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SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB

WEST AFRICAN FUTURES (WAF): SETTLEMENT, MARKET AND FOOD SECURITY

Conclusions

**2nd Working Group Meeting
OECD Conference Centre, Paris 27-28 October 2011**

Léonidas HITIMANA, Programme Officer, SWAC Secretariat / OECD
Tel. +33 1 45 24 17 98; e-mail: leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org

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West African Futures (WAF): Settlement, market and food security

Conclusions

2nd Working Group Meeting Paris, 27-28 October 2011

The second meeting of the Working Group was held on 27-28 October 2011 at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris. The objective was to discuss in more detail the questions raised in the WAF programme notes (www.oecd.org/swac/waf) as well as the perspectives related to the strategies and agendas of regional organisations and their partners, and, in addition, to agree on the implementation of the next steps for the programme. The meeting was attended by the Members of the Sahel and West Africa Club, representatives of international organisations including the IFPRI, FAO, FEWS NET, AFRISTAT, the West Africa Institute, African Development Bank and European Union, and research centres (CIRAD, CNRS, Michigan State University, Center for Research Evaluation Resources and Development (CRERD)/Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, the Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies (CEPS/INSTEAD), and the Trade Hub initiative) (see Appendix 2: Participants).

The aim of this paper is not to summarise all the meeting presentations (which can be downloaded from the website at www.oecd.org/swac/waf) but rather to highlight some of the remarks made during the discussions. These were organised into two sessions (see Appendix 1: Agenda): (i) Settlement and food security: consistency of data and regional indicators, and (ii) Intra-regional market dynamics. Inputs for the sessions included the WAF notes and working papers produced by the SWAC Secretariat, in addition to presentations by the institutions and experts participating in the Working Group.

1. Settlement and food security: consistency of data and regional indicators

The purpose of this session was to share the preliminary results of the analysis of existing settlement data provided by 17 countries (ECOWAS member countries, Mauritania and Chad) and international organisations. This analysis evaluated the robustness and relevance of data on demographic trends, urbanisation, primary and non-primary populations, and the informal economy population. The following points were made during the discussions:

1.1 Demographic trends

- A demographic transition is occurring in all West African countries but to different degrees. The shift can either take place over a long period of time, or occur rapidly, as is the case in several Asian countries. The proposed study could address the following questions: Which factors accelerate the decline in fertility rates? What could ease this demographic shift? What is the outlook on changes in the ratio of economically active to non-active populations? Special attention should be paid to the demographic dividend (decrease in the proportion of economically non-active versus active populations), a fundamental issue for youth employment. These trends impact economic growth, per capita GDP and food security.

- A special discussion was held on Nigeria's total population, which has probably been greatly overestimated for political reasons. A cross-analysis of the results of an Africapolis study with several studies on census results in Nigeria, which have often been disputed or cancelled, produced a lower total population estimate for the country, which allowed for a more harmonised regional analysis.

1.2 *Urbanisation and changes in consumption habits*

- Increased urbanisation rates lead to changes in food consumption patterns, particularly in urban areas. Available consumption statistics generally concern the overall balance sheet of food availability (production, imports, exports and non-food uses such as loss, seed, and livestock feed). These balance sheets do not allow to sort out changes in consumption patterns, nor do they distinguish between rural and urban food consumption. It was also suggested that the dependency rate on food imports be compared to food self-sufficiency and its impact (or lack of impact) on food security.
- Urban growth raises the question of how to supply food to cities. Value chain analyses could be introduced to assess the importance of food processing in supplying urban markets and the ability to mitigate occasional shocks (food crises). The ability of "intermediation activities" (such as food processing and trade) to address these new issues will be crucial in maintaining the linkages between local production and urban markets in order to face the challenge of food insecurity.

1.3 *Urbanisation, agricultural land use and farm worker productivity*

- Several sources attest to the abundance of land in West Africa. However, the fragile nature of tropical land must also be taken into account. This fragility could be exacerbated by the reduction in fallow periods related to population growth and expanded agricultural land use. The issue is now to determine the quantity of agricultural land available in West Africa and the medium- and long-term outlooks. This issue, which has long been raised by farmers' organisations, should be carefully considered in light of changes in agricultural systems linked to the growth of the non-producing population and the diversification of rural activities. Land use around major urban areas also merits a closer analysis. Intensification typically occurs where land is scarce and expensive. Land also provides owners with a way to secure their assets, and they do not always farm the land they acquire.
- The shift in the urban/rural ratio (U/R) towards parity (in 2000 West Africa had two food producers for every non-producer) is causing structural changes in the agricultural system. Changes in farm worker productivity should be better documented, as should changes in farm yields compared to growth in the population, and its division into non-primary and primary populations¹ (NPP/PP).

