian countries where it has been recognized that the State contributed significantly to the economic success achieved by the countries of the region (...).*

*The fourth key idea is that, though predicated on strong leadership, integration should be anchored on an enlarged, popular base (...). Thus, regional integration should take on board not only government representatives but also parliamentarians, political parties, economic operators and civil society representatives (...). Moreover, the integration drive could be championed by groups of countries acting as the engine of integration within and among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In other words, it is not necessary for all countries to be ready at the same time to embark upon the integration train. Integration at variable speed should be conceivable.”*

Does the international community share this regional conviction that is so well expressed by the African Union? Does the absence of the “regional dimension” in the Paris Declaration reflect the skepticism of the signatories – partner countries and donors - towards this ambition? Is it a mere oversight due to the *de facto* preeminence of bilateral co-operation in aid relations?

Yet, in practice, there is regional aid. The donors finance many projects and programmes in the areas of agriculture, environment, food security, health, infrastructures, institutional support to regional organisations, livestock, water and sanitation management, etc. Regional aid has a record of remarkable success stories. While this type of regional aid must be promoted, further expanded and explicitly recognized within the Paris Declaration, it is also necessary to broaden the scope of *regional development co-operation*.

The SWAC's experience with joint work undertaken in collaboration with its West African partners highlights that regional co-operation is insufficiently integrated in aid programmes that have a direct impact on the livelihoods of African people.

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<sup>3</sup> Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission; Volume 1: Vision and Mission of the African Union.

With regard to agriculture, many of the production basins cross over borders and are subject to policies and projects conceived and implemented without co-ordination among the countries concerned. These distortions lead to additional costs and a lack of effectiveness. In the health sector often two hospitals situated on both sides 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 centers located in border zones. Post-conflict management and prevention programmes are often developed only at the national level whereas the spread of instability is for the most part, transnational. Most natural resources management programmes stop at the border.

## II. Action Proposals to Improve Regional Aid Effectiveness

The SWAC Secretariat proposes to implement a series of activities designed to improve regional aid effectiveness. The activities could be managed by members of the OECD Development Cluster (DCD/DAC, DEV and SWAC), in close collaboration with the SWAC’s West African partner organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS). The initiative aims to produce short-term, measurable results in a pilot region (West Africa); outcomes could also feed into a more general reflection on regional aid effectiveness. The initiative’s main objectives would be to:

- ▶ Improve regional aid effectiveness in compliance with the core principles of the Paris Declaration (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, management for results and mutual accountability);
- ▶ Promote innovative regional development co-operation tools;
- ▶ Develop incentives for regional economic co-operation.

The three objectives are broken down into action proposals that are outlined in the following sections.

### 2.1. Improving Regional Aid Effectiveness

<b>2.1.1. Mapping Regional Aid in West Africa</b>	<b>  ACTION PROPOSAL 1</b>
<p>The SWAC’s Strategy and Policy Group (SPG- the SWAC’s Governing Board) has requested its Secretariat to launch as soon as possible a series of mapping studies on regional aid in West Africa. The analysis could first focus on the three major regional organisations, namely ECOWAS, UEMOA and the CILSS. These organisations are also the three main West African partners of the SWAC. The SWAC could assume leadership of this exercise, with methodological support from the DCD/DAC.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>OECD Directorates to be involved:</i> SWAC with DCD/DAC support</li> <li>▶ <i>West African Partners to be involved:</i> ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS</li> </ul>	

<b>2.1.2. Regional Dimension of Aid to West African Countries</b>	<b>  ACTION PROPOSAL 2</b>
<p>This is an even more ambitious exercise, as it aims to analyze aid granted to West African countries from a regional perspective. It would, for example, be interesting to analyze the volume of aid granted in agriculture, health, etc. in neighbouring countries which face the same development challenges. The notion of <i>geographic coherence of aid</i> could emerge from such an exercise. Building on DCD/DAC’s experience on aid assessment, the DCD/DAC could assume leadership of this project with the support of SWAC for regional analysis.</p>	

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* DCD/DAC with SWAC support
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* West African Governments, ECOWAS

### 2.1.3. A Regionally-oriented Peer Review

### | ACTION PROPOSAL 3

#### Placing Regional Co-operation within the DAC's Peer Review Programme:

- a) Add new questions to the "DAC Peer Review Content Guide" (DCD/DAC (2007)6/Final)".  
For example:
  - i. What is the proportion of *regional* development co-operation in the overall volume of aid? Is there a specific strategy in this area? What are the criteria for selecting regional partner organisations?
  - ii. Is the notion of membership in a regional organisation taken into account when selecting partner countries? Is the decision to support a regional organisation based on consideration of aid concentration at the national level?
  - iii. At the Headquarters level, are there consultation channels between country desks? (For example, between the Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali Desks). Do country desks systematically share information with the responsible regional desk? (For example, information-sharing between the Mali Desk and the West Africa Desk).
  - iv. At the country-level, are there consultation channels between country-based representations and Embassies in neighbouring countries or countries belonging to the same regional organisation? (For example, between the Embassy of X in Niger and the Embassy of X in Nigeria)
  - v. Is regional interdependence considered in aid programmes? For example, in programmes designed to improve transport and agricultural development systems located in cross-border basins, in health programmes (complementarities between border hospitals) or in post-conflict programmes (consideration of cross-border propagation of instability), etc.?
  - vi. In support of sector-specific policies, is the coherence between regional and national policies taken into account (for example: national agricultural policy versus regional agricultural policy)?
- b) Include regional development co-operation in the short list of special issues for the 2009-2010 peer reviews cycle (chapter 6 of the "DAC Peer Review Content Guide" (DCD/DAC (2007)6/Final)).
- c) Conduct a peer review on donor support to West African regional organisations. This exercise could draw on outcomes of the analysis on Regional Aid in West Africa (→ action proposal 1). The review could be presented to the DAC, and provide inputs and support the building of synergy between West African regional organisations (→ action proposal 4).

