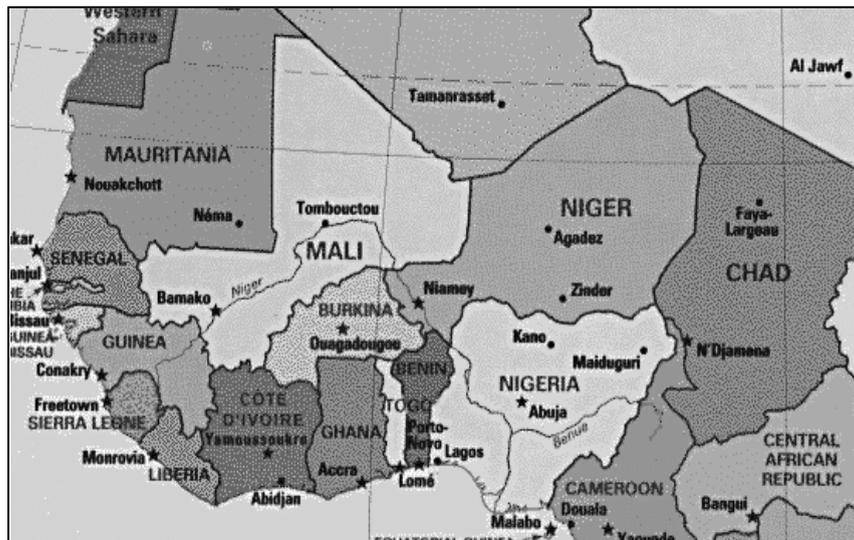




CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

Catholic Relief Services
Regional Strategic Plan
for Sustainable Food Security in West Africa
FY2003-FY2007



Catholic Relief Services/West Africa Regional Office
With funding from Catholic Relief Services and
USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Response/Food for Peace Institutional Support Assistance (ISA) award
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Preface

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) began working on its regional strategic plan for food security in West Africa in 1999, with funding from USAID/FFP's Institutional Strengthening Assistance (ISA) grant. In preparation for the regional food security strategy, CRS sought extensive input from CRS country programs in the region, research institutions, donors, NGOs and national, bilateral and multilateral agencies. The regional strategy presented in this document is therefore a synthesis of country-level assessments and analysis that have taken place over a two-year period.

CRS' regional strategic plan for sustainable food security is one component of CRS' FY02-FY06 regional strategic framework. The strategy describes the framework for action for achieving "sustainable food security" for West African households. The strategic plan summarizes the goal and objectives, the priority areas of intervention, the types of activities to be implemented, expected results, and benchmarks against which to measure progress. It is premised on a common theme: that, despite the differences throughout the region, most West African countries have similar problems and causes, and any strategy to address food insecurity requires a regional solution.

Within each of the strategic focus areas, the strategy briefly discusses how regional approaches can contribute to removing the identified constraints to food security. From the inception of the strategy to the present, CRS has relied heavily on a "bottom-up" approach in both the process and the outcome.

The completion of this regional strategy should be attributed to the commitment of the country programs in the region. The strategy has benefited from the enthusiastic support of Bill Rastetter, the Regional Director for West Africa, CRS' country programs in West Africa and the Public Resource Coordination Unit (PRCU) in headquarters. CRS' regional food security strategy and country program reports are the products of many hands and much collaboration and interaction among many people.

There were four primary stages for developing the strategy. The **first stage** was an initial food security workshop in Accra in 1999, during which time CRS introduced the concepts of food security and provided tools for assessment and analysis of the food security situation. This workshop was facilitated by Jenny Aker, Jindra Cekan and Lisa Kuennen-Asfaw, and included the participation of CRS country program staff in the region.

The **second stage** involved food security assessments and analysis in the West Africa region, including Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Active participants in these assessments and analysis included Jenny Aker and CRS country program staff, specifically Ali Abdoulaye, Augustine Allieu, Chris Bessey, Carla Brown-Ndiaye, Wilson Doku, Sunny Edwards-Skene, Ebrima Jarjou, Matt Hochbrueckner, Lisa Parker, Dorothy Madison-Seck, Suzanne Manzer, Bangre Moussa, Baika Sesay, Celeste Staley, Lisa Washington-Sow, Adama Taoko and Adjavon Vewonyi.

The **third stage** was a regional food security strategy conference, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in January 2002. The conference brought together participants from CRS, FEWS, USAID, and the EU in order to analyze the regional food security problem, assess CRS' capacities and strengths, identify programmatic gaps and determine initial strategic priorities for the strategy. Dr. Gaye Burpee, Valarie Stetson and Mamadou Barro played important roles in the preparation and facilitation of this conference.

The **fourth and final stage** involved the finalization of the strategy document. Key contributors to this document included Caroline Bishop, Gaye Burpee, Polly Ericksen, Anne Sellers, Kate Stillman and Guy Sharrock.

Special appreciation goes to Gaye Burpee, Lisa Kuennen-Asfaw and Valerie Stetson, who generously gave of their time throughout the process.

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Executive Summary

The FY2003-2007 “Regional Strategic Plan for Sustainable Food Security in West Africa” is a framework for prioritizing the region’s activities to address chronic, seasonal and temporary food insecurity. Eleven countries comprise the core geographic area of the CRS regional food security strategy: **Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.**

CRS’ regional strategic plan for sustainable food security is one component of CRS’ FY02-FY06 regional strategic framework, and converges with CRS’ agency and regional strategic frameworks. CRS has developed its regional food security strategy based upon a thorough analysis of the food security problem in West Africa, an identification of key leverage points, the gap and capacity analyses, and an identification of programming and growth opportunities.

The regional strategic plan outlines the framework for action for achieving “**improved sustainable food security for West African households.**” This goal is based upon extensive problem analyses in the region, revealing that food insecurity continues to be a significant problem. It is estimated that over **thirty percent of households in West Africa suffer from food insecurity, either consuming insufficient quantity (or quality) food or suffering from poor health.** (IFAD 2001). This is primarily due to income poverty, the high prevalence of diseases, poor governance, conflict and high rates of illiteracy.

The history of food security in West Africa, rather than a timeline of specific events, is one comprised of pervasive fundamental trends. Global and regional trends currently affect –and will continue to impact – the food security situation in West Africa: **population pressure and urbanization, continued degradation of natural resources and increasing water scarcity, increasing political turmoil and conflict, globalization and the increased prevalence of diseases.**

In an effort to determine the appropriate strategic directions for the agency in the West Africa region, CRS conducted an **analysis of its internal capacities, and those of its partners.** The capacity analysis identified important strengths and weaknesses of the agency in the area of food security programming. Strengths included capacity-building and community participation. Weaknesses included limited integration and weak M&E systems.

The strategic plan is comprised of a goal and four strategic objectives. The strategic objectives are steps along the way to the goal. The strategy’s goal and the corresponding strategic objectives (SOs) and intermediate results (IRs) are premised on a common theme: that, despite the differences throughout the region, most West African countries have interrelated food security problems and causes, and any strategy to address food insecurity requires a regional solution.

While the regional food security strategy has a five-year time frame, CRS recognizes that the long-term goal will take twenty or more years to achieve. Three of the four program areas in the regional food security strategy form the core Strategic Objectives. A fourth Strategic Objective cuts across all of the Strategic Objectives, and will be integrated throughout the strategy. The Strategic Objectives are the following:

- ✓ **SO1: Rural households’ human capital is strengthened.**
- ✓ **SO2: Rural households’ farm and off-farm income is increased.**
- ✓ **SO3: CRS’ country programs and its partners’ emergency preparedness, response and mitigation is improved**
- ✓ **SO4: CRS’ country programs in West Africa and its partners are implementing high-quality programs and projects that transform lives, relationships and structures.**

Within each strategic priority area, CRS/West Africa will develop additional **regional sectoral strategies and action plans.** These strategies will fit into the framework of the regional food security strategy in order to ensure that the agency’s different sectors and themes are contributing towards the same overall goal.

CRS' regional strategy will build upon CRS' current strengths, address identified weaknesses, strengthen local capacities and capitalize on the strengths of West African households. This strategy will work with and through partners. For this reason, partnership and capacity-building activities appear, though in different configurations, within each SO focus area.

As a regional strategy, activities will address the food security problem on a cross-border basis, involve regional and country-specific institutions in the implementation of its interventions and ensure that staff understand that they are operating regionally, and apply a regional perspective. In this context, the term "regional value-added" refers to situations where action, interaction or change at the regional level strengthens or adds value to development efforts undertaken at the national levels.

In order to achieve its goal of improved food security, CRS/West Africa will continue to rely upon its principal donor, **USAID/FFP's Title II program**, in support of its food security objectives. CRS will use its USAID/FFP Title II resources for emergency and development programs to leverage other donors and funding.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGRHYMET	Agro-climatological, Hydrological and Meteorological Center
AID/W	Agency for International Development/Washington
BHR/FFP	Bureau of Humanitarian Relief/Food for Peace Office, USAID
BHR/OFDA	Bureau of Humanitarian Relief/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, USAID
CILSS	<i>Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de lutte contre la Secheresse dans le Sahel</i>
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CRS/WARO	Catholic Relief Services/West Africa Regional Office
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FCFA	Franc CFA
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSAH	<i>Institut du Sahel</i>
IR	Intermediate Results
MSU	Michigan State University
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OFDA	Office for Development Assistance
OICI	Opportunities for Industrialization Centers International
SO	Strategic Objective
STI/HIV/AIDS	Sexually Transmitted Infections/Human Immuno Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
UEMOA	<i>Union Economique Monetaire Ouest Africain</i>
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

Overview

The goal of CRS' regional food security strategy is “**Improved food security of vulnerable rural households in West Africa.**” A series of analytical and consultative steps from 1999-2002 has led CRS to determine that improved human capital, increased rural incomes, improved emergency preparedness and response, and improved program quality of CRS' projects and programs are the appropriate strategic approaches to achieving this goal.

Eleven countries comprise the core geographic area of the CRS regional food security strategy. These countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Section I provides a general look at CRS' strategic framework, and how the regional food security strategy fits into the agency's and region's broader strategic frameworks. **Section II** provides the situation analysis for food security, looking at the food security problem, its immediate and underlying causes, global and regional trends, interventions of other actors and potential gaps in service provision. This section provides a summary of the extensive diagnostic and analytical work conducted in each country in the region over a three-year period.¹ **Section III** presents the regional strategy, outlining the goal, Strategic Objectives (SOs), Intermediate Results, outputs and key activities. **Section IV** describes CRS' priority donors for implementing the proposed strategy.

¹ Refer to the bibliography for a complete listing of papers prepared as a result of consultations held in 1999-2002.

I. The Regional Food Security Strategy and CRS' Strategic Framework

1.1. CRS' Mission

Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) mission statement calls the agency *to promote the alleviation of human suffering, to advance full human development, and to foster charity and justice in the world.*² CRS has been meeting the needs of the poor since its inception in 1943, when the organization was created to respond to the suffering of victims of the Second World War. Its strong commitment to the alleviation of human suffering has continued for more than fifty years.

As part of its strategic planning process in 1996, CRS reassessed its focus in view of the changes in the world during the preceding decade. There was a clear call to address the social, economic, cultural, and political structures that either created or perpetrated the conditions of need.

CRS' strategic planning process resulted in a reaffirmation of the agency's foundation in Catholic Social Teaching (CST). This compelled CRS to focus on **justice** while examining, planning and implementing its work.³ This requires an in-depth understanding and analysis of the main injustices at the global, regional and country levels throughout the world.

1.2. CRS' FY2002-FY2006 Strategic Framework

With the new agency strategic plan in 2002, CRS reaffirmed its commitment to the promotion of justice, calling upon all members of the human family to engage in "right relationships" that protect and preserve human dignity. This is expressed in the goal of CRS' strategic framework, which states:

The people that (CRS) serve(s) support each other to achieve their full potential, share equitably in the goods of the earth, and live in peace.

In working toward this goal, the agency has committed itself to achieving five objectives by the end of 2006:

Foster concrete changes to systems and practices that contribute to injustice.	Promote fuller participation in local, national, and global actions for the common good.	Meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable through building sustainable local capacities.
Demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that promote peace, tolerance, and reconciliation.		Implement systems, structures and culture that promote staff initiative and ownership.

1.3. CRS' Regional Strategic Framework⁴

CRS' strategic framework for West Africa embodies the objectives of the agency's strategic framework, and applies these specifically to the West African context.

² CRS' **mission statement**, written in 1985 and approved by the full United States Catholic Conference, defines CRS as an agency and provides the overarching principles that guide CRS in all that it does.

³ Justice is defined as the establishment and promotion of right relationships between all members of the human family, as well as the transformation of society's unjust structures and institutions.

⁴ For the purposes of CRS' regional strategic framework and regional food security strategy, the West Africa region includes Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

CRS has determined that a majority of West African households are **unable to realize their full human dignity**. In order to realize human dignity, households require access to *basic human needs* (food, water, shelter, health), to be *safe from harm* and to *participate fully in decision-making processes that affect their lives*. In many West African countries, these crucial elements are missing. While there have been some recent improvements in the realization of human dignity over the past thirty years, improvements have not been universal. Those who have been the most affected by the problem are the extreme poor and the victims of violent conflict.

In recognition of the challenges faced by many West Africans, CRS developed a regional strategic framework with the following goal:

The people of West Africa will support each other to protect and preserve their human dignity.

In working towards this goal, CRS in West Africa has committed itself to achieving the following five objectives by 2006 (CRS 2002):⁵

<p>Communities in West Africa that are affected or threatened by conflicts will engage in initiatives that create conditions of peace, tolerance and mutual respect.</p>	<p>The people of West Africa will take greater responsibility for reducing the incidence and impact of HIV/AIDS in their communities.</p>	<p>Vulnerable populations throughout West Africa will achieve the conditions necessary for sustainable food security.</p>
<p>The people of West Africa will build working relationships between communities and local government bodies in order to enhance the long-term sustainability of local community initiatives</p>		<p>CRS will build sustainable capacity for high quality and effective program planning and management.</p>

1.4. The Link between “Basic Needs” and Food Security

As outlined in Section 1.2, one of the objectives of agency’s strategic framework is to “meet the *basic needs* of the most vulnerable by building sustainable local capacities.” In most developing countries, and especially the countries of West Africa, limited access to basic needs is the greatest threat to life.

