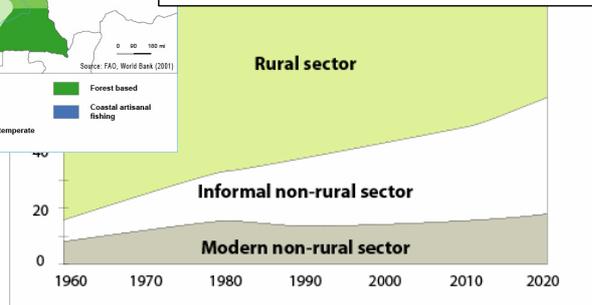
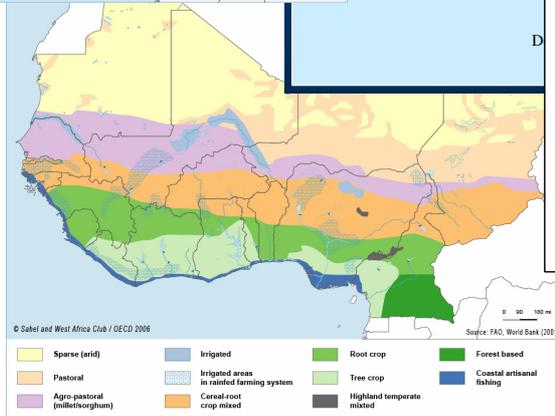
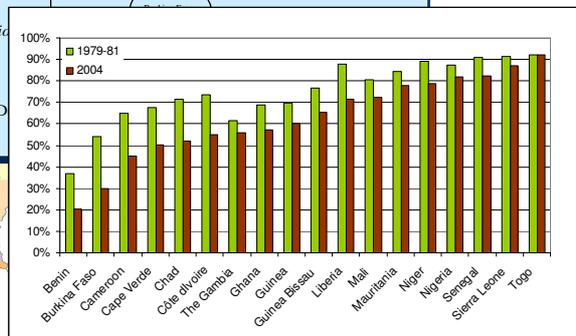
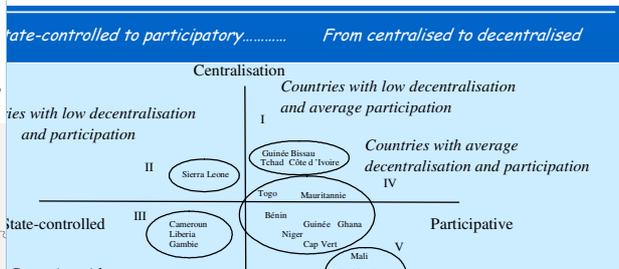
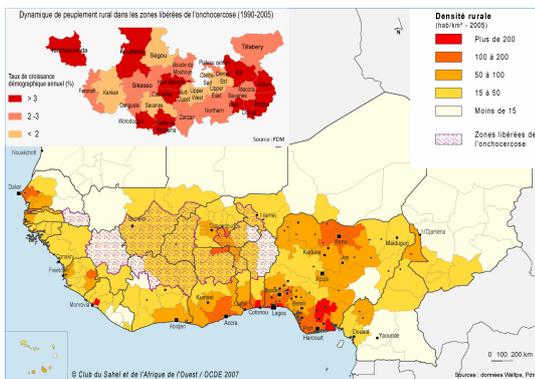




Rurality in motion in West Africa



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION
SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB

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Rurality in motion in West Africa

This document is the result of the joint work carried out in 2006 by the team at FAO's Rural Development Division¹ and the team at the OECD's Sahel and West Africa Club². It falls within a dual framework:

- 1) The International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), organised from 7 to 10 March 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil (see box). The participants particularly recommended working on rural development indicators. This report on the situation in West Africa provides an initial example of an exhaustive collection of data on a given region, with a framework for analysis that could be applied to other regions.



A vision for the future
International Conference on
Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

From 7 to 10 March 2006, the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, brought together 1,400 participants representing 92 FAO Member States, various international institutions and intergovernmental organisations and over 150 civil society organisations.

During the four-day Conference, the participants reviewed the various agrarian reform experiments introduced throughout the world, analysed their impact, the processes and the mechanisms used, examined the roles played by the different actors involved and, finally, discussed the proposals to be made for future action programmes. The ICARRD helped put the issues of agrarian reform and rural development back on the international agenda, thanks to a participatory approach involving all interested parties.

For more information on the ICARRD and to consult the Final Declaration, see the Conference web site at: www.icarrd.org

- 2) The Atlas of Regional Integration in West Africa, a joint initiative by the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). For further information: <http://www.atlas-ouestafrique.org> and <http://www.oecd.org/sah>

¹ Coordinated by Jean Bonnal, with contributions by Geneviève Braun, Stéphane Jost and Valentina Spasiano. The authors would also like to thank the other FAO divisions and departments (AGA, AGL, ESS, Forests, SDRN, TCAS, FID) and the SWAC's Rural Transformation and Sustainable Development Unit for their contributions to this document.

² Coordinated by Christophe Perret.

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Introduction

Rural development has mainly been associated with agriculture, which is still the cornerstone of rural economies in West Africa³. However, while agricultural activity remains a major consumer of rural land and resources, it generates fewer and fewer jobs and the nature of the rural communities in this region is increasingly moving towards greater diversity in terms of land use and economic and non-economic activities. The pace and scope of these changes vary considerably across West Africa, where higher population density is observed around city and coastal development poles.

Economic factors continue to play an important role in the regional reorganisation process. However, the new development paradigm gives an equally important role to not only non-economic factors, such as individual and collective skills, living conditions, the accessibility of innovations, community vitality, openness to consultation and partnership, etc., but also to the promotion of an economy based on the sustainability of development and the quality of local products, taking advantage of the diversity of natural resources and the wealth of knowledge and know-how of the cultural, local and regional heritage of each part of the region.

Box 1: The concept of rurality in West Africa remains to be defined

The concept of rurality is the subject of long-standing debate and controversy. From this debate, the OECD has selected three criteria defining rurality:

- Population density and the size of human settlements: typically rural areas have low population density and small, scattered human settlements;
- Land use and the predominance of agriculture and forestry; limited area covered by buildings;
- “Traditional” social structures and community identity and heritage issues.

The typology of regions is determined in relation to their degree of rurality (predominantly rural, significantly rural, or predominantly urban). The proportion of the population from basic rural communities (first level units) determines the degree of rurality of regions. The thresholds used to distinguish the typology of regions are generally over 50% for the “predominantly rural” typology and between 50 and 15% for “significantly rural” regions. It quickly becomes clear that these criteria respond inadequately to changes in rural societies and to their differences, whether in West Africa or elsewhere in the world. Agreement has yet to be reached in order to define and characterise rural areas and rurality in a coherent and uniform manner, with a view to understanding all the dimensions of rural development and building the basis needed for the development of related statistics and analysis.

³ List of countries concerned by this study: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Upheaval arising from globalisation puts rural development and the future of rural regions in a new perspective. It is no longer possible to talk of local development without taking into account the organisation and demands of global markets. The current challenges of free trade for rural areas are to increase their competitiveness and to face competition, while simultaneously ensuring environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability. The integrated cross-sector approach fostered by rural policies specifically focuses on the ability of actors to generate and retain as much value added as possible in their region, by creating or strengthening links between sectors and pooling resources to promote the specific character of products and services.

In simplified terms, two levels of regional hierarchy are used in the classification and analysis specific to the rural environment. The first level identifies homogeneous rural areas that meet a set of structural and/or functional membership criteria – which are different to urban concentrations – by using small geographical units at the municipal or infra-municipal level as statistical reference units. This is, for example, the level that is used for censuses and household surveys. The second level is made up of larger geographical units (regions or sub-regions). It provides a means of analysing the functional relationships between their different entities along with the trends and dynamics generated by their incorporation within a single area.

The current shift towards the diversification of rural development policies means:

- **a move from the sectoral approach to the regional approach and**
- **priority is given to the coordination and integration of sectoral, regional and local policies.**

More specifically, it involves moving away from an approach based principally on the subsidisation of economic sectors that are declining or in difficulty, towards an approach based on the redeployment of investment to foster the emergence of new activities and the acknowledgment of the regional and local dynamics, specificities and vocations of each rural area concerned.

In this document, we will examine the different aspects of West African rurality. In order to do so, we will begin by reviewing the human and natural components that condition it (parts 1 and 2). We will go on to analyse the performances of rural systems (part 3) and their ability to meet demands for living conditions and food security (part 4), before examining social cohesion as a means of revitalising rural areas (part 5).

Part 1.

Human development and rural living conditions

1.1 *West African population dynamics*

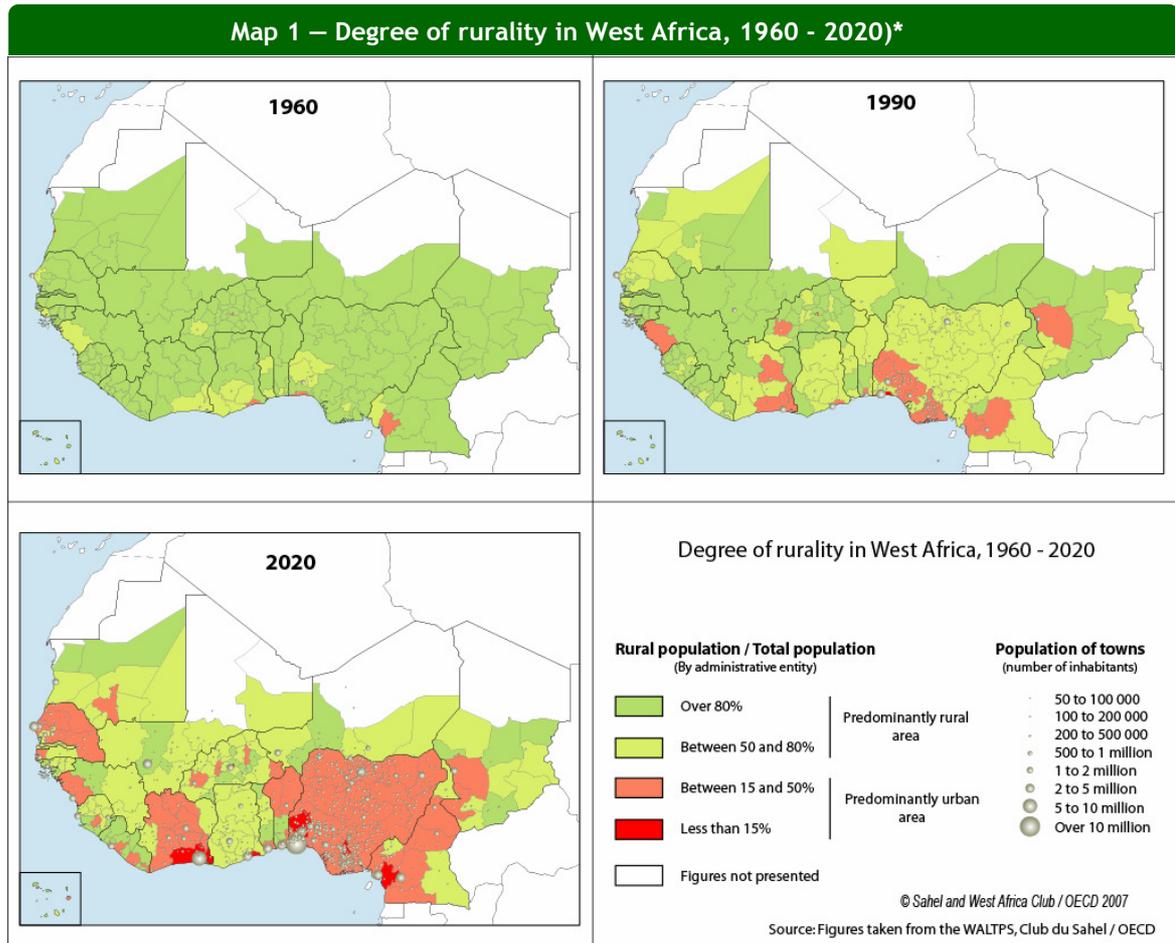
a) **The persistence of sustained population growth**

1. Little information exists about the evolution of the African population in the past. Due to the slave trade and colonisation, it is believed that the African population stagnated or even decreased between the 15th and 19th centuries. The population began to increase as of the 1920s and especially during the 1950s due to improvements in sanitary and medical conditions. Mortality rates have fallen far more than fertility rates, which have remained high (falling from seven children per woman to less than six today). The continent, which represents 14% of the world's population, is currently experiencing one of the highest population growth rates in the world.
2. Following these trends, the West African population (29% of the total African population) has seen growth rates of almost 3% per year, increasing from 40 million people in 1930 to 290 million in 2005. This trend is expected to continue over the coming decades: the population of West Africa could reach 430 million people by 2020 and exceed 500 million by 2040.
3. The age structure of the population is largely a result of the fertility and mortality rates. The West African population is young and getting younger: the share of under-15s grew from 42.1% in 1950 to 44.1% in 2005. At the top of the pyramid, the over-60s are also more numerous than they were 50 years ago; however, the proportion of this category in the total population has fallen slightly from 5.1% in 1950 to 4.8% in 2005⁴.

b) **Urban growth and concentration in coastal areas**

4. West African towns have absorbed 55% of the population growth recorded between 1960 and 2005. This urban growth was initially fed by population movements from rural areas. This is no longer the case: most (about 70% to 80%) of the population growth in West African towns is now due simply to births in urban areas. Today, West African towns are home to almost 45% of the regional population.
5. The urban population has concentrated around the coastal towns of the Gulf of Guinea, which have grown as a result of their connection to regional and international markets. This concentration goes a long way to explaining the clear differences that exist between countries: one in two Ivorians live in towns, while over 80% of the population of Niger live in rural areas.

⁴ Ouedraogo Dieudonné (2006) : *Démographie et développement*.

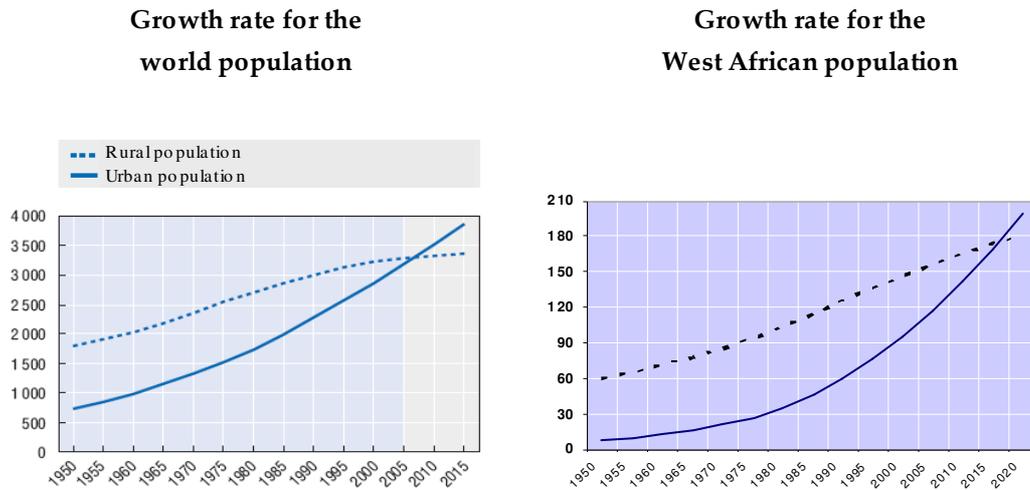


* by administrative unit - region, department or province, according to the country.

c) Rural dynamics that remain strong

6. Although urban growth is not as rapid as in the 1970s and 1980s, it will continue into the future. Projections show that in 2020, the urban population will be greater than the rural population in West Africa. At the international level, this shift took place in 2005.

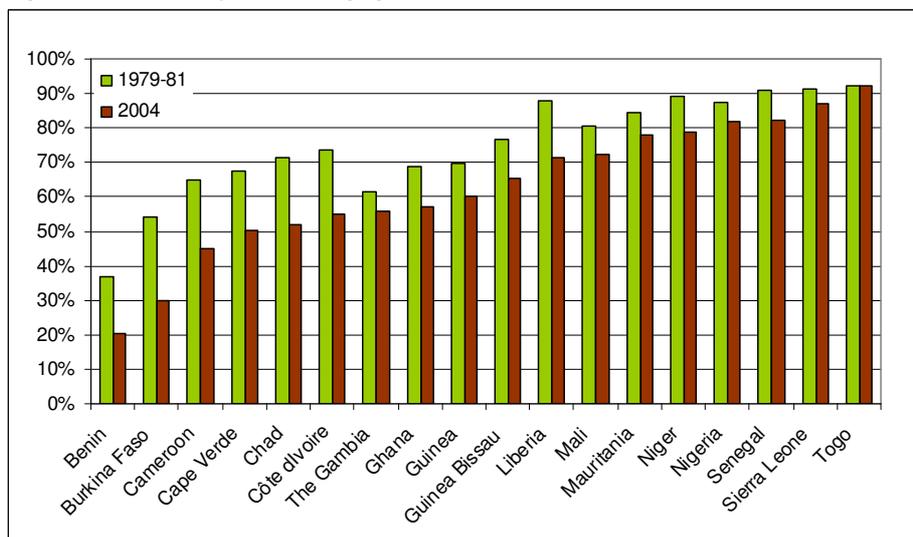
Graph 1 – Urban and rural population (1950 - 2020)



Source: United Nations (2006)

7. The rural population will also continue to grow, although at a slower rate than today. Between 1960 and 2005, the rural population of West Africa doubled, increasing from 70 to 155 million people. It is expected to rise to almost 180 million people in 2020, reflecting an annual growth rate of 0.6%, compared to 1.8% between 1960 and 2005.
8. The notion of rural and urban populations, which does not have the same definition in all countries, can be supplemented by that of agricultural and non-agricultural populations. The agricultural population is defined as all people making their living from farming, hunting, fishing or forestry (including all people conducting agricultural activities, along with their inactive dependants). This mainly involves only part of the rural population (who furthermore conduct other types of activities) but also includes populations deriving their livelihoods from peri-urban agriculture. According to FAO, the agricultural population of West Africa fell from 80% of the total population in 1961 to 51% in 2001. It still remains very large in all the Sahelian countries, except Cape Verde (See Graph 2).

Graph 2 – Proportion of the agricultural population in West Africa



Source: Statistical Yearbook, FAO (2004)

9. As a result of the rapid growth of major cities and secondary towns, the increase in infrastructure and means of transport and the development of radio and telephone networks, interaction between rural and urban areas has increased. Towns represent both a market and an opportunity in terms of jobs, as well as standing for new values. Far from being isolated, rural zones are affected by the development of towns. However, disparities remain, whether in terms of access to health or to education.

