



FRONTIÈRES ET INTÉGRATIONS EN AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST
WEST AFRICAN BORDERS AND INTEGRATION

CROSS-BORDER DIARIES

BULLETIN ON WEST AFRICAN LOCAL-REGIONAL REALITIES
With the support of the Sahel and West Africa Club

One park three countries

The W regional park, a cross-border biosphere reserve
(Benin, Burkina-Faso, Niger).

ECOWAS: Cross-border Initiatives Programme and border pilot
projects (Sikasso-Mali and Ziguinchor-Senegal).



3
EDITORIAL

CIP

Cross-border Initiatives Programme

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

17

REPORT



4 ECOWAS MEMORANDUM

The Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) is the modus operandi of ECOWAS' cross-border cooperation policy.

GAMBIA, GUINEA BISSAU, SENEGAL

6 INTEGRATION OF SENEGAMBIAN TERRITORY
COMPLEMENTARITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

7 THE MJPI, WATCHDOG AND BI-NATIONAL
STRUCTURE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

8 EDUCATION AND HEALTH,
TWO DRIVERS OF INTEGRATION

9 JOURNALISM, PEACE AND INTEGRATION

10 COUMBACARA ON THE BISSAU-GUINEAN BORDER IN SENEGAL : «PEACE MIRADOR»

SIKASSO, KORHOGO, BOBO DIOULASSO

12 WORKSHOP ON «Security, Development and Cross-border Activities in the Malian and Burkinabe regions Bordering Côte d'Ivoire»

13 THE CRISIS WAS HELPFUL...
"it forced us to look for other options and possibilities for selling our products"

18 > 1 Park, 3 Countries

21 > From hunting areas... to a Regional Park

22 > History of the settlement of the Park region

25 > An area of regional migration

27 > Archaeological and historical heritage

29 > A «multi-climate» Eden

31 > Tourism, The Achille heel

32 > The institutional, legal and political background

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

16

"FREE MOVEMENT" : the european way



CROSS-BORDER DIARIES

published in French and English.
Available on
www.afriquefrontieres.org

In editorial and financial partnership with
the SAHEL and WEST AFRICA CLUB
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Over the last few years ECOWAS has accompanied its partners from the West African Borders and Integration, WABI network (the SWAC, ENDA/Diapol and DNF of Mali), in carrying out analyses and exchanging of experiences on cross-border dynamics. This process led ECOWAS to host the second WABI network meeting in October 2004 and to launching the Cross-border Initiatives Programme, CIP, at the beginning of 2005. A new political and institutional dimension has been set off, focusing on local concerns. Some West African border areas are already the scene of collaborations between local/regional authorities and/or communities, collaborations which have benefited from the support or consent of State authorities. Such is the case in the Sikasso–Korhogo-Bobo-Dioulasso zone and Southern Senegambia. Within the CIP, efforts will be made to formalize and systematise the initiatives already underway in these regions. To instigate this process, two seminars have been organised (Sikasso, Ziguinchor) in September and October 2005. In this regard, the Diaries have carried out surveys on the ground and met with local actors. Finally, the main dossier on the joint management of the W Regional Park mired in the northern horn of Benin under the bend of the Niger river and the eastern most tip of Burkina Faso. Always keeping border concerns in mind, at the end of the year we will be distributing a Special Edition devoted to security and migration. Enjoy reading.

The Editors.

The Cross-border Initiatives Programme

(Memorandum adopted by ECOWAS in January 2005)

Over the last few years ECOWAS has accompanied its partners from the West African Borders and Integration, WABI network (the SWAC, ENDA/Diapol and DNF of Mali), in carrying out analyses and exchanging of experiences on cross-border dynamics.

This process led ECOWAS to host the second WABI network meeting in October 2004. This has facilitated the stimulation of dialogue between actors from West African border regions and European (locally elected officials, technical services, etc) representing governments and ECOWAS officials.

On 18 January 2005 ECOWAS' Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs met in Accra and adopted a Memorandum entitled "Cross-border Concept or Local Integration" with which cross-border cooperation was officially integrated onto ECOWAS' agenda. The Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) is the modus operandi of ECOWAS' cross-border cooperation policy.

This **Programme (I)** seeks to support existing or potential cross-border collaborations in order to systematise cross-border cooperation in West Africa at the end of the launching phase

(2006-2008). Increasing cross-border projects must be one of the drivers for the implementation of the **Economic Partnership Agreement EU – ECOWAS (II)**.

This Agreement and the CIP have the common objective of reducing over the long term the "barrier effect" created by borders.

(I)

THE CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES PROGRAMME

The CIP's aim is to identify and support West African cross-border initiatives and encourage the development of more Cross-border Cooperation frameworks and other cross-border initiatives on intra-community borders.

Implemented by ECOWAS, this programme is based on four levels of interventions :

1. "Close" cross-border relationships between authorities and/or local/regional communities ;
2. Bi- and tri-lateral relationships between States that share a common border, often necessary to develop the relationships mentioned above ;
3. Regional multilateral interventions, whether they be inter-governmental or supra-national ;
4. Relationships between regional blocks eager to solidify relative relations in the context of their internal and external integration.

Considering all of these levels of intervention, the CIP can be demonstrated by :

a. **The creation of formal and permanent dialogue frameworks** between local/regional authorities and/or communities, on both sides of the border. Such frameworks should first be set up in strategic zones as regards regional trade and territorial development.

Collaboration between regional/local communities and/or authorities already exists in some West African border areas on both sides of the border, collaboration which has benefited from the support or approval of governments. Such is the case in the Sikasso-Korhogo-Bobo Dioulasso and the Southern Senegambia zones. Within the CIP framework, efforts will be aimed at formalising and systematising initiatives already underway.

In order to begin this process, two seminars have been organised (Sikasso, Ziguinchor) in September and October 2005, respectively.

Seminars of this kind could be organised soon afterwards in other zones such as the Maradi-Katsina-Kano route or the Senegal River Valley (where the Groupe de recherché et de réalisation pour le développement rural (GRDR) a few cross-border initiatives).