There are a multitude of frameworks to understand basic needs. Two of the most well-known frameworks are *food security* and *livelihood security*.⁶ A brief conceptual model explaining the links among justice, human dignity, basic needs and food security appears in **Annex A**.

Livelihood security is broadly defined as people having sufficient access to clean water, food, shelter, education and health services to live with dignity (Frankenburger 1995).⁷ *Food security* is broadly defined as “people having physical and economic access to sufficient food or water to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life today, and the good health to use this food properly, without sacrificing future food security.”

While the livelihood security framework posits food, health care, shelter and education as its overall goals, the food security framework has food, health and water as its overall goals, and education and shelter as household *strategies* to achieve these goals. Thus, food security is a “basic needs” framework with slightly different goals and objectives.

⁵ CRS. *West Africa Strategic Framework, 2002-2006*. Accra, Ghana. November 2002.

⁶ The livelihood security framework is also referred to as the basic needs framework.

⁷ Frankenburger 1995. This is the definition broadly referred to by CARE. Other agencies, such as DFID, have developed other definitions, namely: “A livelihood comprises people, their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets” (Chambers and Conway 1992).

In order to assess and address basic needs, CRS uses food security as its regional framework. This is not only due to the similarities between the food and livelihood security frameworks, but also to the fact that food insecurity continues to be an overwhelming and immediate problem in the West African context.⁸ In fact, participatory analyses in most countries in West Africa – including Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal – have revealed that most households identify poverty as “the presence of hunger”, “few meals per day”, “inadequate diet”, and “a high percentage of income or expenditures used for food” (IFAD 2001). This data supports the importance of food – and food security – in the realization of human dignity.

1.5. Overview of the Food Security Framework

1.5.1. Definition and Types of Food Security

Food security is broadly defined as “people having physical and economic access to sufficient food and water to meet their needs for a productive and healthy life today, and the good health to use this food properly, without sacrificing future food security.” Therefore, the food-*insecure* individual or household does not consume sufficient quantity (or quality) food or water to survive; or, if there is sufficient food, the individual does not have the good health to use it properly.⁹ The relationship between these factors is shown in **Figure 1**.

Unfortunately, this definition of food security is rarely achieved in reality, especially in less developed countries. Rather, individuals and households suffer from different types of food insecurity: short-term or long-term. Short-term food insecurity can be further categorized into **seasonal** or **transitory**, whereas long-term food insecurity can be termed as **chronic**. **Seasonal food insecurity** is defined as inadequate access to sufficient foods or poor health on a cyclical or seasonal basis, implying that households can return to “normal” consumption after the difficult period.

Transitory (or temporary) food insecurity is defined as inadequate access to food or poor health during a temporary period, often after a man-made or a natural crisis. Transitory food insecurity implies that households can return to a state of food security after the crisis passes.¹⁰

Chronic food insecurity is defined as inadequate access to sufficient foods or poor health on a continuous basis. This type of food insecurity is ongoing.

Although chronic food insecurity is often considered to be the most severe form of food insecurity, the other categories of food insecurity are similarly problematic. This is due to the fact that households must find ways to cope during the period of food insecurity, either by selling productive assets, depleting food stocks or outmigration. While such actions help households to meet their immediate consumption needs, they can also make the households more vulnerable to future food crises.

⁸ It should be noted that the food security framework has often been criticized, both within and outside of Catholic Relief Services, as focusing too narrowly on food, food aid and agriculture, and therefore not addressing the broader conceptions of poverty or other non-food items. While this is true for traditional definitions of food security in the 1960s and 1970s, more recent food security frameworks -- such as those used by CRS and USAID -- demonstrate that food security is a holistic framework that shows the relationship among a variety of household needs.

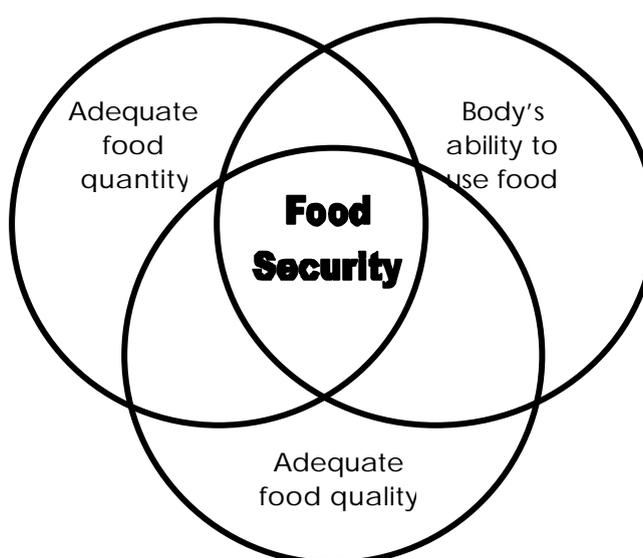
⁹ Food security can be defined and analyzed at the individual, household, and community, national and international level. As the focus of CRS' work is to impact individual lives in relationship with others, this paper will focus on household-level food security. Nevertheless, household food security is determined by household, community, regional, national and international factors.

¹⁰ There is often substantial debate about the time frame for “transitory” food insecurity, and whether those affected by long-term conflicts are classified as suffering from transitory or chronic food insecurity. The literature does not provide concrete classifications, but it should be noted that transitory food insecurity implies that the event is truly temporary in nature, and therefore will not last for more than one year.

1.5.2. Determinants of Food Security

Most agencies, including CRS, recognize that achieving food security requires that individuals consume food and water of sufficient quality and quantity, and that their body is healthy enough to use this food properly (see **Figure 1**). Individuals and households must therefore use a variety of mechanisms to acquire food and to ensure the good health to use it properly.

Figure 1. Relationship between Food Security, Food and Water Quality and Quantity and the Body's Use of Food



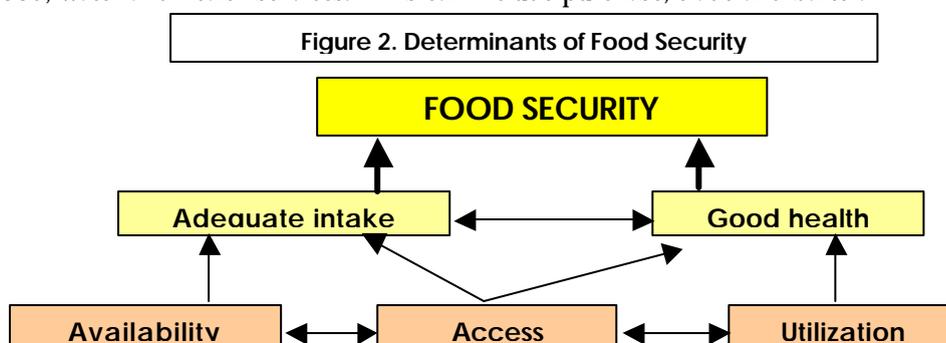
The determinants of food security are multiple and complex. The **food security conceptual framework** outlines the immediate, underlying and basic determinants of food security, and shows the relationships among these variables.

As mentioned in Section 1.5.1., food security relates to the sufficient consumption and utilization of food. Thus, the immediate determinants of food insecurity are the sufficient **availability** of food, physical and economic **access**, and good biological **utilization** (or absorption) (see **Figure 2**). While the distinction between “availability” and “access” is unclear, it is clear that sustained food security requires that households obtain food and non-food items through production, trade, purchase or gifts.¹¹

For poor rural households, **availability** primarily refers to on-farm production of food and livestock that is directly consumed by the household. Food availability is directly influenced by land (including land size and fertility), labor, and other farm inputs (tractors, hoes). These, in turn, are influenced by factors such as a health status (affecting labor productivity), income and access to financial services (affecting the ability to purchase inputs), and education levels (affecting productivity). And finally, these factors are influenced by basic social, political and natural factors, including rural infrastructure, peace and stability, government policies and the natural environment.

Access generally refers to the individual or household’s ability to use other entitlements – other than own production – to obtain food, water and health services. This can include purchase, trade and barter. Access therefore directly depends upon a household’s or individual’s purchasing power, which is determined by income levels and prices. This is affected by a

Figure 2. Determinants of Food Security



¹¹ At the household level, the distinction between “availability” and “access” is an important one, but not always easily understood. Both terms refer to the capacity of the household to obtain (or “access”) food, although the mechanism (production, trade, purchase) differs. “Availability” often refers to food that is obtained through on-farm production or wild foods that are gathered. “Access” often refers to food that is obtained through purchase, barter, trade or gifts. For this reason, a more accurate depiction of the food security framework would probably include two components – access and utilization – with “access” including all of the mechanisms that the household uses to obtain food.

household's income-generating activities and remuneration for such activities. These, in turn, are influenced by factors and assets such as land, labor, access to financial services, health and education and intra-household resource allocation and responsibilities. And finally, these are influenced by basic determinants, including rural infrastructure, peace and stability, government policies and the natural environment.

Utilization broadly refers to the health status of the individual and the proper biological use of food. Utilization directly depends upon the presence (or absence) of disease in the body, either those that prohibit absorption (such as diarrhea) or affect the appetite (such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis). Health status is immediately affected by childcare practices, the health environment and access to basic health services. These, in turn, are affected by factors such as inadequate investment in health and sanitation infrastructure, government policies, illiteracy and conflict.

In order to achieve food security, households therefore not only require food production, but a broad range of assets, including income, potable water, education, shelter and access to basic services. This broader framework differs from more traditional conceptions of food security in the 1960s and 1970s, which focused primarily upon food production and food self-sufficiency.

II. Situation Analysis for Food Insecurity in West Africa

2.1. Problem Analysis

Throughout the world, food insecurity continues to be a major problem. It is currently estimated that 800 million people in the world are food insecure. The largest percentage of the food insecure live in South Asia and Africa, with smaller proportions in Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe (World Bank 1986; World Food Summit documents 1997).

While there have been some recent improvements in food security over the past thirty years, improvements have not been universal. For example, in South and West Asia, the food insecure population has shrunk by half from 1971-2000. In Sub-Saharan Africa, however, the food-insecure population doubled during the same period (IFPRI 2001).

2.1.1. The Food Security Problem in West Africa

The West Africa region covers sixteen countries and four agro-climatic zones (**Annex B**). For the purposes of analysis, CRS has divided the region into three groupings:

- the *Sahelian* countries, including Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali, Niger, and Senegal;¹²
- the *“coastal”* countries, including Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo;¹³
- and the *“conflict”* countries, including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.¹⁴

¹² The Sahel is the “transitional zone”, connecting the desert to the north with the lush, tropical areas to the south. It has historically been vulnerable to drought and famine, with fragile soils and increasingly threatening environmental degradation is an increasing threat. Chad is typically considered a Sahelian country, but is not included in this strategy, as it falls under the Central Africa region within CRS' administrative structure. Similarly, Mauritania and Cape Verde are not addressed in the strategy, as CRS does not have programs in these countries.

¹³ The “coastal” countries are those countries with two agricultural seasons, separating the Sahel from the Sudanian and Guinean zones. Generally, the coastal countries are considered to have greater agricultural potential. These include Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo. Nigeria is not included in this strategy, as it falls under the Central Africa region within CRS' administrative structure.

¹⁴ The “conflict” countries are those countries where armed violent conflict is a characterizing factor. Civil strife and its consequences are particularly prevalent in Liberia and Sierra Leone, but their designation as conflict countries is not meant to categorically imply the absence of conflict in other regions. Indeed, conflict in the Casamance region of Senegal continues to

A map showing the different categories of countries in the West Africa region appears in **Figure 3**.

The data from each country reveals that food insecurity continues to be a significant problem in the region. It is estimated that over *thirty percent of households in West Africa suffer from food insecurity, either consuming insufficient quantity (or quality) food or suffering from poor health* (IFAD 2001).¹⁵

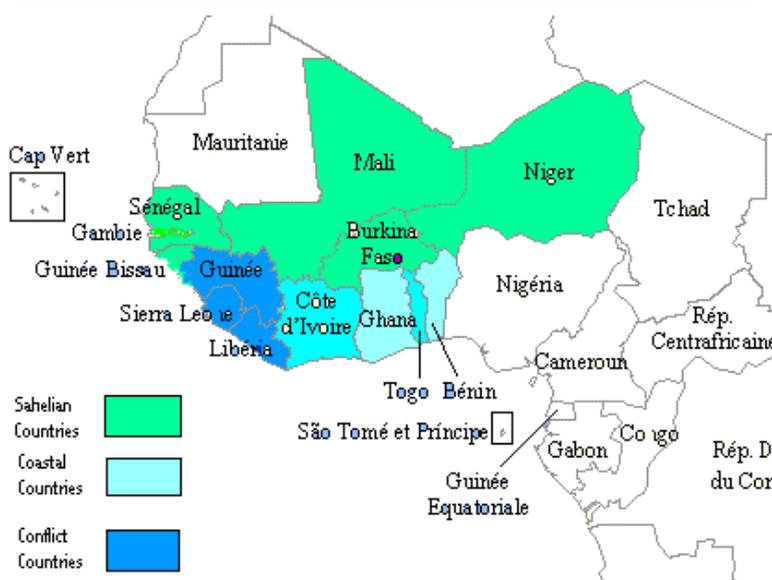
The below problem statement describes the food security problem in the West Africa region.

Problem Statement: Rural and an increasing number of urban households in West Africa suffer from **chronic, seasonal** and **transitory** food insecurity.

While the type of food insecurity differs according to the geographic location and specific characteristics of the individual or household, the problem statement provides a general overview of the problem at the regional level. This problem statement was developed from a composite of food security problem statements for each country program in the West Africa region (CRS 2002).¹⁶ A problem tree for food insecurity is included in Annex C.

