

PERMANENT INTER-STATE COMMITTEE
FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL
(CILSS)

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
FOR WEST AFRICAN STATES
(ECOWAS)

**PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR PREPARING
THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAM
(SRAP)**

With the Technical and Financial Support of UNSO

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FOREWORD

The present document sums up the conclusions of a study carried out by a high level consultant of CILSS and the conclusions of a workshop organized by CILSS in December 1996.

This workshop gathered experts on implementing the Convention. Its aim was to improve and clarify the propositions made in the consultant's report concerning:

- the investigation of the concept of SRAP,
- the outcome of the relationship between SRAP and on-going and future programs,
- the relationships between SRAP, NAPs, RAP,
- suggested methodology for preparing SRAP.

The point of the whole process has been to reach a consensus for organizing the SRAP in such a way that all interested participants will feel part of the process.

This document is a working guide that requires further enrichment and clarification. Its aim is to provide a more harmonious and effective application of the final SRAP.

In the interim, CILSS thanks Dr. Ibrahim CAMARA, who studied the complex situation of the subregion in the field of IGOs, and who has made constructive suggestions.

CILSS also thanks all those who in a single day's work allowed clarification of such complex and sensitive subjects.

INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABN	:	Niger River Basin Authority
CIDA	:	Canadian International Development Agency
ACMAD	:	African Center for Meteorology Applied to Development
WARDA	:	West African Rice Development Association
AGRHYMET	:	Agro Hydro Meteorology Center
ALG	:	Liptako-Gourma Authority
CBLT	:	Lake Chad Basin Commission
WAEC	:	West African Economic Community
CEBV	:	Cattle and Meat Economic Community
ECOWAS	:	Economic Community of West African States
CES/DRS	:	Soil and Water Conservation/Soil Defense and Restoration
CIERRO	:	Inter-African Center of Ouagadougou for Rural Radio Studies
CILSS	:	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CMA/AOC	:	Conference of West and Central African Ministers of Agriculture
CNEDD	:	National Council on the Environment for Durable Development
CONACILSS	:	National Correspondent for CILSS
CONAGESE	:	National Council for Environmental Management
CONSERE	:	High Council for Natural Resources and the Environment
CORAF	:	Network of African Agronomic Researchers
CRAT	:	African Regional Technology Center
CRTO	:	Remote Sensing Research Center of Ouagadougou
CSE	:	Center for Ecological Follow-up

GTZ	:	Foreign Aid Organization of the German Government
ICRISAT	:	International Coops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics
INSAH	:	Institute of the Sahel
IFDC/AFRIQUE UGFS	:	International Fertilizer Development Center Section on SoilFertility Management
IPD/AOS	:	Panafrican Development Institute/West Africa-Sahel
JALDA	:	Japan Agricultural Land Development Agency
MULPOC	:	Multinational Center for Project Programming and Execution
OCLALAV	:	Common Organization for Locust and Fowl Pest Control
IGO	:	Intergovernmental Organization
OMVG	:	Organization for Development of the Gambia River Basin
OMVS	:	Organization for Development of the Senegal River Basin
NGO	:	Nongovernmental Organization
OUA/SAFGRAD	:	Organization of African Unity/Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development
NAP	:	National Action Program
SRAP	:	Subregional Action Program
NEAP	:	National Environment Action Program
RIOD	:	International Network
UEMOA	:	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNSO	:	United Nations Bureau for the Sudano-Sahelian Region

I. INTRODUCTION

The economy of the West African subregion and particularly of the Sahelian states largely depends on agriculture and breeding. Managing natural and environmental resources remains a crucial preoccupation for these states.

Despite innumerable bilateral and multilateral efforts of states and their development partners (elaboration of policies and strategies, establishing projects for desertification control, etc.), the agro-ecological situation has continued to decline. Nor has the creation of a constellation of IGOs whose mandates often overlap helped in containing this degradation.

Through the Subregional Action Program, the International Convention for Desertification Control offers the subregion a real opportunity to establish a genuine cooperation built on efficient mechanisms of dialogue that fully utilize the complementarity and synergy of the various actors (training and research institutions, IGOs, NGOs, etc.) and potential partners while preserving their differences.

Being aware of this new opportunity, the CILSS environment ministers agreed, at their September 1994 meeting in Ouagadougou, to set up a single Subregional Action Program (SRAP) open to all West African states.

The two subregional conferences held in Dakar and Lome, respectively in July 1995 and February 1996, to prepare the SRAP under the auspices of CILSS, clarified the overall process and the different steps to be followed.

At the Lome meeting it was also agreed that a Subregional Forum would be organized around the main modes of action taken to control desertification in the subregion. These actions must back up existing programs and projects identified as potential components of SRAP.

However, the elaboration of the SRAP requires prior identification of the right preparation methodology, one that favors and reinforces partnerships between actors and parties, and relies on the definition of a number of concepts defined by the International Convention for Desertification Control. Hopefully, the different actors will then have the same level of understanding, and all the activities related to SRAP will be better organized.

