SWAC NEWS
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> DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL

April - May 2009 – Nº 4-5

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

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  WEST AFRICA OBSERVER

Normand Lauzon
SWAC Director

A lot is being done on Africa within the OECD. The 2009 edition of the African Economic Outlook (AEO) has just been released in Dakar at the 44th African Development Bank Annual Meetings; the 9th International Economic Conference on Africa brought together some 500 Africa-development experts; the African Partnership Forum (APF) hold its 12th APF meeting with political representatives from G8/OECD countries; and the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) is pursuing, among other dossiers, the monitoring of the impacts of the global economic crisis on West Africa. Key findings are published within our newly launched quarterly review, the "West Africa Observer".

To facilitate access to the various OECD works on Africa and to raise its visibility, the OECD set-up a regional entry point "OECD and Africa" (www.oecd.org/africa) on its website. It presents the OECD's major flagship publications on Africa, key topics and activities, OECD-Africa events, African partner organisations and other Africa-related web resources. The SWAC Secretariat has been a driving force in the construction of this platform and will continue to be involved in its further development, updating and promotion. The experience of this pilot project might also be useful for setting-up other regional platforms (Asia, Latin America) within the OECD. The SWAC's promotion of regional approaches is increasingly gaining attention within the OECD.

The SWAC team also continues to work, together with West African actors, on the development and implementation of regional strategies and policies in West Africa. Within the 4th restricted Food Crisis Prevention Network meeting, network members set-out a series of recommendations for the prevention and management of possible food and nutritional crises and discussed next steps for the implementation of the revised Food Aid Charter, a concrete example of regional aid effectiveness. A case study on the spatial coherence of aid in Mali was launched during a SWAC mission to Bamako. The ECOWAS/SWAC Stakeholders meeting on the Cross-border Co-operation Programme, held in Abuja, brought together local cross-border actors and representatives from West African regional organisations to discuss operational modalities, follow-up actions and funding mechanisms of the cross-border co-operation programme. All these field-level activities illustrate the importance of listening to West African actors and ensure that the SWAC's work is anchored in West African realities. In this issue, an insider-view of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network is provided by Mr. Augustin Sagna, Head of Office of the ECOWARN Zone IV.

ECOWAS EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE NETWORK (ECOWARN)

The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network is an observation and monitoring tool for conflict prevention and decision-making. As set out in Article 58 of the revised 1993 ECOWAS Treaty, its establishment and functioning are defined by the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of December 1999.
The implementation of this tool begun in 2003.

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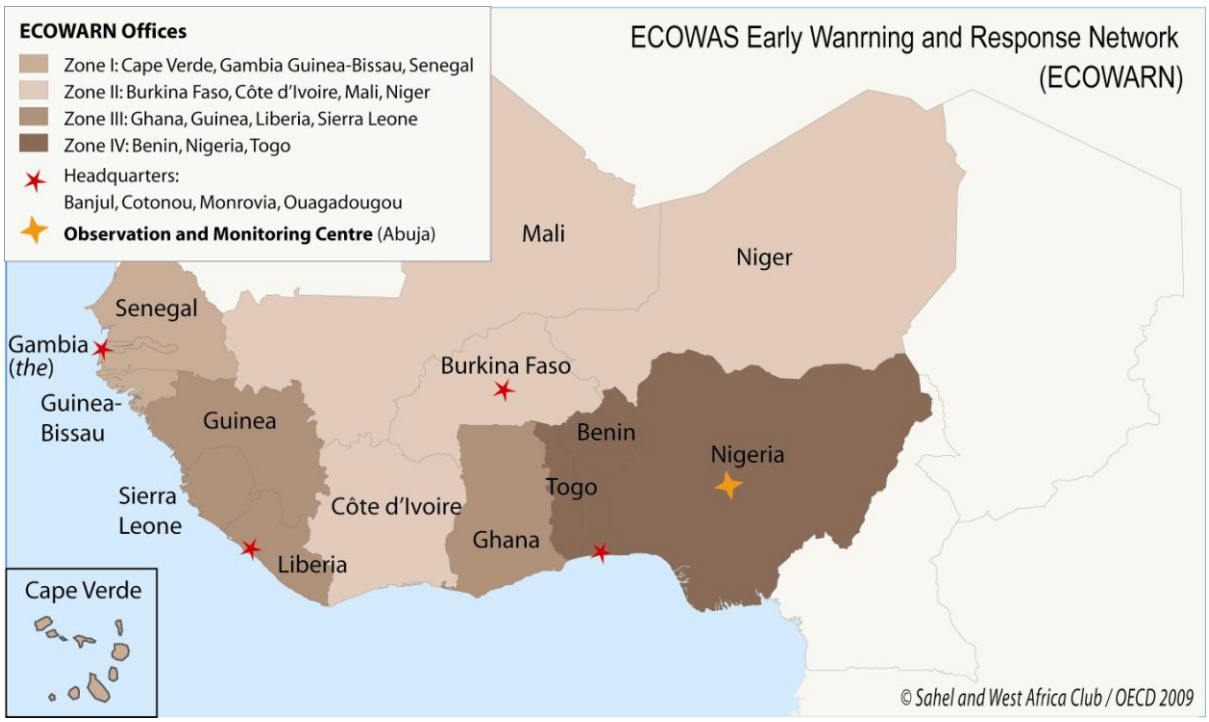