1.2 *The conditions of existence: health and education*

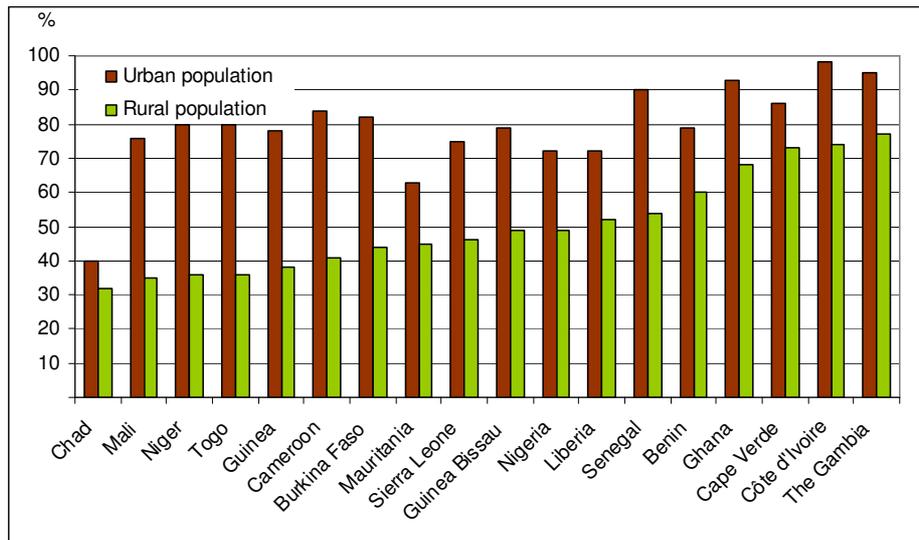
a) Health

10. Public health in West Africa has undergone considerable change with the increase in the number and coverage of health workers (doctor and nurses), the improvement in immunisation coverage and a wider use of modern medicines, etc. But political and economic crises, conflicts, malaria and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS have been, and continue to be, important factors in the increase in mortality, especially since the 1980s. The life expectancy of the West African population fell from 48 to 46 years between 1990-1995 and 2000-2005; this fall is especially pronounced in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.
11. AIDS has generally been considered and treated as an urban problem, but it seems to have increasingly more economic and social impacts on rural areas⁵: the latest statistics show that more than half of all people infected by the AIDS virus live in the rural areas. By 2020, up to 26% of the agricultural workforce could be lost in sub-Saharan African countries due to this disease. Given that it principally affects people between 15 and 49 years of age, the economic and social impact is all the greater⁶.
12. The pandemic is having a dramatic effect on the foundations of agricultural production and food security in certain West African regions: loss of productive labour, loss of income, health and funeral costs, lack of food stocks, and under-nutrition. According to the traditional roles of men and women, female farmers take care of the family members infected by the disease and the time devoted to agricultural activities is considerably reduced. This results in changes in agricultural systems and a loss of nutritional value.
13. Differences between rural and urban areas appear when examining sanitary indicators. Thus, 85% of the urban population and 45% of the rural population have access to drinking water. These figures reveal a slight improvement since 1990, especially in rural areas. As for hygiene, 58% of the urban population and only 28% of the rural population have access to improved sanitation facilities.

⁵ Du Guerny, Jacques (1999): AIDS and agriculture in Africa: can agricultural policy make a difference?

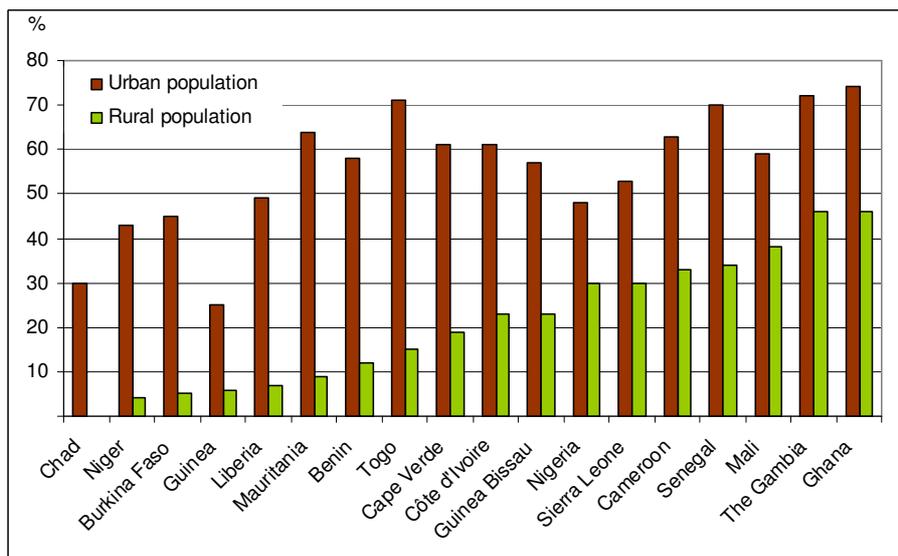
⁶ Villarreal, Marcela (2001): The impact of HIV/AIDS on food security in Africa.

Graph 3 – Percentage of the rural and urban populations with access to an improved water source (2002)



Source: WHO (2006)

Graph 4 – Percentage of the urban and rural populations with access to improved sanitation facilities (2002)



Source: WHO (2006)

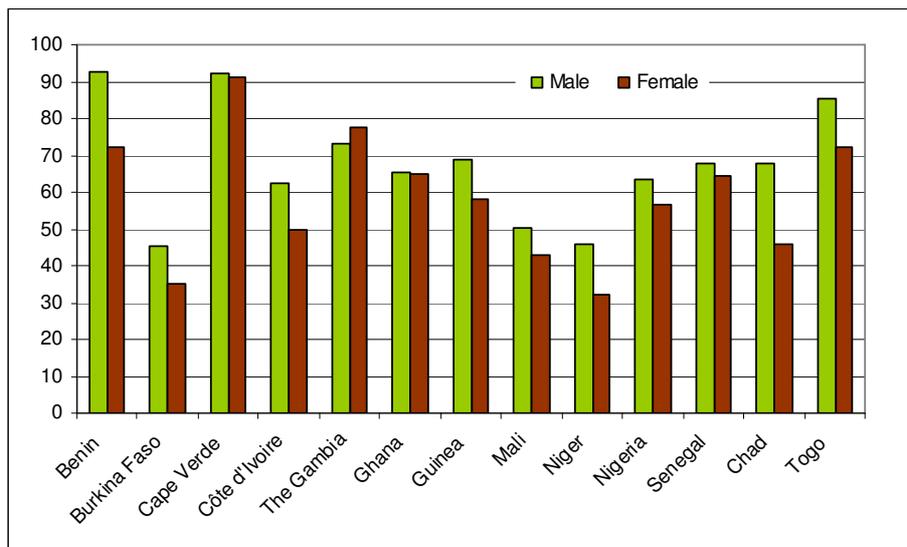
b) Education

- Africa is still lagging behind regarding certain criteria defining education. The continent still counts almost half of the world's out-of-school children (38 million in 2004, of which 53% girls). Some 80% of these out-of-school children live in rural areas⁷. But in the long term, indicators concerning literacy and schooling are following positive trends. This is true of both West Africa and the rest of the continent, and also probably of the countryside.

⁷ UNESCO (2006): *EFA Global Monitoring Report. Regional overview: Sub-Saharan Africa.*

15. Between 1970 and 2001, the illiteracy rate fell from 81% to 44%; this is especially evident among youth, where the rate fell from 68% to 25%. At the same time, the number of literate adults rose from 11 to 80 million people. This performance, remarkable when compared to that of other regions, is also striking for women. In 2001, half of all women were literate, whereas in 1970 only one West African woman in 10 was.
16. Access to primary and secondary education has expanded. In the West African region, the primary school enrolment rate rose from 42 to 77% between 1970 and 2000; secondary school enrolment rate rose from 6 to 25% over the same period⁸. This observation applies to young girls, although they leave school sooner than boys, which in turn results in a form of discrimination.
17. However, major disparities exist between countries. The land-locked Sahelian States, for example, have some of the lowest net primary school enrolment rates⁹ in the region: from 39% for Niger to 57% for Chad, with 40% for Burkina Faso and 46% for Mali. The situation of countries in post-crisis situations, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, is even more difficult.

Graph 5 – Net enrolment in primary education in West Africa (2004)



Source: UNESCO (2006)

⁸ Sahel and West Africa Club (2004): *Regional analysis of West African socio-economic indicators*.

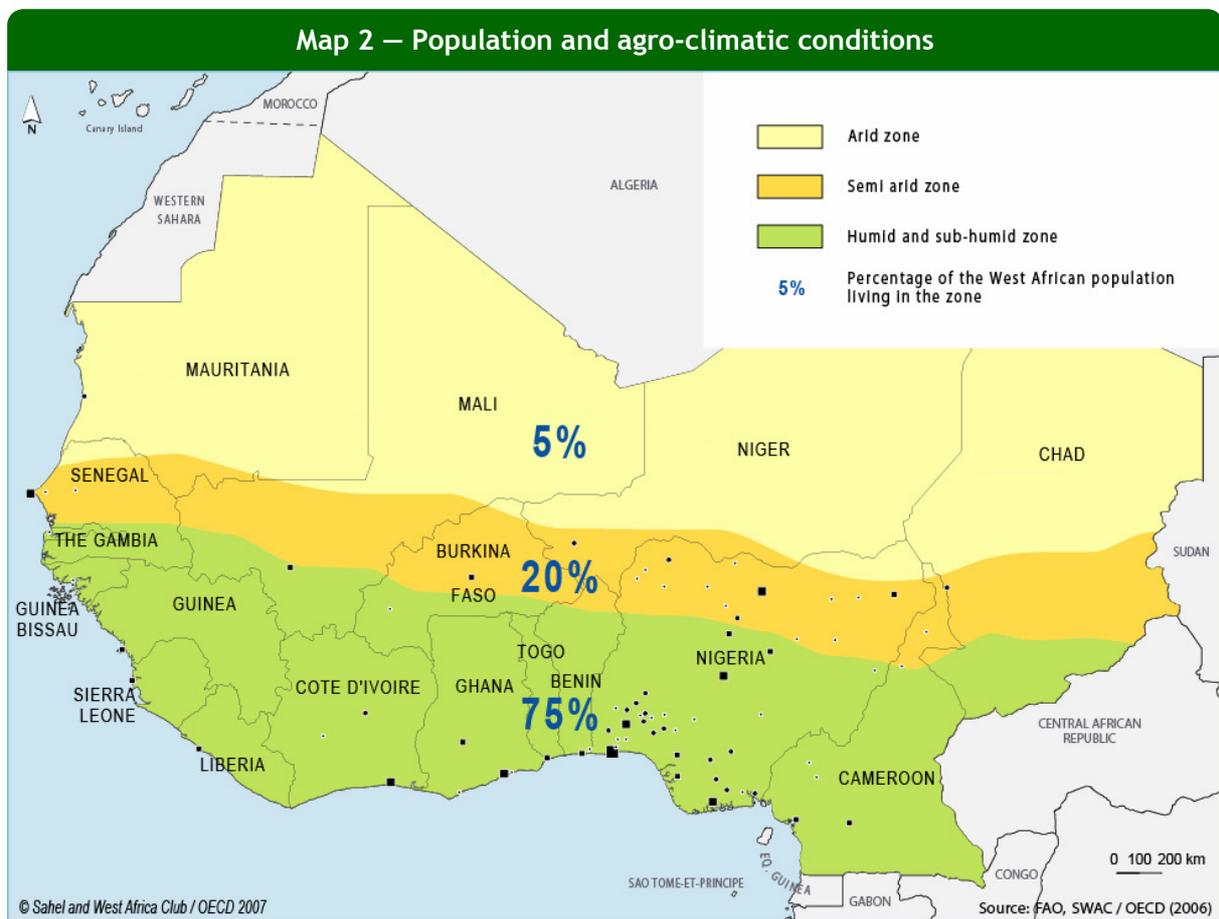
⁹ The net enrolment rate represents the proportion of an official age group at a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

Part 2.

The sustainable management of resources and ecosystems

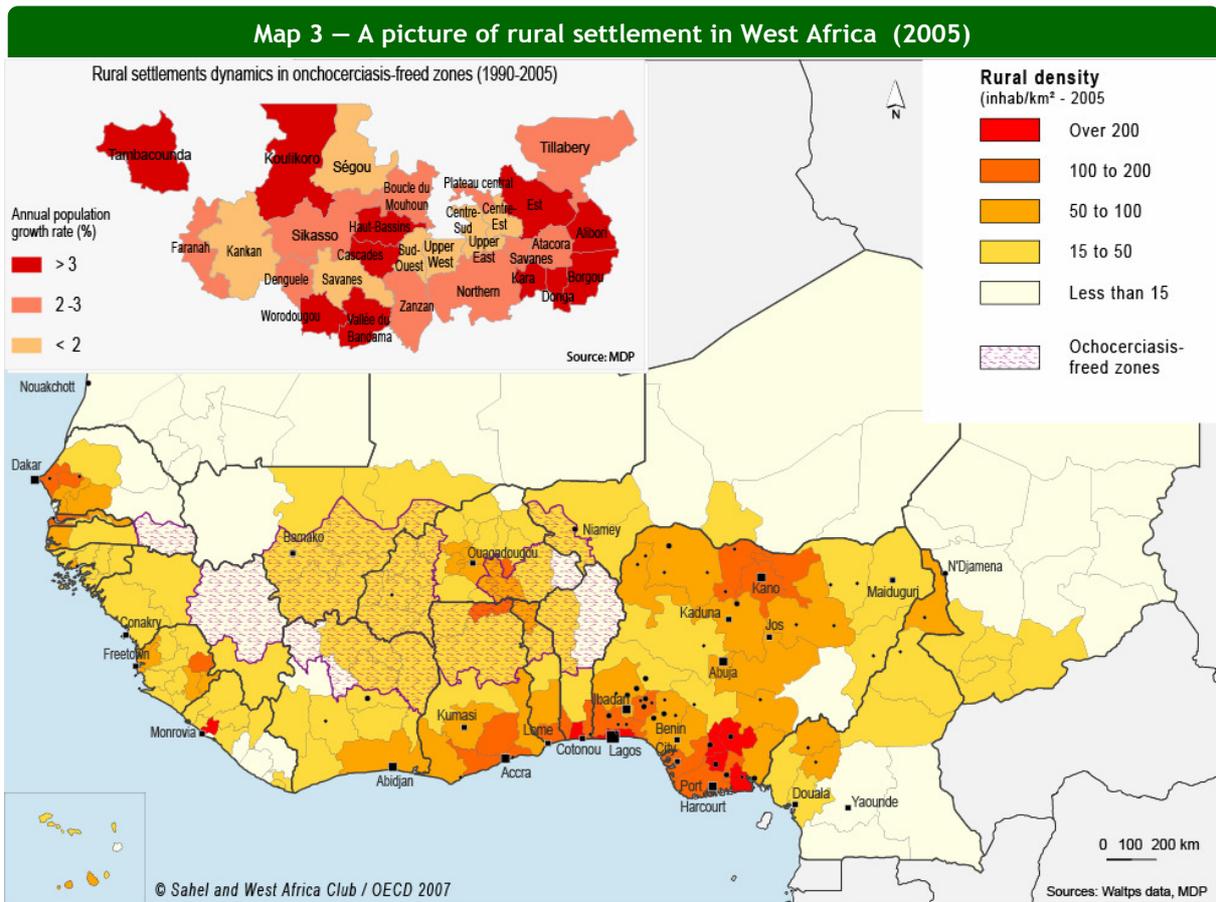
2.1 Uneven settlement

18. Settlement in West Africa is highly uneven. It is the result of several factors, including in particular the agro-climatic conditions (See Map 2). Today, three quarters of the West African population live in the humid and sub-humid zones and 20% in the semi-arid zone, which roughly corresponds to the Sahel region. Only 5% of the population live in the arid zone, which is unsuitable for rural activities, except near rivers or oases.



19. This map should be supplemented by that of the settlement areas that are the result of West African history, from the pre-colonial entities to today. Population distribution has taken place within two geographical areas that constitute the old settlement areas. The first lies in the Sudano-Sahelian region, stretching from modern-day Senegal to Lake Chad and Darfur. A significant number of empires and States developed there, such as those of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kanem Bornu and the Hausa and Mossi States. Further South was the coastal centre around the Gulf of Benin, between modern-day Ghana and the Niger Delta. This region includes several concentrations, including the Akan, Asante, Adja-Fon, Yoruba and Ibo.
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21. Current African settlement is partly structured around these old centres. It developed after the slave trade ended, then the colonial period fostered the shift from the settlement of the Sahel regions towards the coast. Three areas of high rural density (more than 50 people/km²), often close to urban areas, stand out today (See Map 3): the first is along the Gulf of Guinea between Abidjan and Douala; the second on the Atlantic coast is less homogeneous, as it is dotted with several areas of high rural density between Dakar and Monrovia; finally, the third, which is also heterogeneous, stretches from Ouagadougou to N'Djamena, within which three historical subsets emerge: the one in central Burkina Faso (the Voltaic centre), the one in northern Nigeria (the Hausa centre) and the one around northern Cameroon (the Kanuri centre).
22. Conversely, sparsely populated rural areas (less than 15 people/km²) are situated in principally hostile environments within the Sahelo-Saharan region or at the heart of primary tropical forests (southern Cameroon, eastern Liberia). Other "empty pockets" can be found in the middle belt of West Africa. The low population density in valleys affected by onchocerciasis was long believed to be due to this endemic disease. But it is only one of several historical factors and diseases, such as trypanosomiasis¹⁰, contributing to the low population density. Since these areas were freed of onchocerciasis, the settlement or re-settlement of inhabitants has begun. Certain regions where a good deal of land is still available have population growth rates exceeding 3% per year (above the regional average). Surely settlement areas are developing. This is the case in south-western Burkina Faso, where migrants are flowing in from the north and centre of the country, and even from Côte d'Ivoire as a result of the political crisis underway there.

¹⁰ CICRED (1999): *Population Dynamics in Rural Areas Freed from Onchocerciasis in Western Africa*.



2.2 Land dynamics

a) Land use and agro-pastoral potential

23. Due to demographic pressure, urbanisation and population movements, land tenure is facing several problems linked to the availability of land, its quality and access conditions. While land is available in abundance, production is developed exclusively through the extension of cultivated areas. Over the last 40 years, cultivated areas have increased from 8.4 to 11.8% of all land in West Africa. Land for grazing, on the other hand, has remained stable during this period, although in certain Sahel regions, transhumance corridors have disappeared or have been turned into farmland.

