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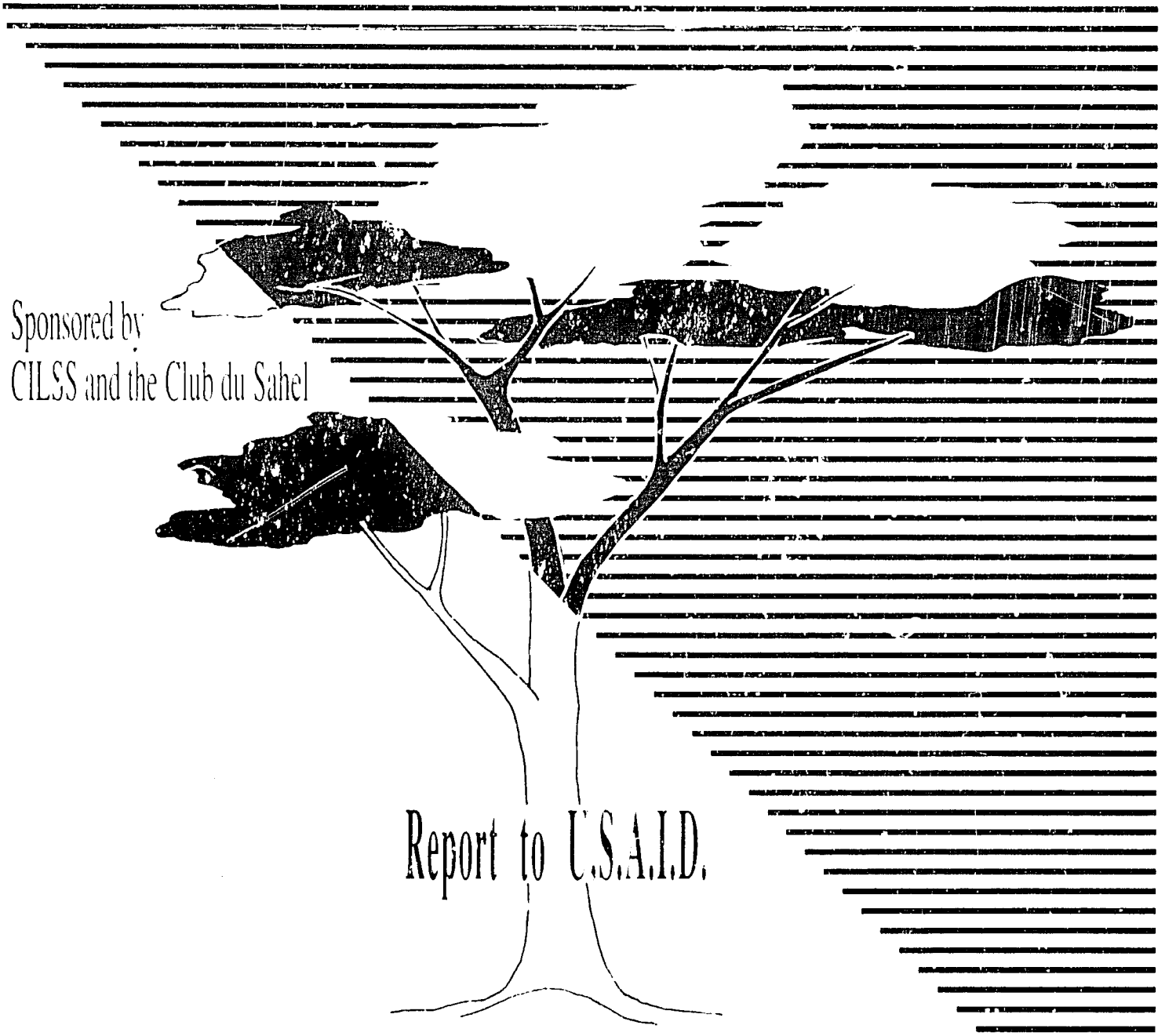
The Segou Roundtable

on local level natural resources management in the sahel

segou, mali may 22-27, 1989



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Report to U.S.A.I.D.

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THE SEGOU ROUNDTABLE

On Local Level Natural Resources Management in the Sahel

Segou, Mali May 22-27, 1989

Sponsored by CILSS and the Club du Sahel

Report to USAID

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INTRODUCTION: A "Trilogue"

In May, 1989, the Club du Sahel and CILSS sponsored a one week regional "encounter" on natural resources management in the Sahel. Neither a conference nor a workshop in the traditional sense, the regional encounter was a unique opportunity to bring together the major actors in Sahelian natural resources management and to hammer out the terms of a contract between rural populations, national governments and international donors. The very opportunity the meeting provided underscored the inherent risk: that it would merely reveal fundamental differences of approach and commitment between the three parties, rather than lay the foundation for concerted action.

The Segou Roundtable was remarkable in the degree of basic agreement it showed. Unlike a generation of previous efforts which focussed on technological solutions, Segou recognized that it is also vitally important to restructure the relationship between governments and rural populations. For the first time in such a conference, rural populations were given a place at the table and treated as equal partners, not just as beneficiaries of public initiative. "Local participation", long the cornerstone for natural resources management, was given concrete and structurally relevant definition in terms of local resource management rights, decentralization, land tenure, rural credit and financial incentive. That is, Segou was as dramatic for the issues put on the table as for the specific solutions proposed.

The Eight Points of the Segou Declaration

- Invest in the land
- Promote the involvement of local communities
- Increase efficiency through decentralization
- Increase the security of land tenure
- Increase local investment through local credit and mobilization of local savings
- Enhance the participation of women
- Promote the sharing of successful experiences
- Master the population/resources equilibrium

TAKING STOCK

Fifteen Years of Trial and Error

Per capita agricultural production in the Sahel has declined every year since 1968. With demographic growth rates which are among the highest in the world[1], forest resources are being rapidly depleted through land clearing for agriculture and the growing demand for fuelwood. Population pressure has intensified the degradation of the resource base by bringing more marginal (and fragile) land into production, shortening fallow periods and reducing vegetative cover.

Cyclical climatic shocks have made a bad situation worse. Average rainfall over the past sixteen years has been 100 mm below the thirty year norms. Severe droughts in 1972/73 and 1983/84 have accelerated soil erosion and vegetation loss. The major rivers have shrunk, water tables have fallen drastically in many areas and many species of plant and animal have been either lost or threatened.

The relationship between human activity and the resource base has been fundamentally altered in a single generation, particularly in the drier zones[2]. Forest resources are no longer sufficient to provide a fallback mechanism for food, fodder, income generating forest products or a source of still fertile land. An increasing percentage of the population farms marginal land which has become rapidly eroded and crusted over. As herding populations have moved farther south, resource conflicts have increased, stretching the bounds of traditional resource allocation mechanisms, often beyond the breaking point. In sum, traditional land use practices have broken down, without giving rise to viable alternatives.

Faced with the growing severity of the drought and its aftermath, the Sahelian states and the international community created CILSS and the Club des Amis du Sahel[3] in 1974/75, amidst calls for a "Marshall Plan" for the Sahel. For the last fifteen years, international efforts have been premised on the understanding that environment and socio-economic development in the region are linked.

The intervening period has been divided into two distinct phases: the first, prior to about 1980, clung to relatively ambitious, large scale designs to "reforest" the Sahel and "stop the advance of the desert". In terms often devoid of social context and particular to the combat mentality in which the effort was viewed, plans were laid for "containment zones", "greenbelts", protection and forest reserves. The seeds of a new paradigm, of course, preceded the failure of the first. By 1980, containment had gradually given way to "social forestry", which itself went through overlapping sub-phases which included village woodlots, cookstoves, natural forest management and agroforestry.

Fifteen years of trial has led, mostly, to error. Viewed as a global quantitative projection made in 1975, what has transpired since would correspond to the "no action scenario": there has been no perceptible reversal of resource degradation trends on a global scale. But closer examination reveals that perceptions of success or failure have often been dominated by unrealistic expectations. In particular, the socioeconomic changes which underlie changes in technology have been taking place throughout the Sahel, yielding still isolated, but more sustainable resource management strategies. These strategies have emanated as much from local initiative as from public projects.

The Road to Segou

The Segou Roundtable was a turning point in the crystallization of a "third generation" of resource management strategies in the region. It marks a shift in emphasis from technology issues to people issues; from forestry *per se* to sustainable management of rural production systems[4]; from isolated projects to generalized incentive systems; from specific "solutions" promoted by the public sector to a menu of options which capitalize on locally-available opportunities. In short, the starting point for Segou was the premise that the locus of power and initiative must shift in order for resource management to be sustainable beyond the limited confines of externally funded *projects.*[5]

The process which culminated in Segou was, in some respects, underway for many years. Deepening crisis in the Sahel has heightened awareness of environmental issues and made rural populations more open to innovation. National governments, squeezed by budgetary deficits and structural adjustment, welcome increased local initiative. Both increased domestic pressure and a reappraisal of strategies for sustainable development have made natural resources much more important in the portfolios of *every major bilateral and multilateral donor.*

Three major reviews of "successful" or promising natural resource management initiatives in the Sahel, carried out between 1987 and 1989,[6] have all underscored a key point for future strategies: *"There is a sufficient range of technically proven and economically attractive natural resources interventions to halt the decline of rural production systems in the Sahel. Better technological packages can and should be developed, but technology is not now the limiting factor. The greater development challenge is to bring about widespread adoption of appropriate technologies."*[7] These, and more specific studies, have found that successful efforts have tapped local initiative, and that social, economic, political, legal and policy factors, as well as the correct technology options, were vital parts of the framework for success. There is a growing realization that the sum of technology-driven projects carried out without restructuring this framework will not add up to sustainable development.

"From Nouakchott to Segou"

from the Segou Declaration

For twenty years, the Sahel has suffered from persistent drought and ecological degradation, which, combined with the economic crisis and population growth, have put considerable strain on the Sahelians and have hampered the development efforts of the countries in the region.

At the initiative of the CILSS and Club du Sahel, Sahelian leaders met in Nouakchott in 1984 to discuss the situation. Proposals were made for desertification control strategy. Such a strategy was subsequently adopted by all the Sahelian countries, and received the support of those countries' partners in the international community.

Since Nouakchott, Sahelian governments have drawn up national plans for desertification control and socio-economic development. They have also embarked on large-scale programs to put those plans into action.

(1) Nevertheless, these programs and projects have encountered problems in transforming the key points in the Nouakchott strategy into concrete action (e.g., participation of producer groups, local- and regional-level resource management)

(2) At the same time, it has become clear that a growing number of local development initiatives by rural organizations of all types have been successful in all agro-ecological situations. However, these initiatives have not been integrated into a process of planning and implementing sustained development...

Recognizing this situation, the CILSS and Club du Sahel decided to organize the Segou roundtable meeting to bring together the three parties involved in the development process: the local groups themselves, represented by

rural organizations, governments, and governments' partners in the international community (public-sector donors and international NGOs).

The Segou meeting was the first of its kind, and its primary objective was to examine ways of ensuring that local groups can assume some form of operational responsibility in local-level and global natural resources management so that the Sahel can move along the path of sustained development.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SEGOU ROUNDTABLE

Participants

One hundred and fifty participants from every CILSS member state, from 8 bilateral donors, 11 international organizations and from the CILSS and Club du Sahel Secretariats met in Segou from May 22-27, 1989. Included for the first time in this "trilogue" were 36 representatives from Sahelian rural organizations, and two international NGO representatives (one from the United States and one from Canada, whose participation was negotiated by their respective governments). Government representatives were drawn from a broad group of ministries, including, most notably, agriculture, livestock and rural development. There were only 9 women representatives from the Sahel.

The majority of representatives of rural organizations were not poor farmers. Often they were local organizers, association leaders and/or organization founders. If not typical of traditional village leadership, they were representative of the new class of rural leadership which is likely to grow as decentralized local management becomes a reality. Understanding the "sociology" of this emerging group of rural intermediaries will be an important part of understanding future relationships between rural populations, central authorities and international partners (both governmental and non-governmental).

Preparations for the Meeting

The Segou Roundtable was preceded by 18 months of intensive preparation. Organizing teams from CILSS and the Club visited every Sahelian country to discuss and refine the meeting agenda. The main themes were vetted before political authorities to confirm that they endorsed the approach and objectives of the roundtable. In successive visits, rural organizations were identified, interviewed and selected for participation. Particular attention was paid to briefing rural representatives and ensuring that they were not at a "competitive disadvantage" relative to government and donor partners more accustomed to such global deliberations.[8] Before arrival, each rural organization was asked to prepare briefing documents on their activities and needs.

A Special Edition of the CILSS/Club News Bulletin was issued approximately one month before the meetings, with summaries of the core documents and detailed presentation of the proposed agenda and themes. The conference agenda itself was distributed to all participating organizations, often with a follow-on visit from CILSS or Club representatives. Several donors sponsored preparatory meetings to identify topics of special concern to their programs. Three such meetings were held by USAID -- two for in-house preparation, and one a joint two-day US-Canadian NGO meeting sponsored by InterAction, Solidarite Canada-Sahel, A.I.D. and CIDA.

Finally, a substantial set of "state of the art" studies were undertaken during the preceding two years. These included three major reviews of successful resource management efforts (Lessons Learned), and nine special studies on such topics as decentralization, rural organizations, the role of women, rural credit and savings, land tenure, resource legislation, technology options, farming systems and livestock. These documents were widely distributed both within the sponsoring organizations and to host country and other donor offices (see documents list overleaf).[9]

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

MAIN DOCUMENTS

- Sustained Development in the Sahel: the Role of the Local Organizations (Soumana Traoré) **Ref. RC-08**
- Sahelian Government Policies: Approaches to Integrated Rural Development and Desertification Control (Abdoulaye Kayne & Sylvestre Ouedraogo) **Ref. RC-06**
- Trends in the Drought and Desertification Control Strategies of Major Donor Agencies in the West African Sahel (Chris Reij) **Ref. D-328**
- Women and Sustained Development in the Sahel (Marie Monimart & Marthe Doka-Diarra) **Ref. D-330.**

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS FOR THE ENCOUNTER

- Opportunities for Sustained Development: Successful Natural Resources Management in the Sahel (Shaikh et al) **Ref. RC-03**
- Lessons in the Fight against the Desertification of the Sahel (ed. Rochette) **Ref. RC-04**
- Ecology and Rural Development in Subsaharan Africa: Selected Case Studies (Wright, Weber and & Broekhuyse) **Ref. D-327**
- Options for Promoting User-Based Governance of Sahelian Renewable Natural Resources (Thompson et al) **Ref. RC-07**
- The Dynamics of Organization in the Rural Sahel (Snrech) **Ref. D-325**
- Women in the Fight Against Desertification (Monimart) **Ref. D-326**
- Savings and Credit in the Rural Areas of the Sahel (Caputo) **Ref. RC-02**
- Land Tenure Policies and Natural Resource Management in Sahelian West Africa (Lawry) **Ref. RC-05**
- Analysis of CILSS Member States' Legislation and Regulations in Natural Resource Management (CILSS publication; ed. Goumandakoye) **Ref. RC-09**
- The Present State of Soil and Water Conservation in the Sahel (Reij) **Ref. D-329**
- Prospects for Improving Productivity in Sorghum and Pearl Millet Systems in West Africa (Matlon) **Ref. RC-01**
- Livestock Activities in the Sahel (R. Pons) **Ref. D-314**

These documents are available from the Club du Sahel (OECD, 2, rue André Pascal, 75775 PARIS CEDEX 16, France) and from the CILSS (BP 7049, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso).

From the Club du Sahel Information bulletin

DISCUSSION GROUPS

The principal logistical problem of the meeting was to organize a meaningful exchange of ideas among participants whose number had swelled to nearly 150.[10] Discussion groups were established around *three principal themes:*

- o Participation of rural populations
- o Preservation of the environment and of its productive potential
- o Transformation of production systems in the context of a global approach

For each theme, two *subgroups* approached the same issues from a slightly different perspective. The conscious attempt was to allow overlap between subgroups, and to make themes more, rather than less, inclusive. The result was a set of groups, each with about 20 regular participants[11], which were relatively free to frame the issues as they saw fit. For example, if the members of the subgroup on transforming farming systems saw land tenure and rural credit as major impediments, they were not constrained from discussing them, even though other groups would focus more specifically on these topics.

After a day of plenary sessions in which main issues were identified and presented, the six subgroups were given two full days each to grapple with the issues. Each subgroup included rural representatives and a mix of participants from member states, donors, CILSS, and the Club which was broadly representative of the whole assembly, with each subgroup selecting its own chair person and rapporteurs. The fourth day was devoted to refining subgroup reports on the basis of feedback from group members, and to presentation and discussion of reports between groups.

In an iterative process of exchange and synthesis, the six discussion group documents were combined into three "group reports". After further presentation to all participants, the three group reports were further synthesized into a single "Segou Declaration".

The process of going from six individual reports to a single declaration proved as fruitful as the discussion groups themselves. The initial reports covered a broad range of topics. To some extent, they were the result of six different sets of minds applied to the same set of issues. They therefore reflected six different ways of framing the problem and potential solutions. *The value of dialogue, of sharing experiences, expertise and visions for the future was most in evidence when differently articulated positions had to be synthesized.* This intensive process forced the setting of priorities. With general approval, the majority of specific points raised in the six reports did not carry over to the final synthesis. Instead, individual points were dropped in the search for the underlying issue. Inevitably, certain strong positions were softened and some dropped. Nevertheless, the end result was a document which, far from being an amalgam of six reports, represented a second level understanding of core issues. This in itself was one of the principal benefits of the structured "trilogue" which took place in Segou.

Group Dynamics

The learning, information exchange and resolution of competing viewpoints which took place within each of the six discussion groups is best illustrated through the following "slices" of the discussion, prepared by group participants themselves.

"Terroir Villageois"

The mandate of discussion group 3 called for it to specifically address the question of "terroir villageois". In general terms, the concept -- which is an important part of the decentralized strategy for local level natural resources management -- involves a given village community taking responsibility for protection and management of surrounding lands. It further implies that the community will have greater decision authority over those resources. Since the idea is both consistent

with recent findings and attractive in its emphasis on local resources management, it received enthusiastic support from the majority of group members. However, the group included an articulate representative from a rural organization representing herders. He pointed out that this approach leaves herding communities out in the cold, since they cannot lay claim to a specific area of land, but cannot survive without access to areas surrounding settled villages.

After further debate, an approach which had been accepted almost by assumption no longer seemed sacrosanct. The group report, instead of including a specific call for "terroir villageois", addressed the underlying issues of local management rights, conflict resolution and resource use. In one sense, this process moved the group farther from a proposed solution than it was as the outset. However, many participants had simply not thought through the implications for herding populations, and agreed that it was better to continue to search for specific solutions than to give a blanket endorsement to the wrong one.

Incentives

In Group 3, the discussion of incentives forced participants to come to grips with sometimes diametrically opposed approaches. The following is from the notes of a group member:

> *The issue was whether or not to pay for conservation work. A government representative: "forced work may be necessary; in the hand-to-mouth existence of Sahelian peasants, some payment may be needed too". Rural organization representative: "In our project, we reconstituted 54 hectares in the first year with no outside help. Later we got some assistance from the World Food Programme". Pastoralist representative: "Give us the tools and materiel, we will contribute the labor and the organization".*
>
> *Donor representative: "Forced work is costly and inefficient". A consultant: "work done with cash incentives is not maintained afterward".*

The disagreements expressed here are fundamental. Many participants either abandoned earlier positions or coalesced around a new one. However, there was nothing like unanimity, at least partly because all parties agreed that no single approach had universal applicability. In this particular section of the debate, having reached an impasse on this issue, the group simply moved to a more fruitful arena: how to build local capability to manage financial resources and organize local effort. Incentives had, of course, been a major topic in each of the other discussion groups as well. The theme that emerged from across group reports was the need for financially attractive projects and for consistent government policies on pricing, taxation and land tenure. These formulations eventually found a place in the final declaration, although not under a separate heading on incentives.

Land Tenure

Land tenure was discussed in several of the discussion groups, including one which specifically focussed on it. In Group 5, under the general heading of "transforming farming systems", land tenure was a hotly debated topic. From a participant's notes:

> *Consultant: "Sahelian production is communal. The notion of individual land ownership is alien and unnecessary". Rural representative: "The lack of secure land tenure is one of the biggest problems we face. When farmers try to get credit, the only asset they have is the land. Because it is not theirs, they can't use it to secure a loan". Government representative: "Yes, but there is the danger, and we are already seeing evidence of it in many places, that poor farmers will lose their land if we allow private ownership, either to big farmers who buy it (or coerce them to sell) or to banks whose loans are in default. The growth in land speculation is one of the most serious problems we will have to confront". Second consultant: "Does individual ownership have to lead to more concentrated holdings? Limit the size of landholdings, but don't throw out the concept of individual ownership, which will be important to future incentives". Government representative: "This doesn't solve the problem of defaulted loans to banks. The poorest farmers may well default in bad years; if we say banks can't take their land, banks won't lend against it either". Rural representative: "I am very concerned with the question of incentives. Why should one of our farmers invest in the land if he is not sure he can keep it? The cooperative can help on the default question". First consultant: "We are accepting here that individual ownership is necessary for incentives; I don't accept this. Communal action is the key to the incentives problem..."*

The better part of a morning was spent exploring this complex issue, and examining the

implications of different options. The above passage accurately reflects that there was no simple solution, nor did the group report attempt to put one forward. The consensus was that security of land tenure was important in order for farmers to have the incentive to invest in natural resources management. That message got through in the group report, and survived the synthesis of the Group 5 and Group 6 reports into the single "Theme III" document. Some of the issues in debate were resolved within the group, but others (such as the credit issue) remain and will continue to be debated in future implementation efforts.

Marketing

Group 6 discussed a wide set of topics, ranging from rural savings/credit, land tenure and energy, to forestry and marketing. The following detailed notes on the marketing discussion are based largely on observations made by rural representatives. It provides an excellent illustration of two points: (a) the level of detail in which specific issues were discussed and (b) the degree to which the discussion focussed on the basic issues of concern to farmers (agricultural production, incomes, marketing), rather than on natural resources management for its own sake.

For several participants, marketing problems constituted a major roadblock. One described how his cooperative had explored ways of getting better prices for their vegetables (which tend to ripen at the same time as everybody else's). Selling their produce in other regions of the country is made unprofitable by the lack of good transport and roads. When they shipped by railroad, their produce arrived in bad condition. In addition to good transport, he requests the state to provide improved market information, allow the cooperative to market produce itself in neighboring countries and to subsidize producers if necessary.

Two rural representatives called for more consistent state price signals and purchasing policies. One said his group obtained a substantial loan one year to plant niebe because they learned that the purchasing agency had offered to buy it from farmers. After harvest, the agency didn't purchase directly from farmers, however, but left the collection to merchants who paid lower prices.

Another group member pointed out that perhaps it is government's responsibility to do market studies and to offer some guarantees on prices, but experience has shown that when the state becomes too involved, things fall apart.

A member pointed out that some speculation is inevitable. "There is no such thing as a sure market study". He conceded, however, that perhaps government should provide price guarantees within a certain range for specified products. Another replied that marketing is at the heart of the transformation of production systems. If government promotes speculation, it should foresee problems. If national transport systems are inadequate, that too is a state responsibility. If the problem is the lack of organization among local producers, that's the cooperative's problem.

A rural organization representative said that producer solidarity may work in certain situations, but his experience with millet growers in his country is that solidarity breaks down quickly when marketing credits are unavailable. Farmers will unload their production at low prices if they lack the means to hold off until later.

A representative of a women's gardening cooperative said that her group sold tomatoes at low prices during harvest time, only to end up importing Italian tomato paste the rest of the year because they lacked processing and canning facilities. The discussion moved to a new topic, with the closing comment that processing of vegetables and cereals offered potential solutions to some marketing problems.

The importance of having rural organizations present is nowhere more apparent than in this discussion. Dozens of past conferences have focussed much more on such topics as agroforestry techniques, water retention or the economics of village plantations. The farmers and herders focussed directly on income, credit, prices and stable markets -- the preconditions for successful investment for transforming production systems. Almost universally, they saw the technology problem as one which could be solved (at least in their cooperatives/rural organizations), with appropriate help from the outside, once the preconditions were in place.

