

Programme of Work and Budget 2011-12 of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat/OECD: Outline

I. STRUCTURE OF THE WORK PROGRAMME AND PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. This proposal, submitted to the Club's Strategy and Policy Group, is the follow-up from the meeting of the Working Group on Prospective Analyses and the 2011–2012 Programme of Work held in Paris on 19 October 2010. It is also based on the recommendations of the SPG meeting of June 2010 and SWAC's Mandate.
2. The work programme is structured around the following elements:
 - a) Food prospects. This is the focus of a two-year process of forward analysis intended to inform decision makers implementing regional policies. This process is the backbone of the work programme and takes up most of the Club's budget.
 - b) Energy and security (stability). These issues will be analysed, reviewed and discussed in a flexible way according to the needs expressed by Members.
 - c) Continuation of the Secretariat's assistance to the Food Crises Prevention Network (FCPN).
 - d) These three work strands will be supported by cross-cutting information and communication activities.
3. The activities described fulfil the missions, aims and functions of the SWAC as defined in the Mandate. They are based on the Club's three functions of monitoring, prospective analyses and dialogue.
4. Following demand from Members, the notion of dialogue on issues and policies is central to the present proposal, particularly with regard to forward thinking. It must lead to the formulation of shared views of the future, common to the three West African regional organisations, the other West African stakeholders, and the international community partners. On this basis it must also lead to guidelines and precise recommendations.

II. WEST AFRICA'S FOOD PROSPECTS TO 2030

5. The Club will conduct analyses of two determinants of food security – the regional market and population and settlement patterns – to the year 2030. The aim is to give relevant information to the policy makers in the regional organisations and their partners.

2.1. The issues

6. Uncertainty over food security is one of the foremost preoccupations for the West African regional organisations, the G8/G20, the OECD and the global community in general. World demand for farm produce is unlikely to decrease in the medium term, so prices should continue to rise. Land investments and international competition for land show that food is once more becoming a geostrategic issue, for the developing world but also for the economic powers of North and South.

From now until 2030 the West African population will grow by 8 million people per year on average, 6 million of these in cities. Overall, the region possesses sufficient natural resources to cope with this increase, but it will have to invest more in agriculture, manage climate hazards, and deal with tensions in the world markets. The regional market is growing in terms of both volume and flows. Although encouraging growth for the majority, in some circumstances it will marginalise the weakest, particularly in the Sahelian zone and peri-urban areas. Recurrent food and nutritional crises are likely. As in the past, governments will activate national response mechanisms, but they will also need more regional coordination and solidarity. To address these issues, special attention will be paid to the following structural determinants:

- a) *Settlement dynamics*, i.e. changes in the distribution of population within the region. The statistical reference source on this question (the United Nations) raises a number of problems, in particular, faster population growth in the Sahelian countries than in the coastal countries. There is also controversy as to the size of the existing urban population (more than or less than 40 million depending on source, in 2010). However, settlement is a crucial issue for managing farm and food policy as it affects the location and structure of demand, rural land use, market dynamics, development investments and risk forecasting. For this reason it is important to construct (i.e. set the parameters for) a realistic picture, agreed by all, of settlement in West Africa in 20 years' time.
- b) *The regional market and its relationship to the world market*. Decision makers do not have the information they need on these questions to take effective action to promote agriculture and prevent food crises. Regional trade is said to be weak (10-12% of the external trade of the region's countries) but in fact, most regional trade is informal, poorly reflected in the statistics and not taken properly into account in policy-making. Not enough is known about the transmission mechanisms between the world market and regional market. Overall, there is very little information, a lot of uncertainty and therefore no lever for policy making.

7. These two parameters are put forward because they involve a particularly wide margin of uncertainty, making it difficult to steer farm and food policy in the medium term. However, West Africa's prospects also depend on many other variables that will have to be taken into account. These include natural resources, production potential and problems of climate and environment. (Will West Africa be able to feed a fast-growing population? What changes to the production systems would be needed to do so?). These issues also need to be addressed.

8. Policy analysis is another crucial element to be included in this work strand: land tenure systems, farm investment context, trade policies and negotiations, production incentives, agro-industrial development strategies, etc. Special attention will have to be paid to regional strategies and to programmes to support these strategies.

2.2. Approach

9. The process will be based on several dialogue and exchange mechanisms:

- a) A Working Group including the Members, representatives of West Africa's businesses, farmers and civil society, the main multilateral institutions and development banks, research centres and *ad hoc* experts. The Working Group's mission will be to shape the methods and modalities for implementing the process and to discuss implications for policy. It will also shape communication and lobbying strategy. It will meet three times during the two years of the work programme.

- b) Technical workshops on specific themes with experts invited to suggest methods, discuss analyses results and develop hypotheses and scenarios. The workshops will be open to Members according to their main points of interest.
- c) Virtual working groups / discussion groups.
- d) A high level Forum at the end of the process.
- e) The research and outputs of the process could provide material for meetings on these issues organised by Members or other stakeholders.

10. Along the way, this process of dialogue and exchange of ideas will generate intermediary outputs in the form of recommendations or papers to assist policy formulation and guide action. The indicative elements of the work programme might be as follows.

11. *Settlement dynamics.* Analysis of available sources, the methodology on which they are based, any impasse and contradictory analyses they may lead to. This analysis would outline scenarios on which there is agreement, and working hypotheses would then be discussed in consultation with experts. On that basis scenarios for possible trends in settlement and food demand would be drawn up.

12. *Regional markets.* Consult with experts to define a method for re-assessing regional farm and food trade, combining the following complementary approaches: (i) re-examination of statistics, comparing official figures for consumption, production, imports and exports, (ii) field surveys and exploitation of existing survey results and data from market information systems, and (iii) modelling. The different components of the method will then be entrusted to experts and/or will be based on the results of programmes run by partners.