Table 1 – Land Use in West Africa (1961 - 2002)

	Area of land (1000 ha)	Arable land ¹¹ (%)			Land under permanent crops (%)			Pastures (%)		
	2002	1961	1980	2002	1961	1980	2002	1961	1980	2002
West Africa	790,000	7.6	8.1	10.3	0.8	1.1	1.5	28.8	28.8	29.2
World	13,432,000	9.5	10	10.4	0.7	0.8	1.0	23.2	24.1	25.6

Source: FAO Statistical Yearbook 2004

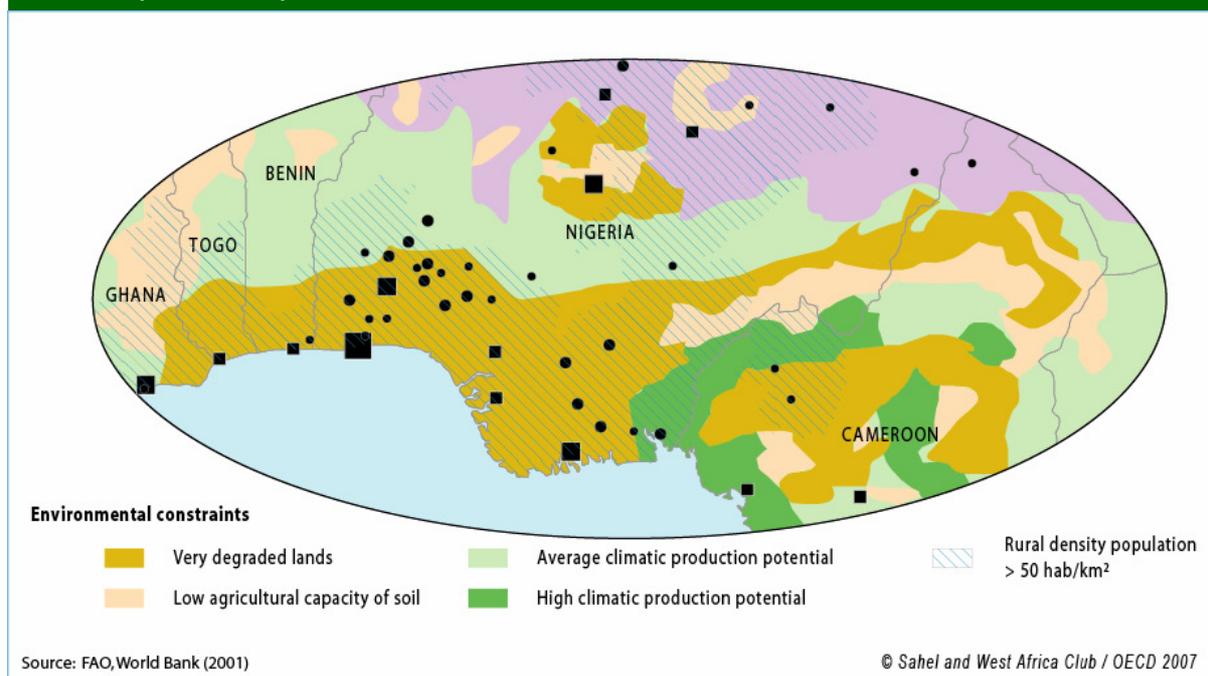
24. Agricultural extension should not mask the fact that there is still considerable potential cropland in West Africa. Cultivated areas represent 36% of the region's agricultural potential. In coastal countries, this potential is lower. On the other hand, less than 30% of potential cropland is used in Chad, Mali and Niger, which together make up over a third of West African agricultural potential.
25. The land pressure arising from rural settlement, measured by the ratio between the agricultural population and arable land or land under permanent crops, is relatively moderate. In West Africa, this ratio has reached 1.4 people/ha in recent years, compared to 1 person/ha in the 1960s. This figure remains lower than in developing countries, where the current pressure of the agricultural population on arable land and permanent crops stands at around 2.3 people/ha.

b) Land challenges

26. However, this global vision deserves clarification in order to outline some unique sub-regional characteristics. When demographic pressure is high, land challenges can be approached from the viewpoint of land degradation. This is the case, for example, of rural areas close to the urbanised coast of the Gulf of Guinea (See Map 4). Long natural fallow periods, which were the basis of soil fertility management, are shorter and cultivated plots are increasingly exploited. This leads to soil deterioration resulting in lower productive capacity, and therefore a reduction in potential yield. Farmers are obliged to use more input, such as fertilisers or manure, to maintain their yield, or they may temporarily or permanently abandon certain plots.

¹¹ Arable land refers to land under temporary crops (double-cropped areas are counted only once), temporary meadows for mowing or pasture, land under market and market gardening and land temporarily fallow (less than five years). Abandoned land resulting from shifting cultivation is not included. (see FAOSTAT glossary).

Map 4 – Principal environmental constraints in the coastal area of the Gulf of Guinea



27. Land challenges also include the issue of access to land. The West African environment has considerably modified the way in which land resources are socially perceived and used¹². Population growth means land becomes rarer and increases in value. In some cases, it becomes the object of increasing commodification: this is true in Mali and Burkina Faso, where population pressure and the emergence of land transactions are closely related. Population growth is far from the only factor of this commodification¹³ (another being the increase in the value of irrigated land, for example). In the future, more and more urban buyers will enter this market and, conversely, a shift will be seen towards the de-capitalisation of the poorest social categories. The risks of land saturation could also increase the number of land disputes: this could be the case between herders and farmers, for example, over the issue of access to water and pastures.
28. These risks require increased political awareness of the need for national land reforms. But they concern politically sensitive local and national issues. The process of national reforms began 20 years ago, with varying degrees of progress and success. In any case, the participatory approach is needed to take better account of the complexity of rights and actors in this respect. Furthermore, land policy must be addressed from a regional and cross-border viewpoint in order to better integrate common problems linked to the management of shared natural resources (drainage basins), transhumance livestock production and displaced populations, etc.

¹² Sahel and West Africa Club (2006): *A study on the land reform process in West Africa*.

¹³ IIED (2006): *Changes in Land Access, Institutions and Markets in West Africa*.

c) Impact on forest resources

29. Rural land use also concerns forest cover. West Africa includes 17% of African forest resources¹⁴, made up of closed forests, open or fragmented forests and other woodland. The dry zone is made up of steppe vegetation, bush and open savannah woodland. The more productive humid zone is characterised by savannah woodland, semi-deciduous tropical forest and tropical rainforest.
30. The natural forests of West Africa have undergone considerable change, especially since the 1970s. It is estimated that between 1990 and 2005, forest cover in West Africa diminished at a rate of 1.2 million hectares per year, which is far higher than the average for the continent. This reduction went hand in hand with a fragmentation of cover, especially in the humid zone: a shift from closed forest to open forest and then to woodland. According to FAO estimations, over 10% of closed forests were transformed into open forests between 1980 and 2000 and between 3 and 7% of fragmented forests became woodland over the same period.
31. The reduction in forest cover is essentially linked to agriculture (cacao, coffee, etc.), forestry (wood energy and log exports¹⁵), mining activities, the development of infrastructure, and fires. This process is characteristic of an economy structured around extensive agricultural development. In the longer term, will the population be able to continue consuming the forest for energy and agriculture at such a pace? Should other strategies be considered in this respect? In the Sahel region, the degradation of forest cover is a decisive element of desertification, in addition to climatic factors.

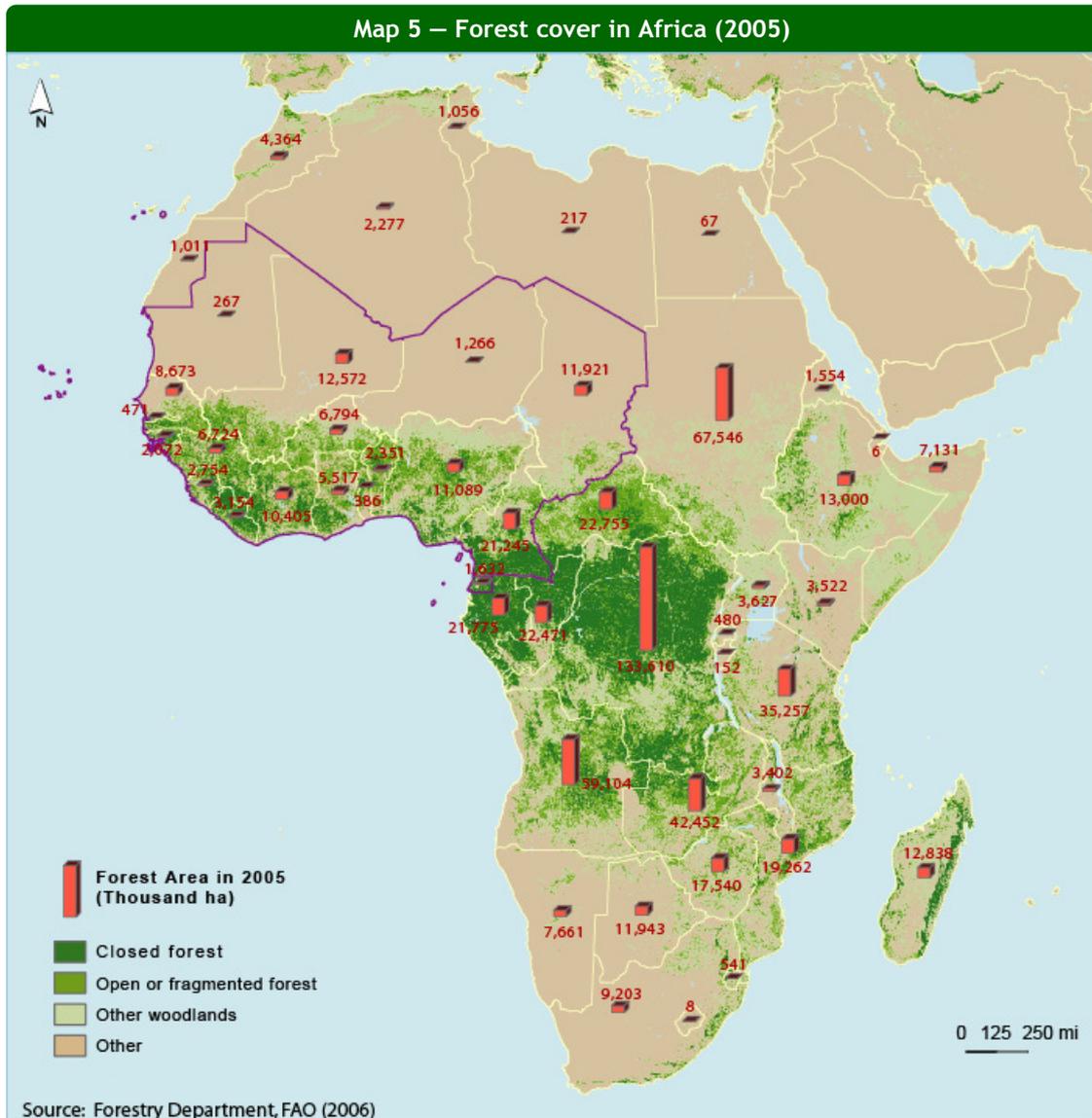
Box 2 — Urbanization consumption of wood fuel and charcoal in West Africa

In many West African towns, especially in peri-urban areas, obtaining wood fuel and charcoal is more difficult: resources are being depleted and it is necessary to go further afield. For example Ouagadougou currently obtains wood fuel from about 150 km away. Intensive wood fuel and charcoal harvesting for the Dakar market has pushed the current area of supply as far as 400 km away. Lagos is supplied with charcoal originating from an even greater distance.

Source: FAO (2003): *Forestry outlook study for Africa*. Sub regional report for West Africa.

¹⁴ African forest cover stretched over 635 million hectares in 2005, or 16% of world cover. The countries of central and southern Africa have the largest forests on the continent.

¹⁵ A total of 90% of the productive use of West African forest cover was for household energy purposes in 2005, compared to 86% in the 1980s. The production of industrial round wood remains more modest and is increasing more slowly than the population.



2.3 Climate impacts

a) Climate change

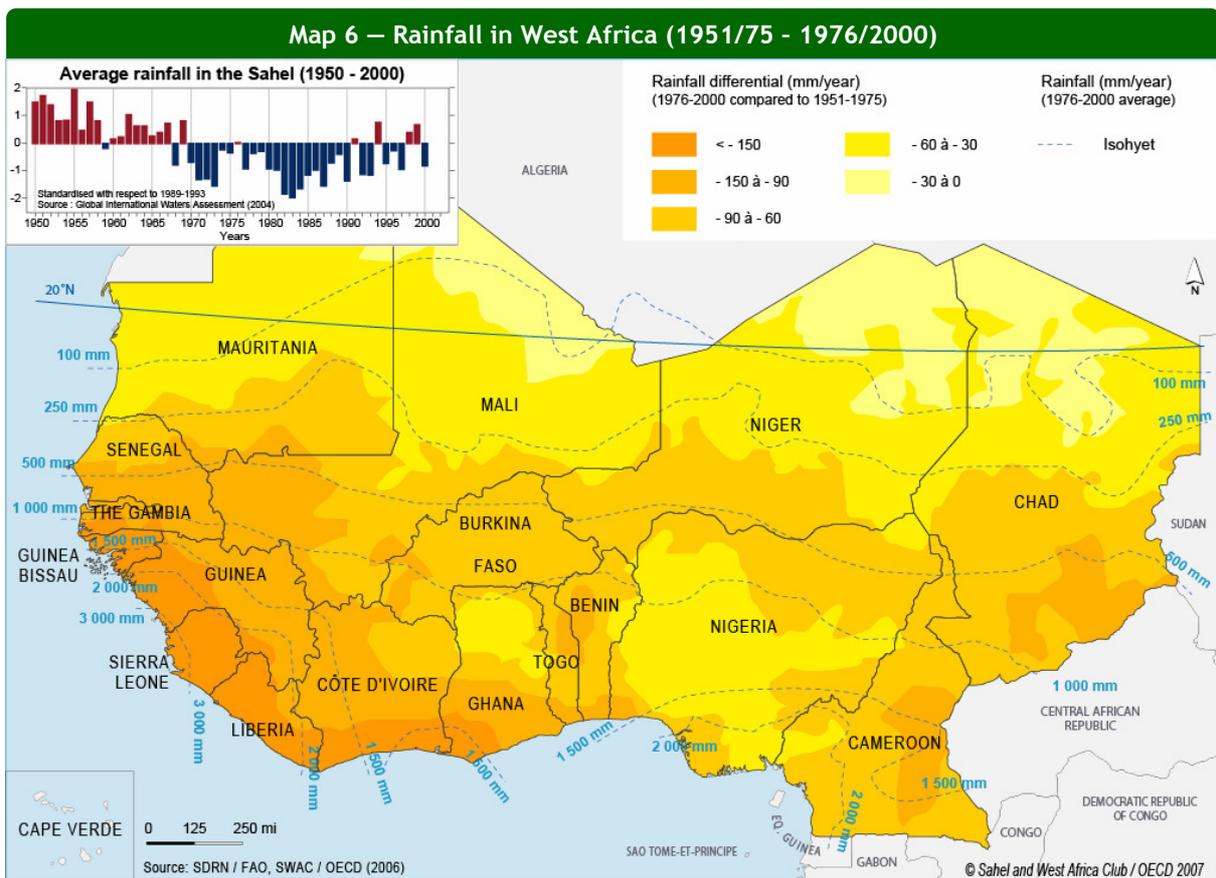
32. The African climate is affected by the equator and the two tropics that cross it, and also by its two major deserts (the Sahara in the northern hemisphere and the Kalahari in the southern hemisphere). Highly varied climates are therefore juxtaposed, ranging from very dry arid to humid equatorial, via more temperate climates

Box 3 — Global warming in West Africa

Studies show that the African continent has been warming through the 20th century at the rate of about 0.05°C per decade with slightly greater warming in the June–November season than in December–May. By the year 2000, the five warmest years in Africa had all occurred since 1988, with 1995 and 1998 being the two warmest years. This rate of warming is similar to that experienced globally, and the periods of most rapid warming – the 1910s to 1930s and the post-1970s – have occurred simultaneously in Africa and the rest of the world.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). See: <http://www.grida.no/climate/vitalafrica/english/01.htm>

33. In West Africa, the climate is influenced by the north/south movements of the inter-tropical convergence zone, the meeting point of moist air masses from the south and dry air masses from the north. Between July and August, the inter-tropical convergence zone and the moist air masses from the southwest move northwards, reaching latitudes between 18° and 22° N. This therefore corresponds to the period of greatest rainfall. In arid, semi-arid and sub-humid zones, the rainy period is concentrated in a single season of two to five months. Countries along the Gulf of Guinea, on the other hand, have two seasons and an average rainfall exceeding 900 mm/year.

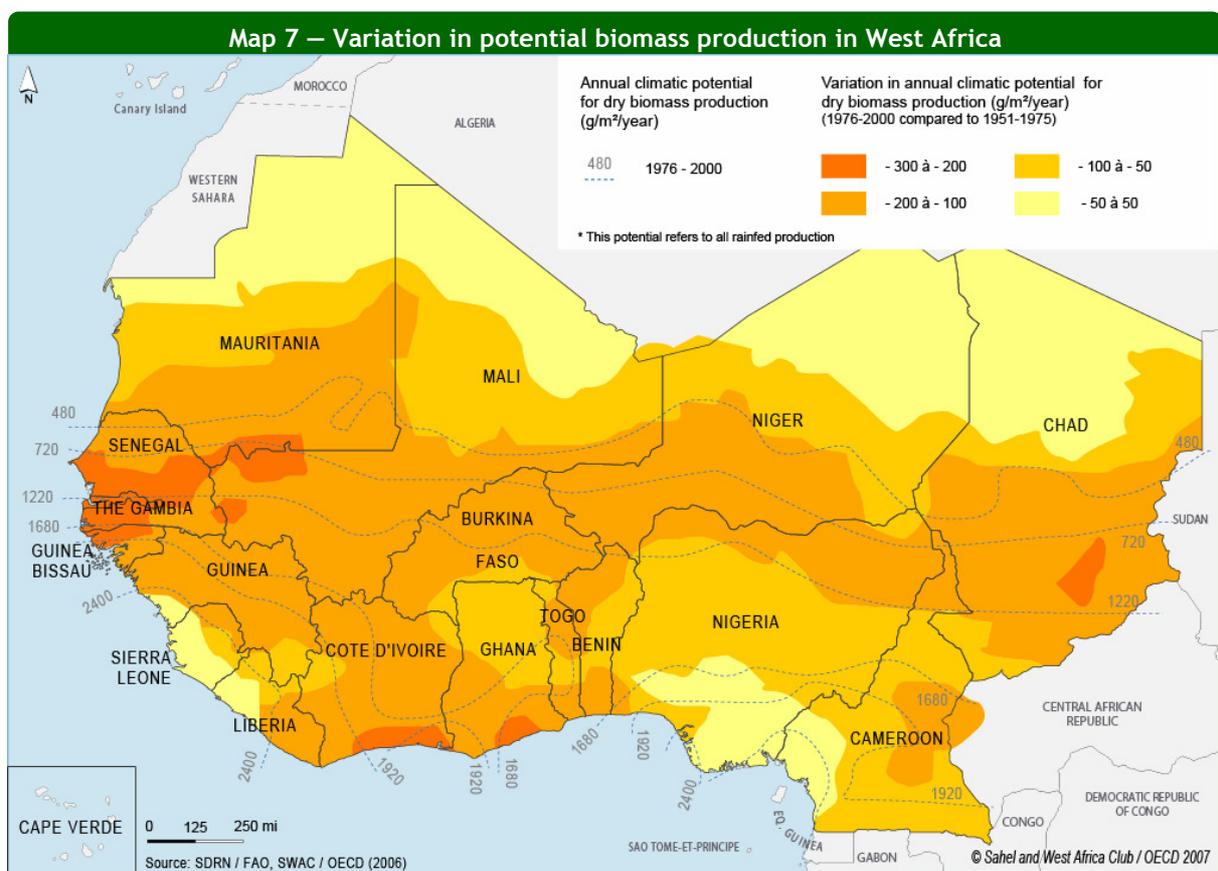


34. Looking back, two major climatic periods can be observed in West Africa: a “wet” period from the 1950s to the early 1970s, followed by a dry period characterised by the two great droughts of 1973 and 1984. Between 1951/1975 and 1976/2000, a reduction in rainfall to varying degrees was recorded across the whole region. This reduction was greater in the coastal areas between Ghana and the Gambia, but rainfall there reaches between 2,000 and 3,000 mm/year. In the Sahel region, the reduction in rainfall, which reached between 60 and

90 mm/year, was felt more acutely: it represents a reduction of 15 to 35% of rainfall in this area (See Map 6). This vision, which is frozen due to the comparative periods, has certain limits. For Sahelian countries, for example, the dry periods lasted from the early 1970s until the early 1990s. Since then, rainfall has increased, although it remains highly variable¹⁶.

b) Impacts on agro-pastoral production

35. The reduction in rainfall, whose impact was more pronounced in the Sahel region, has resulted in a desertification process, fluctuations in cereal production, the descent of herds towards the south and a drop in river flow, etc. These impacts have been assessed according to various indicators. Some estimations show that the levels of the rivers Senegal and Gambia dropped by almost 60% in the 1970s and 1980s. The river Niger dropped by around 15%¹⁷.



¹⁶ Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa (2006): The ecologically vulnerable zone of Sahelian countries.

¹⁷ IUCN (2004): *Reducing West Africa's Vulnerability to Climate Impacts on Water Resources, Wetlands and Desertification*.