How is the ECOWARN mechanism innovative?

Interview with
Mr. Augustin Sagna
Head of ECOWARN Office IV

This mechanism is unique in Africa in its current configuration, its evolution and implementation. Discussions are underway with other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that would like to use it as a model.

ECOWARN is made up of two operational branches. One is the Observation and Monitoring Centre based in Abuja. It has a Situation Room and works with analysts, experts and ECOWAS staff. It is currently managed by Colonel Yoro Koné, under the responsibility of Colonel Touré (Commissioner in charge of Political Affairs, Peace and Security) as well as Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas (President of the ECOWAS Commission).

The second operational branch is composed of the four sub-regional zone offices. Zone I covers Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. Zone II covers Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger. Zone III covers Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Liberia and Sierra Leone. I currently manage Zone IV covering Benin, Nigeria and Togo.

I had been asked to manage the first office which officially opened in October 2003 in Ouagadougou. At the beginning, the idea was, within the framework of the ECOWAS Peace and Security Council and its President, to collect, analyse information and make it available to Heads of State in order to prevent crises.

- ***How has this mechanism evolved since its inception?***

ECOWARN has evolved a lot even though more can always be done. We have a high-performance IT tool that we have improved over time. This very technical tool has been progressively adjusted to field realities, in particular thanks to the contribution by West African civil society. It also had to be translated into French as it was developed in English. This was not easy as the concepts are at times different. We hope to have a Portuguese version soon. 94 pre-defined indicators are used as a grid to analyse risks and rapidly detect security trends in a given area.

- ***This tool seems somehow dehumanised. How do you intend to use this tool to benefit the West African people?***

This statistic/graphic approach which indeed seems somewhat dehumanised nevertheless makes it easier to pass on messages to politicians. Politicians accept more easily a scientific analysis of the situation, rather than an analysis based on factual interpretations and/or theories. Furthermore, based on gathered information, ECOWAS is developing information and decision-making tools (incident and situation reports, daily highlights, country profiles, policy briefs, monthly and quarterly reports).

To give it a more "human" dimension, ECOWAS created the Peace Exchange Forum which is a specialised online dialogue platform through which relevant actors can exchange and improve synergies among their actions. It is accessible to members with a login and password. ECOWAS will further develop this platform by improving both its technical as well as human capacities. Translation into French and Portuguese should make this tool accessible to all actors within the ECOWAS zone.

- ***What are zone offices' roles today? How do they actually work?***

The zone offices are like observation and monitoring offices. In order to respect State sovereignty, ECOWAS has relied on open information sources, which has nothing to do with what is called "intelligence or counter-intelligence" of information that remains the State's prerogative to manage their security. This open information is transmitted by ECOWAS-trained civil liaison officers, members of civil society, in each zone capital. Each office works in liaison with a government representative and a representative of civil society. In most of the countries, civil society is represented by a network member of the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the government is represented by a member of the administration. Each week, national focal points have to fill in an ECOWARN risk indicator form. Once the various weekly reports and the incident reports on the situation in countries in question have been analysed and the indicator form has been filled out, every Monday the Head of the zone office sends his/her report to the ECOWAS Early Warning Department in Abuja.

