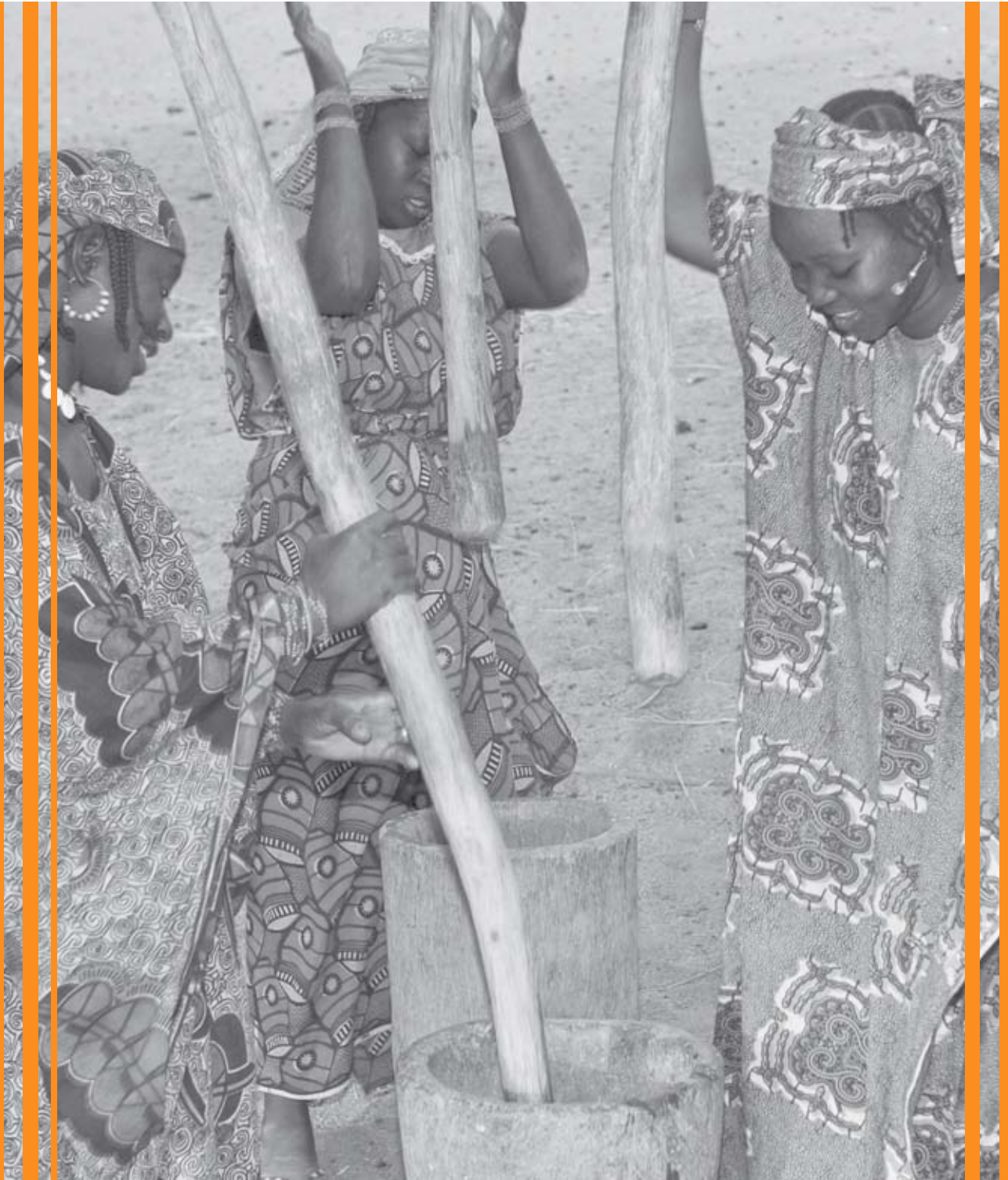


ACHIEVING REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The key to success for the fight against hunger in West Africa



Achieving regional integration: The key to success for the fight against hunger in West Africa

ZERO HUNGER: PHASE 3

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Written by: Frederic Mousseau, The Oakland
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Series editor: Morwenna Sullivan

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Frederic Mousseau Senior Fellow, The Oakland Institute

Frederic Mousseau is Policy Director at the Oakland Institute. He has worked for almost 20 years with international agencies such as Action Against Hunger, Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam International. His work has involved the direct design and supervision of food security interventions in more than 20 countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa over the last 18 years. His most recent work involved research and advocacy on food and agriculture policies and responses to high food prices.
Email: fmousseau@oaklandinstitute.org

Morwenna Sullivan Policy Advisor, Action Against Hunger

Morwenna started her career with Action Against Hunger in Tajikistan in 2000. She has since worked in many parts of the world. Now based in London, Morwenna is able to draw on her varied practical experience by contributing to research and analysis on evidence, leading ACF policy development on hunger-related issues. As a specialist in food security and livelihoods, with a focus on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, Morwenna informs key decision makers and fellow aid workers on issues linked to the causes, and responses to, hunger and acute malnutrition. She recently co-authored the acclaimed report *Changing Climates, Changing Lives*.

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Frederic Mousseau



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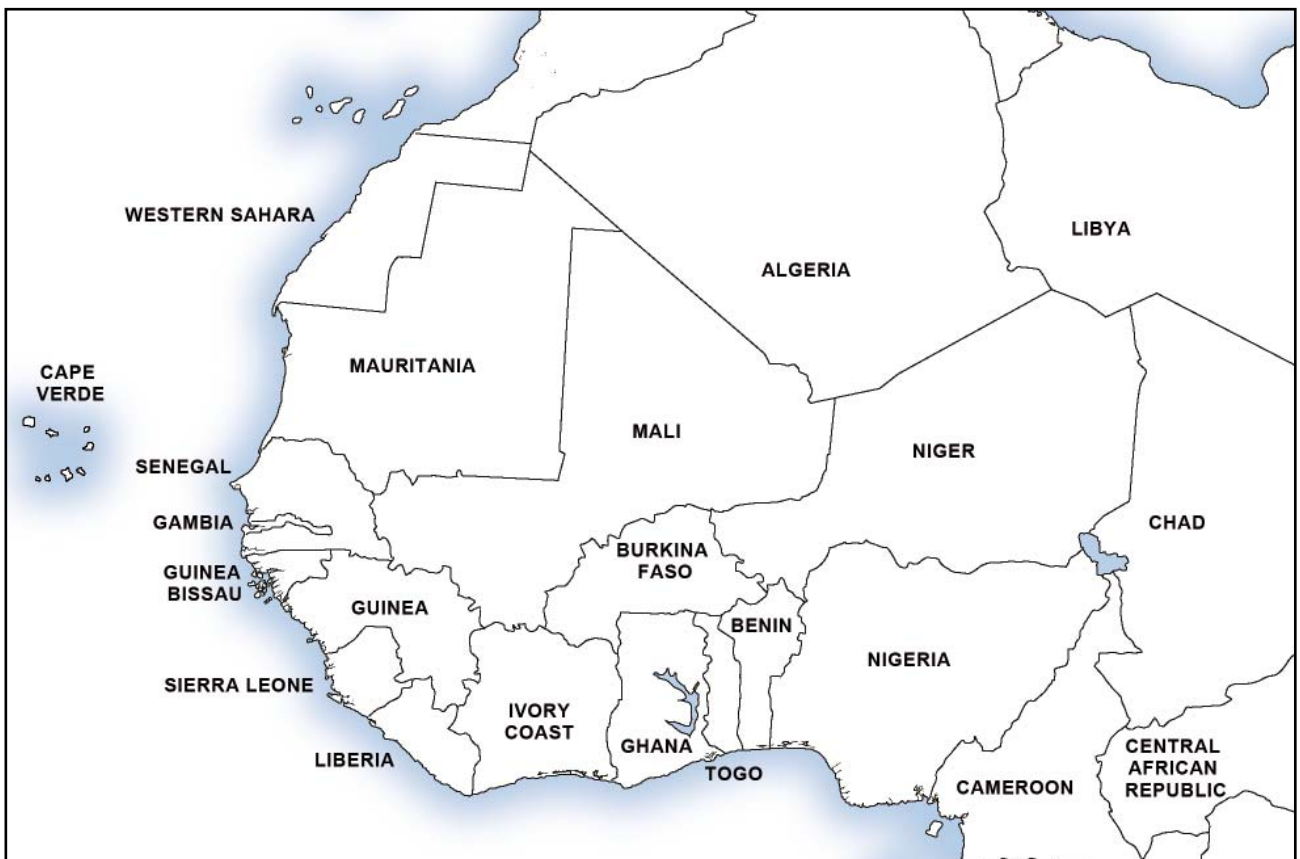
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List of abbreviations

ACF	Action Contre la Faim International Network	NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme	NGOs	non-governmental organisations
CAP	consolidated appeal process	NUSAPPS	Nutrition, Sécurité Alimentaire et Politiques Publiques au Sahel
CILSS	Comite permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Secheresse au Sahel (Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CSOs	civil society organisations	ODA	Official Development Assistance
DHSA	Department of Humanitarian and Social Affairs	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
DRR	disaster risk reduction	RAIP	Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (or PRIA)
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office	ROPPA	Reseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricole de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agricultural Policy	RPCA	Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	RUTF	ready-to-use therapeutic food
EHAP	Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan	SAM	severe acute undernutrition
EU	European Union	SAP	systeme d'alerte précoce (early warning system)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	SWAC	Sahel and West Africa Club
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme	UN	United Nations
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GAM	global acute undernutrition	UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
GDP	gross domestic product	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HKI	Helen Keller International	UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	USAID	United States Aid
INSAH	Institut du Sahel	WAEMU	West Africa Economic and Monetary Union
IRD	Institut de Recherche pour le Développement	WAHO	West African Health Organization
MAM	moderate acute undernutrition	WB	World Bank
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	WFP	World Food Programme
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières	WHO	World Health Organisation
NAIP	National Agricultural Investment Programme (or PNIA)		

Figure 1 Map of West Africa



Executive summary

Nearly four decades after the devastating droughts and famines of the early 1970s, West Africa – and the Sahel region in particular – is still struggling with hunger and high prevalence of child undernutrition. Chronic hunger is pervasive in the region, with rates of stunting commonly reaching 30 to 40 per cent of all children under five. Acute undernutrition, the most severe form of undernutrition, which puts children at high risk of death, is often found in West Africa at rates that exceed internationally accepted emergency thresholds.

However, the number and coverage of nutrition interventions in West Africa have grown dramatically since the 2005 food crisis, thanks to recent developments such as ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) and community-based treatment for severe acute undernutrition, which together have revolutionised the ability to reach large numbers of children in need and allowed a remarkable scale-up of treatment and prevention of acute undernutrition in West Africa.

Despite this important progress, a lasting reduction of undernutrition in West Africa remains a far-fetched goal. Even with the dramatic increase in the coverage of nutrition interventions, hundreds of thousands of undernourished children do not receive the adequate treatment they need. Besides, the scaling up has relied to a large extent on the work of international players, particularly relief organisations and humanitarian donors, which seriously limits its sustainability and the potential for further increase in coverage. Furthermore, the fight against undernutrition still fails to tackle the root causes of hunger in the region. The lack of adequate policy, the scarcity of resources and the fragility of a number of states in West Africa undermine their ability to put in place adequate interventions to address these causes.

This report is the third phase of ACF's Zero Hunger Project. It seeks to identify the relevance of a regional approach to the fight against hunger and to determine the potential of regional institutions in this endeavour. A review of the six elements of success identified during Phase 1 of the Zero Hunger Series – giving high political profile to the fight against hunger, encouraging civil society ownership and participation, adopting a multi-sector approach, ensuring institutionalised coordination, adopting a multi-phase approach and continued financial investment from government and the international community – in the West African context strongly suggests that regional institutions have a key role to play in the fight against hunger in West Africa. The added values of the regional level are numerous. They include the benefits of synergies and mutualisation of capacities and resources across the region in the different sectors relevant to nutrition, including, for example, the improvement of nutritional protocols, food security surveillance, food stocks, research and learning. Intervening at the regional level is also critical to address a number of problems that are regional by essence and cannot be tackled by individual countries – for example, food price volatility, which has had a dramatic impact on hunger in recent years, or constraints to cross-border trade of food and cattle.

Important developments have been taking place at the regional level in order to move forward on these issues in recent years. The most prominent and promising was the design of a Regional Programme for Food and Agriculture by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2010. The programme, created alongside institutions and a financial mechanism to implement it, translates West African countries' commitment to implement a common regional agricultural policy (ECOWAP) into a twin-track approach that will tackle both the causes and the immediate consequences of hunger in the region.

Other important efforts have been made in recent years by different regional institutions and bodies involved in the fight against undernutrition. These include the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO), the ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (Comité Permanent Inter Etats de lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel – CILSS), and the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU, or Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine – UEMOA). Success has been encountered by some of them, including, for instance, with the progress on food fortification in the region. Others, such as CILSS, are faced with important questions relating to their scope and governance.

West African institutions have their weaknesses and are faced with issues of overlap, redundancy and overall coherence. However, their existence and the commitment of West African countries to regional integration represent a critical asset for the region. Given the interdependence of West African countries and the limited capacity of most of them to address hunger on their own, regional integration and regional cooperation are essential. They are also critical in the implementation of the internationally agreed principles of country ownership, strategic coordination and leadership in the fight against hunger and international assistance in general. Without integration, most West African states

will remain subject to the agenda and goodwill of international donors, institutions and richer countries.

To date, despite recent progress, international assistance to West Africa still suffers from many flaws and lacks coherence and convergence behind regional policies and institutions. It remains split between a relief and development divide, and development is still too often conceived as a sum of projects rather than a process to be driven by governments.

To be successful, regional cooperation against hunger nevertheless requires strong support and involvement of international donors, international institutions and NGOs. This should involve funding, but also changes in practices and approaches so that efforts undertaken at the regional level can be effectively supported rather than duplicated, or even undermined by parallel or alternative interventions and mechanisms.

International NGOs such as ACF undoubtedly have a role to play in enabling this to happen. Through their expertise, their operational capacity and their power of advocacy and leverage over international donors and institutions, they have to be part of the changes that are proposed in West Africa. Their future involvement will be determinant on the success or failure of recent initiatives aiming to end hunger and undernutrition in the region.



Introduction

Many countries in West Africa, and especially the Sahel, have continued to experience food crises and episodes of acute food insecurity since the devastating droughts of the early seventies. Such crises could have been a result of war and population displacement, as in Sierra Leone or Liberia in the 1990s; or have arisen due to a mix of climatic and economic stresses, as in crises that have hit the Sahel on a regular basis since the early 1970s. Although most of the region is now at peace, acute undernutrition is often found at rates exceeding emergency thresholds, comparable to the high rates found in war zones and refugee situations. Chronic hunger is also pervasive in the region, with rates of stunting² commonly reaching 30 to 40 percent of all children under five.

The situation has recently started to change. The year 2005 constitutes a turning point for the region, with two unrelated events that will durably affect the way hunger and undernutrition are addressed in West Africa and beyond. The first event was the 2005 food crisis in the Sahel, with Niger at its epicentre, which triggered a dramatic shift in the way undernutrition is considered and addressed. In Niger, some 230,000 children under the age of five, including 60,000 who were severely malnourished, were treated between January and October 2005, surpassing all-time records of any relief intervention.³ Before 2005, acute undernutrition in the Sahel was considered somehow 'normal' and was generally overlooked and left unaddressed by governments, donors and international institutions. The number and coverage of nutrition interventions have dramatically grown since 2005, thanks to the development of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) and of community-based treatment for severe acute undernutrition.⁴ This evolution was also made possible by the substantial and sustained increase in resources

2 Stunting (WHO) – Moderate & severe: Percentage of children 0–59 months old who are below minus two standard deviations from median height for age of the WHO Child Growth Standards.

3 Direct communication from the Centre d'Information Humanitaire, Niamey, October 2005.

4 See UNICEF (2009a).





allocated to nutrition by international donors, NGOs and other international players. These recent developments have revolutionised the ability to reach large numbers of children in need and allowed a remarkable scale-up of treatment and prevention of acute undernutrition in West Africa. The attention given to undernutrition has also boosted a number of initiatives to address chronic deficiencies in nutrients, such as the fortification and supplementation in vitamin A.