II. AGRO-SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION

2.1. CHALLENGES

In 1960, when most countries had achieved international sovereignty, the political leaders, still in the halo of prestige of their newly acquired political independence, were already setting new targets for their people for the year 2000. They envisioned social and economic development and a closing of the gap between their countries and the former colonial powers. The promise was not long-lived. Africa, and the Sahel in particular, has since given up hope. The euphoria provoked by the first flattering growth rates, has today been displaced by a new reality: according to the World Bank, the per capita income has fallen to three fourths of its level at the end of the 1970s. In its prospective study on Sub-Sahara Africa, the World Bank notes that in the Sahel, life expectancy is 10 times lower than the average of other low income countries, the infant mortality rate (130 per thousand) is 10 times higher, the rate of primary schooling (37%) is one half, and there is only one doctor for every 24,000 inhabitants.

In this case, numbers don't always reflect the truth. The degradation of healthcare, the increase in the number of young people who do not attend school, unemployment, the rural exodus, and malnutrition reveal the precariousness of life in the Sahel.

The incriminating factors are, of course, drought and desertification which are at the same time causes and effects. In any case, rainfall has continued to be irregular, although crops have been good for a limited number of countries. Desertification, on the other hand, has never slackened. It has continued to be a dramatic consequence of both climatic effects and anthropic actions (abusive wood cutting, brush fires, animal foraging with fragilization of soils as a consequence). Far into regions known to be humid, pockets of desertification are now found.

Demographic growth has remained high with an average of 3%, which is more than the increase in agricultural production. With the adoption of the N'Djamena Declaration or through individual policies, different countries have taken courageous steps towards demographic control. However, these are too recent to yield any fruit yet. Pregnancies remain high, too frequent, and constitute a threat to the health of both children and mothers, but also to any progress in social infrastructure. The most vulnerable stratum of the population, women and children, suffer greatly from the difficult financial situations in CILSS countries.

The debt alone of Sahelian countries reveals the gravity of the financial crisis. The nine countries of CILSS owe their financiers more than their gross national products.

To face their public debt, these governments have found no alternative but to resort to massive borrowing matched by greatly decreased public spending (education, health, and maintenance of infrastructure - in rural areas, for instance, 2/3 of the population can hardly find potable water).

The debt of Sahelian countries has gone from \$103.6 billion in 1986 to \$147.9 billion in 1989. This increase results mainly from the fluctuating value of the dollar, the increase in interest rates, and the decrease in the price of raw materials. This confirms what little impact these strategies (moratoriums, partial cancellations, renegotiations, etc.) have in decreasing the debt of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The thorny problem of devaluation of the CFA franc as a factor in improving the competitiveness of the economy of Sahelian countries remains. In the regional and international context, the CFA franc remains a subject of heated debate.

2.2 EFFECTS OF THE CRISES

It is now clear that the agricultural policies established since the years of independence in Sahel countries have failed to provide food security. Spurred by a number of unfavorable climatic factors, food crop deficiencies have been constant or have sometimes worsened. For instance in 1988-89, food deficiencies in the entire Sahelian region amounted to 1,017,000 tons. As a rule, Sahelian countries compensate by receiving massive food imports from abroad. Most of the time this is in the form of aid maladapted for the situation and therefore produces the following negative effects on agricultural development:

- an increasing food dependency,
- a weak increase (if not a stagnation) in agricultural production,
- a decrease in exports,
- a growth in migratory phenomena/desertion of rural areas and anarchic urbanization,
- etc.

Neither have the policies and strategies regarding management of natural resources produced the expected results :

- pressure on wood has been constant through frequent clearings which farmers practice to obtain land; thus the disappearance of forests is accelerated;
- providing wood to large urban centers has continued without control because wood remains the main source of energy both in cities and rural areas;
- degradation of soils due to maladapted production systems which lead to large areas becoming uncultivated wasteland (decrease in soil fertility, degradation of pastures, inappropriate irrigation methods);
- decrease in the flow of major rivers (Niger, Senegal) due to silting and invasion of floating aquatic plants.

2.3. SOLUTIONS

In the entire Sahel since the great drought, people have proven to be very dynamic. Private initiatives have been common. Village associations are sprouting up, and people now fully and enthusiastically take part in the conception, execution, and follow-up of different agriculture development projects that are both productive and respectful to the environment.

CES/DRS methods using local know-how and resources are being rehabilitated in order to face the decline in soil fertility and degradation of natural resources. More and more, the focus is on implementing sustainable and durable socio-economic development that involves an active partnership between the different actors in lieu of the "Help and Assistance" approach.

The 1989 Segou meeting on land management called by CILSS and the Sahel Club can be considered one of the key elements in promoting the new "triologue" approach in decentralized management of natural resources.

Better still, in 1992, the international community adopted the first significant multilateral agreement *at a meeting in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)*. It integrates protection of the environment with more humane and durable development. It balances the interests of both North and South by meeting their expectations through acceptance of global natural resource management. Moreover, the Convention acknowledged the importance of fighting poverty for restoring degraded lands. In a sense, the Convention is the first international agreement whose aim is to replace the concept of aid with that of partnership.

III. INTERNATIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL INITIATIVES

3.1. REGIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR DESERTIFICATION CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1. Multiplicity and Diversity

As of 1977, following the years of drought in the Sahel region, plans, programs, and projects to control desertification and manage natural resources have flourished.

Up to 1991 about eight plans for desertification control, natural resource management, and development had been established in the subregion. Other plans are being drawn up and among them are some still waiting to be financed. In most cases, the various plans have adopted similar strategies and identical objectives and programs.