2.1.2. Evidence of the Food Security Problem

Figure 3. Categories of Countries in the West Africa Region



Since food insecurity literally means that people do not have enough food to survive, it is measured by low consumption, high rates of malnutrition, and high rates of mortality. In reviewing the current indicators for West Africa, there is ample evidence of the food security problem.

Evidence from country-specific food security assessments in West Africa shows that a significant number of West African households lack access to sufficient food during the hungry season (*soudure*) for several months of the year, and thus suffer from *seasonal food insecurity*. This is evident by reduced caloric and

micronutrient consumption during certain periods of the year, as well as an increase in prevalence of wasting (ANDI 2001).¹⁷

West Africa is the victim of cyclic droughts and floods, in addition to large-scale and small-scale conflicts. Such events result in *transitory food insecurity*, meaning that households have insufficient access to food during and immediately after the period of the crisis. Transitory food insecurity in West Africa can be detrimental, particularly if households engage in coping mechanisms that negatively affect longer-term food security.

affect food security both in Senegal and The Gambia, and other countries in West Africa also continue to grapple with localized conflicts.

¹⁵ With an estimated population of seventy million, this means that approximately 20-25 million individuals suffer from food insecurity in the region. IFAD, 2001.

¹⁶ Catholic Relief Services' *Country Food Security Profile Reports for West Africa*. Accra, Ghana: Catholic Relief Services, 2002.

¹⁷ The prevalence of wasting (low weight-for-height) has ranged from 13 percent in Ghana to 23 percent in Mali. ANDI 2001.

Finally, households and certain extremely vulnerable groups in West Africa suffer from *chronic food insecurity*, meaning that they consistently have inadequate access to sufficient food. This is evident by the average per capita caloric supply (ranging from an average of 2495 calories per day in the coastal countries to 2085 calories per day in the conflict countries), the high prevalence of stunting (ranging from 23 percent in Senegal to 48 percent in Mali) and the high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies, including goiter, anemia and vitamin A (ANDI 2001).

There is strong evidence that food insecurity in the West Africa region (and in sub-Saharan Africa) has been worsening over the past twenty-five years. While child malnutrition rates dropped in every quarter of the globe between 1970 and 1995, in sub-Saharan Africa the percentage decrease was the smallest recorded for any region (Smith and Haddad 2001). Underlying this statistic was an actual increase in the total number of malnourished children in the region – an increase estimated at 12.9 percent (Smith and Haddad 2001).

2.1.3. Who are the Food Insecure?

Despite widespread population growth, steady urbanization and intra-regional migration over the course of the past fifty years, food insecurity in West Africa remains primarily a rural phenomenon. Food insecurity is closely correlated with household poverty, in West Africa, 41 percent of the total population is classified as poor, of which the rural share is 74 percent (IFAD 2001).

Within rural areas, food insecurity is often localized. In Ghana and Benin, for example, the incidence of food insecurity is higher in the Northern rural savannah areas and lower in the rural coastal areas.

Despite these localized differences, the food insecure in West Africa are primarily rural-based populations, either directly affected by conflict and/or based in savannah and Sahelian regions. Extremely vulnerable populations – including those that are mentally and physically disabled and the elderly – are also food insecure, regardless of where they reside.

Figure 4. Predominantly Food Insecure Regions in West Africa



A map showing the geographic locations of the most food insecure is provided in **Figure 4**. Country-specific food insecurity maps are available in Annex D.

2.1.4. The Causes of Food Insecurity

For both Sahelian and non-Sahelian countries in West Africa, food insecurity is caused by a number of interrelated factors. At the most immediate level, these include the **limited availability, inadequate economic access, and poor utilization**. Although statistics for individual countries vary, all countries in West Africa are classified as Low-Income Food Deficit Countries (LIFDCs), and are typically characterized by subsistence production, a low per capita gross domestic product (GDP), and high rates of malnutrition. These in themselves are red flags for food security.

The fact that all West African countries are classified as LIFDCs is evidence of **limited availability**. While there are marketable food surpluses in the region, West Africa has a regional global food production “gap” of approximately 5.5 million metric tons. Regional food production per capita fell during the 1980s, with the exception of the coastal countries, where the situation remained stagnant (IFAD 2001). The immediate cause of insufficient food availability is low and variable *production* for staple and “cash” crops.¹⁸ Low levels of production are largely due to low and variable *yields* for most staple food crops and the *limited availability of arable land*. Over the next twenty years, per capita arable land in West Africa is projected to decline to less than half the current levels, primarily as a result of high demographic growth rates (IFAD 2001).

Low and variable yields are primarily affected by the **poor soil fertility**, which is due to **land degradation** resulting from extensive agriculture, deforestation and overgrazing, soil erosion, the use of traditional techniques and erratic rainfall. Land degradation in the region is alarming, and the forest area is declining because of agricultural expansion and demand for fuel wood and timber for a growing population. It is estimated that approximately 50 percent of farmland in West Africa suffers to some extent from nutrient depletion and hence poor soil fertility (Scherr 1999). This is evident in **Figure 5**, which shows the average annual nutrient depletion of soils in Africa from 1993-95 (Henao and Baanante 1999).

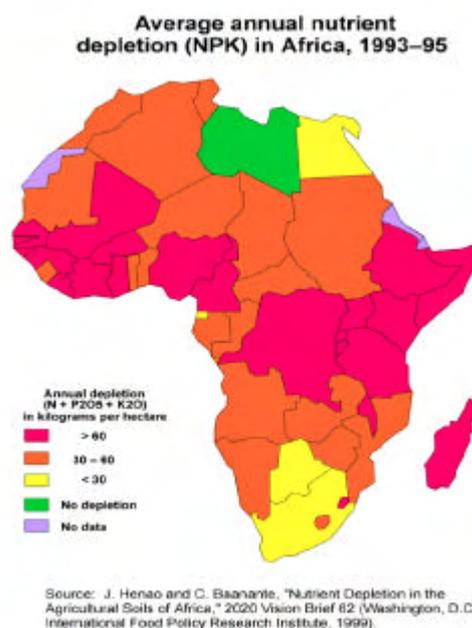


Figure 5. per

All of the factors contributing to limited availability are affected by the education status of the population, conflict, the health status of farm laborers, and agricultural policies.

In terms of **access**, a majority of West African households have inadequate economic means – or **purchasing power** - to purchase or barter for food. The immediate causes of poor purchasing power are **income poverty**. This is evident by the prevalence of poverty in the region – none of the countries in West Africa generate enough income to meet the 2 USD day poverty line. In sixteen West African countries, 41 percent of the total population is classified as poor, of which the rural share is 74 percent. Based upon these estimates, approximately 91 million people in the region can be categorized as rural poor (IFAD 2001).¹⁹

Income poverty is primarily caused by **low remuneration of income-generating activities** (both on-farm and off-farm) and the limited types of income-generating activities available to rural households. These factors are related to **poor agricultural marketing** and **the limited access to financial capital**.²⁰ **Agricultural marketing** in West Africa is characterized by high marketing margins, related to high transport costs, lack of economies of scale, limited market information, legal and illegal taxes, high levels of risk and physical losses (IFAD 2001).

¹⁸ Staple food crops in the region are cassava, yams, millet, sorghum, maize and rice. In general, yield gaps for staple crops remain significant. The largest yield gaps are registered for millet and sorghum. IFAD 2001.

¹⁹ This includes the populations of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. IFAD 2001.

²⁰ Financial capital is often defined as the claims on good and services built up through financial systems that gather savings and issue credit. DFID 1999.

Remuneration for on-farm and off-farm income-generating activities is affected by factors such as lack of skills (particularly low levels of education and training), illnesses that affect the productivity of the household, conflict, poor governance and corruption, and poor rural infrastructure.²¹

In terms of **utilization**, health and nutritional indicators indicate that West African households do not enjoy good health. Women and young children are particularly vulnerable. Indicators often used to represent the general health status of a population include focus upon indicators for infants and children under 5 years of age. For example, according to the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted in the region, the prevalence of diarrhea ranges from 19 to 37 percent in Ghana and Niger, respectively (DHS 2001). The immediate causes of poor health and nutritional status include inadequate access to potable water, inappropriate health and food preparation practices, environmental conditions favorable to a wide variety of diseases and their vectors, and inadequate access to health services. More than sixty percent of the rural population have access to safe water in only three of the countries in the region (IFAD 2001). The picture is similarly skewed for access to health services and sanitation.²² Additional contributing factors are income poverty, illiteracy, conflict and insufficient investment in the health sector. An overview of key health indicators for West African countries is provided in Annex E.

2.1.5. Key Leverage Points

Food security is not only a common problem in the region; it is also a problem with common causes. With the close proximity of West African countries, porous borders, and ethnic and linguistic similarities, events in one country often have an impact upon the food security situation of a neighboring country.

The data discussed in Section 2.1.4. clearly indicate the constraints and challenges confronted at multiple points in the food security chain for all of the West African countries. While causes vary to some extent on a regional level, certain factors persist.

CRS has identified common causes – or **key leverage points** – of food insecurity.²³ (For leverage points listed by individual country, refer to Annex F). CRS' regional food security problem analysis has identified five key leverage points for food insecurity in West Africa: **income poverty**, primarily related to low agricultural productivity; **poor health** and the **high prevalence of illnesses; illiteracy, conflict** and **poor governance**.²⁴

Income poverty and low production, leading to **low purchasing power**, are recurring underlying causes of food insecurity in all of the West African countries. In fact, “there is widespread agreement that a leading cause of food insecurity is low purchasing power or poverty” (Aker 2001). These points are not separable, as low production is a direct cause of low income, which leads directly to low purchasing power. Low purchasing power limits both consumption and proper utilization of food and the ability to sustain adequate health practices.

Widespread lack of quality primary education and **high illiteracy**, especially among women, is also a key leverage point for West African countries. Illiteracy and the resulting lack of knowledge and skills impact overall availability, access, and utilization of food. A 1993 USAID study showed that for every

²¹ While the road system in the coastal countries is generally well-endowed, the infrastructure in the Sahelian landlocked countries is below expected or normalized levels. Road connections between interior and coastal countries are weak, and transport costs are high. IFAD 2001.

²² It is estimated that 29 percent of the region's population has access to sanitation services. IFAD 2001.

²³ Identifying key leverage points is crucial for the problem analysis. As the causes of food insecurity are varied and complex, key leverage points are those causes that are pervasive. A key leverage point is defined as a cause (or causes) that shows up the most often in the problem analysis, or are common across several causal chains. Addressing these causes therefore provides the greatest opportunity to positively impact the food security problem.

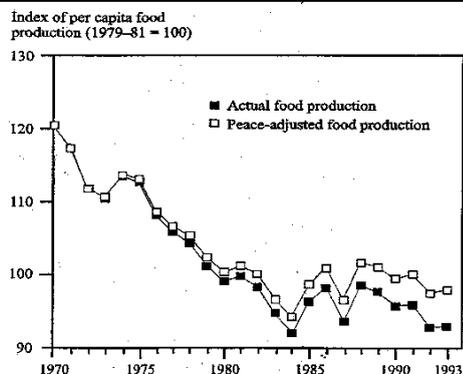
²⁴ These key leverage points have not always been considered within the scope of food security. In fact, these points show that a myriad of causes related to but not encompassed within production and distribution of food are ultimately responsible for hunger.

additional year of schooling, farm output increased by 5 percent, as education has a strong impact on the capability of people to adopt new technologies. In addition, a major work published in 1980 using data from 18 low-income countries also concluded that farm productivity increases by 7.4 percent when farmers complete an extra four years of schooling (Lockheed, Jamison and Lau 1980). Secondary sources confirm the relationship between education and agricultural output in Ghana and Uganda (Psacharopoulos 1995, Appleton and Balihuta 1996).

Poor health status, or the high prevalence of illnesses (such as malaria and HIV/AIDS), reduces productivity and contributes to increased morbidity and mortality throughout West Africa, as those who are sick are often unable to properly absorb nutrients from the food they consume. Communicable diseases account for the greatest percentage of morbidity and mortality, followed by noncommunicable diseases and injury. As the rate of HIV/AIDS infections increases in West Africa, productivity is further reduced, negatively affecting food availability and incomes. Malaria is also negatively correlated with food security.

Conflict is also a key leverage point in the region, primarily affecting the Mano River countries, but also affecting other countries in the region. Approximately 1/5 of the region's population lives in countries currently involved in, or recently emerging from, warfare. Protracted conflict in a number of countries – such as Liberia and Sierra Leone—has had widespread negative social, physiological and economic effects. Conflict reduces agricultural productivity in affected areas and has serious long-term consequences for stability. Moreover, instability in particular regions (such as the Casamance in Senegal, the Northern zones in Mali and Niger, and the “triangle” in Guinea) also increases national development disparities (IFAD 2001). **Figure 6** depicts the difference between food production in peace and conflict.

Figure 6. Actual and Peace-Adjusted Food Production Growth, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1970-93



Source: E. Messer, M.J. Cohen, and J. D'Costa, *Food from Peace: Breaking the Links Between Conflict and Hunger* (Washington, D.C.: IFPRI, 1998).

Access to assets and entitlements are largely governed by power relationships that have political and economic dimensions. Increased food insecurity lends urgency to engaging in issues of **local governance**. Broadly defined, local governance is a political and institutional process that contributes to poverty reduction and nutritional improvements through enhancing the development choices available at the local level and through better inclusion of all social groups in those choices (Rahman 2001). Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that decentralization of government will lead to greater participation of the poor. For example, decentralization can be done to empower local elites at the expense of the poor in order for the central government to

create a power base in the countryside. Thus central government can have a critical role in making decentralization more or less favorable to the poor through the promotion of good governance.