Certain border regions must demonstrate that there should not be any apprehension as regards the cross-border development approach.

b. **The participation of sectoral ministries' technical services**, at a decentralised level, in the cross-border collaboration process initiated by local/regional communities and/or authorities.

Cross-border initiatives promoted by neighbouring countries' governments can go even further, for example under the form of bi-lateral or tri-lateral treaties or agreements authorising direct collaboration between local/regional communities and/or authorities on both sides of the border



THE CIP IN THE NEAR FUTURE

ECOWAS' aims as regards cross-border cooperation can only emerge from concrete results if ECOWAS provides the means to promote or motivate actions on the ground. If, for instance, ECOWAS relies on its WABI network partners in order to launch certain activities, it must be able to provide its own means of action.

In order to expand the cross-border area concept to locally elected officials in border zones, external partners, States or the identification of cross-border pilot projects, how such operations will be financed needs to be examined. The creation of a European-supported fund promoting cross-border initiatives is one approach on which to follow up.

If the CIP involves all of ECOWAS member States and aims to develop cross-border cooperation on all intra-regional borders, it relies first on the States who have expressed a strong political will with respect to cross-border cooperation. This is why the ongoing process or beginning of such a process must be encouraged WITHOUT WAITING FOR THIS APPROACH TO BE APPLIED UNIFORMLY WITHIN ALL INTERNAL BORDERS. The development and adoption of a REGIONAL JURIDICAL NON-RESTRICTING CONVENTION allowing States and local communities to be directly involved in cross-border cooperation operations would help internal borders areas

(Source : General CIP orientation document available on the site : www.afriquefrontieres.org)

(II)

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION, THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT EU-EPA'S IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUMENT

The Treaty revised by ECOWAS sets out, in Article 3.1 that "the aims of the Community are to promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa (...)". It also indicates that in order to achieve the goals set out (Art. 3.2), community action leading to "(...) the establishment of a common market through :

- i) the liberalisation of trade by the abolition, among Member States, of customs duties levied on imports and exports, and the abolition among Member States, of non-tariff barriers in order to establish a free trade area at the Community level ;
- ii) the adoption of a common external tariff and, a common trade policy vis-a-vis third countries ;
- iii) the removal, between Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, service and capital, and to the right of residence and establishment (...)"

West African integration and the establishment of an economic union is one of ECOWAS' principal objectives. The aim is to offset the limitedness of the national markets which hinders regional production competitiveness as regards Asian or Western competition. The implementation of regional policies would also encourage economies of scale.

This has led ECOWAS, along with Mauritania, to negotiate and then sign a European Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. This Agreement, which would create a Euro-African free trade zone as from 2008, is based on the hypothesis that pressure on competition and market integration would impel the West African economy to be restructured on a regional basis. Concretely, this would allow a Euro-African free trade zone to be set up in

which products from the two regional blocs can circulate freely, without having to pay customs duties.

Essential to European promoters of a common market, cross-border cooperation should play an important role in West African market and economic integration promoting for example increasing cross-border infrastructures such as transport, communication, energy, and hydraulics fundamental to strengthening geographic-social continuity.

With a view to the Regional EPA– EU-ECOWAS and the fine-tuning of the West African market, there is still room to develop. As the EPA enters into force 1 January 2008, the CIP could conclude

GAMBIA, GUINEA BISSAU, SENEGAL

Integration of Senegambian territory Complementarities and discontinuities



From north to south, Southern Senegambia covers the Republic of the Gambia, the Casamance natural region and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Historically, it has witnessed widespread population mobility, while inheriting shared religious beliefs and cultural traditions, as well as similar value systems. Following the colonial and post-colonial periods, a new politico-territorial configuration was created (with the Casamance region being attached to Senegal and the establishment of the States of Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia), leading to the coexistence of several administrative systems and the introduction of various “higher languages”.

The region benefits from considerable agricultural potential and extensive forest and fishery resources. Owing to the complementarities in production systems, the circulation of goods has historically been in the north-south direction or from the hinterland to the coast. The grain crops grown in the Gambia’s savannah and the Higher Casamance region are sold in the southern forest regions, while forest products such as palm oil or wood flow in the opposite direction. At the same time, due to the difference between the agro-forestry-pastoral system of the hinterland and the coastal mangrove region, cattle-breeding flows generally take the east-west direction while fishery products take the opposite direction¹.

Firmly anchored in these historical and

geographical complementarities, cross-border trade has also been influenced by more cyclical factors such as the differentials between the region’s countries (in terms of exchange rates, product availability in different periods, or actual prices for the same products) and for the last twenty years or so, it has been highly stimulated by urbanisation.

However, despite the extent of complementarities and the resulting potential for cross-border trade, the Gambian, Senegalese and Guinea-Bissau economies remain poorly integrated. The region’s potential for integration – in the form of solidarities and interdependence between areas, peoples and activities – is in sharp contrast with the compartmentalisation of administrative territories, support policies and resource management.

Hence, decentralised cross-border cooperation seems to be an essential tool for supporting spontaneous integration dynamics on the one hand, and promoting the shared management of productive and natural resources on the other. The importance of a cross-border political dialogue involving not only local governments and technical departments, but also professional organisations, NGOs, local associations, etc., is evident if public policies are to be based on spontaneous integration dynamics, once again putting “*the national peripheries at the heart of sub-regional integration*”².

Bearing these considerations in mind, ENDA-DIAPOL and the SWACS will be holding a workshop on cross-border cooperation in the Southern Senegambian region on 18-20 October 2005 in Ziguinchor. This workshop, under the auspices of ECOWAS, will be part of its Cross-Border Initiatives Programme.