It is in this context that we find:

- the Lagos Action Plan adopted in 1980 by the African Heads of State;
- UNAPERDA (the United Nations Action Program for Economic Reform and the Development of Africa) adopted in 1986;
- the Nairobi Action Plan of 1977.

All three plans are concerned with the decline in agricultural productivity in Africa, and the need for a solution to the agricultural crisis on the continent.

The regional strategies set by CILSS for desertification control (DC) constitute a guiding reference because they have produced catalytic actions among the member states and within the international community.

The following strategies should be cited:

- The first strategy established in 1977 on the basis of priority objectives for food self-sufficiency and restoration of ecological balance in the subregion was for developing cereal production, research on hardy, drought-resistant varieties, and the involvement by people. This strategy has been readjusted several times to adapt to prevailing situations and because the performance of various programs was unsatisfactory.
- The regional strategy for desertification control was articulated around six fundamental options established in light of the general degradation of all the elements comprising or depending on the environment. The general perspective was to promote socio-economic development and to favor a new socio-ecological equilibrium.

- The regional strategy for food security (cereal policies): the Mindelo Orientations (1988).
- The N'Djamena Action Program (1988) on population and demography.
- The regional meeting of Segou (1989) concerned with improving the strategy by using the conclusions reached through strategy application in order to give it a more operations-oriented content.

Applying the regional strategy, the member states created National Plans for Desertification Control (NPDC).

Since then, four other programs for planning and management of natural resources have been elaborated, or are being elaborated in ECOWAS member states. These plans have their own strategies, objectives, and programs. They are sponsored and supported by cooperation partners. Among other such plans are:

- i) the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) sponsored by the World Bank and PNUD;
- ii) the Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP) supported by FAO and PNUD;
- iii) the UICN strategy, initiated by UICN;
- iv) the Plan for the Management of Natural Resources/Soil Management, supported by the World Bank, PNUD, and US-AID.

At the Pan-African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and Durable Development held January 28 - 30, 1991 in Bamako, which was a preparatory conference to CNUED (often referred to "the last chance Conference"), an agreement was reached. This agreement set the following priorities:

- food security,
- energy security,
- durability of economic growth and employment,
- security and stability of financial resources,
- improvement and higher quality of life and housing.

3.1.2. Facts

It appears that the implementation of the regional strategy and other planning programs have faced weak internal structures in countries, faulty conceptions of NPDCs, and operational constraints. From this we may note:

- absence of statistical data in many areas or their limited reliability;
- variable participation of the different partners (states, rural communities, funding agencies, NGOs);
- slow and hesitant decentralization;
- persisting land tenure problems;
- illiteracy;
- juxtaposition of several plans that have no real anchors;
- lack of integration of the NPDCs into the socio-economic development plans (SEDP);
- difficulty in coordinating actions of development partners;
- institutional heaviness that hampers the operation of national coordination committees.

3.1.3. Lessons

Analyzing the experience of implementing the regional strategy through the national plans for desertification control, has taught the following lessons:

- a) because the plans must rely on insightful diagnosis, countries must develop systems to control the ecosystem and production, systems that will serve as instruments in decision-making.
- b) to allow a prospective vision of the plan, it is necessary to clarify the objectives and quantify them through spacio/temporal planning of the major actions to be taken, to determine and rank priorities, and define the decisions to be made at the institutional, legislative, fiscal, and financial levels.
- c) the plan must be realistic and tailored to fit the true ability of a country to organize and control its implementation.

- d) applications to start projects and programs must contain pertinent justification, clear and precise objectives, the current state of knowledge in the field, expected results and impacts, a bill-book that is as precise as possible, estimated cost, and possibly the expected contributions from the different partners.
- e) national plans for desertification control must be integrated into plans for economic and social development.
- f) implementation of the strategy must be comprised of a permanent process of dialogue, support for implementation, and an evaluation process that requires constant effort, regular follow-up, and finding means necessary for operation.
- g) elaboration and implementation of the plan requires a process of widespread involvement. Consequently, they must rely on clear choices made by the communities and which involve dynamic dialogue and partnerships among all actors in the process (rural organizations, youth, women, the state, different cooperation agencies).
- h) reflection is needed on what must be done to integrate the macroeconomic dimension of desertification control, namely the need to diversify incomes and create alternative employment so as to reduce pressure on natural resources.

3.2. SUBREGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

3.2.1. Creating Subregional Organizations

Both the fragmentation of the continent into micro-states and the chronic underdevelopment that has been going on for more than three decades now are sufficient grounds for questioning the present economic policies.

The general philosophy of subregional cooperation focuses on economic independence and integration. A number of conditions must precede development coordination:

- putting resources together ;
- emphasizing specialization where necessary ;
- developing intercommunity exchanges ;
- integrating markets and liberalizing exchanges, harmonizing customs practices, etc.

As a pre-condition, each state must harmonize or at least consider the regional dimension and the rule of complementarity in elaborating its development policies and strategies.

Among the subregional organizations for economic integration are ECOWAS and the defunct WAEC. Unfortunately, neither of these organizations has made significant steps towards market or production integration.

It is noteworthy that intercommunity trade between the 16 members of ECOWAS has fallen from 7% to 3% of the total exports between 1980 and 1986.