Conclusions

Foremost among the conclusions which can be drawn is that rural organizations did successfully express their concerns and priorities at the meeting.

Their representatives were often very articulate on what mattered to their constituents, and were not intimidated by the setting of an international meeting. That the meeting was not held in an air conditioned conference room of a luxury hotel contributed positively to this dynamic. A second important conclusion is that rural organizations were most often interested in (a) removing obstacles (policy, legislative, financial) to local initiative, and (b) enhancing *locally available* opportunities for income generation and investment. They raised local resource management rights, land tenure, credit and market outlets as issues of direct *local* concern.

A third important conclusion was the relative absence of clearly demarcated positions between the three "partners" who attended. Rural representatives showed the greatest overall consistency in the issues they raised, but the relative importance of a given issue (such as decentralization, for example) varied according to individual circumstances. There was no clear cut "government" or "donor" position. Individuals appear to have relied on their own experience and insights rather than on negotiating positions. In almost all groups, the chairperson and two rapporteurs (jointly responsible for the written reports) included at least one CILSS government and one rural organization representative.

Fourth, there was considerable diversity (and divergence) of opinion on the first level concerns (which included such specific suggestions as subsidized credit, price supports, and endorsement of individual technologies), both within and between groups. In contrast, there was broad consensus on the "second level", underlying issues which emerged in the final declaration.

THE SEGOU DECLARATION

The Segou Declaration established eight principles, which, if acted upon, would create the preconditions necessary for sustainable natural resources management in the Sahel. The Eight Points cover:

- o investments to upgrade the land
- o local participation
- o decentralized management
- o savings and credit
- o land tenure security
- o the role of women
- o information exchange
- o population and development

In the following sections, each of the Declarations eight points is presented in its entirety (in italicized, shaded text), followed by discussion of background and implications as appropriate.

1. Ecological rehabilitation: capitalize the land

Problems of land tenure, outdated production systems and farming techniques, and successive droughts have led to serious degradation of the natural environment. Part of the land's initial capital has thus been lost, and there is now an urgent need to reconstitute those assets.

The cost of this rehabilitation is high. Many techniques could be used: certain could be applied immediately by local groups, while others are more complex and costly, and depend on government action. Local populations' awareness and determination to participate in the rehabilitation process are essential but not sufficient.

Spontaneous initiative at the local level is not limitless, and external aid therefore will be indispensable. If producers are struggling just to maintain a viable farming operation, they will tend to favor solutions that generate income in the short term. Rehabilitation, on the other hand, involves investments that will only pay off in the medium to long term. Incentives and aid in the form of logistic support, supplemental income funds, etc., should thus be made available so that producers will make the necessary long term improvements. In this respect, future structural adjustment programs must include ecological costs in their calculations.

Furthermore, land rehabilitation must be seen not only as a way of conserving the environment, but above all as a way of improving production and generating sources of incomes so that users of that land will be encouraged to invest in its improvement.

Technical support must be given by the relevant government departments. Thus, those departments must have the financial and technical ability they need to fulfill their roles.

Underlying Issues

The concept of "outdated production systems and farming techniques" encompasses several ideas. There was general agreement in the subgroup discussions that existing production systems were not simply *outdated*, but that growing demographic pressure and environmental crisis have created the need for entirely *new land management strategies*. More advanced ("less outdated") technology will not suffice without a change in strategy.

New strategies require a move from extensive to more intensive land use. This in turn implies making investments which will not necessarily have an immediate pay off. Some (such as contour dikes) will yield short term benefits which will continue for two or three years. Others (such as windbreaks or Acacia albida) will provide sustained benefits, but may not have an impact until several years after the investment is made.

Also implicit in the strategy of more intensified land management is the *diversification* of land use to reduce risk and stabilize income flows. Grain, fuel, fodder, animal products, construction supplies and marketable products (poles, fruits, vegetables, grasses, etc.) are among the outputs of a more diversified Sahelian farming operation.

The declaration alludes to, but does not explicitly address, the distinctions between individual (or household), communal and common property: *"Many techniques could be used: certain could be applied immediately by local groups, while others are more complex and costly, and depend on government action"*.

With respect to individual and communal property, the meeting emphasized the importance of inherent financial viability in influencing the incentive to invest, but also took the clear position that such incentives will not always be sufficient. Two options were discussed to compensate for this insufficiency: increasing the efficiency of investment as a means of lowering the cost; improving the potential returns. Despite some advocates, the majority thought it unrealistic to discuss commitments of recurrent public expenditure for either cost reduction or revenue support. Instead, discussion centered on ways to improve the "investment climate" by making the policy, legislative and infrastructure framework more responsive. Five of the remaining seven points directly address ways of doing this. In addition, the declaration squarely calls for limited (i.e. non-recurrent) government and donor inputs to "prime the pump". In effect, such inputs would help fill the gap between private benefits (as realized by investors such as households, communities, rural organizations, etc.) and the potentially higher economy-wide benefits. Several groups discussed the very high macroeconomic costs of continued environmental degradation. It was noted that while there is an urgent need to "invest in the land", public expenditure has often been unsuccessful. Therefore, there is an equally urgent need to improve the efficiency of public investment and to increase the role of local initiative.

The declaration makes a fundamental point in this regard: *"land rehabilitation must be seen not only as a way of conserving the environment, but above all as a way of improving production and generating sources of incomes so that users of that land will be encouraged to invest in its improvement"*. In short, if it is not in the interest of those who must make it happen, it won't happen. This basic principle has eluded many project planners and implementors over the past two decades, contributing heavily to some of the more spectacular natural resource project failures in the Sahel.[12]

With respect to the role of government, the declaration reflects the consensus view that greater reliance on local initiative is not a panacea which will completely lift the burden from already strapped government budgets. Growing public expenditure will be required irrespective. At present, the sum of public efforts is having a negligible impact on global environmental conditions. Private initiative is the only means of increasing the efficiency and overall impact of society's response, but public effort must continue to support and spread the process.

2. Local level natural resources management: promote the involvement of localcommunities

Ecological rehabilitation involves systematic management of renewable natural resources at the local level. Numerous techniques must be used here. Certain are suitable for grazing land, while others must be applied to the local land systems that are suffering from ecological deterioration. Yet

other techniques must be used for irrigated land, which is more suitable for intensive agriculture.

Not everybody knows about these techniques, and efforts must be made to improve the understanding of those concerned and to stimulate experience sharing. Research and development initiatives must seek to address the problems encountered by those who are most actively concerned.

That fact that suitable techniques exist is clearly not enough. Rural population groups must also organize themselves in an efficient manner. A wide variety of rural organizations and institutions already exist to deal with specific problems (forestry, water supply, grazing land, etc.). What is most important for these organizations is autonomy, self-administration, and, ultimately, self-management: to achieve these aims, one basic requirement is for the legal system to recognize the existence of these organizations.

Underlying Issues

Three issues are raised here: that resource management is necessarily a localized process; that better techniques exist but are not always known by the populations; and that greater empowerment of local organizations is a prelude to better natural resources management.

On the first point, there was almost universal agreement. The idea that successful resource management could be based on centralized control and initiative was notably absent. This in itself is an important departure from prevailing notions during the "first generation" of Sahel projects. Discussion groups recognized that this implied a different strategy than has been pursued in the past: organizational capability was given greater emphasis than project-type activities; better land use management, integrating agriculture and livestock, was considered a higher priority than discrete forestry or natural resources projects.

There were differences of opinion as to the adequacy of available techniques. As the debate progressed, most differences emerged as ones of relative emphasis. Rural organizations emphasized non-technical barriers to adopting available methods: credit, local authority, markets, training, etc. Several participants with research backgrounds stressed the fact that "available methods" had not always been properly field tested, particularly for the different ecological zones in which they were to be applied. The common ground included the following points.

- If widely adopted, existing techniques could dramatically improve resources management across the region
- There are numerous immediate, non-technical obstacles to widespread adoption. Two of the most important are skills transfer and local empowerment
- Further research is vital, but is not an obstacle to immediate action where techniques exist

This common ground contains the basic priorities for a regional natural resources management strategy.

The final issue -- the need to empower local organizations -- is a prelude to Point 3 on Decentralized Management. The discussion was surprisingly harmonious, given the potential for opposing entrenched positions. Participants from host governments did not generally argue against greater empowerment.[13] Various individuals differed on how extensive local management rights should be. The long-standing debate on "protection" vs. "extension" was revived in some discussion groups. Some expressed the concern that decentralization affected much more than natural resources management, and should not be promoted solely on that basis. There was lively debate on whether legislative and structural change was required, or whether changes in administrative and extension practice would suffice. This issue is discussed more fully under the next point below.

3. Decentralized management: increase efficiency

Governments will encourage local communities to shoulder greater responsibility if those communities genuinely take their development in hand. But for this transition to happen, government departments will have to make local communities

more aware of the issues involved, and will have to place these communities in charge of certain activities that are currently the responsibility of the public sector.

The state must take new institutional steps to guarantee and monitor local development. Comprehensive land-use planning is needed to rationalize investments, and rural development policies must seek to increase the incomes of rural inhabitants and help a non-government sector to take shape.

Similarly, as part of the international community's efforts to move closer to rural organizations in order to increase the effectiveness of outside aid, donors could involve local agencies in part of their procedural approaches, and could devolve a certain amount of decision-making power to them.

If the three families of actors -- local organizations, Sahelian governments and donors -- are to act as partners, the ground rules must be as clear as possible.

Underlying Issues

This is nothing short of a call for a new partnership in Sahelian development. It is new because local communities have previously had no clearly defined role at the discussion table. Decentralization is therefore *both a matter of defining local rights and of increasing them.* By implication, defining *local* rights also requires a redefinition of the role of the state. Participants were aware that these very fundamental issues are of broader concern than natural resources, per se. While recognizing this, the discussion attempted to maintain as clear a natural resources focus as possible.

The case that successful resources management in the Sahel must be based on local initiative was made in virtually all of the preparatory documents, came up in all discussion groups, and met with little resistance. The conference attempted to establish a definitional framework in which the state role was more oriented towards establishing the "infrastructure" within which local development could take place: resource inventories, training, extension, credit systems, pricing policies, and, of course, a framework for local management rights. There was an implicit recognition that public resources are urgently needed at this level, but are stretched beyond their capacity in *most* direct natural resources production/management activities[14]. Herein lies the new role for community organizations: *"rural development policies must seek to increase the incomes of rural inhabitants and help a non-governmental sector to take shape" [emphasis added]*. The success of this "non-governmental sector" -- individuals, households, local communities, rural organizations -- will determine the course of natural resources management in the Sahel. The success of the public sector (government and donor) is judged in terms of its ability to serve as a catalyst.

The redefinition of roles also creates the potential for redefining the relationships between the three parties. Among the more contentious issues at the workshop was the question of direct donor interaction with rural organizations and local NGOs. The final wording, "donors agencies could involve local agencies in part of their procedural approaches, and could devolve a certain amount of decision-making power to them", was a compromise between several competing positions.

Government representatives voiced concern about the danger of donors by-passing government channels to deal directly with local organizations. They specifically referred to the already chaotic state of donor-government relationships in which coherent decision-making often succumbs to multiple and sometimes conflicting agenda from different donors. There was also concern (not just on the part of government representatives) that there is already a dangerous tendency for rural organizations to be coopted by donor priorities and donor money. Several examples were cited of rural organizations which have sprung up in response to outside funding sources, or which have become unsustainable as a result of such funding.

Rural organization representatives acknowledged the dangers of excessive dependency on donor financing. They were not unanimous in favoring direct donor interaction with their organizations. In general, however, they sought fewer restrictions on such interaction, and greater flexibility in project related decision-making at the local level.

The core argument which prevailed was that decentralization itself was a necessary process, which, if implemented, would allow more open and flexible relationships with both national governments and international donors.

The Declaration found the common ground. However, to do so, it did not directly take a stand on some important issues. The principle of decentralization was strongly endorsed, but the specific modalities remain unresolved.[15]

4. Land tenure reform: hedge investments in rehabilitation

Land tenure poses numerous problems of various types, and many of these problems have become acute as available land is in greater and greater demand. There is thus a need to find a flexible way of combining the modern legal system -- which is still insufficiently known -- with customary laws. One solution would be to consult producer organizations in the event of disputes.

One aspect of the land tenure issue that is particularly worrisome is the development of the land market in certain areas. The poorest, marginalized producers, who are forced to sell fields to bolster their incomes, subsequently have no choice but to overfarm their remaining land, thereby contributing to ecological degradation. Newly landless farmers are swelling the ranks of the unemployed in the cities. Suitable rules are needed to address these problems.

In the short term, the central problem is the lack of security of investments in the land. Producers will continue to be unable to invest in improving the land if they are unsure of reaping the benefits later. Legislative solutions must be found.

Underlying Issues

The Declaration was more successful in finding a workable compromise on land tenure than on decentralization. This relative success was related to two factors:

- There was a strongly held majority opinion that insecurity of land tenure was one of the major obstacles to <u>sustainable</u> production.

- The "opposition", such as it was, to revised land tenure legislation was primarily concerned with possible negative side effects (such as land speculation), but did not oppose increased security of land tenure for smallholders.

Most discussions avoided the by now sterile debate as to whether traditional production systems are "community" or "household"-based. Instead, they focussed on the *changes* in rural economies: increasing resource scarcity and resource conflict; the growing urgency of land rehabilitation, and the future needs of a sustainable rural production system. Viewed in these terms, the need for more secure land tenure became almost self-evident.

The underlying premise for the land tenure argument is contained in Point 1 of the Declaration ["Ecological rehabilitation: capitalize the land"]: the land is degrading rapidly, with productivity declines occurring in step; land scarcity and demographic pressure make it impossible to offset these declines by continuing to bring undegraded land into production; traditional methods of extensive land use are therefore no longer sustainable, and land rehabilitation measures must, in order to be successful, assure that *"users of that land will be encouraged to invest in its improvement"*.

Points raised in individual discussion groups showed how land tenure was linked to other key resource management topics: land rehabilitation investments; empowerment of local populations; participation in the application of new technologies; the role of women; rural savings and credit. Two of the more interesting discussions related to the role of women and to rural credit.

Women's resource allocation rights are an often neglected part of the land tenure equation. Men and women bear different work burdens and are subject to different incentives. For example, women's work could be sharply reduced by greater community production of fuelwood, because they do the brunt of the collection. Men, on the other hand, have decision authority on allocation of land resources, but may not be as motivated to invest in firewood production. Such resource allocation problems would not necessarily be resolved through greater security of land tenure, unless the concept of greater security was broadened to include both sexes, rather than just the distinction between the "household" vs. the "community". Aside from sporadic mention in the discussion groups, women's issues were not explicitly included in the land tenure portions of the declaration.

Agricultural land is by far the primary capital asset for most farmers. It may be all they have to offer as collateral for credit. Rural representatives consistently pointed out that without legal title to the land, farmers were often denied access to credit. Others countered that for land to serve as collateral, it must be alienable[16], creating the dangers that (i) the poorest will default on loans and lose their land and (ii) that speculators will pressure or induce small farmers to sell, creating a speculative land market and increasing the concentration of land holding. Further rebuttals argued that legislation could control these tendencies, but that failure to make land tenure more secure would be to throw out the baby with the bath water.

5. Local credit and savings: increase local investment

The success of credit and savings systems depends on the development of local voluntary organizations (cooperatives, associations, etc.) based on mutual trust.

Attempts to set up savings and credit systems that meet local requirements should be encouraged.

Nevertheless, links between these systems and the banking system poses various problems that must be solved:

- *Liquidation periods on loans to producers should be lengthened to take into account the uncertainty of income levels due to climatic variations;*
- *Similarly, the amount of collateral demanded from producers must remain flexible in order to take local situations into account;*
- *Loan contracts must be clear and firm so that borrowers are fully aware of their commitments from the outset.*

More globally, the insecurity of prices and markets discourages producers from contracting loans. Government's policy should thus promote conditions that limit excessive fluctuations in the prices of the main crops, assist producer organizations in gaining a better understanding of market trends, and promote processing, conservation and marketing of local produce. Food aid must be integrated into this global approach.

Several participants pointed out that "land reform" in the Sahel[17] has taken a different course than in Asia and Latin America, where it was driven by the need to break up large land holdings. Lessons from that experience could provide useful insights on the modalities of land reform legislation, particularly with respect to controlling land speculation and increased concentration.

Without prejudging what form land tenure legislation should take, the Declaration took a strong stand on the basic issue: *"the central problem is the lack of security of investments in the land. Producers will continue to be unable to invest in improving the land if they are unsure of reaping the benefits later. Legislative solutions must be found".*

Underlying Issues

The discussion of local savings and credit is striking in its coverage. To some extent, it points up other obstacles to the growth and development of rural production which are at least as pressing as the lack of access to credit *per se:* variable income levels, lack of collateral, developing a tradition of clear contractual systems, pricing policies, marketing systems, food preservation, downstream process and income generation opportunities and relationships to food aid programs.

Points 1 (capitalize the land), 4 (land tenure reform) and 5 (local savings and credit) form a coherent "substrategy" within the Segou Declaration. Together they suggest an agricultural system in transition from extensive subsistence production towards controlled inputs, investment and land rehabilitation, better defined ownership rights over future benefits from investments, and access to short term resources (credit) which will allow investments for longer term rehabilitation. The experience of most rural organizations present testified to the profound changes which accompany this substrategy, particularly with respect to greater participation in the cash economy created by the need to repay loans.

While the Declaration called for closer integration of rural credit with the national banking system, there was a widespread feeling that this would not by itself be sufficient. First, local communities cannot afford to wait for as long as it might take for national banking systems to solve problems of management, rural presence, approval procedures and liquidity. Second, the principles of formal banking institutions were thought to be ill-adapted to the variability of small farmer situations[18]. Finally, it was felt that there was a major opportunity to *mobilize existing rural savings,* but that it would be a long time before accessible banking institutions were both in place and had the *confidence* of rural populations.

Many rural organizations have begun filling the local savings and credit niche. A case example is provided by the "Association Six S" (Groupement NAAM) in Burkina Faso. A portion of the membership fees, supplemented with funds from the international affiliated organizations, is made available for rural credit. Credit is provided through village and neighborhood groups, who take on collective responsibility for repayment. Thus the impersonal concept of collateral (which small farmers often can't put up) is replaced by community networks, in which the final borrower is judged by a more fluid definition of credit-worthiness. To the extent that local organizations have been perceived as being within the control of the communities they represent, they have sometimes had success in mobilizing rural savings. Doing so will be an essential part of reorienting rural resources towards urgently needed productive investments, but there is still a long way to go on this front.[19]

Discussion of long term directions, while sketchy, raised the potential for local organizations playing the role of intermediaries between national financial institutions and rural populations.

The investment, tenure, savings/credit sub-strategy is the crux of the "non-governmental sector" (see Point 3 above) which must develop and flourish if natural resources management in the Sahel is to be sustainable. Several of the rural representatives felt strongly that this sector would be more driven by incentives than by outside assistance. Hence they argued for better access to markets, more rational pricing policies, better transport infrastructure, stronger export promotion policies and access to credit. With these in place, they believed their members could organize the production side with little or no outside technical assistance.[20]

6. Women: enhance their participation

The historic role of women in rural areas has been altered by desertification and rural exodus. As a result, women today are performing different tasks, and, in particular, they play an essential part in ecological rehabilitation and local-level natural resources management.

However, their formal status within society is still incongruous with this new level of responsibility they are assuming. Increasingly, women are asking for sufficient land so that they can meet their monetary requirements; they are seeking access to farm machinery and, therefore, credit facilities; and they wish to take part in the decisions that affect the life of the community.

Training is needed in those areas of activity where women are now involved. Extension work is now too often aimed exclusively at the men. In addition, aid should be made available in order to lighten women's day-to-day workload and to diversify productive and other activities enabling them to find new sources of income.

Underlying Issues

Women were severely underrepresented at Segou. Less than ten Sahelian women were present. The CILSS/Club du Sahel organizers took care to assure that women in development issues were addressed in conference planning and preparatory documents, but the level of discussion and small number of women participants were a disappointment. The one positive element was that a relatively high proportion of representatives from rural organizations were women.

It would be unfair to say that women's issues were neglected at the conference. They were not. Indeed, there was lengthy and sometimes heated debate on them. As often occurs at such meetings, there were disagreements between some participants. Nevertheless, a clear majority of participants[21] felt strongly that (i) the role of women in rural production has already changed dramatically and that "women have assumed responsibilities in many areas, including ecological rehabilitation and land management, far beyond the authority and

resources accorded to them in society"[22] and (ii) that failure to address the pressing constraints on women's time, responsibilities, legal and social rights would impede successful natural resources management.

7. Information and training: share experiences

Local experience is particularly useful. Valuable lessons can be learned from successes as well as from failures. Rural inhabitants are eager to find out about these projects and identify directly with them.

If experience sharing is organized and encouraged, ideas progress faster and reach wider audiences. A genuine communication policy should be adopted in order to achieve these aims. Such a policy addressing the major issues facing the rural world would accord rural problems the priority they deserve. This communication policy would mobilize the mass media as well as alternative channels of information, and would include visits and experience sharing by representatives of the rural areas of different Sahelian countries.

To consolidate efforts to improve agricultural and environmental rehabilitation techniques, close attention should be paid to the development of management and leadership skills required for the management autonomy of local communities. Experience sharing is needed here also, but suitable training is an even more pressing requirement.

Underlying Issues

This section of the declaration must be understood in the context of the alternative forms it might have taken. Past declarations have placed greater emphasis on technical assistance and extension rather than on experience sharing. Segou did not do so for two main reasons:

- The basic recognition that both efficiency and available public resources dictate that the initiative must come from the "non-governmental sector"; outside technical assistance and extension support is therefore a complement to, but not a substitute for a more localized learning process.

- Reviews of successful initiatives have shown that experience sharing between small farmers have been very successful[23]: first hand observation has provided more concrete learning than have exhortations from technical assistance or extension personnel; the "cultural" aspects of visiting a different region and meeting farmers who have solved local problems have often been as beneficial as the technical lessons learned; successful initiatives by other farmers have often overcome farmer problems that assistance personnel are not even aware of.

The call for a rural communications policy, including use of mass media, is consistent with the general finding of the conference that decentralized initiative has been underemphasized to date. Particularly with the growth of rural organizations and of an often sophisticated group of rural intermediaries, there appears to be considerable scope to use mass media as part of a nation-wide effort to mobilize local initiative and air concrete local obstacles to implementation. In addition, the workshop recognized that if greater decentralization is in fact implemented, local communities throughout the region will be grappling with similar problems. The opportunity to share successes and failures through mass communications will facilitate and enrich the learning process.

8. Population and development: control the future

In view of the ecological, social and economic environment of the Sahel, the question of the population policies that will underpin sustained development should be examined in the light of the N'Djamena Plan of Action.

It is of primary importance to involve local communities in the definition and implementation of these policies.

Underlying Issues

Brief, carefully worded and non-committal, the declaration on population reflects the lack of consensus on what recommendations to make.

The population debate in the Sahel is well-known to the development community. There were strongly held positions on both sides of the issue in Segou. A large, but less than majority bloc felt that natural resources management problems cannot be successfully resolved without urgent action on population growth. A smaller bloc felt strongly the other way. A swing group either did not express strong opinions or believed that the issue was too delicate for the workshop to take a strong stand.

One important nuance merits note: there was majority agreement that the existing "modes of production" were no longer adequate to meet the needs of current and expected population levels. Therefore, there is overpopulation *relative* to production capacity, particularly in drier zones where arable land is scarce and resource competition increasingly intense. The debate centered more on whether greater emphasis should be given to changing the mode of production or to attempting to reduce population growth.

The final wording of the declaration reflected the desire of the participants to put the population question on the table, without foreclosing options as to how it should be resolved.

A REALIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES

When considered in light of its full implications, the Segou Declaration constitutes a basic realignment of priorities for natural resources management in the Sahel. The final section of this chapter addresses this realignment, and how it can be expected to influence the course of future action. The two preliminary sections consider the remaining issues which were either not resolved or not discussed in the Declaration.

