



Club du Sahel
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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CLUB DU SAHEL

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Ministerial Lobby Group

**MINUTES OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL LOBBY GROUP
(GMAP)**

Paris, 2-3 October 2000

These minutes are provided by ~~Dr. François~~ Coulibaly of the CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)

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I. INTRODUCTION

At the invitation of His Excellency Hassan Sallah, Co-ordinating Minister of CILSS, the 6th GMAP meeting took place in Paris on 2 and 3 October, 2000.

Taking part in the discussions were their Excellencies

- Hassan Sallah, Ministre de l'Agriculture, The Gambia, and Co-ordinating Minister of CILSS
- El Madani Diallo, Ministre du Développement Rural, Mali
- John Igué, Ministre de l'Industrie et des PME, Benin
- Ousmane Batoko, Ministre de la Fonction Publique, Benin
- Boukary Wassalke, Ministre du Développement Rural, Niger
- Amadou Sar, Ministre de l'Intégration Africaine, Sénégal
- Kwamena Ahwoi, Ministry of Planning, Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration, Ghana
- Anne Konate, Ministre Déléguée chargée du Développement Economique, Burkina Faso
- Olawale Edun, Commissioner, Minister of Finance, Nigeria

Also present were Mariam K. Sidibe Cisse, Executive Secretary of CILSS and Jacqueline Damon, Director of the Club du Sahel Secretariat.

As in Washington, the meeting was also attended by representatives of multinational development partners (World Bank, European Commission and International Monetary Fund) and bilateral partners (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States). Also represented were the African regional and sub-regional organisations WAEMU, ACBF, MDP, CNCR, WAEN and REFEF¹.

The discussions were chaired by His Excellency Hassan Sallah, Minister for Agriculture and CILSS Co-ordinating Minister. Joint chairman was Arjan Hamburger of the Netherlands. The full list of participants is annexed.

In their opening speeches, the two session chairmen reminded those present that this meeting's discussions should continue on from those in Washington, as part of the preparation for Bamako 2000 and more particularly the special CILSS-Club meeting in Bamako on the three key issues of Sahel 21, aid reform, and regional integration. They also stressed that high hopes were placed on Bamako to produce major results, but that to achieve these there would have to be thorough, well-focused preparation so that (a) there can be real discussion between GMAP and the aid agencies on progress on the three topics, and (b) both Heads of State and Ministers would discuss the directions to be taken.

They particularly stressed that this was an informal meeting to allow frank and open debate, and reminded those present of the importance of the partnership concept that should govern discussions in the GMAP-development partners duo. This partnership is based on willingness and reciprocity, working in the common interest to contribute, among other things, to the democratisation process now under way in West Africa and to improving quality of life.

1. WAEMU (West African Economic and Monetary Union); MDP (Municipal Development Programme); ACBF (African Capacity Building Foundation); WAEN (West African Enterprise Network); CNCR (Conseil de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux); REFEF (Réseau des Femmes Entrepreneurs de la Francophonie).

II. THE DISCUSSIONS

There were three items on the agenda:

- Exchange of view on the events of Bamako 2000: state of preparation in Mali and at the CILSS;
- Sahel 21: examination of the draft framework for a sustainable food strategy with a view to poverty reduction;
- Regional integration: proposals to be submitted to the summit of CILSS Heads of State and of Government;
- Aid reform: examination of the summary statement of achievements and products of the aid reform programme;
- The next steps before Bamako 2000.

Discussions took place in four stages:

- A closed-door session of the GMAP member Ministers to prepare for the wider discussion with the partners;
- The first plenary session with all of the participants: GMAP, development partners and other guests. At this session participants reviewed the items on the agenda together and clarified problems to be examined in the group discussions;
- Group discussions on the three issues selected for the CILSS/Club meeting at Bamako;
- Second plenary session, reporting back on the results of the groups' discussions.

III. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Bamako 2000

"Bamako 2000" refers to the 13th Summit of Heads of State and of Government of the CILSS countries, at which the results achieved since the Banjul summit in September 1997 will be assessed and new perspectives identified with a view to transforming the Sahelian countries into emerging countries between now and 2025. There will be three main events at Bamako:

- The 2nd forum of Sahelian societies: **13-15 November 2000**;
- CILSS/Club meeting: **23-24 November 2000**;
- CILSS statutory meetings:
 - Regional Programming and Monitoring Committee (RPMC): **16-18 November 2000**;
 - Council of Ministers: **21-22 November 2000**;
 - Summit of Heads of State and of Government: **25-26 November 2000**

3.1.1. *The Forum of Sahelian Societies.* The sole purpose of this meeting is to adopt a consensus document on priority tasks to be undertaken at the regional level, to achieve the vision and ambitions of Sahel 21. A strategy will be agreed upon for implementing the various programmes. A "food security" component within a strategic framework for regional poverty reduction will be formulated.

3.1.2. CILSS/Club Meeting. This meeting will openly and frankly discuss the conditions for a practical reform of development co-operation in the Sahel and neighbouring countries. Discussion will be based on proposals for developing sustainable food security in the Sahel, significantly improving the aid system and improving regional co-operation and integration.

3.1.3. CILSS Statutory Meetings

→ **RPMC.** This meeting will consist of (1) presentation and discussion of the CILSS Executive Secretary's report; (2) presentation and examination of the CILSS general report of activities; (3) presentation and examination of the Statutory Auditor's report; (4) presentation and examination of the CILSS 2001 budget; (5) discussion of specific issues.

→ **Council of Ministers.** In accordance with the general policy defined by the Heads of State Conference, this meeting's agenda consists of (1) presentation and examination of the CILSS Executive Secretary's report; (2) presentation and examination of the RPMC's report; (3) presentation and examination of the report of the Declaration issued by the forum of Sahelian societies; (4) presentation and examination of the Internal Auditor's report; (5) examination of specific issues; (6) appointment of the new Executive Secretary and Internal Auditor.

→ **Conference of Heads of State and of Government.** This conference has to examine and adopt the conclusions of the forum of Sahelian societies, the conclusions of the CILSS/Club du Sahel meeting, and the report of the Ministerial meeting. It will then appoint the new acting Chairman and award prizes.

The meeting noted that so far all invitations have been sent out except those for Benin and Ghana, for reasons of protocol. Arrangements are being made with the Malian government to find a rapid solution to this problem. It has also been indicated that the CILSS/Club du Sahel meetings alongside the CILSS Summits are usual practice. What is new this year is that a wider circle of non-member countries has been invited; the reason for this is to achieve a wider consensus on common problems, given that some CILSS programmes already involve a larger area than the Sahel.

3.2. Aid Reform

The aid debate is not new. In all examinations of the question, North or South, it has been acknowledged that the existing aid system works poorly. Broadly speaking, partners have so many, and such widely differing methods and procedures that the institutions of the South do not have the capacity to absorb all the aid made available to them and manage it adequately. The meeting's specific observations on this issue can be summed up as follows:

- ***The co-operation system is becoming increasingly complicated.*** As well as the complexity of the various donors' methods and procedures, the co-operation agencies are constantly adding new political conditions. This cumulative process has reached a worrying peak of complexity, especially in co-financing agreements, and this directly affects the level of aid disbursement.
- ***At the present time, most examination of the issue is taking place in the North.*** Although this imbalance is regrettable, it does at least reflect the fact that the donors want to find solutions to the problems of aid. However, the low level of African participation in the debate is a major problem.
- ***The only African attempts to discuss the issue are taking place in strictly national contexts.*** This does not help to develop collective ownership by aid recipients. It must be said that collective ownership also encounters many obstacles on the donors' side.

