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The Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat's newsletter provides regular information on SWAC activities, publications and events.

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> DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL

In April 2010, the RPCA recommended that ECOWAS hold a regional meeting to address the current food crisis in the Sahel region. This meeting took place in Lomé from 17-19 May 2010. Ministers of agriculture, trade, social and/or humanitarian affairs from ECOWAS member countries have worked in solidarity to take immediate action in response to the food and nutrition crisis. How do we analyse the conclusions of this meeting?



Laurent Bossard,
SWAC Secretariat Director a.i.

First of all, we must congratulate this concrete example of regional cooperation. Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo have demonstrated their solidarity with Niger through food aid and logistical support. Though the amounts are relatively small, this symbolic gesture will still help thousands of people. Secondly, the ECOWAS and UEMOA commissions have sent monetary aid to the Government of Niger (550 000 USD and 200 million CFA francs, respectively). In what other parts of the developing world can we see such regional initiatives in place to combat food crises?

Of course, we cannot ignore the fact that some countries in the region have closed their borders—as was also the case in 2005—fearing that large quantities of food might be exported, thereby creating shortages. A long history of droughts and famines can explain these fears and one must reserve judgment on these actions.

In some cases, countries that have closed their borders have also sent food aid. It goes to show that the instinct to protect national interests does not preclude regional solidarity. It is with this level of complexity that we must address regional policies on food security.

Is it possible to establish a regional exchange system of emergency food between nations? Moreover, is it possible to establish regional food stockpiles or financial reserves? Many would respond negatively to these questions, noting that these ideas have been tabled several times—particularly in the 1980s—and have never resulted in concrete action. Yet the issue has come up again. A constitution for the network of companies and offices responsible for inventory management of food security in the Sahel and West Africa (RESOGEST) was adopted during a meeting of experts in Dakar from 24-26 February 2010.

In hopes of realizing this ambition, the SWAC will hold its next Forum in Accra on 1 December 2010 under the theme "Regional solidarity in addressing food crises: South-south cooperation and regional aid effectiveness". The goal of this forum is simple: to raise awareness of similar experiences in other parts of the world. Case studies will include the "Regional Food Reserve Facility in SADC", the "East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve Pilot Project", and lessons learned from the "Latin America and Caribbean Emergency Response Network"—a cooperation between Governments and WFP on the establishment of "Sub-regional depots in Barbados, Ecuador and El Salvador".



Food Security in Niger

Interview with Modibo Traoré, Head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) mission in Niger

A rapid national household survey of food security in Niger has produced alarming results: 20% of the population, approximately 2.7 million people, require urgent food support; 38% of households are moderately vulnerable (requiring assistance in the medium term), while 32% of households are slightly vulnerable. According to these results, the most vulnerable households have a food stock of only 10 days.

Who are these vulnerable populations?

A mediocre agro-pastoral year left 7.8 million people severely or moderately vulnerable (i.e. 58.2% of the population). According to the annual survey conducted by the National Statistics Institute published on 25 January 2010, the past year has seen a shortfall of 25% in agricultural products and 67% in animal fodder.

The populations most affected live in rural areas and areas used for agro-pastoral production (26.8% of severely and moderately vulnerable people in agro-pastoral areas compared to 16.3% in agricultural areas). The regions of Tahoua (north-east of Niamey) and Diffa (on the far eastern side of the country) are the hardest hit, with 33.9% and 32.0% of their respective populations in a severely vulnerable situation.

What about urban households with low incomes who clearly suffer from escalating food prices.

Prices for staple grains (millet and sorghum) have increased over the past weeks (5% increase in the

price of a sack of millet in February 2010 over the same period of 2009). The support plan will address the entire vulnerable population in Niger, both urban and rural.

How is aid being organised to respond to this emergency?

To address this situation, the government has drawn up a response plan which will serve as template for the action that will be taken. The overall cost of this plan amounts to 104 billion CFA francs (around 158.8 million euros). A shortfall of 75.8 billion CFA francs (around 115 million euros) still needs to be secured.

The government is taking the lead in providing assistance through a national food crisis prevention and management system placed under the supervision of the Prime Minister's private office. This system has sub-divisions at both regional and departmental levels which are responsible for implementing actions under the response plan, in collaboration with actors from civil society, national and international NGOs and agencies from the UN system.

The rural populations of northern Nigeria (notably the border villages in the States of Katsina and Daoura) have also been affected by this food insecurity. Is there co-operation with the Nigerian authorities?

