

Strategy and Policy Group meeting (SPG)  
Of the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD)  
25 and 26 January 2007  
GTZ, Berlin



## STATEMENT BY MR. NORMAND LAUZON

SWAC DIRECTOR

### << PRESENTATION OF THE 2006 PROGRESS REPORT AND FUTURE WORK >>

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Mr. Executive Secretary of ECOWAS,  
Representatives of the German Government,  
Mr. President of the Sahel and West Africa Club,  
Dear Colleagues and friends,  
Guten Tag!

Allow me to welcome you and sincerely thank you for accepting our invitation to join us in Berlin, Germany, which, as our President stated, has just taken up the Presidency of the G8 in January. I would like to thank the German Government and the entire GTZ team for hosting our SPG meeting in their offices in Berlin.

I will also take this opportunity to greet our former Deputy Director, Mrs. Sunhilt Schumacher, who recently left the Club to take well-deserved retirement. I would like to thank the President of the Club, Mr. Charles Goerens who, for the last year, consistently provided support notably in his efforts to mobilise resources.

We hope that in 2007 we will harvest all the seeds which were sown last year.

While presenting the broad lines of our 2006 Progress Report, sent to you at the beginning of January, I would like to make a few points so as to launch and deepen the debate on the Club's work that we will pursue today:

#### **1. Presentation of the broad lines of the 2006 Progress Report**

##### The format:

- As you can see, this year's report is quite vast. Considering the amplitude of the initiatives undertaken in 2006, we are presenting those which place particular emphasis on the impacts and perspectives for the years to come.
- Indeed, in 2006, we have attached particular importance to the impact of our work on the region and on development partners as was suggested by SPG members last year. Each Unit has chosen several ways to measure their impact some of which correspond to the way the Unit functions as well as the nature of its activities; while others correspond to the complementarity between the Club's various Units. The goal is for these impacts to be measured consistently.
- We have also examined the two reviews/evaluations carried out by Canada and Germany over the last months. In order to better take into account the remarks and recommendations set out in these two reports, we have decided to present them in two matrix tables which are annexed to this Report as well as the recommendations and remarks from the last SPG meeting in November 2005.

- Indeed, for clarity, this year the document contains a foreword providing a synthesis of the contents and enables those, who may find the document too voluminous, to understand our approach.
- We are open to all comments on how this document can be improved next year.

#### The content:

The Progress Report contains several important parts

1. An introduction which recapitulates the broad lines of the Club's joint action as regards partnership, communication and resource mobilisation;
2. The presentation of the initiatives within the four areas of concentration:
  - Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives;
  - Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development;
  - Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration;
  - Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security.
3. A summary of the financial situation.

My presentation will be organised in four sections:

- The main elements set out in the foreword (a presentation in addition to the text);
- A brief synthesis of the Introduction (a presentation in addition to the text);
- The key initiatives carried out by each of the Units and the main expected and foreseen results, including partnerships and communications (see text below);
- A brief summary of the Club's 2006 and 2007 financial situation, before going into more detail tomorrow morning (a presentation in addition to the text).

### **Medium- and Long-Term Development Perspectives Unit**

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Allow me first to present, for those who have not yet met him, the new head of this Unit, Mr. Raymond Weber, who was until recently the Director General of the Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation. We are pleased to welcome Raymond to the Club. He will strengthen the team's capacities with regard to prospective strategic thinking and more generally, the Club's competencies.

To come back to his Unit, composed of Ms. Sara Minard, who is here today, and Mr. Christophe Perret, two young economists, its aim is to provide elements to respond to the pivotal questions for the region which are: "Where and how will the 430 million West Africans live in 2020?" "What will be the future for the younger generation?" The responses to these key questions are sought in the formulation of horizontal strategic questions for the three other Units.

To cite a few:

*Which West African political and social tools can strengthen the peace and security process in the region? How to better anticipate and address the population dynamics notably urban growth and population mobility? How to break away from recurring circumstantial food crises which the region has faced since the great droughts of the 1970s? How to render the education system more suitable to the actual needs? How to create jobs, improve productivity, reduce poverty? What respective role must be envisaged and reflected in the reality for the public and private sectors?*

This year, the Unit launched initiatives on the prospects of sustainable aquaculture and fisheries policy coherence within the framework of activities with the private sector and South-South cooperation. It has begun working on the draft of a joint SWAC/ECOWAS Annual Report on the medium- and long-term development perspectives of the region.

Within the framework of these various initiatives which will be pursued in 2007, the Unit has strengthened its partnerships with organisations such as FAO, OECD's DCD, and private sector actors of the region and in Asia within the framework of South-South cooperation.

(Other details to be provided, notably on the creation of an internet site with ECOWAS on West Africa, based in Abuja, etc.)

## **Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development Unit**

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The Unit was strengthened in 2006 with the arrival of a new Head of Unit, Mr. Jean Zoundi, who until then was responsible for research at the Environment and Agricultural Research Institute in Burkina Faso and Ms. Khadidja Salah whose post is financed through a specific contribution provided by Switzerland. Furthermore, in order to better reflect the complexity and complementarity of the analyses, the Agricultural Transformation and Sustainable Development Unit was renamed the "Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development Unit."

In 2006, the Unit's initiatives essentially focused on the challenges linked to food security and poverty reduction, rural transformation, agricultural and trade policies in relation to strengthening the regional market.