The second major event in 2005 was the adoption by the 15 heads of state of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) of a regional agricultural policy that was named ECOWAP. ECOWAP, or ECOWAP/CAADP as it is often referred to, was developed as the regional implementation of the NEPAD agricultural component (CAADP). The main objective of this policy is to *'contribute in a sustainable manner to satisfying the food needs of the population, to economic and social development and to poverty reduction in Member States as well as to address inequalities between territories, areas, and countries.'*⁵ This comprehensive, ground-breaking policy

clearly has the potential of bringing durable solutions to poverty, hunger and undernutrition in the region. It does not only seek to achieve economic growth and export earnings, as was often the case with national agricultural policies in recent decades but, rather, it puts food security and hunger reduction at its core. The development of ECOWAP has consolidated West African countries' commitment to address hunger and develop agriculture in the region through ECOWAS as a framework for regional integration.

Taken together, these two developments appear complementary. They are likely to produce a twin-track, comprehensive approach to the fight against hunger in the region: on the one hand, scaling up efforts to tackle child undernutrition and mortality, meeting the most acute and immediate nutritional needs while, on the other hand, a major political move towards regional integration, with the objective of bringing durable solutions to the underlying causes of hunger and poverty in West Africa.

It is, however, not the first time that regional initiatives have been launched in West Africa in the aftermath of a crisis. The region hosts a number of regional institutions and specialised mechanisms, which have not prevented food crises continuing to occur and

5 ECOWAS Commission (2008).

undernutrition remaining widespread in the region. Once again in 2010, West Africa faced a food crisis that affected some 10 million people in the eastern Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Chad),⁶ with high levels of undernutrition reported in several of these countries.

By reviewing this background and looking at recent developments, the aim of this report is to assess the relevance and the potential of regional institutions and mechanisms in reducing hunger and undernutrition in West Africa. This report is the third phase of ACF's Zero Hunger Project. Phase 1 reviewed the experience of five case study countries – Brazil, Peru, Mozambique, Malawi and Bangladesh – which have had relative success at bringing down rates of undernutrition. These case studies identified six critical elements of success:

- **giving a high political profile to the objective of fighting hunger and undernutrition**
- **adopting a multi-sector approach of policies and coordination across sectors**

- **encouraging civil society ownership and participation**
- **adopting a multi-phase approach combining both short and long-term approaches**
- **ensuring institutionalised coordination**
- **continuity of sustained financial investment from governments and the international donor community.**

Phase 2 examined the extent to which these six 'enabling' factors were relevant for Niger.⁷ This report – Phase 3 – seeks to identify the relevance of a regional approach to the fight against hunger and to determine the potential of regional institutions in this endeavour.

The first section of the report provides relevant background on the region and an overview of the key regional institutions relevant to the fight against hunger. The second part discusses the six factors of success identified by the Zero Hunger Project through the regional lens.

⁶ OCHA (2010).

⁷ Separate reports are available for each phase.

PART 1: Setting the context

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Population and development in West Africa⁸

ECOWAS member countries, Chad and Mauritania cover a surface area of 7,424,000 km², 1.7 times the surface area of the EU (4,324,782 km²). The population of West Africa is currently 318 million people. It should exceed 400 million by 2020 and will double in the next four decades. The majority of people will soon be living in urban agglomerations, with 16 cities currently hosting more than one million inhabitants. The majority of people are young, mobile and increasingly well educated. 64 percent of West Africans are under 25 years of age. 7.5 million people live outside their country of origin within another West African country.

With the exception of Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria, all West African countries are classified as 'Least Developed Countries'. As shown in *Figure 2*, West African countries are among the poorest in the world – six of them rank among the nine last countries on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. However, most West African economies have registered strong growth rates over the past decade and were able to weather the global economic crisis remarkably well.⁹

Agriculture plays a determining role in the fight against poverty and food insecurity, through production for home consumption by agricultural households as well as by providing incomes and supplying food products

Table 1 West Africa country populations (millions)¹⁰

Burkina Faso	16.3	5.1%
Ivory Coast	21.6	6.8%
Ghana	24.3	7.7%
Niger	15.9	5.0%
Nigeria	158.3	49.8%
Gambia	1.8	0.6%
Liberia	4.1	1.3%
Mauritania	3.4	1.1%
Sierra Leone	5.8	1.8%
Togo	6.8	2.1%
Benin	9.2	2.9%
Chad	11.5	3.6%
Guinea	10.3	3.3%
Mali	13.3	4.2%
Senegal	12.9	4.0%
Cape Verde	0.5	0.2%
Total	318.0	100.0%
ECOWAS	303	95.0%
WAEMU	98	31.0%
CILSS	77	24.0%

to nearby and urban markets. As the backbone of the economy, agriculture affects society at many levels since national economies and people's jobs, incomes and food security depend upon it. In economic terms, this sector accounts for up to 35 percent of the region's Gross Domestic Product. Agricultural exports constitute an important element of West Africa's foreign trade, generating around six billion dollars, or 16 percent of all products and services exported from the region.¹¹

⁸ adapted from OECD (n.d.).

⁹ OECD (n.d.).

¹⁰ United Nations (2009).

¹¹ ECOWAS Commission (2008).

Currently, regional production covers 80 percent of the population's food needs in ECOWAS. The last twenty years have seen some fundamental changes in the region's agricultural production. Huge increases in production have largely outstripped growth in demand, as cash crops rose from 19 million tonnes in 1980 to 38 million tonnes in 2006, and food crops soared from 59 million tonnes in 1980 to 212 million tonnes in 2006.¹² Over the next few decades West African agriculture will have to meet a huge increase in demand generated by demographic growth.¹³

Life expectancy varies between countries from 41.4 to 70.7 years, with an average of 51 years for all ECOWAS. Child mortality varies between countries

from 26‰ to 165‰ and under-five mortality rates vary from 35‰ to 256‰. Main causes of mortality and morbidity are infectious diseases, including HIV/Aids, malaria, tuberculosis, acute respiratory infections, meningitis, diarrhoea and cholera. Often associated with these diseases, undernutrition is also a major cause of child mortality.¹⁴

Access to adequate health services, potable water and proper sanitation conditions is problematic for the majority of West Africans. Health systems face many constraints including problems of governance, lack of financial resources, lack of skilled and motivated staff, inadequate supply of medical products and limited interstate cooperation on certain epidemics.¹⁵

A final regional issue worth mentioning that affects undernutrition relates to economic and demographic trends in West Africa. Gradually, ECOWAS countries are becoming more urbanised, with about 41 percent of the population living in urban areas in 2008.¹⁶ More urbanised populations and more integrated regional markets result in significant shifts in the way people access food. While in the past, for the majority of peo-

12 Ibid.

13 ECOWAS Commission (p.2) (2009).

14 WAHO (2008).

15 Ibid. p3.

16 Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) (2009).

17 UNDP. (n.d.).

Figure 2 Human Development Index ranking for West African countries, 2010¹⁷

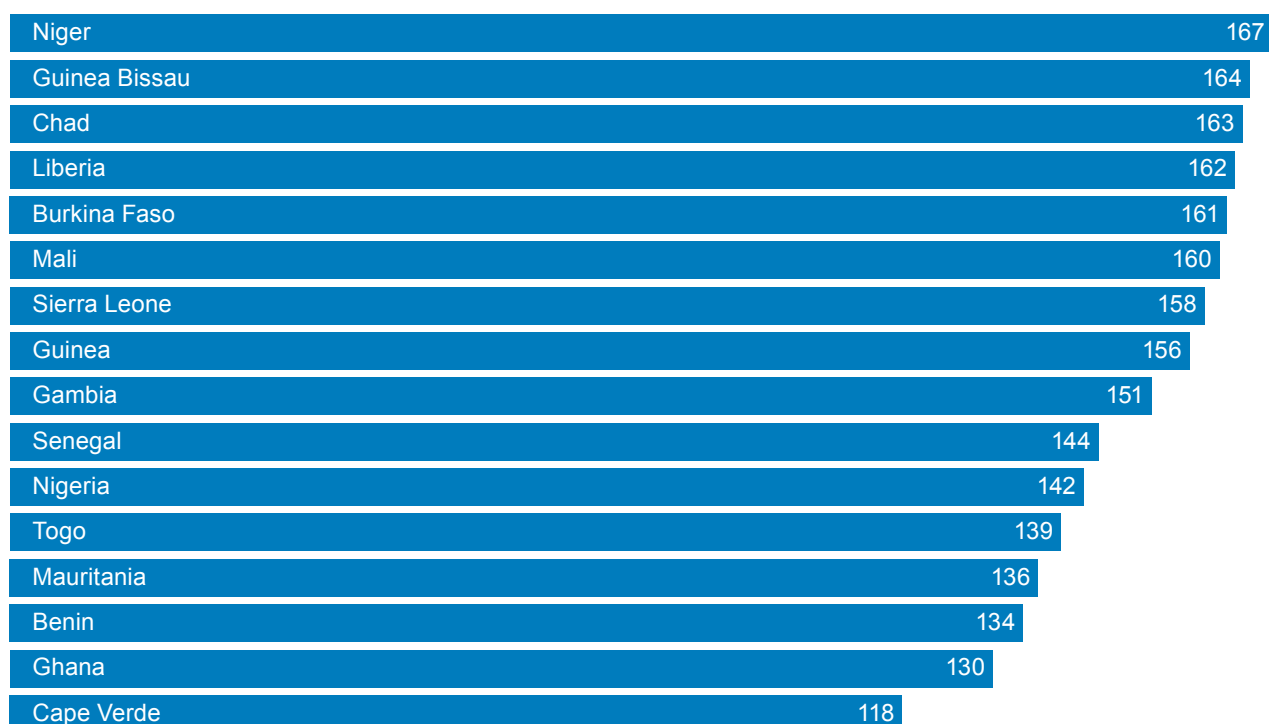
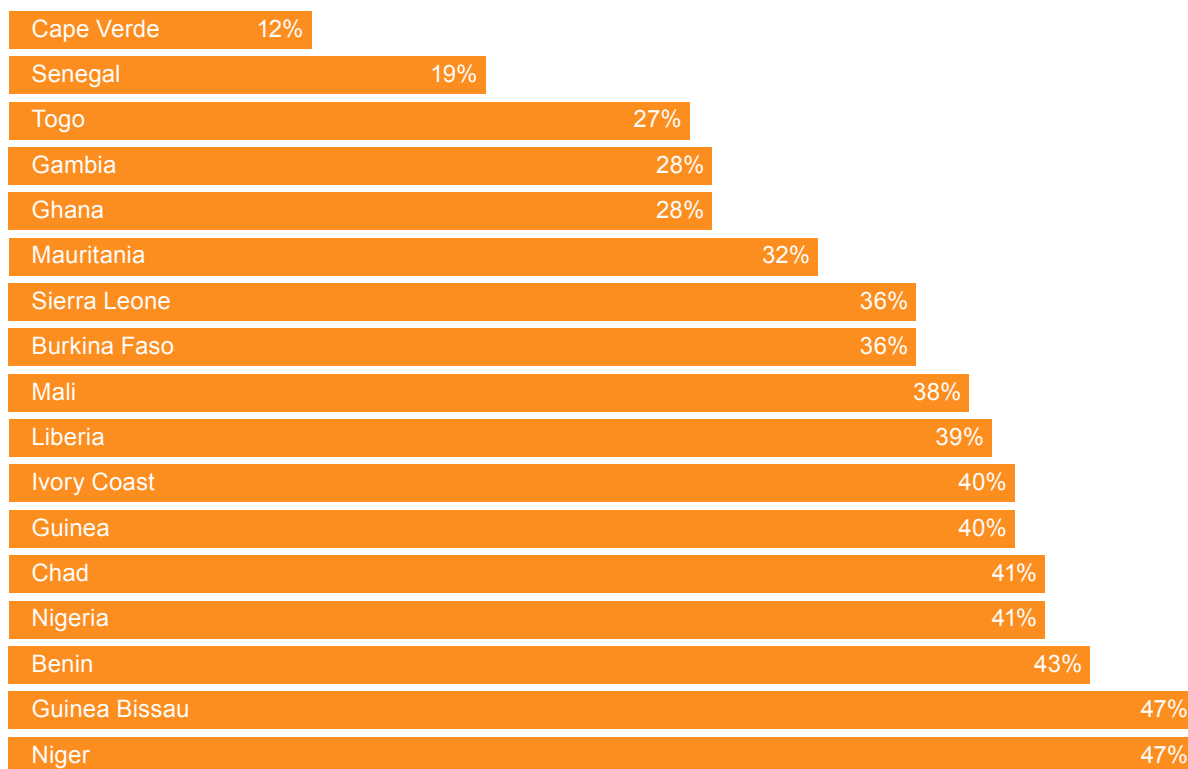


Figure 3: Percentage of under-fives (2003–8) suffering from stunting¹⁸ in West Africa¹⁹

ple, food was coming from their own production and local rural markets, households are now increasingly relying on more processed food and more imported commodities, from the region and from other parts of the world. This evolution has clear implications for nutrition, calling for attention to be given to the standards adopted by the regional food industry and regional regulations over food imports.

1.1.2 Addressing undernutrition in West Africa: progress and bottlenecks

As illustrated in *Figure 3*, chronic hunger is pervasive in the region with rates of stunting²⁰ commonly reaching 30 to 40 percent of all children under five. It results from a mix of factors that can be primarily associated with poverty as well as poor capacity – and sometimes lack of political will – of the West African States to address the different dimensions of the problem. It is estimated that 48 percent of children in the region are suffering from vitamin A deficiency, which claims hundreds of thousands of children's lives every year.²¹

Acute undernutrition – the most severe form of undernutrition, which puts children at high risk of death – is often found in the region at rates that exceed internationally accepted emergency thresholds of 15 percent;²² latest nutritional surveys in Niger indicate rates of global acute undernutrition of 16.7 percent and 15.3 percent in June and October 2010 respectively.²³ A July 2010

18 Stunting (WHO) – Moderate & severe: Percentage of children 0–59 months old who are below minus two standard deviations from median height for age of the WHO Child Growth Standards.

19 UNICEF. (2009b).

20 Stunting (WHO) – Moderate & severe: Percentage of children 0–59 months old who are below minus two standard deviations from median height for age of the WHO Child Growth Standards.

21 HKI mentions 105,000 children death per year for the eight WAEMU countries, Hellen Keller International (2007).

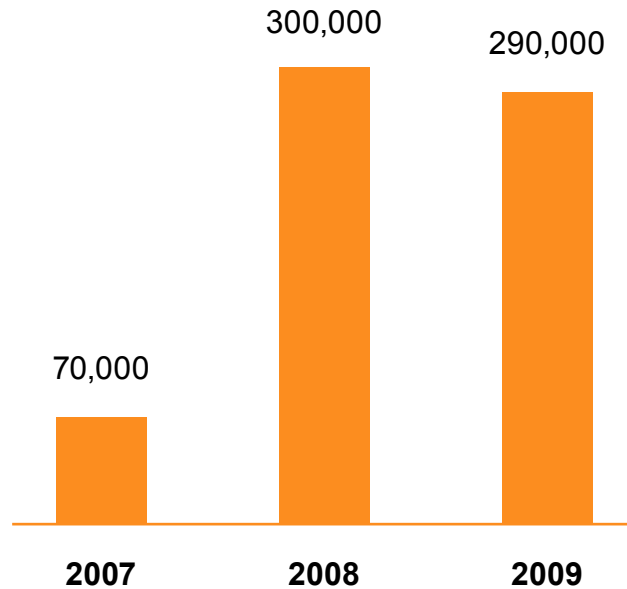
22 SPHERE / WHO.

23 Institut National de la Statistique Niger (INS) (2010).

nutritional survey in Njdamena, the capital of Chad, found a worrying 12.6 percent global undernutrition.²⁴

Although such high rates are typical of war zones and refugee situations where people lack food and other basics, the undernutrition affecting children in the region has little to do with conflict. Rather, undernutrition in West Africa is the result of a mix of factors that can be primarily associated with poverty and its consequences in terms of poor access to food, health, water and social services, as well as poor capacity of states to set up both preventive and curative measures. As seen in 2005 and 2010, high levels of acute undernutrition also result from episodes of transitory food insecurity due to climatic variations and market fluctuations.²⁵ In 2005, a major food crisis affected around 3.2 million people in Niger. In 2009, more than half of the country's population – 7.1 million people – were affected by another crisis²⁶ that arose from a production deficiency: a cereal production deficit (30 percent decrease from 2008) combined with two

Figure 4 Numbers of admissions of SAM children in ECOWAS countries between 2007 and 2009



consecutive forage deficits (31 percent of needs in 2008 and 67 percent in 2009).²⁷

As discussed in the introduction, recent developments have revolutionised the ability to reach large numbers of children in need and allowed a remarkable scale

²⁴ Polonsky, J. (2010).