What is new in the current debate is that it addresses the following concerns, which Southern aid players are expressing with increasing frequency:

- ***The need to restore confidence in partnership.*** The Yverdon meeting was clear about this need, which raises the problem of the South taking charge of the debate. This requires a strong undertaking and political will both North and South in the matter of strict application of international principles for transparent management of public funds. The future of aid depends on improving *African ownership* of the aid system. How can the region be encouraged to involve itself more closely in the aid debate? Can the aid agencies start talking to the sub-region? Is the sub-region united on this issue?
- ***Management of aid by beneficiaries.*** This is the problem of how Africans can become responsible for the orientation of aid, its management and how it is used. How, in practical terms, can the use of local expertise and skills in project execution be encouraged? Can proposals be made and implemented to increase the proportion of local enterprises and experts in implementing or managing projects? How can procedures for mobilising and managing aid be simplified, reduced and standardised? Can procurement procedures for goods and services be harmonised? Would national procedures, certified by the development partners, be an acceptable starting point to management of aid by the South? These are some of the questions raised at the meeting.
- ***The need to start examining the question of conditionality.*** The issue of conditionalities can be compared to that of subsidies: none is ever abolished until a new one has been added, so that an incoherent, inefficient system gradually builds up. It is now a matter of urgency to consider what level of conditionality is compatible with developing ownership and greater responsibility of the African side.
- ***Establishing an African forum for debating and making proposals.*** The products developed as part of the aid reform exercise are so varied and their development phases so disparate that there is all the more reason to structure the intra-African dialogue on this issue and make it more coherent. One way to do this would be to create an African forum in which all the African partners could take part. This forum could develop a fruitful dialogue with fora in the North. It will also have to demand responsibility for managing international cooperation; this in turn will require the support of the North in building up local capacities, which have been weakened by structural adjustment programmes. Similarly, people in the South need to become more aware of the importance of control systems, transparency and answerability to beneficiaries.

Based on the results of the discussions motivated by the observations and concerns expressed above, the meeting examined and adopted, both in the smaller group and in the plenary session, two draft documents: (1) the draft Declaration of Heads of State which is to be presented at Bamako in November and (2) the draft framework document for co-operation between North and South.

→ **The Heads of States' Declaration.** This confirms the need to integrate the Sahel into the West African economy with a view to its integration into the world economy, and reasserts the concern of the Heads of State and government for co-operation and solidarity among peoples and nations. It asserts their support for the work of the GMAP and encourages the latter to continue this work of examining issues, advising, proposing and lobbying in West Africa on matters essential for modernising and developing national economies. It exhorts GMAP to open up the development debate to all players in the sub-region and asks it to (a) launch an regional development initiative and (b) work to establish a West African forum where players can debate and make proposals.

→ **Framework for North-South co-operation.** This sets out a certain number of specific principles to be respected by North and South in order to improve the aid system:

- **For the North**, (1) accept the principle of taking national procedures as a benchmark; (2) transfer the management of aid to the South; (3) assess the risks; (4) invest in local capacity building; (5) take part in programmes providing African aid managers with management training; (6) recognise the right to information on all types of aid; (7) minimise intermediation costs and structures.
- **For the South**, (1) accept a code of transparency in aid management; (2) identify a lead ministry for capacity building; (3) accept an evaluation of local capacities; (4) take part in training sessions; (5) take on all responsibilities for aid management; (6) provide all necessary information on all aid to all sectors and all components of society.

This framework should be sustainable and professional. To become operational, it will have to have operational tools and mechanisms to accelerate the transfer of aid management and ownership to the beneficiaries. These tools and mechanisms will be worked out jointly by a group of experts from North and South.

The meeting had previously recommended that, before any proposal to States and development partners, tests should be run on new aid management mechanisms and methods, as follows:

- Run a test programme in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Senegal where arrangements are already being made to form networks of African partners;
- Choose one sector per country to run the test;
- In each country, carry out a plan for capacity assessment and building, organising joint training sessions, risk assessment, and joint monitoring and evaluation of the test.

Their Excellencies Ahmed El Madani Diallo, Kwamena Ahwoi and Anne Konate are in charge of this work. They will receive technical assistance from El Hadj Ibrahim Sall (Senegal), Idrissa Dante (Mali), Ousmane Sane (Senegal), Daniel Thieba (Burkina Faso) and a Ghanaian expert. It is expected to take three to five years to define standard mechanisms for the North.

