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

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SWAC Director,
Mr. Normand Lauzon



While most of the attention is focused on the impacts of the global economic crisis on Africa, the recent political events in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau just add to a long list of "sources of concern". Mediation efforts led by ECOWAS prove the existence of a regional peacekeeping system, but are these efforts sufficient to find a solution to these crises?

Beyond the analysis of current events and trends, we need to continue to address the root causes that are underlying these structural vulnerabilities. It is also imperative to help people living in these countries to escape from the vicious cycle in which they have already been held up for so long! It would be a serious error not to consider West Africa as one regional area favouring all kinds of trafficking which feeds into criminal networks and weakens the power of states. It is indeed important to set up national programmes for fragile states; but it is equally important to help West Africa combat its regional scourges.

However, we should not exclusively focus on political and security problems. There are more than 320 million people living in West Africa. The large majority make a living through their own hard work on a day-to-day basis. Livestock breeders and other livestock professionals met within the framework of the Regional Livestock Forum, organised by the SWAC Secretariat and the ECOWAS Commission in Niamey (Niger) from 29 January to 4 February 2009. They expressed their concerns and made proposals which were then discussed with government representatives. Guidelines for a regional roadmap emerged from these discussions and were approved at the ministerial level. The new challenge is now to translate these recommendations into practice.

Dr. Ibrahima Aliou, APESS Secretary General, highlights in our interview the need to set-up a regional network of livestock organisations. The SWAC Secretariat is willing to facilitate the emergence of this regional network as it already helped establish the network of agricultural producers (ROPPA) at the end of the 90s. We hope that the international community will also pay attention to and encourage positive initiatives such as the Niamey Forum.

Within this issue, you will also find information on the outcomes of the first "Regional Cocoa Initiative Task Force Meeting" and a study on the possible security implications of climate change in the Sahel region. We also have the pleasure to announce that the complete version of the first West Africa Report on "Resources for Development" is available on the SWAC's website at:

www.oecd.org/swac/westafricareport



REGIONAL LIVESTOCK FORUM

Niamey (Niger), 29 January – 4 February 2009

How could the potential of the livestock sector be optimised in order to strengthen the regional market, ensure food security and reduce poverty? West African livestock experts met for an exchange of views and identified policy recommendations which were approved by ECOWAS Ministers.

Organised by the SWAC Secretariat and ECOWAS, the Forum's aim was to share the results of the initiative "*Potentials and Challenges for Strengthening the Regional Market*" and adopt measures to better optimise the livestock's potential in the region. Discussions enabled participants to prepare draft guidelines which were adopted by ECOWAS ministers. Recommendations shall be transformed into an Action Plan by 2010 in the framework of the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy. In particular, these proposals intend to promote and intensify intra-regional trade, improve food security and strengthen the organisation of the livestock chain.



FORUM PHASES

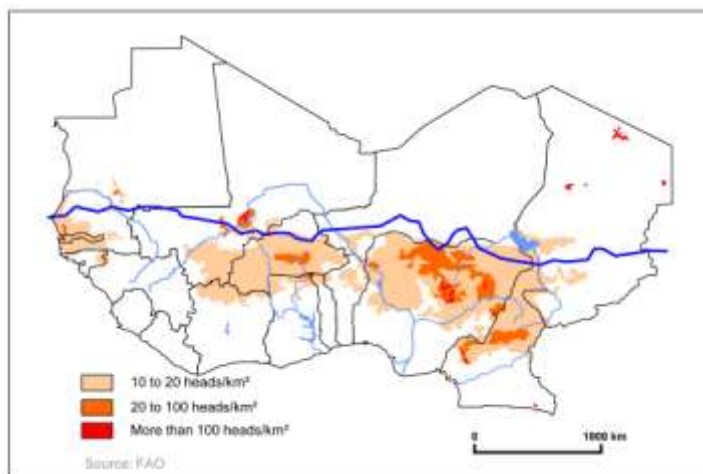
- ▶ **Phase 1:** Consultations with livestock professionals leading to recommendations on how to strengthen the livestock sector and addressing specific concerns of socio-professional groups.
- ▶ **Phase 2:** Experts meeting with livestock professionals, technical, financial and development partners; > guidelines and policy recommendations were submitted to the ECOWAS Ministerial Meeting.
- ▶ **Phase 3:** Ministerial Meeting with ministers in charge of livestock, agriculture, trade and industry from ECOWAS member countries plus Chad and Mauritania. They examined proposals and adopted recommendations aiming to strengthening the livestock sector.

