

Productive strategies developed by the poor households to take part more effectively to the global economic processes

A review of the West African context

Section 1: Brief overview of socio-economic development issues;

The West Africa Sahel covers 9 countries. But the current review focuses on 5 of them (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal). The population of the 5 countries account for about 20% of West Africa total population. Population growth is very high compared to the rest of SSA. Niger has both the highest rate of population growth (est. 3%) and the world highest women fecundity rate (7, 2 children/woman). The countries know differential situations resulting from different natural environments and different economic policies. Two countries (Senegal and Mauritania) have direct access to the sea while the 3 others are landlocked. The Sahel region which is characterised by low and instable rainfall has been most affected by the changes in rainfall patterns, owing to a fall of 20 to 30% in expected rainfall between 1931-60 and 1961-90 (Hulme, in Toulmin and Gueye, 2003)¹ and more unpredictable seasonal distribution. The droughts of the 1970s and 1980s led to large-scale migration of crop and livestock farmers towards the south in a search for areas with more ample water. In western Burkina Faso more than 80% of the land is farmed by people who have come from elsewhere (Toulmin and Gueye, 2003). This “adverse” geography is more acute in certain countries like Niger where only 12% of the territory is favourable to agriculture over an area of more than 1,200,000 km².

Agriculture still remains a strategic sector most of these countries. Its contribution to the GDP varies between 30 and 60% according to countries'; it contributes for up to 60 to 80% export earnings and provides employment to nearly 80% of the population. Moreover, Burkina Faso and Mali are the two largest cotton producing countries in SSA. Cotton export earnings represent around 69% of total agricultural export earnings and 24% of all exports in Burkina and 59% and 28% for Mali². One can understand therefore the vulnerability of these economies given, the volatility of cotton world price.

The performance of the agricultural sector varies considerably according to agricultural products and countries'. For example even if during the last 40 years, a significant fall was noted in the production per capita of certain traditional local cereals like the millet and the sorghum especially in the sahelian countries important increases have been observed for tubers or cowpeas. The livestock also registered a growth more or less equal to that of the population i.e. between 2,5 and 3%.

¹Toulmin, C and Gueye, B(2003).Les transformations de l’agriculture Ouest africaine et le rôle de l’agriculture familiale. IIED

² DUPAIGRE, B.F et al.(2004) Etude sur la compétitivité des filières agricoles dans l’espace UEMOA. Elaboration d’un argumentaire de choix de filières. UEMOA

Table 1: Change in per capita production of major food crops, 1961-63 to 1997-99 (percent

Country	Cereal crops	Root and forest crops	Change
Mali	Rice, maize, millet, sorghum		- 2.6
Niger	Rice, millet		- 24.2
	Cowpeas		+131.2
Senegal	Rice, maize, millet, sorghum		- 41.2
		Cowpeas	+ 33.3

source: Mortimore in Toulmin and Gueye (2003)

Section 2: Regional Perspective:

2.1. Research Question 1: How can poor rural households adapt their livelihood strategies to benefit from participation with global economic processes?

2.1.1. Understanding the context

The Sahel faces severe poverty level. In the 2005 human development report, 3 sahelian countries (Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso) ranked amongst the 5 with the lowest HDI, with Niger ranking last. The average income *per capita* is according to statistics; between 305 and 340 US\$. Approximately 40 to 45% of the population live in extreme poverty (REPA, 2005) with rather important variations according to countries' because the proportion of people living with less than one dollar per day vary from 15% in Senegal to more than 60% in Burkina Faso, Niger, (Oduro, in Guèye and Al 2005)². All the 5 countries are eligible to the HIPC initiative. It should also be noted that poverty strikes harder the rural areas where 70% of the poor of the population live in extreme poverty (Guèye 2006).

The consequences of the weight of the debt were also a factor having maintained the households rural in poverty, in spite of the recent adoption of the HIPC initiative. The resources allocated to the payment of the debt constitute a loss of earnings, which is important for the social sectors and especially for the investment in favour of agriculture. As illustrate it, Niger, has an external debt service before rescheduling, which amounted to 60,1 billion F CFA and accounted for 4,3% of the GDP; 31,7% of the budget revenue and 25,9% of exports (Republic of Niger, 2005). The service debt service would represent the equivalent of 4 years and 7 months of exports. A study of UNICEF and UNDP showed that in 1995, only about 20% of the public resources went to basic services against approximately 30% for the debt service.

Poverty remains a multidimensional phenomenon, which results from the combination of sociocultural, economic and political factors. The typology of the poor and vulnerable groups depends on the degree of interaction of these various factors. For the countries of the Sahel, the CILSS has identified 7 groups (see box 1)

² Guèye, Bara et al (2005). Aperçu sur la pauvreté chronique au Niger : Perceptions, stratégies et questions émergentes. CPRC

Box 1

Classification of the CILSS of the poor risks' groups

The 7 poor groups in rural environment have been determined from the principal causes of insecurity which are: the weak caloric cover rate; weak physical access to food; weakness of incomes; food and nutritional insufficiency; weak access to the agricultural, educational, medical services.