1.4 *Informal economy*

- The informal economy plays a fundamental role in employment in general but particularly in trade and food processing. What tools should be implemented to make the informal economy more effective in both rural and urban areas? What is the role of the informal economy in youth employment?

¹ Primary, meaning food-producing.

- A spatial representation of cross-border informal networks could be very useful for decision-makers in regional organisations as it could indicate priority areas for investment. Developing infrastructure (roads, banks, etc.) in these areas would improve the income-generating activities of informal networks.
- There are several possible ways to make the informal economy more effective: (i) policymakers should turn to associations of informal actors to define their activities better based on dialogue between government and the informal sector; (ii) informal actors should receive assistance in organising themselves into cooperatives in order to define the best measures needed to increase productivity; (iii) informal trade should be taken into account to help improve food security strategies.

1.5 *Harmonisation of regional data*

- Based on a review of scientific literature and an analysis of available data, the WAF programme questions the robustness of settlement data used in agricultural and food strategies and policies. In terms of urbanisation trends, urban population numbers obtained by national statistics organisations do not follow a standard definition. Currently, only data from the Africapolis study make it possible to make regional aggregations and comparisons. The distinction between primary population (PP or “agricultural” population) and non-primary population (NPP or “non-agricultural”) is also an important indicator of the emergence of food markets and transformations in agricultural structures. The paper shows the difficulty of measuring and monitoring the NPP/PP ratio, given the lack and inconsistency of data. Finally, many households derive their income from what is called the “informal economy”, which is incompletely covered by official statistics.
- Meaningful analysis of regional perspectives is contingent upon the creation and updating of a consistent regional settlement database, which is the starting point for any in-depth analysis and medium- and long-term outlook. Until statistical definitions and concepts are harmonised at the regional level, only short- and medium-term modelling can supply West Africa’s regional decision-makers with useful, consistent data on settlement trends. The proposed model would use urbanisation trends to evaluate changes in non-primary and primary populations (NPP/PP) and calculate the informal non-agricultural population. These indicators are essential for analysing food security and will be taken into account by the study. An analysis of these settlement indicators, cross-referenced with available results of field studies and surveys, also suggests that the realities of regional food security are quite different from the general perceptions of these issues. Only a model-based approach can bring together the indicators needed to build this picture and discuss the resulting analysis. This model-based approach uses a spatial and social settlement matrix whose components are derived from a critical analysis of available indicators.
- The following suggestions were made to improve the data standardisation model: (i) import dependency rates need to be taken into account; and (ii) migration needs to be taken into account when constructing the settlement matrix.

2. Intra-regional market dynamics

The aim of this session was to discuss intra-regional trade and how it could be better assessed in order to understand its role in food security.

2.1 *Significant but poorly understood regional trade flows*

- Regrettably, not enough is known about significant formal and informal cross-border trade flows. Improved knowledge of the mechanisms and constraints involved could allow decision-makers to implement measures aimed at making intra-regional trade flow more smoothly.
- In selected areas, data on official regional trade flows should be compared with estimates from other sources that take into account informal trade not reflected in official statistics. This study would provide a picture of regional trade that would be quite different from most current analyses (based on official data).

2.2 *Problems related to the free circulation of goods and obstacles to trade*

- Regional trade faces a number of obstacles, such as the quality of transport infrastructure, illegal duties, etc. These obstacles also impede the application of regional agreements related to the free circulation of goods and people. Several programmes have developed an information system on barriers to the free circulation of goods and people, but substantive results are few and far between. The immediate issue is to identify measures and actors that would have the potential to influence policy decisions.

2.3 *Analyse the differences in food prices and exchange rates that promote regional trade*

- Take into account various issues concerning the relationship between prices and regional trade. Not only should the main determinants of food prices in the region be better documented, but price differentials (due to subsidies, duties, etc.) between neighbouring countries, and the degree to which they promote regional or cross-border trade, should also be analysed.
- Particular attention should be paid to differences in exchange rates between monetary zones, which also influence regional trade.