Also, fragility of regional links at the level of finances and material infrastructure has hampered relationships and trade cooperation between the member states. Reinforcement of the economic infrastructure and of production capabilities is a priority for the least advanced countries, that is, Sahelian countries.

Intra-regional exchanges in the West African subregion have not expanded because the countries have similar production structures and lack strong industrial sectors.

For Sahelian countries, the policy of economic integration can be profitable only if they develop their individual advantages by adhering to the rule of complementarity with coastal countries.

The recent creation of UEMOA was to compensate for insufficiencies but only in the CFA zone of West Africa.

To discern their problems and find possible solutions in a communal and collective sense, West African countries have created other Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO), each in its own particular historical context and with a clear judicial mandate.

There are about thirty of them in West Africa. However, it has become clear that most of them overlap in their objectives and operations (see Tables 1 and 2). The need to create cooperation mechanisms between them, ones that respect the individual prerogatives of the organizations, has become imperative.

It was in this respect that CILSS attempted to create a mechanism for converging the efforts of the IGOs and those of the member states for drought and desertification control. With a similar perspective, the defunct WAEC also elaborated a document for common agricultural policies for member states. The creation of the Association of IGOs of the West African subregion (coordination is carried out by MULPOC in Niamey) follows this same line of thought.

Harmonizing IGO programs has thus always been a shared preoccupation of the IGOs. They are all aware of the need to eliminate redundancy and exploit complementarities judiciously and rationally. IGOs that have a community dimension and are concerned with multisectorial development are ECOWAS, UEMOA, ABN, OMVS, OMVG, BLT, ALG, etc. and specialized IGO and/or similar organizations with a technical bent and are concerned with services are CILSS, CEBV, OCLALAV, CRTO, CIERRO, ACMAD, IPD/AOS, CRAT, etc.

3.2.2. Facts

In general, the results achieved by the various attempts to create sound cooperation between IGOs for social and economic development of the West African subregion have failed to meet partner's expectations for several reasons. The main reasons are:

- lack of openness in the identification, execution, and follow-up of the different programs. Each IGO uses the statutory decisions as an excuse. Dialogue is lacking;

- lack of total involvement of the various partners in the process of reflection and identification of actions to be carried out;
- the "descending" approach used by IGOs in project and program elaboration;
- absence of efficient cooperation mechanisms between IGOs;
- failure of IGOs to respect the various collaboration agreements between themselves, especially where complementarity and synergy are most obvious;
- budgetary constraints;
- lack of information exchange.

3.2.3. Areas of Intervention by International Organizations in West Africa

Table 1 shows present fields of intervention and potential areas of cooperation between IGOs in the West African subregion.

TABLE 1

**PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FIELDS OF INTERVENTION OF THE DIFFERENT
IGOS AND OTHER SUB-REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE STUDY
AND POSSIBLE FIELDS OF CO-OPERATION.**

PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FIELDS OF INTERVENTION		MAIN IGOs
1.	AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY	
	* Plant protection	OCLALAV, CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA
	* Efforts to control important endemic animal diseases	CEBV, ECOWAS, EIMSV
	* Agro meteorological follow-up and early warning	CILSS, ACMAD, ECOWAS
	* Development of intraregional exchanges	CILSS, CMA/AOC, CEBV, ECOWAS, UEMOA
2.	EDUCATION AND TRAINING	CILSS, CRTO, CIERRO, EIER, IPD/AOS, EIMSV
3.	RESEARCH	ICRISAT, OUA/SAFGRAD, CILSS, ACMAD, CRTO, CORAF, CRAT, IFCD/AFRICA
4.	MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	
	* Population and environmental development	CILSS, IPD/AOS
	* Management of river and lake basins and water resources	OMVS, OMVG, ABN, PROJECT FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE FOUTA JALON MOUNTAIN, CBLT, ECOWAS, UEMOA
	* Development of transboundary zones/management of natural resources	ALG, OMVS, OMVG, UEMOA
	* Management of halieutic resources	ECOWAS, UEMOA
	* Domestic and renewable energies	CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA, CRAT

3.3. THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR DESERTIFICATION CONTROL AND THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAM (SRAP)

3.3.1. Review

By the 44/228 resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (CNUED) (also known as "Planet Earth Summit") was summoned in order to set up an agreement for universal solidarity aimed on the one hand at stopping and reversing degradation of the environment on the planet, and on the other hand, working out and adopting institutional and financial strategies likely to ensure favorable conditions for sustainable development in a safe environment.

The idea of creating an International Convention for Desertification Control originated from the preparatory steps of that Conference. As a manifestation of the common African position, it was formally discussed during the fourth session of the preparatory Committee in the context of the options of Action Program 21 and accepted at the Conference in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

The intergovernmental Committee for the negotiation of that Convention was created afterwards by resolution 47/188 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

3.3.1.1. Context

It must be remembered that the negotiations of the International Convention for Desertification Control took place in a particularly difficult context. It was characterized on the one hand by the end of the East-West conflict, which resulted in broadening of aid sectors and therefore competition with regard to aid granted to the East, and on the other hand, a general economic crisis whose consequences are particularly disastrous for developing countries, especially in Africa.