Consensus and Divergence

It would be misleading to leave the impression that all divergent views coalesced into a single, harmonious point of view as expressed in the Declaration. As seen in the preceding discussion, there were a number of competing points of view on each issue. But there was strong consensus on the importance and broad thrust of each of the eight points. Principal disagreements occurred in two areas:

- Stronger positions not taken, including on such questions as direct rural organization-donor contacts, price supports for agricultural commodities, specific land tenure reforms, population control, etc.

- Measures needed to implement the Segou Directives.

There was, therefore, a consensus of intent and of priorities. *It will take concerted joint effort by the three partners, over many years, to translate this intent into action.* Particularly as entrenched interests and procedures (both government and donor) are threatened, the consensus may break down and the original intent may be reinterpreted.

At either donor or government levels, the intent of Segou cannot be implemented only at the initiative of the mid-level officials who were present there. CILSS and the Club du Sahel, who brought this extraordinary encounter together, have unique roles to play in this respect:

- As the representative of the Sahelian states, CILSS is the only entity with the stature, trust and access to bring the Segou agenda to the attention of Sahelian Heads of State, and to elicit their active sponsorship. Without this support, little useful action will result.

- The Club can play a similar role in reducing procedural bottlenecks in donor programs and in assuring that multiple donor priorities do not work at cross-purposes.

Issues Not Discussed

The Segou Roundtable encompassed a broad range of subjects, particularly relative to the narrow technical focus of many similar meetings. Nevertheless, a number of important topics were either not discussed or did not find a place in the group reports or the final declaration.

Two of these issues stand out: structural adjustment and macroeconomic growth strategies. Both were discussed and considered important. Either because participants did not feel competent to make detailed suggestions, or because the issues were considered part of the broader context, they were not reported on.

Structural adjustment will color all public initiatives in the Sahel in the next decade. Both the African Development Bank Environmental Policy Paper[24] and the Commonwealth Conference on Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture[25] expressed the hope that the pressure to reduce government budgets in response to structural adjustment would not lead to a reduction in funding for natural resources management. Participants shared this concern. Several parts of the Declaration make it clear that, even with decentralization, increased levels of public expenditure will be needed. Without elaboration, Point 1 expresses the view that *"future structural adjustment programs must include ecological costs in their calculations"*.

The implications of the Segou Declaration for macro-economic growth strategies are discussed in the following section.

Implications for Future Action

Segou is one milestone in a learning process which has been underway during the last twenty years of experience. By bringing together individuals who have lived and shared that experience, it forced them to exchange information, air disagreement and identify priority issues. But the issues themselves are not new. What is new is the recognition that this set of *policy* and *process* issues is of higher priority than initial concerns about projects and technology.

In the face of environmental crisis in the Sahel, both donors and governments have been guilty of trying to solve it themselves. But the effort has foundered on local populations' unwillingness to "participate" as mere adjuncts. Even where participation has occurred, public resources have proven insufficient to replicate success on a scale that mattered. The net return of public investment on natural resources management in the Sahel has, unquestionably, been negative.[26] While private efforts[27] have, to date, been more limited, they have also been more successful.

The Segou priorities suggest new roles for local populations, government and donors. The greatest implied change is in the conception of what government's highest payoff role should be. The premise of the eight points in the Segou Declaration is that the *public sector will achieve a higher rate of return on its investment by systematically enhancing the capacity of local communities to take the initiative* in natural resources management.

There is some parallel between government and donor situations. Donors have been equally guilty of seeking project success in the absence of community development, with development failure when the project ends as the frequent result. Donors, too, are in urgent need of increasing the net returns on their development expenditures in the Sahel.

The often-used concept of *sustainability* lies at the heart of the Segou Declaration. Much of the discussion during the roundtable centered on the tradeoff between project impact vs. sustained development. For a combination of good and bad reasons, outside assistance has tended to focus on producing visible impacts from project intervention. In some respects, this is as it should be: millions of dollars of expenditure should yield tangible results; it is impossible to manage, evaluate or reorient complex projects without "objectively verifiable" indicators of performance to serve as benchmarks. Nevertheless, project success is sometimes easier to achieve when it does not depend on local initiative, which may not always be forthcoming "on schedule". The Declaration takes the position that sustainable natural resources development must depend on local initiative, even when this involves a tradeoff against more visible short term impacts.

As a consequence, local communities are asked to shoulder greater responsibility for natural resources management, in return for greater decision-authority and more systematic policy support and incentives. Underlying this positive result, however, is the sobering realization that if they do not succeed, *neither government nor donors in fact have the capacity to manage the resource base for them.*

The process as defined involves creating the future basis for sustainable natural resources management and sustainable development emanating from the "non-governmental sector". But private initiative is motivated by different concerns than public initiative, and will require different incentives to mobilize it: *"land rehabilitation must be seen not only as a way of conserving the environment, but above all as a way of improving production and generating sources of income".* Local initiative, while the only viable global strategy, therefore leaves unanswered questions about resource investments which will not improve production and generate income. The evolving new partnership between local populations, governments and international donors and NGOs must therefore find ways of filling this gap in such areas as the preservation of fragile lands, the maintenance of biological diversity and common property management.

Building local capability may be a slower process than usurping local initiative, but past impatience has led to two decades of quick failures. There are structural obstacles, particularly at the donor level, to controlling the impatience for visible short term results. The Declaration does not explicitly address this problem, but clearly articulates different long term priorities.

The linchpin of the new strategy is, of course, the role of rural organizations and NGOs, both

domestic and international[29]. The obstacles to mobilizing rural initiative should not be underestimated when the majority lives at the brink of subsistence and sometimes of survival. The strategy, quite simply, falls apart if local organizations do not play an active and dynamic role. Intensive efforts to enhance local organizational capacity will be required in the coming years, and this raises a number of important issues:

- There is no "formula" for the ideal rural or community organization Those present at Segou showed great diversity in their leadership, organizational structure, power relations, membership and decision-rules.

- Government and donors know relatively little about the local organizations who are to assume the major role in future strategy implementation. Indeed, many of the organizations who will be relevant to future initiatives do not yet exist.

- There is a significant danger of coopting local organizations, and alienating them from their constituencies through the lure of donor money. The challenge is to be supportive of their locally sustainable development without making them dependent on external funding and support.

- NGOs provide a unique source of long term presence and technical support from the international community. When not simply serving as donor contractors, they can intermediate between the two communities (international and local) without the obtrusive presence of foreign technical assistance personnel. The growing links between international and local NGOs provides hope that even the low-profile role of foreign NGOs can give way to domestically-based organizations.

- The already emerging group of "rural intermediaries" is a diverse and articulate local leadership group. They are likely to play an increasingly important role in the "trilogue", and must be assured a place in future discussions.

Conclusions

The Segou Regional Roundtable:

- *wishes Sahelian governments to consider and apply the directives of the Segou meeting;*

- *calls upon rural organizations, the Sahelian governments and the international community to nurture the spirit of Segou by organizing three-sided coordination meetings so that concrete action can be taken to promote sustained development throughout the Sahel;*

- *requests the CILSS and the Club du Sahel to work towards the application of the Segou directives and to continue their examination of the associated issues.*

The Segou Regional Roundtable has made a potentially valuable contribution to natural resources management in the Sahel. The potential will be partially realized only if the three partners make serious, consistent, long term efforts to implement the directives. It will not be fully realized unless local populations are given the authority and take the initiative to improve natural resources management.

POSTSCRIPT: "APRES SEGOU"

The Club du Sahel, in collaboration with CILSS and the donor community, has begun planning for the follow-on activities "After Segou". These efforts are vital if the Segou orientations are to have any real impact on field initiatives.

The immediate objective is to assure that both preparatory documents and results of the roundtable are disseminated widely both within and outside the Sahel. A number of small follow-up meetings have already taken place, and several more are in the planning stages. Continued exchanges of information and views with host government and rural organizations are the most important elements in this process.

The intermediate range objective is to maintain momentum on the analytical processes initiated in Segou. Three main themes have been selected:

1. Ecological rehabilitation and preservation

2. Decentralization

3. Land tenure

For each, working groups (Sahelian, international) will be constituted to continue the learning process, to monitor specific initiatives and propose strategic options. The first meetings of the working groups are scheduled for late October, 1989.

The next phase objective is to undertake long term policy studies in each of the three areas, with a view to producing policy recommendations through which the Segou orientations can take concrete form. The studies will be carried out by mixed teams comprised of Sahelian and non-Sahelian members. An important aspect of these studies is the desire to field joint teams in collaboration with CILSS, member states and the major donors. A coordinated approach to develop a shared vision of the Sahel's future options -- perhaps the most important lesson of Segou -- will be the cornerstone of this on-going dialogue.

FOOTNOTES

1. An average of nearly 3% per year throughout the region

2. Areas where rainfall has historically been under 700 mm per year

3. CILSS, based in Ouagadougou, is the *Comite Inter-Etat pour la Lutte Contre la Secheress3 au Sahel*: The Inter-State Committee for the Fight Against Sahelian Drought. It is the regional organization of nine Sahelian states: Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, The Gambia, Cape Verde and Mauritania, plus Guinea-Bissau, which joined in 1988.

The Club des Amis du Sahel, now known simply as the Club du Sahel, represents the principal international donors active in the Sahel. It is based in Paris.

4. For agriculture, livestock, fishing and rural industry

5. Externally-funded projects are typically limited in their duration, unsustainable in their financial and technical assistance intensity, and very limited in their coverage of affected populations.

6. Rochette, et. al., Le Sahel en Lutte Contre la Desertification: Lecons d'Experiences, CILSS and the Programme Allemand CILSS, 1989.
Shaikh, et. al., Opportunities for Sustained Development: Successful Natural Resources Management in the Sahel, USAID, 1988.
Wright, et. al., Ecologie et Developpement Rural au Sahel en Afrique Subsaharienne: Quelques Etudes de Cas, Club du Sahel, 1988.

7. Shaikh, et. al., Summary Report, op. cit., 1988.

8. Rural representatives were brought to Segou several days in advance of other participants. This afforded the opportunity to become familiar with the base documentation, to discuss and influence the meeting agenda and to share information and experiences with other rural participants.

9. The Special Edition (May, 1989) of the CILSS/Club du Sahel New Bulletin, containing summaries of each document, is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix A.

10. The meeting was originally planned for about 80 participants. The large turnout was itself a measure of the level of interest generated by the recognition that, to paraphrase a 1982 AID report (Taylor, et. al.) "natural resources management in the Sahel is at a crossroads".

11. A number of the 150 participants were either there as observers or were not full-time participants.

12. The question of participant incentives affects the level of participation, the rate of adoption both within and beyond a given project and the sustainability of new approaches when projects (and/or outside support) come to an end.

13. There were, of course, exceptions, particularly in individual discussion groups. However, even these exceptions did not become entrenched positions which carried over into even the group reports.

14. The obvious exceptions being in programs where a direct public role leverages further private effort, and/or where the scale of intervention surpasses private capacity.

15. While all parties did endorse the principle, it is evident that several of the endorsements involved differing definitions of what it is.

16. That is, it can be taken away, bought and sold

17. And, to a large extent, in Africa as a whole

18. The discussion centered on formal banking institutions as they currently exist in the Sahel, and as they were known to participants. There was little discussion, if any, of how other parts of the world have, through formal banking institutions, addressed the specific needs of agricultural credit, including for small farmers. At most 3 to 4 participants had any formal background in the banking/credit sector.

19. The discussions in Segou on rural savings potential did not go into a great deal of depth. Two important points did come up, though. One, that there is more local saving available than is generally assumed in national planning analyses: from merchants, rich farmers, cash remittances and even from the "good year" surpluses of middle to small farmers; second, there are few outlets for such savings at present, leading to consumption rather than investment; third, even relatively small overall volumes of available savings may be quite large relative to local needs; finally, that the overhead costs associated with mobilizing savings and providing credit locally are much lower than for a national banking system, for which it is often uneconomic to provide very small loans.

20. It is worth making the distinction between outside technical assistance and outside financial support. Many rural organizations, including some which made this argument, do receive financial support which ultimately comes from foreign donors or international NGOs. They may also receive training and organizational development support. They note the important difference between such assistance, which helps the local community to take responsibility for local resource problems, and externally funded "projects" in which the initiative comes from outside and "participation" becomes more a question of providing the bodies than of taking charge of the problem.

21. Given the composition of the delegates, this necessarily implies a majority of male participants as well.

22. Otto, Jonathan, Report to the US PVO Community, July, 1989.

23. See the Shaikh, Rochette and Wright reports cited in Appendix.

24. African Development Bank, April, 1989 (Prepared by DAI and E/DI).

25. Banjul, May-June, 1989

26. In terms of total expenditures vs. total benefits to date. Three major factors have contributed: first, a very high proportion of projects have failed; second, the majority of projects have been relatively expensive "demonstration projects" without the follow-on (lower cost) "replication phase" implicit in project justifications; third, experience has shown that benefits may take a long time to mature (mostly the time needed for project messages to be adapted to populations' needs), but that many projects are terminated unless they show short term results.

27. The term "private efforts" includes non-government or project sponsored initiatives by individuals and households, local communities, rural organizations and some NGOs.

28. The term "NGO" covers a broad enough range to require further definition. It is used here to refer to those non-governmental or voluntary organizations who maintain a long term field presence, who are oriented towards community development rather than project outputs and who are able to operate relatively independently of public funding and its exigencies -- i.e, to the majority of NGOs. There are, however, both domestic and international NGOs which do not meet these criteria.

APPENDIX A

Special issue of CILSS/CLUB Bulletin
on SEGOU Conference
with
Summaries of Key Documents

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INFORMATION

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REGIONAL ENCOUNTER SEGOU, MALI, LOCAL LEVEL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL

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VILLAGES AGAINST THE DESERT: RANAWA AND NOOGO

To launch our subject, we are publishing portraits of two villages in Yatenga Province, Burkina Faso. The first describes how the villagers have taken up the fight against the desert; the second focuses on the women's struggle. These two examples, taken from two villages in the same part of the country, are published together to show the unity of this fight, even though each has his or her own specific part to play. The active role of the women must never be forgotten or underestimated; it is a factor of the utmost importance for sustained development in the Sahel.

THE TWO KEYS TO RAWANA'S SUCCESS: EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES AND A WELL ORGANIZED POPULATION

DESERTIFICATION OF A VILLAGE

The village of Ranawa stands on the Mossi Plateau. Besides producing sufficient food for their own needs (millet, sorghum and cowpea), local farmers also used to grow groundnuts and, from the 1950s onwards, cotton. But since that time, and despite seasonal emigration, the population has increased continually, whilst rainfall has declined from 800 mm in the fifties and sixties to 500 mm in the 1980s.

As a result,

- there is a shortage of water, for crops and for domestic use;
- there is a shortage of good arable land; the soil is exhausted; fields on sloping ground have turned into bare waste, while the bottom lands are eroded or inadequate;
- deforestation is almost total; men and women alike are fully conscious of the increasing rarity of fuelwood and timber, and the almost complete disappearance of fruit and forage trees;
- between 1981 and 1988, the only year with an adequate grain crop was 1986; the food production deficit is chronic and deepseated; cotton and groundnuts now bring in almost no money;
- increasing numbers of men are emigrating, and they now emigrate for good: between 1975 and 1985 the village lost 150 of its inhabitants.

Under these conditions - typical of the Mossi Plateau - recovery seems particularly difficult to achieve. But it has begun.

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES, FULLY MASTERED BY THE POPULATION

The OXFAM-financed Yatenga Agro-Forestry Project (PAF) is being carried out in collaboration with the national forestry and water authority. It has successfully popularized the technique of building stone lines to hold back surface runoff on the village common land and in fields worked by individual men or women. The stone lines are built along the contour lines, fruit and forage trees are planted along the stone lines in the newly laid out fields, and the ancient technique of *Zay* or *Zai* (water pockets hollowed out in the sloping ground) has been introduced.

While earlier work was carried out entirely by the farmers and their families, the Fonds de l'Eau et de l'Equipement Rural (FEER) sent its machines and topographers to lay out anti-erosion sites: 50 ha. in 1983, 60 ha. in 1984 and 60 ha in 1987. The farmers were called in merely as laborers, with the enticement of food rations. But the farmers never completed the sites, or have not maintained them.

The ORD officer (the ORD is a government agricultural service), with PAF monitoring, has taught the use of manure pits - every farm now has one. A *bouli* or miniature dam was built in 1985 with the NAAM groups and the NGO "Six S"; a filter bund was built in 1986 with help from the French volanteer organization AFVP. On the other hand two village woodlots established with forestry and water authority support have failed, and popularization of improved cookstoves has not yet succeeded.

THE DECISIVE ROLE OF THE FARMERS' ORGANIZATION

Ranawa is well endowed with organizations, partly because the village has four districts, which have joined forces two by two. There are:

- Four village groups (VGs), two men's and two women's, set up as an ORD initiative;
- One men's NAAM group and one women's for each block of two districts; these have "Six S" backing;
- A GVR or "Groupement Villageois Révolutionaire", embracing all the other groups and involving the whole village.

Besides making it possible to carry out the schemes listed above, these organizations have set up other schemes, e.g. two grain banks (VGs and NAAMs) and a millet mill (NAAMs). But there are problems: women who have not joined the NAAM are not allowed to use the mill; the ORD relies on the VGs to manage large-scale schemes not coordinated with the PAF schemes; and there are too many unconnected agencies wanting to help Ranawa, as it is known to be an active village.

The decisive event in organizational terms has been the creation of a works management committee within the GVR, at the instigation of the PAF: it has small-scale equipment and a grain reserve, from which any individual or group can borrow grain when undertaking anti-erosion work; the grain is repaid after harvest, and repayments have been duly made for four years now, however good or bad the harvest. The committee decides on its year's schedule according to each person's demand.

RECOVERY IS UNDER WAY

There is still much to be done to recover land and water and to reestablish the vegetation. But with techniques they now understand and with all the experience they have gained, the villagers know they can succeed. It is the women who still face the greatest difficulties, as their rights of access to water, land and trees are still very limited. The villagers are aware of the added strength their organizations give them; they know they must still train decisionmakers and overcome their disagreements; they also know these divisions are maintained by the lack of coordination among those trying to help them, and the resulting overload of work. But they do not see how or why they should refuse help from one agency or another.

Lastly, the villagers - the women especially - are lucid about the need to strike a balance between their needs and those of the environment. Analyzing developments in their village, the women say, "Things were not like that before. There were fewer people." They explain that "The money for the first child's food goes to nursing the second, who ought not to have come so soon after; you spend money on nursing care instead of buying the millet, bread and sugar that would make the children strong. We'd be glad ourselves if the births were further apart." And they specify one essential condition for bringing this about: "The big problem is the husband. A woman has to fit in with her husband - like the lid of a box." ■

R.M. Rochette

IN NOOGO THE WOMEN HAVE REBELLED AGAINST THE DESERTIFICATION OF THEIR LAND

THE DISAPPEARING RESOURCES: WATER, EARTH AND MEN

"In the village of Noogo, as in Ranawa, the climate is deteriorating, the grain deficit mounting and male emigration increasing. Where it was once mainly young single men who emigrated, today the married men also leave. Women now make up 60% of the resident population. Left alone with the children and old people, they must look to the smooth running of the farm, and if their husbands do not come home for the cropping season, they must work all the family's fields as well as their own. Mutual self-help among the women grows increasingly rare, while the heavy jobs - fuelwood, water and grain milling - gets heavier. When the head of the household does come home he will bring each wife just the traditional gift of two lengths of cloth and a pair of plastic sandals. He will have full control over a grainstore filled by the labor of the women and children, plus the income he earned while away. The women do not complain: "We do it to keep our homes, so as not to destroy the marriage", they say. For that is the great threat: "If things go badly in the village, all the men will leave and we shall be alone with the children."

So the women have invested all their energies in the fight against desertification. "Before, we cowered before our husbands, but the women are on their feet now and are trying to halt this destruction."

WORKSITES WITH A HUMAN FACE

In 1986 the village mobilized and, by their own means, collected 56 piles of stones to build stone lines to retain water. The ORD extension worker, an energetic and adaptable woman who lives in the village, alerted the FEER/ORD Program and the PAF, who decided to offer help. In the space of two consecutive dry seasons, the villagers have accomplished a great deal. Work is organized by the Village Group with advice from the extension worker. Average site attendance has been 350 persons, 75% of them women, theoretically two days a week though sometimes three or four days. Mostly the women gather and carry the stones; some have been trained to use a water level to trace the contour lines. Work is divided by age group: the younger women carry the stones, the rest build the stone lines. The old and infirm take care of breastfed babies in the shade near the site, where their mothers can feed them in comfort. Others prepare the meal. Everyone has the right to a meal.

ACTION ON MANY FRONTS

Besides their tremendous work on the anti-erosion works, the women of Noogo have been active in other ways. They have built improved cookstoves to economize on fuelwood; in their common field the extension worker has taught them new cropping techniques which conserve the soil better; they take part in digging manure pits, and are guaranteed access to the manure. Lastly, they have won agreement for a mill, and a well to water dry season crops in their market gardens.

WOMEN AND MEN TOGETHER

The approach taken in Noogo has been a global one, and men and women alike have been involved in training and consciousness raising. The ORD extension worker in the village has played a decisive part, and the strong motivation of the women has also been determinant: "Everything that's been done in the village is thanks to the women; there are even some reactionary husbands who think all this zeal on the anti-erosion sites is a waste of time. But the women are intelligent: they want to produce a lot on a little land." Working collectively has strengthened solidarity among the women and made for greater cohesion in the women's group. Efficient and organized, the women take part in meetings involving the future of the village, where once they were not allowed to attend. For these reasons they are ready to accept such considerable inconveniences as overwork and an end to their cotton spinning.

NEW IDEAS ABOUT CHILDREARING

Asked about childbearing, Noogo women deplore the way "the population is increasing and the rains are decreasing; children are a problem now." Pregnancies are closer together than before because the traditional two-year abstinence after each birth is no longer observed. Far from admiring a woman who has been through eleven pregnancies, the women are disapproving: "Their babies are puny and waste away, and the mothers grow old too fast." They consider three things necessary for a child: proper nourishment, proper clothing, and school. But those things are costly and "without the means, children bring nothing but tears." They have heard about family planning, and think modern contraception is a good way of spacing out their births. But they are afraid of their husbands' anger - and of possible beatings. Their demand is clear: "We must be given the means to control these pregnancies," they say; but first it is important to "convince our ignorant husbands."

The experience of Noogo shows how committed the women of the Mossi Plateau are to the restoration of their land. They are determined to hold back the water, the earth and the men, manage the natural resources better, and rear better fed, better clothed, better educated children. Far removed from the Pharaonic worksites of some large scale projects, Noogo also shows that desertification control schemes can take account of the physical and family-based restrictions on women, without compromising on efficiency. Such examples may lead the way to a higher socio-economic status for women. The first three little girls sent to school from Noogo (in 1988) will be twenty in the year 2000.

■

Marie Monimart

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THE SEGOU REGIONAL ENCOUNTER ON LOCAL LEVEL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

On May 22-27 1989, the town of Ségou, Mali, will be hosting a regional encounter for representatives of the three main parties involved in rural development in the Sahel: the rural organizations, the government authorities and the aid agencies. The topic under discussion will be local level natural resource management. This is a major event in the 1989/90 working schedule of the CILSS and the Club du Sahel.

"Village land management" is not really a new fashion - the issues to be discussed at the Regional Encounter can all be found in the first version of the "strategy for development and desertification control in the Sahel" adopted ten years ago by the CILSS and the Club du Sahel. Although the title of the Encounter is still relatively new and "fashionable", the subjects it covers are well known and have long been on the agenda.

One could almost say that the choice of title is the outcome of long years of experience in rural development and desertification control. For the inexorable forward march of desertification against a background of continual population growth means that the top priority today is to manage available resources, water and soil in particular, and so save existing productive land assets, rather than merely to encourage higher agricultural production. Solutions to sectoral problems can only be found by taking account of how the farmer manages his activities as a whole (the global approach). There is a growing organizational momentum in the rural Sahel, and the rural communities are increasingly taking the management of village lands in hand themselves, with or without government support; the importance of this development has already been stressed in *The Futures Study*. The Regional Encounter is intended as an exchange of experiences and information, a way of making the most of the knowhow, the development strategies and the many different responses that participants (the representatives of rural organizations most especially) have brought to bear on the problems they have encountered.