3.3. Regional Integration

In their closed-door sessions the GMAP Ministers clarified the issues involved in regional integration and pinpointed the basic principles for the discussions. For example, Ministers pointed out that ever since independence, Sahelian governments have consistently asserted that without regional integration there can be no solutions to their countries' crucial development problems. During that time many issues have been examined and properly dealt with. So this is not the time for theoretical debates; a multitude of facts and figures demonstrate the need for integration among West African countries.

This evident truth is taken into account in the CILSS programmes, especially with regard to food security, which can only be addressed on a regional scale. For food security within countries depends on three essential factors: sustainable farming, development and fluidity of markets, and improved access to food and basic social services. Other aspects deserving special attention in the drive for greater food security are food crisis prevention and management, and better security.

- **Sustainable agriculture.** This must take account of flows of factors of production or, to be more precise, migration from Sahelian to forest zones, transhumance, and water resources. To fully master sustainable production, the regional production system must be considered as a whole. The problem of regional public assets such as education and energy, and shared investment for physical planning and development also need to be taken into account.

- **Development and fluidity of the market.** This aspect can only be examined in relation to trade in a market sufficiently large to provide a critical mass of solvent demand. From this standpoint, it is the ECOWAS area that has to be the reference zone, not the Sahel. This confirms the relevance of extending the GMAP to the Sahel's neighbours, Benin, Ghana and Nigeria in particular.
- **Improving access to food and basic social services.** This means ensuring that all Sahelians have access to resources enabling them to meet their food needs, and ensuring that they have access to public services in respect of clean water, health and education—aspects of welfare indissociable from food security. To solve the problems involved in meeting these needs, national initiatives must be made consistent with each other.
- **Preventing and managing food crises.** There are two objectives: anticipating food crises so as to limit their extent and optimise their management, and making sure that incidental crises do not suddenly undermine efforts to build up long-term food security, or cost too much in human and financial terms. To attain both these objectives, the countries of the sub-region must necessarily pool their efforts.
- **Strengthening security.** This crucial precondition for successful economic and social development can only be achieved in a more general regional framework, to deal with domestic and border conflicts and their consequences (refugees and/or disrupted circulation of goods).

In institutional terms, rationalising the existing intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) is now a recognised necessity for achieving regional integration in West Africa. Steps must be taken to reduce the number of IGOs and eliminate duplication of effort while properly covering needs. Civil society must also have a place in this process.

The main conclusions from the discussions can be summed up as follows:

→ **Points of view expressed by the GMAP.** The GMAP strongly emphasises the need for regional integration. This issue no longer needs to be debated in principle. GMAP members agree that "integration is no longer one option among others: it is an obvious necessity".

The ECOWAS zone is regarded as the appropriate zone for West African integration. It offers a market with a critical mass that WAEMU does not have. It is also an area where factors of production circulate sufficiently, and it has full political recognition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Antagonism or competition between ECOWAS and WAEMU are not on the agenda; on the contrary, synergy must be sought. For example, ECOWAS should make use of WAEMU's institutional achievements.

The meeting confirmed the validity of the CILSS' role as a regional co-operation organisation for food security and natural resource management, and hoped that its programmes would be opened up to West Africa's non-Sahelian countries.

The GMAP also expressed serious concern about development partners' instruments and programmes that do not sufficiently take account of the regional dimension or the priorities expressed by regional organisations.

→ The development partners' viewpoints. The development partners expressed a widely shared consensus on the value of regional integration. The relevance of ECOWAS as the reference zone was not called into question. However, the partners raised some questions as to the rationality and financing of the institutions, and whether the processes and calendars announced for major regional reforms were realistic. The matter of how regional and national programmes fit together was also raised, given that overall

resources available from the donors cannot be increased. Allocating more of the aid agencies' resources to regional projects therefore partly depends on choices to be made by and between the countries in the region.

