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CROSS BORDER

NETWORKS

Editorial • *FROM ONE BORDER TO ANOTHER*, p.3

Niger - Mali

**TRANSHUMANCE AND
CROSS-BORDER SECURITY**

• *LIVESTOCK BREEDERS FROM NIGER AND MALI EVALUATE THE SITUATION IN TILLABÉRI*, p. 48

Sénégal - Gambie Méridionale

- *CREATION OF A CROSS-BORDER RADIO STATIONS NETWORK*, p.6
- *ASSESSMENT OF THE CIP SENEGAMBIA PILOT OPERATION*, p.8
- *THE ROAD TO A MINI CULTURAL FESTIVAL*, p.12

Report : Niger, Amenagement transfrontalier

- *DOSSO OR GAYA? THE DRY PORT ACQUIRES WATER*, p.18
- *DRY PORT, CONTROVERSIAL PORT*, p.22

Europe - Africa

...*WHICH PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES CAN ENCOURAGE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION?*, p.26

...*«BORDERS ARE "HISTORICAL SCARS." WE CANNOT FORGET THEM, BUT WE ALSO CANNOT NURTURE THEM»*, p.30

Nigeria - Niger

JOINT COMMISSION FOR COOPÉRATION

- *A PRECURSOR TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION*, p. 34

Burkina - Côte d'Ivoire - Mali

CROSS-BORDER RADIO STATIONS NETWORK

• *KURUMBA, 1 YEAR ALREADY: ALMOST FULLY OPERATIONAL*, p.40

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FROM ONE BORDER TO ANOTHER

This edition of the Border Diaries is a composite, travelling all along the already-explored borders ...

It explores the progress accomplished in the ECOWAS pilot operations in the zones of Niger-Nigeria, Mali-Burkina Faso, and focuses more on Senegambie Meridionale.

It reports on other areas: Dosso and Gaya embroiled in a passionate debate on the future of a dry port; a meeting in Tillabéri with the aim of curbing the violence linked to border transhumance.

Out of the field, the Diaries closely follow the development of the new African Union Border Programme which is geared towards West African experiences. Finally, this edition is dedicated to Lotje de Vries who has returned to Holland after a long career at Enda Diapol and working in the field in border areas.

The Editors



POLICY DIALOGUE'S ROLE IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

MOHAMADOU ABDOUL, ENDA PROSPECTIVES DIALOGUES POLITIQUES (DIAPOL)



Mohamadou Abdoul

Firstly, please define what you mean by policy dialogue.

Policy dialogue, as a perpetual concerted approach among State and non-State actors, is a collective regulatory exercise of social, political and economic relations.

It is an age-old dynamic.

The parties created it together for a common goal and general interest. During this process, various categories of actors engage in dialogue, and cooperate while highlighting their complementarity.

They negotiate also through competition, alliances and conflict, the modifiable modalities and positions of their interactions.

It involves an eminently political situation where power stakes reposition as a result of tension between individual interests and collective and general interests.

What achievements and challenges represent policy dialogue for border cooperation?

With a view to cross-border cooperation, policy dialogue reveals tremendous potential for a new and innovative approach to local development and regional integration. But it is operationally very complex and there are various challenges to face.

First, the implementation of cross-border cooperation is confronted, through various stages of its operationalisation and depending on the activity sectors concerned, with the over cautiousness of jealous States of their national sovereignty.

This obstacle is avoidable when actors act within the framework of bilateral agreements between neighbouring countries and that of regulatory and legislative intergovernmental organisations' mechanisms (AU, ECOWAS, UEMOA, etc.).

Promoting policy dialogue through cross-border cooperation, envisaged as a lever of local development of a new type and driver of regional integration, raises the issue of equal legitimacy between all involved actors.

Not all of these actors are integrated into the legitimisation process nor are the organisational structures and institutions predisposed to this equality.

Policy dialogue which infuses democracy and participative governance can clash with the exercising modalities of representative democracy.

This maintains the intermediation function, that is to say the fact that elected and/or nominated individuals or groups speak and react on behalf of others. As a result, the roles, political, technical and financial functions, the various

levels of intervention and their interweaving are major factors in policy dialogue and cross-border cooperation. The outline facilitates the interaction of several categories of actors and is the condition for sufficient regulation. The mechanisms of all involved parties are this policy dialogue's coherence tools.

Where are WABI and Enda Diapol in the strengthening of this political mechanism?

The WABI Initiative is one of the places for building and strengthening advocacy in favor of cross-border cooperation.

Thanks to this initiative, the African Union and ECOWAS, strongly support the idea and are starting to be more involved in the process which entails significant political support. The network is expanding and its partners are diversifying (CILSS, GTZ, GRDR, UNDP). The defined cross-border action plans for pilot operations in the SKBo (Sikasso – Bobo Dioulasso) and “Senegambia Meridional” zones are beginning to be carried out. New experiences are being launched: Karakoro Basin between Mali - Mauritania and Maradi-Katsina-Kano between Niger - Nigeria.

Enda Diapol, the DNF and the SWAC are asked to support the development of cross-border cooperation in new areas. Their support foreshadows the strongest and most sustainable partnerships. However, for these initiatives to be wholly independent constitutes an important challenge. Efforts must in effect now be devoted to the systemization of financial mechanisms in order to pursue the efforts undertaken.

What are the prospects?

After several years of strategic thinking, research and action, the achievements of cross-border cooperation and regional integration are encouraging.

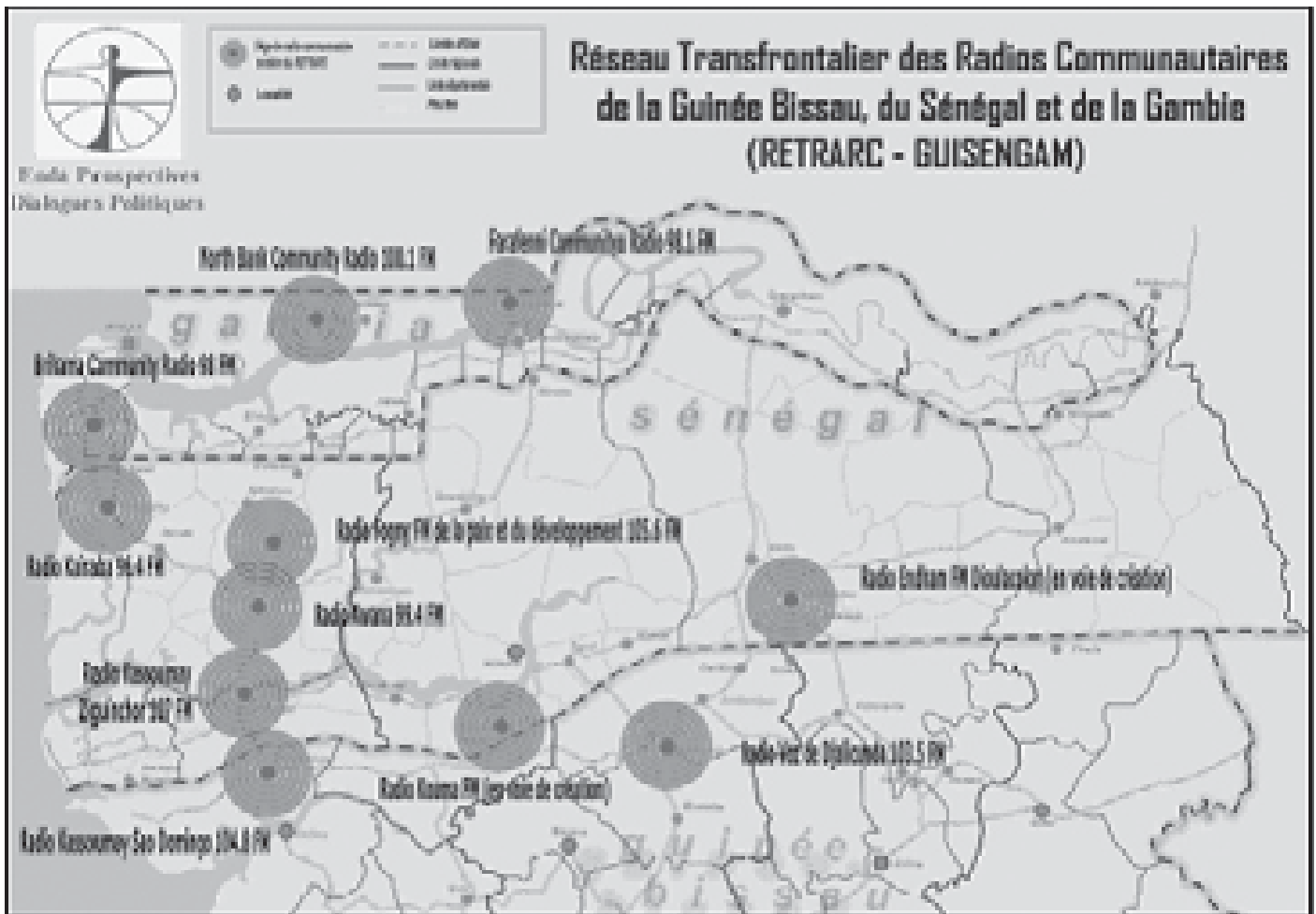
This experience is shared with the wider circles where issues linked to these dynamics are discussed. In these spheres, the WABI initiators are defending their positions and arguments with State representatives, the academic environment, the private sector, strategic partners and other members of civil society (AEBR, CREAM, ECA/UNDP, UNESCO).