3. Conclusion and outlook

The discussions raised the following points which could be studied further by the SWAC Secretariat:

- *The standardisation of settlement data through a model-based approach.* A working session will be organised with the West African regional organisations during the first quarter of 2012 on the topic of statistics and standardisation of regional settlement data. This meeting will provide an opportunity to work with regional officials and technicians to discuss using the programme's findings and recommendations to better inform the policies and strategies of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS. The establishment of a harmonised settlement database will take into account the strategic planning model currently being developed by ECOWAS, as well as other modelling studies that could improve the model-based approach to data standardisation. The aim of the model is to identify variables that the regional organisations could use to strengthen regional integration. The UEMOA Statistical Centre, which is being set up to improve consistency between the regional statistical system and those of Member States, will also be involved.
- *An analysis of primary sector performance using the settlement matrix.* This study would make it possible to examine productivity in the agricultural sector, analyse trade productivity and the primary population's self-produced food, as well as to evaluate production yields by contextualising agricultural transformation and the actual availability of agricultural land. Will the growth in the urban population and consumer demand increase farm worker productivity and change agricultural production methods?
- *Consideration of the work conducted by partners and Working Group members,* particularly the studies on the informal sector in Benin in 2008, the AfDB study on "Agricultural growth in West Africa: Market and Policy Drivers", current studies by MSU, Trade Hub, IFPRI, FAO and CEPS/INSTEAD, the current CIRAD/AFRISTAT/AFD study on urban food markets, etc.
- *An analysis of how well regional trade is accounted for in food balance sheets:* Impact of integrating informal regional trade flows into food balance sheets and, consequently, into food security strategies. This analysis will be conducted in collaboration with the regional institutions and food security monitoring groups. The analysis could use available data and studies conducted in selected pilot areas.

The third meeting of the Working Group is scheduled for late April 2012 and will be combined with the restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN). Contact: philipp.heinrigs@oecd.org.

Annex 1: Agenda of the meeting

**2nd Working Group Meeting
Paris, 27-28 October 2011**OECD Conference Centre (Room D)

The work undertaken in the “West African Futures” (WAF) programme analyses the impact of settlement and market trends on food security. It emphasises the importance of homogeneous information and harmonised statistics for improving regional food strategies.

The Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) Secretariat’s WAF notes, which are regularly shared with members of the Working Group as well as researchers and experts, highlight some of the statistical inconsistencies in settlement data. Through the analysis of key variables, such as urbanisation, settlement, agricultural transformation and regional trade, and their links to food security, the Secretariat proposes a new interpretation of agricultural and food prospects.

The analysis draws on available statistics, existing resources and research and on inputs from the Working Group meetings.

At this second meeting, Working Group members will discuss the questions raised in the notes and debate on perspectives and define next steps in connection with the agendas and strategies of the regional organisations and their partners.

Key results of this process as well as guidelines and tools for regional food security policies will be presented in a forum in 2012.

Thursday, 27 October 2011

08.30 – 9.15 Welcome and coffee

Session 1 Settlement and food security: Data consistency and regional indicators

09.15 – 09.30 Introduction: Work programme and objectives (Laurent Bossard, Director of the SWAC Secretariat)

09.30 – 09.50 WAF: Overall scheme of study and variables considered: Preliminary results (Michel Arnaud)

09.50 – 10.10 West African characteristics and demographic transitions (Dieudonné Ouedraogo)

10.10 – 10.30 Approach and results of the Africapolis project on harmonised urbanisation regional data (François Moriconi-Ebrard, CNRS/Africapolis)

10.30 – 10.45 The evolving relationship between urban/rural (U/R) and economic growth (Thomas Allen, Consultant)

10.45 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 Debate

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch break

14.00 – 14.15 Food security and the evolution of non-agricultural and agricultural population (Léonidas Hitimana, Programme Officer/SWAC Secretariat)

14.15 – 14.30 Indicators of food security (Henri Josserand)

14.30 – 14.45 FAO's experience with the CountrySTAT project in improving the quality of statistical indicators (Paul N'Goma-Kimbatsa, FAO)

14.45 – 15.45 Debate

15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break

16.00 – 16.15 Integration of informal economic cross-border networks (Olivier Walther, CEPS/INSTEAD)

16.15 – 16.30 Informal economy and food security (Léonidas Hitimana, Programme Officer/SWAC Secretariat)

16.30 – 17.30 Debate and conclusion

17.30 Reception

Friday, 28 October 2011

09.30 – 09.50 Creating a harmonised database of settlement in West Africa (Jean-Marie Cour)

09.50 – 10.45 **Debate and tour de table:** How do regional and international organisations deal with regional data consistency and harmonisation?