Expected results are :

- Local actors will report on the many cross-border initiatives and potential projects ;
- A mechanism will be set up to enable the implementation of a framework for concerted action ;
- A process dedicated to the development of specific cross-border projects will be launched ;
- A commitment by external partners (European cross-border movements and donor agencies) to support the process ;
- Dialogues between local, State and inter-State actors will be strengthened in order to improve the coordination of community policies and local cross-border cooperation initiatives

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Report by Florent Arraguain and
Emmanuel Salliot

¹ It must be noted that industrial product flows (building materials, basic manufactured goods) follow the same direction – from the coast to the landlocked regions in the hinterland.

² Decentralised cross-border cooperation is viewed in its broader sense here – i.e. cooperation between communities on both sides of the borders, collaboration between all the actors sharing the same life space and pooling of skills and expertise between Northern and Southern cross-border regions.

The MJPI, watchdog and bi-national structure of conflict management

Meeting with... Mamadou Gano, journalist and Vice Coordinator of the MJPI

You have just organized a series of workshops on cattle theft bringing together representatives from Bissau-Guinean and Senegalese villages. What were the origins of this initiative?

Indeed, we are organizing at this time four cross-border discussion forums bringing together villagers and opinion leaders (imams, Presidents of rural communities, village chiefs, the leader of GPF, etc.) from the rural communities of Salikegné, Médina El Hadj, Tankanto Escale, and Niangha on the Senegalese side of the border and from neighbouring Bissau-Guinean villages. We are inviting the veterinary services from both sides of the border, and covering the costs of training courses or their participation at the MJPI workshops.

The initiative was launched after the cattle raids at the end of 1999 and the beginning of 2000, when armed groups operating along the border attacked several Senegalese villages. Looting goods and cattle, they at times used shepherds to serve as human shields in order to more easily cross the Bissau-Guinean border. People in the area complained about the weak response of the national authorities. The MJPI thus tried to serve as interlocutors but without much success. Faced with the general frustration of the people and fearing growth in the ranks of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, which up to that time had little presence in the Kolda region, local inhabitants and the MJPI closed the border at Salikegné in January 2001 in order to impose a blockade against Guinea-Bissau. This blockade quickly had an important economic impact on Guinea-Bissau, most of whose provisions pass through the Kolda-Bafata axis. The central government of Bissau then opened up negotiations with its Senegalese counterparts and the border populations with a view to establishing some consultation mechanisms. Out of this developed a good number of initiatives that brought together administrative authorities, cross-border populations, and associations such as ours. The border re-opened one month later.

Have these meetings between cross-border administrative authorities been continued since?

At the beginning such collaborations were numerous. The first inter-ministerial initiative in Salikegné in July 2001 called for the establishment of a bi-national commission responsible for tracking down and returning stolen goods. This body is charged with combing the Bissau-Guinean territory in

search of stolen goods in particular cattle. Out of 5,500 heads of cattle stolen from the département of Kolda in 2001, only a dozen of them, along with some foodstuffs and agricultural equipment, have been recovered. Although very limited, this result nonetheless moves towards the re-establishment, even if just provisionally, of the rule of law in this border area. The initiated meetings between Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean administrative and military authorities to resolve local concerns came to a halt, primarily for financial reasons. The costs were covered by intermediary structures such as ours and in particular by the Senegalese administration (expenses for travel, housing, and meals of Bissau-Guinean emissaries). With limited financial resources, the meetings became less frequent and the bi-national commission curtailed its activities.

What contacts do you maintain with Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean authorities on the issues of cattle thefts, security, and the free movement of goods and people?

The MJPI assumes the function of watchdog. For example, when one of our members based in a Bissau-Guinean or Senegalese village alerts us about cases of stolen cattle, we inform the administration. We do not play the role of police, but merely of facilitator of transactions between administrations on both sides of the border. Similarly, our structure facilitates the return of stolen cattle and other goods even if it is the administration that is officially in charge of overseeing these exchanges. In matters of restitution, we register the transaction while the administrative authorities, police, and gendarmerie complete the actual transfer of stolen goods. The method is identical when dealing with gangs of thieves organized into cross-border networks. When these individuals are Senegalese nationals, the MJPI seeks to inform the police and gendarmerie. In 2005, we have also drawn the attention of Senegalese authorities to the importance of anticipating likely population movements caused by the Bissau-Guinean presidential elections of June and July, regardless of their results. Our approach aims to avoid the turmoil that followed the coup engineered by Ousmane Mané overthrowing Nuno Viera. Large groups of people, including many youths and women, had reached the border areas near Kolda and Ziguinchor, the former of which was ill-equipped to accommodate or facilitate transit for these migrants. HCR agencies based in Thiès or Dakar intervened to provide support for these displaced persons, but due to their distance from these



areas, time was lost. Considering current potential risks, anticipation of population movements and conflict prevention are essential. Thus, three weeks ago, the Governor convened a Regional Development Committee that has mobilized all logistical and financial measures for establishing a reception site in Tambacounda and a transit site in Kolda. On these issues, organizations such as ours collaborate with administrative authorities on both sides of the border and with the decentralised services of the département of Kolda. After the Salikegné and Cambajù festivals, we tried to establish refugee villages in order to compensate for the lack of infrastructure. These villages also attempted to reach vulnerable populations in the region. One was set up in Guinea-Bissau not far from Cambajù, a transit area along the strategically important communication route of Bissau-Kolda (via Bafata). Some equipment work has been done for the weekly market (loumo). However, there is a lack of follow-up that leads to a chain reaction: with no maintenance of the reception site the market is less frequented; and with no storage facilities the products brought to the market go off. Despite numerous exchanges with development partners, sufficient financing could not be secured, partly due to the national scope of these programs. This constrains these programs to limit their intervention to one side of the border, although integrated management is necessary. This integration village has now been deserted for lack of upkeep. Further north, right after Kolda on the way to Dioulacolon and Salikegné, the same maintenance problems have been observed in another village due to a lack of support from donors and administrative authorities. The latter mentioned difficulties arising from the different laws and regulations on each side of the border as constraints. We think that the issue of equipment maintenance could be discussed and solved through local cross-border conventions. The populations of these border areas are not confined by the border and the collaborative dynamics and traditional mechanisms of conflict management benefit the region and both countries in terms of security and conflict prevention

Education and health, two drivers of integration

Meeting with...