It also involves periods where potential collaboration is explored and publications are disseminated, where policy dialogue is strengthened.

Basically, this objective of bringing together diversities in order to co-build joint futures is following its course. The pieces of the puzzle fall progressively into place and the interlacing of initiatives and territories over the course of progress on areas of strategic thinking, decisions and concrete actions●

Interview carried out by Florent Arragain

CREATION OF A CROSS-BORDER RADIO STATIONS NETWORK



One year after the launching workshop of the ECOWAS CIP (Cross-border Initiatives Programme) pilot operation in support of cross-border cooperation in Ségambie méridionale (guinea Bissau, Senegal, the Gambia) a cross-border network of a group of community radio stations of the three countries was set up.

Eleven (11) radio stations in total succeed in breaking the barriers with the support of ENDA-Daïpol, the SWAC and GTZ Procas. Waves from the network of Cross-border Community Radio Stations from Guinea Bissau, Senegal, and the Gambia, called “RETRARC – GUISEGAMB”, have been sent across the Senegambian cross-border area.

RETRARC is governed by an Executive Committee consisting of the directors of the different member

principle coordinator. Their missions are defined as follows:

- Work towards strengthening the cultural and economic integration of the population, while respecting the fundamental values of each of them;
- Support the cross-border community radio station sector in its role of promoting exchanges and solidarity among populations;

should assist RETRARC in developing their financing strategies.

Its capacity to disseminate information simultaneously to various countries is an asset on which to be capitalized in the fundraising strategy.

Furthermore, it involves helping diversify its financing sources looking towards different partners.

In addition, ECOWAS' understanding of this network's role as well as its commitment to work together to address cross-border and sub-regional issues will be two determining factors for this initiative to continue.

Due to lack of resources and the great distance separating the network radio stations, communication and dissemination of information is not easy.

As radio station members come from three different countries, organising meetings is costly due to the poor condition of the roads and the constant problems at border crossings.

Telephoning from one country to the other is often difficult and the internet is still not accessible everywhere.

Therefore logistical issues could still impede the well-functioning of RETRARC.

FLORENT Arragain

Enda Prospectives et Dialogues Politiques (Diapol).

ASSESSMENT OF THE CIP SENEGAMBIA PILOT OPERATION

Since its launching in October 2005, how would you assess the CIP pilot operation in Senegambia Meridional?

The assessment is overall positive as the approach instilled hope in the border populations and the motivation of local actors' attained significant results.

Nevertheless, the scope and impact of these achievements has been slowed down by the lack of funding for facilitation mechanisms.

UNDP financing of one facilitator per country, which had been suggested at the Ziguinchor workshop, unfortunately never came to fruition.

Thanks to the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD) then more punctually the GTZ Procas, we have received some financing. It was more suitable to use these funds to support the most dynamic initiatives set out in the action plan and the follow-up process.

Contact with the initially-involved border populations has thus been maintained. On the other hand, the

organisation of an assessment workshop foreseen for the second semester of 2006 had to be postponed.

Concretely, what has been achieved on the ground?

Local associations of Diouloulou (Senegal) and Brikama (the Gambia) have succeeded in mobilising community man-power in order to repair a cross-border route linking their locales.

This collective effort was finally commemorated by the organisation of a cross-border cultural festival during which joint actions to be implemented were defined in order to, together, meet the shared challenges such as isolation, accelerated degradation of forestry resources, and inter-community tensions.

Enda Diapol, GTZ Procas and the SWAC/OECD support this initiative.

Throughout the border areas, the number of inter-village peace committees is growing in order to prevent local conflicts caused by cattle theft, competition around land planning, wate-

and national and sub-regional promotion of inter-State cooperation and regional integration strategies is still inadequate.

The lack of facilitators with the necessary means in order to ensure coordination between promoters of cross-border projects, various concerned ministries and ECOWAS has made it difficult to clearly define everyone's role.

In addition, the degree of convergence of the vision and the objectives pursued at the local and national levels should be brought into question.

In effect, while the States' interest is naturally geared more towards seeking economic integration and shared infrastructures, it seems that in cross-border areas, there is more willingness to maintain good neighbourly relations which is a prerequisite above all to the implementation of cross-border cooperation.

Financing cross-border cooperation is another challenge to meet as it requires development partners to change position.

The difficulty is in the fact that cross-border cooperation results from both local development and regional integration.

Development cooperation intervenes more often within the agreement

frameworks which are either national with partner countries or regional with community organisations.

The national framework is ill-adapted to cross-border activities involving and benefiting, by definition, actors from two different countries.

Regarding the regional framework, the amount needed to implement cross-border cooperation (generally approximately a few million CFA Francs) is not enough to comply with allocation criteria.

Along the same lines, another challenge is asking development partners to better coordinate their interventions, more particularly with regard to peace and security.

While there are increasingly more interventions in Casamance and if too much money is injected without coordination, the current balance could be thrown off kilter, creating new conflicts of interest which will feed into the effectiveness of pre-existing regulations, widen the gaps between advantaged regions and those which are not, between privileged actors and those which are excluded from development aid.

Such a scenario would finally result in even more acute development disparity between countries, which is one of the main factors of tension within cross-border areas.

Finally, although cross-border cooperation activities in Sénagambie Meridionale benefits from ECOWAS' political support, its leadership is still not strong enough to guarantee the needed State-level commitment.

Of course, the fact that ECOWAS often lacks financial and human resources must be taken into account; but it is increasingly relying on the dynamism of cross-border initiatives from which it will gain legitimacy vis-à-vis populations, the States and external partners.

Furthermore, one of the cornerstones of our intervention is to support ECOWAS and its action in order for it to benefit from existing grassroots energy.

We are convinced that regional integration could actually be solidified by placing the West African population at the heart of the regional integration process.

What prospects are opening up for cross-border cooperation in Senegambia Meridional?

In the shortest amount of time, we intend to pursue with our partners the SWAC/OECD and GTZ Procas/Peracod, the support initiated on the ground for the radio station and bee-keeping professionals as well as to

the cross-border peace committee and vested actors between Diouloulou and Brikama in order to open up this zone: by renovating the cross-border production routes, the reforestation of cross-border forestry zones, inter-community dialogue for re-building peace and concertation between Gambian and Senegalese transportation unions.

We will also launch a tri-annual peace and cross-border security programme. Within this framework, prospective research will be emphasised enabling new perceptions of the changes underway in West Africa and which should be addressed from a border perspective.

This research will help garner support for high-integration-potential economic industries in the concerted management of cross-border natural resources, the valorisation and strengthening of peace initiatives, the lobbying for the free movement of people and goods as well as the strengthening of awareness of West African citizenry.

Prior to this, we think that the CIP pilot operation in Senegambia Meridional needs to be assessed and the institutional steering process redefined within States and ECOWAS.

We are planning to organise, in the very near future, a meeting bringing

together the three countries' main ministries, ECOWAS representatives, and organisations involved in supporting cross-border cooperation initiatives.

This will involve evaluating the pilot operation's strengths and weaknesses, defining the lessons learned, outlining future orientations and deciding more precisely on everyone's role.

At the West African level, we will continue to work alongside our partners of the SWAC/OECD, other pilot operations and ECOWAS in order to provide the CIP with the political dimension and financial resources required to reach its goals. Within this framework, the recent re-organisation of ECOWAS is a very positive evolution.

In effect, cross-border cooperation and the CIP are clearly managed by the Directorate of Free Movement of People.

We are currently working with our partners to develop a one-year project which will enable, on the one hand, the strengthening of and capitalising on existing pilot operations' achievements and, on the other, to carry out a development, negotiation and validation process of a tri-annual CIP programme aiming to expand support to

cross-border cooperation initiatives to all of West Africa.

In all of these areas of intervention, emphasis will be placed on the exchange of experiences between West African border region initiatives and European border regions within a collaborative framework still to be defined, but will nevertheless be launched at the Africa-Europe Conference on Cross-border Cooperation to be held during the second semester of 2007.

Interview carried out by E. Salliot

THE ROUTE TO A MINI CULTURAL FESTIVAL

With the financial support of GTZ Procas (Senegalese/German cooperation's Socio-economic Development Programme for Peace in Casamance), between June and September 2006 more than 500 people, women's, youth and transporter community organisations were mobilised to renovate a cross-border route. After working up a sweat filling in and smoothing over the holes, there was a celebratory break. After daily community discussions on peace and forgiveness while working together, the Senegalese and Gambian cross-border communities organised a cultural festival to celebrate the renewed communion. The meeting for the renovation of a route paved the way for a mini festival which keeps to the new cross-border tradition.

Conferences and seminars are excellent opportunities for development actors to make contacts.

At the workshop held under the auspices of ECOWAS launching the pilot operation in support of cross-border cooperation in Senegambia Meridional (October 2005) concrete and constructive collaborations were established:

In addition to the workshop, representatives of community associations such as ASAPID, UFDN (Union du Fogny Diabang et du Naran, Senegal) and Kartong Kabajo Link for Cooperation (The Gambia) discussed collaborative possibilities among their organisations and their respective communities based in the Western Region of the Gambia and in the Bignona Department of Casamance.

Their mutual exchange led to the actual undertaking of two activities:

to renovate a cross-border production route between Diouloulou and Brikama; and to organise a cultural event bringing together all of the border communities.