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* DCD/DAC, SWAC
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS

### 2.1.4. Building Synergy between Regional Organisations

### | ACTION PROPOSAL 4

West Africa has made an important step towards streamlining its regional organisations: the member

countries have officially decided to strengthen their collaboration and build synergy between the work of ECOWAS, UEMOA and the CILSS. However, the way ahead is still very long. Concrete arrangements for ensuring the synergy have not yet been completely clarified.

The SWAC is well-placed to facilitate this process:

- ▶ The SWAC's Secretariat is maintaining close working relations with the three institutions concerned (→ Annex 2); they invited the SWAC to take a lead role by facilitating exchanges that favor the building of synergy among them.
- ▶ The SWAC provides a neutral forum for discussion and brainstorming in which West Africa's regional organisations and their development partners can express themselves freely.
- ▶ As an OECD Directorate, the SWAC Secretariat can build on the capacities and know-how of other OECD Directorates, in particular in the area of aid assessment.

The SWAC Secretariat proposes to start with:

- ▶ Taking stock, with these institutions, on the current situation and describing the areas in which the search for synergies has already been initiated, as well as identifying areas where progress still need to be made;
- ▶ Bringing together the three organisations and their financial partners around concrete action proposals, and defining a road map with measurable indicators;
- ▶ Facilitating the implementation of this road map and regularly present outcomes to the DAC.

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* SWAC with DCD/DAC support
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS

## 2.2. Promoting Innovative Regional Development Co-operation Tools

### 2.2.1. Cross-border Co-operation

### | ACTION PROPOSAL 5

Since 2003, the SWAC Secretariat has been supporting the development of cross-border co-operation in West Africa (joint development projects bringing together cross-border populations in the areas of agriculture, conflict prevention, education, health, trade, etc.).<sup>4</sup> Following the facilitation of four local pilot operations, the development of the ECOWAS Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) and the elaboration of a regional legal framework for cross-border projects, the SWAC would like to deepen this experience in post-conflict settings.

The potential of cross-border co-operation as a tool to rebuild trust among local populations in post-conflict settings<sup>5</sup> could be assessed within the framework of the DAC. To that end, the SWAC Secretariat suggests to:

- ▶ Compile Guidelines on good practices and lessons learned from cross-border co-operation projects in zones of instability and post-conflict settings – guidelines could draw on the West African and European experience<sup>6</sup>.
- ▶ Jointly organise with ECOWAS a workshop to assess results and prospects of the four cross-

<sup>4</sup> West African Borders and Integration Initiative (WABI): [www.afriquefrontieres.org](http://www.afriquefrontieres.org)

<sup>5</sup> One of the ongoing pilot operations in West Africa is located in a zone of chronic instability (the Ségambie méridionale region covers the cross-border area between Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal). It supports local initiatives such as the building of a cross-border community radio stations network, the creation of "Miradors of Peace" and other local conflict prevention initiatives. Cross-border co-operation is also very largely used in post-conflict settings in Europe, in particular in the Balkans.

<sup>6</sup> In collaboration with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR): [www.aebr.net](http://www.aebr.net)

border pilot operations; this workshop would bring together the co-ordinators of the four pilot operations, representatives of states that officially support cross-border co-operation<sup>7</sup>, and co-operation agencies interested in supporting the promotion of this regional co-operation tool<sup>8</sup>.

- ▶ Finalize the ECOWAS Road Map on Cross-border Co-operation, in particular the establishment of a regional cross-border co-operation fund.
- ▶ Facilitate the implementation of this Road Map, and report the progress made to the relevant DAC networks and specific donors.

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* SWAC with DCD/DAC support (CPDC, GOVNET, Fragile States Group)
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* ECOWAS, West African governments, border authorities, various local partners and civil society representatives

## 2.2.2. National Approach to Regional Co-operation (NARCO) | ACTION PROPOSAL 6

National governments and their development partners have great difficulty in implementing transnational and cross-border programmes. Genuine co-operation is rare between two or three countries regarding specific concerns and which would directly benefit the populations. Co-operation could however generate significant productivity with regard to aid and complement the national development strategies of each country.

The SWAC Secretariat is convinced that by taking into account national and local concerns, joint programmes could be implemented between several countries where effectiveness and results in terms of reducing poverty would be greater than the sum of national programmes. While respecting the principle of “subsidiarity” and without pretending that this will solve all the problems, regional co-operation could be better and more often used in national development strategies.

Based on “*the national approach to regional co-operation (NARCO)*”, the SWAC is currently conducting a case study on Ghana. Along with government officials, the project involves professional associations, civil society and Ghana’s development partners, and identifies operational sectors where regional co-operation actions could be carried out as well as tools and modalities for these actions. Initial findings of this case study will be available in September 2008. The SWAC would like to closely associate the DCD/DAC with this project in order to enhance strategic thinking on the effectiveness of development assistance.