2.1.6. The Effects of Food Insecurity

In West Africa, the immediate effects of the food security problem are **high rates of malnutrition** (including stunting and wasting), high rates of **micronutrient deficiencies** (including goiter and Vitamin A deficiencies).²⁵ In addition to impacts upon health and nutrition status, food insecurity can, ultimately have an impact upon **mortality**. A table showing the prevalence of child malnutrition (weight-for-age) and under-five mortality rates for the region is available in **Annex E**. In addition, malnutrition is an

²⁵ Micronutrient deficiencies are often referred to as the “hidden hunger”.

underlying cause of over fifty percent of deaths of children under five years of age (Smith and Haddad 2000).

All West African countries demonstrate high rates of malnutrition, morbidity, and mortality.²⁶ Regional-level data for West African countries shows that under-five mortality ranges from 150 to 300 deaths per live 1,000 births (DHS 2001). Stunting, wasting, and diarrhea rates are also particularly high. .

It is also worth noting that food insecurity in West Africa leads to secondary effects beyond the realm of health and nutrition. These include negative long-term impacts on individuals' cognitive ability, rural exodus to cities, frequent conflicts over land ownership, loss of capital equipment, and the deterioration of traditional and functional farming practices (ACC/SCN 2000).

The result of these immediate and secondary effects is broader social, economic and political disruption, and continued food insecurity. In many cases, food insecurity leads to reduced productivity and output, which results in poverty and reduced production. In some cases, coping strategies can result in conflicts, as competing households and communities compete for scarce resources. And, in other cases, food insecurity can result in widespread dissatisfaction with local or national governments, which can lead to inter- and intra-state conflict. The effects of food insecurity therefore become causes of future food insecurity, allowing the problem to persist for multiple generations.

2.2. Global and Regional Trends Affecting Food Security

The problem analysis provides a detailed picture of the regional food security problem and its immediate and underlying causes. In order to understand how the problem will evolve over the next few decades, it is important to identify global or regional **trends** that affect the food security problem and its causes.²⁷

The history of food security in West Africa, rather than a timeline of specific events, is one comprised of pervasive fundamental trends. CRS has identified five key global and regional trends that affect –and will continue to impact -- food security in West Africa: **population pressure and urbanization, continued degradation of natural resources and increasing water scarcity, increasing political turmoil and conflict, globalization and the increased prevalence of diseases.**

2.2.1. Population Pressure and Urbanization

The bulk of demographic growth in the coming decades will occur in the countries least equipped to deal with dramatic population increases (Mougeot 1999). The relationship between population growth and famine is strongest in less developed nations. Population growth rates in West Africa are some of the highest in the world; between now and 2050, the population growth rate for Africa as a whole is expected to be over twice that of other regions of the globe. The pressures generated by such growth impacts both rural and urban livelihoods in the region.

In those regions with limited quantities of cultivable land, population growth threatens the sustainability of traditional agricultural systems and the social relations that underpin them. As the average household landholding diminishes, marketable surpluses diminish as well in the absence of changes in farming practices. This not only increases the household's vulnerability to food insecurity, but, in the situation

²⁶ Malnutrition refers to a number of diseases with specific causes, all related to an individual deficit of nutrients, which impedes the body's ability for growth and other functions. Malnutrition for children under five is indicated by rates of stunting (low height for age) and extreme malnutrition by rates of wasting (low weight for height) (Wagstaff and Watanabe 2001). Morbidity refers to the incidence of illness in a population and is evidence of the level of food insecurity, as food insecure populations are often more susceptible to disease

²⁷ A trend is defined as a "general tendency or course, as of events, over time."

where sustainable productivity of land does not correspondingly rise, also increases the exploitation of natural resources (von Braun, Teklu et al. 1998). In the worst scenarios, the result is ecological collapse.

As rural subsistence systems reach capacity, population growth also fuels rural-to-urban migration. Nearly all (98 percent) of the global population growth over the next two decades will occur in developing countries, and the urban population of these countries will double again in roughly the same amount of time (Pinstrup-Anderson and Pandya-Lorch 2001).

2.2.2. Degradation of Natural Resources and Water Scarcity

The climatic record suggests that as a region, West Africa has been free of long-term drought since the early 1970s (von Braun, Teklu et al. 1998). However, in much of the arid Sahel, drought is a perennial feature, and an overview of rainfall patterns in the region reveals a declining trend. The decline in rainfall and corresponding water scarcity is closely linked to increased natural resource degradation. As mentioned in Section 2.1.4, nutrient depletion in the region is alarming, and the forest area is declining because of agricultural expansion and demand for fuel wood and timber. It is estimated that approximately fifty percent of farmland in West Africa suffers to some extent from soil erosion.

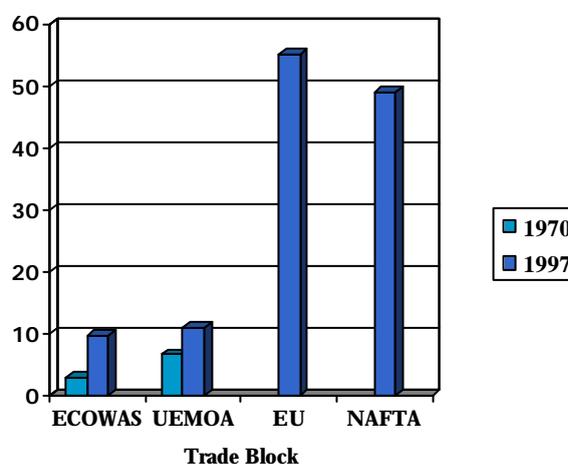
Water scarcity affects household food security in a variety of ways. In West Africa, the linkage between water scarcity (drought) and famine has a long history. In many parts of the Sahel, household food security remains linked to domestic production, and ecological pressure or climatic variation – unmitigated by connections to the market – translates directly to household food insecurity. Rural households typically face lean months during or after the driest months of the year. Even during the best of years, the ecological conditions of much of the region have consigned much of the population to a tenuous grasp on food security, as irregular rainfall and droughts directly affect actual and potential yields and household risk strategies. Households cope with this vulnerability through a variety of strategic decisions, including out-migration in search of wage labor, the sale of household assets, lowering household expenditures, and, most commonly, decreased consumption.

2.2.3. Increasing Political Turmoil and Conflict

For many West Africans, political turmoil and conflict are part of everyday life. In the Mano River region, including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, war is the dominant factor in the social, economic, and political context shaping food security issues. In other countries, conflict and instability continue to plague the lives of countless individuals.²⁸ In these contexts, sustainable food security is difficult if not impossible to achieve.

In its worst manifestation, conflict directly impacts the lives of countless individuals. War can threaten land tenure, infrastructure, and social capital. Natural resources are pillaged, illicit trade thrives, labor is exploited, land grabbing becomes common, and mafia-style criminal activities flourish (Guiton 2001). Conflict can incorporate youth into quasi-militaristic regimes, sap labor from subsistence activities, and displace entire

Figure 7. Percentage of Total Export Value from Intra-Regional Trade



²⁸ According to Freedom House, only Cape Verde, Ghana and Mali are considered to enjoy political and civil freedom.

villages. In these contexts, the safety nets and social services put in place by local and national governments, as well as by local and international aid agencies, are often unable to function.

2.2.4. Globalization

Globalization – broadly defined in this strategy as *greater economic integration with other markets* – offers significant new opportunities, but also carries considerable risks. For many of the West African nations, intra- and inter-regional integration is fairly limited. While intra-regional trade has improved in both UEMOA and ECOWAS regions, market structures are generally poor. This problem is multifaceted, but includes various price controls, regulatory structures, monopolistic structures controlled or managed by the state, complex systems of foreign exchange and poor rural infrastructure. **Figure 7** compares the percentage of intra-regional trade for different trading blocks, including ECOWAS, UEMOA, the EU and NAFTA.

The effects of limited regional and global integration on food security are numerous. For example, in a region with sufficient market structures, localized droughts or food shortages are quickly compensated by the market. Food travels from places of surplus to places of deficit, and food insecurity abates (Johnson 2001). However, in many regions of the Sahel, market structures are such that these simple transfers cannot occur. Localized production shortages translate directly into localized food insecurity (Devereaux 1993).

For urban dwellers, the effects of globalization are quite different, although not necessarily less severe. Overall, urban dwellers are more integrated with regional and global markets, and therefore less susceptible to the type of actual food shortages faced by rural populations. Nevertheless, as urban households are dependent on the market for food purchases, urban households are susceptible to a wide variety of political and economic shocks (Devereaux 1993). In West Africa, the CFA franc devaluation of 1994 represents such a situation: in an effort to reduce overpriced imports, as well as to promote exports and investment in export-related business, the former French colonies cut the CFA value in half (Diagana, Francis et al. 1999). For rural subsistence farmers with little connection to the market, the devaluation had little impact. For urban dwellers, however, food expenditures rapidly increased across the board, and for the poorest urban families, vulnerability to food insecurity increased as a result (Diagana and Reardon 1999).

For most of the urban populations throughout West Africa, and for rural populations increasingly enmeshed in market structures, greater integration with economic markets represents a double-edged sword. Increases in the scope of market structures provide an infrastructure to mitigate against localized drought and production shortages, and provide an equalizing mechanism for price structures over large regions. However, increasing dependence upon the market – and, more importantly, upon global markets – opens households to a new stratum of vulnerability – one driven by the tides of a global political economy well beyond their purview.

2.2.5. Emerging and Reemerging Health Crises

In the problem analysis, poor health status was identified as an immediate and underlying cause of the food security problem. At the same time, trends indicate the emergence and reemergence of certain illnesses that will greatly exacerbate the food security problem in years to come

West Africans live in a perilous health environment. Malaria, HIV/AIDS, river blindness, and countless other diseases exacerbate the difficult conditions of existence for the poorest households. Combined with the impact of malnutrition, disease can often debilitate a household's labor force, resulting in reduced income generating activities, costly medical bills and higher funeral costs. All of these factors can result in increased household food insecurity.

Over the past decade, certain health crises have emerged – and, in some cases, re-emerged – in the region. On a global scale, **malaria** is on the rise due to insecticide resistance, drug resistance and environmental changes. It is estimated that 300-500 million people develop malaria each year; of these, 1.5-2.7 million die (Egan 2001).

Some forty million people in the world are currently living with **HIV/AIDS**, and twenty-three million people have perished from the disease (see **Figure 8**).²⁹ Approximately 70 percent of HIV infections are found in individuals from Sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike some of the other health crises, HIV/AIDS is a relatively recent health issue that has quickly surpassed in scope and impact some of the longer existing illnesses. It is estimated that the AIDS pandemic will worsen rapidly, with the number of HIV cases likely to double in sub-Saharan Africa within five years (Donnelly 2002).

In spite of the pandemic proportions of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, there is some variability to the distribution of the disease. The problem is most acute in the nations of southern Africa, where morbidity rates are as high as 26 percent for the adult population. In comparison to the nations in these regions of the continent, the spread of the disease in West Africa has been significantly slower. HIV prevalence rates in West Africa vary from a reported 0.5 percent in Senegal to 9.7 percent in Cote d'Ivoire (UNAIDS and WHO 2002). Four countries in West Africa have prevalence rates above 5 percent, which represents significant infection and associated negative impacts on the individual, household and community levels.

Related to HIV/AIDS is the re-emergence of **tuberculosis**. Although considered an ancient killer, tuberculosis is currently at its highest levels in history, and is the world's leading infectious killer of young and middle-aged adults. Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis is on the rise and we are seeing an increase in cases due to the vulnerability to tuberculosis among people living with HIV. It is estimated that half of all HIV-positive individuals are concurrently infected by tuberculosis (Pablos-Mendez 2001).

These health crises will continue to impact – household food security in a variety of ways. The most vital impact includes greater impoverishment – and hence food insecurity – of those directly and indirectly affected. This occurs through labor losses, rising health care costs, loss of knowledge and expertise, and declining asset bases (Flores 2001).

2.3. Overview of CRS' Food Security Programming

2.3.1. CRS' Food Security Programming

Food security is a complex interaction of political, economic, social and nutritional needs. CRS' programming therefore strives to address the multitude of factors under which food insecurity develops and persists by focusing on different sectors and addressing needs in the **short-, medium- and long-term**.³⁰

Program activities that have an impact upon the **short-term** usually involve providing for the immediate needs (food, water and health) of those individuals and households who are highly food insecure. In most cases, these programs target victims of man-made emergencies and natural disasters, as well as extremely vulnerable populations. More specifically, CRS' food security programs in the short-term are usually **emergency programs**, which provide food, medical supplies and agricultural inputs to victims and refugees; and **safety net programs**, which distribute basic food and food supplements to vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly and the mentally ill.

²⁹ UNAIDS 2002.

³⁰ CRS considers the "short-term" to be less than one year; the "medium-term" between one and five years; and the "long-term" greater than five years.

Programs that have an impact in the **medium-term** focus on addressing immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity. Sectors typically include agriculture, microfinance, and health. In agriculture, for example, CRS' programs aim to improve household food availability and access through increased staple food production, home gardening, improved storage facilities, and improved marketing. In microfinance, projects aim to improve household access to food through increased incomes and savings. Finally, health projects aim to improve the individual's ability to utilize food by reducing illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, diarrhea and malaria. These programs also have a positive impact upon food security in the longer-term if they offer sustained improvements in reducing poverty and improving health status.

In its programs addressing food security in the **longer-term**, CRS addresses the underlying conditions and structures that allow food insecurity to develop and persist. Sectors typically include education, natural resource management, and peacebuilding. In education, CRS seeks to develop human capital by providing literacy and numeracy skills for adults, encouraging improved school enrollment and attendance (especially for girl children), and providing support for improved educational infrastructure. In the area of natural resource management, CRS promotes agricultural sustainability through projects in soil and water conservation and reforestation. In the domain of peacebuilding and human rights, CRS' activities promote justice through peace and reconciliation programming.

2.3.2. CRS' Food Security Programming in West Africa

In the West Africa region, CRS has used a combination of short-, medium- and long-term programs in order to respond to the food security needs of the region's population. CRS/West Africa has programs in eight countries -- Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone - and implements projects in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Mali and Togo.³¹ An overview of sectoral and thematic activities in the region is provided in **Annex G**.