1. Small farmers living in subsistence farming and having only a few hectares (less than 5 ha) of bad lands (less 400kg/ha) not allowing to produce and store quantities of cereals necessary to earn a decent living for their families (needs estimated at 250 kg of cereals per person and per annum, that is 2.000 kg of cereals for a family of 08 people).
2. Pastoralists practicing only transhumant pastoralism and whose animals, small ruminants especially, do not add up to 3 units of tropical cattle (Unité Bétail Tropical) per person; they cannot thus sell enough cattle to buy cereals without drawing on the reproductive stock that is necessary for them to maintain (30 sheep to buy cereals for a family of 10 people;
3. Pastoralists who, having lost their herds (following the drought or diseases) found themselves as guards of small herds (small ruminants). The wages being only "seasonal", it cannot cater for a household.
4. The agro-pastoralists, the pastoralists in the process of being sedentarized and not having either sufficient products of cattle to sell, or sufficient not yet productive lands or marginal grounds to be self-sufficient in cereals - one finds them in particular among the Foulbé, Toubou and Touareg groups.
5. Women-head of households whose many tasks do not allow them to devote sufficient time for land preparation during the rainy season.
6. The large families (10 people and more) having too many infants in low age who will suffer from the lack of care and food, as well as the poor families which generally have too weak and random incomes;
7. Individuals - generally pregnant and nursing women and children of less than 5 years, physiologically fragile, often affected by proteic malnutrition or deficiencies in micro nutrients (anemias, vitamin deficiencies) detected or not by medical trackings.

Source: CILSS (2002).

Social exclusion and marginalisation, the weak access to the key resources, such as land and credit, the difficult access to the markets, the ill adaptation of national policies as well as inequitable international trade rules, interact to slow down the development of family farms and to maintain the majority of the rural households in an extreme situation of poverty and limit their successful participation in the world economy. On the level of policies, the programs of structural adjustment initiated in the years 1980 have imposed the liberalization and the disengagement of the State.

Beyond their impacts on the incomes drawn from the agricultural products, trade rules also touch fields which before seemed so far distant from trade: gender, the environmental protection, the rights and working conditions (Kathleen Bohene, 2005). In the same vein, IFAD (2005) mentions clearly that more and more, the issue of markets and their impact on the poor must be considered under the

point of view of the consequences of the globalisation rather than only that transformation of the trade system. Indeed, the poor populations are adversely integrated into the global markets. First, through the trade of their agricultural products which face unfair competition resulting in most cases in low prices. Second by the imposition of consumption models, which are more and more based on values and habits alien to local culture. Thus the traditional products of everyday use designed from local products are more and more replaced by imported products, which vary from domestic tools to house equipment and food practices to which new products were added, such as the cellular telephone and, which reinforce the insertion in the world economy. The systems of agricultural production are thus basically modified and are forced to open towards the market, given the importance of cash in the various social and economic transactions. It is likely that other trends will significantly affect the participation of poor households. First in many areas in the Sahel region, agriculture is ceasing to be the principal monetary source of income because of the development of non farm revenues, mainly from migration. Indeed, the flows of resources coming from the emigrants are the essential sources of financing of the family farms. Therefore in these areas the links with the global markets will mainly be developed through consumption, because migration is also a source of creation of a new demand (food, craft industry, trade, services as well as cultural life). This new trend is very noticeable in the Senegal River Valley (Mauritania, Mali and Senegal), the old groundnut basin in Senegal. Second, in other areas where agriculture is still important, cereals tend to become more and more a cash crops because of the difficulties faced by the traditional cash crop such as cotton and groundnut in the global market. However, it is not clear yet, what will the potential for these crops to enter the global market in the future. In the meantime, this situation will certainly accentuate the weak insertion of sahelian producers in the export market of these products. Therefore, if trade between West African countries and between Africans in general does not improve very strongly, the marginalization of West Africa in the world will take the forms of a relegation and the consumption will undergo for a very long time a permeability as to the Asian manufactured products and other good markets. Finally, this dependence and the economic extraversion should push the States to support the initiatives of rural entrepreneurship aiming at creating added value to the local products in order to increase their competitiveness, but that will depend mainly on the possibilities of realization of economies of scale.

Moreover, the potential for the development of peri urban agriculture could enhance and increase rural production. There are chances that the model of the space economy developed by the now traditional theory of Von Thünen will apply. It shows that farmers make rational choices of cultures in terms of profitability and the location of the cultures depends on transport and storage and conservation costs. Urban agriculture is not drastically rampant or on the contrary is not irremediably condemned to decline. The modes of urban development will have still more tendency to containment of urban agriculture in the town interstices while peri urban agriculture would be a kind of laboratory for the experimentation of the individual entrepreneurship with local capital funds. It is thus necessary to promote the study of the conditions of a possible polarization of rural areas for the needs of a growing urban consumption.

2.1.2. Distributional issues

At the micro level, strategies to cope with risk and vulnerability rely heavily on solidarity both at the extended family and the community levels. However factors such as power relation, access to education, the quality of infrastructures, are very critical in influencing the distribution of costs and benefits from different livelihoods.