There is a certain level of co-operation between the two countries in the northern states of Nigeria and the border regions in Niger (Diffa, Zinder, Maradi) with regard to information-sharing, preparing herders'

OCHA is helping to mobilise resources in support of UN agencies and NGOs to provide rapid and effective aid to those most in need.

- Modibo Traoré

transhumance and livestock vaccination. A cross-border mission was established in Nigeria in January 2010 by OCHA, with the participation of regional authorities and technical departments in Niger. Actions are currently under way, in the form of food distributions, to support the population suffering from food insecurity in Daoura (State of Katsina).

What aid is being coordinated?

Through the National Food Crisis Prevention and Management System, the Niger government plays a leading role in terms of aid provision under the national response plan. The implementation of the response plan takes in to account the impact of different operations on local and regional markets through the Agricultural Market Information System, which is one of the components of the National Food Crisis Prevention and Management System. The government is making a major effort to co-ordinate and harmonise the supply of aid and this effort deserves to be supported.

The United National Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) is helping the Nigerien government co-ordinate the response made by NGOs and agencies from the United Nations system to meet the needs of vulnerable people. OCHA helps produce regular updates on the humanitarian situation in general and on food and nutritional security in particular. OCHA is also helping to mobilise resources in support of UN agencies and NGOs to provide rapid and effective aid to those most in need.

Are we on the brink of another crisis like that in 2005?

Lessons have been learned from the situation in 2005 for which the government and its partners were not properly prepared. Since then monitoring and response mechanisms have been put in place or strengthened and the co-ordination of aid has been vastly improved.

Since Niger's agro-pastoral production is primarily dependent on rainfall, it will continue to be subject to the vagaries of the weather which are increasingly influenced by the climate change already seen in this sub-Saharan country. The structural problem is compounded by other factors which are themselves governed by the economic climate (price increases, development aid reduction, etc.).

Alternatives to rain-fed crops such as irrigation will have to be developed, as well as short-cycle varieties and land reclamation. At the global level, the fight against climate change needs to be stepped up. 🌱

Find out More...



Publication : OCHA in 2010
<http://ochaonline.un.org/ocha2010>

Find out more about OCHA's work in the Sahel at:
<http://ochaonline.un.org/> and at www.reliefweb.int

RPCA Confirms Food and Nutrition Crisis in the Sahel

Meeting of the Food Crises Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa Paris, 8-9 April 2010



Photo: Abdoukarim Dankoulou, CILSS

Members of the RPCA discuss the food and nutritional situation in the Sahel region at the OECD Conference Centre

Members of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) unanimously confirmed that the Sahel region is facing a serious food and nutrition crisis. This analysis follows annual assessments of regional crop and food security, meetings of organizations responsible for food crisis management and prevention, as well as individual country appeals.

Experts and representatives of regional organizations in West Africa (CILSS, ECOWAS); multilateral aid agencies, (France, United States, European Union); international organizations (WFP, FAO, UN-OCHA); specialized NGOs (Oxfam, Afrique Verte, Save the Children), farmer organizations (Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa - ROPPA) have confirmed the alarming situation in the Sahel due to declining cereal production lack of animal feed, deteriorating livestock and high food prices.

The already precarious nutritional situation—especially for children under the age of five and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding—is likely to exceed the emergency threshold in some areas of Niger and Chad.

RPCA members examined all available policy instruments and made recommendations. The network asked that the ECOWAS Commission organise a meeting of its members as soon as possible in order to provide a regional response that would add to efforts already undertaken by West African states and their partners. The RPCA specifically recommended actions that would aid the flow of goods and supplies within the region. 🐾

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Food Crisis: ECOWAS takes action on RPCA Recommendations

As a result of RPCA recommendations, ECOWAS organised a special meeting of Ministers responsible for Agriculture, Commerce, social and/or humanitarian initiatives held in Lomé from 17-19 May.

This resulted in aid pledges to Niger from several countries in the region. These contributions compliment the financial aid pledged by the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions. Measures to facilitate the movement of livestock have been established. The problem of certain border closures to grain exports has been discussed but has not yet been resolved. The implementation of a regional strategy for unified management of food security stocks seems more necessary than ever (see below). In addition, ministers have strongly recommended setting up a regional fund for the exchange of food products, as well as the creation of food stockpiles at the regional level.

The current food crisis has once again affected the Sahelian region of West Africa, where the structural vulnerability to climate-related disasters warrants specific attention. The crisis further confirms the need to finalize negotiations on the Charter for food crises prevention and management.