→ ***Points of view of representatives of civil society and local government.*** These participants also stressed the importance of regional integration and wanted to be regarded as fully fledged partners. The region-wide groups they have formed (the Farmers' Platform, WAEN, the MDP) must work closely with the IGOs. They emphasised the possible role in the integration process of consultation and co-operation among local authorities in border regions. The practical value of initiatives like the Monitoring Unit set up by the WAEN to monitor abnormal border practices was also emphasised. Generally speaking, the private sector and civil society are keenly aware of the frequent mismatch between political pronouncements about steps towards integration and what happens on the ground. Effective integration can hardly make progress on a sound foundation until the rule of law is strengthened.

→ ***Prospects for Bamako 2000.*** The CILSS/Club du Sahel meeting should be an opportunity for the GMAP to give a strong impulse towards practical application of the following principles:

- Starting to rationalise the institutions responsible for managing integration, and in particular doing away with duplication of effort;
- Promoting the involvement of civil society;
- Mobilising the development partners to back programmes that foster regional integration;
- Strengthening conflict prevention and management bodies;
- Promoting implementation of a coherent regional policy for infrastructure and productive investment.

Their Excellencies John Igué and Amadou Sar were chosen to finalise the regional integration document for Bamako 2000. The Club Du Sahel Secretariat will assist them. An executive summary setting out the main questions will be produced.

3.4. Sahel 21

The meeting examined the draft document put forward by CILSS, on the regional strategic framework for sustainable food security with a view to reducing poverty. The paper identifies priority tasks requiring political decisions and technical guidelines for sustainable food security in the Sahel and in West Africa as a whole.

There was a lively and informative discussion, especially about developments in the food situation and the issues and conditions for structural food security. The meeting stressed the importance of identifying common principles for action, and of treating sustainable food security as an opportunity for regional economic development and a central aspect of any poverty reduction strategy.

Participants also stressed the importance of consultation and co-ordination mechanisms at the national, infra-national and sub-regional levels, and the implications of this strategic framework for implementing aid co-operation and sub-regional integration.

At the end of the discussion, participants agreed to suggest:

→ ***Political Commitments***

- Prepare a regional strategic framework for poverty reduction, incorporating rural development and food security as key elements;
- Make rural development and food security top priorities when national budgets are being decided and national and sub-regional resources allocated;
- Support efforts towards greater consistency and compatibility between national strategies for food security, poverty reduction and reduction of inequality;
- Develop a national and regional information system with real relevance to market integration and food issues;
- Co-ordinate research and mobilise training arrangements, nationally and sub-regionally, for the new problems involved in food security;
- Support and strengthen fora where players at all levels, infra-national, national and sub-regional, can meet and discuss;
- Strengthen the framework for consultation and co-operation between CILSS, ECOWAS and WAEMU, involving all the Ministers concerned, to implement the strategic framework.

→ ***Technical Guidelines***

- To promote structural food security based on the sub-region's own resources:
 - Promote sustainable, diversified, productive agriculture that functions as an integrated regional whole;
 - Develop national markets and integrate them at the regional level;
 - Improve people's access to food, basic social services and means of production and more generally all the factors for decent living conditions;

→ ***To Prevent and Manage Incidental Food Crises:***

- Strengthen the information and early warning systems in each country, so that crises can be foreseen and responses optimised within a harmonised sub-regional perspective;
- For each country, set up a plan for reacting to food crises, adjusted to the real situation and the scale and nature of each crisis, with emphasis on local crisis management capacity;
- Improve knowledge of the different types of vulnerability and endogenous methods for dealing with this;
- Develop an appropriate approach to the types of food crisis that occur in urban situations.

→ ***Preparatory Notes for Bamako***

The core document will be finalised on the basis of the guidelines set out by the present meeting and the Banjul workshop. There will be specific, short accompanying papers on:

- Implications of the strategic framework for aid reform;
- Institutional implications for managing public policy, developing multi-player partnership, managing the processes involved in joint work between regional institutions (CILSS, ECOWAS and WAEMU), and orienting and managing CILSS programmes;

- Progress in the work and composition of the CILSS/Club du Sahel network for the prevention of food crises in the Sahel.

Lastly, all these aspects will be summarised in a brief paper focusing on the commitments the Heads of State could make.

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