10.45 – 11.00 *Coffee break*

Session 2 **Dynamics of the intra-regional market**

11.00 – 11.15 Regional trade, food balance sheets and food security (Thomas Allen, Consultant)

11.15 – 11.30 Dynamics of the regional cereal trade (Boubacar Diallo, MSU-Bamako)

11.30 – 12.30 **Debate**

12.30 – 14.00 *Lunch break*

14.00 – 14.15 Formal and informal flows, dynamics of a regional reality (Vanessa Adams, Trade Hub)

14.15 – 14.30 Market integration: Mapping of markets sheds (Philipp Heinrigs, Programme Officer/SWAC Secretariat)

14.30 – 15.30 **Debate**

15.30 – 15.45 *Coffee break*

Session 3 **Prospects and next steps**

15.45 – 16.45 Exchanges on the next steps of the WAF programme

16.45 – 17.00 Summary and roadmap

Annex 2: List of participants

MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS / MEMBRES ET OBSERVATEURS

Austria/Autriche	Mr. Hannes HAUSER Director Country Division Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs Minoritenplatz 8 A-1014 Wien, Austria	Tel: +43 501 150 44 82 Fax: +43 501 159 44 82 Email: hannes.hauser@bmeia.gv.at
Belgium/Belgique	Mme Isabelle WITTOEK Attaché de la Coopération internationale Délégation permanente auprès de l'OCDE 14, rue Octave Feuillet 75016 Paris, France	Tel: +33 1 56 75 34 61 Fax: +33 1 56 75 34 70 Email: isabelle.wittoek@diplobel.fed.be
	M. Johan BRUYLANDT Attaché Coopération au développement Programmes gouvernementaux Direction générale de la coopération au développement Rue des Petits Carmes 15 B – 1000 Bruxelles, Belgique	Tel: +32 2 501 81 11 Fax: + 32 2 501 45 85 Email: johan.bruylandt@diplobel.fed.be
CILSS	Prof. Alhousseini BRETAUDEAU Secrétaire exécutif CILSS 03 BP 7049 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Tel: +226 50 37 41 25 Fax: +226 50 37 41 32 Email: alhousseini.bretaudeau@cilss.bf
ECOWAS/CEDEAO	S.E.M. Yaya SOW Ambassadeur de la CEDEAO auprès de l'UE et du groupe ACP Avenue Louise, 283 boîte 2B 1050 Bruxelles, Belgique	Tel: +32 2 644 2356 Fax: +32 2 646 0289 Email: ayasowe@hotmail.com
	Mr. Lassané KABORÉ Director, Multilateral Surveillance Macroeconomic Policy Department ECOWAS/CEDEAO 101, Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Asokoro District PMB 401 Abuja, Nigeria	Tel: +234 703 413 8346 Fax: +234 9 31 43 005 Email: chlaskab@yahoo.fr
	Dr. Rui SILVA Director, Agriculture Development Department ECOWAS/CEDEAO	Tel: +234 706 418 5010 Fax: +234 9 31 43 005 Email: silva_rui@yahoo.com

France	<p>M. Falilou FALL Responsable du Pôle de l'analyse économique de la mondialisation Sous-direction des Affaires économiques internationales Direction générale de la mondialisation, du développement et des partenariats Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes 27, rue de la Convention 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France</p>	<p>Tel: +33 1 43 17 73 55 Fax: +33 1 43 17 44 14 Email: falilou.fall@diplomatie.gouv.fr</p>
	<p>M. Daniel-Yves TAUPENAS Conseiller diplomatique Représentation permanente de la France auprès de l'OCDE 5, rue Oswaldo Cruz 75016 Paris, France</p>	<p>Tel: +33 1 43 17 58 31 Fax: +33 1 43 17 58 32 Email: daniel-yves.taupenas@diplomatie.gouv.fr</p>
The Netherlands/Pays-Bas	<p>Mr. Job van den BERG Head of West Africa Section Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bezuidenhoutseweg 67 BP 20061 2500 EB The Hague, The Netherlands</p>	<p>Tel: +31 70 34 86 486 Fax: +31 70 34 84 848 Email: job-vanden.berg@minbuza.nl</p>
	<p>Ms. Patricia van BENTUM Agricultural Counsellor The Netherlands Permanent Delegation to the OECD 12-14, rue Octave-Feuillet 75116 Paris, France</p>	<p>Tel: +33 1 45 24 99 71 Fax: +33 1 45 24 99 38 Email: patricia-van.bentum@minbuza.nl</p>
Switzerland/Suisse	<p>M. Karl SCHULER Chargé de programme Développt rural Division Afrique de l'Ouest de la DDC Département fédéral des Affaires étrangères Office A06/1635 Freiburgstrasse 130 3003 Berne, Suisse</p>	<p>Tel: +41 31 325 92 79 Fax: +41 31 325 93 62 Email: karl.schuler@deza.admin.ch</p>
UEMOA	<p>M. Seyni HAMADOU Chargé de l'agriculture Commission de l'UEMOA 01 BP 543 Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso</p>	<p>Tel: +226 50 32 88 14 Fax: +226 50 72 88 66 Email: shamadou@uemoa.int</p>
	<p>M. Aly Diadjiry COULIBALY Chef du Pôle planification stratégique et Programmation budgétaire Commission de l'UEMOA</p>	<p>Tel: +226 50 32 88 70 Fax: +226 50 72 88 66 Email: alyd.coulibaly@uemoa.int</p>