The work carried out in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger to study the transformation of west African agriculture (Reij, et al (pers. Com), Toulmin and Gueye, 2003, Touré, 2005 and Ouedraogo, 2004) challenges the idea that livelihoods strategies developed by the rural poor are environmentally

unsustainable. Family farms are multifunctional systems which combines social, cultural, economic and technical objectives; the latter dealing mainly with the sustainable use of natural resources. Indigenous soil and water conservations, local conventions for the good governance of natural resources, pastoral mobility, rainwater harvesting, are examples of sustainable use of natural resources developed by the poor households throughout the Sahel region, to sustain their livelihoods.

However, these good practices are in some case challenged by existing tenure regimes. Women are still facing difficulties in accessing productive land, mainly because of existing social structures and norms, despite the fact that in some legislations (Senegal for example) access to land for women is a constitutional right. Also, until recently the land legislation has been very biased against pastoralists. The concept of “*mise en valeur*”³ which has been the main principle which governs the access to land did not consider pastoral mobility as a productive use of natural resource, therefore preventing herders from having a secure access to land. Fortunately the new generation of agro-pastoral land reforms under preparation in Mali and Senegal have introduced a new perspective more in line with the impact of the pastoral system both in the regional economy and in natural resources. Also, the land legislation currently under application in Mauritania strongly advocates and acknowledge the importance of mobility in drylands regions.

2.1.3. Constraints to participation

Weak access to information is critical for poor farmers to take part effectively in globalisation. The rural Sahel is characterised by poor telecommunication and transport infrastructures which make it difficult for poor farmers to get relevant and timely information on domestic and international markets. This situation is made more difficult because of the low level of literacy which does not allow most rural farmers to make an effective use of existing new information technologies. Moreover, market concentration, which means that there are fewer global actors which engage directly in market transactions, which translate into power concentration and control over inputs and outputs markets exclude Sahelian farmers from the market decision process. The participation of small farmers in global transactions is therefore indirect and is made through intermediaries, public or private companies which buy directly their products and sell them in the world market.

Weak negotiation power and linkages with export markets. Coton farmers are today amongst the most exposed to world unfair trade relations. Unfortunately, they have no control over the price of the world market, despite recent initiatives aiming at strengthening their negotiation power through the setting up of West African cotton producers group bringing together Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin and Tchad. It is unlikely that this process will be reversed in the near future. That is the reason why the farmers organisations in the region pledge for new agricultural policies that put the emphasis in developing the domestic and regional markets instead of targeting the international market where Sahelian farmers have no comparative advantage. Debate on the value-chain has crystallised attention particularly with regard to cotton which is mainly exported as a raw product (less than 10% processed in domestic markets). The recent phasing out of the Multi-fiber Agreement is seen by the Sahelian cotton farmers as a new constraint to strengthen the value-chain with respect to this particular product. On the other hand, it has been noticed that value addition has been higher in some products targeting the domestic and regional markets. That is the case for traditional cereals (sorghum, millet, fruit and vegetables and meat in some cases). Simple technological innovations focusing on processing and conservation have been introduced in the region. The access to international markets for these processed products are still constrained by scale of production, lack of strong export-oriented organisations bringing together all the small production units and more importantly by non tariffs barriers (health and sanitary regulation) imposed by the European

³ Meaning « *putting under productive use* »

markets and the United States. It is because of these tough regulations that countries like Senegal, have not so far taken full advantage of their eligibility to the US-supported Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA)

2.1.4. Household livelihood strategy options

In spite of the complexity of the problems, the poor rural households demonstrate solid capacities of resilience and innovation which have allowed, in several places, to develop successful responses to poverty. These strategies are centred around the diversification of the activities with an increasingly large importance accorded to non-agricultural activities

Sustainable and productive agricultural practices. In response to the combined effects of the reduction of the rainfall, of the difficult access to the inputs following the disengagement of the state, and the land pressure, the Sahelian populations have developed sustainable and productive technologies of water and soil conservation. Reij (personal communication) shows that in the Bam district (Burkina Faso), the adoption of these technologies allowed an increase in the outputs of about 50% resulting in the limitation of the migration, a reduction of poverty of about 50% between 1980 and 2002, an investment increment in the purchase of animals by men as well as women and an improvement in the agriculture and breeding integration with use of the organic manure for the fertilization of fields. In the department of Maradi, in Niger, which has one of the highest populations densities in the country, the investment in similar practices of sustainable agriculture allowed to maintain the agricultural production per capita to approximately 260 kg, which is higher to the minimum requested (200kg), whereas in the majority of the other departments which have the same ecological conditions the agricultural performances are much weaker. This performance results from the fact that the growth of the density of the population and the increase in demand have stimulated the agricultural intensification and the incitation to invest in the improvement of productivity resulting from a diversification of the technical options(the protection of natural resources, association between agriculture and livestock, adoption of new improved crop varieties, etc)