Demba Baldé, director of the school in Salikegné
and **Alioune Baldé**, volunteer teacher and member of MJPI



Over the last three years you have witnessed an increase in the number of Bissau-Guinean children enrolled in the school in Salikegné. How do you account for this?

DB : Registrations occur twice a year. In May, 95 children registered, many of whom were Bissau-Guineans. It is, however, during the October session that they are most numerous. Thus, in Salikegné we count some 60 Bissau-Guineans out of a total of 795 students. In Saré Sissao, Bissau-Guineans constitute half of the total enrollment of 68 pupils.

Outside Salikegné, most schools located along the border accept Bissau-Guinean children. They are neighbours, relatives, nephews, grandsons of local villagers. Residing near Salikegné and facing problems at schools in Guinea-Bissau, especially over the last three years, they are accepted by our schools. Last year almost no public school in Guinea-Bissau was functioning. This was why many parents sent their young to these border schools.

Do you employ a different pedagogical approach from that used with children in the rural community of Salikegné?

DB : No particular approach is used. The children work with the same texts and instruction is given in French language. Regarding the issue of housing, certain kids are taken in by village families for the entire school year. They do not return to their homes until the end of the year. At times, Bissau-Guinean students come from villages nearer to the school than the majority of Senegalese pupils. For example, the children of Cambajù, located less than two kilometers away from the school, return home every night after classes and benefit from lunches served to them in the school cafeteria.

What administrative difficulties do you encounter when enrolling these children?

DB : When the students reach CM2 [their

last year of grammar school], a problem arises. In order to register in middle school, they are required to provide state-issued Senegalese ID documents. However, many of the Bissau-Guinean students do not possess birth certificates. We are thus forced to pretend they are Senegalese, so they can gain access to the same facilities. We do not wish to take them all the way through grammar school just to leave them "out in the cold."

Previously, the audiences foraines* helped us to do this. Now, however, the procedures are more complicated, but we do our best to obtain the documents required for registering in middle school. Our inspecteur d'académie [superintendent of schools], by the way, has welcomed this integration initiative.

What kind of broader impact do you think this form of integration in the field of education could have in the future?

DB : It can only serve to facilitate good relations between neighbours and to bring us closer to the objectives of peace and integration promoted by the MJPI.

AB : Another hope is that there might one day be a bilingual school of integration able to take on both Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean children alike over the long-term. This kind of bilingual framework could be used in Guinea-Bissau as well as in Senegal. The MJPI seeks to convince academic authorities to employ pedagogical models that emphasize the ideals of peace and integration. Students would thereby be instilled with a culture of integration and peace, paving

the way for social exchanges and commercial transactions. Under such conditions it is possible to surmount the effects of the border since the same people live on both sides.

Do you experience similar situations related to integration in other fields? Are you able to accommodate Bissau-Guineans who come here seeking a service they cannot find on their side of the border?

DB : This is the case with the telephone, which is very expensive in Guinea-Bissau due to its poor communication infrastructure. People sometimes come from Bafata to make calls. In the area of health, the centre in Salikegné serves many patients from Guinea-Bissau, where medication is much less available.

Immunization campaigns are undertaken, particularly against measles. The health centre relies on the support of the Rural Council and on co-payments from patients—means that remain insufficient. Especially given the limited existing infrastructure. For example, no ambulance assures the transferrals between here and the hospital in Kolda. Based on these examples, we can only reassert that neither health nor education knows borders



* In Senegal, children who are not officially registered within six months after their birth can benefit from a non-peremptory decision from the administrative court. Considering the mobility problems faced by people living in remote areas, the creation of audiences foraines was deemed necessary: under this system, officials presiding in departmental courts go to the villages to conduct registrations.



JOURNALISM, PEACE AND INTEGRATION

«Helping to better see through dissemination of information»

You are part of the Network of Journalists for Peace and Integration. How was this initiative born? How are you organized?

The network was launched in both Guinea-Bissau and Senegal following the 2001 Cambaju festival. It covers the area of Casamance. While we initially began in Farim in Guinea-Bissau, we are now based in Ziguinchor, Kolda, Bissau, Gabou, and Bafata. Alan Yéro Emballo, based in Bissau, is the General Coordinator for the network and National Representative for Guinea-Bissau. I am the National Coordinator for Senegal.

Since information is hard to ascertain in zones of conflict, we wanted to assist journalists in organizing themselves and in better verifying their sources in order to create a culture of exchange between colleagues. A number of interests are at play within our region. Truth is often the first victim of war, and manipulation comes from all sides. Many young journalists learn this too late. We thus have to supervise our young colleagues, helping them to better see through the deceptions that come with the dissemination of information.

Since then the network has moved forward. We now receive information, process it, and distribute it to press agencies, radio stations, and daily newspapers. When it turns out to be imprecise or biased, it affects the image of the whole region. Today, people are moving back to the region and the economic engine is running again. It is thus important to verify each bit of data and each source. We try to emphasize the positive aspects of events in Casamance and along the border, such as projects for reconstruction and seed distribution. We cover people engaged in struggles to restore peace definitively in Casamance.

Within a context of general instability, you are called upon to disseminate sensitive information. What measures do you take in order to release this information in an objective manner, while being careful not to exacerbate tensions on both sides of the borders?

Meeting with...