Local level natural resource is a new field of reference and action, a way of gradually moving from purely technical adaptations to the underlying social and economic logic of the problems faced. The approach this entails has two key characteristics: it is a global approach, and it is a concerted approach.

A GLOBAL APPROACH

The Regional Seminar on desertification, held in Nouakchott in 1984 by the CILSS and the Club du Sahel, stressed the crucial importance of two points:

- genuine, voluntary commitment by the populations concerned,
- integration of farming and forestry activities.

For the CILSS and the Club du Sahel, application of the global approach meant making a break with the previous sectoral, piecemeal approach. One of the arguments used in support of this global approach was that "... it is the local inhabitants that design and carry out schemes according to their needs, the possibilities open to them, and the help they receive. Their actions are necessarily sectoral, but they are chosen in term of a global approach aimed at maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of their production systems."

A CONCERTED APPROACH

The role of rural organizations in the Sahel (governmental or non-governmental) is now considered essential. However, communication has not yet been established on a large scale between the different parties involved in development: the organized rural population groups, Sahelian government decisionmakers and foreign donors.

It is for this reason that the Secretariats of the CILSS and the Club du Sahel focus a part of their activities on strengthening cooperation between these parties. The Regional Encounter will bring together for the first time in a region-wide forum the three categories concerned: rural organizations from the Sahel countries, the Sahelian governments and the donors.

A NECESSARY TRANSFER OF SKILLS

In the approach described it is recognized that the rural communities and their individual members will be the main actors in village land development; the aim is to strengthen their ability to carry it through effectively.

This means transferring skills and knowhow to the local level. It also means formalizing new procedures for action and creating new instruments of development that will allow genuine partnership between local people and outside agents, Sahelian or foreign.

THE SEGOU REGIONAL ENCOUNTER

Various recent studies have stressed three important points for the future of the rural Sahel:

- the Sahel already possesses proven techniques for conserving, restoring or improving the productive potential of the land, be it individually held or common land;
- independent self-organization by local inhabitants among themselves plays a key part in effective, widespread application of these techniques;
- these techniques will only lead to sustained development if they are employed with a view to introducing thoroughgoing changes in existing farming systems. This is not possible without the technical, material and institutional assistance of government services and aid agencies anxious to foster the independence, initiative and capacity to act of village and inter-village organizations.

It is in this context, and at this stage of development, that the Secretariats of the CILSS and the Club du Sahel suggested organizing the Ségou Regional Encounter. About 120 people will take part in the event, including forty representatives of the rural Sahelian population. The topics will be as follows:

- conservation of the environment and its production potential,
- participation by rural population groups,
- changing farming systems within a global approach.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Besides the preparatory material written for the Encounter, the event should first produce the conclusions of the working groups on each topic discussed (accounts of experiences, conclusions, proposals and/or wishes/hypotheses). A strategic summary of the work of the Encounter will also be drawn up. This report will not constitute a strategy comparable to that developed at Nouakchott, but rather a coherent set of accounts of experiences, reflections, conclusions and agreed proposals; no doubt it will also report on disagreements and on point forgotten.

One of the first possible outcomes of the Encounter could be the organization of national consultations with the rural organizations. The aim would be to capitalize on experience gained, to identify obstacles to the promotion of rural organizations and to join forces to clear such obstacles. Consultations could be organized by province or department, at national level or Sahel-wide, on particular points that the Encounter has shown to be particularly important or urgent (e.g. controlling population growth, or promoting mutual funds for savings or credit). National consultations could be organized soon on the difficult but very important issue of decentralizing government and government services, and also decentralizing the external aid agencies from their headquarters

MAIN DOCUMENTS

The folder for the Encounter will firstly include a set of four documents setting out the respective experiences and ideas of the three parties consulted on the main topics.

Sustained development in the Sahel: the role of the local organizations.
This is an assessment of the approaches and experiences of the rural organizations, drawn from documents prepared country by country and collated by Soumana Traoré, CILSS/Club du Sahel consultant.

Sahelian government policies: approaches to integrated rural development and desertification control.
A report on this topic was drawn up for each country by a national of that country, and the reports were collated by CILSS consultants Abdoulaye Kane and Sylvestre Ouedraogo.

Trends in the drought and desertification control strategies of major donor agencies in the West African Sahel.
This report on the means and policies of the aid agencies was drawn up by Club du Sahel consultant Chris Reij.

Women and sustained development in the Sahel.
This is a report on the policies and actions of the Sahelian governments and aid agencies concerning women's role in relation to the topics under discussion. The report covers Mali and Burkina Faso and has been written by Marie Monimart and Marthe Doka-Diarra, CILSS/Club du Sahel consultants.

These documents will be distributed to all participants before the meeting, and should act as a focus for the debates. Given their particular role in the Encounter, they have not been summarized for this newsletter special issue.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

A second set of documents, consisting of twelve technical reports, will be supplied on request to interested participants. As the entire folder is very bulky, however, all these documents are summarized in the following pages our special issue.

The first three documents assess some projects that are felt to be heading in the right direction; the rest provide additional analyses of a number of sociological, organizational, institutional and technical aspects.

Jacob A. Rooimans

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS FOR THE ENCOUNTER

- **Opportunities for Sustained Development: Successful Natural Resources Management in the Sahel (Shaikh et al);**
- **Lessons of the Fight against the Desertification of the Sahel (ed. Rochette);**
- **Ecology and Rural Development in Subsaharan Africa: Selected Case Studies (Wright, Weber & Broekhuyse);**
- **Options for Promoting User-based Governance of Sahelian Renewable Natural Resources (Thomson et al);**
- **The Dynamics of Organization in the Rural Sahel (Snrech);**
- **Women in the Fight Against Desertification (Monimart);**
- **Savings and Credit in the Rural Areas of the Sahel (Caputo);**
- **Land Tenure Policies and Natural Resource Management in Sahelian West Africa (Lawry);**
- **Analysis of CILSS Member States' Legislation and Regulations in Natural Resource Management (CILSS publication; ed. Goumandakoya);**
- **The Present State of Soil and Water Conservation in the Sahel (Reij);**
- **Prospects for Improving Productivity in Sorghum and Pearl Millet Systems in West Africa (Matlon);**
- **Livestock activities in the Sahel (Pons).**

LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

A number of organizations, including the CILSS and the Club du Sahel, have recently made more or less systematic comparative studies of concrete steps taken by villages, singly or jointly. These analyses have two purposes: to spread information about what are often positive experiences indicating possible ways forward for rural Sahelians; and, in order to gain a better grasp of the significance of a global approach, to analyse the technical, economic and social factors in success or failure and how they interconnect. Below we publish the conclusions of three of these case studies.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT: SUCCESSFUL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL

Main report: April 1988
Asif Shaikh et al.
Summary by L. Bossard

For the past fifteen years the ecology of the Sahel has been undergoing profound changes, and in places the Sahelian zone in the strict sense has shifted 61 to 133 km south. It is therefore imperative to stop using the traditional pluviometric measurements in planning projects. Because of this ecological crisis, West Africans are more open to innovation, and innovation becomes in itself a natural resource.

The team analyzed 70 initiatives in the field in terms of the following criteria:

- Has soil fertility improved or soil degradation been halted?
- Has water utilization or water management improved?
- Has the vegetation cover increased, especially as regards plants that stabilize the soil, increase soil fertility or improve water availability?
- Have the conditions for biological diversity been developed or maintained, including horticulture, crop varieties, animal species and habitats?
- Has the productivity of human labor increased, enabling individuals or communities to consecrate more time and/or income to managing natural resources?

The team's main observations in the field were as follows:

THE TECHNIQUES AND THEIR IMPACT

As regards water conservation, there are many traditional techniques in West Africa. It would seem that projects on too large a scale are often beyond farmers' technical, financial and organizational capacities. In the schemes the team visited, timely arrival of inputs, loans and assistance was the critical point that only too often decided the scheme's success or failure.

Soil conservation brings less immediate benefits than water conservation; the known techniques demand a great deal of work and often imply a temporary drop in production. Most initiatives are to be found in areas of most severe degradation.

In many of the projects analyzed, technology transfer is not thorough enough, and concern for technological factors fades away with the project team. On the other hand, local initiatives very often lack both the means and the authority to develop.

In agroforestry, the team observed a wide range of schemes combining traditional and modern techniques, and were particularly interested in integrated management systems combining trees, shrubs and crops: associations of *Acacia albida* to fix nitrogen and produce fodder, hedges of sizal and spurge, orchards, individual woodlots.

Generally speaking the farmers are highly motivated towards reforestation, and anxious to learn to plant and care for the trees; but they are mistrustful of the forestry authorities, who have a reputation as law enforcers rather than educators. Large scale natural forest management projects have shown that fuelwood and timber can be produced economically on a decentralized basis by introducing a few exotic species alongside the natural species.

MAINTAINING BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The drought has led people to encroach on the wilderness and increase the pressure put on it by their hunting and fishing activities. Wild animals are now seen as enemies. Unfortunately, maintaining biological diversity is not a priority for Sahelian governments, who see it as an alternative to economic development rather than its complement, though the farmers themselves are aware of the need for such diversity. The team found only a few initiatives launched to conserve diversity in local flora, however; such schemes are exceptions, and cannot counter the pressures imposed by economic necessity. Maintaining biological diversity cannot be an issue in itself; it must be combined with economic incentives.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

It is obvious that where natural resource management brings jobs and higher incomes, technical assistance has acted only as a booster to overcome a specific technological limitation. Similarly the existence of a ready market is a strong stimulus in developing woodlot. It may also be necessary to give people a financial interest at the start of a project and then to develop an economically profitable, self-managed activity (for example, a farmers' cooperative may be set up to take over the management of a plantation). Another initial stimulus already tried out is free distribution of forest tree seeds; yet another is "social"

recognition (e.g. in Senegal, a woman has been decorated by President Diouf for her work in running a tree nursery).

POLITICAL MEASURES AND INCREASED INCOMES

Political measures have a catalyst effect when, like the Malian law on improved cookstoves, they meet a need. But if they are purely restrictive, like a ban on hunting or bush burning, they merely worsen relations between the government authorities and the rural population. The most effective political measures are those that transfer ownership of land from the State to the village communities, provide training for these communities outside the institutional structures, or develop local authority structures.

ANALYSIS OF FIELD OBSERVATIONS

CULTURAL ECOLOGIES

There is an observable trend towards increasing homogeneity in cultural ecologies, an increasing mixture of cultures within a given area, increasing sedentarization, etc. This leads to inter-ethnic competition for the same resources as ethnic specialization declines.

SCALE, COST AND TIMESCALE OF OPERATIONS; TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Operations vary enormously in geographical scope, cost and duration, from the planting of a village woodlot to a river valley development scheme. Broadly speaking the impact of planting a small woodlot or managing an area of natural forest (both fairly low-cost operations) will be felt three times faster than the impact of an industrial scale plantation or a forest reserve protection scheme (which are also more costly).

Technical assistance, too, varies enormously according to the scale of the operation; in small individual operations there is none, while in valley development schemes it may be available on a very large scale. In general, local inhabitants prefer long term technical assistance as sometimes practiced by NGOs.

LESSONS

Analysis of 70 experiments in the field reveals many successes, though these are still isolated cases and have not been integrated into any coherent strategy. The study clearly shows that an effective approach to natural resource management has to aim first and foremost at solving environmental problems as such. In other words, more jobs and higher incomes must be created out of the natural resource management itself. In many cases the local population has different objectives to the government. For example, one may want to plant eucalyptus to protect the crops, the other to sell the wood.

It is very hard to say whether an operation is a success or a failure until it has been running a certain length of time; as a rule it takes ten years for a scheme to mature, and even longer if a new technique is being used.

Lastly, it is important to design projects in such a way that, in the long run, they foster genuine participation by the local people and help develop the donors' skills; there has to be a repeatable, pragmatic process in which, for each individual project, the initial objectives can be reviewed and altered and the operation suitably adapted to the specific local culture.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

The authors have graded the 70 experiments into six groups for financial analysis: windbreaks, *Acacia albida*, hedges, chemical fertilizers, organic fertilizers and compost, small-scale irrigation schemes. A first calculation gives the rate of profitability of each technique taken singly. And if one considers two or several of these techniques in combination, it can be seen that the most financially profitable combinations are not necessarily the best in technical terms. Broadly speaking, in "*Acacia albida* programs" for example, there is a considerable gap between the financial value of a scheme for the farmer and long term economic profitability (i.e. environmental conservation); this is a good reason for combining these schemes with more financially attractive operations.

CONCLUSIONS

People have succeeded in regenerating degraded land and creating productive micro-environments through their labor; and their task has been facilitated by the growing interest shown by governments and donors in natural resource management.

However, there remain two major obstacles: (a) the lack of any clear laws on landed property, and (b) lack of training for farmers - and also for donors and government services.

Farmer-innovators play an important part in launching the momentum. Yet so far little effort has been made to encourage such innovators and enable them to benefit from their own initiatives or help others to benefit.

Changes in government policy have increased incentives to farmers to manage natural resources more rationally (e.g. the Malian law on improved cookstoves). In the coming years governments will have to play an increasing part in resolving conflicts between crop farmers and herders, between wildlife and domestic animals, etc. To this effect land law will have to be clarified to allow private ownership of land, without which there will be no investment in environmental protection.

Successful experiences have created a favorable climate for greater effort. It has been observed that once a farmer has tried a resource management activity that brings in a return, he is often keen to start another, complementary activity. For example, a farmer who has agreed to plant acacia trees (in the knowledge that one tree will bring in $ 3 to $ 5 at the end of 3 years) will also be prepared to try soil conservation measures that may reduce his output in the short term.

A good resource management method can only spread if the socio-economic environment offers incentives.

This is why long term action must be combined with activities that generate income in the short term. The disparity

between farmers' interests and those of the State means that projects must be approached consistently but flexibly. Of course the ideal case is the purely individual initiative stimulated by the existence of a potential market, but this kind of initiative cannot be automatically reproduced, as not all rural Sahelians have the same capacity for initiative.

It will be another twenty years before the impact of successful operations makes itself felt on a large scale. The time it takes to establish a climate of confidence and participation is often longer than the time it takes to build a bunds or plant a woodlot. The minimum timescale for a natural resource management drive is twenty years.

PRIORITIES FOR A "NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGY"

To have a real impact, a natural resources strategy should take the form of a generation contract between local population groups, their governments and the donors, on four fronts:

- **Biophysical:** establishing a form of management capable of maintaining natural resources and supporting the needs of the rural economy.

- **Economic:** facilitating the supply of seed and inputs in cash crop areas, sharing the cost of these products in food crop areas, sharing the cost of natural resource management initiatives where rates of economic return are higher than rates of financial return, and sharing risks, especially by developing credit facilities with financial backing from the donors.

- **Institutional:** improving the definition of priorities and resource allocation. Extending training and transferring certain skills.

- **Political:** Settling the land ownership problem, increasing local control over natural resources, adjusting the prices of farm and forest products in line with their true economic value.

LESSONS OF THE FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION IN THE SAHEL

A joint work edited by R.M. Rochette,
P.A.-C.I.L.S.S., June 1988,
Summary by L. Bossard

The first part of this document analyzes 21 development experiences: nine from Burkina Faso, five from Mali, five from Niger, one from Mauritania and one from Senegal. Most are from the Saharo-Sahelian or Sudano-Sahelian zones.

Each case study covers one specific community and the land it uses; all were conducted in cooperation with the local inhabitants and development officers.

The second part of the paper draws some lessons from these studies, asking four questions:

- What do drought and desertification mean for the people and the projects?
- What desertification control measures have proven technically effective, and under what conditions?
- How can the population be encouraged to participate in a responsible way?
- Does the experiment in question indicate any concrete proposals for implementing the global, concerted, integrated approach, or the "land development/regional development" approach, both of which are crucial elements in the search for a new socio-ecological balance?

From these case studies, the authors draw three sets of conclusions:

The Sahel possesses considerable assets in terms of proven or promising techniques and methods.

Land development must take account of these assets as well as the problems of stock herding and hydrological basin development; and it must do so as part of a coherent national development scheme.
Better soil and water resource management is imperative, especially since a return to normal rainfall will at first accelerate soil degradation.
The productivity of tillage must be improved, by lightening the burden of work involved in applying these techniques and increasing the productivity of soils and crops.
Crop diversification is also needed, to reestablish a balanced use of land, to widen the range of sources of income and make incomes more secure, and to facilitate mixed farming (crops with livestock).
Emphasis must, everywhere, be put on the application of simple mechanical technologies and the availability of such equipment as carts and wheelbarrows (encouraging local production).
Promising organic methods (farm agroforestry especially) must be encouraged; individuals and groups or communities must be trained in tree husbandry and nursery work, and must be recognized as the owners of the trees.
Participation by local people is an absolute necessity, even where skilled help is needed to apply the technique in question.

All operations must be based on local communities' socio-cultural and organizational assets.

It is important to recognize the validity of local human resources and techniques; starting from these, technological improvements can be suggested that are in line with local needs, that the community can introduce and that individuals can learn. It is crucial to work in cooperation with the population, establishing a link between the satisfaction of immediate needs and long term needs. Except in extreme cases the "food for work" formula is inappropriate to this perspective; where a food contribution is necessary, it should be regarded as helping out for a short period only, for the purposes of a specific task the population has decided on.

Drought and underdevelopment have brought women to the forefront, in terms of work and responsibility alike.
It is therefore imperative to lighten their domestic burdens and make training and information (family planning matters included) more readily available to them.

Farmers' mutuals and non-profit bodies for savings and credit must be given support

and encouragement. Development assistance must be designed to make the most of local human resources by offering training and access to positions of responsibility.

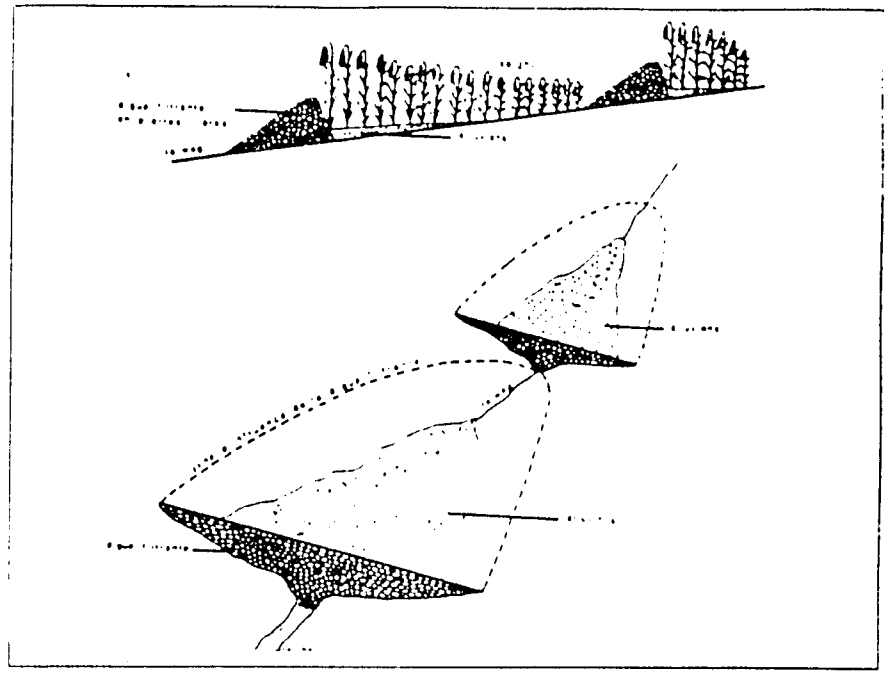
Institutional and cooperative assets must be concretized and developed.

The most important structural adjustment the Sahel governments have to make is to reestablish a socio-ecological balance. To achieve this, the authors recommended that they set up coherent programs based on (a) coordination at all levels, (b) local land development, (c) national development and (d) furtherance of participation by local people. Special care must be taken to genuinely integrate desertification control into development plans, to introduce nature studies into training systems, and to gain control over population growth.

The improvement of women's status must cease to be treated as a passing fad and must be made a reality (access to schooling, legal status etc.).

Governments must guarantee ownership rights for individuals and communities and must take steps to decentralize the right to plan, develop and manage the land.

NGOs must be encouraged in their activities even though they are known to make mistakes. In bilateral, multilateral and international aid, which is often sull poorly matched to needs, discussion and cooperation must be fostered and technical, material and financial assistance must be faster and more flexible. ■



ECOLOGY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Peter Wright, Jan Broekhuyse, Fred Weber, Soren Lund,
Club du Sahel, October 1988
Summary by Peter Wright, adapted by Serge Snrech

This paper reports on eight projects and farmers' organizations, assessing the sustainability of each in technical, economic, political and institutional terms. The notion of sustainability is here applied both to the use of natural resources and to development activities.

Sustained development implies changes not only in the production system, but also in the existing social structures.

The study describes the connection between existing Sahelian social structures and farming systems on the one hand and the deterioration of natural resources on the other. It concludes that this deterioration is largely due to the use of inappropriate farming systems, to the disorganization of societies where traditional governing structures have died out and have not been replaced, and to inappropriate development efforts in which farmers' own capacities are too often underestimated. As a result, underlying rural cultures have changed; there has been a shift from "subsistence societies" based on agriculture to "survival societies" based on dependence on outside resources and overuse of the few remaining natural resources. This has reached the point where, in the absence of any tacitly agreed rules on resource management, many parts of the region now hold a higher population rate than they can sustainably support. Sustained development will necessarily involve a global change in social structures and production systems.

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Global resource management must be promoted as a complement to specific tecnniques aimed at specific problems.

The authors conclude that the changes that best contribute to a sustainable use of ecological and agricultural resources are those that improve the overall management of a production system. Techniques that are not geared towards resource management can of course provide answers to individual production problems, but they do not significantly help to improve the production system as a whole. Resource management oriented approaches seem to pay off in many ecological situations, although such approaches are not yet very widespread.

Technical responses to production problems are far quicker and easier to implement than a global resource management approach. In production systems where resource utilization is fairly complex - as indeed it often is - introducing global resource management means introducing changes in social structures at the same time. But fostering change in social structures takes time, and does not usually count among the aims of donors or Sahelian decisionmakers responsible for rural development.

Rural organizations to the forefront

A first response to the need for change in social structures has been supplied by independent rural organizations. Handling their human and financial resources with skill, they have successfully launched many development activities. Still more significantly, they have shown themselves sufficiently competent and confident to promote innovative approaches for sustained resource utilization.

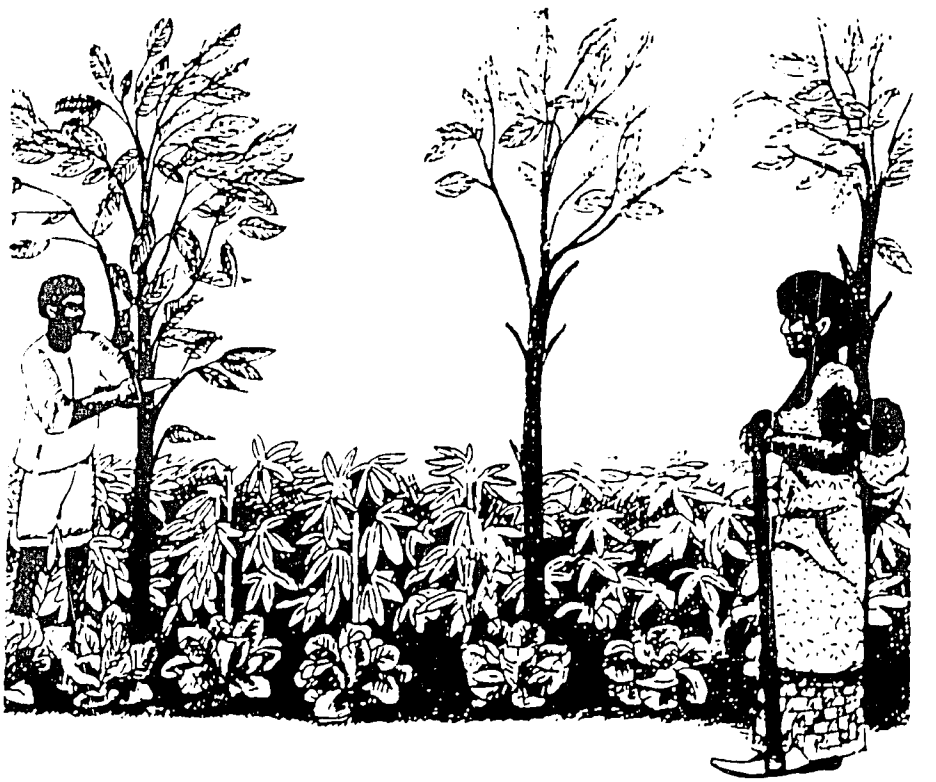
But the current political and institutional environment does not enable rural communities to reorganize themselves and gain real control over the use of their natural resources. There are exceptions, where a large scale operation launched as part of an aid project leads to changes of policy on such problems as land ownership systems, users' rights to resources, or guaranteed benefits for those investing in long term conservation activities. These changes have enabled some rural organizations to gain better control over their productive resources as a whole - human, financial and natural. These are the cases that offer the highest chances of sustained development.