²⁵ See Mousseau, F. and Mittal, A. (2006).

²⁶ SAP (2010).

²⁷ Sanchez-Montero, M. and Salse, N. (2011).



Box 1: Facts and figures on undernutrition in the Sahel

- The Sahel has some of the highest child mortality rates in the world. The regional under-five mortality rate is 222 per 1,000 live births (i.e. 449,000 child deaths annually). This means that one in five Sahelian children dies before age five.
- In the Sahel, undernutrition is an associated cause of over 50 percent of child deaths. This means that more than half the child mortality burden is attributable to child undernutrition, which causes about 225,000 child deaths annually.
- The Sahel has some of the highest acute undernutrition rates in children worldwide. The latest available surveys show that 1.5 million children under five years of age suffer from acute undernutrition in just five countries.
- Prevalence of acute undernutrition in the region is over emergency thresholds. According to WHO, when the prevalence of acute undernutrition in children 6 to 59 months old is greater than 10 percent the nutrition situation of children is considered serious; when it is greater than 15 percent the nutrition situation of children is considered critical.
- Chronic undernutrition in children is widespread and severe. An estimated 40 percent of under fives (i.e. 4.3 million children) suffer from chronic undernutrition. Moreover, 50 percent of under fives who are chronically malnourished suffer from severe chronic undernutrition.
- Rates of undernutrition in children have remained around critical levels for at least a decade. During the hunger season, this prevalence can increase to a critical 15 percent. These stagnant prevalence figures combined with rapid population growth translate into a 40 to 50 percent increase in the absolute number of malnourished children over the last ten years.
- Acute undernutrition is affecting primarily infants and young children. In the Sahel, the rate of global acute undernutrition is higher between 6 months and 2 years old, because of sub-optimal infant and young child feeding practices; for instance the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life – 20 percent – is very low compared to 40 percent in other African regions.
- Child undernutrition is not limited to food-insecure areas. Very high rates of child undernutrition are found in regions not classified as food-insecure. For example, in Niger (2005), some of the highest rates of acute undernutrition in children were found in Zinder and Maradi, regions considered as grain baskets of the country.

(adapted from UNICEF, http://www.unicef.org/wcaro/overview_4249.html)

up of community-based management of acute undernutrition in several countries. As a result, in 2010, some 400,000 severely malnourished children were treated in Niger, Mali and Chad, including 300,000 in Niger alone,²⁸ a dramatic increase compared to the few thousands of children treated yearly by NGOs prior to 2005. ACF research in Niger²⁹ confirms that the capacity to prevent and respond to food crises at country level has been greatly enhanced since 2005. Nutritional programmes have been expanded and institutional set-up has also been strengthened. In the

2010 crisis, the government led the implementation of a comprehensive national response plan with the Food Crisis Committee (CCA) responsible for coordinating all actions, funding allocated and actors that would implement them. This would not have been possible during the 2005 crisis.

In recent years, West African countries, with support from their international partners, have also made remarkable progress in promoting vitamin A fortification, with fortified oil now being now produced by the West African food industry (see Part 2 for more details). They also made substantial progress in achieving and sustaining high vitamin A supplementation coverage, usually through twice-yearly events for child survival

28 OCHA West Africa (2011).

29 Sanchez-Montero, M. and Salse, N. (2011).

that include other services such as de-worming, vaccinations and the distribution of mosquito nets.³⁰

Despite important advances, a lasting reduction of undernutrition in West Africa remains a far-fetched goal. Even with a dramatic increase in coverage of nutrition interventions, still less than half of children in need receive adequate treatment. According to UNICEF, some 859,000 children under the age of five needed life-saving treatment for severe acute undernutrition in 2010 in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Northern Nigeria and Chad.

Furthermore, while important efforts have been made to scale up treatment in the region, especially in Niger, this has relied to a large extent on the work of international players, particularly relief organisations and humanitarian donors. Sustainability and the potential for further expansion in coverage is therefore limited. For example, in March 2010 in Niger, out of 812 health centres in the country, 342 were directly supported by about ten NGOs, mostly financed by ECHO, for the treatment of severe acute undernutrition.³¹ Besides, Niger remains a priority country for a number of actors and it is unclear how similar efforts could be made at the larger scale of the region.

On the other hand, though most West African countries have designed or updated their national nutrition policy in recent years,³² the implementation of adequate nutritional programmes at scale and the allocation of public resources to nutrition through national budgets remain limited. This is due to different factors, including the lack of political will in some countries, but also generally the lack of financial and human resources and the poor coverage and capacity of health systems in West Africa. Pervasive poverty in the region also makes health services unaffordable to millions of people. The problem is aggravated

in periods of seasonal peaks of undernutrition, when people have to pay higher prices to buy the food they need for a healthy diet for themselves and their families during the lean season. This has led a number of actors to advocate for free basic healthcare, especially for children and mothers, as a key measure to fight undernutrition and reduce mortality. An additional weakness is that nutrition is considered as a *sector* at government and ministries level, which makes it difficult to put multi-sectoral policies in place at country level. Yet, as explained by Patricia Hoorelbeke of ACF West Africa, '*nutrition is not a sector but the development outcome which results from interventions that are implemented through different sectors, involving both "direct nutrition actions" and "nutrition sensitive development" interventions.*'³³

Last but not least, the fight against undernutrition remains ineffective because of the failure to tackle the root causes of hunger in the region. The lack of adequate policies, public resources and the fragility of a number of states undermine their ability to put in place adequate interventions to address these causes.

1.1.3 Regional dimensions of hunger and undernutrition

The causality of acute undernutrition is still debated in the region, six years after heated debates in Niger,³⁴ which saw diverging views among development actors relating to the causes of undernutrition in the Sahel (i.e. the relative weight of the key determinants of undernutrition – poor access to food, behaviour of mothers, care practices and sanitary environment etc).

The practical difficulty of singling out the weight of each factor of acute undernutrition in West Africa explains without any doubt why this debate is still going on; the different factors are often at play together, the weight of each factor will vary between different livelihood groups, and also during the year. For instance, the rainy season may imply less food (it is the hunger gap before the harvest, with less food in stocks and higher prices on the markets), higher incidence of diseases (e.g. increase in malaria and diarrhoea) and changes

30 ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers (2009).

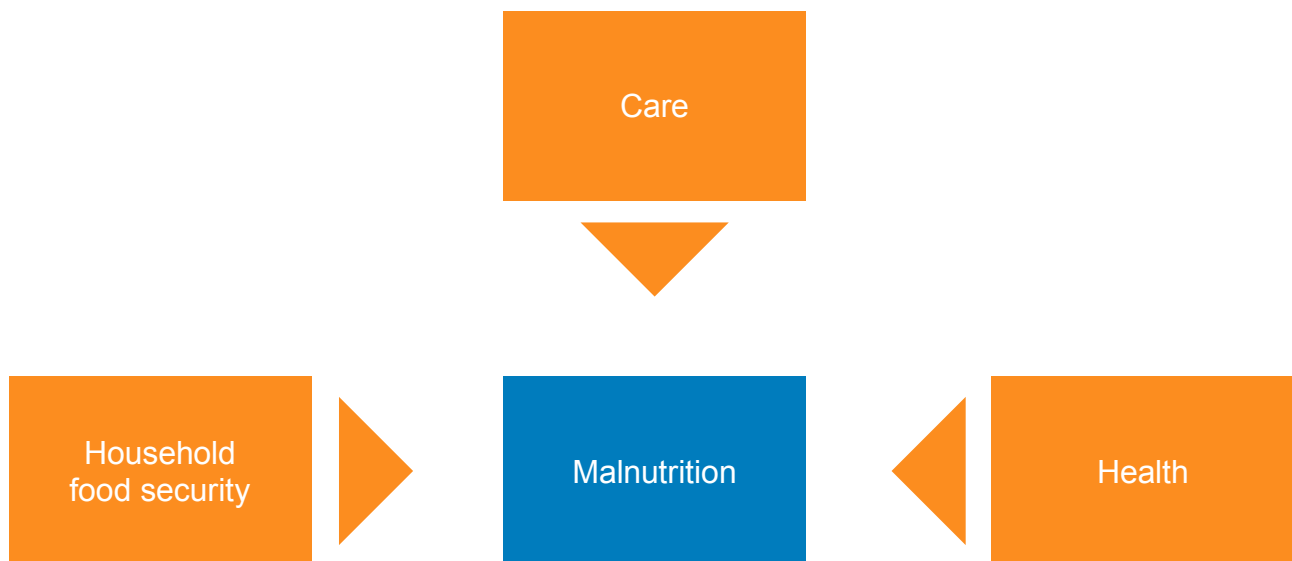
31 Direct communication from international NGOs, March 2010.

32 Tchibindat, F. and Mokbel, M. (2010).

33 Direct communication March 2011.

34 See Mousseau, F. and Mittal, A. (2006).

Figure 5 Immediate causes of undernutrition in the UNICEF Nutrition Conceptual Framework



in care practices (e.g. more time working in the fields, returns from seasonal migration).

It is, however, widely admitted that undernutrition is due to a combination of these factors. Access to food and income is a key determinant of food insecurity and undernutrition, not only because of its direct impact on food intake but also because household food security can have significant effects on both health and care. For instance, high food prices may result in a decrease in households' health expenses; patterns of agricultural production and the level of households' earnings may impact care practices because of migration, level of farm and off-farm labour, which influence the presence and availability of mothers and other family members with children.

Since the 2005 food crisis, household food security is recognised as the only causal factor of undernutrition directly impacted by a number of regional dynamics – in particular, the functioning of well integrated West African agricultural markets. The functioning of these markets can ensure adequate income and food supply or, on the contrary, create food crises as seen in 2005.

The region has undergone a process of trade liberalisation and regional economic integration since the 1980s. This process was formalised by the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975, complemented in 1994 by the creation of the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU – Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine UEMOA).

Starting in the 1980s, countries in the region have abandoned the idea of national food self-sufficiency and opened up to international trade in the belief that market forces would ensure an adequate food supply. A major objective for ECOWAS was, and continues to be, the creation of a common market, which is based on the elimination of all trade barriers between member states, the adoption of a common external tariff, and a common trade policy vis-à-vis third countries.

There is a strong rationale for promoting regional trade and integration in the region: it has poor transport infrastructure and access to remote areas is often easier crossing the border from a neighbouring country than from the capital. One must also remember that West African borders were drawn in the last century by

colonial powers, with no consideration given to actual territory occupied by ethnic groups, seasonal migration or trade patterns – nor to the viability of the newborn countries in terms of food self-sufficiency. Thus, it was rightly argued that it would be more logical and cost-effective to develop trade between Sahelian and coastal countries, rather than create centralised structures to manage agricultural trade within each nation.

Regional integration has a direct impact on food availability and food prices in any given country; supply is no longer determined only by domestic production but to a large extent by the regional food situation and trade flows.

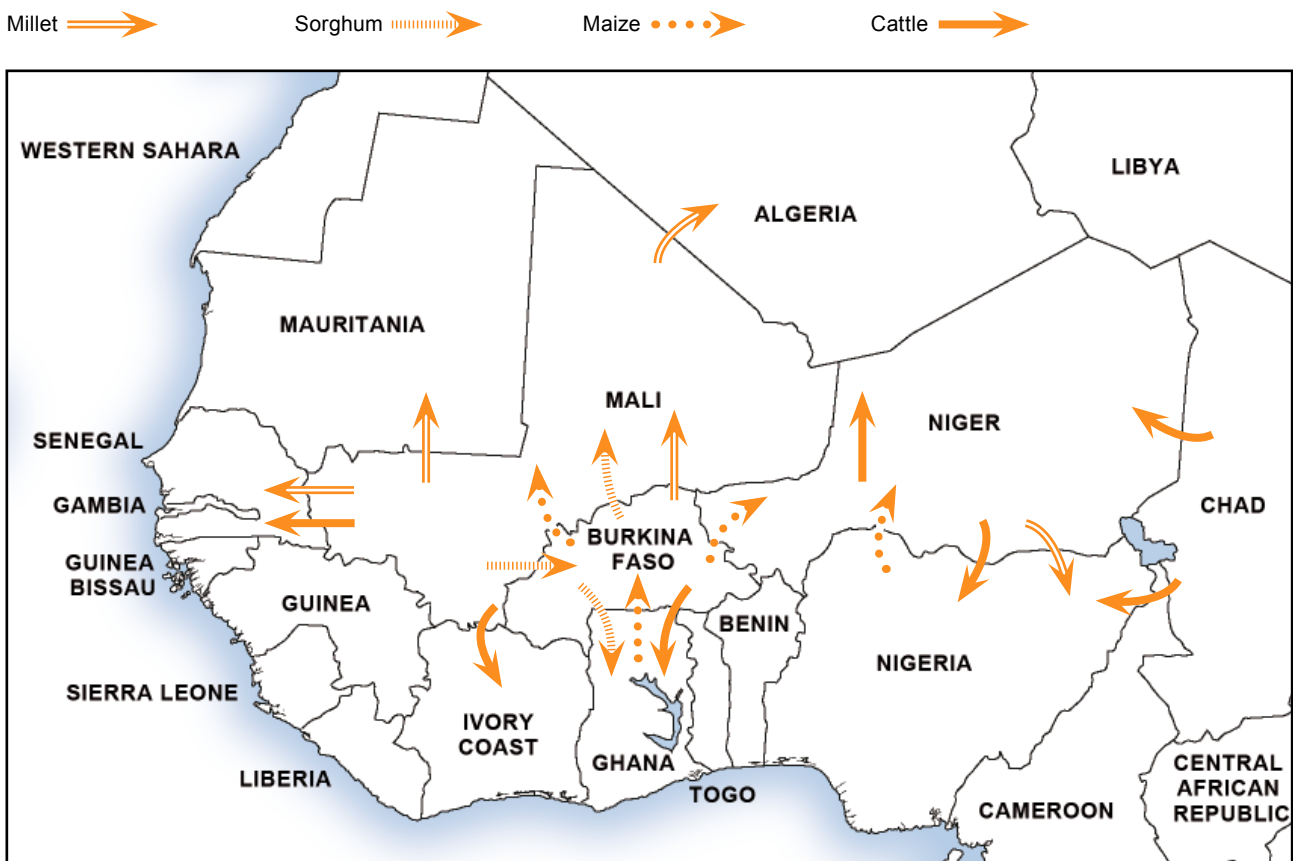
This regional dimension is a major factor of food (in-) security. In 2005, food availability and food prices in Niger were affected by the closing of borders of Nigeria and other countries in the region. Fewsnets explained the market mechanisms that led to the 2005 crisis: ‘West African grain markets are generally working very well, perhaps too well. The high cereal price levels found in the Sahel are being driven by strong demand for Sahelian cereal production, and greater purchasing power in coastal West African countries.’ Well-functioning markets had the opposite effect in 2010 when, despite a poor harvest in Niger, food was still largely available at affordable prices on domestic markets, thanks to the supply of cereal from coastal countries – particularly Benin, which had enjoyed a bumper harvest. Then more recently, in early 2011, prices of certain food commodities were on the rise in Burkina Faso and Guinea because of the crisis in Ivory Coast.³⁵

35 Fewsnets/USAID (2011).

36 CILSS (2004).

The volatility of food prices is a major factor of food insecurity in West Africa. Research has shown the

Figure 6 Agricultural trade in West Africa³⁶



correlation between high food prices and the increase in acute undernutrition in 2005 in Niger.³⁷ Such correlation was confirmed by other studies in Asia,³⁸ and Save the Children recently estimated that in 2008 alone a minimum of 4.3 million (and potentially as many as 10.4 million) additional children in developing countries may have become malnourished as a result of food price rises.³⁹ Low prices are also of concern, when farmers do not receive adequate income from their crops, which ultimately undermine their incomes, their livelihoods and their food security.