For more information:

RPCA: www.food-security.net
 SWAC: www.westafricaclub.org
 CILSS: www.cilss.bf

Responsible Investment in Agriculture

West Africa Represented at the OECD's 12th Freedom of Investment Round Table



Photo: Ben Stanford OECD/SWAC

“How can one define high-level principles and regulations of investment without the input of African countries that are so closely affected by these issues?”

Mr. Alain Sy Traoré, Principal Programme Officer, Production Chains & Markets - ECOWAS Commission

At the recommendation of the SWAC, the Economic Community of West African States Commission (ECOWAS Commission) was invited to participate in the OECD's Roundtable on Freedom of Investment (FOI), National Security and 'Strategic' Industries, which was held in Paris on 26 March 2010. This marks the first time that a regional economic organization from Africa has attended an OECD Roundtable on Freedom of Investment.

Mr. Alain Sy Traoré, Principal Programme Officer, Production Chains & Markets represented the ECOWAS Commission at this meeting and addressed participants during the discussion on “Responsible Investment in Agriculture”.

“First of all I wish to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion, as this is the first time that the ECOWAS Commission has participated in this process,” said Mr. Traoré during the meeting.

Foreign investment continues to play an important role in agricultural growth in West Africa. While benefits may include increased land productivity, improved farming infrastructure and job creation, there are many risks involved in under-regulated multinational land investment deals. Food insecurity, environmental degradation and human rights violations are only a few of the issues driving the need for international regulations on responsible land investment.

Improved policies are essential in developing investment frameworks. For this reason, West Africa is interested in dialogue

OECD Roundtables on Freedom of Investment

Hosted by the OECD Investment Committee since 2006, the Freedom of Investment process provides a framework for intergovernmental dialogue on how governments can reconcile the need to preserve and expand an open international investment environment with their duty to safeguard the essential security interests of their people.

Dialogue takes place in a series of round tables involving the OECD countries, non-member adherents to the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises and other non-member countries.

with the OECD regarding guidelines and ethical principles for multinational investment. The OECD Roundtable on Freedom of Investment provided the perfect forum for this dialogue

ECOWAS Member states have a combined population of some 300 million people. Mr. Traoré emphasized the importance of including West African states and their people in the development of guidelines for responsible investment in agriculture as well as effective frameworks for both domestic and foreign investors.

“How can one define high-level principles and regulations of investment without the input of African countries that are so closely affected by these issues?” asked Mr. Traoré. “More importantly, how can the OECD accompany us in implementing these universal principles in a meaningful way for both OECD member states and for developing countries, in the particular context of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the land pressure in the West African states by the investors from developed countries?”

SWAC's Role in Promoting Dialogue between the OECD and West Africa

The SWAC was pleased to facilitate the ECOWAS Commission's presence at the OECD Roundtable on Freedom of Investment. Part of the SWAC's role is to establish links between the OECD and West African countries in order to facilitate policy dialogue on important economic issues such as: investment and agricultural finance/investment policies, regulation and directives formulation; technical support; institutional development and organisational strengthening; etc.

“Inter-tropical Africa has great potential in unused agricultural land. Today, it is also one of the largest prospective mining regions in the world. For this reason, investments have increased rapidly and significantly and will continue to increase in this manner,” says Laurent Bossard, SWAC Director a.i. “In light of this, African states must be integrated into policy dialogue, especially in dialogues like the OECD Roundtables on Freedom of Investment.”

The SWAC also promotes a regional dialogue on land investment in West Africa. It collaborates closely with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization

Responsible Investment in Agriculture (continued)

(FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Land Coalition (ILC), the World Bank and regional organisations (ECOWAS Commission, the African Union, CILSS, and UEMOA).

OECD and ECOWAS collaboration

Founded in 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional organisation of fifteen West African countries. ECOWAS and the SWAC signed a "Framework for Co-operation" in 2006 that outlines priority areas for joint activities. The SWAC and ECOWAS work together in the fields of agriculture (ECOWAP), cross-border co-operation, regional post-conflict strategies and migration issues. Joint publications such as the West Africa Report and the Regional Atlas on West Africa provide up-to-date information on West Africa that contribute to the reflection on West African development prospects.

"We already work with the OECD in several areas," notes Mr Traoré. "Having been invited to this roundtable demonstrates that our collaborative efforts are continuing down the right path."