THE NEED FOR A REGIONAL LIVESTOCK POLICY

The development of livestock within the ECOWAS region requires an integrated vision. Such a vision should be expressed through a specific development strategy of livestock in the framework of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP). It should:

- ▶ Harmonise the actions undertaken at regional level with national policies in the countries by complying with the principles defined in the framework of ECOWAP;
- ▶ Enhance the dynamism of the chains by taking into account the aspect relating to production, processing, marketing, storage, distribution and consumption;
- ▶ Promote and enhance intra-regional trade and exploit the market potentials to acknowledge regional livestock as growth generator and a strategic sector for successful regional integration, fight against poverty and economic growth within the ECOWAS region;
- ▶ Enhance the productivity and quality of animal products through science, technology and research;
- ▶ Promote dynamic and conducive private-public partnership to enhance production, processing and marketing, financing, animal health services and veterinary public health.

Cattle in West Africa



LIVESTOCK POTENTIAL IN WEST AFRICA

Livestock plays a key role in the economy of West African countries with a contribution to agricultural GDP that at times can reach 44%. With more than 60 million heads of cattle and 160 small ruminants and 400 million poultry, the Sahel and West Africa is an exceptional livestock region. In numbers, and compared with total livestock within Sub-Saharan Africa, this region accounts for 25% of cattle, 33% of sheep, and 40% of goats. However, this animal production potential is still rarely optimised and the region continues to import great quantities of animal products to meet the needs of the population.

BUILDING A NETWORK OF LIVESTOCK ORGANISATIONS

How would you assess your action? What has been achieved within the livestock sector?

APESS contributed to improve the image of the livestock sector and helped livestock breeders to get better organised and recognised. By putting our advice into practice, they were able to increase their profits. Progress can still be made in the area of animal selection. Improving security conditions and the internal organisation of livestock/living areas also remain challenges. However, the APESS assessment illustrates that the behavior and mentalities of APESS members have positively evolved. Three priorities were identified:

- ▶ *The livestock sector is evolving. APESS needs to continue to support livestock breeders by providing advice and knowledge in order to avoid that they feel overwhelmed by these changes. They can play an active role and master these changes if they understand their impact, and if they are willing to persevere with the introduction of innovations which will grant them some independence from others.*
- ▶ *Livestock breeders need to have a strong, independent and sustainable organisation to support their hopes and make their voices heard. The role and responsibilities within APESS need to be redefined.*
- ▶ *The future of the livestock sector depends on future generations: the youth, its education and the role and responsibilities we give them within our families and organisations need to be one of our priorities.*



>> INTERVIEW

with Dr. Ibrahim Aliou
APESS Secretary-General

Association for the Promotion of the Livestock in the Sahel and the Savanna (APESS)



- ▶ **CREATION:** 1989
- ▶ **MEMBERS:** about 15 000
- ▶ **COUNTRIES COVERED:** Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic (CAR), Gambia (the), Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal
- ▶ **STRUCTURES:** a General-Secretariat provisionally located in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso); three Regional Information and Training Centres (CRIFA) in Dori (Burkina Faso), Thiès (Senegal) and Garoua (Cameroon).
- ▶ **MISSION:** "support livestock activities and traditional livestock breeders to encourage a change in mentalities and practices"
- ▶ **ACTIVITIES:**
 - Training involving all dimensions of human development : spiritual, intellectual, emotional and technical;
 - Organisational support, basic education for adults and school enrolment of children;
 - Support to improve animal feeding during the dry season (fodder and foraging troughs, capacity to stock hay, improvement of fodder management, grants for fodder grains, etc.)
 - Raising awareness on new challenges; increasing their political involvement in order to become stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- ▶ **BENEFICIARIES:** traditional livestock breeders for which livestock activities is above all a life style and not just an economic activity;
- ▶ **BUDGET:** 940 000 € (annual); sources:
 - ~ 85 % by development partners : 60% by the Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC); 20% by SOS-Faim
 - ~ 10 % contributions by members
 - ~ 5 % services to third-parties.

From the producers' point of view, what threats must the livestock sector face? What are the future and present challenges and opportunities?

The threats perceived by livestock breeders are the following:

- ▶ Insecurity related to land issues: non-respect of legal texts concerning the free movement of animals leading to legal and various illegal taxes; insecurity related to gang-related crime and violence in rural areas, in particular in Chad, Cameroon and the Central African Republic.
- ▶ Reduction and rarefaction of natural resources related to the advancing of agricultural exploitation, the impact of climate change and accelerated demographic growth increasing pressure on natural resources.
- ▶ The lack of organisation among livestock breeders also limits the search for effective solutions to their problems.

APESS is also concerned by the lack of professional conscience of government representations in charge of livestock issues who thus do not always take appropriate measures for coherent and efficient actions.