Box 2

Strategies of diversification in Fandou Bari

Fandou Bari is a small zarma village located at 55 km to the East of Niamey. The millet dominates the pluvial agriculture practiced in the village. The possession of cattle is a current practice with the Zarma who cohabit with some Fulani households . As in the majority of the arid regions in West Africa, the chronic context of vulnerability has always forced the populations to be inventive and to be equipped with good capacities of adaptation. In Fandou Béri, these aptitudes are declined in more mobility, and in a continuous change in the mode of allowance and use of the resources of the households. In the years 1950 for example, migration was a rare phenomenon and the populations could live correctly of their production. But since the droughts of the years 1960s and 1970s, the adoption of the strategy of diversification got developed, facilitated in so doing by a greater connectivity thanks to the improvement of the systems of transport and the construction of the roads. In this zone, diversification lies on five great activities. That is, agriculture, investment in animal breeding, seasonal agricultural employment, incomes generating activities like the petty trade and finally migration. Approximately 25% of the men are engaged in a form of small trade and the incomes coming from the migration can sometimes be rather important and can vary between 50.000 and 250.000 FCFA per annum. Moreover, in 1997, up to 25% of the adult men have worked as farm laborers in the fields of others for daily wages going from 750 to 1000 FCFA. Anyhow, it appears that the size of the exploitation is a an essential determinant of the capacity of diversification

Migration, a structural response to poverty? During the last 30 years, migration was certainly the most used strategy. At the beginning, conceived like a response to the drought, it has become today the principal structural recourse vis-a-vis deterioration of the living conditions of populations. The seasonal migrations or of short duration are practiced almost in the majority of the sahelian rural zones in particular. On the other hand, international migration, which becomes more and important, calls, for its candidates for a strategy of abandonment of the agricultural sector. Today, the perception on migration has much evolved, because contrary to the conceptions which perceived the phenomenon like an obstacle to agricultural development, the emphasis is now laid on the potential that the substantial resources drawn from the migration offer in order to stimulate local development. In Senegal, according to Tall, M (2005) the transfers of funds by the migrant workers were estimated at 252 billion F CFA of 2003 according to statistics' of the West Africa Central Bank. They account for 7% of the GDP and 82% of the APD of Senegal, against 6% and 72% respectively in 2001 and the 1/4 of the budget of the State of Senegal. Within the framework of the fight against poverty, it was matter of knowing how to channel the important transfers towards the financing of local development.

Development of micro-finance institutions. One also observes the increasingly important recourse to the institutions of micro finance by the poor rural households in order to finance the investment and the consumption needs. The ill-adaptation of the system of conventional credit just as well as the drastic reduction of volumes of credit consecutive to the disengagement of the States, made it possible for these systems to develop. In West Africa, in the eight countries of the WAEMU (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal are all members of WAEMU), one counted at the end of 2000, 303 institutions, offering 2.778 access points, and beneficiating to 4,3 million people. These institutions have collected 116, 8 billion FCFA in saving and had incurred of 103, 4 billion FCFA credit. This array of institutions is diversified: even if the “mutualist institutions” are largely dominant, the effort of innovation made it possible to work out various “models” of financial services adapted to a large variety of contexts, needs and populations (CIRAD et al., 2002)⁵. These systems offer many advantages to women and in many cases were inter-connected with the traditional systems of saving as the “*tontines*”⁴, which made it possible to mobilize resources to be used as warrant funds for the requested loans. New activities thus developed like the installation of small processing units. These give an added value to the gross agricultural product and thus contribute to a better remuneration of farm labour. Among those one can quote the rather widespread units of processing of fruit and vegetables in the region and which enable to face the fall of prices in period of overproduction by creating the conditions of a storage of longer duration, the installation of milk processing units the pastoral zones like the Ferlo of Senegal, the widespread propagation of the threshing-machines and millets or rice mills which especially allow for considerable time savings for the women for whom these tasks are generally reserved to, etc.

Strengthening the organisational capacities of poor farmers to make their voice heard. The Sahel region have witnessed the development of strong farmers organisations over the last 30 years. The ROPPA which bring together national farmers organisations in francophone West Africa has seen its negotiation and influence power considerably increased over the years. The organisation does not only engage in dialogue with government, but it has also been very active in international negotiation with

⁵ CIRAD et al (2002). La microfinance au service de l'agriculture familiale. Le financement de l'agriculture familiale dans le contexte de libéralisation : quelle contribution de la microfinance ? Séminaire international, 21-24 janvier 2002, Dakar, Sénégal

⁴ Traditional credit and saving systems

the EU and the United States regarding the need to lift the many barriers to trade to prevent west African agriculture compete in international markets.

Taking advantage of the information and communication technologies. Getting access to market information can allow the poor farmers to make more profitable marketing decisions. Recently, a very innovative experience using ICT to allow farmers to get timely information on market price has taken place in Senegal. The so-called Manobi consists of providing poor farmers producing high value and perishable agriculture products as well as fishermen, with cells phones which link them to market prices information collectors, who send them every morning, via text and voice mails messages the prices of major vegetables in key markets in Senegal. This system has proved to be very effective in helping regulate prices by allowing small farmers to avoid price fall due to over supply. It has helped the vegetable producers and fishermen to have more stable revenues and overall better remuneration of their products.