As outlined in Section 2.3.1., CRS' programs in the **short-term** include **emergency preparedness and response** and **safety net programming**.³² CRS implements emergency response activities in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and implements safety net activities in Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, The Gambia, Ghana, Niger and Senegal.

CRS' medium-term projects in the region include **agriculture, microfinance** and **health**. CRS' agricultural activities in the region attempt to address the causes of low agricultural production in the region, such as frequent droughts, low yields, soil degradation, poor water management, inefficient production techniques, and the lack of inputs. CRS has more limited experience in projects using a market-oriented approach, but has supported a large sesame marketing project in the Gambia. The lessons learned from this project have provided important guidance for future market-oriented projects in the region.³³

CRS' **microfinance** programs seek to improve food security by increasing access to financial resources, primarily by supporting rural women's micro-enterprise activities. CRS' microfinance programs were introduced into West Africa in 1989, and have since grown to serve over 12,000 clients throughout the region.³⁴

³¹ The West Africa region was divided into two regions – the West Africa region (WARO) and the Central Africa Region (CARO) in 2001. The Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria were formerly part of WARO, and are now part of CARO.

³² Safety net programming is also referred to as General Relief/Other Child Feeding (GR/OCF).

³³ CRS implements agriculture programs in Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone, and some projects in Guinea.

³⁴ CRS implements microfinance programs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal, with smaller projects in Ghana and Togo.

In the area of **health**, projects include maternal and child health, Food-Assisted Child Survival (FACS), sanitation infrastructure, and HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support activities. Many of CRS' health programs throughout the West Africa region are integrated projects, providing food, health education, improved health service delivery and sanitation infrastructure.³⁵

CRS' **education** programs in West Africa primarily focus upon Food-Assisted Education Support programming, which supports the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, while simultaneously addressing the consumption needs of school-going children, their families, and other community members. CRS uses school-feeding programs, take-home rations, and FFW projects to rebuild educational infrastructure in its FAE programs. CRS also implements some adult literacy activities as part of its agriculture, health and microfinance programs.³⁶

In the area of **natural resource management (NRM)**, CRS recognizes that long-term food security relies upon the availability of sustainable common resources, such as land, forests, water resources, and fuel sources. In this manner, CRS implements projects that regenerate the "commons" through water conservation, land rehabilitation, reforestation and erosion control. Almost all of CRS' agriculture programs in the region have a natural resource component.

In the area of **peacebuilding** and human rights, CRS' programs primarily focus on early warning response systems, increased awareness of civic rights and responsibilities and peace and reconciliation. CRS implements a regional peacebuilding initiative with its primary partner, WANEP, and also engages in specific peacebuilding projects.

2.4. Overview of other actors

2.4.1. Private Voluntary Organizations and United Nations' Agencies

CRS is one actor, among a host of others, addressing food insecurity in the West Africa region. Other actors working to combat food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa include international private voluntary organizations (PVOs), national PVOs, governmental organization and United Nations (UN) agencies. Each of these agencies has its own strengths and areas of expertise.

For the most part, few international PVOs have the same extensive **geographic coverage** as CRS in the West Africa region. CRS has programs or projects in almost every country in the region. Other international PVOs have programs or projects in a more limited number of countries. Notable exceptions are Africare and CARE, who have projects in at least five countries in the region.

In terms of sectors, **health and agriculture** are the priority of a larger number of international PVOs operating in the region. In the area of **health** (community health, emergency health and HIV/AIDS), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Africare, the American Red Cross, CARE and Helen Keller International implement programs.³⁷ In the area of agricultural production and marketing, Africare, CARE, Enterprise Works, Technoserve, World Vision and Winrock have projects in the region, with only Enterprise Works and Technoserve having a specific focus on agricultural marketing. OICI, Oxfam, Save the Children, World Vision and Oxfam have expertise in **water and sanitation**.

A smaller number of PVOs have programs in the areas of education, emergency preparedness and response, microfinance and peacebuilding. CRS is the one of the only large-scale implementers of

³⁵ CRS implements health programs in Benin, Ghana and the Gambia, with smaller-scale activities in Sierra Leone. CRS' health activities in Niger are implemented by HKI. In terms of HIV/AIDS, CRS implements programs in Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, and Ghana, with smaller-scale projects in the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

³⁶ CRS implements large-scale education programs in Benin, Burkina Faso and Ghana, and smaller-scale education projects in Niger and Sierra Leone.

³⁷For the most part, these agencies do not have Food-Assisted Child Survival (FACS) programs.

microfinance programs in the region, although Freedom from Hunger and CARE also have projects in certain countries. Similarly, the **education, emergency response** and **peacebuilding** sectors are not covered in a large-scale manner.

Finally, while international PVOs and UN agencies operating in emergency situations (such as Liberia and Sierra Leone) distribute **food aid**, CRS is one of the few PVOs to program food aid – both for monetization and or distribution – on a wide scale throughout the region. CRS distributes food aid in throughout the region in emergency and development programs, using food aid for safety net programs, Food-for-Work (FFW), health and education, and monetizes food aid in support of its Title II development activities. The World Food Program distributes food aid for education and some health programs, and Africare monetizes food aid for its development programs.

2.4.2. Donors in support of Food Security Programming

Donor assistance accounts for approximately nine percent of the aggregate Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the West African countries. Of this amount, approximately half derives from multilateral sources and half from bilateral. The principal multilateral sources include the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the UN agencies and the European Union (EU). The USG (primarily USAID) ranks fourth as a bilateral donor in the West Africa region, behind France, Germany, and Japan. In current dollars, all donor assistance to West Africa increased from \$2.2 billion in 1980, to \$5.8 billion in 1995.

The **US government** provides emergency and development assistance to PVOs primarily through development assistance and through food aid (Food for Peace/Title II). **USAID** is currently operating under an initiative entitled *Promoting Food Security: Africa and Beyond*, launched in 1998. As a result of this initiative, USAID is providing supplemental resources to Africa in an attempt to alleviate growing food insecurity and poverty in the region. Recently **USAID** developed a strategic plan for West Africa that identifies food security as an important part of its strategic objectives (USAID 2000). The main areas where USAID will invest include economic integration, access to HIV/AIDS and child survival health services, environmental and NRM policies and programs, and early detection and response mechanisms to prevent regional conflicts.

The **USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs/Food For Peace** office also manages \$100 million for emergency and developmental food programming in West Africa. Approximately half of these funds are currently allocated for emergency relief, primarily in the Mano River region (covering Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone). The bulk of developmental food aid is allocated for direct distribution programs, including education support, agricultural support and development, health and nutrition programming, and food for work. The general goals of USAID's Food for Peace program are agriculture and health, although it supports other interventions.

The **European Union (EU)** provides emergency and development assistance to governments and PVOs with food and cash resources. The EU is currently developing new strategic priorities and directions. Indications are that the EU remains committed to alleviating food insecurity, primarily through agriculture and natural resource management programs. The priority EU countries in West Africa are Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau and Niger.

2.5. Capacity Analysis

In an effort to determine the appropriate strategic directions for the agency in the West Africa region, CRS conducted an analysis of its capacities. The capacity analysis identified some important strengths and weaknesses of the agency in the area of food security programming.

An important **strength** of CRS' programming is its appropriateness in meeting needs in the region. CRS' activities address one or more of the key leverage points of the food security problem. Nevertheless, while CRS addresses the key causes of food insecurity, these activities have not been as effective as they could be in having **a sustained and positive impact** on the food security problem.

The reasons for the limited sustained and positive impact of CRS' programs on the food security problem in West Africa can be attributed to several key factors. One of the most important of these is the **limited integration** of CRS' projects. At present, most of CRS sectoral or thematic projects are not integrated; in other words, one sectoral project (such as education) is used to address a particular leverage point (such as illiteracy). In many cases, CRS programs have one intervention to address the problem, and usually focus on the immediate cause – rather than broader structures.³⁸

Another factor contributing to the limited impact of CRS' programs is related to the **weaknesses of CRS' monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems**. At the regional level, CRS does not have verifiable quantitative data to support its successes and failures. In addition, CRS/West Africa does not regularly and consistently measure the impact of its sectoral or thematic programs upon food security. Finally, impact data at the sectoral and thematic projects is also limited, and not collected on a regular basis.

The availability of impact data for CRS programs in West Africa varies according to sector and theme. The health sector, for example, has substantial data at the country and regional levels to demonstrate positive impacts upon the health and nutritional status of targeted groups. In addition, CRS' microfinance programs have recently developed tools to measure the impact of client loans and savings on improved income. Nevertheless, for other programming sectors in the region – including agriculture, education, emergency response, peacebuilding and safety net – data demonstrating sustainable impact is more limited.

In general, the reason for this situation can be attributed to the absence of industry-wide standards and impact indicators for certain sectors and themes, the time frame of impact for interventions (such as education), and limited agency-wide and regional capacity in M&E.

Despite these limitations, CRS has identified some key best practices in its food security programming in the region. Two of the most important include the encouragement of **community participation** in the design and implementation of projects, and a focus upon **capacity-building** of partner and project participant staff. In addition, CRS has used the food security framework in order to analyze justice issues in country programs and to develop strategic program plans, which has been a useful holistic tool. Finally, CRS programs have become more aware of the importance of **gender** before designing and implementing projects.

III. Regional Strategic Plan for Sustainable Food Security in West Africa

CRS has developed its regional food security strategy based upon a thorough analysis of the food security problem in West Africa, an identification of key leverage points, the gap and capacity analyses, and an identification of programming and growth opportunities. The main components of the regional strategy appear below. The results framework and "Proframe" summarizing the goal, strategic objectives, intermediate results, outputs, activities and indicators are provided in **Annexes H and I**.

³⁸ In its capacity analysis, CRS/WARO programs felt that limited intersectoral integration was the result of limited resources and limited experience in developing and implementing integrated projects.

3.1. Goal

The goal of CRS' regional food security strategy is "improved food security of vulnerable rural households in West Africa."

Goal: "Improved food security of vulnerable rural households in West Africa."

The four strategic objectives of the regional strategy are steps along the way to the goal. The regional food security strategy has a five-year time frame, but recognizes that the long-term goal will take twenty or more years to achieve. Three of the four program areas in the regional food security strategy form the core Strategic Objectives. A fourth Special Objective will cut across all of the Strategic Objectives and be integrated throughout the strategy.

CRS' regional strategy will be most effective if it builds upon CRS' current strengths, identifies potential weaknesses, strengthens local capacities and capitalizes on the momentum and strengths of West African households. Obviously, this strategy will only be effective by working with and through partners. For this reason, partnership and capacity-building initiatives will appear, though in different configurations, within each SO focus area.

As a regional strategy, activities will: (1) address the food security problem on a cross-border basis; (2) involve regional and country-specific institutions in the implementation of its interventions and; (3) ensure that staff understand that they are operating regionally, and apply a regional perspective. In this context, the term "regional value-added" refers to situations where action, interaction or change at the regional level strengthens or adds value to development efforts undertaken at the national levels.

3.2. Strategic Objective 1: Strengthened Human Capital

Strategic Objective 1: Rural households' human capital is strengthened.

Rationale

If an "iron law" of sustainable food security exists, it is that the way to escape food insecurity in the long run is through human capital developments. Human capital is broadly defined as "the total capability residing in individuals, based on their stock of knowledge skills, health and nutrition. It is enhanced by their access to services that provide these, such as schools, medical services, and adult training. People's productivity is increased by their capacity to interact with productive technologies and with other people." (DFID 1999).

The importance of investing in human capital in terms of the provision of education and health care has figured predominantly in the literature. Empirical data on the impact of education and health demonstrates that improved human capital has positive effects on economic growth, productivity growth, long-term development and the quality of life.

The constraints to human capital in West Africa are related to the poor health, nutrition and educational status of rural households. As outlined in the problem analysis section, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the only region where the non-enrolled school age population has actually increased since 1980 (IFAD 2001). While female illiteracy has declined over the decade, in 1999 it was still higher than for Sub-Saharan Africa overall.

Health and nutritional indicators paint a similar picture. West African households live in a perilous health environment. Malaria, diarrhea, river blindness, HIV/AIDS and countless other diseases exacerbate the difficult conditions of existence for the poorest households. Combined with the impact of malnutrition, disease can often debilitate the labor force of the household.

Strategic Objective 1 will therefore work towards addressing the importance of human capital in food security. Measurement of progress towards achieving the SO will be carried out by monitoring the following proposed indicators:³⁹

- By FY07, the percentage of CRS' education projects in West Africa with improved retention rates for project participants has increased above baselines.
- By FY07, percentage of CRS' projects with an education component demonstrating improved literacy rates for project participants has increased above baselines.
- By FY07, the percentage of CRS health projects demonstrating improved health status for project participants has increased above the baseline.

In order to achieve SO1, CRS will focus on **improving educational opportunities and the health status of vulnerable populations**. Intermediate results are the following:

- **Intermediate Result 1.1. Educational achievement** for West African household members (adults and children) **is increased**.
- **Intermediate Result 1.2. Health and nutritional outcomes** for West African households **are improved**.

3.2.1. Intermediate Result 1.1.

Intermediate Result 1.1. Educational achievement for West African household members (adults and children) is increased.

Rationale

Investments in education – as one aspect of improved human capital – contribute substantially to improved food security. Extensive research has demonstrated a strong link between the components of the food security framework – availability, access and utilization – and basic education. Educated individuals have enhanced skills and access to social capital, and are thus able to improve availability, access, and utilization of food for their families. A diverse body of literature demonstrates that the adults in developing countries with higher levels of educational attainment have more rapid employment, higher individual earnings, greater agricultural productivity, lower fertility, better health and nutrition, and more “modern” attitudes than adults who have lower educational attainment (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). Educated adults are also more likely to send their children to

Education has a strong impact on the capability of people to adopt new technologies. A major work published in 1980 using data from 18 low-income countries concluded that farm productivity increases by 7.4 percent when farmers complete an extra four years of schooling. Secondary sources confirm this relationship in Ghana and Uganda.
IFAD, 2001.