Paul Abib Sagna, ASAPID President:

“This 25 kilometre route between Diouloulou and Brikama via Koudioubé urgently needed to be renovated because populations travel this route to trade their market garden products, their mangos and their oranges.

Here we are closer to the Gambia and Senegalese border products are traded more in Brikama than in Bignona or Ziguinchor.

This explains the populations' mobility because it is a question of

their survival. Many of the Diouloulou and Kafountine rural communities and the Gambian villages of Marakissa, Dar Salam, Sifo as well as organisations located in Brikama all participated in this initiative.”

Together, these institutions decided to request financial support from GTZ Procas (support programme for the socio-economic development for peace in Casamance – Senegalo-German cooperation) and to mobilise various community women, youth



DAGAT - ASAPID - CADP

and transporter organisations to help renovate this route.

More than 500 people invested their time daily between June and September 2005 to fill in the holes in order to be able to use the route to transport local products and for villagers to be able to move about.

Every day local conversation on peace and forgiveness bringing the army, combatants, the police and villagers together moved the work forward.

GTZ Procas provided a financial contribution to the project. The associations also provided financing from their own resources for water and food.

Souleymane Dabo, UFDN Secretary-General congratulates the organizers: “Everyone comes to work with 100 CFA Francs and a little bit of rice. When expenses were too much, we asked Procas to help us feed the workers. In any case, this route is particularly profitable. Since renovating the first 17 kilometres, people use it a lot but the problem remains.

There is still more to do and we are not quitting. During the next dry season, we are going to try to dig with our picks and then request support for

a tractor to help us fill in the holes on the route.”

After renovating the route’s first 17 kilometres, the institutions wanted to thank all of the volunteers who contributed to the initiative by organising an event celebrating the efforts undertaken by all who worked towards cross-border development hence the organisation of a mini cultural festival.

A logistical committee consisting of the ASAPID, UFDN, the CADP and the Kartong-Kabajo Link for Cooperation was responsible for bringing this event to fruition.

With the financial and technical support from GTZ Procas, the Sahel and West Africa Club and Enda Diapol, these institutions were able to organise a major event in this border area.

They were also able to take advantage of all the participating regional populations to carry out strategic thinking on ways to undertake new activities between communities residing on both sides of the border (see box).

In the days preceding the festival, the Diouloulou population cleaned up the

town. In a friendly atmosphere, groups of women working together cleaned up the piles of dust in every nook and cranny so that the matriarchs would prepare the meals for the participants of the three-day festival.

At the same time, in the community radio station offices, the organisers finished the final preparations and decided how to have media coverage of the speeches and concerts.



Set settal campaign.

On 17 November, the processions of minibuses and taxis brought in the troupes and the guests to Diouloulou while there was a final visit to the Sub-Prefecture to ensure that the opening ceremony would be held without a hitch prior to the festivities.

The Sub-Prefet as well as the Director of General Affairs of Land Planning (DAGAT), Saliou Sambou, emotionally and warmly welcomed participants.

Unfortunately, their Gambian counterparts were unable to arrive at the opening ceremony on time. After a series of theatrical, musical and choreographed presentations, the Super Band Mama Sakho of Bandjikaki began playing at sundown.



The Super band Mama Sakho of Bandjikaki

Most of the people impatiently stamped their feet while waiting for the music to

begin and were delighted dancing to the lively rhythms of the Super Band Mama Sakho.

This musical troupe is known for its endeavours to recreate a link between

populations strongly affected by years of conflict.

Their concerts in Mandingue have enabled communities to renew their common culture. The Mama Sakho troupe has always taken the opportu-

nity at such events to engage populations in dialogue on the causes of socio-political problems which persist in the region.

The Gambian border zone along with the Diouloulou arrondissement has been particularly affected by the Casamance crisis for over a year.

Hence the Gambian population has sought to take advantage of the opportunity provided by a musical troupe such as Super Band Mama Sakho which combines celebration and dance through traditional melodies to promote community dialogue on sensitive issues.

Culture in support of peace was one of the three themes debated at the group workshop held on 18 November. With



Manifestations théâtrales avec le CM de Djinacki



Musical and choreographed presentations.

the participation of the Gambian communities and those of the Diouloulou arrondissement, the debates were lively and fruitful.

The cross-border action plan deve-

for joint action. The organising institutions of this festival shall implement this action plan with the technical and financial support of potential partners such as GTZ Procas, the Sahel and

West Africa Club and Enda Diapol.

The mini Diouloulou festival shed light on the number of existing cross-border cooperation initiatives in this part of Senegambia.

After a passionate appeal by Daouda “Boss” Sonko,

developed at this workshop will integrate already existing cooperation initiatives as well as take into account new areas

CADP President, during the closing speeches, Super Band Mama Sakho was assured by the Brigade

Commandant that the army would help the troupe enter what are now very sensitive areas so that it could pursue its dialogue with communities.

A first step was made in Diouloulou. The next phase will include a better understanding of the activities undertaken with decentralised administrations and central States as well as to increasingly involve populations in order to ensure that the action plan will be implemented with everyone’s support●



STRENGTHENING INITIATIVES

The mini cross-border festival was also an opportunity to join regional forces around various themes discussed in order to develop a cross-border action plan. This action plan is particularly based on the consolidation of already existing initiatives that require expertise and mobilisation of all communities located in this border zone between the Diouloulou arrondissement in Senegal and the Western Region of the Gambia. Community association representatives had the choice to participate in one of the working groups addressing the three following themes:

- Concerted management of natural resources
- Economic development and free circulation of persons and goods
- Culture in support of peace

All in all, close to one hundred people from this border zone first referred to the activities already underway in order to assess the constraint so as to discuss the next year-long actions to be undertaken.

The actions which were set out in the “Concerted management of natural resources” group concern activities related to combating deforestation and salinization.

The second group suggested to revive the collaboration between Gambian and Senegalese transportation unions and to bring to the attention of authorities the poor state of the roads and routes crossing the border. The third group’s objective was to increase the cross-border meetings between communities on themes such as peace, forgiveness and development.

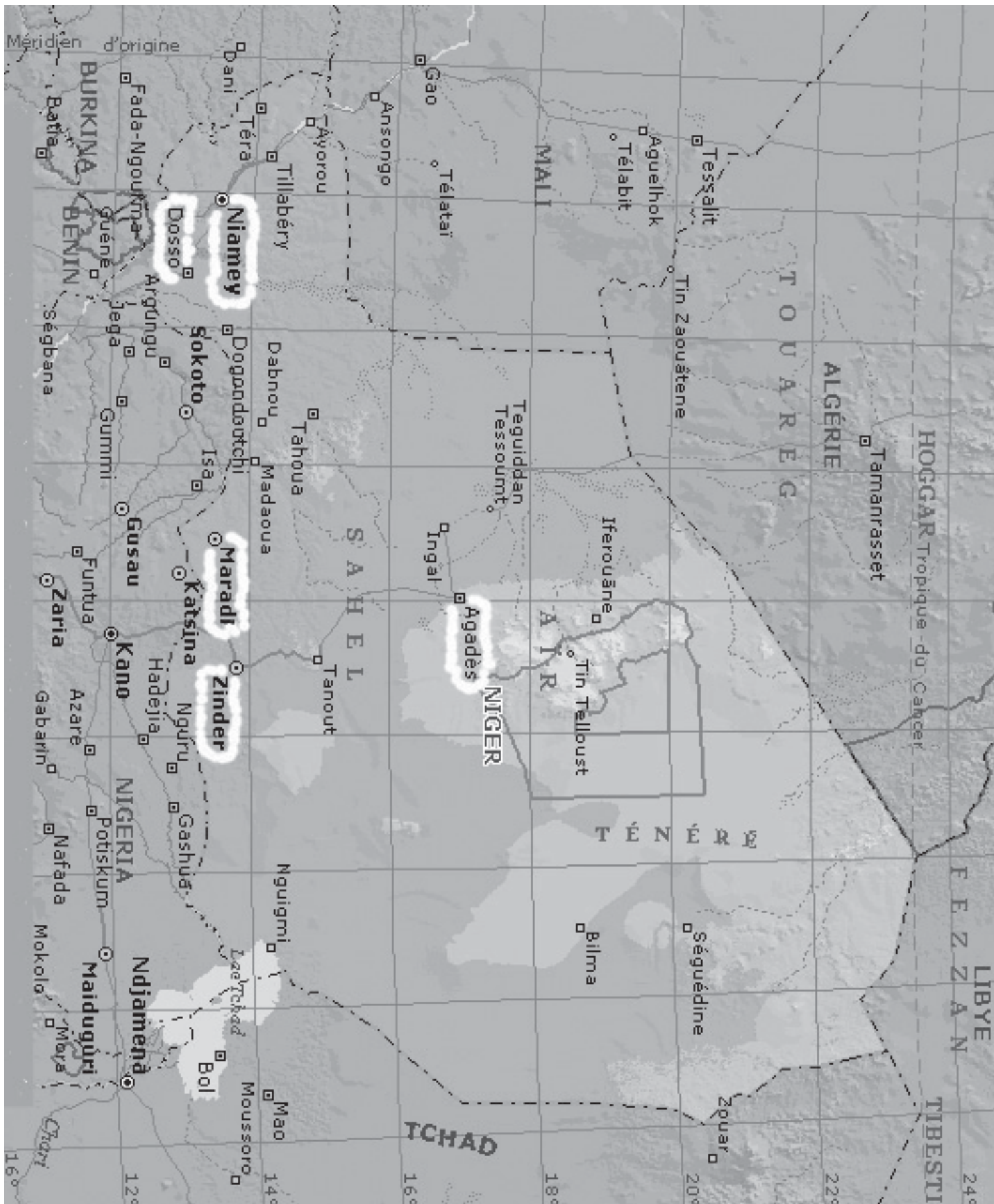
Within the action plan, institutions’ responsibilities were defined and completion dates set out. However, there are a significant number of constraints to face in order for these action plans to be implemented which will require the regular involvement of decentralised administrations, customs and border police.