- ***Can you explain why the media, who are at times actors in prevention but also tension, does not play a key role in this Early Warning Network?***

We have not excluded the media from this network. Taking into account their importance in the stability of countries and the region, ECOWAS intends to better involve the media not only as open sources of information but also as conflict prevention actors. For example, ECOWAS organised a meeting with the main regional media at the end of March in Abidjan.

- ***ECOWAS is criticised for only issuing warnings but unable to prevent conflict, (for example, in Guinea-Bissau). How can this type of crisis be prevented and what responses could ECOWARN provide?***

It is true that in Guinea-Bissau and Guinea we knew what was going to happen. The question is to know how to respond to these crises. As ECOWAS member countries are not yet ready to give up some of their sovereignty to their regional organisation, we cannot intervene prior to the crises. It is a bit frustrating for an organisation like ours to have the signs of a red alert but no mandate to act. We hope that this can change in the future. Within the framework of ECOWARN, ECOWAS is thinking of setting up a standing military force, like the UN peacekeepers. It shall not only be active at the regional level but throughout the continent.

- ***How can the Saly Action Plan feed into ECOWARN? How can the ECOWARN zone offices contribute to its implementation?***

The Saly Action Plan is very important for our zone offices because it defines a working framework aiming to build synergies between civil society organisations and ECOWAS. It should become a key tool for conflict prevention in general and in data collection and information dissemination, in particular.

More concretely, each zone office should liaise with the four Saly Action Plan regional platforms. It is a good thing that the Action Plan is building on the four sub-regional zones, even if they are going to be slightly different (Mauritania has been included in the Sahel zone even thought it is not an ECOWAS member state. Burkina Faso has been included in the Sahel zone although within ECOWARN it is part of Zone II.). However, a direct link can be set up between the ECOWARN zone offices and civil society platforms. This should be mutually beneficial. Furthermore, most importantly, in my opinion, is that through this type of action, ECOWAS will make progress towards its 2020 Vision as an "*ECOWAS of Peoples*".

This approach focuses on the spatial coherence of aid. Indeed, bilateral and multilateral aid is mostly allocated to the national level. This approach does not contest this natural prevalence but rather aims to optimise national aid by taking into account the regional context.

REGIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF AID

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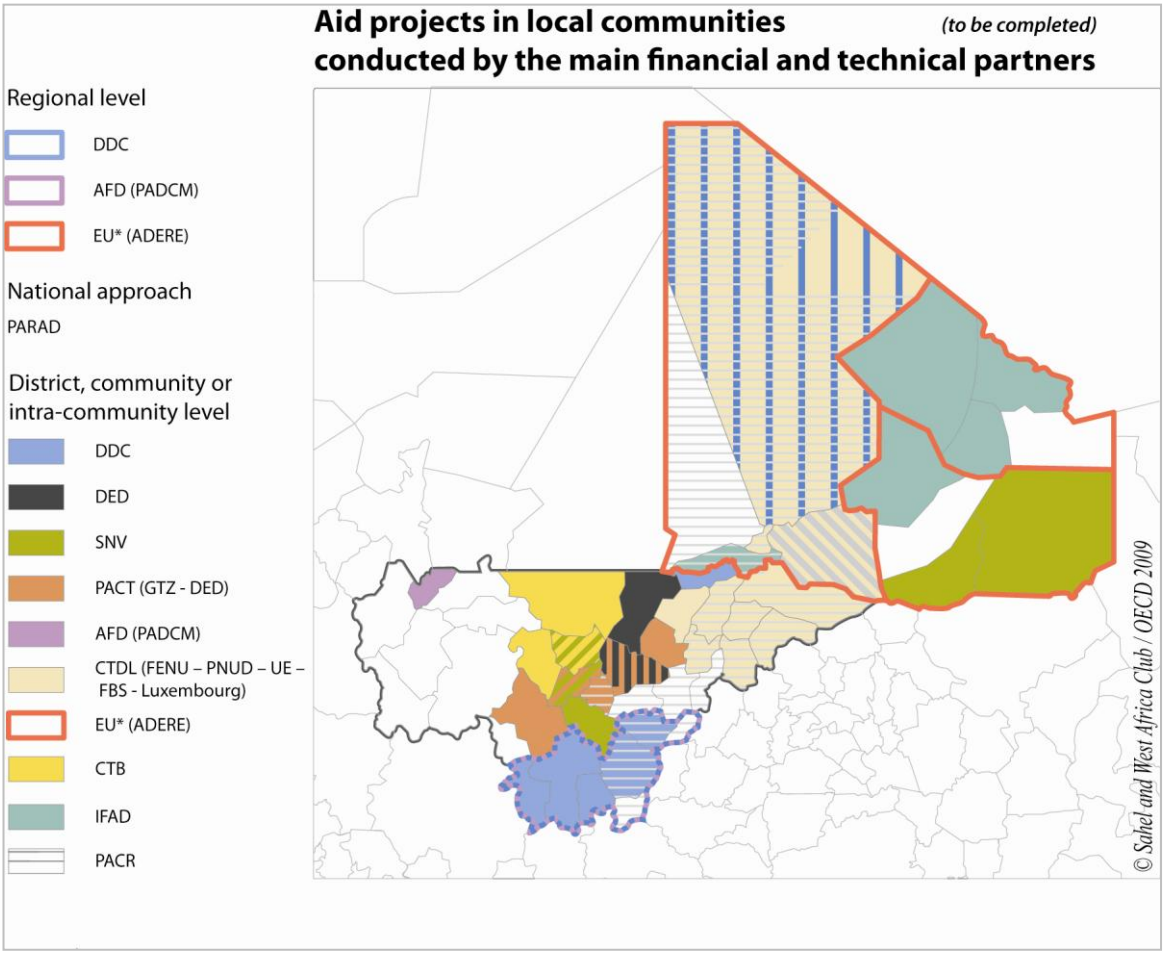
Key questions