³⁹ These indicators are proposed as regional indicators to measure impact on human capital. The indicators were chosen from among the current indicators being used in CRS/WARO's education and health programs. CRS/WARO could monitor one of the indicators or develop more appropriate indicators to measure progress towards this objective by FY07.

school, especially girls (Levinger, 1996, 2002). A schema showing the relationship between education and food security is provided in **Annex J**.

West African households do not enjoy high rates of educational achievement, which is evident by low literacy and enrollment rates for the region. In many countries of West Africa, primary education systems are less than effective: they do not teach children already in school the core skills contained in their national curricula; and they do not provide all school-age children, particularly girls, with the opportunity to attend school.

In looking more closely at this situation, the reasons why school-aged children are not enrolled in school are related to supply and demand. *Supply factors* describe any characteristic inherent in the educational system itself, including school location, curriculum, facilities, learning environment, teachers' salaries, and scheduling. In contrast, *demand factors* reside within the attitudes and perceptions of those who decide whether to send a child to school, and are influenced by the ability to pay direct and indirect costs of schooling. Generally, the main decision-makers are parents, but, as children grow older, they too play an important role in decisions about school attendance.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving IR 1.1. will be carried out by monitoring country-program **impact indicators in the area of education**. A proposed indicator is the following:⁴⁰

- By FY07, the percentage of CRS education programs and projects in West Africa demonstrating increased levels of enrollment has increased over baseline.

Outputs and Activities

In order to realize IR 1.1., CRS will achieve certain outputs and will engage in a variety of activities. The most important of these will be the development of a **regional education strategy**, which will analyze the education problem in the region and determine the key immediate and underlying causes of illiteracy and limited educational achievement. The strategy will also assess CRS' capacities in the area of education and identify programming priorities in the areas of formal and non-formal education, key partnerships and growth opportunities. It is expected that important components of the education strategy will include improving access to educational facilities, either through food aid or other means; improving the quality of education services, either through teacher training, curriculum development; and community participation. Non-formal education is also an area that will be further studied and considered.

Therefore, the key **output** for IR 1.1. is that a regional education strategy developed, approved and implemented. The **key activities** to achieve this output and the corresponding IR are the following:

- Hire a regional technical advisor for education.
- Develop an action plan for the development of a regional education strategy.
- Identify key regional priorities for education in the region.
- Identify cross-sectoral linkages between education and other sectors.
- Develop a regional education strategy, including priority activities, country programs and donor sources.
- Implement the regional education strategy.
- Track country program indicators for education at the regional level.

⁴⁰ This indicator is proposed as regional indicators to measure impact on educational achievement. The indicator was chosen from among the current indicators being used in CRS/WARO's education programs. By FY07, CRS/WARO could develop additional indicators to measure progress towards this objective.

Funding and Key Partnerships

A key issue to be addressed in the development of the education strategy will be future funding for education initiatives. While there is funding available for education activities from USAID and other donors, food aid funding – which serves as an important component for education programs – is limited, and future prospects are not promising. If the education strategy identifies food aid as an important component of CRS' education programming, alternative approaches or phase-out strategies will need to be addressed.

No key partnerships have been identified at this stage, but will be identified through the development of the regional education strategy.

3.2.2. Intermediate Result 1.2.

Intermediate Result 1.2. Health and nutritional outcomes for West African households are improved.

Rationale for IR 1.2.

Investments in health and nutrition – as the secondary aspect of improved human capital – contribute substantially to improved food security. Extensive research has demonstrated a strong link between food security and positive outcomes for maternal and child health. Healthy individuals have the capacity to produce and engage in income-earning activities, and are thus able to improve food security for their families. Illnesses (primarily malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis) substantially affect the productivity and income of households, both by increasing health care costs and affecting labor productivity. On average, malaria-affected families can only harvest 40 percent of the crops as compared with healthy families (Egan 2001). In addition, a good amount of literature exists showing that better nutrition is a key factor in raising productivity levels: Strauss concludes that Sierra Leonean farm laborers consuming 4,500 calories per day are 20 percent more productive than those consuming 3,000 calories per day (Strauss 1986).

Africa's GDP would be 32 times greater if malaria had been eliminated 35 years ago.

<http://mosquito.who.int.doc>

As outlined throughout this strategy document, households in West Africa suffer from poor health. While this can be attributed to a multitude of causes, primary contributing factors are environmental and social conditions conducive to communicable diseases, inadequate quality health service delivery and individual health practices.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving IR 1.2. will be carried out by monitoring country-program **impact indicators in the area of health**. Proposed indicators are the following:⁴¹

- By FY07, the percentage of CRS health projects in West Africa demonstrating improved health care practices of project participants has increased.

⁴¹ These indicators are proposed as regional indicators to measure impact on health status. The indicators were chosen from among the current indicators being used in CRS/WARO's health programs. By FY07, CRS/WARO could develop revised indicators to measure progress towards this objective.

- By FY07, the percentage of CRS health projects serving more than 10,000 beneficiaries has increased.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve IR 1.2., CRS will achieve certain outputs and will engage in a variety of activities. The most important output will be the development of **regional health and HIV/AIDS strategies**, which will closely analyze the health problem(s) in the region, assess CRS' capacities in the sector and identify programming priorities and key partnerships. The development of these strategies will build upon CRS' strengths in the health sector, while at the same time addressing unmet needs. It is expected that the strategies would address the linkages between health and water and sanitation and the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security.⁴²

Therefore, the key **output** for IR 1.2. is that regional health and HIV/AIDS strategies are developed, approved and implemented. The **key activities** to achieve this output and the corresponding IR are the following:

- Hire a regional technical advisor for health.
- Develop an action plan for the development of a regional health and HIV/AIDS strategies.
- Identify key regional priorities for health and HIV/AIDS in the region.
- Identify cross-sectoral linkages between health and other sectors, particularly HIV/AIDS.
- Develop regional health and HIV/AIDS strategies, including priority activities, country programs, donor sources and growth opportunities.
- Implement the regional health and HIV/AIDS strategies.
- Track country-program health and HIV/AIDS indicators on the regional level.

Funding and Key Partnerships

A key issue to be addressed in these strategies will be future funding for health and HIV/AIDS initiatives. There appears to be increased funding opportunities from USAID and other donors for health and HIV/AIDS activities, including food aid and non-food aid sources. For this reason, and based upon the unmet needs, CRS has **identified health and HIV/AIDS as major potential growth areas in the region for the next five years.**

In addition, in light of the important linkages between health and HIV/AIDS – as well as HIV/AIDS and food security – it will be important to highlight the linkages between the health and HIV/AIDS strategies in the development and implementation of the health strategy.

No key partnerships have been identified at this stage, but will be identified through the development of the regional health and HIV/AIDS strategies.

3.3. Strategic objective 2: Improved Incomes

Strategic Objective 2: Rural households' farm and off-farm income is increased.

⁴² As HIV/AIDS is identified as a separate strategic objective in the CRS regional strategic framework, it will not be discussed in detail in the regional food security strategy. Nevertheless, in recognition of the important linkages between food security and HIV/AIDS, the regional HIV/AIDS strategy will be developed and implemented in close coordination with the regional food security strategy.

Rationale

Sustainable food security cannot be attained without improvements in household incomes. Income – more broadly defined as the “flow of goods and services to any individual or household” -- is used for household food and non-food expenditures (Bannock, Baxter and Davis 1998).⁴³ In rural agricultural societies, income is not only derived from off-farm income-generating activities, but home-based subsistence production.⁴⁴

The importance of increasing income to achieve improved food security has figured predominantly in the literature. Empirical data shows that, on average, more income leads to improved nutrition over time. “Increased income usually enables poor families to get better access to the things that matter for [food security]: food of sufficient quantity and quality, enough time for mothers to get and use good information on child feeding and hygiene, adequate supplies of clean water, and sufficient preventive and curative health care of good quality.” (Haddad and Alderman 2001). Data also shows that “...malnutrition and poverty often go hand in hand” (Haddad and Alderman 2001). At the same time, increased income needs to be spent on the factors that determine food insecurity – like food, care and health – in order to have an impact.

The constraints to improved income and economic growth in West Africa are related to the productive and income-generating capacities of rural households. As outlined in the problem analysis section, West Africa is extremely poor; none of the countries in West Africa generate enough income to meet the 2 USD per day poverty line. In addition, poverty data estimates that approximately 91 million people in the region are categorized as rural poor (IFAD 2001).⁴⁵

Strategic Objective 2 will therefore work towards improving income in an effort to achieve sustainable food security. Measurement of progress towards achieving SO 2 will be carried out by monitoring the following proposed indicators:⁴⁶

- By FY07, the percentage of CRS country programs with income-generating projects (agriculture or microfinance) showing improvements in household income for project participants has increased.
- By FY07, the percentage of CRS country programs with income-generating projects (agriculture or microfinance) showing improvements in household expenditures for project participants has increased.

However, in recognition of the specific challenges related to measuring impact on income at the household level, the proposed indicators will be reviewed and revised accordingly. If appropriate proxy indicators are identified to measure changes on income levels (either for agriculture or microfinance), these will be developed and used.

⁴³ At the level of individuals, income is usually a return to factor of production, labor yields, capital yields, land yields and entrepreneurship yields.

⁴⁴ Defining income to include home production and cash remuneration is common in most economic and development literature, but uncommon in the food security model. As the food security framework includes availability, access and utilization, “income” is equated with “access”, and is understood to be “monetary payments from off-farm activities or from cash crop production and sales.” Food crop production, rather than food crop production. Nevertheless, for rural households, food crop production, cash crop production, off-farm income generating activities, barter and trade all can be considered as “income” and part of the “food economy”.

⁴⁵ This data includes households in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

⁴⁶ These indicators are proposed as regional indicators to measure impact on income, and were chosen from among the current indicators being used in CRS/WARO’s agriculture and microfinance programs. However, given the immense challenges in accurately measuring household income, CRS/WARO will look at these indicators more closely in order to determine whether proxy indicators can be developed.

In order to achieve this SO, CRS will focus on **improving households' gains from agriculture**, with a specific focus on agricultural marketing and natural resource management, and **improving access to financial services**. Intermediate results are the following:

- **Intermediate Result 2.1.** Improved **marketing** of staple food and market crops by rural farm households.
- **Intermediate Result 2.2.** Improved **sustainable management** of **natural resources** by rural farm households.
- **Intermediate Result 2.3.** Increased **access to financial services** for clients in ongoing and established CRS microfinance programs in West Africa.

3.3.1. Intermediate Results 2.1. and 2.2.

Intermediate Result 2.1. Improved **marketing** of staple food and market crops by rural farm households.

Intermediate Result 2.2. Improved **sustainable management** of **natural resources** by rural farm households.

Rationale for IR 2.1.

Increased incomes contribute substantially to improved food security. Agriculture is the main activity in most of the rural areas in West Africa, and the incidence of rural poverty is linked to the structure and performance of agriculture. While income is usually categorized as “cash crop” and “off-farm” activities, in a broader sense, all households activities – including food, cash crop and livestock production, off-farm activities and trade – contribute to household income.⁴⁷ A description of these relationships is available in **Annex K**.

While improved productivity is important as part of income-generation, long-term increases in productivity have not solved the problem of poverty nor have they reduced the destruction of the natural resource base of many rural communities (Lundy, Ostertag and Best 2001). This is due the fact that few households, if any, produce only for home production; most households sell a portion of their production to buy other food and non-food items. Consequently, “...increased agricultural productivity is not sufficient to improve rural [incomes] within a context of globalization, declining commodity prices...A focus on post-harvest activities, differentiated value added products and increasing links with...markets would appear to be the strategy open to smallholders” (Ramírez 2001). This is broadly defined as **agricultural marketing**.⁴⁸

Agricultural marketing, broadly defined as the series of services involved in moving a product (or commodity) from the point of production to the point of consumption, is an important poverty-reduction tool for the rural poor (FAO 1989).⁴⁹ Golleti and Wolff (1999) highlight the poverty

A recent study on the impact of non-traditional crops on the livelihoods of rural producers in Mexico reports that improved market links and product diversification increased incomes by 58% while value adding activities accounted for a 350% increase in farmer income (Ramírez 2001).

⁴⁷ In the case of food crop production, income is derived from the substitution of consumption from on-farm production does not need to be purchased in the local market.

⁴⁸ Agricultural marketing is defined as “the series of services involved in moving a product from the point of production to the point of consumption (also referred to as the **marketing chain**) where the producer and the consumer are bridged.

⁴⁹ This definition emphasizes that agricultural marketing is achieved by a series of techniques, the grading and sorting of crops and the packing, transport, storage and distribution of products.

reduction potential of marketing activities, which strive to add value to rural households' farm activities. Marketing activities can result in gains in rural income and employment and reductions in food prices for urban dwellers and improvements in processing and market chains. The net result, therefore, may be positive for both the rural and urban poor (Lundy, Ostertag and Best 2001).

As outlined throughout this strategy document, marketing for food and cash crops in West Africa is characterized by high marketing margins. These margins (particularly so for perishable food crops) are caused by high transport costs, lack of economies of scale, lack of marketing information, high risk, legal and illegal taxes, too many intermediaries and serious physical losses (IFAD 2001). High marketing margins translate into low prices for food and cash crops for farmers. Low prices not only affect farm incomes, but also negatively affect the incentives for investments in production, ultimately affecting productivity.

In general, donors and governments alike tend to neglect agricultural marketing for food and cash crops. Many projects equate marketing with providing credit lines, building roads and supplying group-managed processing equipment (IFAD 2001). While roads are essential, providing credit and processing equipment usually does not address the real problem (IFAD 2001). Simpler and cheaper solutions may be more appropriate.