Hence, a first awareness-raising meeting was held on 20 December 2006 with Gambian and Senegalese administrative services at the Seleti border post.

More recently, a working session was held in Diouloulou on 10 February 2007 at which a series of meetings was planned before creating two committees which will be responsible for defining priority actions to undertake over the coming months.



The Sahelian landlocked country of Niger, served mostly by the ports of Cotonou (Benin) and Lomé (Togo)



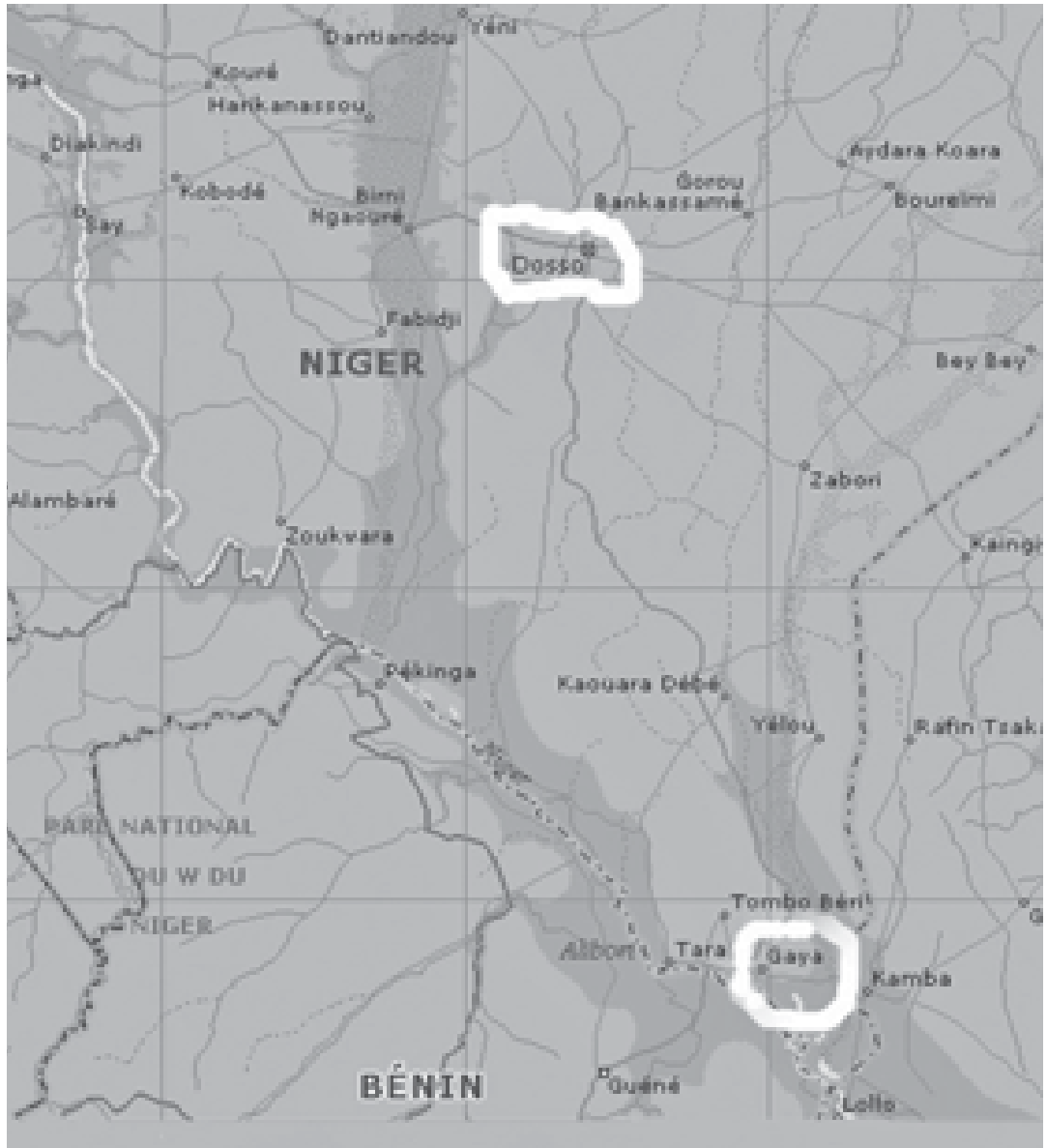
DOSSO OR GAYA? THE DRY PORT ACQUIRES WATER.

First there was a World Bank recommendation, then a feasibility study, a first choice, and then a split decision. The dry port project vacillates between Dosso and Gaya.

It all started at the end of the 1990s when a World Bank study advocated setting up dry ports in all West African hinterland countries.

The aim was to improve the handling of traffic, collect more taxes and create better working conditions for economic operators.

The Sahelian landlocked country of Niger, served mostly by the ports of Cotonou (Benin) and Lomé (Togo) should set up a dry port in its capital, Niamey, and on its borders, in particular in the administrative regions of Zinder (on the south-east border with



Nigeria), Arlit (in the Agadez regional department bordering Algeria), Agadez (on the northern border with Algeria, Libya and Chad), Maradi (on the south-central border with Nigeria) and Dosso (on the south-west border with Benin and Nigeria).

This should not be a problem although some of the towns are not on the border and up to now the dry port's role has been taken on by customs offices of border towns of which one is Gaya.

As a result, there are objections to Dossa being chosen to house the

dry port of the country's south west region.

Gaya is a genuine border town with an imposing customs office at the town's entrance on the left bank of the river, and a natural border with Benin on the right bank. In Gaya to facilitate customs here are administrative buil-



Parking douane Gaya

dings, an area where more than one hundred trucks can park and warehouses to stock products passing through customs and, enough space for a possible expansion.

Customs in Gaya already has all the dry port equipment: a terminal with a platform, its warehouses and administration.

On the other hand, Dosso, located 150 km from the Niamey border appears to be vacant land.

Everything would need to be built to set up a dry port.

In Gaya, it is widely publicized, “choosing to set up the dry port in Dosso is to relocate it”.

Gaya claims that its efficiency and capacity as a dry port and the project will only in fact confirm this.

The dry port issue in this region creates rivalries over and above the eco-

nomie aspect which should have been foreseen.

This can be a textbook case for the Ministry of Transport responsible for this issue, because, as indicates Elhadj Ouayou Ibrahim, Regional Director of Land Transport in Dosso, of the 6 dry port projects in Niger, “only those of Niamey and Dosso are newsworthy”.

The one in Niamey is confirmed and will be set up on “the right bank of the river”.

And then there is the one in Dosso. Excuse me! In the Dosso region.

According to Elhadj Ouayou Ibrahim, “the Spanish company Progosa was interested.

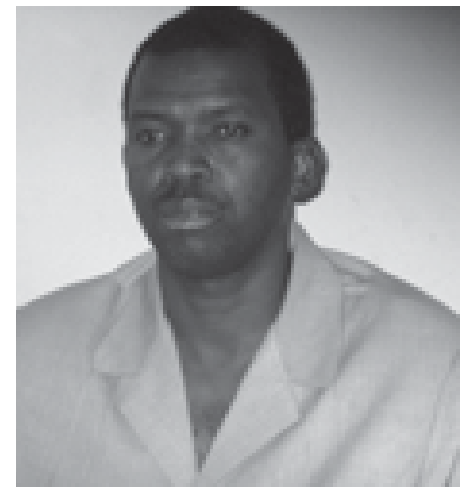
Its experts came to Dosso and selected a 9 hectare area graciously provided by the Mayor with the option to expand.

A relief map was drawn up. Progosa estimated financing to be about 5 billion FCFA Francs which was then revised to 100 million FCFA.

The Minister of Transport balked, “No way!”

Now, continues Mr. Ibrahim, “the Netherlands company, Maerks, is interested in building the port and supplying the construction material.

They led a field mission in Dosso in December and since no word. We are waiting.” Whatever Ministerial deci-



Elhadj Ouayou Ibrahim

sion to set up a port in Dosso, rumours on the work beginning and mobilisation are debated in Gaya ...

“However, not one stone has yet been moved. Only one donor came to do an economic and feasibility study”, responds Elhadj Ouayou Ibrahim to the rumour that infrastructure construction has begun in Dosso.

AMENAGEMENT TRANSFRONTALIER

According to him, “if the dry port in Dosso is profitable, it will be built in Dosso. If not, another site must be sought. The first donor saw that it was not profitable and he left. The second one is here and we are waiting.

If the donor chooses Dosso, there would obligatorily be representation in Gaya.

There is no way that merchandise destined for Gaya should arrive in Dosso only to be turned around to Gaya after all the official procedures. It is not economical.”

But rumours took the lead, “as soon as people heard something, tempers manifested, marches, etc.”

Luckily, he attests, “the Prime Minister intervened and the problem was resolved.

He confirmed that the project was only in the study phase, awaiting results. Consequently, we will see whether it is Gaya or Dosso which will be chosen.”