On October 14 and 15 the United Nations Convention for Desertification Control was signed in Paris. This Convention of international law compels contracting parties, either as "affected country parties" or as "developed country parties", to take common measures against desertification throughout the world and particularly in Africa where it is a priority.

At the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development that took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, it was decided -- particularly at the request of African countries-- to agree on a new convention, the International Convention for Desertification Control. Similar international conventions, such as those on climate change and biodiversity, deal with general problems of the environment that seem to be priorities, especially for developed countries. On the other hand, the suggestion of an International Convention for Desertification Control reflects the specific desire of developing countries to set up international rules for solving problems of desertification which, mainly in those countries, affects the environment and development.

3.3.1.2. Terms of the Convention

- Contracting Parties

The contracting parties are "affected country parties," meaning countries concerned or threatened partially or totally by desertification, and "developed country parties."

- Objectives

The objective of the Convention is to control desertification in the affected countries, with support of international cooperation and on the basis of long-term strategies. Desertification, according to the definition of AGENDA 21 and the first article of the Convention, is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid zones under the influence of various factors, including actions of man and the climate. The term "land" refers to the earth bioproductive system consisting of soil, plants, other living organisms and ecological and hydrological phenomena that occur inside that system.

- Obligations

The Convention defines the action programs at different levels: national and subregional (region = continent). The emphasis is on the national level. At the regional level, some support actions have been planned, especially regarding early warning, research of information, and information availability. These action programs will constitute the framework in which measures taken by the affected countries to control desertification will be integrated. Developing countries are committing themselves to the creation of general conditions favorable to the implementation of national action programs, for example, participation of local populations, especially women and young people, decentralization of decision-making regarding land use, and integration of nongovernmental organizations, as well as the required legal structures. As for the donor countries, they are committing themselves to provide the necessary means and to give their support for technology transfer, cooperation in the field of research, exchange of information, strengthening of capabilities, and training and sensitization.

- Financing

It is useful to point out that a financing mechanism specifically for the Convention has not been set up.

Only financing mechanisms already existing and descriptions of how best to utilize them have been mentioned. The donor countries are asked, but not obliged to provide appropriate financial means.

However, some financing systems already exist: world system, the GEF, the Facilitation Funds, and the National Desertification Control (DC) Funds.

3.3.2. Subregional Action Program (SRAP)

"The affected countries are invited to consult each other and cooperate through the planning and implementation of subregional action programs based on issues more suited to a subregional approach."

Article 11 (page 15 - Part 3 relating to Action Programs) stipulates that: "the affected country parties at the regional level need to consult each other and cooperate to work out, as it suits them and in accordance with relevant implementation schedules, subregional and regional action programs which will harmonize, complete, and increase the efficiency of national programs."

This cooperation can also extend to the application of joint programs concerning long-lasting management of transboundary natural resources, scientific and technical collaboration, and strengthening of competent institutions."

Article 11 of the Africa annex (pp. 49-50) also specifies the content and method for establishing subregional action programs. It states that the SRAP will be primarily concerned with substantive programs such as joint management of transboundary resources, emphasis on substitution energies, systems of early warning, and joint planning for the effects of drought. Additional accompanying actions are scientific and technical cooperation, creation of networks for collection and evaluation of data, coordination of research-development activities, exchange of experiences pertaining to the participation of local populations and communities, strengthening of capabilities and education, public awareness, and reinforcement of subregional organizations' capabilities in coordinating policies in areas affecting the concerned zones and populations.

In September 1994 in Ouagadougou, CILSS organized a meeting of Sahelian experts on implementation of the Convention for Desertification Control, which was extended to representatives from neighboring countries and followed by a cooperative meeting of Environmental Ministers from its member countries. In doing this, CILSS offered countries in the sub-region a chance to begin a process of dialogue and consultation, which complies with the Convention's objectives and which must, in the long run, result in the establishment of a single Subregional Action Program (SRAP) for all of West Africa.

While the meeting in Ouagadougou allowed the participating countries to scrutinize the Convention and discover a strategy and schedule for its implementation, the meeting in Bamako, organized in December 1994, was concerned more with the preparation of National Action Programs in general, and in particular, the organization of the preparation Forum.

Concerning the preparation of the SRAP, at the subregional Conference in Dakar on the Convention's implementation in West Africa (July 24 - 28, 1995), the process to adopt was decided, but the particular steps of this process were determined afterwards at a meeting in Lomé (February 23-24, 1996). The Lomé meeting also offered an opportunity to identify the main actors in the SRAP, to favor exchanges on the content of the Convention, and to come to an agreement on the elaboration strategy for the SRAP.

3.3.3. Subregional Cooperation in West Africa

As mentioned in the previous chapters, subregional cooperation, through Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO), has preceded the SRAP. However, for various reasons already indicated, the results remained mitigated. The SRAP must be able to launch this cooperation and reinforce it by capitalizing on the results from efforts in West Africa. This should be done with a sense of rationalization and reinforcement from the Intergovernmental Organizations, which would favor complementarities and/or a synergy of actions.

The International Convention for Desertification Control, through the SRAP, offers a great opportunity provided that its objectives are well understood by the partners likely to be involved in its implementation. This, unfortunately, does not really seem to be the case as proven by the results of the delegation talks with IGOs, and/or similar institutions, several partners, and Nongovernmental Organizations (see chart in annex).