In the framework of the 2007 assessment, five major challenges were identified:

- ▶ **Technical challenge:** to master the "livestock for life" approach in order to maximise benefits;
- ▶ **Economic challenge:** to manage and develop the livestock economy around milk production;
- ▶ **Spatial challenge:** to secure livestock breeders' living and working areas;
- ▶ **Socio-cultural challenge:** to increase the socio-political influence of livestock breeders;
- ▶ **Geo-strategic challenge:** to raise awareness and building competences to deal with globalisation.

Indeed, livestock breeders cannot meet these challenges individually; which is why APESS' mission is so important. The livestock professionals' strength will depend on their capacity to become mobilised within one powerful livestock movement.

The deep-seated changes of traditional pastoral systems require the ability to significantly adapt: demographic growth contributes to intensifying demand and exerts pressure on production capacities; however, unfair competition from imported meat hinders local production's competitiveness (dumping). What is your strategy in order to face this competition? How should livestock sector adapt to this context?

First of all, there cannot be an isolated, individual strategy at the organisational level. Livestock professionals' organisations must unite in order to pull together their efforts around one common strategy. The building of a network is thus essential. We believe that supporting actions led by ROPPA and ACDID is a good strategy that needs to be further explored. Why not join the ROPPA to support its livestock platform? Instead of building just another network, we could add value and strengthen ROPPA's and ACDID's strategy aiming to defend livestock breeders' interests. This strategy needs to be supported and linked to development partners in the North by the Media and food security agencies such as SOS-Faim, one of our partners. Its mission is to raise awareness in European decision-making spheres.

The reaction of livestock breeders is mixed. Everybody acknowledges and faces difficulties related to the selling of their products, but at the same time, they do not develop a clear and concise strategy to address these difficulties. It is the livestock organisations' responsibility to raise awareness and explain the dangers related to this competition as well as to elaborate an appropriate response strategy. One must also acknowledge that regional institutions such as ECOWAS and UEMOA have also raised this issue. In Niger, for instance, the construction of a slaughterhouse is planned in order to add value to the production of goods at the local level.



The livestock sector is at the centre of Sahelian economies; its importance is however not reflected in the budgets dedicated to this sector. According to your sources, in Burkina Faso, barely 1% of the budget is allocated to the livestock sector; Senegal allocates more with 10% of its budget. How do you explain this difference? What are you planning to do in order to advocate promoting livestock within the States?

The 1% figure in Burkina Faso is an average of the past 20 years. Today, the percentage is higher, though it remains relatively weak. The situation is quite paradox: while the livestock sector contributes significantly to the national economy, its GDP, and employs a large number of citizens, public investment in this sector is very weak. From our point of view, the following factors explain this situation:

- ▶ Those who are in charge of livestock issues do not necessarily have the livestock professionals' "conscience"; they wrongly consider that livestock breeders only have to organise themselves in order to tackle their problems on their own.
- ▶ Livestock breeders are indeed not sufficiently organised to express their demands; in countries which have a tradition of labour unions, such as Senegal, livestock concerns are taken into account much better than in those where this organisational culture is quite new (Burkina Faso); moreover, the lack of school enrolment which is particularly strong within the livestock community, does not always allow them to become represented in programming and decision-making institutions.
- ▶ Livestock breeders seldom vote and are mostly absent in local electoral lists. Consequently, they have very few representatives who could help them make their voice heard by decision-makers.

The last APCESS General Assembly in 2008 focused on the role of women. Why did you choose this topic?

Women are responsible for all activities related to the milk production cycle, from milking to selling. More than 50% of the livestock economy is managed by women. Women are also increasingly involved in the rearing of animals for selling purposes. Both activities are becoming popular in families where hay stocking is used to improve performance during the dry season. To simplify: men guard the herds - women maintain and raise them for market.

APCESS focuses its work on women because a trained/educated woman becomes a driving force for the whole family. This is why APCESS designed specific training for women, focusing on the change of mentalities and improved management. APCESS also works in partnership with other programmes and organisations within our Garoua Regional Centre, to initiative women into revenue generating activities.

We have regular contact with state representatives, in particular with the Ministries in charge of animal resources of Burkina Faso and Niger. In the framework of preparatory work for the Regional Livestock Forum, we have been received by the two Ministers. They strongly supported our position and the whole group of organisations which were involved in this process (APCESS, Bilital Maroobé, Association pour la Redynamisation de l'Élevage au Niger (AREN), Pastoral Resolve (PARE Nigeria), National Commission for Nomadic Education (Nigeria - NCNE), Maison des éleveurs, Fédération des éleveurs de l'Adamaoua (Cameroun - FEPELAD), etc.)