As next steps, the SWAC Secretariat intends to:

- ▶ Publish the initial findings of the Ghana case study;
- ▶ Present the NARCO Approach to the DAC members;
- ▶ Launch a second phase of the Ghana case study aiming to deepen and operationalise the action proposals, with the support of a DAC member operating in this country;
- ▶ Support the launching of a second case study in another West African country (preferably a fragile state like Guinea-Bissau) with the support of a DAC member that is particularly active in the selected country.

<sup>7</sup> Burkina Faso, Gambia (the), Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal

<sup>8</sup> In particular: **EU** (cross-border co-operation was included in the programming of the 10th regional EDF); **UNDP** (currently supports two pilot operations); **Spain** (granted 10 million euros to finance the ECOWAS Common Approach to Migration; the action plan of this Common Approach also includes the promotion of cross-border co-operation); **Sweden** (cross-border co-operation is part of its three priority areas with ECOWAS); **Germany and Canada** have both expressed their interest in supporting cross-border co-operation activities.

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* SWAC with the support of DCD/DAC
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* West African Country
- ▶ *Others:* DAC members willing to take a lead role

### 2.2.3. Innovative Practices in Regional Co-operation

| ACTION PROPOSAL 7

In Africa and elsewhere in the world, there are innovative practices in regional co-operation: the Maputo Corridor, the growth triangles, the cross-border parks in Southern Africa, success stories in cross-border management of transhumance and other examples drawn from the European and North-American experiences in cross-border co-operation.

Guidelines on good practices and lessons learned from worldwide cross-border co-operation initiatives would provide an excellent regional co-operation tool for development regions and their respective development partners.

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* SWAC with DCD/DAC support
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* ECOWAS, UEMOA

## 2.3. Developing Incentives for Regional Economic Co-operation

The international community does not contribute much to encourage the building of common markets in developing regions. In particular, analyses of economic performance and prospects are usually produced on a “country-by-country” basis only, with little or no reference to **regional** economic co-operation challenges. As the international community – donors and partner countries – is increasing efforts to support private sector development and attract investments to developing countries, analyses cannot remain limited to the narrowness of national markets and must be further opened to the regional and international levels. Regional mobility of persons, goods and capital, is another key issue that needs to be addressed. Regional economic co-operation organisations of developing regions would need stronger support from the international community in the long process of building common markets.

### 2.3.1. A Regional Economic Outlook on West Africa

| ACTION PROPOSAL 8

The OECD Development Centre has developed, in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), an excellent practical tool for analyzing annually the performances of African national economies: the African Economic Outlook<sup>9</sup>.

Drawing on this experience, the OECD could launch a **Regional Economic Outlook on West Africa** which could be elaborated by the OECD Development Centre with support of the SWAC Secretariat and in collaboration with ECOWAS and UEMOA. The production cycle could be progressively transferred to ECOWAS and UEMOA that could gradually assume leadership and eventually achieve full ownership, as in the process initiated by the OECD Development Centre with the AfDB.

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* DEV with SWAC support
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* ECOWAS and UEMOA

<sup>9</sup> The *African Economic Outlook* (AEO) reviews the recent economic situation, the likely short-term evolution, and the social and political context of 35 African economies → [www.oecd.org/dev/aeo](http://www.oecd.org/dev/aeo)

Regional areas in development do not have a specific status within development assistance. Specific status is exclusively reserved to states: Least Developed Countries (LDC) category, fragile states category, insular or landlocked states category, etc.

Recent negotiations within the framework of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) between ACP countries and the European Union or on cotton under the WTO (West Africa is the third cotton exporting region in the world, after the USA and Central Asia, and the second supplier of China) illustrated the difficulties that developing countries of the same region face in speaking with one voice.

As regards West Africa, a case study could be jointly conducted by the SWAC Secretariat and the OECD Development Centre. Using the examples of EPAs and cotton negotiations, this study would tend to explain why West African countries have not been able to develop a co-ordinated, united approach (divergences of economic interests, different status (LDC/non LDC), etc.

Building on this initial study, the DCD/DAC could then, in a second phase, further deepen the analysis by proposing innovative ways in which the international community could develop incentives to facilitate the building of regional coalitions between developing countries of the same region. It would, for example, be useful to brainstorm on the idea of a “**region in construction**”, including a minority of non-LDCs and a majority of LDCs; these regions could benefit from having a particular status within trade negotiations and within development assistance.

- ▶ *OECD Directorates to be involved:* DEV and SWAC (phase 1); DCD/DAC (phase 2)
- ▶ *West African Partners to be involved:* West African governments, ECOWAS, UEMOA

## Annex 1 - SWAC Letter to the DAC Chair



ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ET  
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUES



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT



SAH/DO(2008)18

Mr. Eckhard DEUTSCHER  
Chairman of the DAC  
OECD  
2, rue André Pascal  
75016, Paris

Paris, 19 March 2008

Subject: Regional Co-operation within the International Aid Architecture

Mr. Chairman,

Given that the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness will be held in Accra in September 2008, we would like to provide you with some thoughts and proposals on *regional co-operation (i.e. transnational)* within the international aid architecture.

### **Promoting regional cooperation as a tool to improve aid effectiveness**

The work we carry out in West Africa with our partners demonstrates that regional cooperation can be a remarkable tool for improving aid effectiveness.

There are certainly regional cooperation funds financing important infrastructure programmes, the combating of transmissible diseases, and, moreover, capacity building. This form of regional cooperation should be encouraged and intensified. However, we have observed that regional cooperation is only a small part of the development process within each country as well as within development assistance.