In fact, regarding the three inquiries about planning the preparation methodology for SRAP which favors and reinforces partnerships among all concerned parties, especially the IGOs, the reactions recorded by the delegation were different from one IGO to another and even among executives responsible for projects and/or programs within the same institution. Once more this reveals the following:

- vagueness characterizes the Convention, which is seen by some people as a "catch-all";
- inter-IGO rivalries exist; their most tangible manifestations are warnings against the two head IGOs for monopolizing the process and trying to marginalize the others;
- intra-IGO rivalries exist; some people have pointed out the necessity of including the food security component, which would involve experts/executives and technical administrations in charge of food security in evaluations of the Convention;
- circulation of information between the IGOs and within each IGO is insufficient, particularly regarding the Convention's content, especially the SRAP, and the progress of its elaboration, etc.;
- difficulties are met in identifying the partners most likely to bring a substantial contribution to the process, especially regarding NGOs (which are popping up like weeds at the mercy of opportunity) some of which, not only have not followed the process of the Convention, but are also not competent in its favored fields.

Despite everything, during our talks, our interlocutors gave the impression of a unanimous desire to cooperate effectively in connection with the implementation of the SRAP. The virtues of cooperation around the Convention as an ideal framework for the concerted efforts of IGOs to control desertification, have been repeated often.

But what long-term mechanisms, according to a consultative and participative process, can be put in place on the subregional level to prepare the SRAP?

IV. METHODOLOGY FOR PREPARING THE SRAP

It is relevant to first define certain concepts in light of the talks the delegation had with IGOs, about past experiences, coupled with the results of the December 27, 1996 workshop, and personal reflections.

4.1. DEFINING THE CONCEPT

a) What is the SRAP ?

We are first inclined to define the SRAP simply as a sum of the current or future projects and programs of the different IGOs working for desertification control in West Africa.

Three main reasons (among others) for rejecting this approach:

- the "downwards" process which prevails in identification, conception, execution, and follow-up of projects and programs ignores the beneficiaries;
- the absence of middle and long-term strategies;
- the poor results achieved due to the aforementioned reasons.

The SRAP can no longer be limited to the financing of national projects which meet common criteria. Neither can they serve as the foundation for community projects that require the creation of heavy supra-national structures whose costs will be too high for the member states. Instead, the SRAP must be:

- a support to harmonious implementation of national action programs;
- a strategic framework for coordinating policies for the control of desertification and its effects, considering middle and long-term perspectives;
- a means to record past and present experiences in order to take them into account;
- a framework for additional reinforcement of national and subregional capabilities in order to allow identification, planning, programming, execution, and follow-up/evaluation of national and subregional projects and programs.

To stay true to the objectives of the Convention, the following definition is suggested:

The SRAP is a sub-regional framework for co-operation and action to implement pertinent and coherent programs in fighting against desertification on the bases of participation and partnership.

The potential actors in SRAP are IGOs, states, technical partners, financial institutions, NGOs, benefiting local communities, educational and research institutions and the private sector.

- Guiding principles to apply to the definition and execution of programs

- * Availability and competence of the partners for the actions of the SRAP.
- * Activities will consist more in making national policies converge than in superimposing national or subregional activities.
- * Execution of programs and projects will be more efficient at the level of existing institutions and deeply rooted in their local context rather than at the level of new institutions or institutions far from the actual field; cooperation agreements can help favor complementarity and synergy.
- * The search for consensus of the states to undertake common action.

b) What are the links between the SRAP and current and future programs?

The conference in Dakar determined the criteria of eligibility for the SRAP by establishing a ranking order according to the number of criteria met by the projects. Articles 11 and 13 of the Convention (Africa annex) define the priority sectors and the content of the regional action program.

Since the SRAP must capitalize on what exists, it becomes necessary to identify coherent mechanisms for harmonizing what is already in place. This will make complementarity and/or synergy effective between the actions that will be chosen from the first selection by the organs created for that purpose.

Two possible cases are to be considered:

- **1st Case :** *Current subregional programs and projects*

- 1) Record of all current subregional projects.
- 2) Evaluation of IGOs' capabilities to conduct them.
- 3) Selection of programs and projects by the mechanism (organ) to be created which must judge conformity with the Convention with regards to the eligibility criteria.
- 4) Readjustment of projects and programs for harmonization and ensuring coherence with the Convention.

- **2nd Case : *New projects / project ideas***

- 1) New projects must originate from the different subregional actors (i.e., IGOs, NGOs, states, local communities, etc.)
- 2) Project identification will be made through technical organs for coordination of the SRAP that will have previously established criteria for project and program selection.
- 3) Designation of the appropriate technical bodies from SRAP of OIG or other institutions in charge of implementing the projects or programs in collaboration with others (task sharing).

c) What links must be established between the NAP, the SRAP and the RAP?

The Convention stipulates (article 11, p. 15) that the SRAP must complete and harmonize the NAPs, and make them more efficient the NAPs, a principle that must also be applied to the RAP in relation to the Sin relation to the SRAP.

The importance of the institution with a good system of partnership at different levels is vital to eliminate eventual constraints.