Pastoralism and cattle herding are even more dependent on cross-border trade because the urban centres of coastal countries represent the main markets for Sahelian countries, especially Niger, the primary suppliers of meat for the region. Cross-border movements of cattle are also essential, especially in drought years, because of the dependence of Sahelian herders on pastures in coastal countries. Regional trade is therefore a crucial determinant for food security in its different dimensions: it determines the availability of food on markets and the prices of food, as well as people's income and purchasing power.

The functioning of regional food markets also limits the ability of governments and international organisations to put in place adequate responses at national level. In 2002, for instance, the governments of several Sahelian countries sought to take advantage of good national harvests and a favourable price situation to replenish their national grain reserves. Unfortunately, none of them was able to rebuild the stocks as planned.⁴⁰ The situation was repeated in 2005 when the Nigerien government could not find the 30,000

tons of cereals required to replenish the national reserve, although large quantities of food were being kept in private stocks in the country, or were even exported.⁴¹ It was more profitable for traders to export or to hoard food in the hope of a future price increase, rather than sell to the government early in the year.

To date, a major problem has been that the regional integration implemented under ECOWAS has ensured the economic liberalisation of participating countries, but has failed to put in place policies and mechanisms that could ensure food security for the population of the region. It has failed to adequately protect regional markets against cheap imports from outside the region. It is well known, for instance, that for many years, the meat and poultry imports from Europe have undermined the income of regional producers. Integration has never been able to strengthen agricultural production and productivity, as was achieved following integration in the European Union in the 1960s and 1970s. West African countries have also failed to produce any regulation mechanism that could ensure the stability of food prices and an adequate distribution of food supplies in the region.

As a result, governments are reluctant to engage fully in the game of regional integration and may unilaterally impose trade restrictions when they feel tensions on the regional market. This tends to aggravate the problems of inflated food prices further. Furthermore, the lack of concerted policies and interventions by West African governments in the agricultural sector seriously undermines their effectiveness and impact.

The process of regional integration is not over yet. The potential for improving food security and nutrition for West African populations remains promising. The following sections look at regional institutions and processes and their potential to address the regional factors of food insecurity.

37 Mousseau, F. and Mittal, A. (2006).

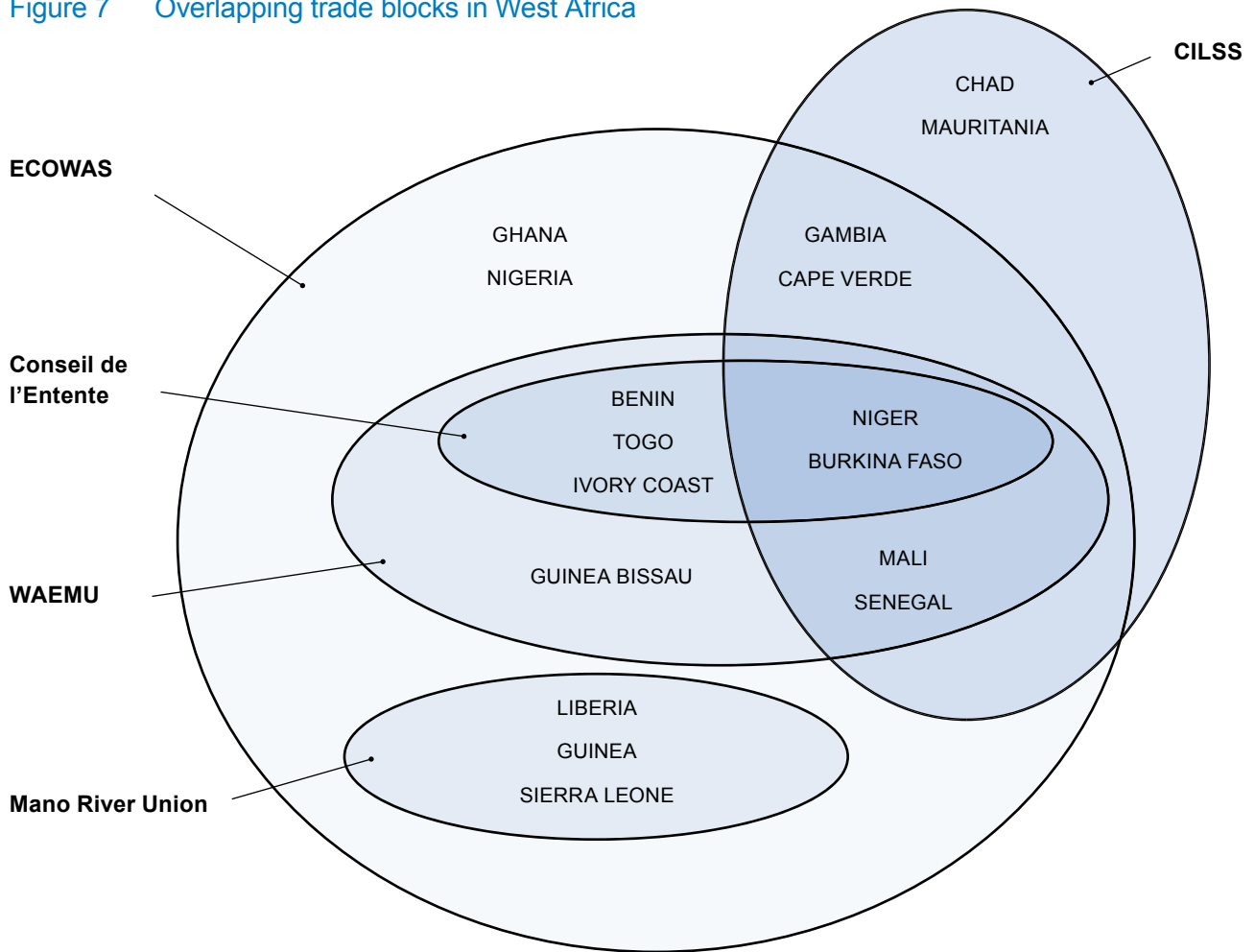
38 Save the Children Fund (2009); Torlesse, H., Kiess, L. and Boen, M. (2003).

39 Save the Children. How many more malnourished children are there as a result of the food price crisis? Unpublished report, 2009.

40 Burkina Faso obtained only 4,664 tons out of the planned 21,000; Mali collected only 5,000 tons instead of the 14,000 tons sought; and Niger sought 25,000 tons but no purchases could be made. Traoré, K., Jeudy, E. and Blein, R. (2004).

41 Several international NGOs have confirmed the availability of large food stocks in country through the market assessments they conducted in 2005 for the procurement of their food relief projects.

Figure 7 Overlapping trade blocks in West Africa



1.2 Principal West African institutions involved in the fight against hunger

This section presents the most relevant organisations involved in the fight against hunger, as indicated in *Figure 7*. Additional institutions are presented in *Annex 1*.

1.2.1 The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded in 1975, bringing together 15 nations in the region into one institution. It includes countries from Senegal in the west to Niger and Liberia in the east. Its mission is to promote economic integration in all fields of economic activity, particularly agriculture, natural resources, finance, social and culture.

The Commission and the Bank for Investment and Development are ECOWAS's two main institutions designed to implement policies, pursue programmes and carry out development projects in member states. Due to the central role of agriculture in West African economies, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources is of great importance to the fight against undernutrition. The West African Health Organization (WAHO) is the agency with a specific mandate regarding nutrition.

Ignited by the 2008 food price crisis, the ECOWAS food and agriculture policy (ECOWAP) is expected to concentrate significant resources and to produce important outcomes in the coming years for the reduction of hunger and undernutrition throughout the region. At the December 2008 International Conference in Paris, regional authorities and all major donors

Box 2: A new architecture for food and agriculture in West Africa⁴²

ECOWAS will lead the implementation of the Regional Compact of Partnership for the Implementation of ECOWAP (also called Regional Programme for Food and Agriculture), in partnership and consultation with other actors. This implementation will rely on a new institutional system that will be established in 2011 and will include:

- a Consultative Committee for Food and Agriculture
- an Inter-departmental Committee for Food and Agriculture
- a Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture (RAAF)
- a Regional Fund for Food and Agriculture (ECOWADF).

Implementing ECOWAP requires prior operationalisation of the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) through the adoption of legal Acts and the concrete installation of the Agency.

The Regional Fund for Food and Agriculture is intended to ensure the financing of the programme to be implemented by the Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture. It is meant to channel all internal and external resources mobilised for the regional dimensions of ECOWAP. It will ensure financing of investments through a range of financial instruments and will provide support to regional integration, food security, innovation and capacity building and regional policies, institutions and regulations.

decided to invest and strengthen their cooperation for the successful implementation of this regional policy.

The implementation of ECOWAP was then perceived as the combination of two complementary mechanisms or action plans – National Agricultural Investment Programmes (NAIP/PNIA) for each of the 15

ECOWAS member countries and one Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (RAIP/PRIA). The vision and objectives of ECOWAP are consistent with CAADP goals of halving poverty and hunger by 2015. The first milestone in progressing on the vision of ECOWAP was the adoption of a ‘Regional Compact of Partnership for the Implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP’ in late 2009.

On the health side, the ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers (AHM) meets every year to discuss policy and adopt ‘resolutions’ on health issues in West Africa. The AHM has taken two key resolutions on nutrition in recent years: the first one in 2006 aimed to scale up food fortification in the region. It has led to specific measures on trade and industry; for example, a preferential fiscal and customs regime of fortification products and compulsory fortification of certain commodities by the industry. By contrast, the 2009 Resolution on Action for Nutrition has barely been translated into action at country level. It did not outline specific measures to be taken. Instead, it involved a number of actions such as scaling up breastfeeding promotion programmes or undernutrition screening, which cannot be enforced without drastic improvements in the capacity and resources of health services at country level.

The West African Health Organisation (WAHO) was formed in 1987, and since then it has become the Specialised Health Agency of ECOWAS, with headquarters in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. WAHO is an instrument of regional health integration that aims to enable high-impact and cost-effective interventions and programmes. WAHO enjoys administrative and financial autonomy.

WAHO hosts a bi-annual Nutrition Forum which brings together member states, the UN, civil society and key NGOs. It enables experience sharing and revision of nutrition interventions implemented at country level, alongside discussion on policy issues related to nutrition. WAHO supports multi-sectoral approaches to nutrition involving all stakeholders. It provides practitioners with baseline data and communities with best practices to overcome undernutrition. WAHO demonstrates com-

⁴² CEDEAO (2010).



Photo: © ACF / S Heuvenstein / Swan

mitment to pushing multi-sectoral approaches through the health and nutrition angle.

The final ECOWAS institution to mention here is the Humanitarian and Social Affairs Directorate, responsible for regional humanitarian coordination in West Africa. Recently the directorate launched a Humanitarian Coordination System (HCS), which should be backed by a regional Humanitarian Relief Fund (HRF) with the aim of enabling prompt and effective responses to disasters in the region.

1.2.2 Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)

The CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel) was created in 1973, following the severe droughts that hit the Sahel in the 1970s. The creation of CILSS initially reflected the commitment of nine Sahelian countries to fight droughts and desertification, but its mandate is in the process of being expanded to all ECOWAS countries. CILSS is run by an Executive Secretariat, based in Ouagadougou, which coordinates, manages and monitor its different programmes.

The core function of CILSS is to monitor food security and food production in the region. It leads a support unit for prevention and responses to food crises in the Sahel. CILSS has much invested at the regional level and in-country in putting in place adequate information systems in order to provide timely and adequate information on unfolding food crises. In addition, it has been the main institution involved in a major initiative on nutrition developed since May 2007 by Helen Keller International (HKI) to produce vitamin A fortified cooking oil in the eight countries of the Union. This multi-stakeholder partnership with a regional institution, NGOs, international donors and the private sector is described in the second section of the report.

CILSS developed two additional activities following the 2005 food crisis: the integration of nutrition (see NUSSAPS below) and the monitoring of markets. It is perceived as a powerful **political** entity in the region because of its power to validate (or reject) annual food production assessments made by member countries. It has, however, a limited influence over the level or scope of interventions in individual countries, or over the amount of donor funding those countries can expect. In addition to food security surveillance, CILSS also runs a number of projects in various sectors across regional borders.

The AGRHYMET Regional Centre (ARC) was created in 1974. It is a key actor of CILSS's food security surveillance. It is also concerned with improving natural resource management by providing training and information to development stakeholders and partners. AGRHYMET partners with a number of research institutions and international agencies (USAID, FAO, WHO, IRD, CIRAD etc).

INSAH is the other specialised agency of CILSS, based in Bamako / Mali, with the mandate to facilitate access to information and knowledge and to foster scientific and technical cooperation among actors in the national research systems working in agriculture, livestock, population and development. INSAH has been developing specific research on nutrition – for instance, it published a causal analysis of undernutrition in Sahel in 2008 (*Analyse des causes de la undernutrition dans trois pays du Sahel: Burkina Faso, Mali et Tchad*).⁴³

Nutrition, Sécurité Alimentaire et Politiques Publiques au Sahel – NUSAPPS (Nutrition, Food Security and Public Policies in Sahel) was created recently (2008), with two main aims regarding nutrition: to better integrate nutrition in diagnosis and analysis and to influence decision makers. In the first three years its achievements appear modest overall. Indeed, some supporting institutions have withdrawn from the project, putting its future in question.

This may be a reflection of the fact that CILSS's leadership has never integrated nutrition as a priority area: its scope of work has remained very focused on agricultural production. On the other hand, it might also demonstrate some of the inherent tension of trying to integrate nutritional indicators into the food security surveillance. Pushed by some international organisations, such an integration might not be the most effective way to allow early and adequate responses

to food insecurity. This argument was strengthened by the 2005 food crisis where the problem was not information but policy and decision-making. ACF research has shown that the 2010 food crisis in Niger was foreseen as early as October 2009, i.e. several months before the hunger gap and the expected increase in undernutrition, which should have allowed a relatively timely and effective response.⁴⁴

Tensions within CILSS to bridge the perceived gap between agriculture, food security and nutrition illustrates a wider challenge of multi-sectoral strategy that is relevant beyond the region. Nevertheless, ensuring the presence of nutrition units in WAHO and CILSS is vital to maintain the multi-sectoral approach to nutrition, linking it with the agriculture and health sectors.

1.2.3 West Africa Economic and Monetary Union

WAEMU (or UEMOA – Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine) was created in 1994 following the devaluation of the CFA Franc by the nine countries⁴⁵ sharing this currency. Its key assets are the unity of currency and language. WAEMU has been ensuring similar functions that ECOWAS has, but at the level of its member nations. It adopted a common agricultural policy in 2001, and developed a regional food security programme.

1.2.4 The Office of Coordination of Humanitarian affairs' West Africa Regional Office

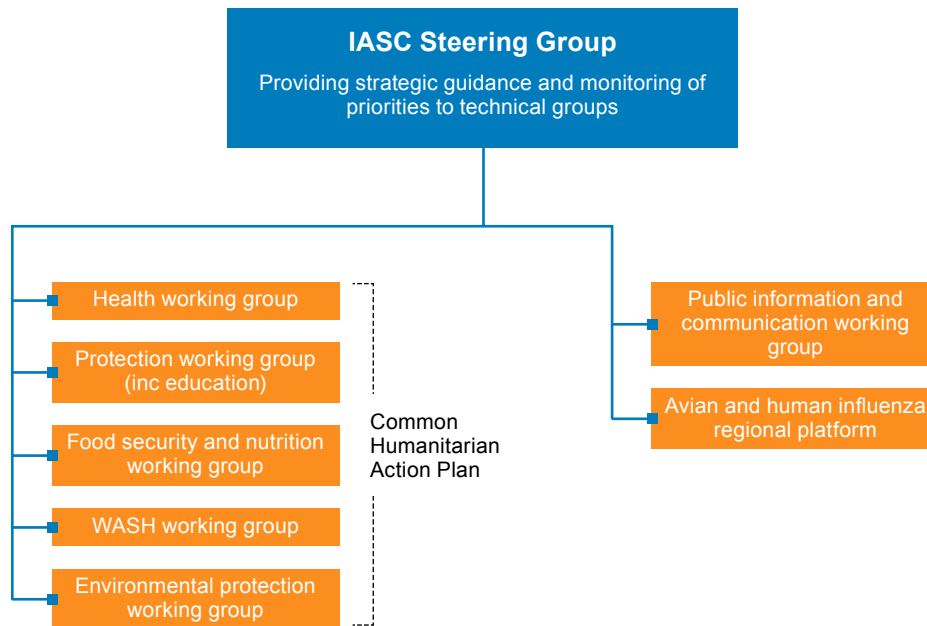
Not, strictly speaking, a West African institution, the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian affairs (OCHA)'s West Africa Regional Office (ROWA) was established in 2005 in Dakar, Senegal. It covers 23 countries of West and Central Africa and coordinates the seven working groups (clusters) described in *Figure 8*.⁴⁶ Dakar also hosts the regional headquarters or regional teams of several UN bodies, including the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). FAO has a regional team in Dakar but its regional office is actually in Accra, Ghana.