Are the Gods appeased? In Dosso and Gaya both populations yearn for it.

In Dossa they are enthusiastic about the project. In Gaya, they are on guard. “With politicians, you never know!”

says Fadel, a Lebanese manager of an international clothing and textiles company in Gaya: “Setting up a dry port in Dosso would be robbing us, it will complicate our lives “.

He explains: “For our clients, Dosso is far away. Most of clients come from Sokoto (Nigeria) via Kamba (Nigerian border town with Gaya) about 20 km from Gaya.”

For him, “the consequences would be disastrous. Nothing is more important than the second-hand clothing sector which has more than 40 stores here and we cannot start elsewhere.

Gaya was built on the second-hand clothing business. Until 1999, there was nothing here.

Also, we are only renters; owners are going to increasingly lose out.”

But traders must always be pragmatic. Fadel and his deputy Aziz, are prepared for the outcome: “very certainly, we are going to set up again in Malanville where we still have stores or, even in Cotonou.”

They are still convinced that Gaya is the best place to set up the regional dry port and that to go to Dosso would “disrupt the market rather than strengthen it.

We don’t want to set up in Dosso because it will kill our business.” No comment!

Does he believe that with the intervention of Department politicians there



Gaya was built on the second-hand clothing business.



Most of clients come from Sokoto

could be a change of mind in favour of Gaya?

“We have held several meetings and our Deputy Youba Diallo (read interview: Dry port, controversial port), has told us not to worry.

But here we don't have any news and we don't know how far the project has progressed.”

Bleak calculations also with Ibrahim Hamadou, manager of the Etablissements Harouna Mallam, owner of three stores with an overall capacity of 20 to 30 000 bales of second-hand clothing.

“If all merchandise must be transported to Dosso, we will incur a supplementary roundtrip cost, or 300 km. How will this affect our prices?

Currently, from Gaya we pay only transport to Nigeria. With the dry port in Dosso, we also have to count official port fees which add on to the total price of the merchandise.”

His refusal to consider moving to Dosso is explained by the fact that “almost all of the clients, around 99%, come from Nigeria, through Kamba or Dan Issa (border town with Nigeria via Maradi) going through Dosso.”

Just like all the large economic operators set up in Gaya, he is preparing for



Ibrahim Hamadou

the moment of truth: “We have held meetings and protested against setting up the port in Dosso.

If, after all, the port is moved to Dosso, we are going to move back to our old sites in Malanville (Benin town on the right bank of the river, bordering with Gaya) “

Ibrahim Hamadou concludes: “Dosso does not suit us. A trader always seeks a situation which suits him.

We come to a country to work and if the country creates a situation that

is going to kill our business, we will return from whence we came in search of other economic opportunities.”

Economic operators have the support of native Gayan politicians and of the entire departmental population.

The population essentially earns its revenue from cross-border trade and in particular all sorts of business generated from setting up customs in the town.

The town's growth is closely linked to the border customs post which has been able to bring together economic operators from various activity sectors in Gaya.

Thus, although lagging behind Dosso from an administrative point of view, banks and mobile telephone operators have set up in Gaya way before Dosso.



The International clothing & textiles

Dosso, the regional town is, in many aspects, less dynamic than Gaya the Departmental town. Setting up a border customs office in Gaya has fostered a socio-economic boom, and its relocation to Dosso is perceived as a tragedy.

A "Management Committee on the dry port issue" has been created, chaired by a Gayan native, former minister and deputy.

The issue has become highly political and the protests have left the street and the issue has now been placed on the agenda of the National Assembly where Gaya has a deputy who has promised his electors to defend their interests.

The project has become a problem. Some, like the Counsellor of the Transport Minister responsible for this issue, have not been interviewed in order to provide clarification.

The story of the dry port is not over yet, even if the Prime Minister's priority for the next two years in the transportation sector is to set up a railroad.

This would extend the Benin railway from Parakou to future iron production plants in Say (town located around 50 Km to the south of Niamey), with train stations in Gaya, Dosso and Niamey.●

DRY PORT, CONTROVERSIAL PORT

They fought against the choice of Dosso. They hold out hope to the Department of Gaya to win the regional battle for the dry port. Here they tell their sides.



Deputy Mamadou Youba Diallo, former Director General of Customs for Niger (2000-2005), Director of the Cabinet Cojufis (Legal Tax Counsel and Customs Officer), National Deputy since 2005.

Is there really a dry port problem in Niger as is the impression in Dosso and Gaya?

It is a current and sensitive issue: current because there is a policy to set up dry ports in all of the West African hinterland countries.

By setting up dry ports, we believe that handling traffic can be more efficient and that we can collect taxes and create better working conditions for economic operators.

The World Bank encouraged the establishment of dry ports with these three objectives in mind.

Currently, customs activities have a huge impact on regional economic

activity, to the point where some locales are demanding the opening of a customs office.

What does the problem entail with favouring the dry port in Gaya to that of setting up one in Dosso?

To decide to set up a dry port you have to consider previous situations and depict the interests involved. On the other hand, deciding to make a choice involves defining criteria.

At the very least, the parties involved must also be informed, a transparent study must be carried out so that everyone can examine the stakes.

Finally, setting up a dry port in a UEMOA country must take into account, in my opinion, building

juxtaposed border offices in order to avoid creating other problems.

Because we have not looked at all the aspects, the issue of a dry port in Niger has faced problems and is still in the beginning stages.

What exactly is the problem?

The Transport Ministry, which is managing this operation, decided to set up a port in Dosso and this unilateral decision was not accepted by the economic operators in Gaya.

They were the first to demonstrate their discontent which was subsequently followed by the entire Department's population. The protests drew thousands of people from a 150 km radius.

As regional native political leaders, we are interested in the issue and have carried out a study on how the Minister's decision's impact on public finances, economic operator and transporter activities.

This study aims to demonstrate that we do not think that this choice is more advantageous both for the interests of the State and for the economic operators, bankers and transporters from Niger.

GAYA'S SUICIDE

Ibrahim Beïdou,
former Minister of
Judiciary, Guard of Sceaux
(1994-95) and National
Deputy (1970-74), Gaya
native, Chairman of the
"Management Committee
on the dry port issue".



"There are many interests at play in this dry port issue between Dosso and Gaya. Interests of the State, banks, transporters and economic operators must be taken into

account not mentioning the population. Hence there are 4 interested parties. The Minister has not responded to these parties on the impact of his choice to set up the port in Dosso. I believe that transporters are going to lose out on the route between the border and the dry port if it is in Dosso., which is 150 Km. The banks in Gaya used by the economic operators are also going to lose out. And Gaya is the only Department with so many banks outside of the capital. They handle billions of francs. 80% of the money of these banks belongs to operators of Benin and Niger in the zone between Kandi (in Benin) and Gaya.



Dosso is a crossroads for merchandise passing through

CROSS-BORDER PLANNING

The State, who should also win, is going to lose because the banks, the transporters and the economic operators are going to see their activities come to a halt. We say that this issue should be discussed transparently and convince us of the benefits of setting up the port in Dosso. I will even say to move from Gaya to Dosso because Gaya already functions as a port. Gaya is a large commercial centre more important than Dosso, straddling 2 borders and even 3 with Niger; Gaya is a commercial trade crossroads, while Dosso is a crossroads for merchandise passing through. It is not the same thing. A crossroads where people pass, it is like a roundabout, people meet up and pass each other going on to take their own route. On the other hand, because of its position on the border, Gaya is trade crossroads between 3 countries.

In addition, the economic operators located in Malanville have endeavoured, after political lobbying, to set up in Gaya.

Moving the port to Dosso would kill Gaya. Hence our slogan: "The dry port or Gaya's death; Stop Gaya's suicide!" Don't take Pierre's clothes to outfit Paul and in this case, Pierre's clothes don't even fit Paul.☹

Is it true that you have brought this issue to the State level?

We have brought this issue before Parliament and the Transport Minister was called. After 3 hours of debate, the National Assembly decided to write to the government requesting that all work undertaken by the Minister on this dry port project be stopped and to carry out financial, technical and economic studies to see which location would be more profitable for Niger. The National Assembly understood that the Minister's choice was guided by political rather than economic reasons.

Furthermore, taking into account the extent of the contestation in Gaya,

the Prime Minister was also forced to receive key actors in his office to clarify the situation.

He was more interested by the railroad project which will link Parakou (in Benin) to Gaya, Dosso and Niamey, with a terminal in Say for an iron mining project in this area. In his eyes, this project is more important than the dry port and falls within his priority for the next two years.

As for the dry port, he explained that from now on, the different parties will be involved in the feasibility studies.

And where is the project today?

After the first donor left, Maerk, the company from The Netherlands, was

interested in the project and a study was carried out solely in Dosso.

Is housing a port so important to elicit such strong reactions?