Lobbying towards States must focus on raising awareness. Our organisations which are in direct contact with local actors have good knowledge of their problems and can thus become their voice. However, beyond this, governments need to have clear and well-developed proposals which they can give leverage to and defend. These proposals are often missing. To ensure that their concerns, needs and ambitions are taken into account, livestock professionals and their organisations need to build a strong group in order to directly lobby decision-makers.



The topic of our last General Assembly ("Women, Culture and Knowledge") was selected to raise our collective awareness (men and women) on the fundamental role that is played by women in our society, in particular within the traditional livestock culture; it underlines the importance of women and encourages them to play their role entirely, which is beneficial for the family and the whole community. This choice was a success. Many prejudices were addressed and modified.

You have also highlighted the complicity/relationship between livestock breeders and their animals by describing their relationship in terms of a contract: “Livestock breeding is a changing and evolving process by which both the livestock breeder and the animal benefit through their exchanges of courtesies and products. While we raise them in every way, in turn they raise us in every way. Livestock breeding is thus an exchange contract between animal and livestock breeder and each must respect their terms of the contract.” Is this rationale compatible with maximising profits? Does spirituality play an important role in this profession?

Obviously this concept is not compatible with an approach aimed at maximizing profit only. Besides, we should maybe question this capitalist concept since it has repeatedly led to crises such as the mad cow disease, bird flu and the current global economic crisis. One can also observe a trend reversal to “all-bio” in Europe. This means recognizing that the animal is not just a “production machine”. The animal has a life that it shares with the one who keeps and raises it. If both agree, they will raise themselves mutually. This logic does not exclude that the livestock breeder will optimize profit; though the profit is not the main objective but the natural result of his/her efforts. This is very important and here is where spirituality comes in. Spirituality plays an important role as it puts the profit into perspective and transcends it for the benefit of the animal that, in the case of production, needs to give its consent.



Nigeria is by far the largest producer of animals and their by-products. In the Sahel, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal are the main producer countries. Do you regularly have an exchange with and share your experiences with producer associations in neighbouring countries? Is a network of these associations being set up? Is there competition between you?

We need to recognize that the exchange of experiences with neighbouring organisations has up until now not been very present within APESS. Apart of inviting a few external associations to our annual General Assembly, APESS has not done much to reach out to other livestock organisations. However, we plan to improve this as no organisation or association, however powerful it may be, can be self-sufficient or pretend to know all the solutions. Exchanging experiences and pulling together a large diversity of competences will allow us to better address the problems that the livestock sector is facing. The intense preparatory work in which we participated within the framework of the Regional Livestock Forum proves the effectiveness of this approach. These consultations maximised the impact of our participation in this Forum where the concerns of our members, and APESS in general, were taken into consideration. Building an information-sharing network is an idea that is shared by all organisations. We have not yet started discussions but this initiative needs to be taken by one or several institutions. We will soon start working on this. Competition between “serious” organisations cannot reasonably exist as we share the same objective: giving livestock breeders and the livestock sector the leverage, resources and recognition they merit. There is no competition, only complementarity.

In the guidelines from the Regional Livestock Forum, ECOWAS Ministers recommended “building capacities of national and regional professional organisations through the setting up of a network”. What concrete actions could be carried out to facilitate this work? What do you plan to do? What do you expect from national policies and ECOWAS?

First of all, livestock organisations, in particular those which participated in the Niamey Forum, will need to work on a shared proposal on how to put these different recommendations into practice. On this basis, it will be necessary to take stock of existing initiatives: what are the actions already undertaken by States and their sub-regional/intercontinental organisations? We also need to establish a dialogue with public authorities and regional institutions (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS) to explore possibilities for the implementation of these recommendations. In any case, we will remain vigilant. We will make sure that these recommendations will be translated into measures in the framework of the action plan that ECOWAS is in charge to develop.

TASK FORCE MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COCOA INITIATIVE

OECD Headquarters, 9 February 2009

The SWAC Secretariat hosted the first Task Force meeting of the regional initiative on “Combating the worst forms of child labour on West African cocoa farms”. The Task Force members discussed the conclusions of a preparatory desk study (French) taking stock on all existing programmes. On this basis, an outline for a complementary regional initiative was developed involving all stakeholders.