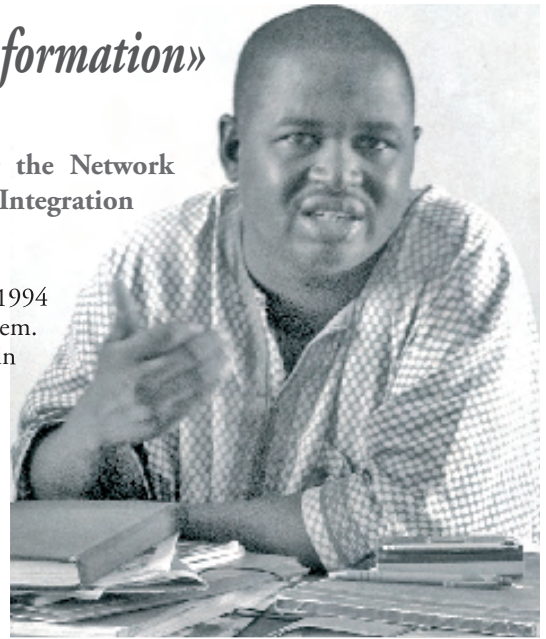
Abdou Diao, Coordinator for the Network of Journalists for Peace and Integration (RJPI).

I have been living in this area since 1994 and I am very familiar with this problem. As journalists, we must do our job in the face of obstructionist tactics on the part of administrative authorities. Even if we cannot say that we are dealing with actual censorship, we are forced to contend with rather sophisticated efforts of intimidation, which attempt to appeal to our sense of patriotism or morality. For us, disseminating truthful information is not anti-patriotic. On the contrary, it is a service to the people.

Finally, what is the role of information and communication in the promotion of integration in the Senegambian zone?

Essential. The promotion of integration necessarily happens first and foremost through communication between peoples. Institutional integration, such as the establishment of treaties between States, is certainly laudable but in order for integration to succeed, people at the base have to feel involved and able to express their opinions. They have to know, for example, that the free movement of people within the ECOWAS zone is a reality, and that hassles at the border are no longer acceptable. The police, the gendarmerie, and customs officials abuse their power at times. People must be able to denounce these abuses.

This highlights the importance in cross-border areas of establishing local radio stations that give people the opportunity to voice their problems. The MJPI wants to start a radio station in the cross-border zone of Salikegné. It would enable livestock owners faced with cattle thefts to announce the number of cattle stolen, to describe the characteristics of cattle missing (hide markings, length of tail, type of horns, etc.), and to speak out against border violations. The



people have to be more aware of the laws established in ECOWAS treaties ratified by their States, and whether or not they are observed.

This would constitute another safeguard, for the State by itself is incapable of verifying everything. Those entrusted with such responsibilities should have outlets for transmitting all useful information. Means of communication along the borders, such as radio and the internet, would contribute to integration.

Culture should be the basis of integration. It represents the gateway for the MJPI. In Guinea-Bissau, we do not need to speak Portuguese. We communicate in Fulani or in Mandingo with the people there. Radio can help reinforce these cultural bonds and accentuate certain aspects of African culture. In particular, we are seeking to promote traditional forms of conflict resolution



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«Peace Mirador»

Following the “Journées du sésame” organized by NGO 7A, the people of Coumbacara (a village on the Bissau-Guinean border in Senegal) voiced the desire to construct a “peace mirador.” Can you tell us more about this initiative ?

One day, Ousmane, Chief of the village of Saré Becar on the Bissau-Guinean side of the border, found the elders of the village of Coumbacara gathered beneath the palaver [discussion] tree. Seated together on the ground, they were discussing the problems of the village. Upon seeing this, Ousmane suggested building a mirador to enable people to meet together and talk. Once built, it became a site for discussion and decision-making on issues affecting the whole community. Women, youngsters, and men all made use of it. The village chief, for his part, would attend the meetings and then inform the village notables of the decisions made.

This mirador has served the needs not only of the village of Coumbacara, but also of villages in Guinea-Bissau. During religious festivities, decisions are made by the imam, but as a final recourse, they are submitted for consideration at the mirador. Similarly, when the Rural Council makes a decision, it first convenes the people of the village at the mirador. This activity thus represents a cohesive force for villages that disregard political parties, as well as religious and national bonds. This initiative originated among the people of Guinea-Bissau, who found in it a means for strengthening their ties with border villages in Senegal. The mirador, in fact, paved the way for the creation of a weekly market in Guinea-Bissau. This was where the Senegalese decided to support Bissau-Guinean efforts to open the market.

When problems in Guinea-Bissau hindered the travel of the Senegalese, solutions were sought out at the mirador (and vice versa).



Chief of the village of Coumbacara accepting the “peace mirador” from the traditional Bissau-Guinean Chief

It was here that potential tensions were anticipated and conflicts were arbitrated.

The peace mirador is one among many examples of traditional forms of conflict management. Tell us a little about the one referred to as the “Gamou of forgiveness” ?

In Coumbacara, there has never been a tradition of the Gamou*. The Gamou represents a time for strengthening faith and for engaging in discussions about the Koran. An influential imam from the region first introduced it, and we have since extended it to other aspects of village life. The element of forgiveness associated with the Gamou is specific to Coumbacara. In the past, there was a big cultural event which consisted in “bringing the road,” a Fulani phrase which means clearing a symbolic and unifying path between our village and Guinea-Bissau.

At each Gamou, the imam devotes some time to questioning the people about possible ways to strengthen their unity. Along these lines, debtors have been granted public pardons from their creditors without having their names openly revealed. Debts as high as two million CFA Francs have thus been erased, a process that rehabilitated severely deteriorating social relations within the village.

The Peace mirador

The mirador is a rectangle composed of bamboo laths with sides of between 10 to 15 meters in length. At times resting upon posts as high as 25 centimeters, with a piece of corrugated metal used as a roof. It serves as place of shelter and rest for travelers. When this is the case, it is situated at the entrance of a village or along a path linking one land concession to another. More commonly, the peace mirador is located at the center of the village under the palaver tree. Known as “diurè” in Pulaar, it occupies the same symbolic role as a place of arbitration and conflict resolution for the Diola and Mandingo communities.

Rencontre avec...

**Ndiobo Mballo, coordinator for NGO 7A
Mballo, chief of the village of Coumbacara**

The inhabitants of this rural community have forgiven debts accrued by Bissau-Guineans (and vice versa). This practice could

7A “Maa-rewee”

Association 7A “Maa-rewee” : Appui à l’autoformation des adultes appliquée à l’action par alternance et en alternative.

