

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE BAMAKO REGIONAL WORKSHOP

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### Introduction

On January 13 and 14, 2004, a regional workshop was held at the Bamako Congress Hall on the subject of "Food and Nutrition Security Policies for West Africa: Implementation Issues and Research Agendas."

That workshop was jointly organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Center of Cooperation in Agronomic Research for Development (CIRAD), and the Institute for Rural Economy (IER) of Mali in collaboration with the Foundation for Sustainable Food Security in Central West Africa (SADAOC).

The meeting was attended by experts from the organizing institutions, food-security service representatives from Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, the DRC, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, France, Italy, the United States, and Germany.

The main objective of the regional workshop was to identify priority areas for assuring food and nutritional security in West Africa to be presented at the international African conference scheduled to take place from April 1 to 3, 2004, in Kampala, Uganda, under the sponsorship of His Eminence, President Museveni, who is also the president of the international advisory council of IFPRI for Perspective 2020.

The workshop allowed the researchers and political leaders to

- discuss regional problems and strategies designed to ensure food security and fight poverty; the effect of migration on rural development and food security; the roles of technological, institutional, and political options on food security and the fight against poverty; the roles of infrastructure and investment on rural development, food security, and the fight against poverty; the role of natural resource management on food security in the fight against poverty; and the effect of conflicts on food security and on the fight against poverty;
- initiate discussions on the options, strategies, and implementation of programs for ensuring food and nutritional security and contribute to the fight against poverty;
- identify priorities, practical options, and strategies and means for their implementation so as to contribute to the eradication of food and nutritional insecurity in West Africa;
- promote a participatory dialogue between political leaders; national, regional, and international research organizations; and providers of loans on the key questions jointly identified in these research activities and on possible solutions and their implications for the future of economic, social, and environmental policies; and
- elaborate a proposed regional research program based on priorities identified during the workshop.

The workshop was divided into three distinct segments: An opening session, presentation of scientific papers, and debate on the implementation options available to the policymakers.

The opening ceremony was followed by a review of the strategies initiated and implemented for attaining food self-sufficiency and fighting poverty. Efforts yet to be undertaken to better define coherent policies at national and subregional levels were also touched on. To that effect, the researchers were urged to define milestones for a subregional vision, to establish coherent actions, and to create synergy between the activities of CEDEAO (Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest), UEMOA (Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine), and CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter Etats de Lutte

Contre La Sécheresse au Sahel)so as to achieve efficiency. Specific proposals were made related to the inclusion of a reference laboratory in the sanitation plan and of technologies and standards adequate for the processing of local products and the setup of production organizations in the agricultural plan, taking into account natural migration. In thanking IER, CIRAD, and SADAOC for holding the meeting, the desire was expressed that the regional workshop arrive at the formulation of pertinent recommendations for the Kampala summit.

## **Agenda of the Workshop**

The program included a number of sessions on specific subjects. The first two days were dedicated to defining and discussing the subjects, while the third day was set aside for the researchers and participants to prepare a draft proposal for a regional research and collaboration program. A press conference was also held that day.

The procedural approach of the workshop was to define a subject and then to discuss it. To that end, each session had a chairman and a coordinator.

### **➤ Session 1**

#### **Regional issues and strategies to assure food and nutrition security**

It was agreed that the theme of the session had to be the determination of strategies for arriving at food security; presentations to all groups concerned (policymakers, rural, and so on.); effective cooperation between the agencies (agriculture, health, education); orientation of the results of the research; food-related cooperation between the public and private sectors; partnerships; nutritional education; consideration for the needs of the people; articulation of research, nutrition, and migration; implications of policy decisions; and the timetable for the research work at the national and regional level.

### **➤ Session 2**

This covered two themes.

- 1. Conflicts, rural development, and food security in West Africa**
- 2. Migration, rural development, and food security in West Africa**

The issues raised on these topics pertained to land access on the part of returnees, the real impact of migration on the economy, an analysis of urban and rural migration, the relationship between conflict and food security, and the effect of the findings of the study on agro-industrial development.

In essence, the session involved analyzing the links between migration and its implications; the link between rural life and food security; migration from the village to the city; the relationship between migration and nutrition, conflict, and food security; and the impact of migration on women.

### **➤ Session 3**

It, too, covered two themes.

- 1. Natural resource management and food security**
- 2. The role of public expenditures within the framework of rural development, food security and the fight against poverty**

The discussion of these subjects was directed at the relationship between public investment and natural resource management, the types of infrastructure to be created, the connection between natural resources and conflict, and the funding of agriculture. Initially, all of the natural resource projects were revisited and an inventory of existing studies of natural resource management was made.

## ➤ Session 4

This covered four themes.

### **1. Role of technological, institutional, and policy options on food security and the fight against poverty**

The points raised during the debate related to innovations for food security, the role of agro-forestry in these technologies, the longevity of these technologies, and the relationship between money and food security.

### **2. Discussion of options, strategies, and implementation**

The first exchanges related to the dimensions of food security, the standards and actual consumption figures for Mali, the types of insecurity, the food supply situation, the strategies pursued, and actions taken to ensure food security.