United States/États-Unis
Ms. Susan J. THOMPSON
Senior Policy Advisor
Office of Sustainable Development
Africa Bureau
USAID
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
4.06 – 110 RRB
20523-4600 Washington, D.C., USA

Tel: +1 202 712 1716
Fax: +1 202 216 3010
Email: sthompson@usaid.gov

OTHER PARTNERS/AUTRES PARTENAIRES

European Union/Union européenne
M. Giovanni MASTROGIACOMO
Conseiller
Délégation de l'Union européenne
auprès de l'OCDE et de l'UNESCO
12, avenue d'Eylau
75116 Paris, France

Tel: +33 1 44 05 31 64
Fax: +33 1 44 05 31 79
Email: giovanni.mastrogiacomo@eeas.europa.eu

Mlle Camille BARRE
Stagiaire
Délégation de l'Union européenne auprès
de l'OCDE et de l'UNESCO

Tel: +33 1 44 05 31 69
Fax: +33 1 44 05 31 79
Email: camille.barre@eeas.europa.eu

INSTITUTIONS/EXPERTS

AFD
Mme Marie-Cécile THIRION
Chargée d'étude
Division recherche économique et sociale
département de la recherche
Agence française de développement
5, rue Roland Barthes
75012 Paris Cedex 12, France

Tel: +33 1 53 44 36 05
Fax: +33 1 53 44 36 08
Email: thirionmc@afd.fr

AfDB/BAD
M. Xavier BOULENGER
Ingénieur irrigation en Chef
Département Agriculture et Agro-industrie
Bureau régional de la BAD au
Sénégal
Immeuble Coumba
Route de Ngor, BP 50544
Dakar, Sénégal

Tel: +221 33 869 86 58
Fax: +221 33 820 09 99
Email: x.boulenger@afdb.org

CNRS/AFRICAPOLIS
M. François MORICONI-EBRARD
Directeur de recherches CNRS/UMR
Espace
74, rue Pasteur
84029 Avignon Cedex, France

Tel: +33 4 90 16 26 97
Email: fme@noos.fr

AFRISTAT
M. Claude TCHAMDA
Expert en statistique des prix
AFRISTAT
Rue 499, porte 23, Quartier Niaréla
BP E 1600
Bamako, Mali

Tel: +223 20 21 55 00
+ 223 20 21 60 71
Fax: +223 20 21 11 40
Email: claudet.tchamda@afristat.org

CEPS	Dr. Olivier WALTHER Centre for Population, Poverty and Public Policy Studies (CEPS/INSTEAD) 3, avenue de la Fonte L-4364 Esch/Belval, Luxembourg	Tel: +352 58 58 55 317 Fax: +352 58 58 55 700 Email: olivier.walther@ceps.lu
CIRAD	M. Nicolas BRICAS CIRAD-AMIS Avenue Agropolis, TA40/16 34398 Montpellier Cedex 5, France	Tel: +33 4 67 61 57 12 Fax: +33 4 67 61 44 49 Email: nicolas.bricas@cirad.fr
FAO	Mr. Paul N'GOMA-KIMBATSA Statistician and Lead Technical Officer CountrySTAT Statistics Division Food and Agriculture Organization Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00153 Rome, Italy	Tel: +39 06 570 55845 Fax: +39 06 570 55615 Email: paul.ngomakimbatsa@fao.org
	Ms. Julia STONE Country Project Officer CountrySTAT Statistics Division	Tel: +39 06 570 56053 Fax: +39 06 570 55615 Email: julia.stone@fao.org
	Mr. Jean SENAHOUN Economist Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) Trade and Markets Division (EST)	Tel: +39 06 570 54238 Fax: +39 06 570 54495 Email: jean.senahoun@fao.org
FEWS NET	Mr. John SCICCHITANO FEWS NET USAID 1325 G Street, NW – Suite 427 20005 Washington, D.C., United States	Tel: +1 202 219 0502 Fax: +1 202 219 0508 Email: jscicchitano@usaid.gov
IFPRI DAKAR	Dr. Ismael FOFANA IFPRI Bureau pour l'Afrique occidentale et centrale Lot 2 titre 3396, BP 24063 Dakar Almadies, Sénégal	Phone: +221 33 869 9818 Fax: +221 33 869 9841 Email: i.fofana@cgiar.org
INSTITUT DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST	Prof. John IGUE Institut de l'Afrique de l'Ouest Maison des Nations unies BP 396 – A Achada Santo António Avenue de l'OUA Praia, Cap – Vert	Tel: +238 262 40 58 Fax: +238 262 40 59 Email: john.igue@gmail.com