- To what extent do "country strategies" of development co-operation agencies consider the interdependencies and complementarities between neighbouring countries?
- To what extent do these national strategies consider the regional context?
- Are the strategies of development co-operation agencies active in the same country coherent?
- Within border areas, do local development programmes and projects take into account social and economic links of border populations?
- How can these interdependencies be better addressed and how can the effectiveness of these interventions be improved?

SPATIAL COHERENCE OF AID IN MALI

Within the framework of its initiative on the regional dimension of development and aid effectiveness, the SWAC aims to emphasise the geographic dimension in aid programmes. A pilot analysis has been launched on the spatial coherence of aid to Mali. This involves in particular identifying aid to local communities within Mali and analysing its coherence from a national geographic perspective. Similar studies will be carried out in Mauritania and Senegal. During an exploratory mission to Bamako, the SWAC team met with key technical and financial partners supporting decentralisation and local development in Mali.



4TH RESTRICTED MEETING OF THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK

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OCED Headquarters, 16-17 April 2009

As a platform for discussions between West African food security actors and the main food aid donors from OECD member countries, the restrictive meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa (RPCA) establishes the half-term assessment of the agricultural campaign and analyses the impacts of food security programmes, with a view to taking concrete measures for the prevention and management of possible food crises during the lean season. This year, network members also focused on the negotiation and adoption process of the revised Food Aid Charter.

FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SITUATION

Despite production improvement in most of the countries over the last three years, the nutritional situation could deteriorate in the next few months due to the high prices of food commodities. In fact, prices remain high although they ought to be lower as products should have reached the market. The global economic and financial crisis is an additional factor exacerbating the vulnerability of the poorest people. The possible reduction in remittances, loss of employment and drop in agricultural export product prices could threaten food security in households, in particular with the oncoming lean season.

At-risk zones have been identified in some West African countries. Some 317 000 people in Mali, 383 000 people in Mauritania and 217 000 people in Niger are facing food insecurity. To deal with this situation, several measures have been undertaken by West African countries supported by other food security actors. Some of these urgent measures are: i) the sale at subsidised prices of 4 000 tonnes of corn, 600 tonnes of imported rice, 100 tonnes of local rice in Benin and 20 000 tonnes of cereals in Niger; and (ii) cash for work programmes in Niger for approximately 15% of households in vulnerable zones. Urban areas are also affected. The CILSS has identified close to 30 000 households in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso (Burkina Faso).

THE REVISED FOOD AID CHARTER

In response to the RPCA recommendations, the SWAC and the CILSS are facilitating the revision process of the Food Aid Charter. Initially adopted by CILSS member states and SWAC contributing members in 1990, the Code of Good Conduct in food crisis prevention and management needed to be adapted to the new food security context and to expand its geographic coverage to the whole West African region. The Food Aid Charter is an excellent example that illustrates how aid can be more effective through a co-ordinated regional approach.