For these reasons, any approach to improving household incomes in West Africa must address the marketing situation in West Africa, as marketing and production are inextricably linked. While agricultural marketing can involve production-related activities (such as improved varieties of seeds, reducing production costs, and increasing yields), focusing solely on improved production is insufficient for improving productivity and household incomes. Agriculture projects must therefore address the dual aspects of production and marketing.

Rationale for IR 2.2.

An agriculture strategy that seeks to improve rural household-level incomes in West Africa cannot come at the expense of the fragile natural resource environment in the region. In the next twenty years, per capita arable land is projected to decline to less than half the current levels, and land degradation as a result of extensive agriculture, deforestation and overgrazing is already alarming. Soil degradation is closely linked to, and exacerbated by, periodic natural disasters in the region.

For this reason, it is crucial that agriculture-based income-generating activities address the issue of natural resource management. This is not only important for improved incomes and sustainable agriculture, but also for the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, outlined in Strategic Objective 3.

Identifying and implementing appropriate natural resource management activities is a complex process. Many natural resource specialists claim that there is no lack of "on the shelf" technologies availability to enhance environmental sustainability (IFAD 2001). Rather, adapting these technologies to local circumstances is where NRM interventions have most commonly failed (IFAD, 2001).

Technologies that are widely adopted by farmers generally respond to several key criteria. First, technologies that build on existing practices, improving them in some way, stand a greater chance of success. Second, technologies with *visible and immediate benefits* are most apt to be replicated by farmers. This is especially important where there is little room for error, either due to the fragility of the environment or to resource-poor farmers' aversion to risks.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving IR 2.1 and 2.2. will be carried out by monitoring country-program **impact indicators in the area of agriculture**. Proposed indicators are the following:⁵⁰

- By FY07, percentage of country programs with agriculture projects reporting an *increase in the value-added of crops* has increased over baseline.
- By FY07, the percentage of country programs with agriculture projects reporting an increase in improved production and NRM techniques being used by targeted has increased over baseline.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve the IRs 2.1 and 2.2, CRS will achieve certain outputs and will engage in a variety of activities. The most important output will be the development of a **regional agriculture strategy**, which will closely look at agricultural and natural resource needs in the region, assess CRS' capacities and determine areas for priorities and partnerships. The development of the strategy will build upon CRS' strengths in the agriculture sector, while at the same time focusing on the **unmet need of poor agricultural marketing** in the region, which is an important constraint but is currently not one of CRS' core capacities. Unlike the other sectoral strategies, CRS has already determined that two priorities for the agriculture strategy will be agricultural marketing in food and cash crop production and improved NRM, as outlined in the IRs.

Therefore, key **outputs** for IRs 2.1 and 2.2 is that a regional agriculture strategy is developed, approved and implemented, and that CRS/WARO and partner staff knowledge in the area of agricultural marketing is improved. The **key activities** to achieve these outputs and corresponding IRs are the following:

- Hire a regional technical advisor for agriculture.
- Develop an action plan for the development of a regional agriculture strategy, with a particular focus on links between production and marketing and sustainable agriculture.
- Conduct an agricultural marketing training in order to build capacity in CRS' understanding of marketing and the market-oriented approach.
- Identify key regional priorities for agricultural marketing and NRM in the region.
- Identify cross-sectoral linkages between agriculture and other sectors.
- Develop a regional agriculture strategy, including priority activities, country programs and growth opportunities.
- Implement the regional agriculture strategy.
- Track agriculture impact indicators on the country-program and regional level.

Funding and Key Partnerships

A key issue to be addressed in the development of the agriculture strategy will be future funding for agriculture initiatives and the agency's current capacity in agricultural marketing. Despite reduced funding in agriculture during the 1990s, there appears to be renewed interest in agriculture from USAID, USAID/FFP and the EU. Based upon unmet needs and potential funding opportunities, **CRS has identified agriculture, and specifically agricultural marketing and NRM, as major potential growth areas in the region for the next five years.**

No key regional partnerships in the area of agriculture have been identified at this stage of the process, but will be identified during the development of the regional agriculture strategy.

⁵⁰ These indicators are proposed as regional indicators to measure impact on agricultural production and marketing. CRS/WARO will continue to assess the appropriateness of these indicators and revise them accordingly in the early stages of the food security strategy.

3.3.2. Intermediate Result 2.3.

Intermediate Result 2.3. Increased permanent **access to financial services** for clients in CRS microfinance programs.

Rationale for IR 2.3.

One of the major constraints to improving incomes of the rural poor is the lack of access to financial capital for financing income-generating opportunities, paying school fees, and fulfilling important social obligations (IFAD 2001). In general, commercial banks in West Africa are unable to adapt their financial products to the needs of poor and remote clients (IFAD 2001).

Rural households engage in a wide variety of off-farm activities in West Africa. These range from arts and crafts to production trades to services. The most important of these activities are those directly linked to agricultural outputs (food processing and marketing) and inputs (blacksmith construction and repair of agricultural implements).

The rural poor face special obstacles in exploiting non-farm employment opportunities. A combination of limited human and social capital, insufficient access to markets, and lack of credit for working and investment capital leads to high barriers to entry and remunerative farm and off-farm employment opportunities. Because of these constraints, rural income-generating activities yield low and unstable returns.

“For a number of reasons, including an unfortunate historical legacy that leads many potential borrowers to equate credit with free money, West Africa may be one of the most challenging regions in the world for developing viable microfinance institutions.” (IFAD 2001). The reasons for this are multiple. First, per capita income levels and growth rates in West Africa have historically been about half those in other parts of the developing world (IFAD 2001). Second, overall population densities in West Africa are lower, which drives up the unit cost of delivering credit and savings services to clients. Finally, literacy rates in West Africa are the lowest in the world, which is a “constraint to developing a strong client base.” (IFAD 2001).

While there are challenges, there are also opportunities. The rural poor have proved to be strong savers and acceptable credit risks. In addition, if population densities increase, demand for financial services will increase. Finally, the macroeconomic environment has become much more hospitable to financial sector development throughout West Africa (IFAD, 2001).

In light of these challenges, CRS’ future microfinance activities must build upon and invest in existing programs in the region. CRS will therefore focus on growth in *current* microfinance programs, rather than immediate growth in new countries. In addition, given the importance of financial services for farm and off-farm activities – and the important linkages between microfinance and agriculture and education – future microfinance initiatives will need to address the question of linkages and integration with other sectors.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving IR 2.3. will be carried out by monitoring country-program **impact indicators in the area of microfinance**. The proposed indicator is the following⁵¹:

⁵¹ This indicator is proposed as a regional indicator to measure impact on households’ access to microfinance services, and was chosen from among current microfinance indicators.

- By FY07, the percentage of CRS microfinance projects reporting an increase in clients has increased.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve the IRs 2.3, CRS will achieve certain outputs and will engage in a variety of activities. The most important output will be the development of a **regional microfinance strategy**, which will analyze the market for financial services in the region, assess CRS' capacities and determine areas for future priorities. The development of the strategy will build upon CRS' strengths in the microfinance sector, focusing primarily on best practices and lessons learned in current programs before expanding into new country programs. At the same time, the microfinance strategy will address some of the important questions raised about CRS' microfinance methodology, the creation of formal financial institutions, and linkages with other sectors, including agriculture, education and health.

Therefore, the key **output** for IRs 2.3 is that a regional microfinance strategy is developed, approved and implemented, addressing the important issues and questions raised. **Key activities** to achieve this output and the corresponding IR are the following:

- Hire a shared regional technical advisor with CRS/East Africa (EARO) for microfinance.
- Develop an action plan for the development of a regional microfinance strategy, with a particular focus on best practices and lessons learned, an evaluation of CRS' current methodology, and an identification of possible areas for integration.
- Identify key regional priorities for microfinance in the region.
- Identify cross-sectoral linkages between microfinance and other sectors, with a particular focus on agriculture.
- Develop a regional microfinance strategy, including priority activities and country programs.
- Implement the regional microfinance strategy.
- Track microfinance impact indicators on the country-program and regional level.

Funding and Key Partnerships

Key issues to be addressed in the development of the microfinance strategy will be future funding, integration with other sectors, and client needs. Based upon current funding opportunities, CRS has identified microfinance as a potential future growth area, but not a major new growth area in the short-term, and not a growth area for country programs that are not currently implementing microfinance projects.

No key partnerships have been identified at this stage.

3.4. Strategic Objective 3: Improved Emergency Preparedness and Response

Strategic Objective 3: CRS' country programs and its partners' emergency preparedness and response is improved.

Rationale

For many West Africans, natural and man-made disasters are part of everyday life. In the Mano River region, including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, war is the dominant factor in the social, economic,

and political context. In other countries, including the Casamance region of Senegal, the northern regions of Chad, Ghana, Niger, and Mali, and many other locales in the region, conflict continues to plague the lives of countless individuals.

In addition to conflict, natural disasters – in the form of droughts and floods -- are a perennial feature in the lives of West Africans. While West Africa has been free of long-term drought since the early 1970s (von Braun, Teklu et al. 1998), in much of the arid Sahel, drought is recurrent. Furthermore, an overview of rainfall patterns in the region reveals a declining trend. Heavy rains also result in intense flooding of areas that were afflicted by drought the previous year.

In the context of periodic man-made and natural disasters, strategic and sustainable food security becomes difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Droughts, floods and armed conflicts have direct and indirect impacts upon food security. Armed conflict directly impacts food security when hunger is used as a weapon, and adversaries attempt to “starve opponents into submission” by seizing or destroying food stocks, livestock and other assets, cutting off market supplies, and diverting food relief from intended beneficiaries (Messer, Cohen and D’Costa 1998). Farming populations are also reduced by direct attacks, terror, or forced recruitment and by malnutrition, illness and death. As populations are displaced or stop producing, production and incomes fall, leading to increased food insecurity of the affected populations. These effects not only occur during the active conflict, but can continue long after active fighting has ceased.

Similar to armed conflicts, natural disasters can also have immediate and long-term impacts upon household food security. Droughts and floods have direct negative impacts upon household food production and incomes, reducing food security of households. At the same time, households coping mechanisms during the disasters – including the sale of productive assets, migration and income-generating activities such as charcoal production – have longer-term impacts upon soil fertility and household labor allocations. These coping mechanisms can reduce a household’s already-fragile asset base, thereby affecting future food security.

As a result, any food security strategy in West Africa will need to account for the impact of man-made and natural disasters upon food security. This will not only involve preparing for emergencies and improving the agency’s emergency response, but also developing programs that will mitigate the impact of disasters.

Strategic Objective 3 will therefore address the importance of emergency preparedness, response and mitigation in improving food security in West Africa. In order to achieve this SO, CRS will focus primarily on improving the emergency preparedness and response capacities of CRS and its partners, on reducing the prevalence and impact of disasters through improved natural resource management, and improving coordination among emergency agencies.⁵²

Measurement of progress towards achieving this SO. will be carried out by monitoring the following indicator:⁵³

- By FY07, the percentage of end-users commenting on increased effectiveness of CRS’ and partners’ emergency response has increased over baseline.

In order to achieve this SO, CRS will focus on **improving the agency’s and partners’ emergency preparedness, response and mitigation** in the West Africa region. Intermediate results are the following:

⁵² Emergency preparedness and response is defined as the series of sectoral and thematic interventions that are implemented before, during and after a disaster.

⁵³ This indicator is proposed as a regional indicator to measure the effectiveness of CRS’ emergency preparedness and response. This is a new indicator for CRS. By FY07, CRS/WARO could revise the indicator or develop additional indicators to measure progress towards this objective.

- **Intermediate Result 3.1.** CRS staff and partners are **using emergency preparedness and response tools.**
- **Intermediate Result 3.2.** **Inter-agency coordination** on slow-and quick-onset emergencies **is improved.**
- **Intermediate Result 3.3.** Improved **sustainable management of natural resources** by rural farm households.

3.4.1. Intermediate Result 3.1.

Intermediate Result 3.1. CRS and staff and partners are using emergency preparedness and response tools.

Rationale for IR 3.1.

A key component of emergency preparedness and response is knowing if and when a disaster will occur, and in working with other agencies to respond. Advance warning allows CRS and partners to develop plans in preparation for the emergency, either to mitigate its impact or to respond quickly and effectively. Preparedness involves the use of a variety of tools to analyze the disasters affecting the region to develop appropriate responses. These tools allow CRS and partners to develop activities that can prevent the emergency, mitigate its impact or enable it to respond quickly. A key component of using such tools is improving capacity.

For these reasons, any approach to addressing emergencies in West Africa must address the importance of developing and using specific emergency preparedness, response and mitigation tools in order to increase the effectiveness of CRS' emergency activities.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving IR 3.1. will be carried out by monitoring country-program **impact indicators in the area of emergencies.** Proposed indicators are the following:⁵⁴

- By FY07, the percentage of country programs with contingency plans (emergency preparedness and response plans) for quick- and slow-onset emergencies has increased.
- By FY07, the percentage of Emergency Corps members having field experience in emergencies has increased.
- By FY07, the percentage of Emergency Corps members involved in contingency planning activities has increased.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve IR 3.1., CRS will engage in a variety of activities. The most important outputs will be the development of a **regional emergency preparedness and response strategy**, which will look closely at the types of disasters affecting the region, assess CRS' capacities and determine areas for priorities and partnerships. The development of the strategy will build upon CRS' strengths in the emergency sector.

Therefore, the key **outputs** for IRs 3.1. are the following: a regional emergency strategy is developed, approved and implemented, country-specific contingency plans are completed, and CRS staff and

⁵⁴ These indicators are proposed as regional indicators to measure impact of CRS' emergency response IRs. By FY07, CRS/WARO could develop more appropriate indicators to measure progress towards this objective.

partner capacity in emergency response is improved. **Key activities** to achieve these outputs and the corresponding IR are the following:

- Hire a regional technical advisor emergency preparedness and response.
- Develop an action plan for the development of a regional emergency preparedness and response strategy.
- Provide support for the development of country-specific emergency preparedness and response plans.
- Identify key regional priorities for emergency preparedness and response.
- Identify cross-sectoral linkages between emergency response and other sectors.
- Develop a regional emergency preparedness and response strategy, including priority activities.
- Implement the regional emergency preparedness and response strategy.