2.2. Research Question 2: How can the enabling environment be enhanced to support the successful participation of the rural poor?

2.2.1. Overarching issues

The Sahel region like the other countries of the West Africa region has undergone many policy changes that shape the current state of the economy. During the sixties and seventies, the development process was characterised by heavy State intervention and the implementation of large rural development programmes under the called Integrated Rural Development approach. The adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme in the mid eighties followed the failure of the IRD because of heavy bureaucratic interventionism, corruption, inefficient resource allocation, market distortion, political clientelism and pledged for liberalisation and state disengagement. This new policy had major negative impacts of the livelihoods of poor farmers, particularly those in subsistence agriculture who lost state support for input subsidies and guaranteed producers prices mainly for food crops. In the case of the Sahelian countries, the negative impact of these policies had been combined with recurrent drought and rainfall fluctuation. One of the consequences of this situation has been a sharp decrease in agricultural productivity resulting from low investment in technology. For example, average fertiliser consumption was 16 kg/ha in sub-Saharan Africa, with the lowest levels found in Central Africa (around 3 kg/ha) and the Sahel (around 4 kg/ha) (Kelly, 2005). Only commercial agriculture has been able to derive some advantage, as the pull-out by the State has only partially affected the main cash crops

The new post-reform era (MDGs and PRSPs) initiated in the early 2000 does not seem to have overcome rural poverty. A recent study carried out in West Africa and including Senegal, Burkina Faso and Niger (Fall, 2005)⁶ to analyse the articulation between agricultural policies and PRSPs shows that the agricultural sector programs (Programs of rural infrastructures, Programmes of support to the agricultural services, etc), which have preceded the Strategies of Reduction of Poverty are not bound to the latter but are rather implemented in parallel. In addition, the targeting of the poor and vulnerable rural groups is paradoxically not adequately designed in the DSRP and within the agricultural policies. But the reduction of poverty is also a matter of distributing of the fruits of the growth, and at this level great efforts will have to be made. Indeed, one notes a rather yelling inequality in the distribution of wealth because for example whereas in Senegal the 20% of the richest population control 55% of the incomes, the poorest

⁶ Fall, Abdou Salam (2005) *Articulations entre DSRP et Politiques agricoles en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Synthèse des Principaux résultats.* REPA

20% share only 6% of the incomes (Mellali and Gregoire, 2003)⁷. To make it possible for the poor to benefit in an equitable way to the growth and to participate effectively to the global processes, the policies must focus on a certain number

Over the last few years there seems to be a higher level of awareness regarding the need to develop a new policy environment responsive to the need for the poor to better participate in the decision making process. This will require transparent and accountable institutions at all levels, a good legal framework that encourages the participation of local communities, the existing of viable rural markets and the strengthening the capacities of the poor to better participate. It is certainly in the field of participatory natural resource management that the Sahelian region has experienced the more significant progress in this field. Participatory Community Forestry, Rural fuel-wood markets (Mali and Niger), the institutionalization of local conventions throughout the region, are examples where through the participatory and sustainable use of of NRM, rural households have been able to improve their livelihoods.

Box 3.

Local conventions

Local conventions refer to arrangements formulated by communities to ensure better management of their natural resources. They often arise as an expression of the need to preserve local natural resources. They raise the issue of global, holistic management of natural resources, authority for which must be transferred to the local level as part of decentralisation processes. A local convention involves the interaction between resources, institutions and policies.

- **Natural resources:** on these depend the survival of the communities concerned; the quantity and quality of the resources available are key determinants of their capacity to meet community needs in the long term. They also influence the modes of access and management likely to be adopted. experience shows that the scarcer a resource, the stronger the reflex to codify and regulate its exploitation.

- **Local institutions:** these comprise all the rules and mechanisms introduced at local level to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources. The ways in which resources are accessed and managed will in turn influence the quantity and quality of the resources available.

- **Policies:** sustainable good practices of NRM depends largely on its internalisation by the the formal formulation process. Even though many local agreements are set up apart from any formal framework involving the state, the provisions and rules they enshrine must necessarily be in accordance with the national legislation and regulations governing NRM.