Involving legislators and users in a common dynamic

In most present cases, the political or institutional decisionmakers involved in natural resource utilization do not seem to be very highly motivated or to have a very clear view of how they might use - or share - their power and responsibilities. On the other hand resource users have little right of control over resource use. As a result, examples of how sustained development can be put into effect are still only very fragmentary. One can only hope that local communities will be given greater responsibility in natural resource management matters, and that governments will establish clear, well adapted legal frameworks.

Questions pending ....

These case studies raise a number of questions about the concept of sustained development. Is it a priority? If so, other questions immediately follow: Are donors prepared to change their policies on financial and technical aid? Are governments prepared to hand down a part of their political, financial and institutional power to the rural communities? Are these communities prepared to organize themselves and subject themselves to rigorous self-control in their use of natural resources? And can the aid agencies, governments and rural communities sit down to discuss and agree on these measures and others in an atmosphere of mutual respect and shared responsibility?



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DECENTRALIZATION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE RURAL WORLD

The case studies summarized in the preceding pages provide a clear illustration of the vitally important role of rural population groups in determining the success or failure of development projects in general and natural resource management projects in particular. Rural population groups must cease to be seen as targets for development, but must be considered as central partners in a concerted approach adopted by all the actors involved in the development process. The conceptual and executive roles of farmers' groups now appear to be the key to sustainable development in the Sahel. It remains to be seen, however, just how tasks can be distributed between government services and organized population groups, and close attention must be paid to the limitations, potential and conditions for survival of each. And what role will women be allowed to play in the future, considering that they are already the pillars of these rural organizations?

OPTIONS FOR PROMOTING USER-BASED GOVERNANCE OF SAHELIAN RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES

James T. Thomson et al
Summary by L. Bossard

The institutions that currently govern renewable natural resource management in the Sahel are inadequate..."

The term institution is taken here to mean a set of rules, and not systematically a formal organization. In the Sahel today, a large number of institutions are in a position to contribute to the management of resources at all levels and on all scales. The main institutions are the family, village associations and authorities, local administrations (cantons, arrondissements, etc.), legal codes, rural development, finance and interior ministries, NGOs and donors.

The inadequacy of current resource management policies - characterized by the lack of recognition of local jurisdictions and powers, and by the difficulty experienced by those local powers in mobilizing the financial resources needed to manage their resources - is largely responsible for the relative inertia of Sahelian societies in the face of environmental degradation.

The apparent uniformity of the Sahel actually conceals an extraordinary and highly complex pastiche of micro-environments, which can only really be managed and preserved if everybody that lives in them behaves in an autonomous and responsible fashion. On the basis of this statement, the authors stress a number of fundamental facts:

- Natural resources can be divided into various categories on the basis of exclusion (i.e., the extent to which it is technically feasible to deny access to potential users), and mode of consumption (i.e., whether the resource is consumed in a joint and non-rivalrous manner, or whether consumption is separable and rivalrous).
- Private goods are resources that are subject to exclusion and separate or rivalrous consumption. Arable soils, for example, are considered private goods in many Sahelian rainfed agricultural systems.
- Private goods with externalities, such as water harvesting installations on uphill fields, may have positive effects on downhill holders (reduced threat of erosion), but they may also have negative effects (preventing water from moving downhill during droughts).
- Open access resources, such as grazing land around public boreholes, is open to anyone and everyone, and consumption is separable or competitive.
- Common pool resources are similar to open access resources, except that they are subject to easy exclusion (e.g., shallow aquifers in valley bottoms, where those that hold rights in the valley can get access to the water and use it until the supply is gone).
- Public goods and resources are not easily subject to exclusion. Better air quality, for example, is freely available to all those in the area, and consumption by one person does not potentially or actually interfere with consumption by others.
- Resource management needs rules and authorities (to govern access, etc.) Rules must be flexible and must evolve pragmatically.

THE NEED FOR DECENTRALIZATION

In view of this complexity, the need for real decentralization becomes considerably clearer, and decentralization must rely on resource-specific institutions that can alter management rules in line with the specific resource situation. These institutions must be able to settle disputes between users, and must have the wherewithal to ensure that the resources themselves continue to exist and that management is sustained.

Although it is clear that private goods can only be managed correctly by the basic production unit (on condition that property rights are recognized), there is a need to protect these goods (police) and to resolve any conflicts that may arise (law). Similarly, collective resources must be managed by a collective organization whose authority is freely recognized. That authority will establish rules, and ensure those rules are respected and that resource availability continues. For open access resources, public institutions must prevent attempts by certain parties to keep the resources for their own exclusive use, and must take steps to avoid degradation caused by over-exploitation. In a word, central government cannot avoid promoting private initiative and local government, provided that such promotion is backed by national policies and by appropriate legal and jurisdictional frameworks.

Further, local institutions must fit the type and extent of the resources to be managed, and there is thus a need to review the basic principles of village institutions, which currently cover too many different types

of activities. This should ease and accelerate the process of developing concerted approaches, defining common interests, and resolving conflicts.

RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS

No collective organization can function correctly if it does not establish its own rules as part of a global policy that respects the resources that fall outside its area of competence. This autonomy not only promotes individual consciousness, but also makes it possible to solve most conflicts internally and quickly without needing to turn to formal institutions.

Nevertheless, legal and administrative authorities must always be in a position to intervene at the request of the local institution if the latter cannot establish the ground rules and ensure they are applied and respected.

INSTITUTIONS WITH SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The current state of land-tenure legislation and the fact that insufficient power has been placed in the hands of local communities, these communities cannot use savings and taxes to mobilize the capital needed to set up and implement large-scale natural resource management programs.

In most cases, capital must be brought in from outside, not only to cover basic investments, but also to provide the physical means of management. The problem of recurrent costs has purely financial aspects (how to mobilize the funds that are needed) as well as management-related aspects (how to optimize management of the resource in question). Guaranteed exclusivity of access to a resource by a given group of users (supervision, fences, etc.) is the best incentive for members of that group to participate in management and upkeep costs.

Once this has been established, a joint undertaking can be financed in a number of ways, such as local taxes, work in a collective field (where profits would cover all or part of the operating costs), etc.

Aside from the current difficulties in setting up this type of system (centralization and absence of official local taxes), one major problem remains: paying for access to a resource does not restrict the use of that resource once contributions have been paid. In other words, the "unit price" should reflect both the quantities consumed (and this is very difficult to measure) and the cost of reconstituting the resource once it has been depleted (marginal cost + external cost).

STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

Decentralization and the responsibility of rural organizations are not yet part of the real situation. Nevertheless, initiative has been taken spontaneously at the local level for some time now, and donors have started to change their attitudes and are now exerting pressure on governments to bring changes in the legal, organizational and financial frameworks governing natural resource management.

Today, the decentralization process is still in its early stages, and involves more delegation than real devolution of responsibility. It is now urgent to promote the institutionalization of the transfer of authority to the local level:

- transferring the right of ownership of natural resources to the local users;
- transferring the power to establish management rules to local institutions, which are the only actors in a position to make the rules fit the local context;
- transferring dispute-resolution power to local institutions;
- transferring the power to levy taxes and contributions to the same local institutions.

THE DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATION IN THE RURAL SAHEL

Serge Snrech (summary)

Since the early 1960s, rural Sahelians have been developing modern forms of organization as alternatives to the cooperatives set up by governments. The movement expanded considerably during the two great droughts, as this type of organization was very widely popularized by the NGOs that were flooding into the Sahel to manage aid. Further encouraged by the forced withdrawal of central governments from the rural areas, self-organization is now an established social fact in the Sahel, even if the scale of it varies from country to country.

TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS

These groups have a very wide scope of action, which may include services to individual producers, collective production activities, creation of infrastructures, land development schemes, grain banks for greater food security, and so on. They give the local community access to services which individuals on their own cannot obtain or could only obtain at a much higher price (e.g. input supplies or credit) due to their scale of operation or because they are a way of attracting financial aid.

They are therefore of obvious economic value to their members, and membership depends on this as much as or more than on the social structure they offer. Too many outside agencies idealize this social aspect, sometimes mistakenly attributing it to a "collective" African tradition and assuming that this is the sole reason for the existence of the groups. In fact, self-organization is a modern way of exchanging views and developing ideas, and the opportunities it provides for joint economic activity have a higher chance of success than does individual action. It is also a good way of introducing modernity through the group's more enterprising members. At a time when the rural Sahel needs to adapt very fast to a rapidly changing world, self organization is a first rate instrument of development.

RELATIONS WITH FINANCIAL PARTNERS

Farmers' groups are very often in touch with aid agencies, and the aid agencies have introduced the concept of the "project"; in fact the term has been absorbed

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into many local languages, not in the sense of a forward plan but meaning rather a set of technical development tasks and the financing that comes with them.

But "projects" as currently conceived have some serious shortcomings. While in technical terms they enable considerable progress to be made, they also seriously compromise the group's ability to reflect and adapt, since each project is defined once and for all at the outset, making it very difficult to change the purpose to which the funds are allocated at a later date.

A new form of financing theoretically provides a way out of this problem: this is the "flexible fund" for which the donor lays down only the general conditions for its use, the group members being allowed to decide on the precise application.

There is a very obvious problem of discipline and coordination among the groups' financial backers.

The groups have fallen victim to their own success, receiving far more money than they can handle to best effect. Groups that manage to taylor their rhetoric to donor expectations succeed in obtaining funds for giant schemes even where it is patently obvious they will never be able to realize them, let alone handle longer term maintenance. Meanwhile other groups appeal in vain for the small sums they need to realize their projects. So there is a need to rationalize relations between the groups and their financial backers, especially if the flow of funds is to continue growing.

RELATIONS WITH THE AUTHORITIES

Relations between the groups and the authorities were for many years marred by mistrust and suspicion, but this is gradually changing. As the groups grow, they aspire to the legitimacy that would allow them to become genuine partners to the State authorities in local development matters. The governments, which have hoped for such a momentum to arise, must also make a place for it in the action they take. The gradual formation of federations at various levels - district, department, and up to national level, depending on the country - could improve farmer representation and facilitate "political" dialogue.

THE FUTURE OF THE FARMERS' GROUP

Despite the impressive expansion of the movement, most farmers' groups are still very new and it is hard to foresee how they will develop. It is not clear, for example, whether the movement is heading towards a type of farmers' union, or more towards a form of local authority, in which case the groups would pioneer political devolution and then die out, replaced by small management units.

The farmers' leaders and those working with them need to reflect on all these questions.

WOMEN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION

Marie Monimart
Summary by Theresa Steverlynck

In this study, the role of women has been analyzed through forty-three case studies conducted in six different Sahel countries: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The aim is to identify the factors that will further the economic, social and political advancement of women, with a view to development and desertification control.

The study has deliberately chosen to analyze positive experiences in desertification control (DC). It reaches the conclusion that although desertification has caused severe, destructive disruptions, it has also generated a momentum for change. However, there can be no effective desertification control unless the crucially important part played by women on the land is given full recognition, and unless women are involved as partners at every stage from formulation to implementation of any DC schemes to be undertaken in the future.

Women have a very clear perception of the causes and scale of desertification and - a new and significant fact - of the negative impact of population growth on living conditions and the environment. The great majority of women interviewed want fewer, better fed children, properly cared for and with a school education. A large family no longer necessarily means a stronger family, and a new perception of the child seems to be emerging. These new ideas are firmly supported by the old women in the village, who have a lucid perception of the changes taking place and are ready to confront their sons on these taboo subjects.

Women are heavily penalized by the negative effects of ecological deterioration, especially as regards the availability of cultivable land, wild produce, water and fuelwood. Above all else, the women complain about the socio-economic effects of desertification: the mass exodus of the menfolk and young people, the destabilization of the household, the refusal of the young to live in the tough conditions of the bush, and the growing poverty of family and individual alike.

In the home, the overwhelming problems recognized by all women are the arduous tasks of grinding grain and fetching wood and water. The fuelwood problem is connected with access rights, woodcutting bans, and [illegible]er exploitation of resources in heavily [illegible]ated areas. The increased workload [illegible] malnutrition seriously undermine the health of women and children.

The rural exodus and social destabilization have forced new responsibilities on the people of the Sahel. This has had two results: a new awareness, and new forms of organization. The constant presence of women in the villages, where they form a high proportion of the population, has made it easier for them to gain access to information and to be taken into account in decisions affecting the village. And with the new forms of pre-cooperative and village-level organizations, they are more readily taken into account have enabled women to be taken into consideration by developers and extension workers. In this way, women are consulted and are beginning to participate fully in village affairs.

It is known that Sahelian women take part in desertification control schemes in very

large numbers. As the case studies show, however, they usually do the most arduous and least skilled jobs. Despite the meager advantages to be gained - food aid and a higher social status - their participation in the schemes has a negative impact on their daily routine of work, their health and any dry season income they might otherwise earn. Moreover, women rarely benefit from the land they help reclaim, develop and protect. They do not have easy access to agricultural extension work, agricultural loans, or the factors of production. They help reforest an area, but have no access to the trees they have planted.

The assessment of DC policies with respect to women is thus broadly negative. Sahelian women are employed as necessary, cheap labor without being involved in decisionmaking, and without any direct social and economic advancement. This is a situation that carries with it a high risk of demobilization. However, a promising momentum is building up: after group work on a DC scheme, womens' groups are stronger and villages more united.

Positive forestry experiences show how in some cases - rare cases as yet, unfortunately - women have been successfully involved, for example, in growing saplings for planting and in creating, maintaining and running orchards and forest tree plantations. Despite the considerable constraints connected with land tenure and rights of access to the trees planted, women are genuinely interested in these activities, agro-forestry especially. A well run drive to introduce improved cookstoves, in an area where women see this as a useful advance, wins their total support.

Women's participation in the management of wells, water points and natural forest is an absolute necessity. They must also be taught the basics of maintenance engineering for wells, pumps and mills. Lastly, the educational role of the women - which includes education in natural resource management - is under threat at the present time. This role must at all costs be maintained, if the children's future and that of the environment are to be safeguarded.

Some conclusive experiments in agriculture show how well run DC can open the way to rural development and the socio-economic advancement of women. At Noogo in Yatenga, women's participation in local land restoration has led to a new awareness on other issues: improved homes, a collective field, new cultivation techniques, pit composting and a mill have been introduced and used; the women have sent a few of their daughters to school and have asked for family planning instruction. In other places, there is market gardening combined with fruit production, or even DC work carried out in neighbors' fields for a wage.

As backup for these production schemes there is credit for the purchase of small scale equipment (and even animal-drawn ploughs, e.g. the "Vive le Paysan" Association), wells, vehicles, and the training of women as relay supervisors, seed distributors and forestry officers. The recovery rate for such loans is high. The main restrictions are still the land question, the lack of outlets for market garden produce and the reluctance of those who own the collective gardens and fields to make lasting investments (bunds, trees etc.).

The report points out that extension work, training and organization are the key requirements if women are to participate successfully.

As a result of the women's decade of 1975-85, political positions favorable to women have been taken in all the Sahel countries. But official rhetoric is no longer making any progress, and the situation of women is deteriorating. The men are afraid of change, especially where family or religion are affected. In many cases, the national women's associations are the only authorized organizations for women, and owe their allegiance to the government; many of these national organizations are too firmly tied to be able to spark off change, even though their structure enables them to reach the majority of the women in their country. These organizations need solid professional support. The status of women must be reviewed, and policy must be defined on issues of population, education and the socio-economic advancement of women through participation in DC schemes.

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

As was stated earlier, governments should be called upon to increase the freedom of action of local organizations so that these organizations are in a better position to optimize management of the resources they use. The role of central government will not be reduced, however, but will evolve. In the future, central government should play a vital legislative and regulatory role in moves to create a suitable framework for development. This is particularly true for land-tenure issues, but it is also true for credit, forestry codes, and many other matters.

SAVINGS AND CREDIT IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THE SAHEL

Vincenzo Caputo,
Summary by L. Bossard

The end of the 1970s marked a significant turning point in discussions on credit and savings in the developing countries in general, and in the Sahel in particular, for it became recognized that the approach based on a supply of low-cost credit had led to widespread failure. Recent studies show that a much greater number of financial transactions take place in rural areas than are handled by national financial institutions. The rural financial market is already a reality.

There is thus a need to stop injecting cheap credit into the rural world as if credit was just another technical input. Support must now be given to rural financial markets:

- by attaching greater importance to the collection of savings;
- by avoiding the creation of new institutions, but by strengthening the dynamics of farmers' groups;
- by simplifying procedures;
- by defining a legal framework that offers the flexibility of management and autonomy that rural financial institutions need.

This conviction is borne out by a number of recent experiences with village savings and credit systems (e.g., COPEC and ADRK), which have shown extremely encouraging results.

The problem now is to devise mechanisms that allow rural financial markets and their institutions to develop in a coherent manner alongside the national financial markets and their banks:

- Although the collection of savings by a rural financial institution (RFI) should not pose any particular problems, the management of credit by RFIs should be introduced progressively and with considerable caution (solidarity aspects of the RFI, management capacity, guarantees by the national financial market, autonomy of management).
- The scope of the RFI should be restricted, if possible, to users that do not have access to the "modern" financial system.
- The favorable legal framework for RFIs mentioned above must be defined and applied.
- RFI promotion programs must be defined, with particular emphasis on training aspects, and the NGOs should play an active role in this endeavor.

LAND TENURE POLICY AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SAHELIAN WEST AFRICA

Steven W. Lawry
Summary by Theresa Steverlynck

This study analyses some key aspects of land tenure policy in terms of their impact on natural resource management in the Sahel, and identifies possible ways of fostering changes that may improve resource management. Some case studies are presented as potentially conducive to effective change. The report considers the ownership and management of common and individual (family) resources and pays particular attention to forestry resources, looking at government forest regulations especially.

The ownership and management of common resources

The Sahelian states claim ownership over "common" resources - i.e. forests, rangelands, wetlands, fauna and fish - in line with the measures decreed by the French colonial administration in 1930. As a result, locally enacted resource management provisions have no legal status. Local communities are therefore unable to impose any control over the use of these resources by community members, still less by outside individuals or groups. Niger's Central Delta is given as a typical example of this situation.

Government policies are geared towards drawing up codes of law, regulations and controls to be implemented at national level, but very little attention is paid to economically viable management models that would win local support. In an environment where resources are at the free disposal of all, no one is responsible for managing them or conserving them for the future. However, modern bureaucrats confronted with this lack of control have not managed to establish a new management system, which would mean gathering and analyzing information on changes

in the status of these resources, followed by rapid decisionmaking and action. Only the users of the system can link the need for information with the need for immediate, flexible action.

The users of the system need unambiguous rules on resource utilization, to restore the economic motivation that will ensure they play their part in resource management. Distribution of the benefits of a reforestation project, for example, are rarely seen in terms of the contributions made by individuals. Furthermore, local authorities are currently too weak or atrophied to impose resource use standards on what are now becoming fairly mixed communities.

The solution lies in cooperation among governments, local communities and individuals: the government must provide a legal framework and technical assistance, while the community must identify forms of management likely to interest its members (and so become an integral part of their development options), and the tolerable limits of control. Niger's forest and land use planning project (Planification de l'Utilisation des Sols et des Fôrets or PUSF) is quoted as a positive experience: cooperation has been established between the government forestry service, a local cooperative marketing timber from the forest of Guesselbodi, and a group of woodcutters. Roles, contributions and benefits have been clearly established.

In Senegal and Niger, exclusive rights to the use of certain rangelands and water points are granted to associations of herders, providing an institutional basis for new ways of developing livestock herding in the Sahel. Similar provisions are included in the new Pastoral Code in Mali.

The future aim of policies on common land is to give user groups a more important role in control and management. One obstacle to this is the weakness of the local institutions. Particular attention will also have to be paid to the individual interests of the members of the group concerned, and how those excluded from access to the resource are to be compensated. Aid projects can provide excellent opportunities for experimenting new management models, and the results of such experiments must be taken into account in the formulation of future policy at national level.

Security of tenure for the family farm

Customary law in sub-Saharan Africa varies widely, but as a whole provides "individual" farmers, as members of the social group, with very secure tenure in the form of long term rights of usufruct and use of common land. Security of tenure is recognized as a key element in farm management. While the sale of land was once the exception, custom now recognizes an increasing number of modern forms of transaction such as rents, mortgages and sales, confirming a trend towards individualization of property rights.

Modern legislation has often cut short this tendency of customary law to shift towards greater security of tenure for the individual farmer: in Senegal, limits have been imposed on these rights they have been transferred to the authority of the Rural Communities. Moreover, transactions authorized by governments involve registration procedures and expenses which discourage farmers, inspire mistrust, and encourage "illegal" transactions. Outside operators with the necessary means are sometimes helped considerably by government intervention in land tenure matters, since the latter action limits small farmers' possibilities of appealing to the local authorities.

Future policies must encourage governments to give individual farmers clear, unambiguous land rights. Sources of insecurity must be identified, as they endanger long term investment on the land; they may or may not be due to land tenure problems. Individual rights must be offset against the interests of the community and the state. Reforms must take into account the needs of women and "outsiders" to the local community, and must protect farmers from arbitrary decisions by the authorities, local or national. They must facilitate and officially recognize new forms of transaction, and must set up institutions where disputes will be settled equitably - an important element for security.

Forest regulations and the management of forest resources

Under Sahelian forest regulations, the State has supplanted local communities and individuals in forest management matters, and even where trees planted by man are concerned. In Mali, for example, where the nation's forests cover more than 90% of the country's land area, one must have a permit to cut fuelwood - even for trees on family land, though in this case there is no charge. Permits and fines make up a large part of the forestry service's revenue in Mali: 50% in 1984. Obviously this system, which applies in most Sahelian countries, fosters a police mentality among forestry officers and abuses in the issuing of permits, generally undermining the population's motivation. How can farmers be encouraged to produce, protect and manage forest resources if they are not even allowed to cut their own trees?

A new forest policy must involve reforms that will change the policing role of the forestry officers into one of resource management guidance.

Technical solutions must be made an integral part of the overall land tenure system, taking into account restrictions under which farming people - men and women - operate (whence the importance of agro-forestry). Changes in forest regulations must have an impact on the factors that discourage long term investment at farm level.