MSU	Mr. Boubacar DIALLO Food Security Economist Department of Agriculture, Food & Resource Economics Michigan State University PROMISAM, ACI 2000 Bamako, Mali	Tel: +223 20 22 34 19 Fax: +223 20 23 34 82 Email: diallob@msu.edu
OBADEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY	Dr. Olusina BAMIWUYE Department of Demography & Social Statistics Ede Centre for Research, Evaluation Resources and Development (CRERD/Obademi Awolowo University 9 Ayeloja Street, Oke Gada PO Box 510 Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria	Tel: +234 703 598 4242 Email: bamiwuye2001@yahoo.com
OECD/OCDE	Mr. Jonathan BROOKS Senior Agricultural Policy Analyst TAD/DD	Tel: +33 1 45 24 17 02 Email: jonathan.brooks@oecd.org
	Ms. Claire DELPEUCH Agricultural Economist TAD/DD	Tel: +33 1 45 24 19 99 Email: claire.delpauch@oecd.org
TRADE HUB	Ms. Vanessa ADAMS Director West Africa Trade Hub USAID Contractor Jubilee House, 4th Street, Kuku Hill PMB Osu Accra, Ghana	Tel: +223 302 773 393 Fax: +223 302 782 231 Email: vadams@watradehub.com

Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)
Secrétariat du Club du Sahel et de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CSAO/OCDE)
2, rue André-Pascal, 75016 Paris, France
Fax: +33 1 45 24 90 31

Mr. Laurent BOSSARD Director	Tel: +33 1 45 24 78 55 Email: laurent.bossard@oecd.org
Mr. Sibiri Jean ZOUNDI Principal Administrator	Tel: +33 1 45 24 19 82 Email: sibirijeans.zoundi@oecd.org
Mr. Philipp HEINRIGS Programme Officer	Tel: +33 1 45 24 89 85 Email: philipp.heinrigs@oecd.org
Mr. Léonidas HITIMANA Programme Officer	Tel: +33 1 45 24 17 98 Email: leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org
Ms. Marie TREMOLIERES Programme Officer	Tel: +33 1 45 24 89 68 Email: marie.tremolieres@oecd.org

Mr. Thomas ALLEN Consultant	Tel: +331 45 24 90 13 Email: thomas.allen@oecd.org
Mr. Félix BADOLO Consultant	Tel: +331 45 24 90 13 Email: felix.badolo@oecd.org
Ms. Nadia HAMEL Research Assistant	Tel : +331 45 24 95 80 Email : nadia.hamel@oecd.org
Ms. Sylvie LETASSEY Assistant	Tel : +331 45 24 82 81 Email: sylvie.letassey@oecd.org

CONSULTANTS

M. Michel ARNAUD Urbaniste Conseil 5, boulevard Bineau 92300 Levallois Perret, France	Tel: +33 1 47 58 77 62 Email: michel.arnaud6@club-internet.fr
M. Jean-Marie COUR 22, rue de la Côte d'Argent 92410 Ville d'Avray, France	Tel: +33 1 47 50 03 25 Email: jeanmariecour@numericable.fr
M. Henri JOSSERAND Via Ipponio, 8 Rome 00183, Italy	Tel: +39 06 700 24 26 +39 333 778 96 46 Email: hjosserrand@gmail.com
Prof. Dieudonné OUEDRAOGO Université de Ouagadougou Institut supérieur des sciences de la population (ISSP) 03 BP 7118 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Tel: +226 50 30 25 59 Fax: +226 50 36 21 38 Email: dieudonnebf@yahoo.fr