However in the field of agriculture, structural market distortions prevent rural poor households to take full advantage of the existing opportunities. The degradation of the prices on the international markets for the non processed or little-processed products has obliged the West African countries to appreciably increase the surfaces devoted to the cultures of revenue and the volume of exports to maintain the level of revenues, which are essential to assume the debt service (ECOWAS 2003)³. Indeed, trade practices of the European Union and the United States have contributed to the deterioration of the living conditions of the rural populations. The case of the cotton can illustrate this situation. Some 1-2 million families in West Africa (the Sahel region producing the largest share) produce cotton and 16 million people approximately

⁷ Mellali Soraya et Luc. J. Grégoire (2003). Communication au forum sur les objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement en Afrique de l'Ouest. Dakar, Sénégal du 28 au 26 Février 2003. PNUD

³ CEDEAO (2005) Forum régional ouest-africain sur l'élaboration du cadre de politique agricole commune et le volet agricole du NEPAD CEDEAO

depend directly or indirectly on the impact of the production of cotton. The total output went from 200.000 tons in the years 1970 to approximately 1,037,000 tons in 2003. Unfortunately, the world prices have fallen by half since the middle of the years 1990. This had a dramatic consequence in the west African economies and it is estimated that this price fall has caused a loss in the export earnings of the order of 12%, 8% and 9% respectively for Burkina Faso, Mali and Benin, corresponding to 1%, 1,7% and 1, 4% of their GDP (OXFAM, 2002)⁴. Of course, the solution of this critical problem is beyond the capacity of the Sahelian countries alone and requires an international joint effort backed by a genuine willingness of the UE countries and the USA to resolve this problem. In the meantime sahelian countries should explore the possibilities of providing better protection to their own farmers by not allowing into their markets products that do meet the international trade regulations.

Other domestic constraints relating to poor infrastructures (road, storage facilities, processing facilities), lack of economies of scale, remoteness of markets and sharp fluctuations in supply add to marketing costs and reduce product competitiveness. For example, it has been noted that in Niger, the fluctuation in cereals supply between January and July 2005 resulted in severe deterioration of terms of trade between cereals and livestock, because while 1 goat was necessary in January to buy 100 kg of millet, in July, herders had to sell 3 to 4 goats to buy the same quantity of cereals. Though the year 2005 witnessed a severe food crisis during the rainy season, prices of cereals are often twice higher during the rainy season.

2.2. Access to factor markets

The structural adjustment policies have completely dismantled the formal state-supported credit systems. To fill the gap new credit systems are taking place through micro-finance. NGOs and bilateral or multilateral institutions are providing support to fill the vacuum. In Senegal the USAID Programme on “**strengthening the microfinance sector**” helped increase MFI savings from 2 billion CFA to about 43 billion CFA and the number of loans made by MFIs each year, from 11,580 to 76,342 between 2001 and 2004 enables MFIs to offer credit and savings products to thousands more rural and urban entrepreneurs, particularly women. However, most of these credits are short term and mainly and are seen to be relatively expensive.

Access to land also constitutes one of the principal conditions to allow the poor rural households to improve the performance of their exploitation. Land indeed constitutes the principal resource of the poor rural households. Experience has demonstrated that obtaining a title (indenture) is not a sufficient condition to guarantee investment. Actually the best systems of land security are those, which are based on simple rules and institutions, which are endogenous and flexible and known by the communities concerned (Quan, J and Al 2005)⁸. It appears thus that the land policies must take into account the diversity of situations and keep a certain flexibility in their application, so that they can adapt to situations in perpetual change. There are several problems that need to be tackled by good land policies in order to secure the livelihoods of the poor households. Firstly, the rapid growth of African towns and the demand for agricultural products have contributed to the development of highly dynamic peri-urban agriculture which is, however, accompanied by heavy pressure on tenure due to multiple uses and users. In many cases small and poor households have been pushed away under pressure from political or financial lobbies. Secondly, areas of high agricultural potential increasingly attract new agricultural entrepreneurs, known as “new actors”. The latter occupy large areas of land which have often been acquired with the complicity of the traditional powers to the detriment of small producers. Studies conducted recently in

⁴ OXFAM (2002). *Cultivating Poverty The Impact of US Cotton Subsidies on Africa*. OXFAM

⁸ Julian Quan, Su Fei Tan and Camilla Toulmin, eds (2005) Proceedings and summary of conclusions from the Land in Africa Conference held in London, November 8-9, 2004. IIED/NRI/RAS

Burkina Faso, Senegal and Niger (Ouedraogo M, 2001; Touré O, 2004 and Démocratie 2000, 2004) have shown a low level of utilisation of this land of around 30% , low economic performance of the newly set enterprises and adverse impact of cropping practices on the environment. Thirdly, in areas used for herding, the moving of the boundaries of agricultural areas is leading to a steady reduction in areas used for herding livestock. This situation is leading to an increase in conflicts between farmers and herders, some of which end in a bloodbath (as was recently the case in Niger) (Gueye, 2006)⁵

Access to the markets for the poor must also be a priority for any policy, which aims at reducing poverty and the vulnerability of the rural households. Because of increasingly difficult access to the international markets, the stress must be laid on the development of the national, sub regional and regional markets with a particular focus on policies of promotion of the cereal field in order to reduce the food dependence of the sub-region, which imports between 20 and 30% of these needs. However the absence of good infrastructures (roads, infrastructures of telecommunications, storage and processing) constitutes one of the biggest obstacles to the development of the national and regional markets. That results in distortions on the prices and the costs, which tend to be abnormally high and to make the agricultural products less competitive. For example, in Niger a recent study undertaken by Seydou (2003) has showed that an increase of 10% in the road density would provoke an increase of approximately 8% in the agricultural production thanks to the creation of new market opportunities. But in addition to the infrastructures, some measures to guarantee the producer prices are necessary. Without these protection measures, it will be difficult for the poor households of the region to face the competition of the imported products.