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 a lack of effectiveness. In the health sector often two hospitals situated on both sides 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 spread of instability is for the most part, transnational. Most natural resources management programmes stop at the border. These are only a few examples.

We have noted that national governments and their development partners have great difficulty in implementing transnational and cross-border programmes. Genuine cooperation is rare between two or three countries regarding specific concerns and which would directly benefit the populations. Cooperation could however generate significant productivity with regard to aid.

We are convinced that by taking into account national and local concerns, joint programmes could be implemented between several countries where effectiveness and results in terms of reducing poverty would be greater than the sum of national programmes. While respecting the principle of “subsidiarity” and without pretending that this will solve all the problems, we believe that regional cooperation could be better and more often used in national development strategies.

*In 2008, the SWAC is supporting a pilot project entitled “the national approach to regional cooperation” within West African countries. Along with government officials, the project will involve professional associations, civil society and development partners of these countries, and identify operational sectors where regional cooperation actions could be carried out as well as tools and modalities for these actions. The SWAC would like to closely associate the OECD’s Development Cooperation Directorate and the DAC with this project in order to enhance strategic thinking on the effectiveness of development assistance.*

### **Give developing regions a specific status**

Today the most developed countries are quickly building up their regional capacities in order to face the stakes of globalisation, whereas the poorest countries seem fated to deal chaotically with the challenges of development.

Significant efforts have been undertaken, notably in Africa, in order to build regional interdependent development areas. Several African Regional Economic Communities have recorded significant progress over the last decade. However, regional construction is hampered by West African countries’ diverging interests. These diverging interests are due in part to their belonging to or not belonging to the category of Least Developed Countries. The LDCs benefit from the “Everything but Arms” initiative signed in 2001 by the European Union, an initiative which eliminated quotas and duties on all products except weapons within the European Union. As they do not all have the same status, they do not have the same interests as the “non-LDCs”.

Regional areas in development today do not have a specific status within development assistance. No strategic thinking, no strategies, no prompting are aimed at these areas however vital for development.

*Hence, we suggest that the idea of a “region in construction”, including a minority of non-LDCs and a majority of LDCs, be discussed within the framework of the OECD’s DAC. These regions could benefit from having a particular status within trade negotiations and within development assistance.*

## Including the regional issue in strategic thinking and action on aid effectiveness

In light of the above, we believe that the regional issue should be included in the aid effectiveness debate. This could be through:

- Presenting at the next DAC High Level meeting a concept and orientation document on regional cooperation in support of aid effectiveness.
- Identifying, within DAC member countries, a “regional cooperation” project leader able to oversee the development of this project.
- Placing regional cooperation within the DAC’s Peer Review programme.
- Organising, within the context of the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra in September 2008, a roundtable on this issue; where the first results of pilot exercises in West Africa that the SWAC is launching in the next few weeks could be presented.

We would be pleased to discuss these ideas and proposals with you and with the OECD’s DCD. We believe that the “regional door of development” must be opened. We are sure that this belief is widely shared by developing countries and within cooperation agencies. We believe the time is right for this initiative.

Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the expression of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Normand Lauzon  
Director  
Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD

Yours sincerely,



Charles Goerens  
President  
Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD

Cc:

Mr. Mario Amano, Deputy Secretary General/OECD  
Mr. Richard Carey, Director, DCD/OECD  
Mr. Eric Burgeat, Director, CCNM/OECD

## Annex 2 – The Three Major West African SWAC Partners: ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS

### ECOWAS – [www.ecowas.int](http://www.ecowas.int)



The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen countries, founded in 1975 and lead since 1 January 2007 by a Commission. Its mission is to promote economic integration in "all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, social and cultural matters".

In November 2006 ECOWAS and the SWAC signed a "Framework for Co-operation" that outlines priority areas for joint activities. To date, the two organisations work together in the fields of agriculture (ECOWAP), cross-border co-operation, the setting-up of a regional post-conflict strategy and the building of a common ECOWAS approach to migration. Joint publications such as the 2007-2008 West Africa Report or the Atlas on Regional Integration provide reliable and up-to-date information on West Africa that contribute to the reflection on West Africa's development prospects.

**ECOWAS Member Countries:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia (the), Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

### UEMOA – [www.uemoa.int](http://www.uemoa.int)



Created in 1994, the West African Economic and Monetary Union's (UEMOA) brings together eight West African countries in one monetary zone (F CFA). Within this common market, the UEMOA aims to strengthen the economic and financial competitiveness of its member states.

The SWAC signed a Partnership Agreement with UEMOA in October 2007. Both organisations commit to co-operate in the field of (i) Food Security, (ii) Water and Land Resource Management and Combating Desertification, (iii) Rural Transformation, (iv) Agricultural and Trade Policies, (v) Cross-border Co-operation, and (vi) Prospective Strategic Thinking.

**UEMOA Member Countries:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

### CILSS - [www.cilss.bf](http://www.cilss.bf)



The Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) was created in 1973 to carry out research on food security and curb the effects of drought and desertification.

The SWAC and CILSS have worked together for more than 30 years. They created and co-animate the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA - [www.food-security.net](http://www.food-security.net)) of which one of the main achievements was the adoption of the Food Aid Charter in 1990 (currently being revised). In October 2006, CILSS and the SWAC adopted a Partnership Agreement that outlines the major joint initiatives: (i) Food Aid Charter, (ii) Food Security, (iii) Land Tenure, (iv) Livestock, and (v) Monitoring and Response Mechanisms for Combating Desert Locusts.