Mr. Traoré noted that the ECOWAS Commission has already adopted a directive on harmonizing policies and guidelines in the mining sector within ECOWAS states with the view of establishing a regional mining code. ECOWAS is currently conducting awareness workshops for states to implement the measures contained in this directive.

Responsible investment in agriculture and OECD instruments

Existing OECD investment instruments could have the potential to facilitate and expedite this work on "responsible investment in agriculture". OECD investment instruments promote openness in international investment, the responsible design and implementation of public policy by both home and host governments, responsible business conduct by investors, and international cooperation.

The SWAC will play a key role in reflecting on whether several existing instruments could be relevant to the investment realities in West Africa. The instruments include:

The **Policy Framework for Investment (PFI)**, which provides guidance on developing an appropriate enabling environment for investment, both domestic and international.

The **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNE Guidelines)**, which provide recommendations for responsible business conduct in many areas (labour, environment, combating bribery, etc.) and are backed up by follow-up institutions, National Contact Points (NCPs), which are located in each of the 42 governments that adhere to the Guidelines.

The **OECD Risk Awareness Tool for MNEs in Weak Governance Zones (WGZ Tool)**, which provides guidance for investors operating in zones where governments are either unwilling or unable to assume government responsibilities. 📍

For more information on OECD investment instruments, please visit: www.oecd.org/daf/investment

African states must be integrated into policy dialogue, especially in dialogues like the OECD Roundtables on Freedom of Investment.

- Laurent Bossard, SWAC Secretariat Director a.i.

Next Steps...

Further Dialogue on Land Investment

Organised by the SWAC in conjunction with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, a working session entitled "Land Investment in West Africa: regional perspectives and global challenges" was held in Paris on 26 May 2010. The SWAC invited participants from the Roundtable on Freedom of Investment to participate in this working session in order to continue dialogue on principles and standards for responsible investment in agriculture.

The meeting explored existing international and regional principles on investment in land as they relate to the specific challenges of West Africa; the use of OECD investment instruments to assist the international community in developing policy based on existing guidelines; and the potential to address land investment from three angles: human rights, land tenure policies and investment frameworks.

Establishment of a joint process between the Government of Burkina Faso and SWAC - OECD-NEPAD initiative for investment in Africa

Burkina Faso has launched several measures to increase productive investment in the agricultural sector in line with its national development objectives. These initiatives, Sectoral Programme on Productive Rural Development and the National Agricultural Investment Programme contribute to ECOWAS' regional agricultural policy (ECOWAP) (in line with the directives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)'s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)'s Agricultural Policy (PAU)). Within this framework, the SWAC/OECD coordinates with the OECD-NEPAD Africa Investment Initiative and the government of Burkina Faso, a review of its Sustainable Agricultural Investment promotion Policies. Based on the OECD's Policy Framework for Investment, it aims to strengthen coordination and convergence of the various policies.

1) http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3343,en_2649_34893_33696253_1_1_1_1,00.html
 2) http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_34889_1_1_1_1,00.html
 3) http://www.oecd.org/document/26/0,3343,en_2649_34889_36899994_1_1_1_1,00.html



Second Meeting of the SWAC Steering Group

The SWAC's Strategy and Policy Group (SPG) continues with its reflection process to "rethink the SWAC". This process aims at redefining the SWAC's strategic orientations, its operating modes and localisation of its Secretariat, etc., so as to secure a longer lasting and active commitment by its members and stakeholders from the North and the South.

The first session of the Steering Group on the future of the SWAC was held on 2 February, 2010 at UEMOA's headquarters, in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), where it was decided to establish a steering group chaired by Soumaila Cisse, President the UEMOA Commission. The group is represented by two other experts from West Africa, Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda, Vice-President of the ECOWAS Commission, and Mr. Issa Martin Bikienga, Deputy Executive Secretary of CILSS. Three independent experts from the North have also contributed to this working group: Mr. Hermann Spirik, Mr. Jean-Luc Virchaux and Mr. Raymond Weber.

During the second meeting in Paris on 15 and 16 March, the Steering Group invited personalities who have contributed to the history of the club; its founder Anne de Lattre, Roy Stacy (former Director), Jean-Marc Pradelle (former Assistant Director), John Igué (former advisor to the Director) and Jean-Marie Cour (founder of the West Africa Long-Term Perspective Study). The working group has also taken note of the OECD's work on Africa (beyond the SWAC) and gave an update on African research institutions.