2.2.3. Process

Most of these countries are rather characterized by a high level of out-migration. For example Cote d'Ivoire accounts about 1/3 of its populations as migrants, the majority of them coming from Burkina Faso and Mali and to a lesser extent from Senegal and Niger. The recent political crisis which partly takes its origins from land disputes has taken back to their home countries hundreds of thousands of migrants. Senegal has also in its border with Mauritania thousands of refugees. Resettlement programmes have been taking place to secure access to productive resources such as land to these persons but it appears in all these cases that short term solutions do not work. Instead, long term perspective taking into account providing technical capacity through training, facilitating access to credit to allow for long term productive investment in agricultural and non-farm activities, are necessary.

Like other countries in Africa , the Sahelian region faces a unfavourable business environment because of very small domestic markets, long administrative procedures, high cost of production factors like electricity and telecommunications, poor transportation system including air freight, corruption. All these problems, whose level of severity varies from one country to another, result in high production cost, hence lack of competitiveness. The situation is particularly critical in landlocked countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger who depend on the neighbouring coastal states both to export and import goods. Therefore the flow of foreign direct investment in the region has been low compared to other developing countries. However the stable political environment which characterizes all the 5 countries (despite a recent military coup in Mauritania) should be stressed as being a key factor in contributing in developing private business in these countries.

However, Sahelian populations remain particularly vulnerable because the region is structurally exposed to natural shocks. It has been noticed that since the years 1930s, a country like Niger face a severe food

⁵ Gueye, Bara (2006). Policy, poverty and agricultural development to support small scale farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Reflections from West Africa (pers.com)

crisis every 10 to 15 years. This situation has major impact on rural households' productive strategies. Households living in shock-prone areas tend to adopt diversification strategy with a particular emphasis in investing in small animals particularly goats that are more resistant to drought. Seasonal migration is also a common strategy adopted in such areas. In the pastoral areas, the composition of the livestock and the ratio small animals/cattle is also greatly influenced by the level of vulnerability. For example, some herders tend to keep more in small animals (mainly goats) given their highest reproductive capacity and their lowest feed requirement to address pasture depletion or to reconstitute a herd severely hit by a drought or any other natural disaster.

2.2.4. Government support

The role of government in promoting sustainable development and in promoting successful participation of the poor is to set up an enabling environment including pro-poor legislations, accountable and responsive administrative system, economic institutions including markets, credit systems and infrastructures and a decentralised decision making process to give more power to local institutions and governments. This can be undertaken through different mechanisms:

Promoting decentralisation and local governance. Decentralization offers to the rural populations a space of expression and participation in the definition of the priorities of local development. The factors of success in the area of local development are universal: they are the governance of proximity, social cohesion and the mobilization of the social capital. Besides, experience reveals the opening to the world through the Diasporas, the systematic recourse to the fruits of modernity among which are the new communication and information technologies (NTIC), the adoption of a deliberative approach founded on a process of continuous training and learning. However, for this potential to be valued up, it is important that the local governments install more inclusive mechanisms and procedures. Several experiments are taking place to help the local governments in better taking into account the need for transparency and a better targeting of the needs for the poor in the allocations of the resources. Among these initiatives one can mention the institutionalization of the participative budget in certain rural communities of Senegal in order to associate the poor rural citizens in the choice of priorities as regards investment.

Providing extension and advisory services. It is worth mentioning that like the marketing boards, the extension services in all Sahelian countries had also been dismantled with the adoption of the structural adjustment programmes. But over the last 5-7 years, a new approach to extension promoting demand-led advice instead of the classical transfer of technology has been put in place in the region. The household is seen as a system whose needs go beyond agriculture-specific activities and takes into account other needs such as marketing and processing. A key component of this new approach is the empowerment of local producer organisations. However more impact could be reached if a state supported strong credit system was available to allow the local organisations to fund the activities identified through local consultative planning processes.

Facilitating access to education and health services. The impact of education and health on the productive capacities of the poor is very high. Therefore efforts towards sustaining the livelihoods of the poor should put a particular emphasis in developing the education and health sectors. Access to health services is still very critical particularly in rural areas. In the field of education important efforts have been made to improve school enrolment. However, to meet the health and education MDGs by 2015, investment should be substantially raised. Some countries like Senegal have decided to allocate 40% of their budget to education and 10% to health since 2004. To fill the gaps in social service providing rural communities are developing alternative mechanisms of health care like the one developed in Fandene a small rural community located around 90km East of Dakar in Senegal. The system has been set up in 1989 by the Fandene population, Each household pays a monthly fee of around 0,5 US\$ and the policy covers all members of the family. The policy covers up to 10 days of in-hospital care and 50% of surgical

interventions costs. Additional resources are provided through financial contributions by people originating from the village and living in other cities or abroad. Similar systems are now being developed in the country and in the region.