With regard to food security, the Unit has focused its action around the following strategic question: *How to achieve sustainable food security and break away from recurring circumstantial food crises which the region has been facing since the 1970s?*

Within this framework, the Unit has undertaken three key initiatives:

- Re-launching, with the CILSS, of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN) by establishing a follow-up to the recommendations. This is demonstrated by the Club's increased attention to the food security issue.
- Creating an independent FCPN web-site on food security.
- Producing periodically an Information Note on Food Security in order to facilitate decision-making and action.

Concerning agricultural and trade policies aiming to strengthen the regional market, focuses on the following questions: *Which policies should be implemented in order to attain the first MDG regarding poverty reduction? How to strengthen the regional market through improved coherence of agricultural policies with a view to enabling the region to benefit from the international and regional economic structural transformations?*

With various actors of the region, the Unit has produced a certain number of studies on:

- The future of livestock in the Sahel and West Africa within the framework of the establishment of the ECOWAS agricultural policy, ECOWAP.
- The impact of agricultural, food cooperation and trade policies on food security, with ROPPA in the framework of its Forum on Food Sovereignty.
- Analysis of land policies and reforms.
- Aquaculture and the sustainable management of fishery resources.

As the region is facing challenges of food security, demographic growth and economic development, the Club has undertaken strategic thinking on the transformation of the rural environment by 2025. This strategic thinking covers several themes, placing high priority on the key issue of rural youth and the transformation of rural societies.

## **Local Development and the Process of Regional Integration**

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In 2006, this Unit's two major initiatives were the Atlas on Regional Integration and the cross-border cooperation pilot projects. These activities' achievements confirm the notion that when a new idea is developed in Africa, it is easy to bring in African partners to support its development.

From the WABI network to the CIP adopted by ECOWAS, cross-border cooperation is now an idea which has gone all the way to the office of the President of the Commission of the African Union. These developments have encouraged us to organise in May the first Africa-Europe Conference on Cross-border Cooperation with the support of the European Union.

With regard to the Atlas, with active internal and external support, and the contribution of ECOWAS, the Unit has produced a number of chapters in 2006, notably on migration, cotton, the vulnerable zone of Sahelian countries, Africa and China, petroleum and gas. Other subjects will be undertaken in the months to come such as rice, electricity, towns, tourism, regional organisations and large businesses.

The Atlas chapter on migration highlights the veritable nature of the exercise. It should enable the strengthening of capacities in the development of regional policies. It is within this framework that ECOWAS and the SWAC have decided to set up a group of experts to work on the migration issue aiming to help West African countries adopt a joint approach on this issue.

## **Governance, Conflict Dynamics, Peace and Security**

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In 2006, this Unit's initiatives were marked by a foot-hold on the ground through the organisation of several workshops bringing together various actors from 18 countries of the region; the establishment of a conflict prevention and management network; and the coordination of Women's and Youth Groups.

Three questions, three sectors and three areas of work summarise its involvement.

- *What are the ongoing dynamics of transformation and challenges which face West Africa as regards governance and democracy, conflict prevention and resolution, peace and security?*
- *What actions are to be undertaken in support of the various actors?*
- *What partnerships should be developed within this framework?*

At the request of ECOWAS, civil society and institutional actors, the Unit developed joint actions in the following areas:

- Governance and democracy, by the ratification, the dissemination and implementation of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the establishment of a regional policy dialogue, the valorisation of endogenous governance mechanisms and capacities.
- Conflict prevention and resolution, in collaboration with ECOWAS, the Regional Women's Group and WANSED.
- Reform of the Security Sector, and the promotion of human security, notably in the development of a regional approach with regard to DDR and building sustainable peace.

Concretely, this contributed to:

- Strengthening and valorisation of understanding through the organisation of workshops of various actors from 18 countries of the region and within the framework of networks with which the SWAC is involved. In 2006 there was a substantial contribution with regard to dynamics of exit from crises, DDR situations, human security, the situation of the younger generation and women and their involvement in democracy, conflict prevention and resolution.
- Decentralisation of actors and the development of dialogue at the regional level as well as with development partners.
- Synergy in action and partnership development: within the various initiatives, the SWAC promoted the synergising of action and development of functional partnerships with among others WANSSED, the Women's Group, the Youth Coordination Group, and various international and regional institutions. A strategic partnership with ECOWAS has been developed and consolidated. It will be strengthened in 2007 through the implementation of joint initiatives at ECOWAS' request.

## **2. What will these various activities lead to?**

- The complementarity between the Units' various initiatives and areas of involvement.
- An unquestionable foot-hold in the region which enables us to work in partnership with various regional and international institutions on the ground, and fully play our facilitator role between countries of the region and development partners.
- The importance given to the impact of our initiatives. This is not about patting ourselves on the back but to responding – as much as we can – powerfully, by welcoming and considering ideas, by feeding strategic thinking, by making actors of the region heard, by facilitating exchanges and dialogue at the regional level.

I would like to assure you that the entire SWAC team, at its modest level, works with determination towards building a stable and prosperous region.

I would also like to address today the issue of the Club's future, as it has just celebrated thirty years of existence. Over the course of this year, we will reach the conclusion of our 2005-2007 programme and should begin a new cycle. We would like your thoughts on this next programming period. Some countries have suggested a five-year programme. We think that a five year programme would indeed enable the Club to undertake initiatives over a longer period of time and better understand the impacts on the region.

Danke Sehr.