Adresse : BP 11 Kolda, Sikilo près des grandes endémies. Téléphone : (221) 996 10 83- Fax : (221) 936 60 21 E-mail : ong7a@yahoo.fr

Date d’implantation dans la zone : 1988

Mission : appuyer les populations rurales urbaines et périurbaines de la région de Kolda dans leurs efforts de lutte contre la pauvreté sans que les interventions ne détruisent l’équilibre écologique.

Objectifs :

1/. Créer les bases qui permettent de satisfaire les besoins fondamentaux des populations au travers des activités dans les secteurs de la sécurité alimentaire, de l’environnement, de la santé et de l’entrepreneuriat urbain et rural.

2/. Offrir aux élus locaux et leaders locaux, une formation qui renforce les compétences et les capacités de leurs structures, de leurs institutions et de leurs villages.

3/. Favoriser la coordination entre les organisations paysannes et entre elles et celles qui se trouvent dans d’autres localités du Sénégal.

4/. Créer chez les populations une conscience écologique pour la défense des ressources naturelles.

5/. Promouvoir le développement d’activités à potentiel d’intégration et de coopération sous-régionale.

theoretically be extended, but due to tight resources it is restricted to a limited area. The Gamou, much like the peace mirador, has laid the foundations for cross-border cooperation.

As village chief, you embody a traditional form of authority. How do you view the relationship between modern law and customary forms of arbitration ?

Since we started the Gamou of forgiveness and the peace mirador, the role local authorities play in arbitration has been facilitated. Previously, in cases of cattle theft we would immediately call in the sub-prefect. Now, when there is a theft, the people involved resolve the situation under the supervision of the village chief and then inform the sub-prefect of their decisions. The administrative authorities, however, do not feel disregarded. To the contrary, they are relieved to be spared from the fastidious procedures required to settle such cross-border disputes. Moreover, if the administrative authorities are unable to travel to

the Bissau-Guinean side of the border, the traditional chiefs can.

For the latter, such mechanisms represent useful tools for preventing villages from imploding, and for keeping relations between the two countries from growing embittered. Five miradors are now shared by villages in this rural community. Also the Miradors that exist in Guinea-Bissau have been initiated by the traditional chiefs from Guinea. For any dispute each member of the community can resort to it. The traditional chief will then arbitrate. This practice has been brought to the attention of administrative authorities so that they can officially sanction this peace initiative. As a result, the Senegalese authorities have been further legitimated, and they have in turn placed greater trust in the local people to handle their own problems.

Faced with constraints related to geographical isolation and to problems arising from differences in the regulations governing activities on each side of the border, these

two grassroots initiatives serve to eliminate the border effect and establish a system of local justice

●

* At the beginning the big Gamou was the occasion to celebrate the birth of the prophet (Maouloud). Afterwards the Gamou became more frequent in Senegal. Their objective is not only to speak about the Coran. They also celebrate Marabouts from Tidjaniya.



SIKASSO
MALI
KORHOGO
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
BOBO DIULASSO
BURKINA FASO

Workshop on

« *Security, Development and Cross-border Activities
in the Malian and Burkinabe regions
Bordering Côte d'Ivoire* »

The United Nations Bureau for West Africa, the Municipal Development Partnership, and the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD jointly organise this workshop as part of the ECOWAS Cross-Border Initiatives Programme (PIT). This initiative seeks to launch a process of cross-border dialogue and action between the regions of Sikasso and Bobo Dioulasso. It could contribute to optimising the substantial cross-border potential of this area and to creating a virtuous circle capable of limiting the spread of instability related to, among other factors, the Ivorian crisis.

This event would not have been possible without the commitment of Mali and Burkina Faso to cross-border cooperation, and without the efforts of a number of institutions which, while retaining their autonomy, have agreed to collaborate on this common objective.

ECOWAS has recently adopted a memorandum on "cross-border areas," which has been translated into operational terms with the development of the PIT.

This program seeks to provide the sub-region with a legal foundation—Community treaty, convention, or framework agreement—intended to facilitate cross-border cooperation between local communities and/or local/regional authorities, and to encourage a range of "pilot experiences."

The June 2004 mission of the Security Council in West Africa recommended that the United Nations system, in cooperation with national governments in the region, develop coherent strategies capable of resolving specific problems arising along the border areas of several West African countries. The regions in Mali and Burkina Faso bordering Côte d'Ivoire have been specifically identified by the Council as requiring special attention. Along these lines, the United Nations Bureau for West Africa recently organised a workshop in Timbuktu on an integrated approach to Sahelian border areas.

For its part, the Municipal Development Partnership, an association of elected local officials, many from border areas, has initi-

to be held in Sikasso (Mali) on September 27-28, 29, 2005



ated a study of various aspects related to the passage across borders, such as land planning and security.

For many years now, the Sahel and West Africa Club has been working actively, in cooperation with the National Borders Directorate of Mali and Enda-Diapol, within a network called "West African Borders and Integration."

This network has enabled the completion of numerous cross-border diagnoses, as well as exchanges between the residents of West African and European border regions and regional integration institutions.

This seminar will bring together some sixty people: local cross-border actors, institutional representatives, experts and donors.

It should lead to:

- **Concrete proposals** for activities or joint projects in this border area;
- **The establishment** of a cross-border con-

sultation framework enabling, on the one hand, to assist and follow-up the finalisation and/or implementation of specific projects, and, on the other hand, to promote dialogue on cross-border issues, particularly security and free circulation, economic integration and land planning, security, and finally socio cultural cooperation

The crisis was helpful...

“it forced us to look for other options and possibilities for selling our products”

Meeting with...Saïdou Sanou

What were the consequences of the Ivorian crisis for the city of Bobo Dioulasso ?

The impact on Bobo was considerable, with both positive and negative, cyclical and structural effects.

A few examples serve to illustrate my point : as regards negative effects, companies have been severely hit, resulting in production halts (technical unemployment), downsizing, lay-offs, and business closures.