Funding and Key Partnerships

A key issue to be addressed in the development of the emergency strategy will be future funding for these initiatives, as well as prioritizing certain sectors in CRS' emergency activities. CRS has already established strong donor relations with USAID/FFP, OFDA and BPRM.

No key partnerships have been identified at this stage.

3.4.2. Intermediate Result 3.2.

Intermediate Result 3.2. Inter-agency coordination on slow-and quick-onset emergencies is improved.

Rationale

As described in Section 3.4.1., a key component of effective emergency preparedness and response is knowing if and when a disaster will occur, and in working with other agencies to respond to those disasters. Advance warning allows CRS and partners to develop activities in preparation for the emergency, mitigate its impact or respond quickly and effectively. In addition, coordination once the disaster has occurred allows CRS to focus upon its key strengths in order to better serve food insecure populations.

Early warning systems for natural disasters, particularly droughts, have been in place in West Africa since the early 1980s, in response to the widespread droughts in the Sahel. Agencies such as CILSS and FEWS work with NGOs and local governments to collect data on climatic conditions, rainfall and food production, in an effort to alert governments and the international community to a natural disaster.

Early warning systems for man-made disasters, however, are a more recent phenomena in the region. One of CRS' key partners – the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) -- has been working to develop an early warning system for conflicts by developing networks in countries throughout the region. While this is a fairly new effort, it is an important one. CRS is currently supporting this effort through its regional strategic framework.⁵⁵

Any approach to addressing emergencies in West Africa must address the importance of coordination, both for early warning systems and for emergency preparedness and response.

⁵⁵ For more details on WANEP's activities and CRS' broader peacebuilding initiatives in West Africa, refer to CRS' regional strategic framework and WANEP's regional strategic plan for peacebuilding.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving the IR 3.1. will be carried out by monitoring appropriate indicators. These indicators will be developed during the development of the regional emergency preparedness and response strategy.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve IR 3.1., CRS will engage in a variety of outputs and activities. The most important of these will be the development of a regional emergency strategy, which is described in more detail in IR 3.1. An additional output is the identification and use of **improved inter-agency mechanisms for emergency preparedness and response**. **Key activities** to achieve this output are the following:

- Attend annual CILSS meetings.
- Participate in working groups on the CILSS and FEWS early warning methodology.
- Liaise with WANEP, International Crisis Group and other organizations on the development of an early warning system for conflict.

Funding and Key Partnerships

Key partnerships to be developed and maintained in this area are CILSS, FEWS and WANEP. Additional partnerships may be identified through the development of the regional emergency preparedness and response strategy.

3.4.3. Intermediate Result 3.3.

Intermediate Result 3.3. Improved sustainable management of natural resources by rural farm households.

As described throughout the document, natural disasters are a perennial feature in West Africa. While West Africa has been free of long-term drought since the early 1970s, drought is recurrent. Furthermore, an overview of rainfall patterns in the region reveals a declining trend.

In light of the close relationship between soil degradation and natural disasters in the region, natural resource management is an effective tool to reduce households' risk to emergencies. Agricultural activities will be used in an effort to prevent natural disasters and in mitigating the impacts of natural disasters once they have occurred. In addition, agricultural and microfinance activities can reduce households' risk to emergencies by increasing household incomes. For more information on the activities, refer to IR 2.2 for more details.

Funding and Key Partnerships

Funding and key partnership issues for this IR are the same as those for IR 3.2.

3.5. Strategic Objective 4: Improved Program Quality

Strategic Objective 4: CRS/WARO country programs and their partners are implementing high-quality programs and projects that transform lives, relationships and structures.

Rationale

Achieving sustainable food security in West Africa not only depends upon the sectoral and thematic activities implemented, but also upon the quality of CRS' programs and projects. Program quality is broadly defined as "programs and projects that [positively] transform lives, relationships and structures... [such] programs link local and global issues and actions, strengthen local systems and capacities and seek strategic solutions to achieve measurable impact. They are also rooted in continuous learning and innovation and based on technically sound activities and processes."

The importance of program quality for achieving improved food security cannot be underestimated. High-quality programs will not only contribute to improved human capital, increased incomes and improved emergency preparedness and response, but will enable CRS to do so in a sustainable manner.

The constraints to program quality in West Africa are varied and complex. However, some of the key challenges to program quality are related to limited project design and implementation capacity, poor M&E systems, overwhelming needs in the context of limited resources, weak partners and poor partner relations. While CRS/WARO and country programs have worked on program quality issues since 2000, CRS staff have identified program quality as a cross-cutting regional priority.

Strategic Objective 4 will therefore address the importance of high-quality programs in having a sustained positive impact upon food security in the West Africa region. Measurement of progress towards achieving the SO will be carried out by monitoring the following proposed indicator:⁵⁶

- By FY07, the percentage of end-users commenting on increased effectiveness of CRS' and partners' programs and projects.⁵⁷

In order to achieve SO4, CRS will focus on **improving the use of sound design and monitoring and evaluation practices, prioritizing interventions through the development of strategies, pursuing growth through program quality, engaging in strong partnerships, and supporting an enabling environment for program quality**. CRS will develop a specific regional program quality strategy and action plan, which will be included in a separate document. Nevertheless, specific intermediate results to achieve the SO are the following:

- **Intermediate Result 4.1.** CRS/WARO programs and projects reflect sound design, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (DME&R).
- **Intermediate Result 4.2.** CRS/WARO programs focus on clearly-defined priorities and balance growth and program quality
- **Intermediate Result 4.3.** CRS engages in strong partnerships that support high-quality programming.
- **Intermediate Result 4.4.** CRS/WARO programs operate in a supportive enabling environment for program quality

3.5.1. Intermediate Result 4.1.

Intermediate Result 4.1. CRS/WARO programs and projects reflect sound design, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (DME&R).

Rationale

⁵⁶ This indicator is proposed as a regional indicators to measure improved program quality. By FY07, CRS/WARO could develop an additional indicator to measure progress towards this objective.

⁵⁷ "End users" will be identified and defined in the first year of the strategy.

Effective design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation contributes substantially to the positive and sustained impact of CRS' sectoral and thematic projects. CRS strategies, programs and projects must be based upon relevant information, and designed to address the core problem and immediate and underlying causes in a participatory manner. The effective design of a project and program sets the foundation for successful implementation.

CRS program and partner staff in the region have recognized that CRS' project design and implementation could be strengthened. In general, the project design process is not clear, and staff and partners have limited capacity in this area. In addition, CRS has developed limited tools for project implementation.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving the IR 4.1. will be carried out by monitoring the following proposed indicators:

- By FY07, formal evaluations of publicly funded CRS projects conducted show measurable improvement in project DME&R over previous evaluations.
- By FY07, the percentage of internal and external end-users commenting on increased capacity and effectiveness of CRS and partners in DME&R has increased.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve Intermediate Result 4.1., CRS will engage in a variety of outputs and activities. The most important outputs are **improved capacity of CRS and partner staff in the design, monitoring and evaluation of strategies and projects, implementation of effective project design review processes, increased integration of projects, and improved staff capacity in food security and sectoral issues**. CRS will strive to promote the integration of its sectoral and thematic projects for enhanced impact upon food security, and improve the capacity of CRS and partner staff in designing food security programs.

The **key activities** to achieve these outputs and corresponding IR are the following:

- Conduct project design trainings for CRS and partner staff
- Conduct food security trainings for CRS and partner staff
- Finalize the food security manual
- Revise the regional project design review process, and provide support to the development of country-specific review processes

3.5.2. Intermediate Result 4.2.

Intermediate Result 4.2. CRS/WARO programs focus on clearly-defined priorities and balance growth and program quality

Rationale

Balancing growth and program quality is an important aspect of effective and efficient projects. With a multitude of needs and limited financial and human resources, country programs are confronted with tough decisions. In order to have a positive impact upon households' lives, CRS' programs and projects must not only address household needs, but also reach out to the greatest number possible. Nevertheless, this balance is a difficult one for most programs.

CRS program staff in the region have recognized the importance of balancing growth and program quality – and pursuing growth through program quality – in their work. At the same time, country programs have recognized the importance of choosing activities and interventions among a myriad of priorities.

In order to support CRS country programs in prioritizing certain sectoral and thematic activities, CRS/WARO will support the development of regional sectoral strategies and country-specific program strategies. Such strategies will not only be used to develop appropriate interventions, but also to prioritize certain areas, build CRS' expertise in key areas, and assist country programs in making decisions about future areas for growth. As part of the sectoral strategies, CRS/WARO will clearly identify appropriate growth initiatives. At the same time, CRS/WARO will develop a regional growth strategy in an effort to build country programs' capacity in pursuing new growth initiatives.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving the IR 4.2. will be carried out by monitoring the following proposed indicator:

- By FY07, regional sectoral strategies and country program strategic plans are developed..

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve IR 4.2., CRS will engage in a variety of outputs and activities. The most important outputs are **development and use of regional sectoral strategies and country program strategic plans**, the **development of a regional growth strategy**, and **improved capacity of country program and partner staff in strategic planning and accessing new resources**.

Key activities to achieve these outputs and corresponding IR are the following:

- Develop regional sectoral strategies
- Provide support for the development of country program strategic plans
- Revise the CRS/WARO strategic planning toolkit
- Identify regional resource people for strategic plan
- Draft a regional growth strategy

3.5.3. Intermediate Result 4.3.

Intermediate Result 4.3. CRS engages in strong partnerships that support high-quality programming.

Rationale

As an agency that works primarily with and through partners, partnership is a crucial aspect of program quality. CRS' partners directly implement CRS' programs, and therefore their capacity is crucial. In addition, CRS' relations with its partners can negatively or positively affect the way in which partners design and implement projects. In order to have a positive impact upon households' lives, CRS' programs in the region must engage in and support strong partnerships that are committed to high-quality programming.

CRS program staff in the region have recognized the importance of partnership in program quality. Partners' capacities vary considerably within the region. While some country programs have a few strong partners, others have limited partners to choose from. Nevertheless, most country programs have recognized that partnership capacity is an issue for program quality.

Partner capacity is only one aspect of partnership. In addition to partnership capacities, CRS must foster good relations with its partners in order to program effectively. Again, country programs' experiences differ throughout the region, but most country programs have expressed an interest in improving or strengthening partner relations.

In recognition of the importance of partnership in improved program quality and hence improved food security, CRS/WARO will support capacity-building for partners in all of its work. At the same time, CRS/WARO will focus specifically on building CRS' and partners' capacities in the area of partner relations.

Proposed Indicators

Measurement of progress towards achieving the IR 4.3 will be carried out by monitoring appropriate indicators. These indicators will be developed during the development of partnership activities.

Outputs and Activities

In order to achieve IR 4.3., CRS will engage in a variety of outputs and activities. The most important outputs are **improved capacity of CRS and partner staff in using partnership tools and in effective partnership relations.**

Key activities to achieve this output and corresponding IR are the following:

- Conduct a survey of current partner tools, and develop new tools or trainings as necessary.
- Develop appropriate partnership trainings, as appropriate.
- Encourage ongoing partnership reflections.
- Identify a regional point person for partnership issues.

3.5.4. Intermediate Result 4.4.

Intermediate Result 4.4. CRS/WARO programs operate in a supportive enabling environment for program quality.

Rationale

Program quality can only be achieved through the hiring of qualified staff to design and implement projects. In order for staff to design and implement effective programs, there must be efficient, effective and appropriate systems in place at the regional to support them in the work. Throughout SO4, the strategy has referred to the implementation of appropriate "regional systems" and capacity-building for CRS and partner staff. These are part of the broader "enabling environment" for program quality, although rather limited in focus.

Other aspects of the enabling environment for program quality include appropriate supervision of staff, improved inter- and intra-office communications, and access to sufficient financial and physical resources. While these are an important part of program quality, they will not be dealt with specifically in the context of the regional food security strategy. Rather, these issues will be addressed through CRS' regional strategic framework.

3.6. A Note on Food Aid and Food Security

Although not addressed specifically in the document, CRS will use food aid in the implementation of its food security strategy when it is an appropriate response to the food security problem. In the past, CRS has programmed food aid for monetization and distribution purposes.

CRS' experience has demonstrated that food aid for distribution is most appropriate for achieving three main objectives: 1) improving the nutritional status of targeted groups; 2) providing an income transfer; and 3) providing an incentive for participation in a particular activity. In its programs in West Africa, CRS has used food aid in five categories of distribution programs, including emergency feeding activities (general, supplementary and therapeutic feeding); safety net programs, Food-for-Work programs (in the sectors of agriculture, health, education, natural resource management), Maternal Child Health programs, and Food-Assisted Education programs. The appropriate use of food aid in these programs will be specifically addressed in the sectoral and thematic strategies.

In the future, CRS/WARO will also consider ways in which monetization – the sale of food for cash resources -- can contribute to its food security objectives, particularly in the agricultural marketing sector.

IV. Donors

In order to achieve its goal of improved food security, CRS/West Africa will continue to rely upon its principal donor, USAID/FFP's Title II program, in support of its food security objectives. CRS/WARO believes that the donor offers a unique opportunity for large-scale, inter-sectoral, multi-year funding, which allows for a holistic approach to the food security program. In addition, USAID/FFP's provision of food aid for distribution and monetization allows CRS to meet food security needs in the short-term, while at the same time implementing projects that address the factors under which food security develops and persists. In the future, CRS/WARO will also consider ways in which monetization can contribute to its food security objectives.

CRS/WARO will use its USAID/FFP Title II resources for emergency and development programs to leverage other donors and funding. This has been done successfully in the past, as CRS has obtained resources from the World Bank and USAID in support of its Title II activities.

In the context of its sectoral strategies, CRS/WARO will also identify sectoral-specific donors, as appropriate.

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