In other words, the ideal approach would have been to design the NAPs first and then set up the SRAP from the converging points of national policies; therefore, the ascending approach recommended by the Convention would be favored. The NAPs will provide mobilization and the framework for getting all actors involved (states, private sectors, local communities, NGOs, rural associations, etc.).

But the fact is that the NAPs are at the first stage of their preparation process whereas regarding the SRAP, some programs and projects are already being executed or are in the framework of the IGOs and other participants. Therefore, those two activities must by necessity be carried out jointly.

When preparing the NAP, the SRAP will permit harmonization of national policies and will take into account the subregional dimension.

The interpenetration of the two levels will be accomplished, among other ways, through periodical meetings in connection with the NOCs under the supervision of the concerned Ministry (Environment / Agriculture / Planning).

The RAP must determine political orientations and ensure coherence and coordination of subregional actions. For actions started in the field at the continental level and which are currently underway, formal collaboration agreements must be established which give responsibility to the competent IGOs during execution. This will be done in order to avoid competence conflicts and interferences. The continental level will be responsible for research of funds, coordination, and exchange of experiences.

4.2. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR ELABORATING THE SRAP

4.2.1. Fundamental Options

The SRAP is meant to provide a framework for cooperation, partnership, and the recording of subregional initiatives for desertification control. Like the NAP, it must be based on the following options:

- ascending strategy involving the different partners in identifying and executing programs and projects;
- decentralized cooperation and execution in order to avoid a concentration of evaluation and decision-making at the coordination organ level;
- regional meetings that enable consultation among partners.

These options are derived from analyzing the experiences of different IGOs in connection with the program and project elaboration process, the institutional mechanisms supporting it, and from analysis of NAP preparation methodologies.

It appears that, regarding organization and method in involving these different partners in the elaboration process of these programs and projects, CILSS has the most associative and participative approach. The SRAP must capitalize on this experience.

4.2.2. Structure and Operation of the SRAP

The success of the subregional action program will depend on a set of factors. One of the most important is related to the efficiency and functioning of the mechanisms of coordination, harmonization, and follow-up/evaluation.

The following organizational scheme is suggested:

a) A political organ for decision-making: three possible alternatives:

- Conference of Environment Ministers of West African countries.
- Conference of Finance and Planning Ministers of West Africa.

This will be the sovereign organ for dialogue, debate, decision-making, and orientation.

It defines the general policy of cooperation concerning efforts to control desertification in West Africa, and it also defines priorities.

A regular session will be convened once every two years or an emergency session can be called whenever needed.

b) A consultative and technical organ of the SRAP: Subregional Organ of Coordination (SROC) or Managing Committee

Having statutes and regulations, the SROC is in charge of:

- defining the SRAP's strategy;
- selecting projects and programs, formulating them, ensuring they are monitored for better coherence, following their implementation, and evaluating them.
- piloting the program.

The CSO will be organized in specialized sectorial subcommittees to execute the tasks it is given. An example of organization for the sectorial subcommittees is given in chart II.

It consists of representatives from the states (the NOCs), IGOs, NGOs (regional), and development partners.

It meets once or twice every year.

TABLE II

SPECIALIZED SECTORIAL SUBCOMMITTEES	
A. Vertical sectorial subcommittees	
1. Development of river basins, lakes and water resources	
2. Management of transboundary ecosystems	
3. Regional agriculture and exchanges	
4. Alternative energies	
5. Crop protection/pest control	
B. Horizontal sectorial subcommittees	
6. Training/Education	
7. Information/Documentation	
8. Scientific and Technical Research	
9. Funding	

c) National organizations of the SRAP

They comprise the National Co-ordination Organs (NCO) of the NAP formed in the countries.

d) Executive organs: Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat set up by CILSS and ECOWAS has the following roles:

- follow-up of the execution of SRAP organs' guidelines, especially SROC and the meetings for Ministers and Heads of State;
- dissemination of information on the Convention and the SRAP;
- preparation of regular reports on the evolution of the process, and ensuring broad dissemination of those reports;
- preparation of documents for submission to SRAP organs (SROC and meetings of Ministers and Heads of State);
- search for activity funding;
- elaboration of the agreement which must rule the cooperation between the two leading organs (CILSS, ECOWAS), between the OSC members (statutes and regulations), and finally between service providing institutions in the implementation of projects and programs.

To better anchor the decisions of SRAP organs in the SRAP partners' respective work programs, the agreements and projects chosen must be part of their planned activities and submitted for the evaluation and approval of the appropriate organs. Therefore, the frequency of the different sessions of SRAP organs must be adapted to the budget cycles of the partners, especially the states and the IGOs.

4.2.3. Partners in the SRAP

The meeting in Lomé (February 23-24, 1996) identified the main actors and partners of SRAP as follows:

- national focal points, NGOs, local populations through their organizations, businessmen, etc.;
- subregional organizations and institutions whose activities are related to DC, institutions of research, training and dissemination;
- NGOs that are active in the field of DC and meet the requirements established during the regional meetings for undertaking emergency actions in Africa;
- bilateral and multilateral cooperation partners.

4.2.4. Suggestion for a Legal Framework for Cooperation in the SRAP

It has been observed that under the pressure of circumstances, some states, especially in West Africa, have created Intergovernmental Organizations to tackle problems that they implicitly supposed to be temporary. The Intergovernmental Organizations used to offer an opportunity for particular relationships of solidarity between the members, usually on a geographical basis. Unfortunately, their number increased according to needs and affinities. Their conventional regulations provide for very complex permanent organs and operational rules that are complex as well as inappropriate because they are constraining.