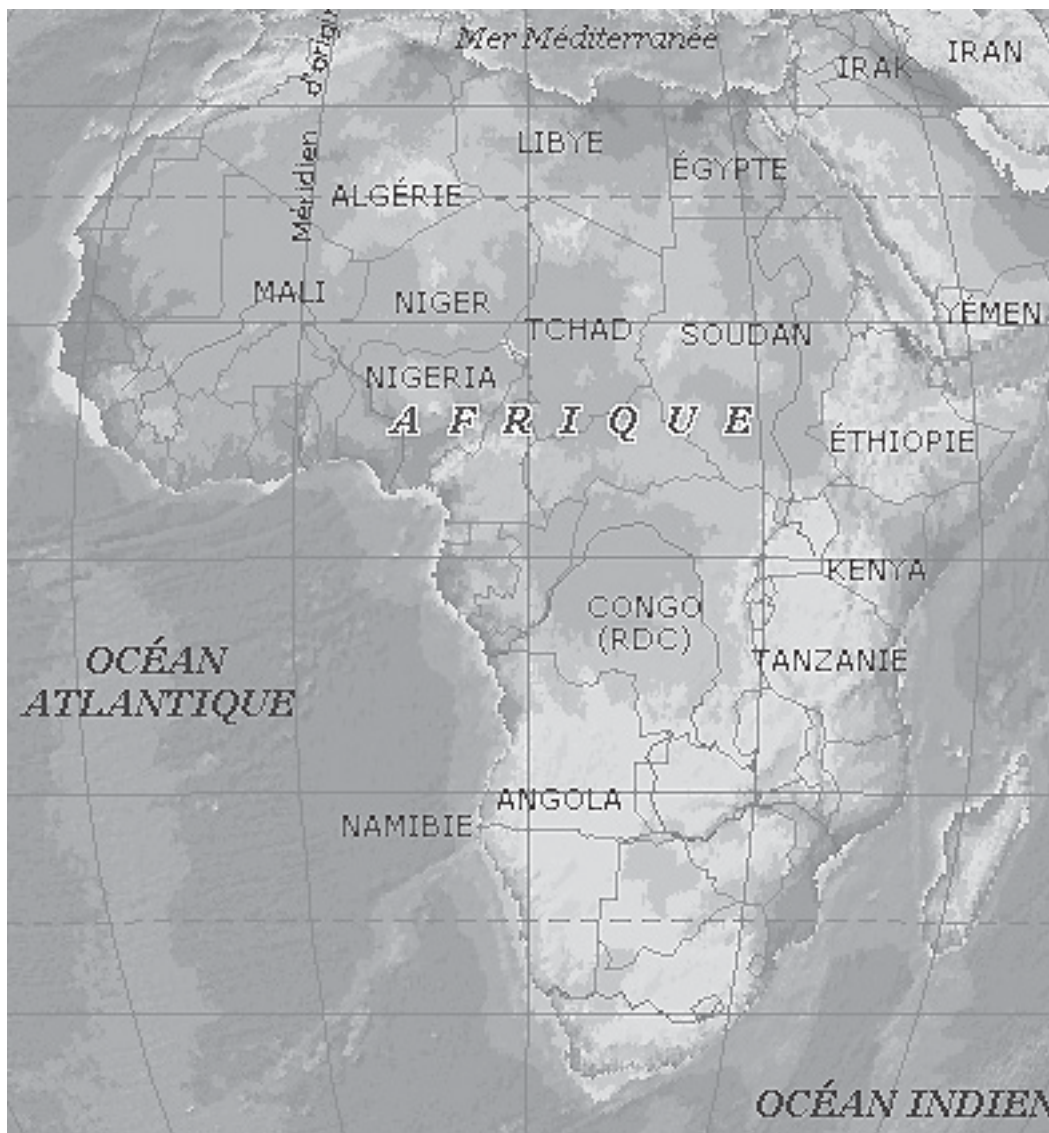
A dry port is a container terminal from which goods are sent to the interior and other countries. The traffic which currently goes through Gaya includes about 60% of the merchandise destined for Nigeria without having to go through Dosso. Why then set up a port 150 km inland while bypassing a large town located on the border where it was envisaged on a regional level to create juxtaposed customs offices?

The dry port should be integrated into the juxtaposed office. We will then save on an escort and roundtrip between the dry port and the juxtaposed office.

Gaya would be the most practical, but what does it offer in terms of infrastructure?

In Gaya, infrastructure is already in place, it would only be a matter of adding 3 or 4 large warehouses, administrative offices for the port and a container terminal. There is enough room, it would cost at the most 2 billion CFA francs, thus less costly for Niger.●

Interview carried out by Michel Bolouvi



WHICH PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES CAN ENCOURAGE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION?

INTERVIEWS WITH **NORMAND LAUZON**, DIRECTOR OF THE SWAC AND **LAURENT BOSSARD**, DEPUTY DIRECTOR.

The SWAC's intervention at the meeting organised by the AU in Bamako in March 2007 on the development of its border programme addressed the partnerships and financial tools necessary for the rapid development of cross-border cooperation in Africa. This represents a new challenge for regional integration organisations and donors. It is increasingly in line with the African Union's vision that is based on two key ideas:

The first idea: "Within the context of advancing globalisation and regionalisation, in the North as in the South, regional integration should be the strategic transformation and modernisation model of African economies".

The second idea: "If the integration process aims to re-stimulate the States' role, integration must henceforth have a wide and popular base."

To know more, the Diaries met with two participants at the Bamako meeting: Normand Lauzon, Director of the SWAC and Laurent Bossard, Deputy Director.

What should the States' role be in such a context?

Laurent Bossard: Cross-border cooperation cannot be carried out without the strong political will clearly expressed by the States.

This political will already exists through decentralization.

In most African countries, laws define the conditions under which local authorities must carry out their responsibilities (including financial) through what is commonly called "transfer of skills".

Empowered with these new responsibilities, local communities should be able to play an important role in regional integration within the scope of their competencies.

Under these conditions, how can the various levels of actors be coordinated?

L.B.: At the local level: Local actors are at the same time representatives of the central States, locally-elected officials, civil society in the broadest

sense, including professional organisations and NGOs.

They should be the direct initiators of cross-border cooperation projects, provide suggestions, as well as being the actors implementing these suggestions with the support of necessary technical expertise.

As a case in point, in Senegambia Meridional, cross-border radio stations decided to form a network facilitating the dissemination of messages in the health, security and economic sectors.

This network set up needed no technical intervention other than at the local level as these involved radio stations are private.

Nevertheless, an official demand was made to the ECOWAS regional representative to extend the laws of free circulation. This approach illustrates



the direct link that can exist between the local and regional levels.

These two examples demonstrate the diversity of the relationship and the interdependencies at the local level with other levels of governance.

At the national level:

in all African countries, central administrations are represented in border zones.

But the States' role in cross-border cooperation cannot only be limited to facilitating local initiatives. It should intervene at the outset to provide the essential legitimacy to cross-border cooperation.

The State is thus at the centre of this mechanism of which it is the political driver. Local legitimacy does not at all diminish the national legitimacy; it makes it more powerful by bringing together populations in the regional integration process impelled by the State.

At the regional level:

the African REC are at the centre of the African integration and unity project. Their role in the promotion of cross-border cooperation is thus crucial.

ECOWAS as an example first took the initiative to suggest to its member States to set up a Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) aiming



Laurent Bossard

to encourage the development of pilot operations on the ground and to provide West Africa with the first draft legal framework on border cooperation.

ECOWAS now seems to be lacking a regional cross-border cooperation financing instrument somewhat like that which is in operation in Europe.

Given that there is no instrument such as that, there is a lag between expectations on the ground and the capacity to support the initiatives envisaged.

As for the continental level, what is the strategic and political dimension of the African Union and its Commission?

Normand Lauzon: The meeting of experts in Bamako and the process

launched with a view to the first Pan-African Ministerial Conference on Cross-border Cooperation (envisaged for May 2007 in Addis Ababa) perfectly illustrates the role and position of the African Union.

The Commission of the African Union is also the only structure that can provide cross-border cooperation with a global policy.

This is fundamental because for the time being, African cross-border cooperation is not yet on the important international agendas.”

However, as underscored by Laurent Bossard, cross-border cooperation is at the heart of the most urgent issues

N.L.: In the area of regional migration, anticipating populations next movements is the major issue; in particular to plan out the last great African settlement areas which are most often cross-border areas.

- As for security, border zones are not places where conflicts begin but where their consequences materialize (refugee camps, trafficking, etc.).

- With regard to agriculture, livestock and food security, the recent crisis in Niger brought to the forefront the

impact of cross-border trade on the living conditions of the most vulnerable Sahelian populations; the West African cotton basins on which a large part of the future of regional agriculture depends are all located in cross-border areas; 80% of West African livestock is thus concentrated in the cross-border area between the countries north of the Gulf of Benin and the south of Sahelian countries.

With regard to the mobilisation of financial resources for cross-border cooperation, what are the obstacles?

N.L.: Large funds financing regional cooperation are not currently set up to finance a large number of small initiatives; rather they finance large projects, notably infrastructure.

National bilateral funds are by definition used to finance activities in only one country.

One of the solutions has been to have “twinning projects” on both sides of a border and to try to fund them at the same time by using national funds from one country and national funds from the other country.

This experience has been successful in Mali-Burkina although it requires

much time and effort. This financing operation however was unable to work in “Sénégal Meridionale.

It is difficult to split up the construction of the same rural route or a cross-border programme combating insecurity, so what are the solutions?

N.L.: The protagonists (regional institutions, donors, locally-elected officials and local actors, NGOs and associations) should agree upon the need for cross-border cooperation to be a priority in regional programmes.

LOCAL ACTORS' EUROPE

Initiated by the elected officials and authorities of border regions, cross-border cooperation began in the 1950s. In 1971, the creation of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) enabled close relations with European institutions and national governments to be solidified.