13. *Other variables.* Establishment of a regional Geographic Information System on agricultural land, production systems and environment, from sources giving homogenised information for the region as a whole (FAO, FEWS Net etc.). This database will subsequently be used for cross-analysis.

14. *The Working Group* will draw initial conclusions and guide the next phase of the process:

15. Cross-analysis of all the variables and elaboration of one or more scenarios for agriculture in 2030. There will also be:

- a) An analytical summary of major trends in national farm policies, regional policies, and the strategies of the other stakeholders and partners in the international community.
- b) Hypotheses on practical implications for policy.

16. *The Working Group* will formulate a proposed interpretation of food security issues and will seek consensus on practical measures and actions that the West African regional organisations and their partners could implement to strengthen their long-term agriculture and food security strategies and policies. The Working Group will prepare recommendations to be endorsed by the Forum.

17. *The Forum* is conceived as the political outcome of the process. It should bring together West African and international decision makers who are in a position to influence policy. It will be prepared for by a communication and lobbying campaign and will be held in late 2012. In order to reach a wider audience, it might be considered that it be hosted by a SWAC Member.

III. SECURITY AND ENERGY ISSUES

18. With regard to activities concerning security and energy, the Secretariat proposes to:
- a) Contribute to a better understanding of West African dynamics and prospects by analysing trends, looking at West African issues in a global perspective and examining political strategies;
 - b) Foster dialogue and exchange of experiences, and contribute to policy coordination by organising meetings and/or participating in meetings organised by Members.
19. This should be a flexible approach to meet Members' needs e.g., attending a think tank, responding to a call for papers for an international conference, producing articles and reviews, organising a round table, working in synergy with other directorates of the OECD.

3.1. Security issues

20. Many West African countries are still faced with the demands of consolidating constitutional government and democracy, and strengthening institutional capacities. In this context, the accelerating pace of change the region is faced with brings its own risks and instability. Rising food prices, security for oilfields and uranium deposits, the demands of people living in those areas, the need to protect the interests of farmers with regard to land law, the sharing of cross-border resources, and the consequences of climate change, are all potential sources of tension and conflict. Some countries or transnational areas of West Africa which are heavily dependent on the world market to feed their populations may find themselves in socially tense and politically dangerous situations. The consequences of climate change may intensify these crises. A whole set of threats to agro-pastoral ways of life come together in the Sahel, including a resurgence of irredentism, mining issues, terrorist risks and illicit trade and trafficking, which could further weaken and compromise the region's geopolitical equilibrium. Regional thinking and policies must take all forms of fragility and risk into account.

21. The Secretariat could mainly contribute to Members' thinking in the following ways:
- a) Producing analyses of security issues in the context of geography, culture, demo-economics, mining, food and agriculture etc; revealing the regional dynamics of some forms of instability and the spreading of conflicts. These analyses could provide food for thought about regional instruments for conflict prevention and management through the INCAF network^[1], which is facilitated by the OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD).
 - b) Publishing a series of analytical articles drawn from the discussions conducted in 2010 on the links between security and climate variables (compiled in one publication). These articles, which would include a climate forecast, should make a useful contribution to forward-thinking about food security from now until 2030.
 - c) Providing facilitation for a round table and networking.

^[1] International Network on Conflict and Fragility

3.2. Energy Issues

22. West Africa possesses abundant energy resources: fossil fuels (oil, gas and coal), renewables (hydro-electricity, biomass, solar power, geothermal energy), and nuclear. This wealth, and its location close to major markets, puts West Africa at the centre of world energy security strategies. Despite the availability of these resources, electricity output is among the world's lowest. Current demand was not anticipated. Power cuts in the cities are now potential sources of social and political tension, and impede agricultural, agro-industrial and industrial development. Energy needs will continue to accelerate more rapidly than in the past, owing to urbanisation and economic growth.

23. The Secretariat could produce a review of the energy resource situation (quantities, locations and development potential), an energy market analysis (state of play, stakeholders, demand, forecasts) and an analysis of constraints to developing energy markets (investment, legal and political frameworks).

IV. FOOD CRISES PREVENTION NETWORK

24. The work programme on food crisis prevention could be structured around the following:

- a) Continued facilitation of the process of revising the Charter for food crisis prevention and management: (i) continuation and finalisation of country consultations, (ii) regional validation by ECOWAS, (iii) validation by development partners, particularly through OECD/DAC, (iv) establishment of a system for assessment peer review and consultation with stakeholders.
- b) Continued joint running of the FCPN. Beyond its regular activities, the FCPN and its members will be called upon to contribute to forward thinking on food security (see point II).
- c) Support for the regional farmers' organisations.
- d) Assistance to the regional organisations for governance of food security issues and coherence/effectiveness of their actions and of international cooperation.

V. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

25. The Secretariat will implement an information and communication strategy serving its Members and the Work Programme. A considerable part of the available resources will be devoted to assisting the process of reflection on food prospects between now and 2030. The Working Group steering this process will be able to shape the strategy and facilitate its implementation. This strategy must take special care to (i) communicate on the nature of the "New Club" and hence on the nature of the reflection process, i.e. a process common to all the Club Members, governed and shared equally; (ii) make a special communication effort towards West Africa; (iii) make use of the communication resources of Members (websites, aid agencies' and regional organisations' publications) and of the OECD; (iv) ensure a presence in certain key media; (v) ensure sustained and regular dissemination of information about the process, etc.

26. As well as the website and the Secretariat's newsletter, communication will be based on the West Africa Gateway (a resource centre and online forum), the *West Africa Observer* (quarterly review analysing and contextualising West African current affairs), position papers and the Club's annual report.