The revised draft version (available as of August 2008) will serve as a basis for discussions with various actors in order to reach consensus and adopt the revised Food Aid Charter. Consultations with civil society actors, co-ordinated by Oxfam Intermon, have begun in Chad and Mauritania. They will be pursued in Niger and in other West African countries. However, the consultation phase still lacks funding in order to involve a wide range of actors in Sahel countries and some West African coastal countries at the local, national and regional levels. This process shall be as participative as possible with regard to achieving consensus on a revised, applicable, realistic and assessable Food Aid Charter. Thus fundraising remains a priority. The next annual RPCA meeting, scheduled for December 2009 in Bamako (Mali), will take stock on the progress made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The RPCA network members recommend to decision-makers:

- ⇨ The lifting of the obstacles to the free circulation of foodstuffs in the Sahel and West African region.
- ⇨ The continuation of aid programs for the most vulnerable populations in the rural, peri-urban and urban zones in order to limit the degradation of their purchasing power as well as to prevent malnutrition.
- ⇨ The improvement of price and supply monitoring activities, particularly in the structurally deficit areas.

from left to right:

- Mr. Jean Sibiri Zoundi, SWAC Head of Unit, Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development
- Mr. Mario Amano, OECD Deputy Secretary-General
- Mr. Normand Lauzon, SWAC Director
- Mr. Alhousseini Bretaudeau, CILSS Secretary-General
- Mr. Ousseini Salifou, ECOWAS Commissioner, Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources
- Mr. Salif Traoré, ECOWAS Co-ordinator, Agriculture and Rural Development

STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON THE ECOWAS CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

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Abuja (Nigeria), 18-20 May 2009

This meeting brought together the main cross-border co-operation actors active within the ECOWAS region to discuss next steps and priority actions of the ECOWAS Cross-border Co-operation Programme. The programme's aim is to bring regional integration and local populations closer together by empowering border areas. This is based on concrete short- and medium-term projects focusing on economic development as well as strengthening peace and security in border zones. The SWAC has facilitated the establishment and development of this programme since its inception.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutional and legal framework for cross-border co-operation

- ⇨ Establishment of Cross-border Steering Committees at zonal, local, national and regional levels to ensure better monitoring of the cross-border co-operation programme;
- ⇨ Strengthening of networks such as the West African Borders and Integration Initiative (WABI) and similar networks;
- ⇨ Political, technical and financial support by ECOWAS for the implementation of cross-border projects;
- ⇨ Inclusion of the Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) within the priorities of community development programmes;
- ⇨ Incentives for financial partners to include cross-border co-operation in their initiatives;
- ⇨ Promotion of exchange programmes by member states through twinning and other co-operative work;
- ⇨ Adoption of a community legal framework on cross-border co-operation;
- ⇨ Strong involvement of member states in the implementation of cross-border co-operation actions in their areas.

Mobilisation of financial resources and partnerships

- ⇨ Integration of cross-border co-operation in the priorities of the EU-ECOWAS roadmap (*currently being negotiated*);
- ⇨ Political advocacy by ECOWAS to promote cross-border co-operation within the member states' national programs;
- ⇨ A study facilitating the speedy implementation of financing mechanisms for cross-border initiatives;
- ⇨ Financing through ECOWAS of existing cross-border co-operation projects through already available dedicated funds (Peace Fund, Spain fund, etc.);
- ⇨ Provision of funds from already interested donors through tripartite agreements, facilitated by ECOWAS;

Mr. El Hadj Mohamed Daramy:

"Cross-border co-operation could contribute to the achievement of a borderless ECOWAS based on sharing of socio-cultural values among the communities living across the West African borders."

PARTICIPANTS

- Country representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo
- Partner organisations/institutions: AU, Enda-Diapol, EU, Nigero-Nigerian Joint Commission, OCAL, PDM, Spain, SWAC and UEMOA;
- Civil society organisations' representatives, local government authorities, technical partners and resource persons.