**CILSS Member Countries:** Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia (the), Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

## Annex 3 – Draft Revised Food Aid Charter

### WARNING

This document is a draft revised instrument, which will be used as a basis for discussions with the various actors with the aim of reaching a consensus and adopting the Revised Food Aid Charter.

Therefore, it is not the revised Charter document. It was produced based on expert analyses in accordance with precise terms of reference. Annex 1 presents the general background to the preparation of the document.

- I. Background – Foreword
- II. General principles
- III. Food Security Information and Analysis System
  - 3.1. Specific principles
  - 3.2. Commitments
- IV. Dialogue & Consultative Framework
  - 4.1. Specific Principles
  - 4.2. Commitments
- V. Strategic Framework Governing Response to Food Crisis
  - 5.1. Specific principles
  - 5.2. Commitments
- VI. Food Aid in Response to Food and Nutritional Crisis
  - 6.1. Objectives
  - 6.2. Assessing Needs and Supplying Food Aid
  - 6.3. Evaluation Mechanism

- I. Background – Foreword

The Food Aid Charter was adopted in Bissau (Guinea-Bissau) on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1990 by the Summit of Heads of State of the member countries of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) at the instigation of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN). Over the years it was recognized as a code of good conduct in the field of food aid management. Since 2005, FCPN members have been underscoring the necessity to revise this instrument considering the changing context of food crisis: (i) coming on the scene of new donors who were not signatories to the Charter in 1990, (ii) emergence of civil society organizations very active in food security, (iii) evolution of the nature of food crisis and diversification of response tools, (iv) consideration of the roles and responsibilities of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) cooperating with the States, (v) consideration of general concerns associated with aid effectiveness (Paris Declaration, March 2005).

**The Parties:** *States, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), NGOs, Technical and Financial Partners (TFPs<sup>10</sup>), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs<sup>11</sup>)*

1. Considering that food security should be addressed in a broad sense including nutritional aspects;
2. Considering that food crisis prevention and management are part and parcel of beneficiary countries' development dynamics and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies' strategies for humanitarian aid and development support;

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<sup>10</sup> TFPs include bilateral and multilateral donors and international organisations (UN system and others).

<sup>11</sup> CSOs include producer professional organisations, private sector organisations etc.

3. Considering that the Right to food is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations – 1948), included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been in force since 1976 – as well as the " Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security" approved by FAO;
4. Considering the commitment made by the international community during the World Food Summit (Rome - 1996), reaffirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Millennium Declaration aimed at "halving by 2015, the proportion of people in the world whose income is less than one US dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (...)" (MDG 1);
5. Considering West and Central African countries' commitments to place their agricultural and food strategies in a context of regional integration in all fields, particularly through the implementation of a customs union to facilitate free movement of food commodities in the sub-region and a common trade policy within the borders of this area;
6. Considering the objectives of the ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Policy, which aim "to ensure the food security of the West African rural and urban populations and food commodity safety, within the framework of an approach, which guarantee sovereignty over food in the region, to reduce dependence on imports by giving priority to food production and processing by optimising the use and tapping complementarities and comparative advantages within the subregion, (...)" (ECOWAP – Summit of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS Member States held in January 2005);
7. Considering the objective of the Sahelian Food Security Strategy, which aims "to ensure access by all Sahelians, at any time, to required food to lead a healthy and active life by 2015 " via " (i) the promotion of productive, diversified, sustainable and regionally integrated; (ii) development, fluidity and subregional integration of national markets, (iii) sustainable improvement of conditions associated with the access of vulnerable groups and zones to food and basic social services, (iv) improvement of temporary crisis prevention and management systems, in line with the achievement of structural food security, (v) strengthening actors' capacity and promotion of good governance in food security" (Summit of the Heads of State and Government of CILSS countries – November 2000);
8. Considering donor and beneficiary countries' commitments to improve development aid effectiveness by complying with the basic principles, which are (i) taking ownership of development strategies by partner countries (ii) alignment of donors with these strategies and the various countries' institutions and procedures, (iii) harmonisation and transparency of procedures, (iv) adoption of results-based aid management and lastly (v) mutual responsibility for achieving results (Paris Declaration on aid development effectiveness – OECD 2005);
9. Recalling the main donor countries' commitments within the framework of the London Convention on food aid;
10. Referring to the main codes of conduct in force in the field of humanitarian aid (notably SPHERE, Good Humanitarian Donorship – GHD), which commit aid agencies, humanitarian NGOs, the United Nations humanitarian agencies;
11. Conscious that food crisis in the Sahel and more generally in West Africa can result from the combination of several structural, temporary, natural factors , etc.;
12. Conscious that these crises develop in a context characterised on the one hand, by the existence of geographic areas and sections of the populations affected by endemic poverty, and on the other hand by risks related to climate change, socio-political evolution and lastly profound changes due to population growth, urbanization, fragile natural environments, opening up and globalisation of economies etc.;