Concluding remarks: models of innovation

Several Sahel countries are in the process of revising their codes of pastoral, forestry or rural law. Legal reforms are not enough, however. The attitudes and mentalities of government officers must also change - towards a search for innovative solutions and towards dialogue, with instruction in the new regulations and education in management methods for farming people. An approach involving development projects as a test bed for new methods and models should make it possible to stimulate individual and/or community interest through national and, if appropriate, local legislative changes. This approach is especially useful in developing new forms of management for common land. Another innovative model is to experiment with land use planning methods based on local participation through village committees (as has been done with World Bank finance in Burkina Faso). This approach is useful in seeking out forms of individual and collective appropriation and simple, low-cost methods of land administration appropriate to the little-utilized lands of the Sahel. ■

ANALYSIS OF CILSS MEMBER COUNTRIES' LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

M. Soumare, I. Ango, S. Traore,
Summary by L. Bossard

BACKGROUND

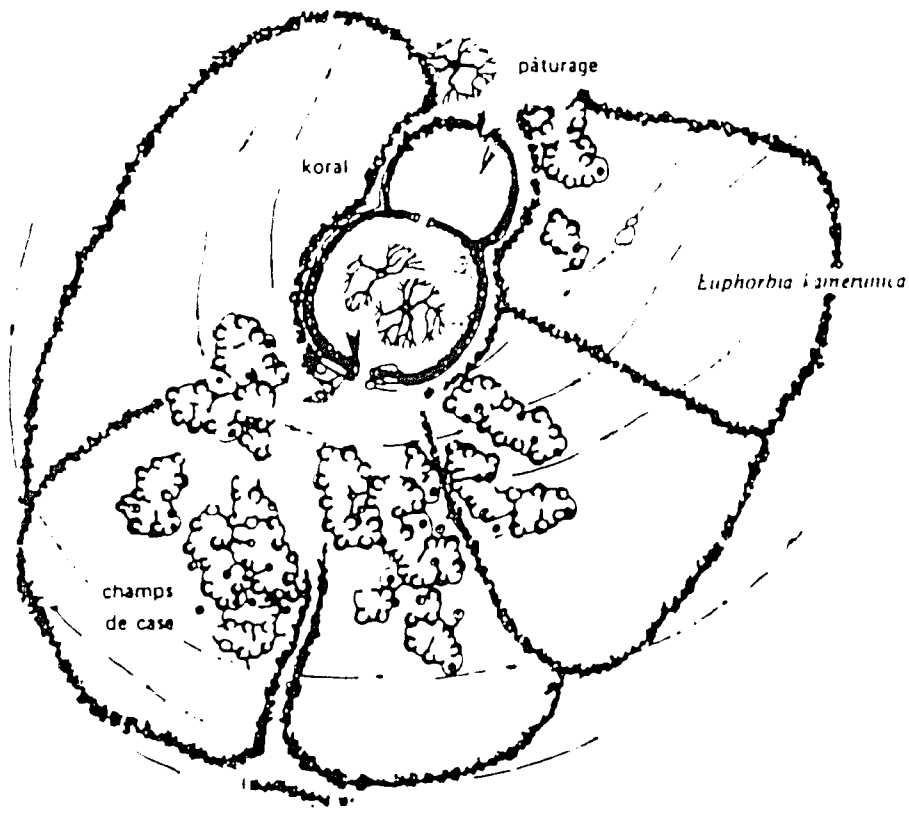
National legislation governing natural resource management in the CILSS Member Countries is still, to a large extent, ill-suited to the desertification control strategy that is generally accepted to be a vital part of the move to place responsibility on the shoulders of local population groups, and is incompatible with maintaining a balance between resource exploitation and the conservation of the environment.

Access to landownership is, in most cases, difficult and costly, if not impossible, but it is nonetheless a basic necessity if local population groups are to assume responsibility for their future. In most cases, classification of a forest is not synonymous with good management. Legislation on bush fires is repressive without offering effective prevention. Legislation on woodcutting is aimed more at generating resources for the State than at managing the natural heritage. Only four countries in the CILSS area have a Water Code, and, whether or not authorization is needed before a borehole can be sunk, systems to monitor the level of underground aquifers are non-existent. Priorities for water utilization are not clearly defined, and, as a result, optimum use is not made of this resource (it is recognized, for example, that hydro-agricultural schemes waste large quantities of water). As regards livestock activities, only four countries have regulations governing conflicts between herders and farmers, and rules on overgrazing are either insufficient or non-existent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is an urgent need to encourage governments to draw up or improve sectoral natural resource management codes. In particular:

- Local communities and private individuals should be able to hold land and register that land more simply and at lower cost.
- Forest classification should be reviewed, and classification should form part of a global management plan.
- Local communities should be relieved of the responsibility for bush fires if it is clear that they have made serious attempts to extinguish those fires, and preventive measures should be included in legislation.
- The notion of forest clearance should be extended to cover clearance caused by the construction of roads, mines, etc., and a system of compensation should be introduced.
- Water codes should be drawn up by the countries that do not have them, and national committees should be formed to ensure these codes are applied and to control and plan for water use in rural areas.
- Authorized fishing net mesh sizes should be defined on a scientific basis, and the rights of fishermen in border areas should be stipulated.
- Legislation on overgrazing and overuse of grazing routes should be clarified, and moves should be taken to guarantee that the size of the animal population is compatible with the availability of water and forage.



SOME TECHNICAL ASPECTS

We conclude our series of summaries with three technical reports. For far too long, it was thought that technology in its own right could solve the problems of the rural Sahel, and this led to many misunderstandings with local population groups. Technology is essential, but the population group concerned must be consulted over its introduction. R & D is now moving in this direction, with increasing success in the field.

THE PRESENT STATE OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION IN THE SAHEL

Chris Reij
Summary by L. Bossard

This report analyzes the current state of soil and water conservation, with emphasis on physical conservation structures, mainly in Niger Burkina Faso and Mali.

First of all the author describes recent and traditional SWC systems; he then gives an analysis of current trends and puts forward some recommendations to the Sahelian governments, aid agencies and rural organizations.

A NEGATIVE ASSESSMENT BUT GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM

The author observes that the SWC techniques employed over the past thirty years have had very little effect, despite the considerable sums invested. He expresses regret that the traditional techniques, which are less spectacular, have not been widely used and have often been dismissed as rudimentary. As a result, there is now an enormous gulf between SWC needs and actual achievements. But, within this worrying overall picture, there are hopeful developments. In particular, donors are showing increasing interest in SWC, local participation is on the increase, greater research efforts are being made, and the traditional techniques are now recognized as valid.

On a more technical level, the author observes that the early 1980s marked a step forward in SWC projects, especially as regards

- attempts to achieve voluntary, responsible participation by local people,
- greater attention to the problem of water conservation,
- integration of trees with herbaceous plants in conservation projects,
- a farm-based or village-based approach,
- a mushrooming of SWC schemes and initiatives,
- transfer of certain successful methods from one region to another.

TOWARDS BETTER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION IN THE SAHEL

Taking account of the enormity of the task to be accomplished and the limited funds available, the author recommends applying effective, low-cost conservation methods that can be used by local people with a minimum of outside help.

This approach will succeed only if certain conditions are fulfilled, the following in particular:

- a more thorough knowledge of traditional SWC methods that may be suitable starting points for new programs;
- more research, especially in semi-arid regions that until now have been neglected in favor of the Sudano-Guinean zone;
- fostering maximum local participation, especially by means of:
  - simple, low-cost methods that effectively increase crop yields,
  - training in the field and opportunities to exchange experiences,
  - aid for tools and equipment: spades, pick axes, carts etc.;
- concerted efforts in densely populated areas where the environment has suffered badly;
- a review of SWC incentives; "food for work" operation in particular should be reduced to a minimum, and food aid replaced, wherever possible, by community infrastructures or measures that encourage production.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The author advises the Sahelian governments to introduce national SWC policies under the aegis of a single authority or institution. Implementation of a SWC policy should be based on coordination between projects and donors, identification of priority zones, consciousness raising, training and research.

He also recommends not accepting loans from the international community but relying on donations, wherever the increased production due to an SWC project goes to boosting self-sufficiency rather than producing more for the market.

To the cooperation agencies he suggests increased funds (in the form of donations) for applied research, training, basic equipment etc.

Financing can only be planned for the long term, allowing the time required for preparing projects with local farmers.

Priority must be given to simple, low-cost techniques even though these are often less spectacular in the short term.

For the rural organizations, the key recommendations are to mobilize the farmers and to improve organizational abilities and self-management skills. ■

PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY IN SORGHUM AND PEARL MILLET SYSTEMS IN WEST AFRICA

Peter Matlon
Summary by L. Bossard

Except in the Sudano-Guinean zone, there is no great scope for extending existing farmland in the semi-arid areas of West Africa. If existing farming methods are continued in the Sudan and Sudano-Sahelian zones (where 84% of the rural population live), production will fall inexorably. Since displacement of the population has amply proven its limitations as a solution to the problem, all hope of reversing the decline in production must lie in changing farming methods.

In the Sahelian zone (under 350 mm rain a year) the chances of increasing sorghum and pearl millet productivity are limited: however, encouragement must be given to simple technologies that will limit the effects of drought, and to the use of short growth cycle varieties, some of which already exist. It will take another ten years to develop drought resistant crops. Moreover it can be argued that since the Sahelian zone is already too heavily exploited, it ought to turn towards intensive stock farming, probably the most rational and ecologically feasible activity that can be promoted.

In the Sudano-Sahelian zone (350 to 600 mm/yr), promising SWC techniques are being developed, especially in areas of high population density where the degradation of the soil is obvious and farmers fear the consequences. However, yields are unlikely to rise very significantly before the year 2000; sustained improvements can only be obtained in high population density areas once there has been investment in systems designed to control surface runoff water. In the Sudanese zone (600 to 800 mm/yr), better rainfall offers greater possibilities for more intensive farming combined with SWC techniques; intensification will involve, in particular, moderate use of chemical fertilizer and recurrent applications of organic matter, along with suitable crops (high population density areas). In areas where population pressure is lower, there is as yet little incentive to invest in SWC techniques: mechanized tied ridging is the most appropriate here.

Mixed crop and livestock farming has the twin advantages of animal power and biomass for recycling; unfortunately, the practice is too rare in areas with a low labor force density where there is less need for animal power, and this could be a threat to soil regeneration in the long run.

In the Sudano-Guinean zone (800 to 1,100 mm/yr) there are substantial possibilities for improving sorghum and millet productivity, whether through improved yield (irrigation, fertilizer, high-yield varieties) or by cutting down on labor (herbicides, animal power etc.) However, in this zone the farmers are turning to cash crops, rice or maize wherever they can, as they utilize inputs more efficiently.

Besides these new orientations, there must be an expansion of R & D by government services (in addition to the basic research undertaken by international institutions). The very specific nature of each area in social, ecological and agricultural terms must be emphasized, and work on simple SWC techniques - essential to millet and sorghum farming in the short and medium terms - must be intensified.

LIVESTOCK ACTIVITIES IN THE SAHEL

R. Pons (Summary)

Livestock activities are currently going through a period of deep-seated structural change, which the droughts of the 1970s and of 1983-85 brought to light and exacerbated. The Advisory Group on the Development of Livestock Activities in the Sahel, which was set up by the Secretariats of the CILSS and the Club du Sahel, observed in 1984 that the data available on this sector were insufficient. It was subsequently decided to undertake an in-depth analysis of the issue and to draw up concrete proposals for Sahelian governments and donor agencies.

An interdisciplinary team of experts direct by Mr. Henk Breman visited Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in April and May 1985, and the three detailed reports they produced in 1986 and 1987 formed the basis of a 28-page summary report by Mr. Roger Pons, which was published by the OECD in January, 1988.

The Breman mission paid close attention to the ecological and environmental aspects of livestock activities, and to forage availability, which is considered central to the difficult problem of livestock activities in the Sahel. The first chapter of the OECD summary deals with recent developments in this important sector and with the current situation.

A SHIFT TOWARDS SEDENTARIZATION

Pastoral animal production systems, which were considered highly efficient in the past, are progressively breaking down. Droughts have amplified the incongruities

within these systems and accentuated the contradictions that already exist between livestock activities and agriculture. As a result of social changes and population growth, agriculture is gaining an increasing hold on areas that have traditionally been used for livestock activities (reduced fallow land, extension of areas under crop, pastoralists liquidating herds in difficult periods or selling their animals at low prices to farmers and investors (traders or civil servants from the cities, who are legally known as "absentee herders"). There is a general trend towards sedentarization. The center of gravity of the livestock sector is moving south, particularly for bovines, and at the same time productivity and efficiency are falling. Transhumance - the traditional method of optimizing resources - is faced with innumerable difficulties, and dry-season grazing land is becoming increasingly scarce. While development strategies have concentrated on animal health and pastoral water supply, the mission revealed that the principal constraint is in fact low food availability, particularly in the dry season. The well-being of the Sahelian livestock sector depends primarily on the intensification of agriculture, for this is the only way of producing animal feed of sufficient quality. This conclusion was drawn on the basis of a number of observations, including: the inevitable decline of pastoralism, which will nevertheless continue to exist in areas of the north that are unsuitable for farming, and which must be assisted; the growing tendency for farmers to become involved in livestock activities and for livestock activities to become associated with agriculture, even if considerable efforts must still be made to reverse the tendency for farmers to expand their cropping land and to encourage them to intensify (improved yields, use of fertilizers, leguminous crops, manure, animal-drawn agriculture, etc.).

CONSTRAINTS AND DETERMINING FACTORS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVESTOCK ACTIVITIES IN THE SAHEL

- Ecological factors and constraints: space; natural resources (grazing land and over-use of grazing routes, degradation of trees, shrubs and grasses); water resources (which are not the principal constraint, contrary to popular belief); animals (the control of epizooan diseases and breed improvement are not the most important factors in improving the situation, for deaths caused by food shortages are far more numerous that disease-related deaths, and local breeds are well suited to the local context, but are under-nourished).

- Socio-cultural aspects: the intensification of agriculture seems inevitable. Neither increased animal populations (grazing land is already over-exploited) nor increased cropping land can solve the food shortage problem. Herders suffer from the occupation by farmers of the best dry-season grazing land, the reduction of grazing routes, conflicts with farmers, the absolute power of the State on land-tenure issues, and the breakdown of their socio-economic structures.

- Economic aspects: despite the current unfavorable economic environment in the Sahel, livestock activities play an appreciable role. Not only do livestock activities supply international markets with meat and milk, but they also provide traction and manure, and provide a potential for exports to neighboring coastal countries.

Analysis of the animal population demonstrates that, despite the severe droughts and the "running down of stocks" that they provoked, the animal population has increased everywhere in the Sahel over the last twenty-five years. Sheep and goats have increased in number dramatically (from 27 to 40 million head), while bovines have increased only from 16.5 to 19 million, and Mauritania's bovine population has actually fallen. In general, there has been a tendency for bovines to move south, and the proportion of bovines in national animal populations is now smaller. Burkina Faso and Senegal have benefitted from these trends, to the detriment of Mauritania and Niger.

The severe droughts of 1973 and 1984 led to a more substantial fall in the number of larger animals (bovines), but on both occasions populations were reconstituted in the two or three years following the drought.

By contrast, the average price of animals seems to have fallen, and in terms of equivalent head of cattle (250 kg live weight), the overall Sahelian animal population is probably static, or falling, despite the increasing number of animals.

Despite these fluctuations, the overall national financial income from livestock has increased in real terms, even if the distribution of this income has changed a great deal. Supplies to the cities have increased with the accelerating trend towards a market economy. These global data must be kept in perspective, however, and it should always be remembered that the human population has doubled over the last quarter-century. In terms of resources per capita, therefore, overall increases in livestock activities have not offset the effects of population growth.

Exports are difficult to gauge. Most exports involve border movements of live animals, which are impossible to monitor accurately; but there is little doubt that large numbers of animals are exported to the coastal countries. Export flows vary at different periods, increasing sharply during droughts. These exports play a role of fundamental importance in the foreign trade performance of several Sahelian countries. The sale of carcasses has never reached the levels that governments had hoped for, and various State organizations in charge of industrial slaughterhouses have recorded major losses. Exports of this type are now falling appreciably, for Sahelian products are no longer competitive with meat imported to the coastal countries from Argentina or Europe.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

The last chapter of the summary report is entitled "What can be done to counter the crisis and develop livestock activities in the Sahel?". Propositions are based on the observations and comments made in the preceding chapters. Agriculture is the most promising sector for the future, on condition that it adapts correctly and succeeds in becoming more intensive. Pastoral livestock activities are not condemned, however, even if their role will become less important. Pastoralism is well worth protecting (mobility, transhumance, conversion of dispossessed pastoralists). Governments are invited to review their plans and attach greater importance to improving the production of high-quality animal fodder, and to breaking down the traditional barrier separating agriculture from livestock activities - two sectors that will be forced to integrate more and more in the future.

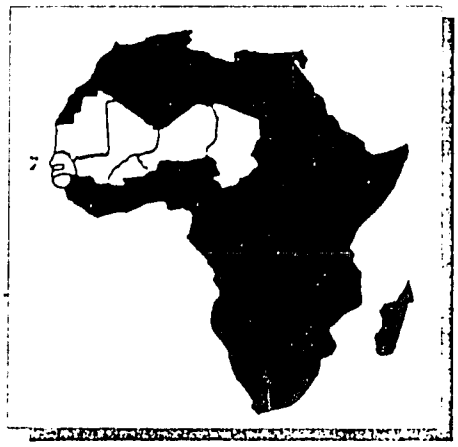
APPENDIX B

Club Du Sahel/CILSS SEGOU Report

SEGOU Declaration (French) and Participants Lists

CILSS

Comité permanent Inter-Etats
de Lutte contre la Sécheresse
dans le Sahel



OCDE
CLUB DU SAHEL

PHOTO PERISCOOP

Les orientations de Ségou

Rencontre Régionale de Ségou (Mali)
22-27 mai 1989 sur la gestion des terroirs sahéliens

DE LA STRATEGIE DE NOUAKCHOTT A LA CONCERTATION REGIONALE DE SEGOU

Depuis vingt ans, le Sahel subit une sécheresse persistante et une dégradation écologique qui, conjuguées à la crise économique et à la croissance démographique, ont durement éprouvé les populations et handicapé les efforts de développement des pays sahéliens.

PHOTO PERISCOOP

Sur le plateau Mossi, au Burkina Faso, les paysans construisent des diguettes selon les courbes de niveau pour retenir l'eau dans les parcelles.

Face à cette situation, et à l'initiative du CILSS et du Club du Sahel, les responsables sahéliens se sont réunis à Nouakchott, en 1984; ils ont proposé une stratégie de lutte contre la désertification, adoptée par tous les Etats et soutenue par leurs partenaires de la communauté internationale.

Depuis, les Etats ont élaboré des plans nationaux de lutte contre la désertification et de développement économique et social et se sont engagés dans des actions de grande ampleur.

Il est apparu que les programmes et projets éprouvaient des difficultés à traduire en termes opérationnels les points clefs de la stratégie de Nouakchott tels que la participation des populations, l'approche terroir, l'approche globale.

Parallèlement, on constatait la multiplication d'actions positives de développement local par des organisations rurales de toute nature et dans toutes les situations agro-écologiques ; cependant, ces actions ne se sont pas généralisées dans un processus de développement durable.

De même, les partenaires du développement exprimaient leur préoccupations devant la faible efficacité de leurs aides en terme de contribution à un développement durable au Sahel.

Dans ces conditions, les méfaits de la désertification ont continué à s'élargir, contribuant à aggraver encore les difficultés socio-économiques des populations, de leurs organisations et des Etats.

Conscients de cette situation, le **CILSS** et le **Club du Sahel** ont pris l'initiative d'organiser à SEGOU, une RENCONTRE DE CONCERTATION entre les trois acteurs de développement du Sahel qui sont les populations représentées par leurs organisations rurales, les Etats et leurs partenaires de la communauté internationale (aides publiques et ONG).

Première de son genre, la Rencontre de SEGOU avait pour objectif central de donner un contenu opérationnel à la participation des populations, à la gestion de terroirs et à l'approche globale, afin que le Sahel puisse s'engager pleinement dans la voie du développement durable.

La concertation de Ségou a été riche, franche, animée ; des expériences positives et diverses ont servi de support aux débats ; chacun a fait valoir son point de vue dans un esprit de respect mutuel. De leur rencontre à SEGOU, les organisations rurales, les Etats et leurs partenaires de développement ont dégagé des ORIENTATIONS qui leur paraissent essentielles à l'échelle du Sahel.

ORIENTATIONS

1

La réhabilitation écologique : reconstituer un capital dégradé

La pression foncière, l'inadaptation des systèmes et techniques de production qui n'ont pas évolué assez vite, et les différentes sécheresses ont conduit à une grave dégradation du milieu. Le capital initial ayant été ainsi en partie perdu, il convient de procéder à une réhabilitation.

Le coût de cette réhabilitation est très élevé. Parmi les techniques à utiliser, certaines sont immédiatement applicables par la population, d'autres complexes et coûteuses relèvent de l'intervention de l'Etat pour leur mise en oeuvre. La participation consciente et volontaire des populations concernées est une condition nécessaire au succès, mais elle n'est pas suffisante.

Des aides extérieures seront indispensables, car le seul travail volontaire a ses limites. D'abord, les producteurs lorsqu'ils sont confrontés à la survie de leur exploitation privilégient la recherche de revenus à court terme. Or, la réhabilitation représente des investissements dont les effets se sentiront seulement à moyen et long terme. Il convient donc de définir des incitations et des aides permettant aux producteurs de consentir les efforts nécessaires : appuis logistiques, fonds de soutien au revenu. A cet égard, les programmes d'ajustement structurel devront prendre en compte la dimension écologique.

Par ailleurs, cette réhabilitation doit être conçue non seulement pour préserver le milieu, mais surtout pour permettre d'améliorer la production et de créer des sources de revenus afin de faire face aux dépenses monétaires auxquelles sont confrontés les producteurs.

Les travaux à entreprendre nécessitent un appui technique des services administratifs spécialisés qui doivent disposer des moyens nécessaires à leur mission.

PHOTO PERISCOOP

Sur les routes qui convergent vers les villes sahéliennes, le bois de feu arrive de plus en plus loin, par tous les moyens de transport.

2

La gestion des terroirs : gérer avec les collectivités locales

La réhabilitation écologique se fait dans le cadre de la gestion des terroirs, c'est-à-dire d'une gestion ordonnée des ressources naturelles renouvelables. Cela suppose le recours à de nombreuses techniques. Certaines s'appliquent aux espaces pastoraux, d'autres aux terroirs sahéliens dégradés, d'autres encore aux différentes formes de terroirs plus arrosés et plus favorables à une intensification agricole.

Ces techniques ne sont pas connues de tous. Des efforts pour les faire connaître et favoriser les échanges sur les expériences sont nécessaires. Des opérations de recherche-développement doivent répondre aux problèmes posés par les principaux intéressés.

Mais, disposer de techniques satisfaisantes n'est pas suffisant. Il faut aussi que les ruraux s'organisent de manière efficace.

Il existe des formes très variées d'organisations et d'institutions rurales en fonction des problèmes posés comme par exemple : la gestion des forêts, d'un bassin versant ou d'un espace pastoral. L'essentiel est

que ces organisations soient autonomes dans leur fonctionnement, leur encadrement et leur gestion, ce qui implique, entre autres, une reconnaissance juridique de leur existence.

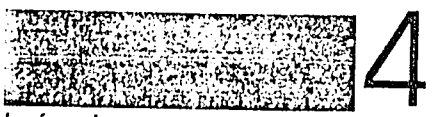
3

Décentralisation : accroître l'efficacité

Les Etats accompagneront ce mouvement de prise de responsabilité par les collectivités locales si celles-ci montrent qu'elles peuvent réellement prendre en main leur développement. Cette transition suppose que les administrations facilitent la sensibilisation des collectivités et décentralisent une partie de leurs activités de service public au profit de ces collectivités.

L'Etat devra prendre de nouvelles mesures institutionnelles afin de garantir et d'arbitrer le développement local. Cela implique en effet de définir et d'appliquer des politiques globales d'aménagement du territoire afin d'assurer l'équilibre des investissements, et des politiques favorisant les revenus des ruraux et l'émergence d'une société civile.
Les partenaires de la communauté internationale, dans leur recherche d'un rapprochement avec des organisations rurales pour améliorer l'efficacité de leur aide, pourraient de la même manière confier à leurs agences locales une partie de leurs procédures et pouvoirs de décision.

En définitive, il convient d'établir des règles de partenariat aussi claires que possible entre les trois "familles": organisations rurales, Etats et bailleurs de fonds.



4

Le foncier : sécuriser les investissements dans les terroirs

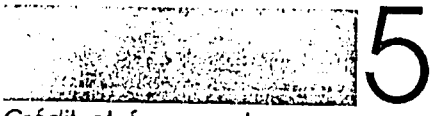
La diversité des problèmes fonciers qui se posent localement, et qui sont devenus aigüs avec la pression sur l'utilisation des terres, implique de savoir articuler de manière souple le droit moderne (trop mal connu) et le droit traditionnel. Une solution est de consulter les organisations de producteurs pour résoudre les litiges.