PRESS REVIEW:

THE WEST AFRICA REPORT AND THE SWAC

Mr. Jean-Louis Schiltz, Minister for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Affairs of Luxembourg, Mr. Charles Goerens, former SWAC President and Mr. Raymond Weber, West Africa Report Team Leader, presented key findings of the first West Africa Report on Resources for Development. Some feedback was presented within the press review of the government of Luxembourg (*21 April 2009 – orginal version: French*)

Co-operation and Humanitarian Affairs – Luxembourg

"Towards a creative economy"

The Sahel and West Africa Club reports:

Jean-Louis Schiltz and Charles Goerens presented yesterday the first issue of the West Africa Report published by the Sahel and West Africa Club in collaboration with ECOWAS. The report emphasises that, although the region faces many problems, there is great potential that should be encouraged through aid and other types of regional co-operation.

■ For three years Charles Goerens served as President of the Sahel and West Africa Club (created in 1976). Raymond Weber was Head of Unit for the last two years. Within this context the exiting President emphasised that the Club contributes very significant to the region's development through the scientific data that it provides.This precise and reliable information "helps enormously in carrying out the actions successfully". This publication, co-produced with ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), offers a regional overview of West African resources and gives the floor to six West African personalities who provide their view of the region's future. The publication targets a wide audience and is illustrated with many maps. It shows where the region's resources are located, according to Charles Goerens, "in the youth and in the subsoil", but corruption, which also exists in this part of Africa, must be brought to an end in order to take advantage of opportunities that arise". According to Raymond Weber, the zone is moving towards a "creative economy with tremendous potential and in which a demographic transition is currently underway."

Jean-Louis Schiltz, Minister of Development Co-operation, concluded by highlighting that "the image of destitution must end as it no longer corresponds to the actual context". He also pointed to regional telecommunications and microfinance projects in West Africa.

■ DDS

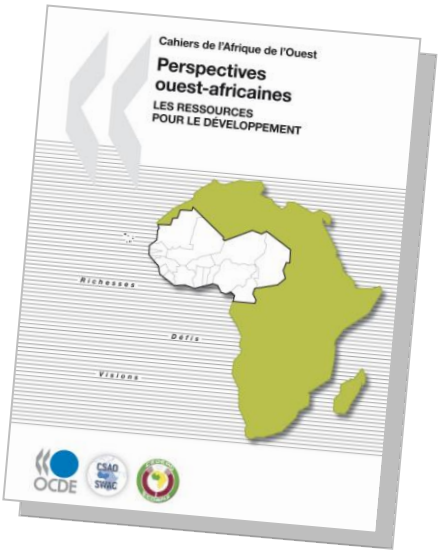
www.oecd.org/swac/westafricareport

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

English version: forthcoming

www.oecd.org/swac/westafricareport

This first joint SWAC/ECOWAS publication offers for a large public an analytical and synthetic view on West African realities, illustrating its key messages with various maps. It explores West African resources from a regional perspective and contains a cross-cutting analysis of the main issues and challenges the region faces. The analysis goes beyond the economic sector to explore other fields, in particular natural resources and social, cultural and human capital. The book offers an original contribution to the debate: it gives the floor to six West African personalities who offer their view on the region's future.



Co-operation and Humanitarian Affairs – Luxembourg

Far from Destitution

The Sahel and West Africa Club has just published, under its Luxembourg presidency, a report on the situation in the region

Created in 1976, at the initiative of OECD member countries, the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) is a forum for consultation and advocacy facilitating the international community's increased and lasting support to West African countries.

Mr. Charles Goerens, Deputy and former Minister of Luxembourg, has been the SWAC's President since 2006. While his mandate will expire shortly, Jean-Louis Schiltz, Minister of Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Affairs, invited Mr. Goerens yesterday to present the achievements over the last three years.

"What is going to happen in this region over the next 30 years?" pondered the SWAC President during the presentation. For the last two years the SWAC was working on a report that analyses the West African context and its regional potential in order to respond to this question.

This report develops three broad themes. Raymond Weber, Director-General of Lux-Development and representative to the SWAC, yesterday presented an in-depth report of the report's key messages. First of all, it focuses on the idea of resources for development. "**To demonstrate that the often destitute image of Africa does not correspond to the reality,"** explained Raymond Weber who believes that West Africa has great potential and will be able to affirm its place within the global economy.