Operators such as SITARAIL, GMB, FILSAH, etc. have thus borne the brunt of the crisis. Some are recovering (FILSAH and SITARAIL) while others continue to struggle.

The positive effects are to be found in the fruit and vegetable sector. Particularly the mango packaging and handling sub-sector experienced a northward shift to the city of Bobo Dioulasso.

In addition to the resurgent dynamism of this sector at the national level, one of the largest operators in the Ferkéssédougou and Khorogo (both Côte d'Ivoire) zones relocated to the city.

One of the substantial results is the launching of the “West African Mango” label. The structural effects are for the biggest part observable in the transport and transit sector.

What are the new trade corridors ? Has new infrastructure been built ?

Rather than referring to “new” corridors, we should speak of the revival of old ones. The Sikasso-Bobo axis is a case in point.

Its recently completed asphaltting greatly contributed to an increase in road traffic, not only to Sikasso but also toward Bamako and Dakar (in Senegal).

The Ghanaian corridor (Bobo-Pa-Dano-Ouessa-Hamélé) now represents the most important and economical route for Malian as well as Burkinabe and North Ivorian operators (see graphic).

The projects that are underway (the Ouessa-Ghana border axis has been promoted to the status of a national road, and its asphaltting has been scheduled) demonstrate that these changes are lasting.

In terms of new infrastructure, the project to construct an international road transport terminal (cargo terminal) in Bobo Dioulasso will also enhance Bobo's role as a com-

mercial hub and transit city.

The project is supported by the Chamber of Commerce and its financing (over 4 billion CFA francs) is already agreed by a consortium of local and sub-regional banks.

The building of a dry-harbour near the cargo terminal is planned over the medium term.

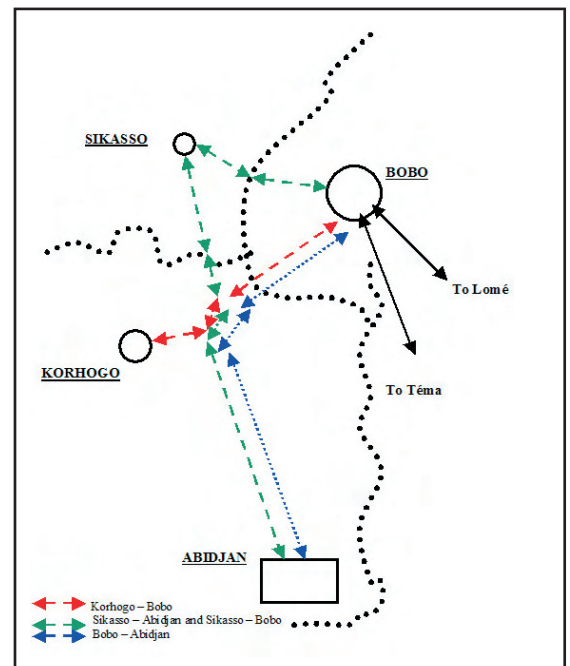
The fruit and vegetable sector also benefited from new transport infrastructure. New deep freeze containers have been brought into service by SITARAIL since April 2004, transporting mangos by train from Ferké and Korhogo to Abidjan.

Recently, the SNTB container platform in Bobo has also been used to carry fruits and

vegetables from there to the port of Abidjan.

In the hydrocarbon sector, SONHABHY supplies its Bobo depot from Vridy in Cote d'Ivoire, since the closure of the Bouaké fuel depot. Some Malian companies also use the Bobo Dioulasso fuel depot.

New Organization of the Goods Traffic in the SKBO Zone



What kind of goods are traded and in what quantities ?

The recent dynamic on the Korhogo-Bobo-Ouessa-Hamele axis is linked to the export of Ivorian cotton.

It is processed in Toumou and Tamale in Ghana.

At first, the trucks took the Korhogo-Sikasso-Bobo axis to Ghana.

Now they follow the Korhogo-Bobo corridor. Ivorian operators are based in Bobo and work with burkinabe transit companies packaging and shipping

PERIODS	DESTINATIONS	NUMBER OF HEADS
3rd quarter 2003	Côte d'Ivoire	8 535
	Ghana	919
	Benin	224
2nd quarter 2004	Côte d'Ivoire	5 225
	Ghana	309
	Nigeria	169
3rd quarter 2004	Côte d'Ivoire	4 960
	Ghana	3 115
	Benin	1 172

cotton, wood, cocoa etc.

The Korhogo-Sikasso axis is still in use but for other goods. For instance, Ivorian fuel transits via Bobo and then passes through Sikasso to Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire).

The CMDT also heavily used the Sikasso-Zégoua to ship its cotton.

The other exported products are teak wood and cocoa, which also transit through Bobo on their way to Ghana and Togo.

The quantities in 2004 were as follows :

- Teak wood via Tema through Delmas : 257 x 20 -foot containers.
- Teak wood via Lomé through Delmas and Maersk : 102 x 20 -foot containers.
- Cocoa via Lomé through Delmas and Maersk : 85 x 20 -foot containers.

However, Bobo's main export products remain cotton and livestock.

As for cotton exports :

- Before the crisis : 80 to 90% of exports were shipped via the port of Abidjan.
- During the crisis : this was reduced to 10% of the fibre ex-

ports.

- Today : 70% of exports pass through Lomé. Some transporters predict that around 20% of cotton fibre exports will be shipped through Abidjan this year.

As for livestock, after the peak of the crisis, exports to Cote d'Ivoire are picking up again :

Even after sustaining an accumulated loss of over 150 billion CFA francs, as a result of the Ivorian crisis, Bobo's livestock traders still see positive consequences of the crisis for the meat-cattle sector :

- Diversification of opportunities and discovery of other markets.

- Recognition of the outdated character of their commercial system, and of the need to develop and learn other languages, in order to expand into English-speaking markets.

According to these traders, the crisis was helpful "in so far as it forced us to look for other options and possibilities for selling our products"

He said...