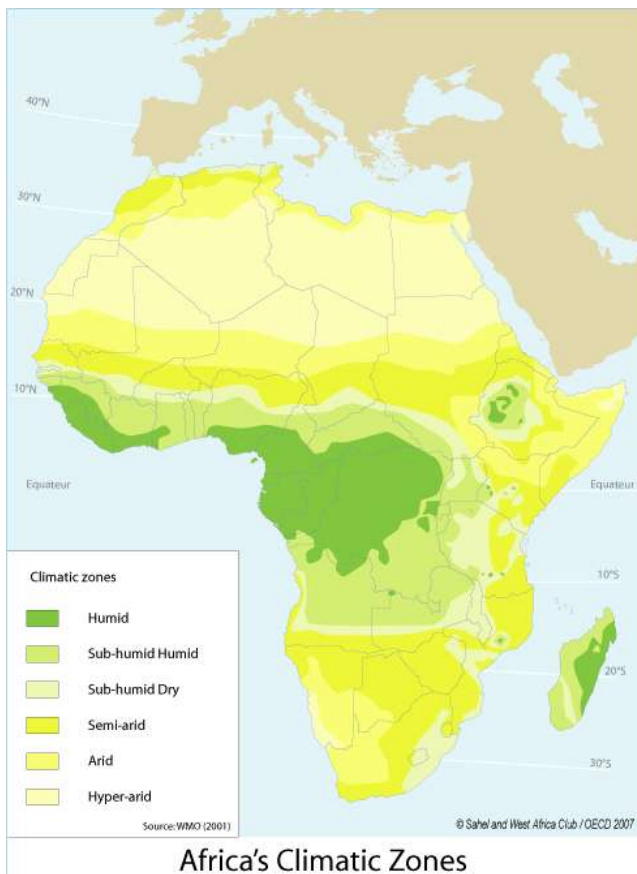
NEXT STEPS

- ▶ Promoting the emergence of a regional leadership in combating the worst forms of child labour, in particular ECOWAS;
- ▶ Promoting a West African Reference Framework;
- ▶ Producing a regional practical guide for combating the worst forms of child labour on cocoa farms;
- ▶ Setting-up a regional information database on child labour in West Africa.



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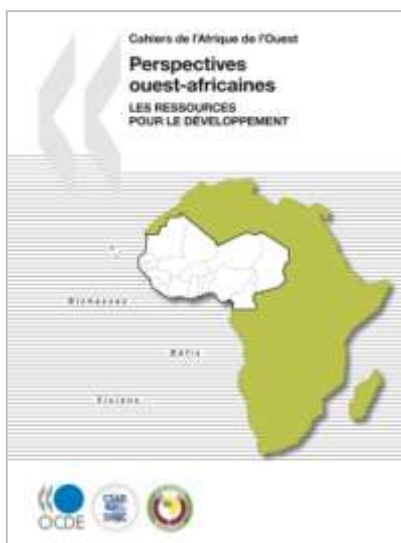
CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE SAHEL REGION



At the initiative of France and the UK, the SWAC Secretariat will be launching a study on the possible security implications of climate change on the Sahel region. This study will be conducted between April and December 2009. It will describe the Sahel region (past climatic evolutions, settlement patterns, natural resources, impact of human actions, etc.) and analyse the linkages between climate evolutions and “tensions, crisis and conflicts” witnessed in this area over the past decades. Findings of this preliminary analysis and policy implications will be discussed at a scientific workshop which will be organised in a Sahelian country with the participation of key stakeholders. The final study will be presented at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

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PUBLICATIONS



West African Studies

West African Perspectives: Resources for Development

This joint SWAC/ECOWAS publication explores West African resources from a regional perspective. It contains a cross-cutting analysis of the main issues and challenges the region faces and provides suggestions on how to meet them. The analysis goes beyond the economic sector to explore other fields, in particular natural resources and social, cultural and human capital. It also gives the floor to six West African personalities who offer their views on the region's future

The full "West Africa Report" (*French version*) is available on the SWAC website at: www.oecd.org/swac/westafricareport



West African Studies

Regional Challenges of West African Migration: African and European Perspectives

Drawing on contributions by international experts on various aspects of West African migration, this SWAC publication provides another perspective to current debates essentially focusing on security issues. The authors encourage "win-win" mobility for all parties involved (Europe, North Africa and West Africa), whether it be a host, transit or departure country.

> www.oecd.org/swac/migration

EVENT

Policy Coherence for Development and Migration High-level Parliamentary Conference

Brussels, 12 February 2009

Organised jointly by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the OECD, this inclusive dialogue aimed to help strengthen the voice of parliamentarians in the topical issue of migration and policy coherence for development (PCD). The SWAC Secretariat used this opportunity to promote its two flagship publications on migration ("*West African Mobility and Migration Policies of OECD Countries*" and "*Regional Challenges of West African Migration*" > see above) and presented its work on migration dynamics in West Africa.

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