This was followed by a recapitulation of the composition of the CMA/AOC (Conférence des Ministres de l'Agriculture de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre) states, their objectives, and their areas of cooperation. The strategies pursued include the rehabilitation and sustainable conservation of natural resources through participatory management, improved agricultural research systems, the effectiveness of rural infrastructures as a function of increased investments, an improvement of the financial markets, the supplies market, and the influence of the private sector on the development process.

The third topic was the genesis of SADAOC, a recapitulation of its objectives, and a presentation of its research agenda and its strategies at the regional level. As for SADAOC's research agenda, it consists of strengthening a regional strategy for realizing food security (complementing SADAOC's objectives with those of UEMOA and CEDEAO) and harmonizing activities between the networks of the decisionmakers and SADAOC. The strategies proposed by SADAOC at the regional level include a stronger SADAOC interface for supporting the research, as necessitated by the broad definition of the research, the platform for verifying the pertinence of the objectives of the research program, the follow-up instrument, and the platform for distributing and disseminating the program's research results.

In terms of CILSS, issues raised included the crises of the 1970s and 1980s, food security from the perspective of the fight against poverty and integration in West Africa, the Strategic Food Security Body (CCSA), and the operating strategy toward the 2015 horizon. It is the purpose of the CCSA to "ensure the access of Sahelians, at any time, to food needed to lead a healthy and active life by 2015." That requires productive, diversified, sustainable, and regionally integrated agriculture; subregional development, fluidity, and integration of national markets; sustainable improvement of access to food and basic social services by vulnerable groups; improvement of systems preventing and managing economic crises, alongside the development of food security infrastructure; the strengthening of the capabilities of the parties involved; and the promotion of good food security administration.

With regard to IFPRI, commitment was expressed in terms of creating greater awareness of agricultural challenges and solutions, an improved relationship between the agricultural sector and cattle breeders, the development of regional trade, increased exports, and increased nonagricultural production.

All of these discussions concluded that the following issues constitute challenges that must be addressed: implementing strategies formulated, the partnership between researchers, the harmonization of organizational programs, the establishment of structures, the adoption of technologies, and good administration.

### **3. Identification of priority research areas**

It was stressed that research must also be directed at improving production systems through better access to inputs and credit, developing local and regional markets, better understanding the constraints affecting institutions and organizations responsible of production, food security, markets, and natural

resource management; at the links between conflict, migration, and food security; at financing mechanisms; and at the types of investments.

Moreover, it was recognized that attention must be paid to the supply side (information, the players, the balance between supply and demand). There must be a match between the research and the needs of the countries. Likewise, the actions to be taken include restructuring African institutions, harmonizing the different research projects, coordinating lenders at all levels, and creating a favorable political climate and a competitive market environment.

During the debates, suggestions were made to tie the research programs to the objectives of the governments (involving politicians in the dialogue), to improve the commercialization of agricultural products, to spread the technologies more widely, to pay particular attention to the base of statistical data, and to tie the offer of a study to the condition of establishing congruity between the research and the basic needs of the population.

#### **4. Recommendations and next steps**

On this subject, it was felt that the focus should be on the technology aspect, meaning better orientation toward bioenvironmental safety, the transformation aspect, and the aspect of evaluating the impact of the policies and implementers. Organizing the methodology at the subregional level, long-term financing of the research, and abiding by the agendas are the chief concerns to be addressed. Integration exists by virtue of the establishment of study networks, but linking the policies with the implementers remains a challenge to be overcome.

The research leads to benefits for all, yet that needs to be realized through interactions with parliamentarians. The research must be based on reality; the analysis and the data must be trustworthy and well founded.

The participants insisted that the conclusions of this workshop be presented at Kampala and that the dialogue be continued after the Kampala conference.

From that perspective, everyone agreed to accept that the chief concerns to be studied are the pursuit of research and the dissemination of the results; the stabilization and liberalization of commerce; the market information systems; and the application of technical standards, funding, and nutrition education.

With that in mind, the suggestion was made to consider the DSRP rule for the integration of food security data, the creation of networks, the implementation of a research communication system, multiple studies and analyses, research-on-demand, and partnerships.

As for IFPRI's particular role, the regional workshop requested that the Institute be encouraged to organize periodic meetings to provide information on food security in West Africa. It asked that at the Kampala conference, concrete actions be formulated for ensuring food and nutrition, while at the same time supporting partnerships between the public sector, private sector, and civil society.

#### **Conclusion**

The subregional workshop provided an opportunity for the players to get together and discuss the constraints to food security. It became obvious in the debates that food security is a complex matter that requires concrete actions. Education, health, and nutrition are indispensable factors for ensuring greater food security.

Many challenges remain. They include the allocation of finances; the dissemination of results; the involvement of governments, the private sector, and society; the harmonization of programs; technology transfer; the consolidation of partnerships; adherence to agendas; the matching of research with development objectives; communication, and so forth.