43 Dabo, K., Traoré, S. and Traoré, B (2008).

44 ACF research Niger.

45 Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo

46 OCHA (2011).

Figure 8 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in West Africa⁴⁷

The OCHA Regional Office coordinates the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance at the regional level. IASC is a forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making for humanitarian action in the region. It involves the UN and non-UN humanitarian partners, though the main issues in terms of coordination relate to the respective roles and responsibilities of the different UN organisations.

Both the West African IASC and the regional Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) are unique in the world – no other region has such mechanisms in place. OCHA coordinates the regional CAP, through which proposed interventions by different NGOs and UN organisations are put together and the priority axes for humanitarian action in West Africa are decided. Every year, the CAP for the following year is published at the end of November, with a mid-year review taking place in

July. A Global Launch of all Consolidated Appeals is done on the same day by the UN Secretary-General in a ceremonial event in Geneva. This is followed by a ‘CAP Funding Consultation’ conference in January, when the UN system seeks funding for humanitarian interventions.

In recent years, the CAP has been calling for between \$300 million and \$600 million annually to tackle humanitarian needs in the region, with generally substantially increased requirements in mid-term reviews (e.g. the CAP 2010 increased from \$368 million to \$568 million between November 2009 and July 2010). CAPs have largely focused on food security and nutrition as humanitarian priorities for the region, which generally represented between 50 to 60 percent of the total requirement. In terms of funding received following the appeal, the share of food security and nutrition interventions was even higher. By July 2010, 91 percent of the funding to the 2010 CAP was for food and nutrition.⁴⁸

47 UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) (2011).

48 UN Consolidated appeal (2010).

PART 2: Six success factors to defeat hunger in West Africa

2.1 Raising the political profile of nutrition

2.1.1 A regional food and agriculture policy to defeat hunger in West Africa

Apart from minor steps towards integration (e.g. on technical norms and regulations, as in the case of pesticides), not much happened policy-wise in the years following the adoption of ECOWAP in 2005. It took the 2005 food crisis in the Sahel and the high food price crisis that also affected coastal countries in 2008 to point out to donors and governments in the region how crucial it was to put in place a sound regional food and agriculture policy that would tackle the interrelated issues of hunger, food trade and food production. In most of West Africa, the price of food rose by 50 percent in 2008, threatening both the livelihoods of the poor and the viability of several import-dependent economies. For the less convinced, the food riots that swept across West Africa with protests

in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mauritania and Senegal, helped them to realise how closely related the issues of hunger, food prices and food production were.

ECOWAP is a real breakthrough in the way West African policy-makers approach food and agriculture policies to reduce hunger and undernutrition. It involves two major revolutions:

- It is the first time that countries in the region have put together not only a policy but also a costed comprehensive action plan, with instruments and institutions to implement it.
- Hunger reduction has become a central policy goal for food and agriculture in West Africa. This is a significant paradigm shift for countries which, for the past three decades, have focused their policies on economic growth and macroeconomic stability, in the hope that this growth would ultimately reduce poverty and hunger.



Photo: © ACF / S Hauenstein Swan

2.1.2 Guiding agricultural investment towards hunger reduction: the regional initiative to support food from West African ecosystems

Although the importance of a diversified diet is recognised, and some projects like vegetable gardens are proven to affect dietary diversity, there is little overall shared understanding on the kind of programmes or resources needed to reduce undernutrition durably among the rural poor in West Africa.

At the time ECOWAP is being developed, this seems to be an important gap, as nutrition advocates should be in a position to advocate in favour of the agricultural investments required to effectively address undernutrition. An example of what could be done is found in East and Southern Africa, with the promotion of the orange-fleshed sweet potato. Comprehensive programmes have been undertaken at national and regional levels through agronomic research, multiplication, distribution and extension, nutrition impact assessments and marketing campaigns.

This is an area that seems of high interest for WAHO, which has put efforts recently into this linkage between nutrition and food production, including diversification and use of local products. The promotion of local crops with high nutrition values, and of practices that give access to a richer and more diversified diet is one key area where WAHO nutrition experts are already working. This approach is critical to ensure that agricultural policies in the region are not just seeking economic growth and increased production but are really geared toward nutritional outcomes.

The Regional Initiative to Support Food from West African Ecosystems was thus launched in September 2009 with funding from USAID and WAHO. It is a regional collaborative, multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral partnership that involves the West

African Health Organization (WAHO), the ECOWAS Commission on Agriculture, the regional network of small-scale food producers (Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest – ROPPA), in collaboration with Bioversity International and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The overarching objective of this initiative is to ensure the effective promotion of use of local food resources from West Africa's traditional food systems in households. It also promotes West African food systems in strategies and interventions to combat food insecurity, micronutrient deficiencies and diet-related chronic diseases. It recognises the need to have a comprehensive approach on the links between agriculture and nutrition/health that include agroforestry, agro-biodiversity, food safety and food-borne diseases.⁴⁹ It seeks to increase production, processing, marketing and consumption of local foods rich in micronutrients in ECOWAS member states through the optimisation of traditional foods. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to reduce undernutrition, food insecurity and poverty in West Africa, in the framework of the MDGs.

By 2010, this initiative had developed a costed five-year operational plan to facilitate increases in production, availability and use of traditional foods by urban and rural households, as well as increased use in food and nutrition intervention programmes. It has set itself the goal of catalysing strategic actions of national governments and regional institutions to increase knowledge of the nutrition and health benefits of the region's traditional food resources, increase their production and use by the population, thereby effectively mainstreaming these food resources in everyday family diets. The action plan includes four main activities:

RESEARCH: Continue with ongoing research on the compositional attributes of food resources from West Africa's traditional food systems and pursue the development of a database to be used by all relevant actors.

RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR ACTION AND CHANGE IN DIETARY HABITS: Promote the use of local nutritious foods through the publication and dissemination of books, the use of social marketing tech-

49 ECOWAS Commission WAHO ROPPA, FAO, Bioversity Intl. (2009); ROPPA, Bioversity International, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the ECOWAS Commission for Agriculture (2010).

niques and programmes, the use of health, nutrition and school programmes, as well as dedicated events.

ADVOCACY AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS:

Raise awareness among decision makers, through direct lobby and advocacy, the organisation of events and roundtables in collaboration with the media, private sector organisations, NGOs and civil society groups. Influence ECOWAS health and agriculture policies.

CAPACITY BUILDING: Train experts, researchers, food processors, farmers and their organisations.

This initiative is unique in the sense that it is based on a cross-sectoral partnership bringing together actors of the health, environment and agriculture sectors. WAHO and other partners have been calling for more actors to join the initiative, as it appears very relevant to diverse stakeholders, with different comparative advantages and capacities, including international NGOs and research institutions. The initiative has a clear potential to play an important role in guiding agricultural policies and programmes that are being designed or implemented at both country and regional level. Indeed, it can play an important role ensuring that these programmes and policies adequately incorporate nutrition objectives. There are a number of specific areas for which research and advocacy activities could be conducted in order to ensure that the implementation of ECOWAP will effectively reduce undernutrition.

2.1.2 Nutrition on the international agenda in West Africa

Humanitarian organisations and donors have put hunger reduction and, specifically, nutrition as a key priority for their work in the region. INGOs such as ACF, UN institutions like WFP, FAO, WHO and UNICEF, donors such as ECHO, and research organisations such as IRD – all prioritise nutrition. As seen earlier, nutrition activities have been scaled up by several of these actors in recent years, leading to an unprecedented level of coverage of nutritional programmes.

However, it is recognised that the chronic nature and the massive scale of hunger in the region requires governments to lead efforts in the different relevant sectors to reduce undernutrition in a durable and comprehensive way. Yet, as discussed in this report, the allocation of public resources to nutrition through national budgets remains limited. This is due to different factors, including the lack of political will in some countries but also, generally, the lack of financial and human resources and the poor coverage and capacity of the health systems in West Africa.

This reality has led a number of actors, including ACF and international organisations like UNICEF and the World Bank, to invest at national level to promote the role of governments in the treatment of acute undernutrition and increasingly to develop capacity-building activities instead of direct interventions.

At regional level, the Nutrition Working Group for West Africa (NWG) brings together 18 organisations combating undernutrition in the region, including ACF and international NGOs, international organisations (UN and World Bank) and humanitarian donors. The main goal of this group is to support countries to scale up their action in nutrition and encourage governments to give a higher priority to nutrition in their policies and resource allocations. The NWG focuses on:

- coordinated advocacy and communication
- the development of effective regional and national coalitions
- regular situation analysis and dissemination, technical harmonisation and updating
- expanding and improving human resources in national and regional governments.

The NWG is supported by a REACH Facilitator.⁵⁰ The group has advocated for nutrition since 2009. It has been engaging with the ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers and with the regional nutrition forum. Members of the group have worked to influence the ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers who adopted two resolutions on nutrition in recent years, as seen earlier.

⁵⁰ To learn about REACH in West Africa, see UNICEF (2009c).

Members of the NWG have realised that such resolutions were not necessarily implemented at country level and that other tactics were required to conduct successful advocacy at regional level. In early 2011 the NWG thus started to initiate another approach: to appoint a 'Nutrition Ambassador', a high-level political figure from the region (a former president) who could advocate in favour of nutrition towards heads of governments and ministers. Such advocacy work at the regional level may be fruitful, especially if combined with other interventions and networking, as being done with the Health Ministers, WAHO and the Nutrition Forum. As seen with the fortification experience, to be successful regional advocacy needs to be combined with action at country level.

2.2 Civil society ownership and participation

A number of civil society organisations, especially farmers' groups, have been increasingly active in West Africa over the last decade. Organised in regional networks, they are working at the national, regional and international level.

2.2.1 ROPPA

Founded in 2000, the Network of Peasant organisations and Producers in West Africa (Le Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest – ROPPA) gathers organisations coming from ten West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo). ROPPA sees the rural family as the cornerstone of rural societies in African countries and works to promote the improvement of rural families' livelihoods and working conditions. It sees food sovereignty and the promotion of regional agriculture and food production as essential to ensure food security and economic development in the region.

Since its creation, ROPPA and its member organisations have also been actively involved and influential in all major institutional processes and policy debates relating to trade and agriculture in the region, including the design of national and regional agricultural poli-

cies, such as ECOWAP. At the global level, ROPPA has been one of the most active civil society organisations: it has participated in a number of global conferences and meetings (e.g. the World Food Summit in Rome in 2009) as well as in global initiatives such as the reform of the UN Committee on Food Security or the establishment of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP). Ndiogou Fall, former President of ROPPA, is currently a member of GAFSP's Steering Committee.

ROPPA plays an essential role in national and regional efforts to promote diversification, production of agricultural systems which contribute significantly to households' food security and nutrition. ROPPA has made the promotion of family farming and local food production a major priority. Since 2003, ROPPA launched the 'Afrique Nourricière' ('nourishing Africa') campaign, aimed at highlighting the nutritional value of local foods from local ecosystems. ROPPA has organised several exhibitions at international agricultural fairs, organised conferences and capitalised on the current knowledge of culinary art from the sub-region. As seen earlier, it has also recently teamed up with WAHO to develop an initiative geared towards the promotion of locally produced nutritious food.

2.2.2 RBM Network

The Réseau Billital Maroobé (RBM Network) was founded in 2003 by three national pastoralist organisations from Niger (AREN), Mali (TASSAGHT) and Burkina Faso (CRUS) to influence development policies in the Liptako-Gourma (ALG) region in order to defend the interests of pastoralist herders and to improve the management of cross-border transhumance. In 2009, the network was extended with members from four additional countries: Benin (Anoper), Nigeria (Myetti Allah), Senegal (four organisations) and Mauritania (one national organisation). The technical secretariat is based in Niger.

The network intervenes in two main activities:

- Advocacy at regional level to improve national and regional policies, ensure adherence to ECOWAP's



texts which recognise the free movement of cattle, the harmonisation of national policies, and collection of data required for advocacy purposes on policies and early warning systems.

- Capacity-building of member organisations through training of its members, to allow them to better understand and influence policy issues and decision making.

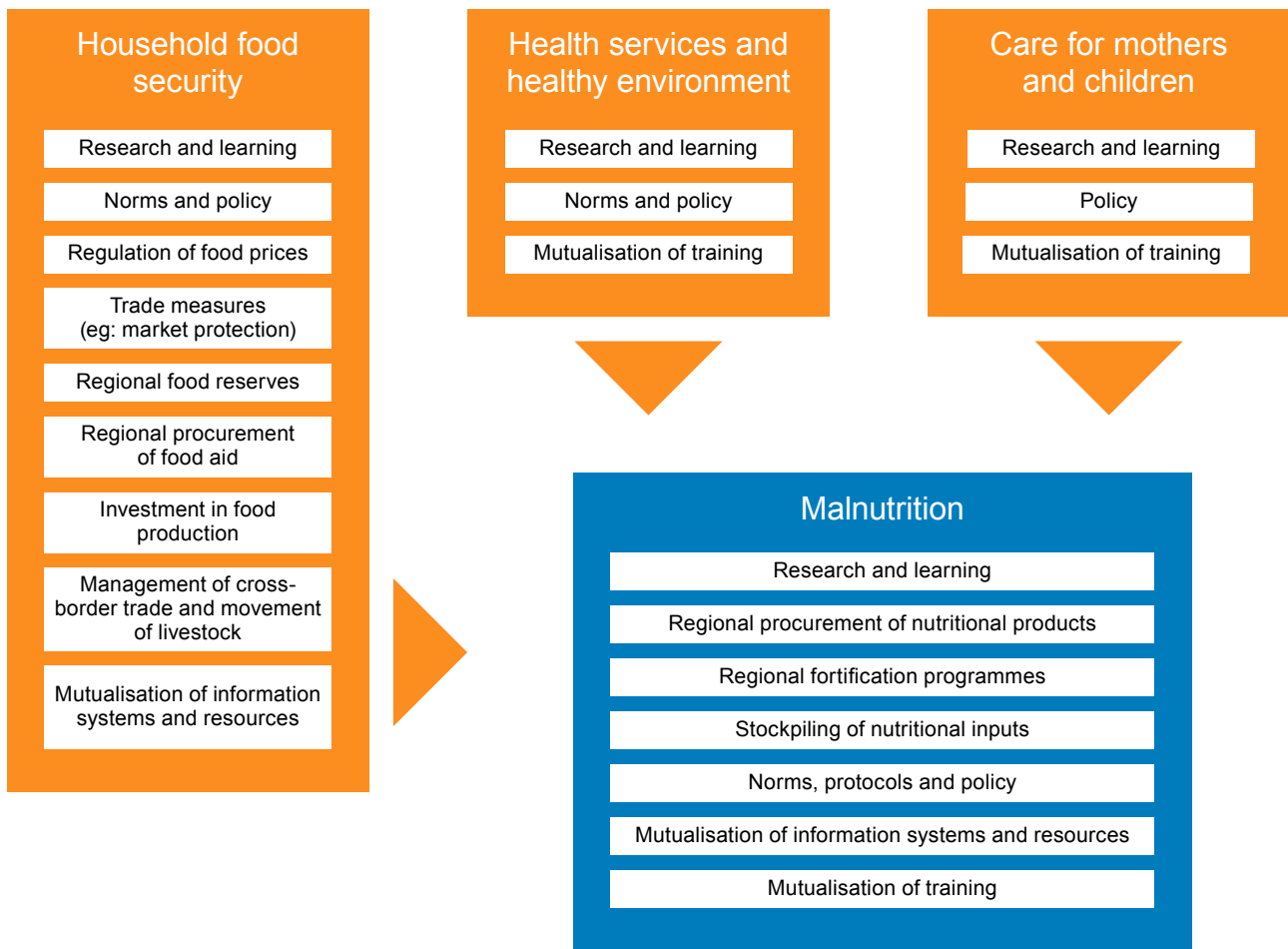
In April 2010, RBM co-organised with other organisations the Gogounou Forum on cross-border transhumance, where national authorities from Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger met to discuss the facilitation of access to pasture in coastal countries for cattle from Sahelian countries. It was first aimed at responding to the emergency situation in Niger, where drought had resulted in a large fodder deficit.