The Director of the Sikasso cattle market

By Philipp Heinrigs

Before the Ivorian crisis, Malian and Burkinabe livestock production was largely oriented towards Cote d'Ivoire. Meat and cattle exports constitute one of the main economic activities of the Sikasso – Korhogo - Bobo-Dioulasso zone (SKBo). It was principally organised around two border markets: Niangoloko in Burkina Faso and Sikasso in Mali.

The meat sub-sector represented 140 billion CFA francs in added value in 2000, or 14% of the zone's GDP. The growth of the livestock population was a consequence of the increase in urban demand in Cote d'Ivoire (37% of Ivorian consumption was supplied by imports) and of the expansion of animal-drawn cultivation linked to the growth of cotton production.

In Mali, Sikasso had thus become the leading region for penned livestock. Obstacles to fluid exchanges remained, such as the development of regulated crops and customs red tape. The need for a cross-border approach to this industry's development thus became clear.

The aim was primarily to decrease illegal duties on the trade in ruminants. Thus, facilitating the circulation of cattle would have enabled a better utilization of research, food supply, veterinary care, trade, and the available abattoir and transport facilities on both sides of the border (roads and trains).

What are the stakes and preoccupations today ?

The magazine *Chroniques Frontalières* looked into the Sikasso



Aguibou Diarrah, (on the right)
Director of Mali's National Borders Directorate (DNF) and Dramane Diarra Director of Burkina Territorial Affairs Coordination.

(Mali) market.

What impact did the Ivorian crisis have on your sector ?

Before the crisis, almost all our exports went to Abidjan and Côte d'Ivoire. For the past two or three months, they have all gone to Bamako and especially Dakar.

Is this linked to the increase in hassles at the borders and on the roads ?

There are indeed more hassles and hijackers have appeared. For instance, before the crisis, transporters paid between 100,000 and 250,000 CFA francs for the journey from Sikasso to Abidjan. Today, these costs have risen to between 400,000 and 500,000 CFA francs. These duties are the same as those paid (450,000) on the trip to Dakar, which is further away (1550km vs. 820km to Abidjan) and more time consuming (one week). The main reason is security: transporters come back from Dakar "in one piece".

What is the impact on the Dakar market of this influx of live-stock ?

The Dakar livestock market is saturating. As a consequence, prices

decrease and fluctuate to a greater degree.

Thus, the standard price for a good bull may fall to 250,000 from 450 000 CFA francs.

The industry is currently in a difficult position but, in the absence of any alternative, we manage the insecurity as best we can



“Free movement” : the european way

Meeting with Jens Gabbe,

Secretary general of the Association of European Border Regions

How is cross-border cooperation addressed at the political level and in European treaties ?

While working for the European Common Market between 1985 and 1992, the European Union quickly realised that despite free movement of people, labour, capital and goods, problems in the cross-border zones persisted hindering the European integration process.

These problems are for the most part linked to existing differences between member countries, the level of authority, structures, social security systems, national taxes.

European harmonisation at all levels is neither possible nor desirable notably because the citizens will not accept such a radical change in their daily lives. The development of the European Union, since the transformation from a principally economic union towards a political union, has clearly demonstrated that cross-border cooperation at the local/regional level plays an important role in the European integration process.

For this purpose, cross-border cooperation will remain a political priority on the European Union's agenda and in cohesive and regional policies for the years to come.

This is a European responsibility because the past has shown that cross-border regions are not priorities in national policies.

Cross-border cooperation takes place in all areas of the European Union : territorial cohesion policies, regional strategic thinking, agriculture, tourism, innovation/research, trans-European networks, etc. justifying its recognition within the new European constitution.

Right now, efforts are being made to develop a European juridical instrument for decentralised cross-border cooperation.

What arguments could convince West African states of the role cross-border cooperation plays in building an integrated market ?

Border and cross-border areas often suffer from lack of jobs and high quality educational institutions.

Border businesses are often badly or insufficiently informed as regards market capacity, exportations, marketing or resources available on the other side of the border.

They rarely resort to the possibility of using research and development institutions or social services of their neighbouring countries.

The weakness of cross-border infrastructures is a recurrent flaw whereas they are one of the essential conditions for cross-border cooperation to succeed.

Cross-border cooperation's value-added can be summarised as follows :

- Political value-added (contribution to European integration, convergence between regions, mutual understanding, preparation for the adhesion of new members) ;
- Institutional value-added (familiarisation with various structures and administrative authorities, concretisation of subsidiarity and partnerships) ;
- Economic value-added (for example, revitalisation of traditional regional economic areas, divided by national borders during the 20th century, cooperation between small- and medium-sized enterprises, universities, employment creation, joint infrastructures, strengthening the region's specific potentials) ;
- Socio-cultural value-added (for example, understanding languages, cooperation despite differences between partners, tolerance as regards other cultures, working methods, minorities).

cooperation for cross-border integration preserves national sovereignty

Cross-border cooperation, in partnership with national countries helps, as the development of the European Union has demonstrated, reduce the imbalances and economic obstacles in cross-border regions.

What message to local African actors who are working for “cross-border collaboration” ?

Borders often are “history's scars” which mainly disadvantaged cross-border areas.

Cross-border cooperation helps overcome these disadvantages and improves the populations' living conditions.

Knowing and understanding your neighbour and the resulting trust presents the inherent condition in each form of cross-border cooperation.

The European example demonstrates that the local/regional approach represents the most suitable level at which cross-border cooperation can be successful and illustrates concretely the cooperation agreements ratified between the countries.

The local/regional actors have a better understanding of their neighbours' situation and the existing differences, being both problems and opportunities of their shared region.

They are thus stimulating a basic interest to work towards their development.

Cross-border cooperation demonstrates a responsibility for the future all the regions concerned because their geographic characteristics and their historic links represent a strength test for :

- a peaceful and human group ;
- respect for differences and minorities ;
- respect for the principle of partnership and subsidiarity ;
- balance, tolerance and equality between various partners ;
- social, cultural and economic