Parmi les problèmes fonciers, le développement d'un marché de la terre dans certaines zones aménagées recèle des dangers. Les producteurs les plus pauvres et marginalisés contraints de vendre des parcelles sont, en effet, conduits à surexploiter la terre et participer ainsi à la dégradation écologique. Les paysans ayant perdu leurs terres grossissent le nombre des chômeurs urbains. Il sera sans doute nécessaire de trouver les règles adéquates pour éviter ces problèmes.

A court terme, le problème essentiel est celui de l'insécurité des investissements fonciers : tout investissement d'amélioration de la terre par des producteurs est impossible si ceux-ci ne sont pas certains de bénéficier des fruits de leur travail. Des solutions de droit doivent être trouvées.

PHOTO PERISCOOP

A l'extrême nord du Sahel nigérien, les femmes transportent des pierres pour construire des barrages anti-érosifs.



5

Crédit et épargne locaux : accroître l'investissement local

Le succès du crédit et de l'épargne repose sur le développement d'organisations locales volontaires viables, de type mutuel, associatif ou coopératif, dont les membres sont liés par un contrat de confiance.

Il est nécessaire de soutenir des expériences de différents systèmes d'épargne et de crédit s'adaptant aux situations locales.

Cependant, la liaison avec le système bancaire pose des problèmes qu'il faut résoudre :

- concernant les prêts aux producteurs, un allongement des durées d'amortissement est nécessaire, afin de tenir compte de l'incertitude des revenus due aux aléas climatiques ;

- de même, les garanties demandées doivent s'adapter de manière souple à la situation des producteurs selon les régions ;

- les contrats de prêt doivent être clairs et fermes, afin que les emprunteurs sachent quels sont leurs engagements.

Plus globalement, l'insécurité sur les prix et les marchés gêne les producteurs pour s'engager dans des emprunts. Les Etats devraient donc réfléchir sur des politiques permettant de limiter les trop grandes fluctuations dans les prix des principaux produits, assister les organisations de producteurs en matière de connaissance des marchés et promouvoir la transformation, la conservation et la commercialisation des produits. Il en est de même pour les aides alimentaires qui doivent s'inscrire dans ces politiques.

6

Les femmes : valoriser leur participation

Le rôle traditionnel de la femme rurale a été accru par les phénomènes de désertification et d'émigration. Les femmes sont donc amenées à assumer des responsabilités nouvelles. En particulier, elles prennent une part essentielle dans la réhabilitation écologique et la gestion des terroirs.

Pourtant, leur statut dans la société n'est pas encore à la hauteur des responsabilités qu'elles assument. Les évolutions en cours les conduisent à demander des parcelles suffisantes pour faire face à leurs besoins monétaires, à accéder aux équipements agricoles et donc au crédit, à participer aux décisions qui concernent la vie de la communauté.

Par ailleurs, il est nécessaire de consentir des efforts de formation dans les domaines qui les intéressent, car souvent la vulgarisation ne s'adresse pas à elles. En outre, il conviendrait de proposer des aides permettant d'alléger leurs tâches quotidiennes et favorisant la diversification des productions et activités susceptibles de créer des revenus nouveaux.

7

Information et Formation : échanger des expériences

Les expériences locales sont d'une grande richesse. Les succès, comme les défaillances, comportent des enseignements précieux que les ruraux veulent connaître et apprécier directement.
Les échanges, s'ils sont organisés et favorisés, permettent de faire avancer plus vite les idées et de les diffuser. A cet effet, une véritable politique de communication doit être mise en place : elle conférera aux problèmes ruraux la place prioritaire qu'ils méritent et prendra en considération les préoccupations majeures du monde rural. Elle mobilisera les mass médias et les moyens alternatifs d'information et s'appuiera sur des visites et des échanges d'expériences entre pays sahéliens.

Outre les techniques agricoles et de réhabilitation du milieu, un accent devrait être mis sur les formes d'organisation, de gestion et d'animation dont les collectivités locales ont besoin pour s'autogérer. Cela suppose aussi des échanges, mais surtout des formations appropriées.

8

Population et développement : maîtriser son avenir

Tenant compte de l'environnement écologique, social et économique du Sahel, la question des politiques de population devant sous-tendre le développement durable mérite d'être examinée à la lumière du Programme d'Action de N'Djaména.
Il se révèle primordial d'associer les populations à la définition et à la mise en oeuvre de telles politiques.

LA RENCONTRE REGIONALE DE SEGOU :

- souhaite que les Etats sahéliens prennent en compte et mettent en oeuvre les orientations de Ségou ;
- appelle les organisations rurales, les Etats sahéliens et leurs partenaires de la communauté internationale à prolonger l'esprit de Ségou par des rencontres de concertation à trois pour engager des actions concrètes de développement durable dans tout le Sahel ;
- demande au CILSS et au Club du Sahel de travailler à la mise en oeuvre des "Orientations de Ségou" et de poursuivre les réflexions engagées.

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- Développement rural durable au Sahel le rôle des organisations rurales (Soumana Tracré) **Réf.:RC-08**
- Approche de la politique des Etats sahéliens en matière de developement rural intégré et de lutte contre la désertification (Abdoulaye Kane et Sylvestre Ouedraogo) **Réf.: RC-06**
- Evolution des stratégies de lutte contre la sécheresse et la désertification des principaux organismes donateurs dans le Sahel (Chris Reij) **Réf.: D-328**
- Femmes et développement durable au Sahel (Marie Monimart et Marthe Doka- Diarra) **Réf.: D-330**

LES DOCUMENTS D'APPUI A LA RENCONTRE

. Exemples de développement durable - gestion réussie des ressources naturelles dans le Sahel (Shaikh e a) **Réf.: RC-03**
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. Ecologie et développement rural en Afrique subsaharienne . une sélection d'études de cas (Wright, Weber, Broekhuyse) **Réf.: D-327**
. Options pour promouvoir le contrôle et la gestion par les usagers des ressources naturelles renouvelables au Sahel (Thomson e a) **Réf.: RC-07**
. Dynamique d'organisation du monde rural (Snrech) **Réf.: D-325**
. Femmes et lutte contre la désertification au Sahel (Monimart) **Réf.: D-326**
. Le crédit et l'épargne ruraux dans le Sahel (Caputo) **Réf.: RC-02**
. Politiques foncières et gestion des ressources naturelles au Sahel (Lawry) **Réf.: RC-05**
. Analyse des textes législatifs et réglementaires des pays membres du CILSS en matière de gestion des ressources naturelles (publication CILSS , rédaction: Goumandakoye) **Réf.: RC-09**
. La conservation des eaux et des sols dans le Sahel aujourd'hui (Reij)**Réf:D-329**
. Perspectives d'amélioration de la productivité du sorgho et du mil en Afrique de l'Ouest (Matlon) **Réf.: RC-01**
. L'élevage dans les pays sahéliens (R. Pons) **Réf.: D-314**

Ces documents sont disponibles au Club du Sahel (OCDE 2,rue André Pascal 75775 Paris Cedex 16 France)
et au CILSS BP 7049 OUAGADOUGOU BURKINA FASO

APPENDİX C

Executive Summary of the

Report to the U.S. NGOs on SEGOU

A Report to the U.S. PVO Community:
Regional Encounter on Local Level Natural Resources Management in the Sahel in Segou, Mali, 22-27 May 1989

by
Jonathan Otto
InterAction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report from an NGO perspective on the "Rencontre Regional sur la Gestion des Terroirs Villageois au Sahel" of the Club du Sahel and CILSS. The Segou encounter is one event in an on-going CILSS/Club du Sahel process which is exploring options for the future of the Sahel, and is suggesting promising directions for development policy and programming. The Segou encounter built on existing tendencies towards decentralization of resource management and towards greater popular participation and **responsabilisation** of rural organizations.

As part of this long-term process, the final "Orientations" paper of the Segou encounter serves to spell out more clearly than previous CILSS/Club du Sahel meetings the changes needed in order to plan a positive future for the Sahel region. These changes are dramatic and fundamental. They call for the Sahelian states and rural populations, with appropriate support from the international community, to redefine basic relationships and redistribute responsibilities.

The envisioned decentralization of natural resource management is an opening for NGOs to push ahead with their grassroots efforts in ecological rehabilitation, rural productivity and local institution building. The challenge to the NGO community, in this context, is to continue expanding its understanding, its capacities and its cohesion in order to meet this opportunity. More than ever, NGOs need to find ways to share experiences, to collaborate with each other, and to articulate common concerns.

NGOs, while regrettably not represented adequately at this encounter, will have a significant role if the transitions called for at Segou are to become reality. Without any doubt NGOs are a growing force in natural resource management in the Sahel region, already proving their effectiveness in such areas as: developing and disseminating agroforestry techniques, mobilizing communities for conservation efforts, linking donors' resources with rural producers' needs, training leaders of rural organizations, and providing the practical framework for governments' technical personnel, among many other functions.

The projected restructuring of natural resource management will face enormous difficulties, especially given the current level of environmental degradation. Ultimately, it is Sahelian populations and their governments that must agree on changes in policies, investment priorities and civil relationships. The encouragement and active participation of the concerned international community, including the NGO sector, will be essential at both government and popular levels for such changes to have the desired results. All sides in this process must acknowledge and complement the contributions of each of the others. To do their part, NGOs, both Sahelian and international, must be recognized as integral partners and treated as such in the planning process.

APPENDIX D

Report on the Joint U.S./Canadian

Sahel NGO Workshop

"Participation and the Role of Local Organizations in the Management of Natural Resources in the Sahel"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of the InterAction-Solidarite Canada Sahel-A.I.D.-CIDA sponsored conference entitled, "Participation and the Role of Local Organizations in the Management of Natural Resources in the Sahel." The conference convened to achieve three results: to allow Canadian and U.S. PVOs/NGOs as well as government representatives from CIDA and A.I.D. to share experiences of their approach to natural resource management in the Sahel; to discuss ways of more clearly determining the organizational capacity of rural populations to manage their own resource bases; and to provide a workshop on these issues before taking them to the Regional "Encounter" scheduled in Segou, Mali, May 22-28, where rural organizations, Sahelian governments, and donors will discuss the "Management of Village Land in the Sahel."

BACKGROUND

The recent CILSS/Club du Sahel Futures Study has determined a present trends scenario projected from 1985 into 2010 which forecasts increasing physical deterioration of the rural environment caused by drought and land degradation. This land degradation will decrease production and income for rural dwellers and lead to increasing dependence on foreign aid. The study projects that if financial dependence rises in line with population growth, a sum of US $ 7 billion will be needed by 2010 to cover structural deficits. In order to counter this trend, the study proposes that the rural population must be the initiators of change, particularly in the management of natural resources. Current trends of male migration to Europe and other parts of Africa and the flight of youth to urban centers in search of new lifestyles pose major constraints, but the recent dynamic of newly created farmer organizations, totalling 12,000 in the Sahel, holds hope for change. Decentralizing authority to these groups and passing land tenure legislation which gives them control over local lands may act as an incentive to farmers who would be assured of direct benefit from investment in their farms and therefore more inclined to participate politically and economically in the society. Some of the questions which have been raised include: Are these groups ready to accept a political and economic role in the Sahel? What are the obstacles to their achieving this type of power? Once they do achieve greater control over their interests, will they begin channeling human and physical resources into the conservation of the environment? These questions propose a radical change in donor and Sahelian government policy and are the focus of current discussions in the Sahel.

THE PVO/NGO ROLE IN DECENTRALIZATION

In order to promote a strategy of decentralization, donors recognize that PVOs/NGOs play an integral role in this transition. Sahelian and international NGOs provide the technical and human resource development support that these groups need in order to become self-sufficient. PVOs/NGOs stress the importance of longer time frames in donor funding policy, particularly with a goal of creating autonomous institutions and securing local ownership of the land. Donors are attempting to address this concern. Furthermore, PVOs/NGOs and donors recognize the need to coordinate their efforts to achieve local governance for the rural Sahel. Their hope is that conferences such as this one, held between Canadian and US donors and PVOs/NGOs outside of the Sahel will be important stepping stones in achieving this result.

CANADIAN AND U.S. APPROACHES

Canadian and US government donor policies differ in several areas. Perhaps the most evident is found in the "microrealization" approach adopted by CIDA and the Canadian NGOs. This approach stresses

implementation of smaller projects in the range of $5-10 thousand dollars. By working with a smaller grant size, CIDA believes that projects can be more easily initiated by local farmers using technology which they can sustain.

A.I.D. has recently placed much emphasis on "umbrella grants" in a limited number of African countries. Using this funding system, a "lead" PVO will manage a series of subgrants to other PVOs and national NGOs. This funding policy is meant to increase flexibility and encourage collaboration. However, A.I.D. does little direct work with Sahelian NGOs as yet, and instead works more closely with US PVOs.

In addition, Canadian NGOs and U.S. PVOs appear to take different field approaches. What were they? Did they find village organizations which were ready to accept the challenge of decentralization? Were these organizations interested in protecting their resources?

THE THOMSON MODEL

The process of identifying the legal and economic structure of the village organizations is an arduous one. However, a new model proposing a "checklist" to understand this structure as well as the nature of natural resources as economic goods may allow PVOs/NGOs to engage in more analysis before projects are implemented. This process would help to promote greater sustainability in development by focussing on institution building prior to implementation. The access of farmers to secure land tenure, the ability of the local authorities to levy taxes and adequately represent their populace are necessary steps on the road to decentralization. In natural resource management, one study covering Gambia, Senegal, Mali, and Niger, examined 70 successful interventions to determine the "criteria" for success and the different contexts in which these interventions were conducted. An incentive for income earning capacity was highlighted as one of the crucial elements in promoting conservation activities.

PREPARING FOR THE SEGOU "ENCOUNTER"

The Regional Encounter in Segou, Mali, has been organized to allow donors and Sahelian governments to have open discussions with the representatives of the village groups. Three main topics will be used to focus discussion: participation of local population groups, water and soil conservation techniques, and development of farming systems. These topics were used in the Washington U.S.-Canadian conference to generate ideas which the PVOs/NGOs, based on their field experience, thought were important to communicate at the Encounter. Concerns raised were: to respect the Sahelian method of organization in local groups, noting that methods may be very different in a North American context; to address the issue of women's long work days as obstacles to their participation in natural resource management; the need to use local techniques wherever possible and to create more governance institutions at the local level; the need to be wary of the term "appropriate package." Package implies uniformity and not enough contextual sensitivity. Appropriate is anything that makes sense to the local people given the technological and climatic constraints in the existing socio-political framework.

CONCLUSIONS

Reversing the present trend of decertification in the Sahel will require a combined response from several partners working toward the development of the region. Donors must begin to coordinate policies to create a more stable macroeconomic environment and more consistent resource allocation for Sahelian development. It is important that the Sahelian governments recognize that the rural population must play a fundamental role in activities for the protection of natural resources and in the augmentation of agricultural production in order to reduce structural deficits. The governments must be prepared to decentralize control to the local government structures if they are eager to achieve equitable growth. The international NGO community should learn from each other's efforts and be encouraged by the donors to do so. The PVO/NGO community should feel secure in their ability to negotiate with the donors to allow for longer time frames and more flexibility for spontaneous replication. Finally, the true focus of discussion must arise within the rural

communities themselves. Members of village organizations are realizing their ability to control their own development and should be equipped with the tools and confidence needed to address their own problems and to move towards long-term development.

Participation and the Role of Local Organizations in the Management of Natural Resources in the Sahel

Canadian - United States
PVO/NGO/CIDA/A.I.D. Conference

Washington, DC
May 2-4, 1989

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1. INTRODUCTION

The idea for this Canadian-U.S. PVO/NGO/CIDA/A.I.D. conference held in Washington, DC, May 2-4, 1989, originated in discussions between A.I.D. and CIDA officials attending the December 1988 meeting of the Donors' Advisory Group of the Club du Sahel in Tucson, Arizona. Donors acknowledged that the Sahel Futures Study proposal of decentralizing power and authority from the central government suggests major implications for donor agency policies. Donors recognize the integral role which NGOs have played in the process of decentralization and local participation. Both CIDA and A.I.D. agreed that a conference at which PVOs/NGOs could present their perspectives on the role and current level of autonomy of local organizations would not only help to guide donor policies, but would also allow more open communication between Northern NGOs and perhaps more cohesion in strategy.

The objectives of the conference were threefold. The first was a Canadian - U.S. discussion, the first of its kind in the international NGO community working in the Sahel, to share experiences and ideas on the role of NGOs in the promotion of participatory and sustainable development, particularly in the area of natural resource management which is of primary concern in the Sahel. The second was to discuss ways of more clearly determining the organizational capacity of rural populations to manage their own resource bases. This discussion was facilitated by James Thomson's model, "User-based Governance of Renewable Natural Resource Management." This new model was designed to promote more analysis on institutional prerequisites before projects were implemented. By incorporating a "checklist" into case studies and projects, Thomson's goal was to ascertain the feasibility of local governance of natural resources and perhaps entice NGOs and donors to take a more long term view of possible solutions. To refine this model, US PVOs and Canadian NGOs presented case studies of field experiences. The results of a natural resource management assessment project were presented by Asif Shaikh of ED/I in order to provide linkages between the Thomson model and case studies which had previously been documented as "successful." The third objective was to synthesize the most crucial points regarding local participation raised at the conference so that they may be used at the Rencontre Regionale in Segou, Mali, taking place May 22-28, 1989.

2. THE SAHEL FUTURES STUDY

To set the stage for the conference, Alioune Sall, UNDP NGO Division, presented the origins and significance of the Sahel Futures Study, of which he was a participating author.

In 1983, a conference in Brussels, with CILSS and the Club du Sahel raised the following questions on issues facing the Sahel: "Where are we?" "What are our strategies and have they been working?' Acknowledging that donor funds and initiatives were not achieving results, the Sahel Futures Study commenced.

The purpose of this study, which attempted to determine a trends scenario projected from 1985 into 2010, was to take a longer term view of prospects for sustainable development in the Sahel. An inter-generational focus was adopted which tried to determine the constraints which will face future Sahelian generations. Physical considerations, such as a projected downward trend in rainfall, increasing deforestation, and decreasing soil fertility, were combined with economic and political realities to determine a trends scenario. The scenario which evolved implied insurmountable constraints for the future generations and thus was not acceptable to the Sahelian governments. The study found that with the flight of youth from the countryside in search of urban employment and lifestyle, the elders left behind lacked the motivation to promote and sustain rural natural resource development with the increasingly limited resources. However, where village organizations had emerged, a new dynamic was arising which the study found encouraging and integral in the development process. Local autonomy and decentralization became the central focus which implied many policy considerations for donor agencies and Sahelian governments.

It took Sahelian governments time to accept the suggestion of the study and they have not accepted the decentralization concept outright. They need clarification on such terms as "responsibilization", which is an attempt to distance the foreign donor agencies from the process of development in the Sahel. This transformation implies a radical change in political structure for the Sahelian states and it requires donor agencies to be supportive of the changes, offering guidance, but little intervention.

This process of change will require a redefinition of the respective roles of the Sahelian governments and the NGOs. If NGOs are to be the primary facilitators of communication between the new village organizations and the governments, a climate of confidence must be established between governments and NGOs. The NGOs may be drawn into political activities such as assisting with legislative initiatives, a departure from the technical and training assistance which they have traditionally provided. Decentralization will be a delicate process, but the study concluded that the most important hope for the Sahel is the emergence of local organizations which have a long-term interest in sustainable development of natural resources in the Sahel.

3. UNITED STATES - CANADIAN DIALOGUE

3.1 A.I.D. - PVO relationship

The approach which A.I.D. has been developing recently is one focussed on institution building, and participatory and sustainable development, including work with African NGOs and other beneficiary groups. This is due in part to a mandate from Congress to look at these special concerns. A.I.D. recognizes that its understanding of what works and does not in terms of participation needs constant revision, and so is increasingly looking to the PVO community for answers and lessons to guide funding policies. A.I.D. recognizes that its demands for financial accountability has been a major constraint to long-term development. However, it is committed to devising a strategy to provide resources for sustainable projects, perhaps accomplished by providing programmatic grants within a country over a longer period of time to all PVOs working in that country. "Umbrella" grants such as this are a recent element in AID funding policy, but encouraging lessons learned in the field and increased PVO collaboration will continue to strengthen this procedure. A.I.D. is committed to developing a "partnership" between the U.S. PVOs and the African NGOs with the ultimate aim of strengthening the African groups so they can design and implement their own development activities. In order to promote this partnership, A.I.D. is also involved in trying to engage U.S. PVOs in a continuous dialogue to determine better ways of working together within the Sahel.

3.2 CIDA - NGO RELATIONSHIP

The concept of "microrealization" characterizes the policy of CIDA. CIDA appears to be more flexible than A.\i.d. in the allocation of funds and in permitting projects which appear to be working well to continue and flourish. The Canadian NGO community considers that CIDA should play more a role of observer than evaluator. Institutional collaboration occurs among the Canadian NGOs, and between the Canadian and Sahelian NGOs in order to ensure a common perception of reality. For a long time, they have asked themselves how to develop an association among partners having resources of unequal importance. The "microrealization" approach was created to respond to this concern.

3.3 U.S. PVO COMMUNITY

The US PVO community working in the Sahel has no type of umbrella organization such as SCS in Canada. Instead, for the entire community, there are two consortium organizations which include members working in all areas of the developing world. The first organization, InterAction, comprises roughly 120 voluntary members. It functions as a trade association, providing information sharing, including a newsletter and working on public policy issues facing the community. Membership dues and private funding provide the operating budget. PACT, Private Agencies Collaborating Together, the second consortium group, is a conduit for A.I.D. funds. The group's 30 members include African NGOs as well. The main objective of PACT's program in the recent past has been the institutional development of U.S. PVOs, although some of PACT's funds are used by U.S. PVOs to strengthen their partner organizations in the developing world.

3.4 CANADIAN NGO COMMUNITY

Part of the Canadian NGO community takes a direct interest in the Sahel. The consortium Solidarite Canada Sahel (SCS) is comprised of about 40 member NGOs which do development work in the Sahel and also work towards educating the Canadian public about development problems in the Sahel. Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) is a coalition of Canadian NGOs which work throughout the African continent.

The objective of the SCS project is to reinforce the solidarity between Canadians and Sahelians in improving living conditions in the Sahel. Its goal is to reinforce the actions of Canadian and Sahelian NGOs in education and development cooperation to involve more actively and mobilize more effectively the populations in Canada and the Sahel.

Four major principles guide the action of SCS:

(1) Partnership: The establishment of a new type of partnership between the Sahelian and Canadian NGOs by ensuring that the Sahelians are fully involved in the planning of three and one year plans and of individual projects. They participate equally in all of the stages of project management (SCS committees, project review committees, SCS Working Groups, etc.). This type of partnership succeeds in breaking the classical relationship of donors and recipients.

(2) Collaboration: Multiple collaboration between Canadian NGOs themselves and between Canadian and Sahelian NGOs in a manner which encourages a common understanding of the Sahelian situation and of the solutions which can be achieved jointly.

3.4 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Because only five case studies were presented at the conference, it is difficult to make generalizations about the different approaches which Canadian NGOs and U.S. PVOs tend to take. However, it seemed apparent that Canadian NGOs stress local participation more strongly than the U.S. PVOs do. Perhaps this difference may be due to the fact that many PVOs who began working in the Sahel initially provided disaster relief and have only recently begun to work with natural resource management projects. In structure, the US PVO community does not have an umbrella group for PVOs working in the Sahel, although the new A.I.D. Natural Resource Management Project's PVO component may provide a vehicle for better coordination. SCS manages its own projects; PACT has funded projects in Mali but does not directly manage the activities; InterAction does not directly manage projects in the Sahel. In government - non-governmental organization relationships, both A.I.D. and CIDA are committed to creating a "partnership" between African NGOs and international NGOs although their approaches in achieving this goal differ. Where A.I.D. would like to concentrate on institution building in the Sahel with the assistance of the PVO community and has only been able to provide direct funding to those African NGOs which have a capacity to absorb relatively large grants. A.I.D.'s management system makes it difficult to provide small direct grants, although alternative mechanisms are currently being sought. CIDA directly funds Sahelian NGOs through SCS with grants for both small projects and institutional support. CIDA has been able to be more flexible in terms of project time frames and funding accountability because of differences between their relationship with the Canadian Parliament and A.I.D.'s relationship with the U.S. Congress. The latter is constrained by strict financial oversight and limited funding horizons imposed by Congress.