Although there is little awareness on this issue by most international humanitarian actors, the facilitation of cross-border movement and access to pastures in neighbouring countries was a highly relevant emergency response to the 2010 crisis and an effective alternative or complement to 'traditional' distribution of animal feed and destocking programmes run by relief organisations. The forum allowed the definition

of a road map to address the cross-border issues of pastoralists.

The growing experience and presence of West African farmer and pastoralist organisations are clear assets in the development of adequate food and agriculture policies in the region. Representing farmers and pastoralists, they have a first-hand knowledge of problems faced by the rural populations of West Africa and are therefore key actors to participate to the design of adequate policies and interventions in the region. They are very open to partnerships and collaboration with other actors, such as humanitarian NGOs and regional institutions such as CILSS and ECOWAS, with whom a number of partnerships and collaborative processes are already in place. However, past experiences call for caution in the development of partnerships, so that national member organisations do not become implementing partners of international actors and international NGOs, guided by externally designed agendas. The strength of these organisations must remain, above all, their ability to represent, support and work with their members.

Figure 9 Where the regional level can make a difference



2.3 A multi-sector approach

2.3.1 Why a multi-sector approach at regional level?

It is widely recognised that a multi-sector approach is essential to the success of hunger reduction strategies, so the many causes of undernutrition can be adequately addressed. This makes a lot of sense at community and national levels because, in order to be safe from undernutrition, people need not only good food but also adequate healthcare, safe water, etc. But is a multi-sector approach as relevant when contemplating what can be done at the regional level?

The regional level presents important added values and many opportunities to address the different

causes of undernutrition and make the fight against hunger more effective. As highlighted in *Figure 9*, it can address two different kinds of problems:

FACTORS OF UNDERNUTRITION AT THE INDIVIDUAL, COMMUNITY OR NATIONAL LEVEL: Examples of these are, respectively: care practices, access to adequate water and sanitation, and quality of health services. Regional level interventions may then be about finding synergies and economies of scale to tackle these problems in an effective way. For example, through mutualisation of resources, learning or harmonisation of policies, norms and practices – many examples are presented in *Figure 9*. Such regional interventions are relevant to tackle the three causes of undernutrition, i.e. food security, health and care.

FACTORS OF UNDERNUTRITION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: Unlike health and care practices, household food security is the only factor of undernutrition directly related to regional dynamics and, in particular, to the functioning of the West African agricultural markets and their ability to provide adequate and affordable food for all. Regional interventions are therefore required to address regional problems (e.g. interventions to regulate regional food markets and limit price volatility, to support food production in certain areas to ensure adequate food supply in others, favour cross-border trade of food, and cross-border movement of cattle in case of scarcity of pasture etc).

2.3.2 Solidarity and mutualisation of resources

The lack of resources of individual governments and the extent of hunger in the region makes it obvious that much can be gained from the mutualisation of resources and capacities at regional level for every sector relevant to nutrition. Regional and international organisations already have an important history of working together for this purpose. As seen earlier, food security surveillance and analysis is certainly the oldest field of mutualisation at the regional level, especially with the different agencies and activities run by CILSS and its partners.

More recently, NGOs and UNICEF collaborated with governments and regional institutions towards the expansion of supplementation and food fortification, and harmonisation of nutritional protocols, nutritional surveillance, research and training conducted at the regional level. In recent years, UNICEF has also started on regional procurement and stock-piling of nutritional products.

On the food side, efforts are underway in ECOWAS, with the support of WFP and other institutions, to establish a regional food reserve that would mutualise

the overall limited capacity of individual countries and put in place a more effective instrument to tackle food insecurity in individual countries. An initial feasibility study on a regional food reserve was conducted by WFP in 2009.⁵¹ A conference, 'Regional Solidarity Against Food Crises', was held in Accra in December 2010 to discuss the project further.⁵² The project is expected to move forward in 2011. It could initiate an important primary intervention for Pillar III of the ECOWAP Regional Plan which focuses on food security and vulnerability.

Apart from organisations like IOM and UNHCR which have a cross-border scope by nature, WFP is the UN institution which appears most inclined to engage with regional dynamics, processes and institutions, mainly because WFP has to consider regional issues when it procures food for its programmes from the region. This is increasingly the case, given WFP's growing access of cash resources and lower reliance on in-kind food aid. In recent years, notably 2008 and 2010, WFP faced restrictions from certain West African governments to buy and export foods to Niger. Preventing such disruptions is critical to its operations. *Box 3* provides more details on WFP's regional approach.

2.3.3 Regional integration to address regional problems

Food and agriculture is a sector for which regional interventions may not just bring advantages in terms of mutualisation of resources at regional level, but are actually necessary to tackle the threats to food insecurity and undernutrition that originate from regional dynamics. The implementation of the ECOWAP Regional Plan represents the most promising initiative that can address these threats.

One key area where the implementation of ECOWAP can have an impact on undernutrition is around the regulation of regional food markets. The volatility of food prices can result in high levels of undernutrition when high prices make food unaffordable for the poor or when low prices undermine farmers' incomes. It is now generally accepted that price volatility on global food markets is here to stay, but it can hardly be

51 Boukar, M. and Sall, A. (2009).

52 de Donne, F. X. (7-8 décembre 2010).

Box 3: Experimenting with new pathways – WFP and ECOWAS

Alongside FAO and UNICEF, WFP participates in joint food security surveillance and market monitoring in the region, which are important both for the implementation of its programmes and procurement and for the definition of responses to food insecurity.

But WFP's inclination to develop a regional scope for its programme is also driven by the orientation set by its 2008 new Strategic Plan which, as part of a revolutionary shift from food aid to food assistance, not only encourages local procurement of food aid but also capacity-building, partnerships and support to local food systems. In 2010, WFP was thus mandated and financed by ECOWAS to procure food aid for assistance to Niger. In 2009, ECOWAS requested WFP to conduct the feasibility study on a regional food reserve, and WFP should continue to work on the development of such instruments in the future.

In 2010, WFP and ECOWAS signed a Memorandum of Understanding detailing a number of areas of cooperation and stating that *'their role should not be to take over the functions of Member States'*, but would conduct a number of activities favouring synergy and economies of scale. The agreement commits WFP to help and reinforce the capacity

of ECOWAS to play a more prominent role in food security and humanitarian issues.

ECOWAS and WFP have identified eight core areas of cooperation:

- harmonisation and standardisation of policies, strategies and programmes
- climate change adaptation and mitigation
- improvement of food security and disaster risk management
- promotion of information and experience sharing
- capacity development
- emergency preparedness and response
- logistics
- information communication technology.

Both organisations have also agreed to develop a joint comprehensive strategic implementation plan to address food insecurity and eradicate hunger. In line with this MoU, in 2011 WFP will start seconding several staff to different departments of ECOWAS in Abuja.

addressed at national level, given the poor capacity of governments and the high level of market integration and interdependence in the region. Limiting the volatility of food prices in West Africa requires actions at regional level. A regional agricultural policy has the potential to play this role through different means: the facilitation of commercial flows within the region, the management of food availability at the regional level and on the sound utilisation of regulatory instruments such as the regional food reserve. Furthermore, by reducing dependency on foreign imports of food stuff, efforts to increase production of rice and maize, which are traditionally imported from abroad, are likely to prevent the transmission of international prices to domestic markets. Overall, by supporting West African farmers and pastoralists, ECOWAP has the potential not only to ensure an adequate food supply for all in the region – rural and urban alike – but also to improve the liveli-

hoods and incomes of rural populations and, ultimately, their nutrition.

As mentioned earlier, another important nutritional issue at regional level concerns the nutritional quality of the food consumed by West Africans, and especially by a growing urban population. This is an area which has seen successful efforts in the recent years by West African health institutions and their partners. Born in the aftermath of the 2006 Resolution by the ECOWAS Assembly of the Health Ministers on food fortification, the 'Faire Tache d'Huile' Project described in *Box 4* (overleaf) is symptomatic of an innovative approach to address this issue.

2.3.4 Does water matter?

Access to safe drinking water and, more generally, to a healthy environment is of critical importance in the

fight against undernutrition. However, the research could not find any obvious added value for regional interventions in this sector. The West Africa Water Initiative described in *Box 5* formed a partnership of outsiders to the region, mainly donors and international operators, with few connections to local and regional structures and institutions. The initiative has been mainly donor-driven, which has not favoured its sustainability and long-term impact beyond physical realisations. There is no indication of specific outcomes related to the regional scope of the initiative.

53 See Daniel, S. and Mittal, A. (2009).

54 Most information, quotes and materials in this section come from the 'Faire tache d'huile' case study, which can be found at Jarvis, M. (ed.) (2009).

There is, however, one key area where water clearly matters: the use and the management of regional rivers. West African countries share a number of large rivers, which are critical to agriculture and food production in the region. These include the Niger (Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon), the Volta (Benin, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso), the Senegal (Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Guinea) and the Gambia (Senegal, Gambia, Guinea).

The current trend of large-scale agricultural investments in the region – also called *land-grabs*⁵³ – is a major issue of concern for food security and regional collaboration in the region. In Mali, for instance, from 98,531 hectares currently developed in the Niger river, the government is planning to expand the area under irrigation to some

Box 4: Faire Tache d'Huile – food fortification in West Africa⁵⁴

Helen Keller International (HKI) has been active on the regional front on a very specific nutritional issue: food fortification. In recent years, HKI played a key broker role for a multi-partner public-private initiative to produce vitamin A fortified cooking oil in the eight WAEMU countries in West Africa.

The Programme was dubbed 'Faire Tache d'Huile', literally similar to a 'snowball effect' in French, used figuratively to express the scope and outcomes of this multi-country, multi-partnership approach to vitamin A fortification of cooking oil in the West Africa region. The successful implementation of this cooking oil initiative catalysed a similar regional initiative on micronutrient fortification of cereal flour, with the two regional initiatives declared at the Clinton Global Initiative as 'Fortify West Africa'.

The 'Faire Tache d'Huile' initiative was a multi-sectoral effort that included governments, industries, researchers, NGOs and other social actors, with a strong support from GAIN, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. It operated not only at the level of individual WAEMU member states, but also at the regional level, through collaboration with WAEMU and WAHO. HKI helped bring together the key private, public, and not-for-profit stakeholders with the goal of achieving mandatory vitamin A fortification of industrially-produced cooking oil throughout WAEMU. In May 2007, HKI announced a \$2.7 million public-private initiative to produce vitamin A fortified

cooking oil in the eight countries. Five countries were expected to produce fortified vegetable oil by 2010 – Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Benin and Senegal.

The experience of HKI of working at both regional and national level is very valuable. As HKI explains, regional and national efforts were '*mostly synergistic rather than conflicting. One advantage of the regional effort was the ability to set out a regional standard for practice, legislation, and certification. Another was the ability to work directly from the start with regional institutions and a region-wide industry association to accelerate fortification within individual countries and the region. A third was the impact of harmonised standards. The challenge was in managing a large number of actors all moving at a different pace.*'

The 'Faire Tache d'Huile' initiative has been praised for its success in bringing together all relevant stakeholders at regional level to address a nutritional challenge. This study could not, however, identify assessment impact studies to show its impact on vitamin A deficiency. Analysing such studies would be useful to assess the impact and relevance of this approach and, in particular, its effects on undernutrition and mortality. Learning lessons from this project will also be important, especially around the issue of regional partnerships and in relation to future development of the production of fortified and other nutritious food (e.g. special blends for children).

Box 5: The West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI)

The West Africa Water Initiative (WAWI) was launched in late 2001 as a partnership driven by USAID and comprised of fourteen international institutions: the Conrad Hilton Foundation, World Vision, USAID, UNICEF, WaterAid, the World Chlorine Council, Winrock International, Lions Club International, the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development, the Desert Research Institute, the International Trachoma Initiative, the United Nations Foundation, Helen Keller International and the Carter Centre.

WAWI's four objectives were to:

- increase the level of access for the poor and vulnerable populations to safe water and environmental sanitation services
- reduce the prevalence of water-borne diseases, including trachoma, guinea worm, and diarrhoeal diseases
- ensure ecologically and financially sustainable management of water quantity and quality
- foster a new model of partnership and institutional synergy.

WAWI's activities mainly focused on three countries – Ghana, Mali, and Niger – including through interventions on access to water supply and sanitation, community mobilisation and organisation, disease reduction through hygiene behaviour, livelihood and income generating activities, and ecological management at boreholes. Some 55 boreholes, 267 latrines, 75 waste pits and 9 water standpipes were constructed between 2002 and 2008.⁵⁵ Interventions were conducted by partnering NGOs, as well as through Tetra Tech ARD as a private contractor hired by USAID to handle some operational aspects of the initiative.⁵⁶

The initiative had a \$45 million budget for a first phase, during the first six years of operations (2002–2008). The research could not establish the current financial situation, though the budget is expected to have been drastically reduced for the second phase, with a refocus on the promotion of behaviour changes.⁵⁷

It is unclear what the impact of this initiative has been in the past nine years, though the overall cost-effectiveness seems low when considering the limited outcomes.

1,000,000 hectares,⁵⁸ mainly for large-scale plantations for the production of agrofuels and other exportable crops. Such development is an issue of serious concern for food security in Mali – with land and water resources taken away from smallholders and pastoralists – but also for the population of other countries in the region, who will see a drastic reduction of their water resources if current plans materialise. This evolution will obviously require interstate collaboration in the future so that existing resources can be shared in an equitable way, and served to ensure regional food security rather than benefiting a few foreign interests and wealthy individuals.⁵⁹

55 Bismark Nerquaye-Tetteh, WAWI Coordinator (n.d.).

56 ARD (n.d.).

57 Hernandez, O. and Shafrits, L. (2009).

58 API (n.d.).

59 A forthcoming report based on research by the Oakland Institute at the end of 2010 identified 22 large scale investors, who have signed leases for some 550,000 hectares in Mali, including Libya and HUICOMA for 100,000 hectares each.

2.4 Institutionalised coordination

2.4.1 An established ECOWAS leadership

Although there is definitely value in developing initiatives with a smaller group of countries, as seen earlier in the case of WAEMU, it is now widely accepted that ECOWAS is ultimately the level where regional interventions must be designed and coordinated.

This reflects a historic convergence of all stakeholders behind ECOWAS's leadership to design and implement policies and programmes to fight hunger in West Africa:

MEMBER STATES: Governments have shown their strong commitment to regional integration under ECOWAS in many decisions. They have given ECOWAS the mandate to lead and coordinate policies and programmes in the various sectors relevant to the fight against hunger.

REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS: CILSS is extending its country coverage to match the ECOWAS region.

MAJOR DONORS, as well as the Sahel and the West Africa Club, are supporting the implementation of ECOWAP as a priority policy that is intended as a major catalyst of regional integration.

REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS are fully involved in the regional integration process under ECOWAS.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS: ECOWAS has signed a series of memoranda of understanding which frame its collaboration with UN agencies including the UN Organization for West Africa (UNOWA), WFP, ILO, UNICEF, etc.

As seen earlier, ECOWAS includes sectoral institutions (responsible for health, for food and agriculture, water etc) and is also creating a humanitarian directorate to tackle transitory and emergency issues. WAHO, the regional health agency in charge of nutrition, is promoting initiatives that seek to positively influence the national and regional agricultural policies for proper consideration to be given to nutrition. On paper, the ECOWAS structure should thus be in a position to implement a comprehensive approach to hunger reduction. However, the ability of ECOWAS to effectively coordinate its different institutions and agencies appears poor at the moment and will have to be built over time.

The Regional Compact of Partnership for the Implementation of ECOWAP, adopted by all relevant stakeholders, recognises ECOWAP as the fundamental framework for programming actions in the food and agriculture sector and the coordination of international assistance in West Africa. Its implementation appears to offer the best potential in terms of hunger reduction in the region, providing potentially swift impact.

2.4.2 A leadership to share

The regional level has proven to be the right place for multi-stakeholder partnerships like the one undertaken in collaboration with WAEMU for vitamin A fortification (see *Box 4*), where different actors with different capacities can join hands towards a common goal.