36. The theoretical impacts on biomass and hence on potential agro-pastoral production are relatively serious. FAO estimations show that between 1951/1975 and 1976/2000, the reduction in rainfall resulted in a reduction in dry biomass production of between 100 and 200 g/m²/year in the Sahelian regions of Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad and northern Nigeria; this reduction reached between 200 and 300 g/m²/year in Senegambia.
37. Although it is difficult to translate into agro-pastoral production terms, the decrease in potential production of dry cereals (millet, sorghum and maize) or fodder for livestock is clear. It must be recalled that the droughts in Africa and particularly in the Sahel affected fodder production and consequently the animal population. During the 1982/84 period, for example, the cattle population fell by almost 60% in Niger, either because herds were decimated, or because they moved southwards.

Part 3.

The performances of rural economies

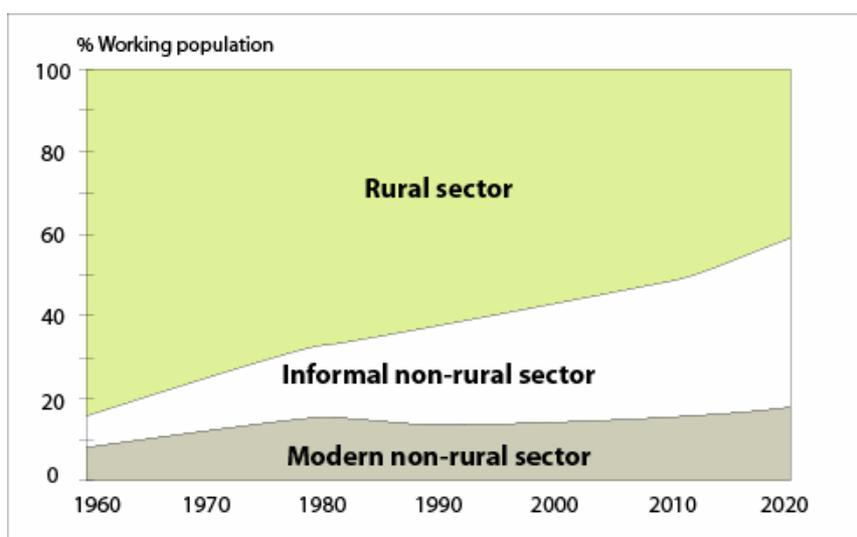
38. The changes that have taken place in West Africa over the last forty years or so have deeply affected its rural environment. From the economic perspective, rural areas are still largely structured by so-called agricultural activities. Agriculture, in its broadest sense, has demonstrated an immense ability to adapt to and withstand the opening up of the region's economies and its fast-growing population. From the land management point of view, the sector's predominance remains unquestioned. However, its activities have diversified, although assessing their characteristics and dynamics is not an easy task.

3.1 West Africa's rural landscape

a) West Africa's economy characterised by the importance of the rural sector

39. In 1960, the West African region, still divided into scattered islets with a marginalised urban population, was characterised by a predominant agricultural sector. Forty years later, the cities have expanded and are connected to each other and with rural areas. Whereas the rural sector's active population is more numerous, the informal urban sector's population is increasing more rapidly¹⁸. Still accounting for 30% of the region's GDP, despite the disparities between the Sahelian and coastal countries, the rural sector remains a powerful driving force for West Africa's economic development and the largest income- and employment-generating source.

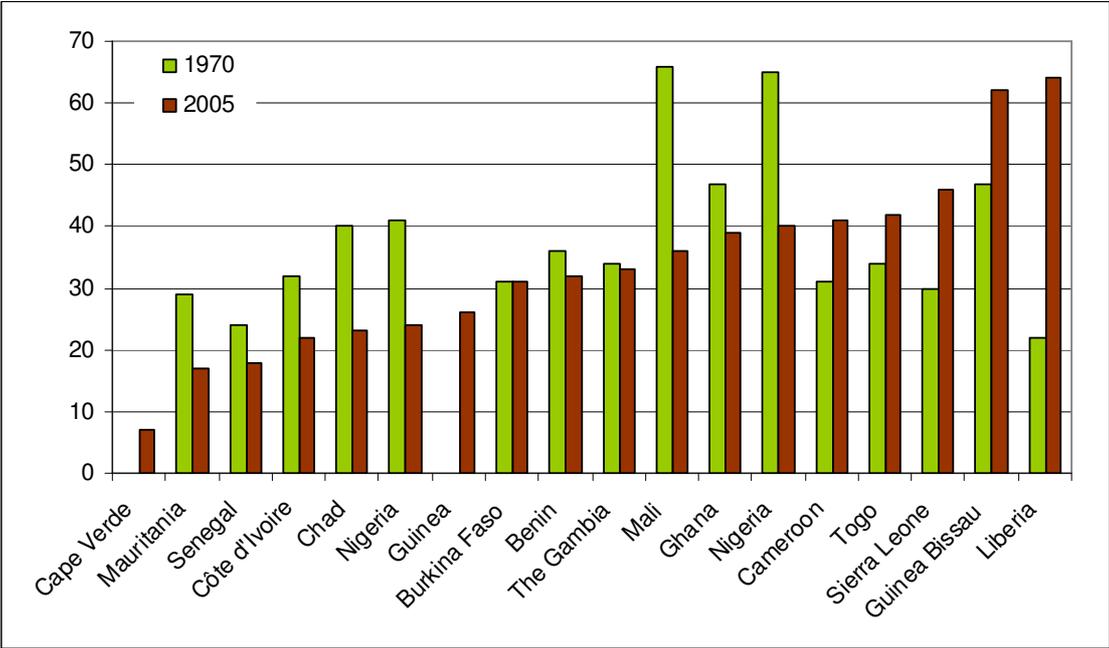
Graph 6 – Breakdown of West Africa's working population



Source: SWAC / OECD (1998)

¹⁸ Club du Sahel (1998): *Preparing for the Future: A vision of West Africa in the Year 2020*.

Graph 7 – The rural sector’s added value in percentage of West African countries’ GDP



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database (2004)

b) Activities in rural area

- 40. The rural environment actually covers a wide range of sectors and activities. The FAO¹⁹ distinguishes between four production system groups in agriculture as a whole, closely interwoven along latitudinal gradients with their own dominant characteristics (cropping and pastoral activities) or various degrees of spatial distribution (dispersed or concentrated). Within these groupings, nine production systems predominate in West Africa (See Map 8 and Annex 2). They bring together a large number of farming families and cover a wide area. They may sometimes be highly heterogeneous, breaking down into more specific sub-systems while remaining imbued with the system’s dominant characteristics (climate, rainfall, soil types, history, sociology, etc.).
- 41. These differences structure the rural economies of both regions and countries. Today, it is difficult to obtain separate, standardised data to enable such distinctions. Despite these limitations, it is estimated that agriculture accounts for more than half of the West African countries’ “agricultural GDP”, except in Mauritania, where the livestock farming sector predominates. The latter is the second-largest contributor to the region’s “agricultural GDP”, particularly in most Sahelian countries, where it represents 30 to 40% of the overall GDP.

¹⁹ FAO, World Bank (2001): *Farming Systems and Poverty*.

Map 8 – Production systems in West Africa

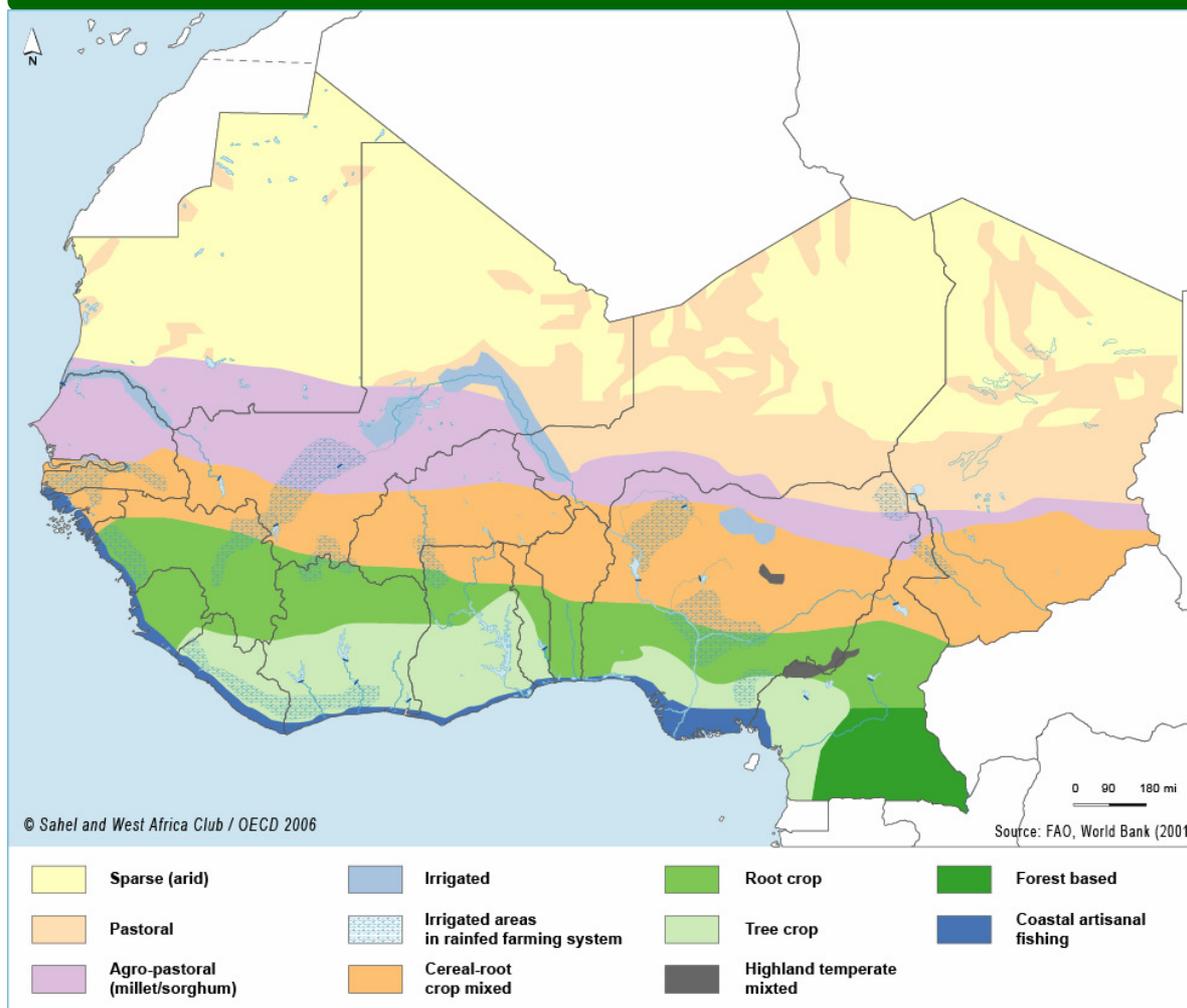


Table 2 – Contribution of agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing to the agricultural sector in some West African countries

	Agriculture	Livestock	Forestry	Fishing	Years
Burkina Faso	55%	35%		10 %	2004
Cameroon	76%	12%	6%	6%	2004
Chad	47%	44%	-	9%	2002
Guinea	95%	19%	12%	4%	2004
Mali	57%	28%		14%	2004
Mauritania	20%	53%	-	27%	2005
Niger	56%	33%		11%	2003
Nigeria	84%	10%	2%	5%	2003
Senegal	55%	30%	5%	11%	2003

Source: IMF country data

42. In addition to these sectors, other activities and income sources have developed in rural areas, including agricultural product processing or other productive sectors such as mining, handicrafts, trade, transportation or tourism. The structural adjustment policies implemented in the 1980s have been partly responsible for the transformation of the rural production environment. Therefore, the difficulties faced by a large number of

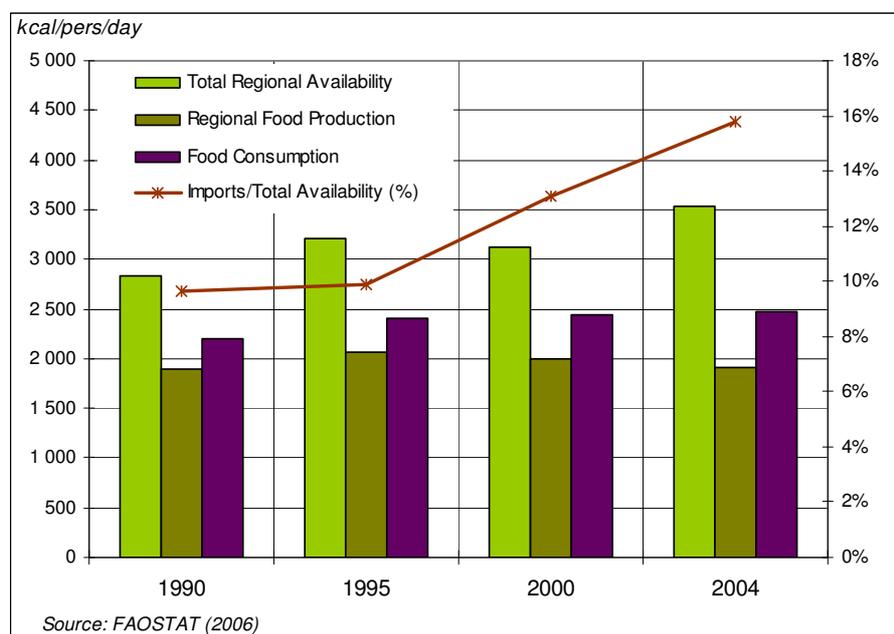
rural inhabitants in gaining access to agricultural services because of State withdrawal and the private sector's inability to take over properly has constrained some of them to move to other non-farming economic sectors, such as the informal sector²⁰. What, then, is the current share of active farmers in rural households? What other socio-economic groups can be distinguished? What is their respective economic weight? Unfortunately, our current knowledge does not enable us to answer these questions precisely.

3.2 The performances of the « agricultural sector »

a) Available regional production growing much faster than the population

43. An analysis of food production and consumption indices in caloric terms shows that West Africa's rural sector has succeeded to a large extent in meeting a fast growing population's needs over the last few decades. Studies have already analysed the gap between rising demand and the food supply response, considering the time-lag as the response time required to ensure supply. The response time-lag peaked in the early 1980s under the simultaneous impact of high urban growth, unfavourable climatic conditions and high export product prices, leading to an increase in exports while food product imports were facilitated by the accumulation of surpluses in developed countries, inadequate national food crop policies, etc.²¹. But the response time decreased after the 1980s.

Graph 8 – West African caloric balance sheet (1990 - 2004)



²⁰ Sahel and West Africa Club (2006): *Concept Note for Regional Strategic Thinking on the Future of the Rural Environment over the next 20 years*.

²¹ Snrech Serge (1996): *Current Thinking on Agricultural Changes in the Sahel*.

44. The time-lag seems to have increased again significantly since the early 1990s. While regional food supply was able to meet demand in less than five years in the early 1990s, it seems to take more than five years today. Consequently, food imports have risen from 10% to 16% of available regional stocks (See Graph 8). However, it must be noted that whereas per capita regional food production has remained stable over the past fifteen years, per capita consumption has risen considerably (from 2,200 to almost 2,500 kcal/capita/day), stimulated by an increase in urban incomes in particular.

b) Agricultural diversification and intensification

45. Post-independence, West African countries defined agricultural policies that focused on promoting export sectors (palm oil, coffee, cocoa, cotton, groundnuts, etc.) that had been established during colonial rule, thereby ensuring foreign exchange inflows. But the food crop production boom intended for the regional market soon overshadowed export crops. This can be explained by international market price fluctuations, the increase in food crop product supplies for the regional market or the fall in public investment in export sectors (See Box 4). The food crop share increased in terms of volume from 71 to 78% between 1960 and 2005. The boom concerned cereal crops (rice and corn), tubers and vegetable and fruit production, as well as the livestock and dairy sectors.

Table 3 – Growth in agricultural crop production and yields in West Africa

<i>West Africa</i>	Crop area 2005 (Thousand ha)	Production 2005 (Thousand tonnes)	Yields 2005 T/ha	Annual growth rate (1970/2005)		
				Crop area	Production	Yields
Fruit	3.3	18.5	5.6	1.6%	2.2%	0.6%
Maize	9.0	10.8	1.2	2.7%	3.5%	0.7%
Millet	15.5	11.9	0.8	1.1%	2.0%	1.0%
Oil seeds	15.7	4.7	0.3	1.4%	2.0%	0.6%
Dry pulses	11.2	4.1	0.4	1.7%	2.9%	1.2%
Rice (Paddy)	6.0	7.9	1.3	3.3%	3.8%	0.5%
Roots and tubers	12.8	106.0	8.3	2.9%	3.2%	0.3%
Sorghum	13.4	12.6	0.9	1.1%	2.1%	1.0%
Vegetables	2.5	14.1	5.6	2.2%	3.0%	0.7%

Source: FAOSTAT (2006)

Box 4 — Investments and agriculture in Senegal

Since 2000, Senegal has demonstrated its willingness to promote the development of commercial farming, replacing family farming. The groundnut sector stopped receiving the public support it got earlier. While in the 1960s, the groundnut sector contributed to 60% of farm GDP and 80% of export receipts, its current contribution is 6.5% of the agricultural GDP.

Conversely, emphasis was placed on agricultural diversification and the development of food processing. Although no precise statistics are available, investments seemed to be limited to commercial farming in Dakar's peri-urban zone in the horticultural sector (French beans, cherry tomatoes and mangoes) and in intensive livestock farming (milk and meat). These investments were made in the Niayes region and Senegal River valley for developing the tomato processing industry.

At the same time, donors began to withdraw from rural development financing and Official Development Assistance (ODA) continued to focus on irrigated agriculture, particularly in the Senegal River Valley and Delta region. Income inflows from the diaspora – comparable to the amount of Official Development Assistance received – represent an essential share of rural income. But the latter is not generally invested in economic activities in the rural environment.

Source: World Bank, ASPRODEB (2007))

46. The boom characterising agricultural diversification, though admittedly still limited in scope, stems from West Africa's production systems. The latter are essentially based on family farming, with cropping areas ranging from 3 to 5 hectares on average. A few exceptions may be noted, such as Nigeria and Liberia's rubber plantations, or oil palm plantations in certain coastal countries. While family farming has suffered many setbacks (input supplies, climate variability, transportation and market access, etc.), it seems better able to manage the uncertainties that weigh heavily on the regional and international markets, with diversification at the heart of the adaptation strategy's success²².
47. "Agribusiness" has developed along with family agriculture. It refers to large-scale farming for commercial purposes – a capital-intensive activity, maintaining close links with input supply and processing chains, as well as marketing channels. The food processing industry is one aspect of agribusiness. This sector's industrialists sometimes work on a contractual basis with small farms, as is the case of Mauritania's milk production sector or tomato concentrate processing in the Senegal River valley. Companies doing large-scale manioc processing for animal feed and other industrial derivatives are being set up in Ghana and Nigeria, creating a large market for producers and generating added value at the national level. These major industrial enterprises work with small farms, providing them inputs on credit, sometimes along with technical advice²³.

²² Camilla Toulmin and Bara Guèye (2003): *Transformation in West African Agriculture and the Role of Family Farms*.

²³ Hitimana Léonidas (2004): *The Transformation of West African Agriculture: Towards new partnerships for agricultural innovation*

48. The ability of family farming to respond to regional market dynamics is based on the marketing of fresh but increasingly processed products. For instance, women promote manioc as “attieke” or “gari” – preparations that have turned into national dishes for Côte d’Ivoire, Benin and Nigeria’s inhabitants. In the Sudanese region, for instance, yams have started competing with cotton, from northern Côte d’Ivoire to Cameroon’s Bénoué plains²⁴.
49. Agricultural diversification has kept pace with agricultural intensification, which is still moderate but likely to grow in the future. It can be seen in the introduction of new seeds, more inputs, the use of animals for manure and traction, etc. Comparatively, agricultural intensification in West Africa still remains limited as compared to other regions in the world: while fertiliser consumption increased five-fold from 1970 to 2000, reaching almost 4kg/farm asset, it is ten times lower than the world average (See Table 4).