3.5 FUTURE DIALOGUES

Both the NGO/PVO community as well as the donors expressed an interest in a future dialogue, including another conference to discuss the outcomes of Segou. Among the NGO community, the question was raised about what kind of mechanisms can be structured to facilitate more regular communication between the North American PVO/NGO communities. Possible areas for discussion are a more in-depth analysis of the "microrealization" approach, and sharing information on future developments on decentralization in natural

resource management. Donors agreed that more thought and discussion of topics such as greater policy coordination on macroeconomic and environmental issues were required as no concrete solutions were achieved at this gathering.

4. ACHIEVING DECENTRALIZATION IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

It must be noted, first off, that "decentralization" and "local participation" are issues on which donors and PVOs/NGOs have been focussed for some years before this conference. However, "local participation in natural resource management" is a newer and more difficult goal to reach in light of the survival conditions which constrain Sahelian farmers in conserving the environment. This issue was highlighted at the conference and was often a point of some divergence among thinkers regarding which is the first step to take, land tenure for political and economic security which will lead to conservation, or natural resource projects which will become income producing activities?

4.1 THE THOMSON MODEL: "USER-BASED GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT"

James Thomson's model attempts to provide an analytical framework for assessing projects aimed at local participation and governance.

The model addresses four major categories of issues:

1. the nature of renewable resources as economic goods
2. institutional frameworks used for managing resources
3. interactions which follow when actors choose strategies in light of the incentives inherent in the nature of the good and the rules governing its management and use
4. outcomes, evaluated in terms of efficiency and equity.

Thomson proposes a checklist for each category which will allow project initiators to:

- define the nature of the goods
- determine the rules governing access to natural resources,
- distinguish between the different strategies adopted by different classes of resource managers, such as pastoralist, housewives, or artisans
- assess the efficiency and equity of outcomes resulting the strategies adopted by users.

Thomson proposes that there are two constraints placed on rural managers. The first is government restrictions on the legal capacity at the local level to manage natural resources. The second is the concentration of public financing power of the central governments. He believes that localities need to be able to tax at their own initiative to begin sustainable development. In order to increase the legal and economic capacity of village organizations in the Sahel, the goods, and actors, and their relationships in the rural world need to be identified first. This model provides a guideline for PVOs and NGOs working with rural managers to analyze the present situation to locate or create the structures ready to sustain natural resource management.

In order to identify the goals, actors, and their relationships, Thomson asks the following questions in each category:

- in defining the nature of the goods, he asks, is the resource naturally and easily subject to exclusion? Is the resource characterized by rivalrous or non-rivalrous consumption?

there are two types of governing rules: formal legal rules and working rules. Under the formal legal rules heading, questions of ownership, controlling access to the resource, determination of allocating the use units of the resource, and maintenance of the resource are posed. Under the working rules heading Thomson basically is referring to conflict resolution, posing such questions as: "Who has the authority to arbitrate resource disputes? Who has standing to appeal arbitrated decisions? How are resources mobilized for resource creation or extension? Who manages and expends mobilized resources? How is resource maintenance to be financed?

- in interactions, do different ethnic groups consistently adopt different resource creation, use and maintenance strategies? What are the incentives which lead each group to adopt its particular strategies?
- in outcomes, do the strategies which various categories of individuals adopt result in efficient and equitable outcomes?

Thomson argues that because there are multiple resources in the Sahel, each with a different economic definition, such as water being a public good and perhaps land being a private good, that a multiplicity of institutions are needed to create a structure for management in the Sahel. Relationships between people and goods are different depending on ethnic backgrounds and the goods in question.

Thomson uses the Bakel irrigation project as an example of a case which has used the model in institution analysis. Within this irrigation system, Thomson cites four regimes which administer the system depending on how close each group is to their best area of knowledge. For instance, family farms can respond rapidly to changing conditions and so should be the first organizational body making decisions on the irrigation system. Subunits of the farms are responsible for direct maintenance of the system because again, they have physical proximity to the problems which may arise. Federations of the village organizations keeps the autonomy of the village through representatives in SAED. Finally, the NGOs provide consulting and technical expertise for the village groups. Thomson emphasizes, however, that in order for this system to sustain itself, the local regimes must be able to change and make rules about property rights and collective property arrangement.

Several important revisions were proposed to the Thomson model. The first was that the model incorporate the prospects of changing interactions among managers and goods and between authorities and rural farmers. A static model seems unlikely in the face of constant ecological disruption. The second was that the model may be slightly too academic to be readily implemented by PVOs/NGOs or more precisely, local NGOs. Are people able to identify these issues for themselves? Is the model itself replicable? One point was raised that the primary objective of any model should be the capacity of local populations to develop themselves. Further questions emerged. Are farmers really decision makers? What is the difference between acquiescence and real participation? When are farmer to farmer talks important? The point was stressed that we must clearly define the different levels of participation which are seen when working for change in the Sahel. It was agreed that the adage, "Those who can't say no, have no say," should not realized. A final question pointed to whether projects should employ the Thomson analysis before they commence or whether the analysis be part of the process of implementation.

4.2 CASE STUDIES

Five case studies were presented, three by Canadian NGOs and two by US PVOs. Because there were so few, it is difficult to draw generalizations about the scope and type of projects in which each country's private voluntary community is involved. However, from the case studies presented, it appeared that the US effort in the Sahel was originally one to provide disaster relief which has made the transition to natural resource management projects somewhat more difficult in terms of sustainability. None of the projects had yet been able to comprehensively identify the institutional structures and relationships which the Thomson model proposes, but these cases provided Thomson with a guideline for how difficult this identification process may be.

4.2.1 ISAID

The Institute for the Study and Application of Integrated Development in Toronto, Canada uses an approach of maintaining a long term presence in one specific location. Originating with an academic function for research and education, ISAID now has five permanent people in the field in its one area of concentration, Filingue, Niger. Through a slow evolution process, the NGO has become a reactive body, responding to the direct needs of the community looking at four stages of the participatory process. Identification begins a reactive process in the cycle and is followed by negotiation and planning. Implementation, the third phase, involves interaction and training, and then withdrawal completes the cycle.

In terms of its relationship with the community, ISAID sees itself in a linking position between the village development councils, the ministry of planning, and the National Council for Development. The study did not illuminate where institutional prerequisites were needed to allow ISAID's withdrawal. However, new projects developed in conjunction with the community have included husking millet, a grain mill project with SCS and a proposal for a women's credit program.

4.2.2 SAVE THE CHILDREN, CANADA

SAVE THE CHILDREN, CANADA in Sy, Mali emphasizes "local ownership of projects." How do they work the matching of funds? What is its relationship with the village?

4.2.3 CECI

CECI presented a study on their activities in 36 villages in Kaarta, Mali. Their participation initiatives focussed on the difficult process of integrating pastoralist and agriculturalists. They tried to determine how relationships were affected between the two groups when committees were set up outside the local power structure and are still in the process of assessing these interactions. Questions surfaced such as, when committees are set up to give more power to the pastoralist, why would people want to collaborate? Complimentarities do exist between farmers and pastoralist, but it depends on the ecological zone. The study also discovered that often new projects emerged from a long relationship between Malian technicians and local populations without any external assistance.

4.2.4 CARE

This CARE study centered in Chad explained that the original goal in their projects there was to provide disaster relief. With a relief initiative, originally they worked with a high level of resources and a short time horizon. However, as the project shifted into a development phase, the resources were less available and the time horizon lengthened considerably.

CARE has seen a trend moving into the late 80's of devolution of government responsibility and focus on training and sustainability to the individual village organizations. New options were defined together with the community instead of as a mandate from the Sahelian governments. Further issues will emerge in the 90's, such as whether NGOs and PVOs should be implementors or facilitators in the development process and how to exit projects leaving organizational sustainability. Once again, a feasibility study of whether the village people with whom they work, primarily churches, local coops and primary schools, in Chad were ready to assume complete responsibility for natural resource management and sustainable income production activities has not been documented.

4.2.5 WORLD VISION

World Vision also demonstrated that their initial response to development was relief originated. The study presented focussed on the 7th region of Mali, where they agreed to provide logistics and support structure from rainy season to rainy season. However, as World Vision has committed itself to more sustainable development, they look carefully at the duplication potential of their projects. In order to commit, they pointed out that staffs need to be reorganized, and people need to agree to the changes. They raised the issue questioning whether the NGO should provide the operating budget to a village organization or local group as they reach an organized, institutional status.

These cases provided the Thomson model with a limited analysis for revision. However, certain points of discussion could be used for further study. For instance, are donors forcing NGOs to create village groups in their own image, inventing someone with which to play? Are the NGOs creating partners? Are we giving villages roles which they don't want and can't have? Do farmers truly know what their options are? Can they articulate their specific needs, like a new soil fertility project, for instance? If resources are scarce, do NGOs/PVOs focus on areas where they may achieve a high probability of success? These questions have yet to be answered, but deserve much attention from the NGO/PVO communities as well as the donors.

4.3 "OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT: SUCCESSFUL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE SAHEL"

This paper was commissioned to assess participatory projects in natural resource management of 70 interventions in four countries in the Sahel including Mali, Niger, Senegal, and the Gambia. As a large scale case study, it provides further analysis of the Thomson approach and may provide linkages with the PVO/NGO field experience.

It was discovered early on in the study that incentives, in social, economic, and political contexts must be combined with technical measures to create the full array of factors for success. They found that socioeconomic incentives, particularly for investments, are the guiding force to technical success. The inability to acquire land tenure was found as the largest impediment to these investment incentives. In determining a checklist of "criteria for success," they learned that margins for success were often more applicable for criteria than direct, observable factors which were difficult to determine. For example, it was difficult to tell whether a farmer might initiate a project for financial objectives or to preserve the environment. In natural resource decision making, they learned that changes in the rural economic context such as the degradation of the environment and the acquisition of new knowledge were far more influential than any one static factor.

Successful initiatives included private initiatives, public projects, and community efforts which covered all types of technical assistance, from high levels of assistance to very low levels. Cases covered all aspects of natural resource management from soil and water conservation, soil fertility improvement, forestry and agro forestry and the preservation of biological diversity. Perhaps the three most evident cases of success were the AID sponsored Guesselbodi Natural Forest Management project, the Maggia Valley Windbreaks, and the Mali mud stoves program. For the most part, these successes occurred as a result of trying to resolve the problems of the populations involved rather than of the environment, per se. For example, Guesselbodi involved people in management initiatives, not solely technical ones. ED/I's observation was that a minimum ten year time frame is required for natural resource management initiatives to mature.

It was difficult to provide a linkage with the case studies presented at the conference because a "checklist" for these studies was not presented. It is important to point out that both Thomson and Shaikh arrive at the same basic premise. Land tenure security is the obstacle to sustainable resource management. While Thomson is more concerned with institution building, Shaikh takes the analysis one step further to see what can be achieved in terms of increased income and sustainable resources, by using these institutions.

The ED/I study concludes that rural production systems in the Sahel today are under stress. Impacts from shrunken rivers, fragmented forests and grasslands resulting in reduced natural production are irreversible

and must be countered with a change in land use practices. The relative scarcity of factors of production (land, labor, and capital) is changing. In particular, the relative importance of capital must increase to offset declining natural resources and increasing population. Farmers must be prepared and equipped to invest in the land with financial and physical capital. But they need to be assured of direct benefit from this investment. One must remember that the farmer issue is economic well-being. To achieve this, an environment conducive to participation and short term benefit must be created. Perhaps the environmental impacts will be indirect benefits from local participation. It must be remembered that it will take twenty years or more to achieve large-scale, visible impacts.

4.4 DECENTRALIZATION IN DIFFERENT POLICY AND PLANNING STAGES

Four subgroups were organized to focus in on one particular planning and policy analysis arena. Each group looked at the potential relevance of Thomson's model for PVO/NGO monitoring of local development at these four different planning stages. Within each category, the groups attempted to define the appropriate role of donors, international NGOs, host governments, local NGOs and farmer organizations.

1. "Structural Adjustment: Implications for Local Organizations and NGOs."

The initial question which this group raised was, Will Northern NGOs take over the functioning of the government? They stressed the awareness of changes in linkages between the Northern and Southern NGOs and felt that perhaps their new emerging role was that of intermediary between the government and local NGOs. Additionally, they feel they may be able to assist in discussion with Northern donors about structural adjustment policies. The group highlighted two needs for local NGOs in structural adjustment issues. The first is the need for capacity building. The intermediary PVOs are under pressure from the voluntary associations to expand the size and number of services they provide. In order to accomplish this goal, they felt the second need was the ability of local NGOs to participate in strategic planning and conceptualization. Local NGOs must see themselves in the context of the entire society with all of its linkages. They must be given the responsibility of determining their own policies and strategies not only with the local populations but with the Sahelian government institutions as well.

2. "Replicating Success: Scaling up for Spread effects"

The general consensus within this group was that replication as a concept was difficult to define because of the several definitions of success which people assign to projects. Whether replication should be designed into a project was a debatable issue with some Canadian NGO representatives stating that replication often occurred spontaneously and that donor provisions should be made for this possibility. It was pointed out that project designers cannot develop blueprints, but can only develop approaches. However, in the several stages of development, including, the pilot, the demonstration, and replication, NGOs voiced that often they do not have the "guts" to march into the replication phase without the infrastructure which has yet to spontaneously develop. Time frame was an important issue here. The approach of "capturing" was brought into discussion, noting Cecil Cook who postulates that local people need to see a colleague reaping the benefit of some new method of farming for instance, and then they will begin to ask for it, or "capture" it and replicate. The group seemed in agreement that replication in its most successful form was a process of self-initiation. Correlating with Shaikh's paper, it was agreed upon that replication should focus on sociopolitical, economic issues rather than technical ones in order to allow for greater sustainability. Pressure of evaluation from donors inhibits the design process at the replication stage because it affects the ability to have long term projects. CIDA seemed much more flexible than AID in terms of allowing a project to continue and flower if it seemed to be "catching on". CIDA seems capable of "monitoring", rather than "evaluating". The Canadians in the group generally felt that replication is a dynamic process and cannot be initially designed into a project. However, if it is to be designed into the project NGOs and donors need to maintain a brutal honesty when determining the real cost of a project through all phases to achieve sustainability.

In addressing Thomson's model, the group asked where PVOs fit in politically. They agreed that PVOs/NGOs must begin to look at political issues of land tenure rights instead of solely focussing on the immediate goal of planting trees, for example. This longer term view means that the NGOs need to maintain

the responsibility of hiring local people who will have an interest in becoming politically aware and active, and who can garner support from their colleagues in the village.

3. "Land tenure reform and other local governance issues."

Dealing with the problem of "tenure fonciere" policy and other local controls, this group began by defining certain terms.

- "La tenure fonciere" : this does not refer just to land but to "natural resources"; not only in the sense of property but the problem of tenure must be perceived in reference to rules - formal, informal, and authorities at all levels. This assessment correlates with Thomson's model.
- "Governance": The concept includes the application and control of a group of formal and operative rules at the level of both central government, and local traditional authorities.

The group situated the "problematique" of land tenure policy of Sahelian states at the level of lack of respect for traditional systems in making natural resources into public goods in many cases. This situation has produced ambiguities, conflicts, and sometimes, expropriation of peasants. Many cases of abuse upheld by official statutes were cited. This state of affairs represents a major constraint to initiatives which peasants could take to enrich, conserve and rationally exploit natural resources.

The group recognized the complexity of the problem and the diversity of situations according to the nature of the resources and the locality under consideration. The analytical scheme presented by Thomson was very useful to deepen this point and the groups discussed the necessity to establish different tenure rules and management systems as a function of the attributes of the resource: private goods, common property with limited access or unlimited access, and public goods. Each needs particular institutional arrangements. Consensus was reached that the only longer term solution can be found by putting into place conditions permitting the establishment of institutions at the local level. These institutions must be able to make decisions concerning the management, conservation and improvement of natural resources and must be reinforced by a national legislative code and decentralized jurisdictions having the power to resolve conflicts between the users of the resources.

The roles of different partners has to reflect their experience and comparative advantages. The NGOs must help the local populations to negotiate the rules controlling the exploitation of resources for education and training and assistance in self-organization.

In conclusion, the donor agencies should maintain a dialogue with the Sahelian states in order to lead them to reform the existing land tenure laws and implement a decentralization policy.

4. "Beneficiary participation in the project design and implementation process."

The ultimate aim behind initiating local participation and decision making is that it leads to local empowerment and sustainability. The question is how to achieve this participation. Suggestions included involving the beneficiary in the identification of the project activity at every level, noting that if people are participating in the start of a project they are more unlikely to back out during the tough and unfruitful stages, and also providing incentives to people to speak up once they are brought into an activity to keep their participation ongoing. Different types of participation were highlighted such that collective participation could happen where collective interest is involved. There were several problems cited with participation. donors need to flexible and recognize time and effort taken to achieve participation. OEF International offers an example that in their literacy training programs, they do not offer the program automatically, but wait until women clearly perceive potential benefits from this training. This waiting takes time and money. People are more likely to participate when they see short term benefits, but no model of participation is exactly replicable.

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Many points were stressed for further discussion:

- North-South NGO dialogue that replication and participation are intrinsically linked.
- Partnerships must begin at the lowest level. Project should not even be started which don't work with partners that do not have a sustainable future
- Social pressure should be applied by peers as a good control mechanism for avoiding "free-riders."
- NGOs do not work in a vacuum, they work in a cultural context.

5. TOWARD REGIONAL ENCOUNTERS: THE VILLAGE ORGANIZATION AS A NEW DYNAMIC IN THE SAHEL

The Regional "Encounter" scheduled for Segou, Mali, May 22-28 provides the first chance that donors have had to formally discuss natural resource management with representatives of the village organizations. The original nature of this type of meeting required that issues for discussion at Segou be worked through with the NGO community first to assemble ideas on natural resource management from field representatives which would be communicated at the Encounter. Three categories were created for discussion. The comments below provide a brief synopsis of discussion made at the meeting to be used to prepare talking points for the Segou Encounter.

(1) "Production of the environment and its productive potential"

These are the issues raised in the discussion:

- o always use local techniques if possible
- o show peasants what the new techniques can do
- o emphasize to farmers the crucial importance of information
- o if local government is becoming more important, where will if find resources?

Points of discussion for Segou:

- o will the introduction of new cash crops encourage protection of the environment?
- o If men emigrate to Zaire, Europe and Gabon because of the "disappearance of the land", are married women more interested in developing an environmental protection strategy in order to keep their families together? Even if they are interested in environmental protection for economic or social reasons, how can they get involved when their workload is already so heavy?
- o How can farmers have better access to existing technologies, such as using manure as fertilizer?
- o Will reforms of land tenure rights by themselves bring higher levels of investment?
- o Can the forestry services channel towards environmental projects the money from fines which they impose? Or, does this money already go into their operating budget? If their budget is raised, would the local management of public lands be more economic? Do employees of the forestry services believe that farmers do not understand anything about the environment and that they would simply destroy the forests if they had the chance?

(2) "Participation of the rural population"

The following points were raised:

- Evidence was presented showing the determining influence which Sahelian governments exercise over popular movements. This influence has an important demobilizing effect on popular associations.
- The methods of group organization in the Sahel can differ enormously from methods utilized in the North American context. NGOs must be sensitive to this issue and respect the Sahelian ways of doing things.
- The NGOs were warned to watch for village organizations created by the government as a means of unifying the voice of the people. The interaction between foreign NGOs and these organizations, "however artificial", remained an unanswered question.
- NGOs were reminded of the obstacles to women's participation. It is necessary to take special measures to ensure their full participation in the development process.
- Solid, relatively well structured organizations - if one takes into account the Sahelian context -have the best chances of succeeding and have a particular need for external aid. The best way to support them is to offer them possibilities for consultation and training.

Points of discussion for Segou:

- Might the village organization become exclusive one day? For example, if the group of village organizations were to form a federation with a legal statute having the power to give property titles to the land and therefore give direct advantages, would the traditional roles in the village lead to an inequitable distribution of newly available resources?
- Why would a farmer join a village organization? To be more socially visible? To learn to preserve the environment? To inform him/herself of the accomplishments of other farmers? To learn to obtain funds from donors?
- What motivates the participation of various categories of people? For example, women, children and the economically vulnerable?
- Traditionally in African societies, one doesn't work collectively to "produce" but rather on the occasion of village celebrations or to help a sick farmer. Are the farmers going to consent to work in a group in order to increase their incomes? Can they have commercial loans and savings with a system of individual agricultural production? Will they have confidence in group savings? Is environmental protection a central priority for the community groups? Is it possible to give a legal statute to community organizations which will be flexible enough for them to respond to changing economic and ecological conditions in the Sahel?

(3) "Transform agrarian systems within a global approach."

These questions were raised in discussion:

- It is necessary to use the expression "appropriate package" carefully. One cannot propose technical solutions until after a detailed study of the ecosystem concerned, including an analysis of water, soils, vegetation and climate. It is not easy to repeat technological successes without adapting them to specific contexts. Technology is but <u>one</u> of the criteria involved in project success.
- Systems are transformed by offering the population more alternatives. It was proposed that recourse to the "trial and error" method would give beneficiaries a larger choice.

Points for discussion in Segou:

- o Should farmers examine only those technologies which they could use individually? Or rather technologies which are useful for the local production of tools and transport; for example bicycles or wagons?
- o Can one modify technological solutions which are advantageous in the short term so that they can then serve long term development purposes?
- o If federations of organizations were involved in revolving credit funds, one could reduce the costs of services and interest rates. Are farmers ready to negotiate and to work without intermediaries?
- o Should donors distribute foodstuffs as remuneration for work or so that the population can work?
- o Can market incentives encourage production and environmental protection in the Sahel as long as Sahelian farmers are competing with European and American Agro-industry?
- o Would the Sahelian governments be inclined to adopt policies and create legal and administrative support to stimulate management and stimulate management and responsible protection of resources by those who use them and who know them best?

6. EVALUATION OF THE CONFERENCE

Most goals set out for the conference were accomplished and the overall evaluation from participants was very positive. The first goal, the Canadian - US dialogue and acquaintance, was significantly aided by the bi-lingual discussions and presentation of material. All participants emphasized this point and felt this type of conference should set a precedent for future international gatherings. Both the Canadian and US NGOs stressed that they needed more time to compare their experiences in the Sahel and stressed the desire for a future meeting. The donors acknowledged that they did not recognize that international NGO communication is limited. This discovery served to highlight the need for donors to encourage international NGO collaboration. However, the NGO community felt that their next gathering should be held without the presence of the donors as they felt that this conference may have followed a USAID agenda too stringently.
Another interesting outcome arising from the first goal was the realization by US PVOs that they had no organizational structure in the Sahel such as the Canadian Solidarite Canada Sahel. The US PVO community acknowledged a need for more discussion among themselves on natural resource management issues.

The second goal, discussing ways to achieve decentralization in natural resource management, was best reached through the workshop groups. Most participants noted that the group discussions were very helpful in fleshing out differing viewpoints and arriving at more clearly stated conclusions. The Thomson model did not facilitate as much discussion as perhaps it was designed to because most PVOs and NGOs argued that it was "too intellectual" for their uses. However, both Thomson's model and Shaikh's study were highly useful in providing a frame of reference for discussion.

The third goal, providing a workshop for natural resource management issues to be discussed at the Segou Encounter, was certainly accomplished simply by articulating thoughts at the conference. Unfortunately, time constraints limited the extent to which points could be thoroughly examined in the workshops, but nonetheless, important comments were generated.

The general consensus was that more international conferences including both donors and NGOs, such as this one, should be conducted on a regular basis. Perhaps this bi-lateral event will set the stage for multi-lateral conferences in the future with the hope of creating a unified network of international NGOs working in harmony with their Sahelian partners for sustainable natural resource management.