In the 1980s, the accession of Spain, Portugal and Greece to the EU, then the creation of a common market, underscored the persistence of territorial divides. The “INTERREG” programme, offering border regions aid on the basis of “cross-border development strategies or plans”, became a major community programme (its budget for 2007-2012 was close to 8 billion Euros).

Three important factors contribute to the regions becoming actors completely aside from their own development and subjects of European construction:

1. The increase of the community budget: In 2002, of the 85 billion Euros spent by the EU, the amounts allocated to the Common Agricultural Policy and equalisation aiming to reduce inter-regional imbalances within all of Europe, reached respectively 51% and 27%.
2. As from the 1980s, the accession of poorer countries to the Community (like Greece, Spain, and Portugal) assisted in the evolution of the redistribution towards solidarity between Europeans.
3. The implementation of decentralisation policies in the 1980s in France, Spain and the UK. Infra-State territorial communities will be in a position to define the conditions of their evolution themselves while addressing not only their countries' central authorities, but also community institutions, indeed to other European regions. ●



Normand Lauzon

Border cooperation is an “integrator umbrella” under which includes goals for trade development, cultural security, migration, etc.

While there are many aspects of which some are already taken into account in regional programmes (development corridor, settlement basins just to name a few), now the aim is to highlight local cross-border cooperation initiatives confirming its value added to the regional integration process.

Significant effort must be made with regard to communications, the dissemination of information on border realities and cross-border initiatives with the ultimate aim of raising awareness among political leaders.

It is difficult to find financing for a hundred small local cross-border initiatives.

These initiatives should be grouped together by cross-border area within a cross-border development programme as is the case in the pilot operations which we are supporting with ECOWAS in West Africa.

Operators, local communities or NGOs, supported by the States concerned, must provide leadership and contribute to these programmes as well as seek financing.

Regional Economic Communities should have the human and financial capacities to encourage such dynamics under the urging of their member States.

As for the donors?

N.L. : Two elements of the current context should be taken into account: for the most part, funds provided by donors stop at the borders; and ii) regional funds are routinely used for financing public goods (rivers for example).

Work should be carried out at the political level for the ideas and approaches of these regional funds to evolve.

The European experience illustrates that specific regional funds having operating methods and particular tools must be created. States should agree to co-financing.

The technical feasibility of such funds should be envisaged as quickly as possible and discussed with the major donors. Strategic thinking on regional funds should also include the States, RECs, and representatives of local African communities and even NGO who work in border zones and face national financing constraints.

Finally, we would like to emphasise pilot projects between European and African regions. The idea of implementing direct support projects bringing together a European border region and an African border region needs to be explored through a few pilot experiences which could be supported by European donors.●

«**BORDERS ARE “HISTORICAL SCARS.” WE CANNOT FORGET THEM, BUT WE ALSO CANNOT NURTURE THEM**»

JENS GABBE, HONORARY MEMBER OF THE AEBR, 2007 IN BAMAKO (MALI)

Is the issue of borders and cross-border cooperation in Africa similar to Europe?

In Africa and Europe borders are “historical scars.” We cannot forget them, but we also cannot nurture them.

The mentality or how we think about borders needs to be changed. At the same time we must be aware that the aim is not to abolish borders but for their function to be simply administrative, similar to borders between provinces within a country.

And like in Europe, peripheral – border regions are usually neglected and border populations’ potential is not capitalised on, neither in socio-cultural nor economic terms.

Cross-border cooperation aims at solving those problems of border populations including those of minorities.

How to you see the advancements made in (West) Africa in terms of cross-border cooperation?

First, I would like to congratulate on the progress made with regard to cross-border co-operation that quite often has been achieved under difficult conditions. But the several contributions from speakers from different

African states that I have listened to also made clear, that the goals of integration and co-operation in Africa require a new strategy (Ambassador Diarrah).

As stressed by Prof. Asiwaju in this context the issue arises, if problems can not be solved through wars (which has been the case to date in Africa and Europe) a new dimension of peaceful co-operation, also across borders, can be created, which consequently would help solve border problems.

AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO SOLVING BORDER PROBLEMS COULD BE THE CREATION OF JOINT BORDER FACILITIES

What should be the role of regional institutions in this context, what should be the next steps?

Since the 1960s, there have been many African Union Declarations addressing the problems as well as the solutions in Africa.

Now these contracts, agreements and treaties must be implemented in order to benefit cross-border co-operation. This requires:

- The political will of all African states,

- The awareness that socio-cultural co-operation is as important as economic co-operation,

- The involvement of all politicians, NGOs etc. on both sides of the border in order to mobilise the available knowledge on both sides of the border,

- A bottom-up approach, i.e. the regional / local level must have the opportunity for successful cross-border cooperation in partnership with the States;

- Last but not least, the creation of permanent structures for successful cross-border co-operation.

Having said that, it is important to emphasise two points in order to avoid misunderstandings:

- Cross-border structures are not a new administrative level, but only an instrument for co-operation,

• Cross-border co-operation does not draw on sovereign rights of the State but its aim is to carry out the necessary tasks in support of the populations on both sides of the border.

This understanding of cross-border co-operation is of great help while overcoming legal barriers and prejudices in Africa.

As regards the creation of a cross-border co-operation legal foundation, the AEBC offers the

**NOW THESE CONTRACTS,
AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES MUST BE
IMPLEMENTED IN ORDER TO BENEFIT
CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION**

exchange of documents, e.g. the background study of AEBC developed for the EU, which ultimately led to the creation of the EGTC (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation) as well as recommendations based on the Madrid Outline Convention (that creates a legal framework but does not ensure direct applicability) and copies of the Agreements of Anholt (Dutch-German) and Karlsruhe (France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland). Also in Africa country's sovereignty stops at the border. That means: sovereign rights of two States meet at the border, but no State has the sole power to act across this border.

Therefore, cross-border structures are needed, ideally at the regional / local level acting as drivers of co-operation.

Do you have any examples of such cross-border structures on the local, on the practical level?

Yes. For example an important contribution to solving border problems could be the creation of joint border facilities.

In the future, new border clearance facilities should always be built together, in particular when EU financing is involved.

The advantage would also be lower costs

for the buildings and their equipment. Moreover, due to combined staff, more human resources are available; controls can be more effective; at best with joint patrols.

Veterinary problems can be solved more easily, as well as visa problems etc.

Old custom houses could be shared by personnel of both sides of the border so that one side of the building would process those entering the country while the other side would process those exiting.

Indeed, as the examples from Western Africa presented by the OECD illustrated, the regional / local level is most appropriate for co-operation.

The reasons can be summarised as follows:

• Local actors are familiar with obstacles and problems as well as with the economic, social and geographical conditions,

• They have the greatest interest in its success as it concerns their daily life,

• They recognise not only the problems, but can also propose solutions,

• They are more interested in co-operation based on partnership than in the clarification of the competence issue.

Can you explain in more detail the role of partnerships?

With regard to partnership, if regional/local actors play the leading role, they have to cultivate both, external and internal partnerships.

External partnership refers to the relationship with state levels, governments etc. on both sides of the border. This is essential for strategic, political and financial reasons.

The internal partnership refers to the mobilisation of all partners that could contribute to cross-border co-operation (capitalisation on existing available knowledge for cross-border co-operation).

Moreover, while establishing cross-border structures, vertical and horizontal partnerships are created.

The vertical partnership is created on both sides of the border between the local/regional/national and possibly also African levels. The institutions involved on both sides of the border have very different competencies and structures at their disposal.

Through the horizontal partnership in a cross-border structure, these vertical partnerships are integrated to form a network and are linked despite these highly different competences and structures.

This sounds like a complex and difficult process.

These remarks make obvious that nothing is easy in cross-border cooperation.

Very often in Africa and Europe sceptics complain that cross-border cooperation is difficult, requires much time and money.

If these sceptics were heeded, nothing would ever happen at the border.

You should never give up your ambitious goals, from the marking of bor-

ders to forms of practical social, cultural and economic co-operation.

In order to achieve these goals political will must be kept top of mind. We

**CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION
DOES NOT DRAW ON SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE
STATE BUT ITS AIM IS TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY
TASKS IN SUPPORT OF THE POPULATIONS
ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER**

must continuously remind our politicians of the documents they signed and the promises they made.

With our prodding, they must be responsible for what they have recognised as politically important.

A politician will always only take action when he receives political pressure from the ground.

What was the role played by the EU programmes in European cross-border cooperation?

EU cross-border cooperation programmes in Europe since 1990 which were an important accelerator of cross-border co-operation. Essential elements of current EU-programmes are:

- A joint programme per border (in some cases with sub-programmes),

- Programmes include joint activities and priorities in accordance with regional needs,

- Joint Monitoring and Steering Committee,

- Joint bank account for EU-funds that can no longer be divided nationally,

- Co-financing at the national level,

- Joint definition of a cross-border project,

- Definition of joint eligibility.

How can Africa benefit from the vast European experience in cross-border cooperation programmes?

Based on the experiences with EU-programmes in Europe, Africa can learn how available EU funds can be used more effectively for cross-border co-operation on this continent.

For example, in the EU a part of the regional funds and the PHARE-programme were allocated to cross-border co-operation for a seven-year period.

For that purpose, operational programmes along a border were developed

that had only one goal: cross-border co-operation. Initially, however, this was not the priority of EU member States or neighbouring states.

The fact that a part of the regional funds and the PHARE-programme were allocated to cross-border co-operation goes back in particular to the European Parliament (political will!).