Table 4 – Use of fertilisers and tractors in the world

	Fertilisers (kg/farm asset)		Tractors/1000 farm assets	
	1970	2000	1970	2000
Africa	6.1	8.7	1.3	1.2
Asia	8.2	37.1	0.5	4.1
Europe	281.0	362.8	68.6	177.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	23.7	113.7	5.2	16.3
North America	1430.2	2995.0	513.6	762.0
West Africa	0.8	3.9	0.1	0.4
World	34.7	52.5	8.1	10.5

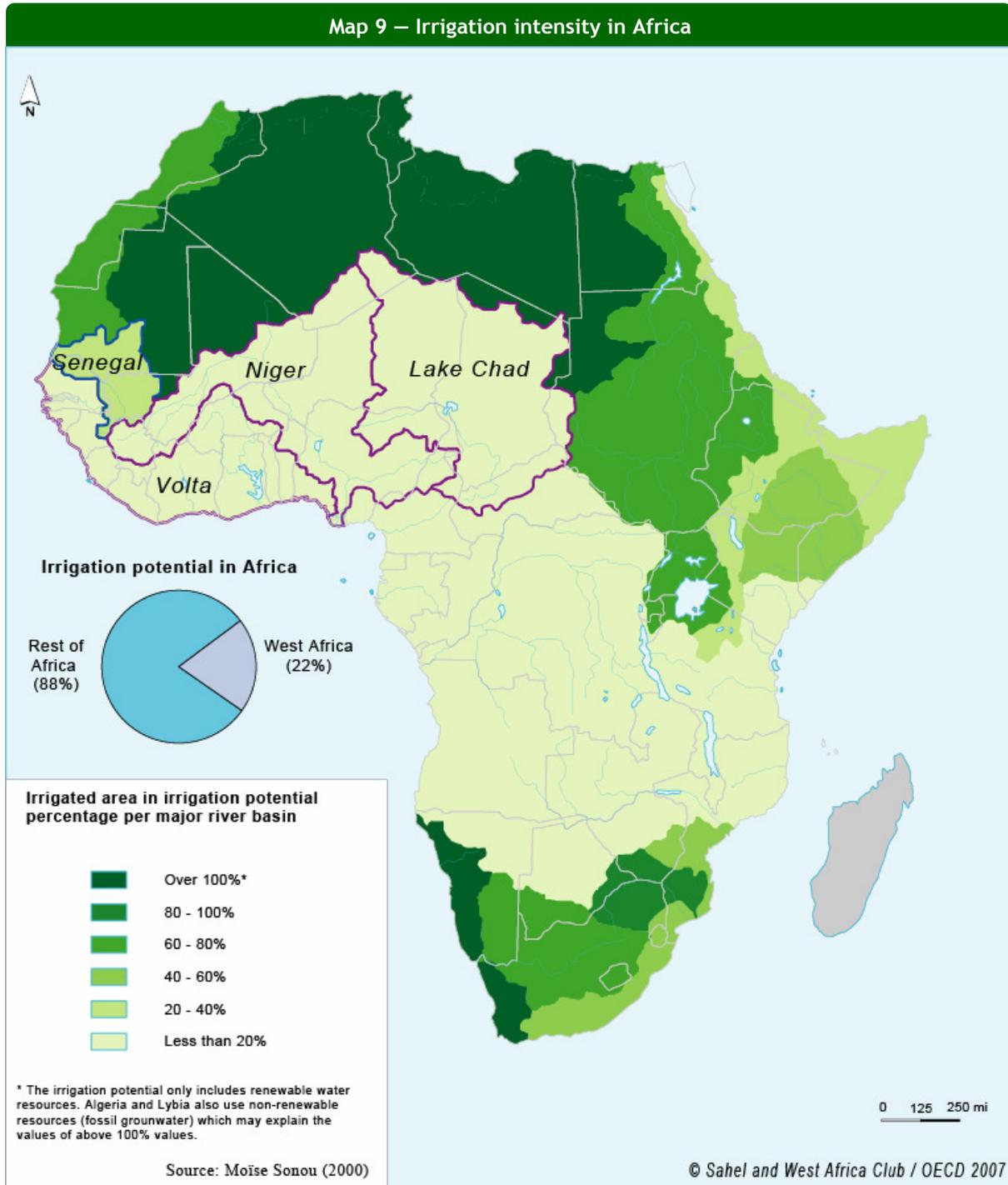
Source: FAOSTAT (2006)

50. Indeed, of all the means of agricultural intensification, governments want to promote more large-scale irrigation. Thus, irrigated systems are expected to be intensified, leading to more cost-effective irrigation system construction. A high potential exists for the development of irrigated, low-land or receding water crops. The African continent’s irrigation potential is estimated at more than 42.5 million hectares, taking into consideration the irrigation potential per river basin and renewable water resources²⁵. Twenty-two percent of this potential lies in West Africa, particularly in its main water basins: Lake Chad, and the Niger, Senegal, and Volta Rivers.

²⁴ Pélissier Paul (2000): *Les interactions rurales – urbaines en Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre*.

²⁵ FAO (2005): *Irrigation in Africa in figures: Aquastat survey – 2005*.

Map 9 – Irrigation intensity in Africa



51. Today, less than a million hectares of land is effectively irrigated in the region, to which the same amount of low-land or receding water areas must be added. There is still a low level of use here. Only 8% of irrigable land is effectively irrigated. The irrigated land area is not expected to expand substantially in the future. It should increase to 1.25 million hectares in 2030. On the other hand, cropping intensity²⁶ is expected to improve significantly, from 129% in 1996 to 156% in 2030 (See Annex 4).

²⁶ Cropping intensity is a perimeter's annual cropping area.

c) Livestock performance and challenges

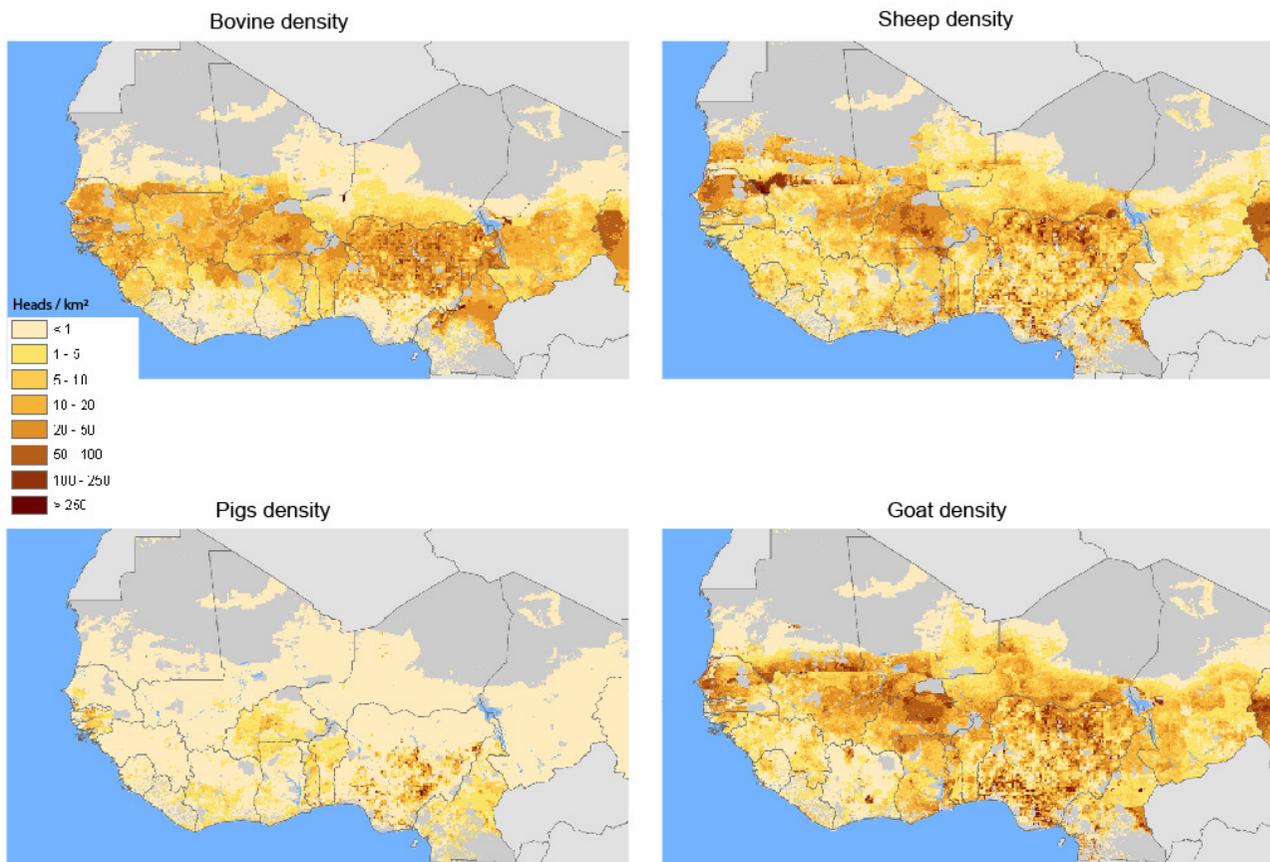
52. West Africa's livestock potential is significant and very diverse. West Africa accounts for about 28% of the continent's cattle, 41% of its sheep, 40% of its goats and 20% of its camels. Other herbivores (*camelidae*), short life-cycle animals (pigs, poultry) and several other species used as draft animals (horses, donkeys) complete the region's animal stock.
53. There are four livestock production systems in West Africa, as in the rest of the continent: grazing systems, which provide 60% of the African continent's beef, 40% of its small ruminant meats and 70% of its milk. Agro-pastoral systems, steadily on the rise as compared to grazing systems, are sedentary and based on food crop or export crop cultivation. They account for 35% of the total beef production, 20% of small ruminant meat production, 35% of poultry production, 40% of pork production, 15% of milk production and 10% of egg production. Fowl-run systems promote agricultural or domestic by-products, with the produce almost completely home consumed. The fowl-run production's contribution has been assessed at 30% of small ruminant meat production, 35% of poultry, 50% of pork production, and 60% of egg production. Intensive systems are developing in urban and peri-urban areas, making the most of demand proximity. They essentially pertain to poultry farming (eggs and meat), pig farming and dairy production to a lesser extent.

Table 5 – Livestock strength and production in West Africa

Species	Million heads, 2005		Average annual growth rate 1970-2005 (%)	
	West Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	West Africa	West Africa
Cattle	60	218	1.5	1.5
Sheep	73	176	2.8	2
Goats	88	211	3.2	2.3
Pigs	13	22	4.3	3.8
Poultry	0,4	0,8	3.2	2.6
Animal production	Million heads, 2005		Average annual growth rate 1970 – 2005 (%)	
	West Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	West Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
Meat	2.8	7.2	2.6	2.1
Milk	2.7	18	1.6	2.4
Eggs	0.7	1.1	4.2	3.2

Source: FAOSTAT (2006)

Map 10 – Animal density in West Africa



Source: Animal production and health division, FAO (2006)

54. At the regional level, livestock production in West African countries is far from meeting the ever-increasing demand. On the whole, there is a growing animal product supply deficit in relation to regional demand, except for small ruminant meats. In addition, regional milk product supplies remain insufficient and overall demand continues to be covered by imports. While the milk product demand surplus decreased between 1980 and 1990 (to about 1.3 million tonnes), it has recorded a quasi-exponential growth since then. Projections do not presage a reversal of the trend and the deficit is likely to reach 2.5 million tonnes by the year 2015²⁷. Unless major investments are made, substantial extra-regional milk imports would have to fill the gap in regional production.

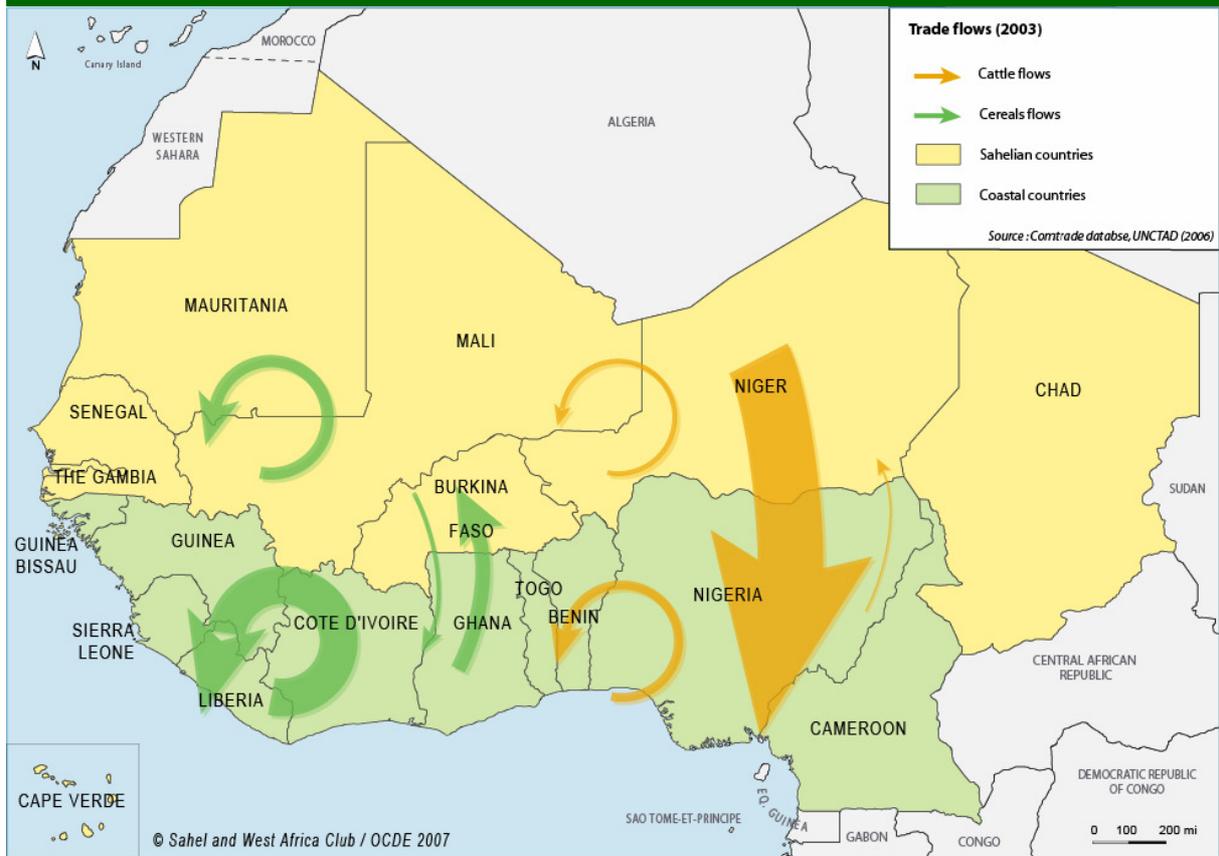
d) Agricultural trade and markets

55. While demographic growth and urban development offer greater opportunities for the marketing of farm products as compared to the past, the regional agricultural market is still driven by the complementarity of rural spaces, the supply-demand gap at the sub-regional level and the development of national and regional policies.
56. East-West complementarities – between plateau regions and swamp areas – and North-South complementarities – between the Sahel, the savannah, and forests – have always prompted trade of different kinds, characteristic of long-distance commerce²⁸. And they continue to do so. Cereal and meat flows from the Sudano-Sahelian and Sahelian regions towards coastal metropolises run along the north-south corridors. Such trade takes place as much between the Sahelian and coastal countries (See Map 11) as between regions within the same country.
57. Numerous trade flows of tuber, fruit, vegetables and forestry products create linkages between Sudanese areas and coastal countries and major cities or secondary towns. Harvested produce usually follows the same route, as is the case with the palm oil trade – from Guinea Bissau and Guinea to Mali and Senegal (See Map 12).
58. Shortages in local production vis-à-vis demand are also a driving force for regional trade, as is the case with tomato production in Benin or Nigeria, which far from meets national demand. The tomato trade follows two different routes, depending on the seasons: the West-East route, starting in Ghana and Togo's production areas and reaching Cotonou and Lagos' markets at the same time as these countries' rain-fed production. But in the off season, tomatoes from Northern Nigeria, Northern Benin, Northern Ghana or even Burkina Faso find their way to Cotonou and Lagos' coastal markets (See Map 13).

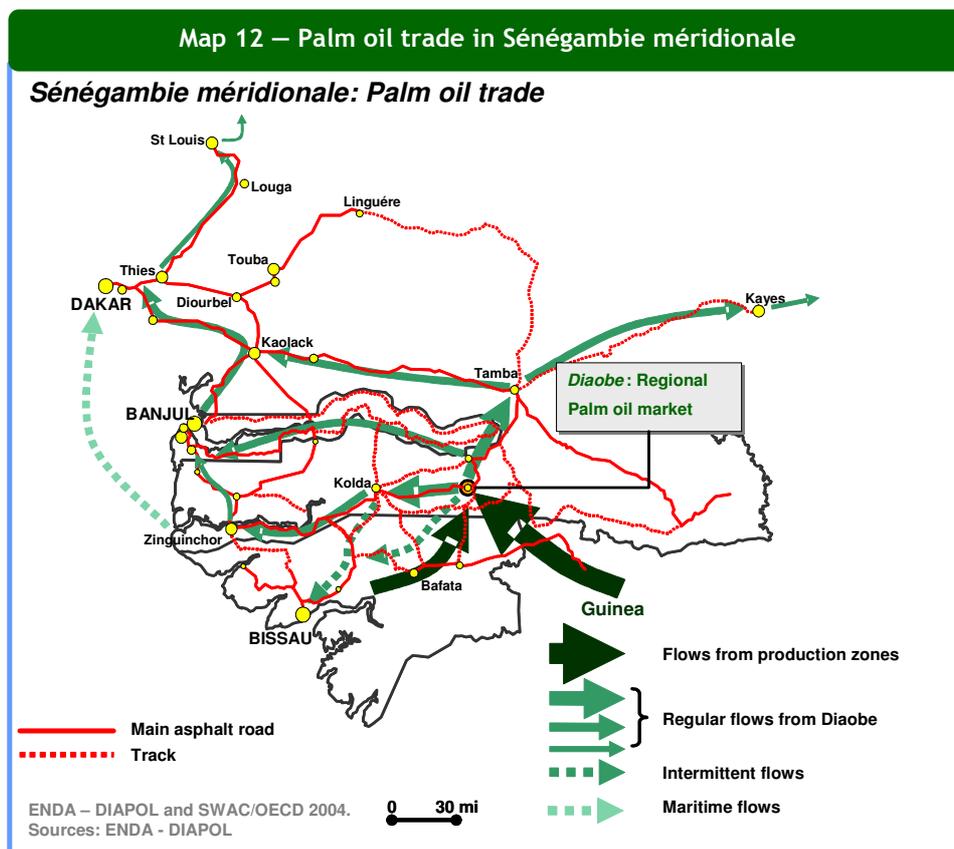
²⁷ Sahel and West Africa Club (forthcoming publication): *The Future of Livestock in the Sahel and West Africa: Potentials and Challenges for Strengthening the Regional Market*.