In the present context of the Convention, the suggestion for an "Agreement Protocol" seems to be an interesting alternative for solving these cooperation and collaboration difficulties. A protocol is needed because this extends and completes sovereignty acts of the states by defining the principles on which the agreement is established as far as cooperation is concerned.

The formula "Agreement Protocol" does not include any direct legal obligation for the parties concerned, but it does bind them morally. The Agreement Protocol must establish a code of good behavior without necessarily altering the text's ability to promote an active cooperation based on the requirements of independence of actions among the IGOs. The rules will be adaptable and flexible and free from any legalistic and contentious visions. This Protocol must enable freedom of evaluation and interpretation that opens dialogue and favors a voluntary adhesion by partners.

4.2.5. Expected Results of the Forum and Approximate Time Schedule

At the end of the forum, the main results expected as well as an approximate time schedule for the partners of the SRAP must be clearly shown.

4.2.5.1. Expected results

- List the major problems and priority programs of the sub-region whose activities (projects and/or programs) that should be undertaken in the SRAP program. The identified problems should be examined using various criteria.
- Consolidation of current actions and/or prior harmonized planning according to the objectives of the SRAP.
- Methodological approach and bills-receivable book to develop the activities of the sub-regional action program.
- Method of funding of the process as well as the subsequent programs and projects to be formulated and implemented.

- The mechanism(s) of co-ordination between the sub-regional organs and other donors. A competent sub-regional organ could be assigned the co-ordination of the SRAP program. An understanding could be reached on the modus operandi of their future consultations;
- Follow-up mechanisms to evaluate what has been achieved in implementing preparation of the sub-regional action program;
- All other matters judged necessary for the better functioning of the sub-regional action program.

4.2.5.2. Approximate Time Schedule

ACTIVITIES	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	RESPONSIBLE
1. Organization of 1st forum	March 1997	CILSS/ECOWAS
2. Adoption of the approach and the mechanisms of the development actions of the SRAP	March 1997	Forum
3. Setting up of Pilot Technical Secretariat	April 1997	CILSS/ECOWAS
4. Realization of the projects and programs, studies and diverse concertations statutes and regulations	May-December 1997	Piloting by Technical Secretariat
5. Organing of 2nd Forum or Workshop	February 1997	CILSS/ECOWAS
6. Meeting of Ministers	April 1997	CILSS/ECOWAS
7. Implementation	Starting from May 1998	SRAP participants

4.2.6. Estimated Budget

ITEMS	ESTIMATED COST (1,000 FCFA)
1. Information/Sensitization	10,000
2. Organization of 1st forum	PM
3. Studies and concertation	50,000
4. Organization of 2nd Forum or Workshop training	15,000
5. Meeting of Ministers	17,000
6. Functioning of the Technical Secretariat for Piloting the activities	18,000
TOTAL	110,000

4.2.7. Sources and Mechanisms of SRAP Funding

The Convention, in articles 20 and 21, recognizes the basic importance of funding in achieving its objectives. In this respect, it urges all concerned parties to do their best to discover new approaches for garnering financial resources to support programs for desertification control.

To ensure funding of the SRAP process, it is necessary (1) to create a subregional fund for desertification control and (2) to gather contributions from states and cooperation partners.

The subregional fund will enable CILSS and ECOWAS to assume their functions as linking organs for the SRAP preparatory activities and to coordinate the elaboration and implementation of subregional projects and programs.

CILSS and ECOWAS will carry out studies on objectives, field of action, and mechanisms of the fund.

In addition to the creation of this subregional fund, the SRAP should and will receive financial support from the states, as the first beneficiaries of the SRAP, and from cooperation partners. Methods for gathering resources will be determined by both linking organs (i.e., CILSS and ECOWAS).

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The relevance of the present mission and the workshop has been shown and is favorably and unanimously approved by all organs concerned.
2. The desire to have sincere cooperation through the SRAP obviously exists. In any case, it is a necessity due to difficulties and mismanagement regarding IGOs. In most cases, this has been the basic reason for financial problems which prevent proper institutional functioning. The number of IGOs has become more important than necessary. The financial burdens they bring are difficult for the member states to bear. The donors are upset by mismanagement of resources obtained through vital efforts by the international community.
3. The International Convention for Desertification Control, though it does not bring new funds, will make it possible, especially through its Subregional Action Program (SRAP), to establish a basis for good cooperation among the Intergovernmental Organizations (IGO) of the subregion that are working for desertification control.
4. The present cooperation among IGOs must be extended to other actors and adapted to the evolution of the intervention system. Hopefully these close collaborative relationships will open up the most advanced forms of cooperation in the harmonization of programs and execution of projects.

The usefulness of activity coherence, exchange of experiences, complementarities between capabilities of IGOs and other actors, and their being made responsible for sustained cooperation for the identification, elaboration, programming, fund research, and execution of the SRAP, have often been reiterated.

5. A preparation methodology for SRAP, a suggested schedule, and an estimated budget are given, as well as the legal elements for the elaboration of a cooperation agreement among the different partners.