13. Conscious that crisis have become more complex and multifaceted, that they affect first the most vulnerable groups of the society, not only pregnant and breastfeeding women, infants, elderly people, chronic patients and disabled people but also households with vulnerable livelihoods, small holders and livestock breeders<sup>12</sup> on the one hand and result in the degradation of food diets, undernutrition and malnutrition, which can culminate in famine on the other;
14. Conscious that the emergence of new civil society actors and local authorities or local governments (resulting from the implementation of decentralization policies), who play an increasing role in the management of public goods and food security;
15. Conscious that effective management of food crisis in the various countries should include all the actors concerned and be placed in the regional perspective;
16. Conscious that prediction and prevention are the most appropriate tools to limit the extent of crisis and reduce related human and financial costs;
17. Conscious that all crises cannot be completely curbed by prevention efforts and considering that food aid and adaptation or mitigation strategies (mobilization of local stocks, off-season farming, income generating activities, creation of assets, etc.), are important tools to increase access to food and provide for the food and nutritional needs of the vulnerable populations affected by crisis;
18. Recognising that the modalities governing food aid mobilization and management can positively or adversely affect the food security conditions of households, countries and the region and therefore strengthen or reduce the populations' capacities to cope with future shocks.

**Hereby declare to adhere to the following provisions:**

II. General principles

The parties concerned (States, IGOs, TFPs, NGOs, and CSOs) shall adhere to the general principles below:

- Respect for the dignity of the people faced with food crisis, irrespective of its extent;
- Recognition, consideration and strengthening of the leadership of local, national and regional institutions in mapping out response strategies and implementing actions;
- Recognition of the necessity to involve the social and economic organizations as well as the organisations representing the civil society in the assessment of food situations and the identification of actions to take and their monitoring & evaluation;
- Mapping out of response strategies based on reliable information, recognized and accepted by the parties concerned and systematic consideration of this information by the frameworks for dialogue, consultation and coordination. This requires better recognition of the key role of national and regional information systems in food and nutritional crisis prevention and management;
- The integration of interventions into global and coherent approaches and into the choices of policies and mechanisms by the States, communities, and regional institutions, regarding development actions or emergency operations;
- Duty to intervene through emergency humanitarian actions when a crisis poses high risks for the affected populations' basic human rights and lives;

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<sup>12</sup> It is important to take these groups into account during the identification of needs.

- Requirement of transparency and independent evaluation of actions. On this account, the parties to this Charter shall recognise the importance of carrying out joint, rigorous and independent evaluations, which allow to nurture the dialogue on practices, evaluate application and call on all categories of actors to comply with the principles of this Charter.

Thus, the parties to this Charter shall unanimously recognize that any action in the field of food crisis prevention and management, irrespective of the tool used, should rest on the following three pillars:

- **Pillar 1:** Prior knowledge and analysis of the food and nutritional situation through the information systems and appropriate technological assessment tools recognized at country and regional levels;
- **Pillar 2:** Consultation among actors through consultative and decision-making mechanisms set up at country and regional levels;
- **Pillar 3:** Consensual analysis of responses so as to better direct actors towards the most adapted response tools in line with the nature of the crisis.

### III. Food Security Information and Analysis System

#### 3.1. Specific principles

The parties concerned (**States, IGOs, TFPs, NGOs and CSOs**) shall recognise the necessity:

- To have in due time complete and quality diagnoses on the various dimensions and acuteness of food insecurity, risks and the capacities of the various sections of the populations to cope with these risks. This information should be consensual, regular and reliable and based on recognized and tested methodologies;
- To have information systems which are part of a complete mechanism and contribute to making detailed diagnoses of the food situation and risks of deterioration of the latter: agricultural sample survey and seasonal crop monitoring, market monitoring, monitoring of household livelihoods and vulnerability, monitoring of the nutritional situation, etc.;
- To construct and sustain perennial early warning systems focused on the main risk factors associated with temporary crisis, allowing to detect risks of deterioration of food and nutritional security and to prevent and foresee the outbreak of crisis;
- Of diagnoses shared by the various stakeholders, which optimise the use of the diversity of information sources and analyses from national, regional and international actors, be they public systems or framework and surveys promoted by other institutions, including IGOs, NGOs and United Nations organizations;
- To collect, process and analyse data whatever the source is, in accordance with criteria and methodologies chosen with and recognized by the States;
- To go beyond the diagnosis, to provide information and analyses which facilitate decision-making by all the stakeholders (**States, IGOs, TFPs, NGOs, CSOs**).

#### 3.2. Commitments

**The States and IGOs shall commit to:**

- Cooperating in order to support the development of operational and effective information systems linked to national and regional institutions;

- Contributing to ensuring the institutional and financial sustainability of information systems. Therefore, suitable funding mechanisms shall be sought at State and IGO levels;
- Strengthening information reliability and independence by laying down a set of rules governing information production and verification as part of a "quality assurance process"; this process shall include a report on quality from information systems as well as an independent certification system<sup>13</sup>;
- Promoting innovative initiatives enabling to improve the understanding of risks and their prediction, to enhance knowledge of the populations' adaptation strategies and to improve vulnerability analysis at household, community and country levels;
- Promoting dialogue and exchanges of views among the multiple actors and institutions on the above-mentioned issues.

**The States, TFPs, NGOs and CSOs shall commit to:**

- Cooperating with a view to avoiding duplications in information production, particularly between national, regional and international information systems on the one hand and to making joint vulnerability analyses based on harmonized and consensual methodologies;
- Sharing produced information first and foremost within consultative and coordination frameworks, in order to harmonise the information and resulting analyses before their wider dissemination, particularly with the media;
- Developing information analysis efforts within existing consultative and coordination frameworks so as to make shared diagnoses, to carry out fine situational analyses and to make appropriate recommendations to services in charge of managing crisis, be they national, regional, or part of the United Nations System and NGOs;
- Transmitting all information in their possession, enabling to supplement or improve the diagnosis and to communicating those related to their planned actions and interventions to respond to an identified situation of crisis. In this vein, the planned actions and interventions shall comply with national and regional choices.