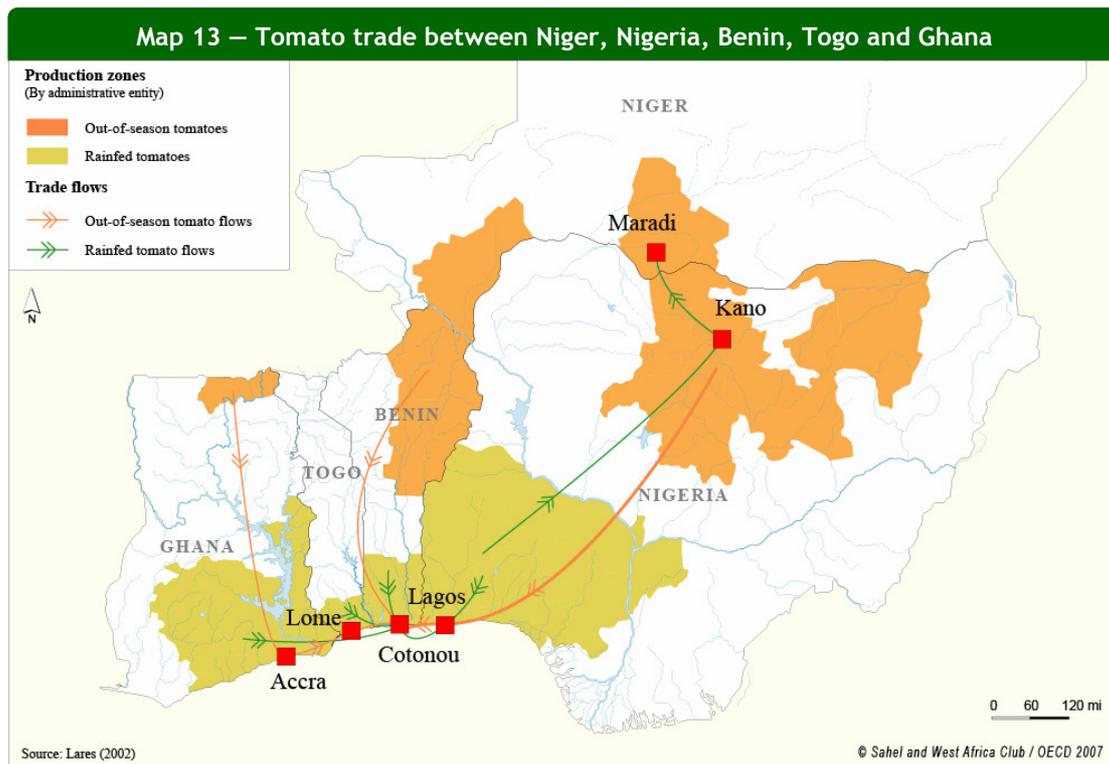
²⁸ Dahou Karim (2003): *Structure du commerce extérieur et intégration régionale*.

Map 11 – Regional cereal and cattle trade in West Africa



Map 12 – Palm oil trade in Sénégalie méridionale





59. The food crop trade has witnessed a revival over the last twenty years. Indeed, it has benefited from State withdrawal and the growing autonomy of farmers since the liberalisation wave in West African economies. It has also benefited from the region's construction, which has promoted trade development within the WAEMU and ECOWAS regions. In principle, there is a free flow of goods within these regions, without any customs duties or quantitative restrictions. However, such a boom would not have happened if trading had not been based on old, well-structured networks, sometimes on the basis of an effective, informal foreign exchange market, and if it had not benefited from the development of storage and transport infrastructure.
60. Conversely, trade liberalisation policies seem to have aggravated producers' difficulties with regard to market access for selling farm produce. Some of the region's farm products face competition from imported products even in local village markets. Products such as rice and milk are particularly sensitive to this situation as they suffer from weak commercial protection rates within the WAEMU, along with meat.
61. In future, the WAEMU's CET (Common External Tariff) expansion to ECOWAS, scheduled to be completed on 31 December 2007, should modify the trade position of countries that do not have the same tariff barrier practices in the region. In fact, the expansion could take the shape of tariff 'disarmament' for protectionist countries such as Nigeria, or conversely, tariff 'rearmament' for very open countries such as the Gambia (See Annex 6).
62. At the same time, European Union and ECOWAS countries, along with Mauritania, are planning to establish a free trade area within the framework of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA). These should be concluded by 1 January 2008, when the WTO dispensation that allows the specific EU-ACP regime to continue for a transitional period expires. These reforms bear both risks and opportunities for West African countries, especially for their rural sector.

**Box 5 — The effects of the CFA franc devaluation on intra-regional trade:
the case of the cattle sector**

The 50% CFA franc's devaluation in 1994 had widespread implications for West Africa's agricultural market. Overall, it tended to favour the profitability of export sectors, while regional market sectors (cattle, cereals, etc.) witnessed a mixed situation. On the other hand, the end consumers' food purchasing power eroded.

In the early 1990s, the Sahel's cattle sector faced stiff competition from extra-African imports in coastal countries. The expected effect of the currency's devaluation in the franc area improved the Sahelian sectors' competitiveness and, consequently, led to a better integration of the regional market. The devaluation took place in a favourable context associated with the easing of procedures governing exports from Sahelian countries to coastal countries and the reduction of European export subsidies.

Thus, in the short and medium term, the Sahelian sectors saw their share in coastal country markets improve, especially in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. For Mali, export market shares rose from 23% to 42% between the 1990/93 and 1994/97 periods. In Burkina Faso, the average went up from 40% to 55%.

Source: Sahel Institute (1998): *Enjeux et perspectives quatre ans après la dévaluation du FCFA*.

Yade Mbaye et al (1999): *The Role of Regional Trade in Agricultural Transformation: The Case of West Africa following the devaluation of the CFA Franc*.

63. Most impact studies and works agree on a certain number of conclusions: the increased opening up of markets to products imported from the European Union is supposed to favour consumers by reducing food costs. But the opening up of these markets led to increased competition with local producers. Some estimates have shown that extra-regional imports of onions, potatoes, beef or poultry meat would increase by 15-20%²⁹.
64. Conversely, would the opening up of the European market be beneficial for West African countries? Not obviously so, for two reasons – on the one hand, thanks to the 'Tout Sauf les Armes' (Everything but Arms) initiative, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)³⁰ already have access to European markets without having to pay any customs duties for any products except those covered by a specific protocol. Only Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria, all non-LDCs, could actually benefit from a possible opening of the European Union market. On the other hand, countries exporting food products or processed food products to Europe have to meet quality and timeframe criteria, which they are unable to do fully, except in the case of the fresh fruit and vegetable sectors. But this is probably an opportunity that West African countries have to seize, along with the European Union's support, in order to deal with the market's qualitative constraints or to even develop other potential outlets in South America or Asia. Finally, the possibility of gaining access to European markets could give rise to a growing interest in the ECOWAS zone from foreign investors.

²⁹ GRET (2005): *Impacts de l'Accord de partenariat économique UE – Afrique de l'Ouest*.

³⁰ Some LDCs: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Part 4 .

Poverty reduction and food insecurity

4.1 *Income dispersion, poverty and malnutrition*

65. The primary objective of the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals is to halve the proportion of the poor and those suffering from hunger, between 1990 and 2015. West Africa's progress in this respect is quite mixed: in 10 years (from 1990-92 to 2000-2002), the proportion of malnourished persons fell from 21% to 16% (See Table 9).
66. However, the abject poverty level (proportion of the population living on less than a dollar a day, the primary indicator of the Millennium Development Goals or MDGs) remains significantly higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than in the other regions (44% in 2002). Furthermore, it has barely changed since 1990 (44.6%).

Table 6 – Proportion of the population living on less than a dollar a day

	1990	2002
Developing countries	27.9	19.4
North Africa and Middle-East	2.2	2.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	44.6	44.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	11.3	8.9
Far East	33.0	14.1
South Asia	39.4	31.2
South-East Asia and Oceania	19.6	7.3

Source: The Millennium Development Goals Report 2006, United Nations, New York, 2006

67. According to West African countries, between 33 and 79% of the total rural population is poor and the proportion is decidedly higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Furthermore, the percentage is likely to increase. At that stage, 27% of the developing countries' poor will live in Africa.

Table 7 – Rural and urban poverty (as percentage of total population)

Country	Survey year(s)	Rural	Urban	National
Benin	1999	33	23	29
Burkina Faso	1998	51	16	45
Cameroon	2001	50	22	40
Chad	1995-96	67	63	64
Côte d'Ivoire	-	70	30	33
The Gambia	1998	61	48	58
Ghana	1998-99	50	19	39
Guinea	-	52	51	52
Guinea-Bissau	-	65	29	54
Mali	1998	76	30	64
Mauritania	2000	61	25	46
Niger	1998	68	30	48
Nigeria	1992-93	36	30	34
Senegal	1992	40	24	33
Sierra Leone	2003-04	79	56	70
Togo	1997-89	n.d	n.d	32

Sources: World Bank 2005, Development Indicators; IFAD, COSOP

68. The UNDP has developed a Human Development Index (HDI) that incorporates data on life expectancy, health, access to knowledge and standard of living. The HDI ranges from 0 to 1 and varies throughout the world, from 0.271 for the country with the lowest index (Niger) to 0.960 for the country with the highest (Norway), with the world average at 0.741. Table 9 shows to what extent West African countries are among the least developed – the last six on the list are West African countries.

Table 8 – Human Development Index (HDI)

	HDI	Rank (out of 176 countries overall)
Benin	0.428	163
Burkina Faso	0.342	174
Cameroon	0.506	144
Cape Verde	0.722	106
Chad	0.368	171
Côte d'Ivoire	0.421	164
The Gambia	0.479	155
Ghana	0.532	136
Guinea	0.445	160
Guinea Bissau	0.349	173
Liberia	nd	nd
Mali	0.338	175
Mauritania	0.486	153
Niger	0.311	177
Nigeria	0.448	159
Senegal	0.460	156
Sierra Leone	0.335	176
Togo	0.495	147

Source: Human Development Report 2006, UNDP.

69. Despite their abundant natural resources, the average per capita GDP remains very low – \$ 638 on average for all West African countries taken together. The number of inhabitants suffering from malnutrition in West Africa remains high, as can be seen in Table 9. These figures are slightly better than those for the rest of the continent (over 30% of the country’s population), and are improving steadily.

Table 9 – Malnutrition in West Africa

WEST AFRICA	1990-92	2000-02
Total number of malnourished persons (millions)	44.8	42.9
Proportion of malnourished in the total population (%)	23	17
Current ratio and reference figures for malnourished persons (as compared to the Millennium Goal target ¹ = 0.5)		0,7
Current ratio and reference figures for malnourished persons (as compared to the World Food Summit target ² = 0.5)		1,0

Source: FIVIMS (2005)

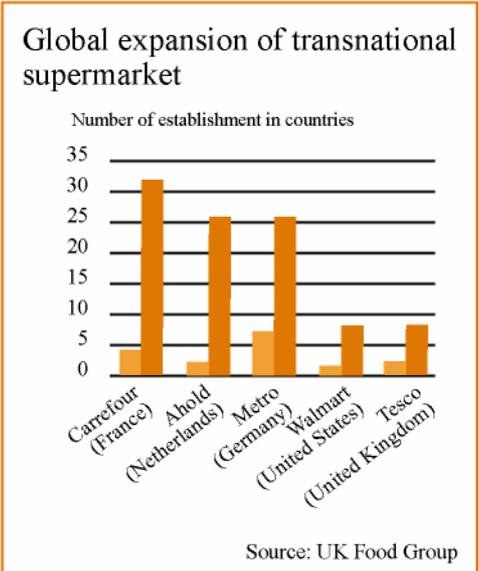
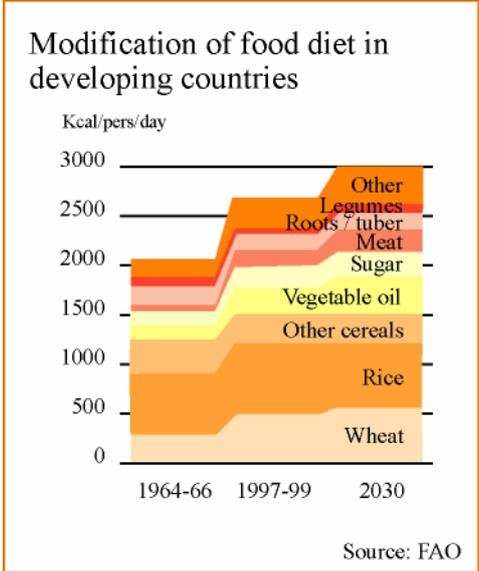
1- Millennium Development Goal: to halve the proportion of persons suffering from hunger between 1990 and 2015.

2- World Food Summit Goal: to halve the number of persons suffering from malnutrition between 1990-92 and 2015.

4.2 Changing consumption patterns

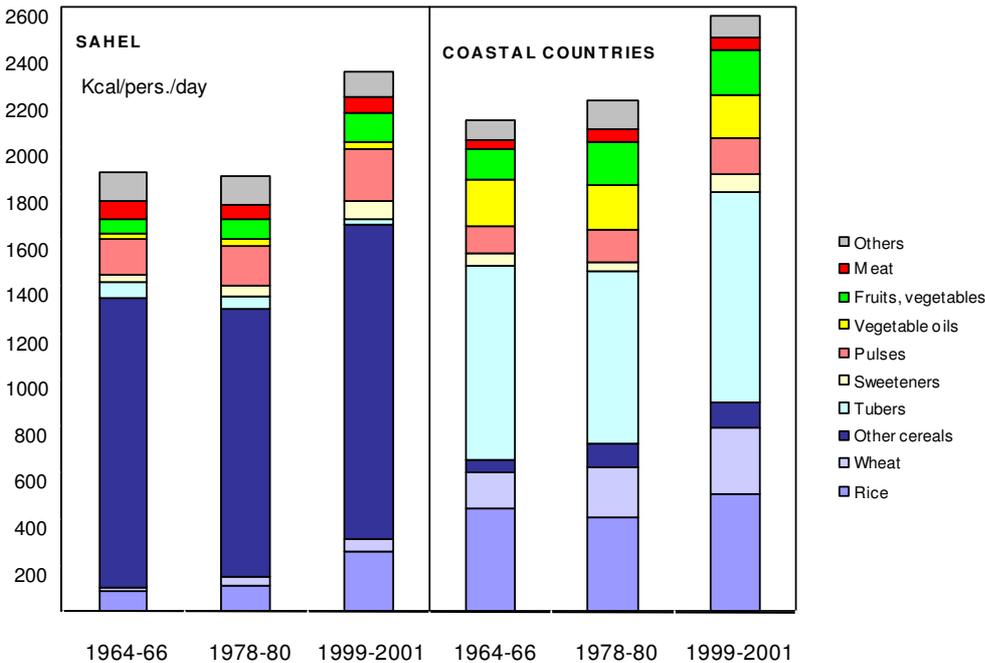
70. Strong trends in rural societies are bringing about changes in the inhabitants’ behaviour pattern – in particular with regard to food. These deep-seated demographic and economic transformations are leading to rapid changes in food systems, as well as the scope and nature of nutritional problems in all developing countries. Thus, diets in the rural environment are increasingly limited to fewer food items (wheat and rice), with higher meat and derivatives consumption and a lower fibre intake. The effects of rising urbanisation compel people to have more of their meals outside their homes and to purchase more processed foods.

Graph 9 –



- 71. The increased concentration of the processing and sale sectors is another reason for the convergence of diets. The strongest trends are investments by multinational food chains (the 30 biggest food chains alone control a third of the world market) and the growing market share of international supermarket chains.
- 72. These changes have had a strong impact on food security as well as on the nutritional well-being of people at the extreme end of the chain – farmers, who are now forced to comply with the changing market requirements and standards and the growing number of urban inhabitants opting for the processed foods now at their disposal thanks to street vendors and fast-food establishments.
- 73. Moreover, small producers find it difficult to remain independent and not be drawn into joining the ranks of the suppliers selected by supermarket chains. They have to make major investments (irrigation systems, greenhouses, trucks, refrigerated warehouses and packaging techniques) to meet their quality and reliability standards. Small farmers who manage to become suppliers for these supermarkets form cooperatives. Those that fail to be selected risk being excluded and marginalised.
- 74. The considerable urban growth in West Africa has also had an impact on the nature of the food demand. A growing number of children are born and raised in cities, following urban consumption patterns. Cities tend to feed themselves with rice and wheat imports, which are increasing, but also with increasingly diversified food items, as long as their availability is assured and their prices attractive (oil, meat, fish, as well as local cereals such as fonio, corn, millets and sorghum). According to household surveys, the cereal base accounts for half the cost of a meal in rural areas and only one-third the cost in cities.

Graph 10 – Food availability trends in West Africa



Source: FAO, Food and Nutrition Division

75. From 1961 to 2003, food imports in West African countries rose from 5% to 16% of total food supply. This situation was largely due to the rise in cereal imports, in particular wheat and rice³¹, vegetable oils (soybean and palm oil), animal fat and milk.
76. The attraction for imported cereals was largely due to their regular availability on the market, both in terms of quality and quantity, which in turn was due to the food security policies implemented by States and regional institutions in order to ensure regular supplies to cities at low prices. But imported cereals were also attractive in rural areas and intermediate towns in the Sahel in the lean season. On the contrary, the irregularity of local product supplies on the market, exchange rate fluctuations and the vagaries of seasonal supplies depending on climatic conditions make investments in products of this type even less attractive.
77. Local foods are processed almost entirely within the countries. Even in urban areas, they are used for cooking (flour, precooked semolina, fritters, pulps, etc.) mainly only informally, within families. Attempts to promote Sahelian products have remained at an experimental level (incorporation of local cereals in imported products, development of new substitute products) and have not led to any substantial results. Much thought needs to be given to the possibility of adding value to local products in order to give agricultural and rural areas a chance to meet a demand that is likely to increase, in all circumstances.

³¹ The overall food dependency rate is calculated on the basis of the food dependency rates of different product groups in proportion to calories.

Part 5.