A proposal will be submitted to the next SPG meeting on 15 June 2010 in Paris. 🐘

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Participants:

First photo: Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda, Vice-President of the ECOWAS; Mr. Laurent Bossard, Director a.i., SWAC Secretariat; Mr. Issa Martin Bikienga, Executive Secretary of CILSS

Second Photo: Mr. John Igué, Researcher, former Counsellor of the SWAC/OECD; Mr. Raymond Weber, Independent Expert; Mr. Jean-Marie Cour, Founder of the West Africa Long Term Perspective Study (WALTPS)

Third Photo: Mme. Anne de Lattre, Founder of the Club du Sahel and former Director of the Secretariat

SWAC Work

> ECOWAS Development Partners Annual Coordination Meeting

Abuja (Nigeria), 25-26 January, 2010

With the theme of "Strengthening Coordination for Effectiveness of Support to the Regional Integration", discussions progressed on the subjects of peace, security, deepening the implementation of sectoral policies and capacity building. Recommendations focused on the need for greater regional aid coordination.

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> International Conference on Financing of ECOWAP (ECOWAP/PDDAA)

Lomé (Togo) 1-4 February 2010

Acting on conclusions from the international conference in Abuja in November 2009, participants agreed to a roadmap of deliverables at both the national and regional level (i.e. the implementation of priority funding, support to the Network for the Prevention of Food Crises (RPCA), etc...)

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> Security implications of climate change in the Sahel (SICCS)

Berlin (Germany) 22 February, 2010

At the invitation of Peter Fahrenholtz, Head of the West and Central Africa Division at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the SWAC presented the SICCS project focusing on the analytical components of the study and the intermediary results and policy conclusions. Future collaborations will be discussed in evaluating the usefulness, feasibility and willingness to integrate climate and environmental variables in conflict early warning mechanisms in Africa.

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> Management of national food security stocks in Western Africa

Dakar (Senegal) 2 –26 February 2010

Organised by the CILSS, the objective of this meeting was to discuss the establishment of the Network of companies and offices responsible for the management of food security stocks in the Sahel and West Africa (RESOGEST). This network reflects the commitment of states to provide a regional response in the management of food crises.

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> Steering committee for sustainable agricultural investment in Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), 8–12 March 2010

A team of experts from Burkina Faso and the OECD met with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Fisheries Resources (MAHRH) of Burkina Faso to reaffirm the importance of investment in agriculture and to provide a regulatory framework to develop a “law of general guidance for agriculture” by early 2011.

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> Network of Farmers’ and Agricultural Producers’ Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA),

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), 19-21 March 2010

Following the Steering Committee of the review process established by the SWAC and ROPPA, the two organizations met to consider the advice offered by partners and to discuss the implementation of the institutional and organizational review. SWAC will organise a round table meeting of ROPPA partners in June 2010.

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> Reflection process on the future of CILSS

N’Djamena (Chad), 23-24 March 2010

The CILSS has officially begun the process to transform the organisation into a specialized and autonomous agency of ECOWAS to support rural development, natural resource management, climate change and the fight against the desertification.

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> The food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa

Lomé (Togo), 30 March - 2 April 2010

Cotonou (Benin), 30 March - 2 April 2010

Faced with the threat of food crisis in eastern Sahel, these meetings have outlined the necessity for States to strengthen their emergency actions and put in place preventive measures. ECOWAS members have developed a plan for implementing regional accords and advancing National and Regional Agricultural Investment Programmes for West Africa (PNIA). Members also agreed to strengthen synergies between the CILSS, the SWAC and ECOWAS.

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Important SWAC Events

16-17 April	Workshop on land transactions in West Africa, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
26-27 April	World Bank Annual Conference on Land Policy and Administration, Washington (U.S.)
3-7 May	Third Extraordinary Convention & 5th Ordinary Convention of ROPPA : “Agriculture, Food and Nutrition in West Africa: role and responsibility of agricultural family exploitations”, Grand-Bassam (Côte d’Ivoire),
11-12 May	Seminar on ‘Strengthening regional integration in West Africa: What role for the EU?’, EU Spanish Presidency, Brussels (Belgium)
17-18 May	Third Meeting of the SWAC Steering Group, Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
26 May	Meeting “Land Investment in West Africa: regional perspectives and global challenges”, OECD Paris (France)
26-28 May	Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference on “The role of Parliamentarians in combating child trafficking and the worst forms of child labour in West Africa”, Cotonou (Benin)
15 June	Strategy & Policy Group meeting, OECD, Paris

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