Working with regional institutions can ensure the fixation and enforcement of the highest standards (e.g. nutritional protocols, food fortification) for all countries in the region. Based on the vitamin A fortification experience, it seems effective to combine different forms of interventions including favouring adequate laws, norms, and regulations, and direct support and capacity-building of local industries in research of adequate products, procurement, processing, marketing, labelling, etc.

As happened with vitamin A fortification, which was led by WAEMU, or with the livestock certificates developed by CILSS to ease cross-border movement of cattle, the possibility for other institutions than ECOWAS to take leadership on certain regional activities must certainly be maintained. It may even be encouraged, as long as mechanisms are in place for ECOWAS to adopt instruments or regulations that have been created by others.

It is thus expected that the achievements at the WAEMU level will be soon extended to the 15 ECOWAS countries. HKI Regional Director observed that: *'Working with the WAEMU Commission as a first step in the regional effort is ideal for moving the fortification agenda more easily to the broader ECOWAS level.'*⁶⁰ Extension to ECOWAS is facilitated by the memorandum of understanding existing between the WAEMU and ECOWAS Commissions and stipulating that ECOWAS would adopt standards established by WAEMU.

Such cooperation follows the important principle of subsidiarity, which is upheld among regional institutions in West Africa. It allows the optimisation of existing regional capacities. It also permits a more balanced relationship between countries in the region, given the difference in demographic and economic weight of Nigeria and other coastal countries with

⁶⁰ Most information, quotes and materials in this section come from the *'Faire tache d'huile'* case study, which can be found in Jarvis, M. (ed.) (2009).

Sahelian states. This more balanced relationship may favour adequate consideration being given to the concerns of Sahelian countries, for instance, on pastoralist issues (most livestock in West Africa is raised in Sahelian countries).

2.4.3 What role for CILSS?

The new architecture being set up for the implementation of the Regional Plan (described in the Part 1 of the report) raises questions about the future role of CILSS at a time ECOWAS is becoming the overarching framework for food and agriculture in West Africa.

WHAT SCOPE OF WORK FOR CILSS? Though its mandate is supposed to be extended to all ECOWAS countries, the institutional process to conduct this extension is unclear. Furthermore, if this extension seems quite straightforward concerning CILSS's technical functions, it seems much more problematic for the political and operational aspects of its work, where this would result in an overlap with ECOWAS institutions and activities.

ARE CILSS'S POLITICAL FUNCTIONS STILL RELEVANT TODAY? All CILSS member states⁶¹ have committed to a regional integration process at the level of ECOWAS. It seems difficult to retain an apparently redundant political function for CILSS. CILSS's political scope cannot be adapted any more to the new paradigm framing food and agriculture issues in the region, which is no longer about managing droughts and natural resources, but about managing food and agriculture in a broader way that encompasses other critical aspects, including trade and food markets but also vulnerability and nutrition.

SHOULD CILSS BE THE OPERATIONAL ARM OF ECOWAS?

There has been an intense discussion in 2010 to determine whether CILSS should become the Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture that was being created. There was a strong rationale for this solution, especially since the institution was already in place

and operational. It was unfortunately decided that it would not be CILSS. The decision was due, allegedly, to issues around the current governance of the organisation more than to a choice in terms of architecture or policy orientation. If problems were deep enough to reach such a decision, the solution has the advantage of removing them from the path of the immediate implementation of ECOWAP, in the hope that a solution can be found to the problem in the future.

SHOULD CILSS BE THE TECHNICAL ARM OF ECOWAS?

Though this does not appear in ECOWAS official resolutions, it seems, however, generally admitted that CILSS, even if it is not the regional agency, will play an important role in the implementation of ECOWAP. Like FAO at the global level, CILSS and its specialised agencies have a great deal of knowledge and expertise on food and agriculture issues, which will be critical for the future for this implementation.

2.4.4 A thorn in the side of coordination: the relief and development divide

Coordination is a challenge in West Africa where the humanitarian and development divide remains very present. A number of key donors, including the main ones – the EU and the USA – as well as several international institutions, still operate along the lines of this divide. A humanitarian approach focusing on relief responses to disasters tends to overlook the true nature of food insecurity in West Africa. By holding the emergency response as the first priority, it also tends to ignore regional processes and institutions.

While it is certainly adapted to protracted conflicts and refugee situations, the functioning of the UN humanitarian system led by OCHA in West Africa raises a number of questions relating to the way it addresses food insecurity and undernutrition:

TIMING: The timing of the Consolidated Appeals (CAP) does not correspond to the reality of the population's needs but to a global UN agenda for fundraising. Every year, the CAP is prepared by OCHA, which brings together UN agencies and programmes, humanitarian NGOs and Western donors around September-

61 Except Mauritania and Chad which are not part of ECOWAS.

October, just a few weeks prior to the assessments on food supply, crops and pastures conducted in the region. It is perplexing that this important strategic planning takes place without the information required to adequately assess the food security and nutrition situation to be expected in the months to come. Furthermore, as seen in recent years, the mid-term review which takes place in July is too late in the event of a food crisis in the Sahel: it takes place at a time the crisis is already too advanced to make necessary adjustments. When a food crisis is unfolding in the Sahel, adjustments in action plans and resources must take place early in the year.

SCOPE: As seen earlier, every year a major share of the CAP requirements is intended to address food insecurity and undernutrition, though it is widely recognised that these problems are somehow permanent and present every year in the region. The short-term approach implied by the CAP neither allows work on long-term solutions, risk reduction and preventive measures nor enables building response capacities over time.

PROCESS: This humanitarian-exclusive process brings together UN institutions and international humanitarian NGOs. It takes place in advance and in parallel with regional processes for food and agriculture which bring together the same UN organisations and donors with governments and specialised regional agencies to consolidate the regional assessment of the food security situation. There is a real risk of duplication, which undermines the effectiveness of both processes.

The above may explain why it was decided that Niger and Chad will do separate appeals in 2011 – i.e. outside the regional CAP. However, this decision only addresses some of the aforementioned issues. It is perplexing to see how the UN machine remains driven by its own institutional agenda rather than by the needs of people in West Africa.

2.4.5 Challenges ahead

2011 is a crucial year for the process of operationalisation of the ECOWAP process. No doubt West Africa is facing many challenges for a successful realisation of current plans:

- The process is complex and challenging. Fifteen countries and regional institutions are participating in in-depth reforms of the governance of food and agriculture. It relies on institutional reforms and the effective establishment of new instruments that will allow implementation of the regional programme.
- All actors, including governments, international organisations and donors must shift from the project approach that characterises development activities in Africa⁶² to one that creates the conditions of solid policy-making that will allow real management of food and agriculture.
- Apart from positive first steps by WFP (see *Box 3* above), multilateral agencies are not necessarily supportive of a process which may be perceived by some as competing with them. The World Bank does not support or finance regional initiatives or programmes and the UN coordination system seems largely disconnected from regional processes others than its own.
- After decades of investment in national mechanisms to coordinate response to and prevention of food crises, these national systems must be adapted to allow the development of regional responses. For instance, current plans for a regional food reserve that could be constituted by the virtual consolidation of individual countries' reserves would require changes in the procurement procedures and the disbursement of food at country level (current arrangements in the Sahel require all donors to formally sign with the government for any operation on the national food stock).
- West African countries have embarked upon the creation of new instruments and mechanisms in an institutional landscape which is already quite well developed, with two organisations for economic integration (ECOWAS and WAEMU), CILSS, and

⁶² See Crola, J. D. (2009).

a multitude of specialised development institutions. These organisations have overlapping and sometimes competing mandates and limited resources with which to pursue their aims.⁶³ It is critical for the successful implementation of ECOWAP to avoid redundancy and competition and to evolve towards a more coherent architecture for food and agriculture in West Africa.

2.5 A multi-phase approach

With ECOWAP, ECOWAS intends to do what the international community and the UN organisation have failed to achieve in the past few decades: break a meaningless relief and development divide by bringing short and long-term objectives into one policy. This is particularly relevant in the West African context where states, national administrations and regional institutions have the responsibility to prevent and respond to food insecurity, and where undernutrition is rather an endemic plague than the effect of discrete disasters.

63 Nabarro, D. et al. (p29) (2009).

64 CEDEAO / Département de l'Agriculture, de l'Environnement et des Ressources en eau (2010).

2.5.1 Implementing the twin-track approach in West Africa: The three priorities of the ECOWAP Regional Plan⁶⁴

a) Promotion of strategic products for food sovereignty

The objective of this pillar is to support all regional initiatives and strategies for the development of agri-food value chains, in order to improve the incomes of the rural population, reduce food dependency of the ECOWAS countries and modernise production systems. It is structured around two components:

COMPONENT 1: Promotion of food commodities that contribute to food sovereignty: millet/sorghum, maize and rice, roots and tubers, fruit and vegetables, and animal products. This component 1 includes (i) support to the modernisation of family farms and sustainable intensification of production systems; (ii) the development of irrigation; (iii) structuring and organising value chains; (iv) promoting processing and adding value to products.

COMPONENT 2: Promotion of the livestock, meat and milk value chains. This component includes: (i) supporting the adaptation and securing of the various



livestock production systems; (ii) the management of movement of herds among countries and the prevention/regulation of conflicts in the use of natural resources; (iii) the restructuring and organisation of marketing channels or value chains; and (iv) the promotion of processing and adding value to products.

b) An environment favourable to regional agricultural development

This second programme aims at helping to create a business, physical, informational and institutional environment conducive to a massive transformation of production systems and agricultural value chains in West Africa. It has four components:

COMPONENT 1: Improving the business environment of agri-food chains through (i) the promotion of regional trade of food products; (ii) the development of trade infrastructure suitable for agricultural food products, and (iii) the adaptation and implementation of new trade provisions at the borders of the ECOWAS sub-region.

COMPONENT 2: Adaptation to climate change and variability, and integrated management of shared resources through (i) strengthening regional research on climate change and its impacts on production systems, and (ii) strengthening the capacity for integrated management of shared water resources.

COMPONENT 3: Operationalisation of an information and decision support system including: (i) monitoring the environmental and macroeconomic context; (ii) monitoring agricultural policies; (iii) monitoring production systems and the food and nutritional situation, and (iv) monitoring markets and trade opportunities.

COMPONENT 4: Strengthening institutional and human capacities through (i) regional support to capacity strengthening initiatives; (ii) strengthening the coherence of regional policies; and (iii) improving the management of ECOWAP/CAADP.

c) Reduction of food vulnerability and promotion of sustainable access to food

The objective of the third programme is to help ensure the coverage of food needs of vulnerable populations and reduce the structural vulnerability of populations in the region. This programme is structured around five components:

COMPONENT 1: Definition of a regional approach to safety nets for vulnerable populations, including support for defining a common approach and intervention instruments concerning access to food for the poorest, in urban as well as rural areas.

COMPONENT 2: Adaptation of the vulnerability and food-crisis-prevention monitoring system. This includes: (i) adaptation of the crisis prevention and management systems to the changing context and food risk factors; (ii) developing the capacity to support decision-making for prevention of crises within the region and for targeting interventions; and (iii) strengthening consultation and coordination mechanisms on the food and nutrition situation.

COMPONENT 3: Promotion of safety nets for vulnerable urban populations.

COMPONENT 4: Implementation of targeted safety nets for poor or vulnerable rural populations.

COMPONENT 5: Promotion of regional instruments for food security.⁶⁵

In order to initiate concrete steps in the implementation of the policy, the ECOWAS expert meeting that took place in early February 2011 decided to focus initially on the following four strategic areas, which confirm the comprehensive approach taken by the regional programme. It involves support of production, trade and food security:

- institutional and human capacity-building of the key partners of the regional pacts
- implementation of the production-support instruments

65 ECOWAS Commission (2009).

- establishment of storage-support instruments, warrantage, and group marketing by producer organisations, as well as the promotion of value chains within the regional trade sub-space
- the implementation of safety nets targeted at vulnerable populations and the implementation of a regional storage and security strategy.

2.5.2 Bridging the humanitarian sphere with regional processes

Future food crises in the region should not undermine the current process of regional integration but rather reinforce it. This requires that international actors and regional institutions take urgent steps to bridge the ECOWAP and the humanitarian sphere. Given the challenge of accessing sufficient financial resources for the implementation of ECOWAP, it is essential to avoid duplication and ensure the most effective use of available resources. Consistency and coordination of communication to donors and the public is also key.

The actual potential of the Humanitarian and Social Affairs Directorate to tackle food insecurity and undernutrition in the region is not yet clear. It does represent an important step towards 'regionalising' a sector that, to date, has been mostly driven by international players, including humanitarian donors, NGOs and UN organisations. This could potentially have a number of advantages in terms of responsiveness, effectiveness and coherence of hunger reduction interventions in the region. In addition, the rising insecurity in some parts of the Sahel limits the presence of international relief staff and organisations, which may support the idea of 'regionalising' humanitarian relief. That said, an expanding role of ECOWAS within humanitarian relief could be problematic in responses to food crises resulting from conflicts where ECOWAS could be potentially involved – as was the case in Liberia and

Sierra Leone, where ECOWAS troops had become one of the warring factions.

2.6 Financing

While WHO estimates that \$34 per person is necessary for access to a minimum healthcare package, national health budgets in west Africa do not provide more than \$10 per person.⁶⁶ The 2000 Abuja Declaration of Heads of States committed them to allocate 15 per cent of the national budget to health while the 2003 Maputo Declaration committed them to allocate 10 per cent of the national budget to agriculture. However, most countries in West Africa have not reached these targets.⁶⁷ Though it is recognised to be endemic in the region, resources for the treatment of acute undernutrition in West Africa mainly come from humanitarian donors, primarily ECHO.

The cost of the Regional Food and Agriculture Programme has been estimated at \$900 million for the first five years, for which ECOWAS has committed \$150 million of its own resources, with the expectation that international donors will bring the complement. So far this plan has received limited funding from donors, and, in early 2011 the ECOWAS commission was uncertain on the amount of funding that it could expect to receive from international donors. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) that has been created at the World Bank to channel the funding committed in L'Aquila does not finance regional programmes or bodies. So far, three national programmes (PNIAs) have received funding from the GAFSP: Togo (\$39 million), Niger (\$33 million) and Sierra Leone (\$50 million).⁶⁸

A 2009 Oxfam study in West Africa examined how the commitments made at international summits over the previous two years were materialising at country level. One of its main findings was that boosting aid to food and agriculture requires more than money, and that major changes in the way aid is provided are necessary to address major flaws in terms of coherence and coordination.

66 WAHO (2008).

67 Ibid.

68 CEDEAO / Département de l'Agriculture, de l'Environnement et des Ressources en eau (2010).

69 Crola, J. D. (2009).

Box 6: Examples of the project approach of aid to agriculture in West Africa⁷⁰

- In 2007, 27 donors were supporting agriculture, forestry, and pastoralism in Burkina Faso, through 131 projects (out of a total of 551 projects registered in all sectors).
- In 2008, 28 donors were involved in 67 projects in the rural sector in Niger.
- In Burkina Faso and Ghana, 80 and 63 projects, respectively, were being implemented within the Ministries of Agriculture alone.

The study shows how in West Africa, typically 60 to 80 percent of public expenses for rural development and agriculture are externally funded by donors. The major part of international aid is *‘implemented through a plethora of different projects that are often poorly coordinated and at times disengaged from national programmes.’*⁶⁹ The project approach tends to weaken local capacity in administrative and financial management, especially because it puts in place independent management structures that hijack major human and financial resources from productive investment and different administrations. Donors have renewed their commitments to ‘country-led processes’ and national leadership, but the project approach may undermine the materialisation of these commitments (see *Box 6*).

The Regional Food and Agriculture Programme is intended to move away from this approach and to bring lasting changes to the fight against undernu-

trition in the region. The effective implementation of the programme will largely depend on the availability of financial resources, and the capacity of the new regional fund and agency to disburse these funds. Previous commitments by international donors, both in terms of the level of financing and aid effectiveness and convergence, must materialise for this process to succeed (see *Box 7*). A related challenge will be to bring certain donors and institutions which have not supported it so far, to the table of regional integration (e.g. the World Bank and UK).