**The TFPs shall commit to:**

- Supporting the initiatives developed by the States and IGOs in the field of harmonization and improvement of the quality of produced information;
- Strengthening the efforts made by the States and IGOs regarding the setting up of sustainable and effective information systems.

#### IV. Dialogue & Consultative Framework

##### 4.1. Specific Principles

Rapid decision-making as well as synergy and coherence of interventions are key elements in the effectiveness of collective action in food crisis management.

Therefore, **the stakeholders (States, TFPs, IGOs and NGOs) shall recognise the necessity:**

- To improve governance in the field of food crisis management by combining two requirements:

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<sup>13</sup> This aspect on the quality of information could be the subject of an additional component of this Charter.

- *Compliance with the principle of participation:* the involvement of all actors in the dialogue and consultation process in preparation for decisions is regarded as an essential stage in the improvement of public decision;
  - *Compliance with the principle of responsibility:* the stakeholders have the duty to ensure transparency in their actions. Furthermore, the States and IGOs have responsibility for making decisions on required interventions and to ensure their implementation.
- To strengthen dialogue, consultation and coordination related to information, crisis assessment and identification of needs, determination of adequate responses, implementation of actions in response to identified crisis and lastly monitoring-evaluation.

#### 4.2. Commitments

**The stakeholders (States, IGO, TFP, NGO and CSO) shall commit to:**

- Supporting the setting up of dialogue and consultative organs and promoting the diversity and representativeness of the various categories of actors within these organs including public bodies, socio-professional organisations, main humanitarian agencies, nongovernmental and intergovernmental organisations as well as financial partners;
- Promoting transparency in decision making within consultative frameworks and strict compliance with the latter by all parties concerned in order to guarantee the effectiveness of collective action in food and nutritional crisis management. Therefore, beneficiary countries' governments, donors and civil society organisations shall commit to consulting at least once a year with the aim of taking stock of the food and nutritional situation and deciding, with all parties concerned, possible measures to take and responses to give if needed;
- Ensuring that each Sahelian and West African country has only one organ or focal point easily identifiable by stakeholders in the fields of food security and humanitarian action and in charge of disseminating information, among other things. They agree that any external partner (NGO, community, enterprise, etc.), planning to intervene in response to a crisis, shall contact the focal point beforehand and coordinate its action which shall be developed in accordance with a national and regional framework;
- Seeing to it that external stakeholders adhere to the principles and commitments contained in this Charter, to facilitate their integration into the dialogue and coordination framework by national authorities and actors.

### V. Strategic Framework Governing Response to Food Crisis

#### 5.1. Specific principles

The parties concerned have agreed to define the following terms as follows:

- "Food crisis management" means **preventive** or **curative** interventions, which addresses temporary or chronic food insecurity;
- In this framework, there are two types of "food crisis":
  - a. *Temporary food crisis* limited over time and caused by a precise shock, which affects a significant part of the population and can have different degree of severity and extent; circumstantial food insecurity (transitory) is of short duration and often consist of a sharp decline in food access and consumption compared to usual conditions (irrespective of whether usual conditions are good or not);

- b. Chronic food insecurity:** persistent incapacity to have access to adequate and nutritive food. This crisis or food insecurity persists and is caused by structural factors and generally associated with extreme poverty in which part of the population lives permanently.

The parties concerned shall recognize:

- That the two types of crisis often coincide over time and space and that chronic food insecurity is a source of vulnerability and a fertile ground for temporary crisis. Similarly, temporary crisis increase chronic food insecurity and increase the vulnerability of the populations<sup>14</sup>;
- That depending on the severity, extent, possible development of the crisis and on immediate, underlying and structural causes of food insecurity, responses to crisis shall be specific and developed on an ad hoc basis (provisions of component III) for each situation, that there is no single solution, neither is there any single relation between the possible situations of food insecurity and available tools for managing disasters caused by food crisis;
- The necessity to define beforehand a "**Strategic Framework** for Food Crisis Management" (graph 1 – Annex 2), developed in a concerted way (component IV) facilitating response analysis and aiming at directing the interventions of the various actors, particularly by addressing the problem from three angles: (a) to reduce the immediate effects of the temporary crisis, (b) to protect the livelihoods of the vulnerable populations directly affected by the crisis and lastly, (c) to address the structural causes of food insecurity.

Therefore, the stakeholders agree on the following necessity:

- For "response analysis", to take into account the advantages and drawbacks of available crisis management tools as well as the capacity of the actors who should implement them;
- To consider the existence of several available response tools (Annex 3) and to optimise their use in food crisis management. Each of these tools could be the subject of a specific development as part of the additional components of this ever-changing Charter.

## 5.2. Commitments

The stakeholders shall commit to:

- Seeing to it that all interventions fall within the scope of the Strategic Framework for Food Crisis Management agreed upon and intended to guiding the various actors in the choice of adapted tools based on the nature of the crisis;
- Seeing to it that any analysis of the situation characterising the crisis (component III) is followed by the definition of various response options ("**response analysis**") through the Strategic Framework for Food Crisis Management;
- Agreeing on criteria and tools for exchanging views enabling to assess the response and promote better coordination and effectiveness of interventions, by encouraging particularly: (a) a technical consensus and a common language, (b) coordinated early warning and action, (c) a choice of a pertinent and effective responses;

## VI. Food Aid in Response to Food and Nutritional Crisis

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<sup>14</sup> 'Temporary' should not be confused with 'acute' which refers to the idea of severity. It is the case for malnutrition, which is either chronic or acute.