Social cohesion and the revitalisation of rural communities

5.1 *Rural development policies*

a) National rural development policies

78. From 1960 to 1980, West African States played a predominant role in managing the agricultural sector. They initiated the development and implementation of agricultural policies or the establishment of a positive environment for agricultural activities. The State also positioned itself as the main, if not the only player in certain activities (research, spreading technologies and primary marketing of several products, especially cash crops). The organisation into a sub-sector, guaranteeing a balanced price and ensuring market outlets was somewhat successful, as in the case of certain cash crops, such as cotton. The system was not as well developed for food crops. However, this approach often led to major deficits in these sectors, and consequently to national public finance. Furthermore, State management has been rather restrictive for producers, stifling all initiatives and sense of accountability.
79. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by the implementation of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in the agricultural sector, launched by issuing “Rural Development Policy Letters” in almost all the region’s States³². They prescribed the transfer of certain State activities and powers to private actors and Producer Organisations, which play a much greater role in the sector’s organisation as such today, or in the definition of rural strategies at local and national level.
80. The farmers’ movement built up at various levels – grassroots, federations and national platform. At the local level, several thousand Producer Organisations (POs) in West Africa, with economic and social visions, developed proximity services (credit and savings funds, cereal banks, health centres, etc.). Producers’ federations and organisations started being set up in the 1980s and focused their strategy on economic functions for sectoral POs (cotton, coffee, cocoa, etc), economic, social and technical functions for generalist POs (FONGS, MOORIBEN, etc.), and “lobbying” functions for PO unions (CNCR, CNOP, FUPRO, ANOPCI, etc.).
81. The latter emphasised the participation of producer organisations in the definition and implementation of agricultural and rural development policies. Today, they have come together in national platforms³³. In Mali, for instance, the National coordination framework for producer organisations (CNOP) was entrusted with the organisation of consultation workshops on the Agricultural Vision Act in the various regions. In Senegal, the CNCR, which brings together 22 federations, has developed into an interlocutor that the State

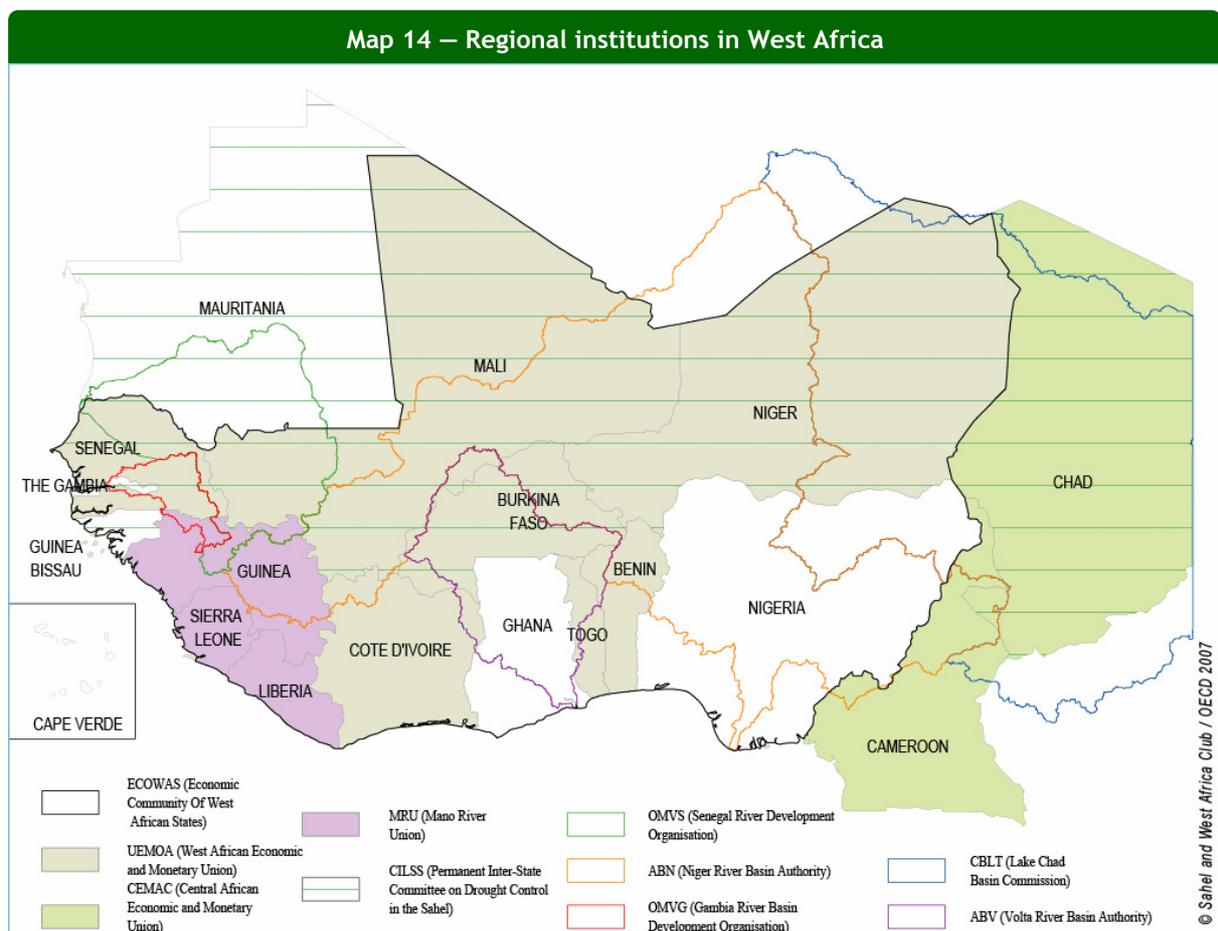
³² Soule Bio Goura (2003): *Le rôle de l’agriculture dans la compétitivité ouest-africaine*.

³³ SOS Faim (2003): *Légitimité et représentativité des organisations paysannes*.

cannot afford to ignore, etc. Producers and other actors' involvement in the formulation of rural development strategies are also echoed at the regional level.

b) Towards the definition of a regional policy

82. Regional strategies and policies are not new to West Africa. Several institutions were set up in the 1970s to take these requirements into consideration: economic integration institutions (ECOWAS, WAEMU, MRU, etc.), scientific cooperation and technical support institutions (CILSS, ADRAO, OCLALAV, etc.) and regional planning institutions (OMVS, OMVG, SBLT, ABN, etc.).

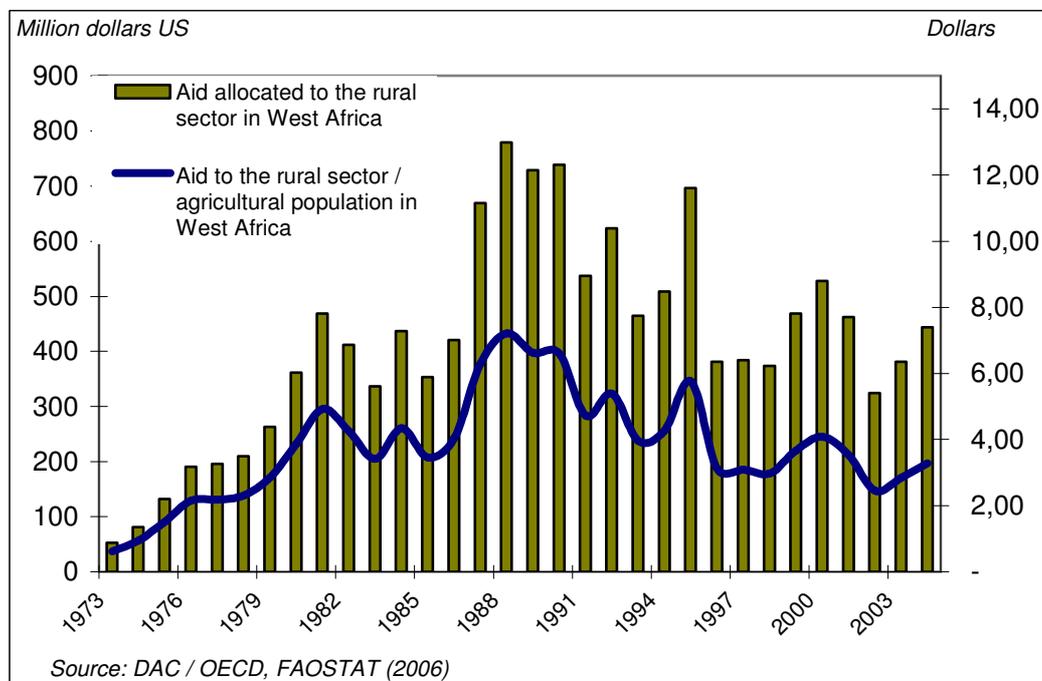


83. Given the challenges facing the region today, new strategies and policies are being drawn up or implemented: the WAEMU's agricultural policy, the CILSS' Strategic Framework for Food Security, the ECOWAS/CILSS sub-regional programme against desertification and the ECOWAS agricultural policy framework for West Africa (ECOWAP). Ensuring the smooth interlocking of the complementary roles played by these institutions has now become necessary.
84. Like economic operators, producer organisations grouped together at the regional level play a greater role in drafting and directing these policies. Thus, the intervention of ROPPA members (West African Network of Producer Organisations and Agricultural Producers) in national workshops has made it possible to influence the ECOWAS' debates on the Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP). Beyond the regional level, these organisations

have gained greater weight and take part in international negotiations. Some institutions have been particularly active along with the C4 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad) in commercial negotiations in the WTO: the African Cotton Association (ACA), the African Producers' Association (APROCA) and the ROPPA.

85. All these transformations are partially the outcome of the support received from development partners in the region. External aid to the rural sector, which played a major role in the past, has tended to shrink, to the benefit of other economic or social sectors. According to OECD data, Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated to the agricultural sector has fallen from 16% to 8% of total ODA between the 1980s and the preceding decade (1995-2004). So what will be the future of ODA in the rural sector? Does the advent of "emerging countries" as actors in providing aid indicate the possibility of fresh funding or new strategies for the rural sector?

Graph 11 – Official Development Assistance allocated to the rural sector in West Africa



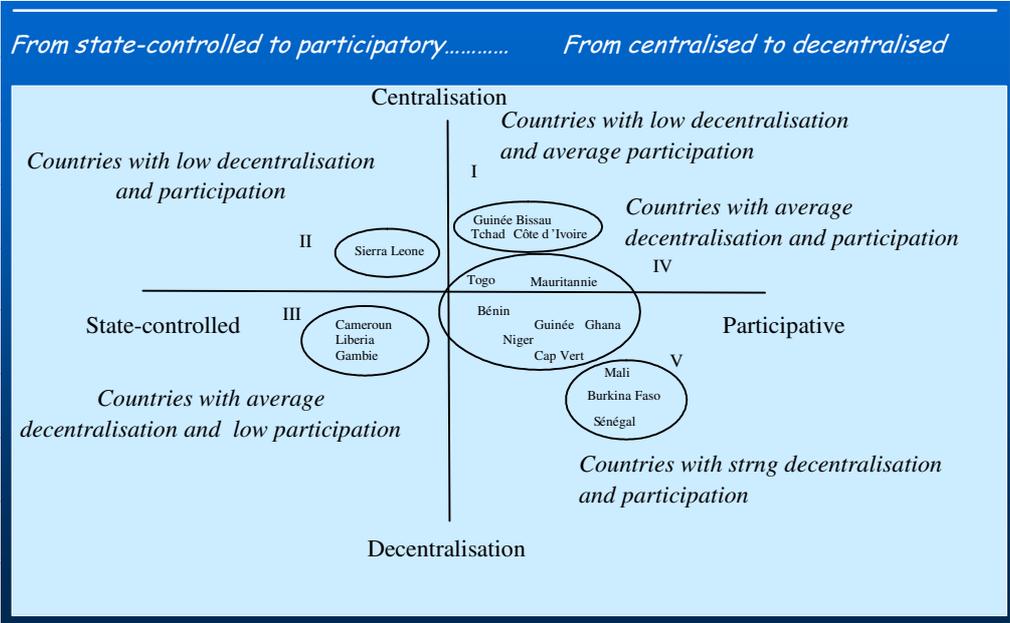
86. There are several reasons for adopting a common approach in the region's countries: complementarities between production areas and consumer needs, development of common resources shared between various territories, and the region's ability to take part in international negotiations. Rural development strategies have much to gain from considering these issues to a larger extent, in particular when they are initiated at the regional level.

87. West Africa has to face two major challenges. Firstly, solidarity vis-à-vis national policies needs to be reinforced in order to defend the countries' and region's interests. The benefits of such action could be seen when cotton producing countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad – joined forces during the WTO negotiations. The same needs to be done now during the commercial negotiations to be held within the framework of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the European Union or partnerships with new actors, such as China, India or Brazil. How can ECOWAS countries reconcile their divergent interests? And secondly, strategies focused on the development of cross-border regions or areas on the basis of their comparative advantages need to be furthered. Decentralised rural development – i.e. at the local level – is part of such a process.

5.2 Decentralisation of rural development

88. Over the last few years, rural development management has evolved towards greater decentralisation, while participatory mechanisms and procedures have also developed, either as pilot projects or institutional reforms. They tend to involve local actors to a greater extent and to give them the opportunity to take part in planning and implementing activities concerning them. However, such practices are not widespread and there may be different degrees of participation and decentralisation in different countries, giving rise to five groups of countries according to their typology (See Graph 12).

Graph 12 – West African decentralisation and participation typology



Source: FAO, Rural Development Division (2006)

89. The current institutional landscape is the outcome of the region's historical context. Most institutions stemmed from administrative and directive forms developed by the colonial administration. But by opting for the centralised planning of their economies, certain countries strengthened the directive aspect of interventions in rural areas. Others

maintained a strong administrative presence or, on the contrary, demonstrated a political will for decentralisation and regionalisation very early. In order to prepare strategic frameworks, most countries followed a “top-down” approach, steered by central departments supported by external actors. However, consultation with decentralised bodies began to develop to a limited extent in some countries, with different forms and degrees of rural development planning in some.

90. While consultation processes developed everywhere, populations’ effective participation in managing their affairs often still remains at a pilot stage in several countries and the transfer of power and responsibilities is also unequally distributed. It has been observed that countries that decentralised their intervention systems very early and those that witnessed major changes in recent years have made the greatest progress towards local development. An examination of the situation in these countries reveals that the way the regional level is organised today is rooted both in the centralised systems inherited from the colonial period and the efforts made to appropriate and adapt them to the local conditions prevailing in territorial organisation and the administration of development. More recently, territorial and rural sector restructuring has been marked by a strong trend in favour of regionalisation, as can be seen in the strategic visions adopted by various countries.
91. The options adopted have a number of underlying causes whose impact can be seen in the forms taken by the decentralisation process and their development. The States’ concern to withdraw from certain functions is one example, as are the pressures of internal movements, those of external actors, financial problems, greater people’s participation, etc. Contrary to developments at the central and local levels, as regionalisation attempts are a fairly recent experience, their objectives, methods and results are not very well known at this stage. However, what can be observed is that through the partial withdrawal of the central level, all these attempts aim at strengthening the local level, to different degrees and in different ways, specific to each country.
92. With regard to the institutional landscape and in the light of developments in different countries, the limits between the regional and local level are not always well-defined. There are some administrative or technical support bodies that have a limited territorial coverage in some countries, whereas they may have a regional coverage in others. Given these conditions, it is proposed that a sub-regional level be defined within the regional level. In the same way, at the local level and in order to differentiate between the commune, canton or village, for instance, a local and micro-local level could be envisaged.
93. The various regional bodies fulfil four types of functions: those related to the representation of central departments and administrations in the regions, which are therefore directly involved in the State’s withdrawal process; those related to the representation of the people and producers, which are therefore concerned by the emergence of civil society; those related to regional-level coordination itself, which therefore aim at strengthening the region’s role; and finally, those related to the capitalisation of experiences and methods at the regional level.
94. The primary constraint with the new distribution of powers stems from the concern for national cohesion, in order to avoid the risks of federalism and the break-up of States. Other limitations may be analysed as a series of constraints within the framework of the improved functioning of the various regional bodies. The main constraints identified are

those related to State functioning and that of its support departments, as they often perpetuate habits and customs inherited from the centralised system, frequent changes in institutions, programmes and officials and an imbalanced sharing of power between the central and regional levels. Other constraints pertain to the emergence of civil society itself, such as the weak private sector, the behaviour of certain social categories, the lack of ability to manage new functions, and so on. Constraints related to the functioning of these regional bodies themselves also deserve to be mentioned. In fact, these bodies are conditioned by the very foundations of the process through which they developed and the existence or lack of adapted legal frameworks. Finally, constraints represented by the process cost and its financing also need to be mentioned.

Box 5 — Decentralisation in rural areas in Mali

The territorial reorganisation process was initiated in 1995 in Mali. It gave rise to 703 rural and urban communes in the country. The responsibilities of a rural commune in Mali covered:

- Development planning and infrastructure development policy
- Commune-level water supplies
- Building and maintenance of the commune's roadways
- Market management and economic development
- Land organisation, natural resource management and land-use management
- Waste and waste water management
- Primary education and local health system organisation

However, the implementation of these duties remains limited – the central administration's powers are only partially transferred. Communes do not have much financial autonomy: on average, communes collect CFAF 2,500 per inhabitant. Of this budget, they allocate only CFAF 600 per inhabitant to expenditure for facilities. Finally, local representatives are sometimes inadequately trained in planning and management techniques and methods.

Source: GTZ (2005): Democratisation in rural areas in West Africa.
MDP (2003): Status of decentralisation in Africa.

Conclusion

Rural development policies cannot look to the past to prepare for the future. Over the last 45 years, West Africa's rural landscape has witnessed deep-seated changes.

At their independence, the population in these countries was almost five times smaller than it is today and the inhabitants of rural areas, who were in the majority, mostly lived directly off the land (self-subsistence). Urban and rural areas were worlds apart – completely disconnected in many respects.

Today, West Africa is well on the way to becoming essentially urbanised. Its population has risen from 65 to 300 million inhabitants and the proportion of agricultural producers has fallen drastically. Nonetheless, despite some gaps, food production has generally managed to keep pace with the staggering rise in demand. However, it is still insufficiently diversified to be able to fully meet the urban population's needs. Imports have increased while remaining relatively low as compared to other developing regions. There is no doubt that imports would have risen much more with higher foreign currency resources.

The growing population and urbanisation have turned West Africa into a regional market. Rural and urban areas, local and national levels are intricately interlinked and interdependent. They have definitely entered the competitive era. Rural areas are no longer exclusively agricultural and urban areas are still partially involved in food production and cattle-raising.

The new era seems promising, though risk-laden, in particular because the weakest rural groups (those living in peripheral zones) are subject to the market's shortcomings without benefiting from its advantages. As was the case in other parts of the world at different times, the changeover from a traditional agrarian economy to urbanisation and the market economy led to an increased consumption of agricultural areas and non-renewable natural resources (timber).

These changes may seem extensive and very rapid, but there is no doubt that there will be more in the next two decades. In 2020, the urban population is likely to represent more than 50% of the total population. A city with 100,000 inhabitants in 2006 will have 160,000 in 2025 solely through its natural growth, and probably 180,000 with rural entrants. Land will be perceived as a capital asset by a growing number of farms (perhaps practices more respectful of the environment will emerge?). A larger share of farms than today will be well connected to the market and profit from it. Farmers in peripheral zones are likely to continue to suffer from the vagaries of the climate and the market.

Far more than in the past or even today, “agriculture” will not be the sole activity in rural areas, although it will remain the driving force. It will have to be incorporated in all rural development policies or strategies. Rural development will also have a great deal to gain from developing each specific sub-regional area by favouring consultation and the involvement of all the actors concerned – i.e. through dialogue and discussion between institutions and economic operators.