Table 2: primary school enrolment

Countries	Primary school enrolment in 1988-89	Primary school enrolment in 2002-03	Life expectancy (2003)	% of national budget to health (2003)
Burkina faso	69	80	44	4%
Mali	49	58	44	4,%
Mauritania	87	88	48	3,9%
Niger	31	44	41	4%
Senegal	69	88	57	5,1%
Africa	82	92		

Source:UNESCO (education) and WHO (health)

Section 3: Overview of research activities (including 'gaps' in the research agenda & potential future research 6. Some institutions engaged in research on the domestic economies

Institutions	Current Research in West Africa	Potential Funders and programmes under which links can be established
BAD/WARF	Economic governance and corruption	
CORAF	Strategies of production, transformation and marketing in the Sahel Initiative on the policy of the genetic resources in Central and West Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ World Bank: Agricultural Markets and Agribusiness Development Project (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali) ▪ CIDA: Land Use and Economic Development of the Niayes region ▪ USAID (Senegal). Economic well-being and income generation - Fifteen new cashew processing units using locally manufactured material were established and poultry, pig raising and vegetable gardening activities made profitable links with local hotels.
Sahel club	Local development prospects local in West Africa by the transformation of agriculture and the trans-border co-operation	
ENDA/Diapol	Design of public participatory policies in integration, development and borders	

FAO	Development and improvement of agricultural policies by the creation of national strategies aiming at rural development and the reduction of hunger.	
IFAD	To reduce rural poverty by the increase in the agricultural productivity and the improvement of the living conditions of the populations in rural medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IFAD. Agricultural Development Project in Matam - Phase II (Senegal) ▪ IFAD. <u>Project for the Promotion of Local Initiative for Development in Aguié</u> (Niger) ▪ Oasis Sustainable Development Programme (Mauritania)
Civil forum	Governance and natural resources management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTZ (Burkina Faso, Senegal) ▪ World Bank (Niger). Community-based Integrated Ecosystem Management 2003-2007
IIED and IED Afrique	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study on chronic poverty in West Africa (CPRC) 2. Study on the transformations of West African agriculture and the role of "family agriculture" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTZ (Niger). Reducing poverty in Tillabéri and North Tahoua ▪ Mata Masu Dubara (MMD) in Zinder and Diffa. CARE is aiming to improve the living conditions and economic opportunities of 50,000 poor rural women by giving them access to a permanent system of savings and credit. The project offers training for groups of women interested in starting savings and credit associations, rather than providing financial support.
IFAN/University Sheik Anta Diop of Dakar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical analysis of economic policies in particular participative processes in international agreements 2. Creation of wealth in the context of poverty: comparisons West Africa/Latin America/North America/Europe. 	World Food Programme (Niger) Creation of Productive assets and prevention and mitigation of food crisis.
Platform of rural development Central and West Africa	Consistency of the sub-regional programs of rural development and partnership	
REPA	Strategies of reduction of poverty and agricultural policies in central and West Africa	

Third World Network Africa, Ghana	Transformation of the policies on Gender and development of the effective strategies favorable to economic justice and the political emancipation of the African women	
	Analysis of the impact of policies on chronic poverty in West Africa	
IFPRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Rights and Resource Management in the Low-Rainfall Areas of North Africa and West Asia, a component of the Mashreq and Mahgreb (M&M) project (jointly with the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas, ICARDA) • Property Rights, Risk, and Livestock Development (jointly with the International Livestock Research Institute, ILRI) • <u><i>Pathways from Poverty (Mali)</i></u> - This research program seeks to understand how policies, program interventions, and other factors can reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition--and use this knowledge to inform the development of more effective policy. 	IFPRI: Niger and Burkina Faso
IDRC	Appropriation des résultats des recherches sur la restauration des sols salés par les différents acteurs	
Association of African Women for Research and Development	Tie-off general support for research, advocacy and technical assistance to enhance women's influence on development thinking and policies across Africa and to develop a fundraising plan	CIDA (Niger). Support for Women Entrepreneurs 1998-2006
CIRAD	Improved cropping and animal production systems	

Section 4: Long-list of possible theme for a regional research agenda

1. How to support poor farmers in remote areas to take advantage of the Information and communication Technologies (ICT) to access critical market information?
2. Governance of the global economy and participation of the poor: how rural institutions can link with global actors to participate more successfully in economic processes?
3. Biotechnology, and rural livelihoods in the Sahel: opportunities and threats for poor rural households
4. The impact of the liberalisation of environmental goods and the lifting of trade barriers (including Economic Partnership Agreements) on the livelihoods of poor households in the Sahel region.

5. The impact of globalization on natural resources
6. Globalisation, decentralization and participation of the rural civil society in economic processes. Globalization, migrations and rural livelihoods in the Sahel: how to impulse the rationalization of fund sending?
7. Liberalization, agricultural modernization and access to land by poor rural households in high potential areas.
8. Economic and social policies: for more equity
9. globalization, food sovereignty and pro-poor agricultural policies in the Sahel