## 6.1. Objectives

The objective of food aid is to contribute to ensuring food security by responding to food shortages or deficits in due time and in an appropriate way.

Food aid is one of the forms of intervention contributing to resolving food crisis. Appropriate responses to food crisis vary according to the nature of the latter, possibility to mobilise food in the country concerned, neighbouring countries or elsewhere and based on food availability, market supply, price levels, available food security stocks etc.

## 6.2. Assessing Needs and Supplying Food Aid

**Beneficiary States' governments, TFPs, IGOs and NGOs** shall recognise that:

- The assessment of needs for food aid shall be jointly carried out by the stakeholders, and shall only aim at improving beneficiary countries' food security. The assessment shall be carried out as part of dialogue and consultative frameworks (see component IV) set up based on information provided by the various information systems (see component III) and shall consider the strategies implemented by the populations to adapt to the crisis and the bodies put in place by the governments;
- Information availability only is not enough to make good decisions and therefore it is essential to ensure that assistance operations are launched in accordance with the recommendations made by the information system;
- The determination of needs, except in the event of humanitarian crisis which disrupts public bodies, is part of the responsibility and remit of the governments;
- Consultation between actors is essential to avoid interventions likely to affect the smooth operation of markets (slump in prices, speculative practices, etc).

**Therefore:**

**The States, TFPs, IGOs and NGOs** shall commit to:

- Improving and harmonizing their criteria for assessing needs for food aid through an assessment of food and nutritional security, including an analysis of:
  - Food availability (domestic production, stocks, imports, exports and aid);
  - Markets (supplies, prices, trade flows, operating conditions of the market at national, subregional and international levels);
  - Access by households and affected populations to food resources (local production, commodity prices in the affected zone, purchasing power and sources of income of the populations, household coping strategies and mechanisms, etc.) ;
  - Food use and nutritional conditions of the populations in affected zones (health, water, hygiene, education, food habits and practices), particularly the most vulnerable groups (children of less than five years of age, pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, elderly people, refugees, displaced people...).
- Ensuring, through their response options, the satisfaction of the specific nutritional requirements of pregnant and breastfeeding women, children of less than five years of age and elderly people by providing suitable food in safety and nutritional quality<sup>15</sup>;

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<sup>15</sup> A special component on addressing nutritional crisis could be prepared later under the additional components of this Charter.

- Seeing to it that in this context food aid is firstly reserved for responding to emergencies and that free food aid distribution is targeted only to the most vulnerable groups irrespective of whether there is an emergency or not;
- Using food aid only when it is the most effective and best adapted means of assistance in response to the identified crisis;
- Giving priority to alternatives to food aid, in order to avoid the adverse effects of this form of aid, particularly the risks of changing food behaviours, affecting the functioning of markets and discouraging producers, adversely affecting the dignity of people by encouraging a mentality whereby people will think they can live on handouts from donors and by creating conditions for sustainable dependence on external aid, etc;
- Giving priority to the local market (by giving priority to the purchase of supplies in national and subregional markets) or triangular operations for the purchase of products intended for food aid;
- Mobilising only products corresponding to the food habits of the communities targeted by food aid operations;
- Deploying the human, technical and financial resources enabling to send food aid in due time to the beneficiaries for whom it is intended, to developing mechanisms for monitoring the implementation and to carrying out an independent evaluation of interventions or to contributing to an overall evaluation ;
- Communicating without delay to the national consultative framework, including during emergencies, the information in their possession to facilitate decision-making and the implementation of appropriate action;

The **States and IGOs** shall commit to:

- Searching for sustainable solutions to the structural causes of food and nutritional insecurity; they shall particularly commit to:
  - Implementing policies conducive to the development of local food production (national and subregional), to strengthening national and subregional food commodity markets and to improving vulnerable populations' incomes;
  - Promoting sustainable national and regional investments in line with the improvement of local production of food resources, access to food and its utilisation by the populations;
- Banning the implementation of any agricultural and/or trade policy or the making of any commitment, which would adversely affect the achievement of the objectives pursued by the various countries and the subregion in sustainable food and nutritional crisis prevention and management;
- Gradually implementing and in accordance with national priorities the right to food.

The **IGOs** shall commit to:

- Strengthening the States' action through regional mechanisms for assisting and managing food and nutritional crisis and other natural disasters. These mechanisms, to be triggered at regional level, should supplement the efforts made by the States in the event of crisis;
- Promoting policies conducive to better application of the principles and commitments of this Charter.

### 6.3. Evaluation Mechanism

The stakeholders (**States, TFPs, IGOs and NGOs**) agree on:

- Conducting annual independent evaluations of the level of application of the principles and commitments of the Charter and of the implications on the food and nutritional situation;
- Creating tools or mechanisms for monitoring the application of recommendations stemming from the periodic evaluations of the Charter. The annual meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa (FCPN) is a suitable framework for examining the aforesaid recommendations and making consensual decisions;
- Developing specific tools to express concern about the application of the Food Aid Charter to the various States' Governments, IGOs and donors