> *Numerous challenges to meet*

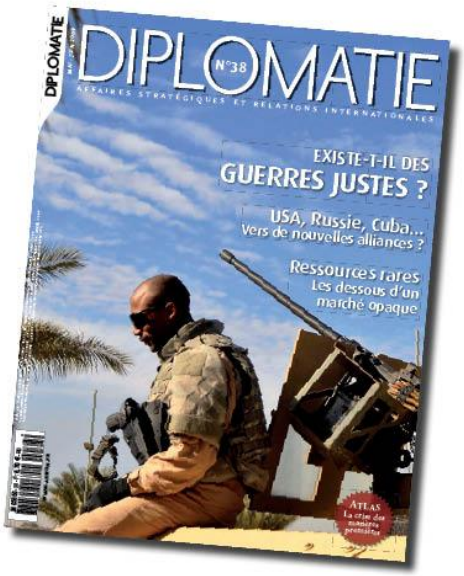
The report then presents the political and economic context of the region examining the many elections which took place in the region in 2007.

The report concludes with the challenges facing the region. Obviously there is the demographic challenge as the population continues to increase year after year placing ever more pressure on infrastructure and employment.

The SWAC also believes that culture should be considered a driver for development of the region. According to Raymond Weber, "**Culture is increasingly drawing more attention, providing impetus to other sectors"**. The SWAC points at the region's linguistic affluence that could be an asset if politicians would know how to exploit it economically. Another great challenge is food security in the medium- and long-term. The SWAC believes that it is the market that is decisive in this context, and that West Africa should try to develop everything possible at the regional level in order to assure its food sovereignty. As for energy, Raymond Weber thinks that there are enough energy resources in the region to create a regional market, while recalling that electricity and water are still more expensive than in our countries. Finally, the SWAC advocates for strengthening regional co-operation.

"It is essential that this report not only be a final product but rather opens up a serious discussion with countries of the South," concludes Raymond Weber who would like to see the ideas set out in the report reach the broadest audience possible. *O.L.*

LE QUOTIDIEN, 21.04.2009



DIPLOMATIE

Trade and the geopolitics of raw material: the mining sector and infrastructure in West Africa

by the analysts of the Sahel and West Africa Club

This article is a compilation of work conducted within the framework of the Regional Atlas on West Africa and the West Africa Report on Resources for Development.

EVENT

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S BORDER PROGRAMME IN WEST AFRICA

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), 23-24 April 2009

This workshop, organised by the African Union, examined the progress made in the implementation of the African Union's Border Programme (AUBP) in West Africa. Developed with the SWAC Secretariat's technical support, the AUBP was adopted by the Conference of African Ministers on 7 June 2007. It focuses on three aspects: 1) definition and demarcation of borders (by 2012); 2) cross-border co-operation; and 3) capacity building. The meeting's aim was to raise awareness among relevant actors, to mobilise their support and develop a regional action plan for West Africa. With a view to promoting the AUBP and facilitating the development of regional action plans, the African Union organises similar meetings within each region of the continent.

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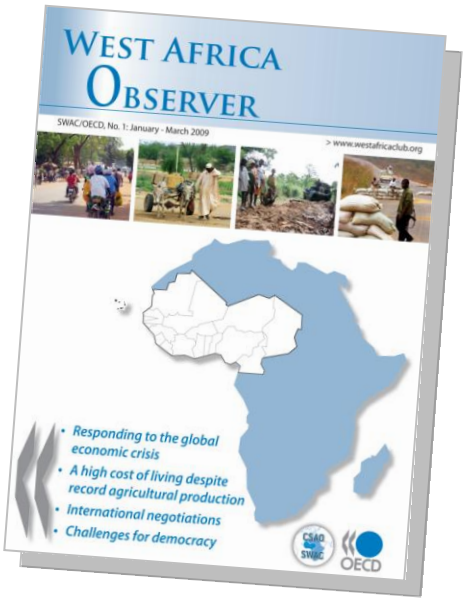
PUBLICATION



WEST AFRICA OBSERVER

Issue N°1, January - March 2009

This quarterly review analyses major political, economic and social trends in West Africa from a regional point of view. The first issue summarizes and puts into perspective important events and developments which took place in the first quarter of 2009. Our work draws on many existing information sources. We believe: "*The more information is available, the more it needs to be synthesised*". The West Africa Observer is intended to become a tool that provides easy and quick access to key information on the region.

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> FORTHCOMING:

Strategy and Policy Group Meeting of the Sahel and West Africa Club
International Energy Agency, 18-19 June 2009

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