Acronyms

ABN	Autorité du Bassin du Niger / Niger Basin Authority
ABV	Autorité du Bassin de la Volta / Volta Basin Authority
ACA	African Cotton Association
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ANOPACI	Association Nationale des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire / National Association of Agricultural Professionals' Organisations in Côte d'Ivoire
APROCA	Association des Producteurs Africains / African Producers' Association
ASPRODEB	Association Sénégalaise pour la Promotion des Petits Projets de Développement à la Base / Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Small Grassroots Development Projects
CBLT	Commission du Bassin du Lac Tchad / Lake Chad Basin Commission
CEMAC	Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale / Central African Economic and Monetary Committee
CET	Common External Tariff
CICRED	Committee for International Coordination of National Research in Demography
CILSS	Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CNCR	Conseil National de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux / National Council for Rural Consultation and Cooperation
CNOP	Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes / National Coordination Framework for Farmers' Organisations
ECOWAP	Agricultural Policy Framework for West Africa
ENDA-DIAPOL	Environment and Development in the Third World – Political Dialogue
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FIVIMS	Information and Mapping Systems on Food Insecurity and Vulnerability
FONGS	Federation of Senegalese NGOs
FUPRO	Fédération des Unions de Producteurs du Bénin / Federation of Benin's Producers' Unions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRET	Groupe de Recherches et d'Échanges Technologiques / Technological Exchanges and Research Group
HDI	Human Development Index

HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ICARRD	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LARES	Laboratoire d'Analyse Régionale et d'Expertise Sociale / Regional Analysis and Social Expertise Laboratory
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDP	Municipal Development Partnership
MRU	Mano River Union
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMVG	Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Gambie / Gambia River Development Organisation
OMVS	Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du fleuve Sénégal / Senegal River Development Organisation
ROPPA	Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest / West African Network of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policy
SWAC	Sahel and West Africa Club
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WALTPS	West Africa Long-Term Perspective Study
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Useful links

- Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa (SWAC)
<http://www.atlas-ouestafrique.org>
- ICAARD, International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, March 2006, Porto Alegre
<http://www.icarrd.org>
- FAOSTAT, Statistics Division
<http://www.fao.org/ES/ess>
<http://faostat.fao.org>
- Natural Resources Management and Environment Department
<http://www.fao.org/nr>
- Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD)
<http://www.fao.org/sard>
- SICIIV, Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems Program
<http://www.fivims.net>
- UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security
<http://www.rdfs.net>



Annexes

Annex 1: Urban and Rural Population in West Africa

Countries	1990		2000		1990 -	2010		2000 -	2020		2010 -
	Pop	%	Pop	%	%	Pop	%	%	Pop	%	%
	(x1000)	Rur.	(x1000)	Rur.	Rur.	(x1000)	Rur.	Rur.	(x1000)	Rur.	Rur.
Benin	4,650	65.53	6,222	57.73	17.89	8,068	50.15	12.64	10,122	43.13	7.91
Burkina Faso	8,921	86.44	11,905	83.28	28.57	16,018	79.29	28.10	21,403	73.87	24.50
Cameroon	11,661	59.71	15,117	51.02	10.77	17,775	43.41	0.04	19,874	36.90	-4.95
Cape Verde	349	55.87	436	46.56	4.10	529	38.56	0.49	623	32.26	-1.47
Chad	5,822	78.96	7,861	76.21	30.32	10,543	71.82	26.39	13,890	65.36	19.90
Côte d'Ivoire	12,505	60.15	15,827	56.39	18.65	18,526	51.74	7.41	21,026	46.00	0.89
The Gambia	936	75.11	1,312	73.78	37.70	1,680	73.33	27.27	2,015	70.32	15.02
Ghana	15,277	63.54	19,593	56.08	13.19	24,117	51.28	12.55	28,521	46.45	7.14
Guinea	6,122	74.65	8,117	67.39	19.69	9,990	59.63	8.90	12,478	52.00	8.91
Guinea-Bissau	1,016	76.28	1,367	68.47	20.77	1,827	60.43	17.95	2,421	52.71	15.58
Liberia	2,135	58.03	2,943	55.11	30.91	4,130	49.03	24.85	5,367	42.78	13.38
Mali	9,046	76.19	11,904	69.81	20.57	16,208	62.75	22.39	22,140	55.38	20.55
Mauritania	2,030	56.01	2,645	42.23	-1.76	3,520	30.34	-4.39	4,473	22.94	-3.93
Niger	7,650	83.91	10,742	79.42	32.90	15,388	73.70	32.94	21,731	66.73	27.87
Nigeria	86,018	64.96	114,746	55.90	14.80	145,922	48.09	9.40	177,158	41.10	3.77
Senegal	7,345	59.97	9,393	52.56	12.08	11,869	45.47	9.32	14,422	38.98	4.15
Sierra Leone	4,054	70.00	4,415	63.33	-1.48	5,859	56.14	17.63	6,979	48.72	3.37
Togo	3,455	71.52	4,562	66.62	22.99	5,730	60.35	13.79	6,962	52.94	6.59
TOTAL											
	188,992	67.23	249,107	59.89	17.41	317,699	53.32	13.55	391,605	47.11	8.91

Source: SWAC (2006) from FAO database

Annex 2: The main farming systems in West Africa

(Source: Farming Systems and Poverty, Improving farmers' livelihoods in a changing world, FAO - World Bank, 2001)

Tree crop farming system

1. This system occupies 559 000 km², or 7.16 % of the region land area. The backbone of the system is the production of industrial tree crops; notably cocoa, coffee, oil palm and rubber. Food crops are inter-planted between tree crops and are grown mainly for subsistence; few cattle are raised. There are also commercial tree crop estates (particularly for oil palm and rubber) in these areas, providing services to smallholder tree crop farmers through nucleus estate and outgrower schemes. Since neither tree crop nor food crop failure is common, price fluctuations for industrial crops constitute the main source of vulnerability. Socio-economic differentiation is considerable. The incidence of poverty is limited to moderate, and tends to be concentrated among very small farmers and agricultural workers, but growth potential is moderately high.

Root crop farming system

2. This system covers 791 740 km² of the regional land (10.13 %). Rainfall is either bimodal or nearly continuous and risk of crop failure is low. The area is bounded by the Tree Crop and Forest Based Farming Systems on the southern, wetter side and by the Cereal-Root Crop Mixed Farming System on the northern, drier side. The prevalence of poverty is limited to moderate.
3. Agricultural growth potential and poverty reduction potential are moderate; technologies for this system are not yet fully developed. Nonetheless, market prospects for export of oil palm products are attractive, urban demand for root crops is growing, and linkages between agriculture and off-farm activities are relatively better than elsewhere.

Cereal-root crop mixed farming system

4. This system occupies 1 366 030 km² of the regional land (17.48 %) - predominantly in the dry sub-humid zone. Although the system shares a number of climatic characteristics with the Maize Mixed System, other characteristics set it apart, namely; lower altitude, higher temperatures, lower population density, abundant cultivated land, higher livestock numbers per household, and poorer transport and communications infrastructure. Although cereals such as maize, sorghum and millet are widespread, wherever animal traction is absent root crops such as yams and cassava are more important than cereals. Intercropping is common, and a wide range of crops is grown and marketed.
5. The main source of vulnerability is drought. Poverty incidence is limited, numbers of poor people are modest and the potential for poverty reduction is moderate. Agricultural growth prospects are excellent and, as described in the relevant section below, this system could become the bread basket of Africa and an important source of export earnings.

Agro-pastoral millet and sorghum farming

6. This system occupies 1 016 170 km² of the regional land (13 %). Density is modest, but pressure on the limited amount of cultivated land is very high. Crops and livestock are of similar importance. Rainfed sorghum and pearl millet are the main sources of food and are rarely marketed, whereas sesame and pulses are sometimes sold. Land preparation is by oxen or camel, while hoe cultivation is common along riverbanks.
7. Livestock are kept for subsistence (milk and milk products), offspring, transportation (camels, donkeys), land preparation (oxen, camels), sale or exchange, savings, bridewealth and insurance against crop failure. The population generally lives permanently in villages, although part of their herds may continue to migrate seasonally in the care of herdboys.
8. The main source of vulnerability is drought, leading to crop failure, weak animals and the distress sale of assets. Poverty is extensive, and often severe. The potential for poverty reduction is only moderate. Agricultural growth potential is also modest and presents important challenges.

Pastoral farming system

9. This system occupies 1 155 240 km² of the regional land (14.75 %). It concerns cattle, as well as sheep, goats and camels. During the driest period of the year, Sahelian pastoralists move south to the Cereal-Root Crop Mixed System areas and they return north during the rainy season.

10. The main source of vulnerability is the great climatic variability and consequently high incidence of drought. Socio-economic differentiation is considerable – many herders have lost most of their animals due to droughts or stock theft. Poverty incidence is extensive, but the potential for poverty reduction is low. Agricultural growth potential is also modest.

Sparse (arid) farming system

11. This system covers 2 480 360 km² of the regional land (31.74 %). It is of limited significance from the point of view of agriculture, and has a cattle population of several million. Because the wadis and their surrounding areas are considered part of the Pastoral System, grazing within the actual Sparse (Arid) System is limited. There are some scattered irrigation settlements in these arid areas, in most cases used by pastoralists to supplement their livelihoods.
12. Poverty is extensive and often severe, especially after droughts. The potential for both agricultural growth and poverty reduction is low.

Irrigated farming system

13. This system covers 123 660 km² of the regional land (1.58 %), but harbours a significant agricultural population.. The remainder of the irrigated area in the region occurs within other farming systems.
14. The Irrigated Farming System is quite complex, especially in respect of institutional aspects. In many cases, irrigated cropping is supplemented by rainfed cropping or animal husbandry. Water control may be full or partial. Irrigated holdings vary in size from 22 ha per household to less than 1 ha. Crop failure is generally not a problem, but livelihoods are vulnerable to water shortages, scheme breakdowns and deteriorating input/output price ratios. Many state-run schemes are currently in crisis, but if institutional problems can be solved, future agricultural growth potential is good. The incidence of poverty is lower than in other farming systems and absolute numbers of poor are small.

Coastal artisanal fishing farming system

15. This system occupies 131 850 km² of the regional land (1.69 %). Average population density is fairly high. Households that depend on lake and river fishing are not included in this system.

16. The livelihood system is based on artisanal fishing supplemented by crop production, sometimes in multi-storied tree crop gardens with root crops under coconuts, fruit trees and cashews, plus some animal production. Artisanal fishing includes sea fishing from boats, seine net fishing from beaches, setting of nets and traps along estuaries and in shallow lagoons, and catching of crustaceans in mangrove swamps. Poultry and goats are the main domestic animals. Cattle keeping is rare, due to, *inter alia*, tsetse infestation, and land preparation is by hand. Off-farm opportunities are connected with tourist resorts along the beaches and with large tree crop estates. In West Africa, because of the humid climate, there is more swamp rice and little or no cashew nut. Although socio-economic differentiation is considerable, the current prevalence of poverty is only moderate.
17. The potential for poverty reduction is considered low, and agricultural growth potential is only modest.

Forest-based farming system

18. This system occupies 171 800 km² of the regional land (2.20 %). Farmers practice shifting cultivation; clearing a new field from the forest every year, cropping it for 2 to 5 years (first cereals or groundnuts, then cassava) and then abandoning it to bush fallow for 7 to 20 years. With increasing population density, however, the fallow periods are progressively being reduced. Cassava is the main staple, complemented by maize, sorghum, beans and cocoyams. Cattle and small ruminant populations are low, as is human population density. Physical isolation plus lack of roads and markets pose serious problems. Forest products and wild game are the main source of cash, which is in very short supply because few households have cash crops and market outlets are distant. Poverty is extensive, and in places very severe. Agricultural growth potential is moderate, thanks to the existence of large uncultivated areas and high rainfall, but yield increases in the near future are expected to be modest. Development requires careful management of environmental risks, including soil fragility and loss of wildlife habitats.

Farming system	Estimated area in km ² (% of the regional land)	Agricultural Population (in % of the region)	Main livelihoods	Observations on vulnerability
Agriculturally-based Group				
Tree crop system (from Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana, and from Nigeria and Cameroon, largely in the humid zone)	559 440 km ² (7.16%)		Cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, yam, maize, off-farm work	Since neither tree crop nor food crop failure is common, price fluctuations for industrial crops constitute the main source of vulnerability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic differentiation is considerable. The incidence of poverty is limited to moderate, and tends to be concentrated among very small farmers and agricultural workers. • Growth potential is moderately high.
Root crop farming system (from Sierra Leone to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Cameroon, typically in the moist subhumid and humid agro-ecological zones)	791 740 km ² (10.13%)		Yam, cassava, legumes, off-farm work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prevalence of poverty is limited to moderate. • Agricultural growth potential and poverty reduction potential are moderate; technologies for this system are not yet fully developed. • Nonetheless, market prospects for export of oil palm products are attractive, urban demand for root crops is growing, and linkages between agriculture and off-farm activities are relatively better than elsewhere.
Cereal-root crop mixed farming system (from Guinea through Northern Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana, Togo, Benin and the mid-belt states of Nigeria to Northern Cameroon)	1 366 030 km ² (17.48%)		Maize, sorghum, millet, cassava, yam, legumes, cattle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main source of vulnerability is drought. • Poverty incidence is limited, numbers of poor people are modest and the potential for poverty reduction is moderate. • Agricultural growth prospects are excellent and, as described in the relevant section below, this system could become the bread basket of Africa and an important source of export earnings.
Pastorally-based group				
Agro-pastoral millet sorghum farming system (in the semiarid zone of West Africa from Senegal to Niger)	1 016 170 km ² (13%)		Sorghum, millet, pulses, sesame, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, off-farm work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main source of vulnerability is drought, leading to crop failure, weak animals and the distress sale of assets. • Poverty is extensive, and often severe. • The potential for poverty reduction is only moderate. Agricultural growth potential is also modest and presents important challenges.

Farming system	Estimated area in km ² (% of the regional land)	Agricultural Population (in % of the region)	Main livelihoods	Observations on vulnerability
Pastoral farming system (in the arid and semiarid zones extending from Mauritania to the northern parts of Mali, Niger, Chad)	1 155 240 km ² (14.79%)		Cattle, camels, sheep, goats, remittances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main source of vulnerability is the great climatic variability and consequently • high incidence of drought. • Socio-economic differentiation is considerable – many herders have lost most of their animals due to droughts or stock theft. Poverty incidence is extensive, but the potential for poverty reduction is low. • Agricultural growth potential is also modest.
Agriculturally-sparse group				
Sparse (arid) farming system (in the arid and semi-arid zone, from Mauritania to North Mali, Niger and Chad)	2 480 360 km ² (31.74%)		Irrigated maize, legumes, date palms, cattle, off-farm work,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty is extensive and often severe, especially after droughts. • The potential for both agricultural growth and poverty reduction is low.
Forest based farming system (humid forest of the South-East Cameroon)	171 800 km ² (2.20%)		Cassava, maize, beans, cocoyams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest products and wild game are the main source of cash, which is in very short supply because few households have cash crops and market outlets are distant. • Poverty is extensive, and in places very severe. • Agricultural growth potential is moderate, thanks to the existence of large uncultivated areas and high rainfall, but yield increases in the near future are expected to be modest. • Development requires careful management of environmental risks, including soil fragility and loss of wildlife habitats.
Agriculturally-concentrated group				
Irrigated farming system (extensive riverine and flood recession-based irrigation, West African fadama areas)	123 660 km ² (1.58%)		Rice, cotton, legumes, rainfed crops, cattle, poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop failure is generally not a problem, but livelihoods are vulnerable to water shortages, scheme breakdowns and deteriorating input/output price ratios. • Many state-run schemes are currently in crisis, but if institutional problems can be solved, future agricultural growth potential is good. • The incidence of poverty is lower than in other farming systems and absolute numbers of poor are small.

Farming system	Estimated area in km ² (% of the regional land)	Agricultural Population (in % of the region)	Main livelihoods	Observations on vulnerability
<p>Coastal artisanal fishing farming system</p> <p>(from the Gambia and the Casamance region of Senegal, along the coast of Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, to Nigeria and Cameroon)</p>	<p>131 850 km²</p> <p>(1.69%)</p>		<p>Marine fish, coconuts, cashew, banana, yams, fruit, goats, poultry, off-farm work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although socio-economic differentiation is considerable, the current prevalence of poverty is only moderate. • The potential for poverty reduction is considered low, and agricultural growth potential is only modest.

Annex 3: Agricultural land use in West Africa

	Agricultural area	Arable and permanent crops (2002)	Use of agricultural potential
Benin	7,000	2,815	40%
Burkina Faso	9,000	4,400	49%
Cameroon	n.a.	7,160	-
Cape Verde	n.a.	45	-
Chad	19,000	3,630	19%
Côte d'Ivoire	21,000	6,900	33%
The Gambia	430	255	59%
Ghana	10,000	6,331	63%
Guinea	6,000	1,540	26%
Guinea Bissau	1,100	548	50%
Liberia	n.a.	600	-
Mali	43,700	4,700	11%
Mauritania	1,000	500	50%
Niger	16,500	4,500	27%
Nigeria	61,000	33,000	54%
Senegal	3,800	2,506	66%
Sierra Leone	5,360	600	11%
Togo	3,400	2,630	77%
Total	208,290	74,855	36%*

Source: FAO, Aquastat 2005

* Except Cameroon, Cape Verde and Guinea

Annex 4: Irrigation development perspectives in West Africa

Country	Irrigation Potential	1994-96			2015			2030		
		Irrigated area (Thousand ha)	Cropping intensity (%)	Cultivated area (Thousand ha)	Irrigated Area (Thousand ha)	Cropping intensity (%)	Cultivated area (Thousand ha)	Irrigated area (Thousand ha)	Cropping intensity (%)	Cultivated area (Thousand ha)
BENIN	300	1	158	2	4	155	6	6	153	9
BURKINA FASO	164	24	160	39	28	170	48	33	180	59
CAMEROON	240	33	85	28	38	90	34	42	100	42
CHAD	935	13	85	11	15	100	15	16	120	20
COTE D'IVOIRE	475	69	85	59	92	100	92	113	120	135
GHANA	1,900	4	100	4	4	110	5	5	120	6
GUINEA	520	93	80	74	103	100	103	114	110	125
LIBERIA	600	3	85	3	3	90	3	4	100	4
MALI	560	129	200	258	157	200	315	183	200	365
MAURITANIA	221	91	150	137	101	150	151	108	150	163
NIGERIA	3,137	249	100	249	304	110	334	380	120	456
NIGER	270	66	90	60	74	100	74	82	110	91
SENEGAL	400	71	73	52	96	85	82	118	100	118
SIERRA LEONE	807	32	100	32	32	100	32	32	100	32
TOGO	180	8	106	8	9	114	10	10	123	12
TOTAL	10,709	887	129	1,016	1,061	144	1,304	1,247	156	1,638

Source: Sonou Moïse (2000)

Annex 5: Working population in the rural sector

Working population in rural sector (Thousand persons)			% of total working population	
Country	1979-1981	2003	1979-1981	2003
Benin	1,122	1,568	68	51
Burkina Faso	3,343	5,609	92	92
Cameroon	2,693	3,729	73	56
Cape Verde	35	41	37	21
Chad	1,903	2,831	88	72
The Gambia	283	564	84	78
Ghana	3,154	5,881	61	56
Guinea	2,205	3,459	91	83
Guinea-Bissau	323	527	87	82
Liberia	583	844	77	66
Mali	3,242	4,826	89	79
Mauritania	551	673	71	52
Niger	2,455	4,777	91	87
Nigeria	14,327	15,178	54	31
Senegal	2,051	3,296	81	73
Sierra Leone	874	1,119	70	61
Togo	743	1,210	69	58
West Africa	42,126	59,250		

Source: World Bank- World Development Indicators database 2005, FAOSTAT

Annex 6: Customs duties in ECOWAS zone and Mauritania

	WAEMU CET	Cape Verde	The Gambia	Ghana	Guinea	Mauritania	Nigeria
Potatoes	20	35,45	18	39,29	17	5	100
Tomatoes (fresh or refrigerated)	20	10	18	20	17	10	100
Onions (Fresh or refrigerated)	20	25,69	18	20	17	10	100
Tomato paste (wholesale)	10	10		20	17	13	
Canned tomatoes	20	10	10-18	20	17	13	
Cereal (non-specified)					17-24		
Wheat	5	5	18	20	7		5
Cereal Preparation					17-32		
Wheat flour	20	15	18	40		5	Imports prohibited
Pasta	20	37,92	18	20		20	
Bread, cake, cookies	20	42,12	18	40		20	
Meat (non specified)					2-17		
Beef	20	50	18	20		20	Imports prohibited
Poultry	20	50	18	39,31		20	Imports prohibited

Source: GRET (2005) : Impacts de l'Accord de partenariat économique UE – Afrique de l'Ouest

Annex 7: Geographic level and institutional structure

Level	Territorial Organisations	Technical Services	Civil Society	Consultation Frameworks
National/ Central	State	Ministry, Central and National Directorate General	Union, Cooperative Federations, Associations, Unions, Chamber of Agriculture, NGOs, etc.	National Committees and Councils
Regional	Region, Province, Prefecture, Department, Willaya	Regional and Departmental Directorate	Union, Cooperative Federations, Associations, Unions, Chamber of Agriculture, NGOs, etc.	Regional Committees and Councils
Sub-regional	Department, Prefecture, Sub-prefecture	Dominion District, Sector and Sub-sector	Chambers and Prefectorial Unions, Unions	
Local	Municipal Commune Urban District Sector	Bureau Sub-sector Zone	Cooperative Grouping Association Unions	Local Committees and Councils
Micro-local	Canton Village District Sector		Agricultural Association Farming	Committee

Source: FAO, Rural Development Division (2006)