

Meeting of the Strategy and Policy Group (SPG)  
of the Sahel and West Africa Club

Abidjan, 29 November 2013

**SUMMARY RECORD**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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Members of the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) met at the SWAC Strategy and Policy Group (SPG) in Abidjan on 29 November 2013. The list of participants can be found in Annex.

In the opening remarks, the SWAC President, chairing the meeting, welcomed all participants, and the agenda of the meeting was adopted. The President of the UEMOA Commission sent a message of support and encouragement to the SWAC via Commissioner Diémé.

### Meeting agenda:

1. Opening Remarks
2. Comments and Lessons learned from the Sahel and West Africa Week 2013
3. SWAC Activity and Budget Report (January-October 2013)
4. Other Remarks and Conclusions.

## **I. SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA WEEK 2013**

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Members and observers commended the success of the 2013 Sahel and West Africa Week, in terms of attendance and of the quality of the discussions and debates. The Week was attended by approximately 350 participants, including high level representatives from West African countries covered by the SWAC/OECD, international and regional organisations, partner countries and multi- and bilateral development partners. Prominent speakers included HE Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, HE Mr. Pierre Buyoya, High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel and former President of Burundi, Mr. Michel Reveyrand de Menthon, EU Special Representative for the Sahel, as well as nine Ministers representing the region's countries.

The Week is becoming a reference in the West African development calendar for an increasing number of actors, as proven by the growing number of participants and the multiplication of side-events throughout the Week. Members asked the Secretariat to propose ways to manage side-events in the calendar of events for the next edition of the Week.

### Specific comments on the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA):

i) Countries of the region were represented at high level (including Ministerial) attesting to the relevance of the Network. It will be essential to also assure the presence of relevant technical level national staff for efficient in-country transfer of the results of the Network.

ii) Regarding the meeting of the Senior Experts Group (SEG) of AGIR, the inclusive dialogue process leading to the NRP-AGIR should be a light exercise. It should also be seen as an opportunity to define resilience priorities, deepen and improve co-operation among the various actors.

iv) The RPCA runs the risk of becoming a victim of its own success. An inclusive reflection process on its governance, calendar of events, and meeting organisation should be organised in order to continue to guarantee effectiveness. The Secretariat and CILSS – that jointly co-ordinate the Network – will lead consultations with main stakeholders and any necessary adjustments will be presented for approval at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Network in December 2014.

Specific comments on the SWAC Forum:

i) Members and observers highlighted that the content and level of discussions at the Forum were of great quality and high level. This attests to the capacity of the Secretariat to lead work that both delivers knowledge and analysis and contributes to policy dialogue, on a highly sensitive topic. The contact with the research community, allowing for a contextualisation of the discussion, was in general very well received.

ii) The capacity to mobilise a variety of actors was recognised by participants: the event succeeded in gathering and fostering dialogue between representatives of West Africa and North Africa, as well as their international partners.

iii) Both the African Union and the European Union expressed their wish to pursue joint work with the OECD/SWAC in this area as follow-up to the Forum. Several members are interested in holding internal seminars on the Saharo-Sahelian areas with the support of the Secretariat. The Secretariat confirmed its availability to respond to these requests.

iv) Members asked the Secretariat to continue its efforts to include more African researchers (in particular the young) in the debate. The renewed interest in the Sahel region also needs to motivate the appropriation of the reflection and dialogue by regional organisations, in order to create a stable agenda around the topic.

## **II. SWAC ACTIVITY AND BUDGET REPORT**

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### **2.1. Presentation of the 2013 Interim Activity and Budget Report**

The OECD/SWAC Secretariat Director Laurent Bossard presented the report. The complete 2013 Annual Activity and Budget Report will be sent to Members and Observers in the first quarter of 2014. The Secretariat will be in touch with Members and Observers during the second quarter of 2014 to discuss the Programme of Work 2015-2016, in preparation of the June 2014 SPG meeting.

### **2.2. Debate and approval of the Interim Activity Report**

Members and Observers commended the Secretariat on the implementation of the ambitious Work Programme. They deemed that the report follows the guidance of the work programme defined by the Members.

The following specific comments were made:

i) In 2014, the Secretariat will need to stay active and close to regional organisations to support the implementation of the AGIR roadmap in participating countries.

ii) The Secretariat should strengthen and better communicate on its collaboration with other OECD Directorates. Members asked the Secretariat to in particular examine how to best contribute to the work of the G20 within and via the OECD. The Secretariat was also asked to consider how to contribute to international discussions on investment in agriculture. The Secretariat will present further information and proposals in response to these requests at the June 2014 SPG meeting. It was already underlined that the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises constitute an important international reference, but do not include responsible investment in land or agriculture. The Secretariat offered to accompany Members in a dialogue with the appropriate OECD Directorate and Committee to introduce this perspective.

iii) Faced with the multiplication of Sahel initiatives (irrigation, pastoralism, etc.), Members expressed their wish that the OECD/SWAC contribute to their alignment with regional strategies and the coherence of these various elements.

iv) The OECD/SWAC Secretariat should be more explicit in reporting its “behind the scenes” work of lobbying and providing networking and other support to its Members.

### **III. OTHER REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS**

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#### **3.1. Sahel and West Africa Week 2014**

The SPG decided that the 2014 edition of the Sahel and West Africa Week take place in an Anglophone country in the region. A tentative date for the Week was set for 8-12 December 2014. The Secretariat will initiate dialogue to define the location of the Week early 2014 and keep Members and Observers informed of the process.

#### **3.2. Other appointments in 2014**

- The Restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network 2014 is scheduled for April at the OECD Headquarters, most likely from 16-17 April.
- The next meeting of the Strategy and Policy Group is scheduled to take place in Paris on 17 June.
- ECOWAS and CILSS presented a proposal to jointly organise a Forum on Climate Smart Agriculture in Bamako, Mali on 26-30 May 2014. The conclusions of the Bamako Forum could be presented at the June SPG.

The Secretariat will keep Members and Observers informed of the definition of the exact dates of the meetings early 2014.

Mr. De Donnea closed the meeting.