Box 7: Concretising the commitment of aid alignment, effectiveness and coherence

ECOWAP is a historic opportunity to concretise international commitments made by the international community in recent years. The 2005 Paris Declaration⁷¹ inspired the L’Aquila joint statement on food security, endorsed by 26 countries and 14 international bodies in July 2009, which agreed on the following five principles that are also at the core of ECOWAP. Initially called the *l’Aquila Principles*, they became the *Rome Principles* when endorsed by the October 2009 World Food Summit, and include the following:

- Programmes must be country-led.
- Approaches must be comprehensive.
- Assistance must be strategically coordinated.
- Multilateral agencies must have a strong role.
- National efforts must be supported by a sustained commitment of financial resources.

70 Ibid. pp. 5–7.

71 In 2005, the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness set five principles for international assistance:

- Ownership: countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, strategies and co-ordinate development actions. Aid should reflect recipient rather than donor priorities.
 - Alignment: Donors base their overall support on countries’ development priorities strategies, institutions and procedures.
 - Harmonisation: Donors’ actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective.
 - Managing for Results: Managing resources and improving decision making for results.
 - Mutual Accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results.
- OCDE (n.d.).

Conclusion

High food prices in 2008 triggered a number of international conferences and global forums in recent years. Global processes were initiated, such as the design of a Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) led by the UN High Level Task Force or the reform of the Committee of World Food Security. But none of these global initiatives has had the ability to link policy discussions to the concrete choices which are being made by West African countries in terms of policy orientation, allocation of resources and institutional development.

West African institutions have their weaknesses and are faced with issues of overlap, redundancy and overall coherence. However, their existence and the commitment of West African countries to regional integration represent a critical asset for the region in the fight against hunger. Given the interdependence of West African countries and the limited capacity of most of them to address hunger on their own, regional integration and regional cooperation are musts. They

are also critical to implement the internationally agreed principles of country ownership, strategic coordination and leadership in the fight against hunger and international assistance in general because, without integration, most West African states will remain subject to the agenda and goodwill of international donors, institutions and richer countries.

With ECOWAP, West African countries have developed a ground-breaking food and agriculture policy which clearly has the potential of bringing durable solutions to poverty, hunger and undernutrition in the region. It does not only seek to achieve economic growth and export earnings, as was often the case with national agricultural policies in recent decades, but, rather, it puts food security and hunger reduction at its centre.

As seen in this report, ECOWAS is facing many constraints on successful implementation of its policy. Besides, it currently has a limited capacity (human,



technical, financial) to put in place and manage all the initiatives and instruments it has decided to create to implement this policy. A key driver of success will be the participation and support of all stakeholders, including governments, regional institutions, civil society and international actors (both humanitarian organisations and donors).

This situation represents an important opportunity for international NGOs such as ACF which have a unique chance to become part of this process. ACF, like many international humanitarian organisations, has been working for two decades as an 'implementing partner' of UN agencies and programmes, and is sometimes perceived as a contractor of Northern donors. The current evolution in West Africa is opening the door to a new era where international NGOs can move beyond working only with 'traditional' partners, to forming partnerships with regional bodies such as ECOWAS, WAHO or CILSS.

Partnerships and collaboration can take a multitude of forms, from direct programming, advocacy, capacity building, research and participation to policy development and funding. WAHO already has a financing capacity that could facilitate a partnership. ECOWAS will set up its new fund soon, and its regional agency, with the ability to contract different actors, will also be running shortly.

As seen earlier, WFP is already financed by regional institutions on certain regional operations. By reinventing its way of working as it is doing since 2008, WFP has shown an important new path for humanitarian organisations committed to fight hunger. One must hope that others, and especially international NGOs, will do the same, in their own way. People in West Africa are among the most affected by undernutrition, but the region is wide open for innovations and efforts that will eventually bring an end to the suffering of millions.

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Annex 1: Further institutions involved in the fight against hunger in West Africa

Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC)

The 'Club du Sahel' was founded by OECD member countries in 1976 to raise international support for and awareness of the drought crises in the Sahel. In response to growing regional interdependence, its geographic coverage was extended in 2001 to encompass all West African countries. Renamed 'Sahel and West Africa Club' (SWAC), it supports the leadership of West Africa's regional organisations and regional integration of West Africa. It conducts prospective analyses and promotes policy dialogue in the region, including through its publications and the organisation of forums bringing together club members and key stakeholders.

Whereas it has been a sort of donor forum for more than thirty years, SWAC is currently changing face: in 2011, ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS are joining OECD countries as Club Members.

SWAC has been supporting a number of specific initiatives and mechanisms, such as:

THE FOOD AID CHARTER, adopted in 1990 by CILSS countries and SWAC donors, contributed to harmonise donor practices and thereby improved food crisis prevention and management in the Sahel. Building on a broad consultation process, facilitated by SWAC and CILSS, a revised version of this code of good conduct will address new food security challenges, expanding its coverage to the whole West African region, under the aegis of ECOWAS. www.oecd.org/swac/charter

THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK (RPCA), jointly managed by SWAC and CILSS since its creation in 1984, is a forum for discussion and exchange

on food security issues, facilitating decision-making to better prevent and manage food crises.

www.food-security.net

CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION: Together with West African partners, the SWAC Secretariat created the West African Borders and Integration network (WABI) in 2003 which gave rise to local pilot operations. It helped the ECOWAS Commission to formulate its Cross-border Initiatives Programme and the Commission of the African Union to set up its Border Programme.

www.oecd.org/swac/crossbordercooperation

Conference of Agriculture Ministers of West and Central Africa (CMA/AOC)

The Conference of Agriculture Ministers of West and Central Africa (CMA/AOC) is an intergovernmental organisation, which brings together the Agriculture and livestock Ministers of the 20 member countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad).⁷²

Created in 1991, the CMA/AOC is both a forum that formulates policy proposals on agriculture and development and a regional organisation running programmes in agricultural development. It seems quite redundant with the ECOWAS Commission and lacks both mandate and resources to implement regional programmes.

River basin management authorities

West Africa has four main interstate organisations united by the sharing of water resources:

⁷² For more information see CMA/AOC (2007)

NIGER BASIN AUTHORITY (ABN): (Autorité du Bassin du Niger) – Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Guinea. www.abn.ne

AUTHORITY OF THE VOLTA BASSIN (ABV): Benin, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso. www.abv-volta.org

ORGANIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SENEGAL RIVER (OMVS): (Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Senegal) – Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Guinea. www.omvs.org

ORGANIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAMBIA RIVER (OMVG): (Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Gambie – Senegal, Gambia, Guinea.

Research and development organisations

In addition to the CILSS institutions mentioned earlier, a number of agencies are active in West Africa, including the following international institutions with technical mandates and headquarters or offices in the region:

THE AFRICA RICE CENTRE (AFRICARICE), with headquarters in Bouake, Ivory Coast, is a leading pan-African research organisation with a mission to contribute to poverty alleviation and food security in Africa through research, development and partnership activities. www.warda.cgiar.org/warda/aboutus.asp

THE INTERNATIONAL CROPS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE SEMI-ARID TROPICS (ICRISAT), has headquarters for Western and Central Africa in Niamey, Niger, and research centres in Bamako, Mali and Kano, Nigeria. www.icrisat.org/icrisat-about-wca.htm

THE INTERNATIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE (IWMI) West Africa's main office is in Accra, Ghana, and runs activities throughout the sub-region. Satellite offices are in Kumasi, Ghana and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Its objectives are to reduce poverty and to provide improved food security through sustainable and efficient agricultural water use. <http://westafrica.iwmi.org>

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE (IITA) has its headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria, and is a research institution seeking solutions for hunger, undernutrition, and poverty. www.iita.org

THE NORTH AND WEST AFRICA DIVISION (NWAFFD) OF THE INTERNATIONAL FERTILIZER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (IFDC) has its headquarters in Lome, Togo, and is an international organisation focusing on increasing productivity across the agricultural value chain in developing countries. www.ifdc.org/Divisions/North_and_West_Africa

THE RURAL HUB, whose goal is to assist West and Central African stakeholders (states, inter-governmental and civil society organisations) to promote coherence in rural development programmes worldwide. www.hubrural.org

When considering that these institutions come in addition to CILSS's specialised agencies and to a number of other active research organisations and universities not listed here, the above clearly indicates a substantial capacity in terms of research in the region. A key challenge is therefore to make sure that research is directed towards people's problems and priorities and that it can actually be used to guide policy-making and resource allocations.

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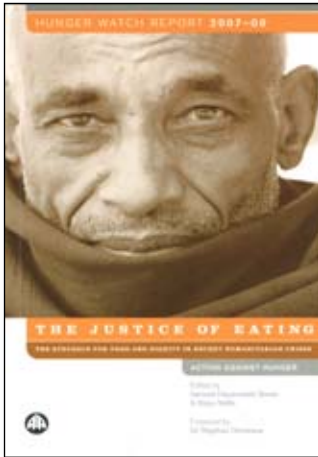
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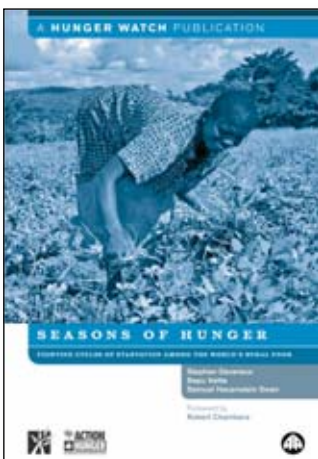
ACF publications



Hunger Watch Report 2007–08: The Justice of Eating: The struggle for food and dignity in recent humanitarian crises

The first Hunger Watch report from Action Against Hunger presents an accessible jargon-free account of the causes and consequences of malnutrition around the world. Combining thorough analysis with personal testimonies from struggling families, this report assesses the underlying causes of hunger in several African countries. A powerful indictment of local institutions, national governments, international agencies, and the socioeconomic forces complicit in the persistence of world hunger, this report argues that an end to malnutrition is fully possible with sufficient political will.

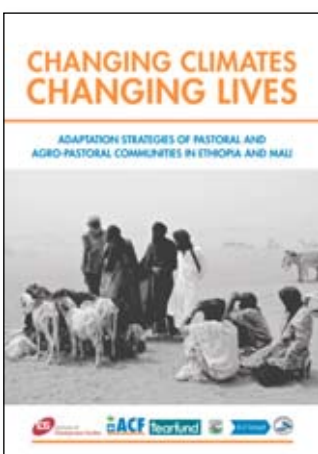
Edited by Samuel Hauenstein Swan and Bapu Vaitla, Published 2007 by Pluto Press, ISBN: 978-0-7453-2746-4, 108 pages.



Seasons of Hunger: Fighting cycles of quiet starvation among the world's rural poor

Documenting hunger in three countries – India, Malawi and Niger, this book explores the issue of seasonality and why the world does not react to a crisis that we know will continue year after year. Personal stories and country-wide data show the magnitude of seasonal hunger, which is caused by annual cycles of shrinking food stocks, rising prices and lack of income. This hidden hunger pushes millions of children to the brink of starvation, permanently stunting their development, weakening their immune system and opening the door for killer diseases.

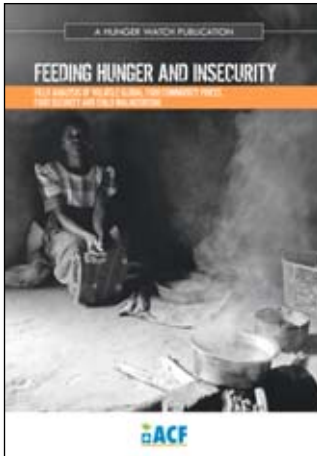
Written and edited by Stephen Devereux, Bapu Vaitla and Samuel Hauenstein Swan, Foreword by Robert Chambers, Published 2008 by Pluto Press London, ISBN: 978-0-7453-2826-3, 148 pages.



Changing Climate, Changing Lives

A joint report launched by IDS, Action Against Hunger and Tearfund reveals that pastoral households in Ethiopia and Mali are finding it increasingly difficult to tackle current climate risks and meet their food and nutrition needs. The focus of the report is local perceptions of changes in climate shocks and stressors. It examines how people respond to these changes, and what constraints they face. Examining local perceptions and responses to change is important because these can help to identify more precisely what support people require to strengthen their climate resilience. It will also help identify specific constraints that different actors and groups face, and also uncover a more holistic understanding of adaptation in relation to particular socio-economic, political or historical contexts.

Written by Lars Otto Naess, Morwenna Sullivan, Jo Khinmaung, Philippe Crahay and Agnes Otzelberger, Published 2010 by ACF International, Tearfund, International Development Institute, 57 pages.



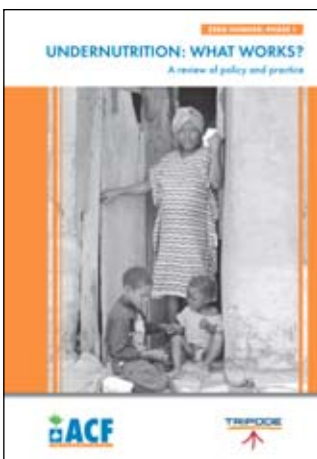
Feeding Hunger and Insecurity

Field analysis of volatile global food commodity prices, food security and child malnutrition

This publication presents field analysis of volatile global food commodity prices, food security and child malnutrition.

Rapid price increases in early 2008 led to riots in over 30 countries that sparked international calls for action and repositioned as global priorities the need to combat hunger and reinvigorate local agriculture. Action Against Hunger's in-depth field study, *Feeding Hunger and Insecurity*, reminds us the crisis is far from over and that urgent funding is needed to translate global policy into effective, targeted responses addressing the needs of those most affected.

Written by Samuel Hauenstein Swan, Sierd Hadley and Bernardette Cichon. Published 2009 by ACF International. ISBN: 978-0-9557773-2-5, 74 pages.



Undernutrition: what works?

A review of policy and practice

This book provides insights into why and how some countries have managed to bring down rates of childhood undernutrition, while others have not.

Worldwide progress in reducing rates of childhood undernutrition has been relatively slow over the past fifteen years. In too many countries, rates remain unacceptably high. Nevertheless, behind the global statistics lie some success stories. This briefing is based on the outcome of secondary research which examines five such stories – Brazil, Peru, Mozambique, Malawi and Bangladesh – which have had relative success in bringing down their rates of undernutrition, in the quest to find out why and how these countries in particular have been successful. The report identifies policies and practices implemented to facilitate the success and analyses the extent to which a reduction in undernutrition has been achieved due to a responsive policy environment and or social/civil initiatives.

Published 2010 by ACF International and Tripode, 84 pages.



Malnutrition: Just Stop It

Action Against Hunger's annual publication provides an insightful overview of global child and maternal malnutrition in 2010 and 2011. What is malnutrition? Who is at risk from it? Where in the world? Why is it causing deaths and suffering? What is being done to tackle it?

Malnutrition: Just Stop It narrates and illustrates the complexities of the problems, issues and policies linked to the world's most serious public health problem – malnutrition. It tells the stories of people living with malnutrition such as Maria from northeast Uganda, who struggles to feed her large family without a regular income, and Dorméus in Haiti who lost his wife in the earthquake in January 2010 and now provides for his three daughters. It also introduces children like one year old Adam in Chad and nine month old Awalou in Niger, both of whom live in the Sahel region of West Africa which experienced a severe food crisis in 2010.

In highlighting the role that individuals and organisations like Action Against Hunger can continue to play, the publication outlines successful solutions to end child malnutrition.

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Action Against Hunger – UK

First Floor, Rear Premises
161-163 Greenwich High Road
London, SE10 8JA
Tel: +44 (0)20 8293 6190, Fax: +44 (0)20 8858 8372
Email: info@aahuk.org
www.actionagainsthunger.org.uk



Action contre la Faim – France

4 rue Niepce / 75662 Paris Cedex 14
Tél :+33 (0)1 43 35 88 88
Fax :+33 (0)1 43 35 88 00
www.actioncontrelafaim.org



Action contre la Faim – Canada

1150, boulevard St-Joseph est
Bureau 302
Montréal, QC, H2J 1L5
Téléphone : (514) 279-4876, Fax : (514) 279-5136
www.actioncontrelafaim.ca



Accion Contra el Hambre – Spain

C/Caracas, 6, 1º
28010 Madrid
Tel.: +34 91 391 53 00
Fax: +34 91 391 53 01
www.accioncontraelhambre.org



Action Against Hunger – USA

247 West 37th Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY, USA 10018
Phone: +1 (212) 967-7800, Toll free: +1 (877) 777-1420
Fax: +1 (212) 967-5480
www.actionagainsthunger.org