Will the EU promote such programmes in Africa?

If you read the Director General's letter written after a long meeting with Ambassador Diarra, Mr Lauzon and Mr Bossard in the autumn of 2006, you will see that he more or less explicitly promises some support.

However, activities in Africa itself are essential in order to bring together

funds at a border that have initially been allocated at the national level.

Finally, it is important for some of the EU-money available for Africa be allocated for the sole purpose of cross-border co-operation.

But here again the problem: it is not in the interest of African national governments.●

A PRECURSOR TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

How can a community be built between people intrinsically linked by history and geography but separated by an artificial border?

Niger and Nigeria provide an example with the creation in 1971 of the Joint Niger-Nigerian Cooperative Commission, the only institution of its type on the African continent.

After thirty six years, there has been joint willingness that goes beyond the national framework of its 1500 km long border.

The Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation, with its headquarters located on Boulevard des Ambassades in Niamey, is today an international organisation with diplomatic status.

It is known for the coordination, promotion and facilitation of trade between the two countries and is an example of cross-border cooperation going beyond the traditional bilateral agreements because it was based on an intrinsically linked community.

Its creation enabled populations of both countries to live in the border area paying no heed to official borders, to preserve their specific connection, connections that are surely linked with other communities on the continent and in the West African region. The communities of the Sikasso-Korhogo-Bobo Dioulasso zone or even those sharing the Senegambia Meridionale space are perfect examples.

The Niger-Nigerian Joint Cooperation Commission supports these two countries in harmonization over colonial balkanization.

Through the past, history and geography have moulded the present of these two countries and smartly foresaw that they were also committing to their future.

A large part of their territory, and thus their population, were part of all the successive empires in West Africa, in particular the Malian, Songhay, Kanem Bornou Empires, the Hausa States, etc.

One would say, history is past.

Even today, it is difficult to separate the communities living along the 1500 km border, to disassociate the communities of Niger of the Dosso, Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder and Diffa Departments from their neighbouring Nigerian States of Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobé and Bornou. Defying time and political

and administrative changes, these populations have remained the same, speaking the same languages, sharing the same culture, and practicing the same religion.

The community has flouted the changes and border limits.

With regard to secular links, the Commission's administration modestly recognises, "over these thirty six years we have worked to expand and strengthen cooperation between the two countries in all areas of human activity."

In fact, the Commission's work goes beyond the framework of simple economic relations.

Its integrity is to remain concrete in the promotion of joint development of the two countries, by implementing local projects, financing strategies and by motivating political decisions in order to facilitate their implementation.

The Commission's achievements are closely linked to its mission of developing bilateral and cross-border trade in the vital sectors.

Transportation, communications, trade, environment management and

protection, energy, industry, health, aquatic resources, combating cultural enemies, security and border management are all examples.

SOME OF THE COMMISSION'S ACHIEVEMENTS

• Providing electricity to the Republic of Niger by the Federal Republic of Nigeria: In January 1972, the Electricity Provision Agreement was signed with regard to the Kainji (Nigeria) dam, under the auspices of the Convention leading to the creation of joint Commission and regularly renewed between NIGELEC (société nigérienne d'électricité) and NEPA (National Electric Power Authority). Currently, 90% of the energy consumed in Niger is from Nigeria.

• Development of connecting roads: Paving main international roads between the two countries by Nigeria except the Kongolam-Takiéta section financed by International Cooperation (regional ACP/CEE cooperation funds – European Development Fund).

The Departments of Niger, Nigeria borders and States are thus all linked by at least one paved road.

The road between the Diffa Department in Niger and the Nigerian States of Yobé and Borno is the last one to be paved. Furthermore, thanks to decentralized cooperation, secondary dirt roads link villages and above all border markets.

• Promotion of the telecommunications network: Neighbourly linking of Konni (Niger)-Sokoto (Nigeria) in the 1980s with ECOWAS financing; Hertzian link of Maradi (Niger)-Katsina (Nigeria) on both countries' finan-

cing in 1978 (total amount 692.944.300 CFA Francs) including a neighbouring Maradi-Katsina telephone link of 12 circuits; an international Niamey (Niger)-Kaduna and Lagos (Nigeria) link of 24 circuits of which one was for the telex; finally, linking the tele-visual Hertz band between Maradi and the Katsina transmitting station.

• Management of Aquatic Resources: The Commission obtained financing for studies and projects notably for the Niger River and 4 large joint basins in Niger and Nigeria, namely Maggia-Lamido, Goulbi of the Maradi-Gada River, Tagwai-El Fadama and Komadougou-Yobé.

The studies were financed in the 1980s for a "development strategy" with a view to the development rationale of the four basins with: 1.129.000 USD from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); 399.926 USD from the European Development Fund; 30 million CFA Francs from each of the two governments.

• Joint Rural Programmes: In the rural development sector, the joint programme of the physical, biological and integrated combat of hyacinth water in collaboration with the Niger River Authority; in 1990, the integrated programme to combat desertification along the border; combatting crop infestations during seasonal growth periods.

• Livestock breeding: In this sector which is the principal source of the northern Nigeria and Niger populations' income, the Commission created a control framework for

livestock health at the common border in order to combat epizootic.

It also established cattle control posts, markets and a cattle path map of 1/1000.000 to facilitate implementation of animal health programmes and reduce conflicts between livestock breeders and farmers.

- **Health:** Setting up a rapid exchange of information system on the sanitary situation in both countries, principally to manage contagious diseases and epidemics at the regional borders.

- **Trade:** In order to improve the long and age-old tradition of commercial trade between both countries, the Commission initiated the signature or revision of agreements: signature of a Road Transport Agreement with the terms and condi-

tions favourable to the movement of persons and goods; revision of the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and the Bilateral Airspace Agreement (BAA) in order to update trade liberalization between both countries.

- **Industry:** Carrying out pre-feasibility and feasibility studies at the beginning of the 1980s, with UNDP and UNIDO assistance, for an industrial millet and sorghum processing unit to be set up in Zinder and Kano; village mills manufacturing unit to be set up in Maradi; glassworks to be set up in Kano.

There was also a preliminary study at the end of 1980 on the iron deposits in Say (Niger) and the Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) to guarantee secure investments of Niger and Nigerian citizens of both countries.●

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION

1) Creation

The Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation was created after two Summit meetings: in November 1970 in Nigeria and in March 1971 in Niger between the Presidents Diori Hamani of the Republic of Niger and General Yakubu Gowon of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The two Heads of State steered their governments towards setting up a permanent legal framework responsible for implementing effective and monitored cooperation between the two countries.



Ambassador Kabiru Garba, Secretary general.

The Convention creating the “Niger-Nigerian Joint Cooperation Commission” was signed on 3 March 1971 in Niamey where its headquarters were officially set up on 23 December 1973. Its goal and role are set out in Articles 2 and 3 of its Convention:

Art. 2: The Commission has the general and exclusive jurisdiction for identifying ways and means of coordinating and harmonizing the economies of the two countries in all fields with a view to achieving increased and more effective cooperation between them.

Art. 3: The Commission will particularly be responsible for proposing to the two Governments, measures and projects to be undertaken which will result in a gradual establishment

of a rational, harmonious and balanced cooperation capable of ensuring maximum development of the two countries at the least possible cost and with a minimum of delay.

The Joint Commission’s official headquarters is located on the Boulevard des Ambassades in Niamey. The complex which was built in 1982 on 1.3 hectares for approximately 600 million CFA francs was financed equally by both governments. It is composed of a two-floor administrative building and 6 lodging accommodations for staff. The opening budget of the Secretariat of the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation is approved by the Council of Ministers annually and it is borne equally by the two countries.

2) Objectives

The statutes of the Commission signed on the 22nd of December 1973, in Niamey, define the objectives of the Commission and the role the Permanent secretariat is expected to play in achieving those objectives.

In article 4 of these statutes, it is stipulated that the Commission is charged with the following responsibilities:

a) Formulation of policies which will facilitate full application of the principles set out in the Convention;



b) Collection, evaluation and dissemination of information on proposals made by member states;

c) Promotion and coordination of joint research, projects and programmes aimed at the development of the resources of the two contracting parties;

d) Liaison with the contracting parties on joint efforts and to follow the progress of the execution of surveys and works as envisaged in the Convention;

e) Keeping contracting parties fully informed of its activities through systematic reports which each contracting party may submit to it;

f) Drawing up common rules regarding matters within its component;

g) Drawing up of staff rules and regulations and ensure their application;

h) Examination of complaints and promotion of settlement of disputes referred to it through conciliation or mediation;

i) Taking all necessary preventive measures aimed at upholding the principles adopted in the Convention pending the settlement of any differences;

j) Ensuring implementation of the provisions of the present Convention and statutes.

The aims and objectives of the Commission are in conformity with the principles stated in the Charter of both the United Nations Organisation and the Organisation of African Unity. It is, furthermore, worthwhile emphasizing that the commission is neither in competition nor at variance with the aims and objectives of other sub-

regional and intergovernmental organisations in West Africa. This Commission was, therefore, created by Nigeria and Niger to enable the two States formalise the cooperation,

which had existed between them for generations.

3) Bodies

On the 22nd of December 1973, the Governments of Nigeria and Niger signed a Protocol amending the 1971 Convention, thereby instituting the following three main organs to direct the affairs of the Joint Commission:

1) The High Authority: supreme body of the Commission is composed of the two Heads of State of the member countries. It is expected to meet at least once a year.

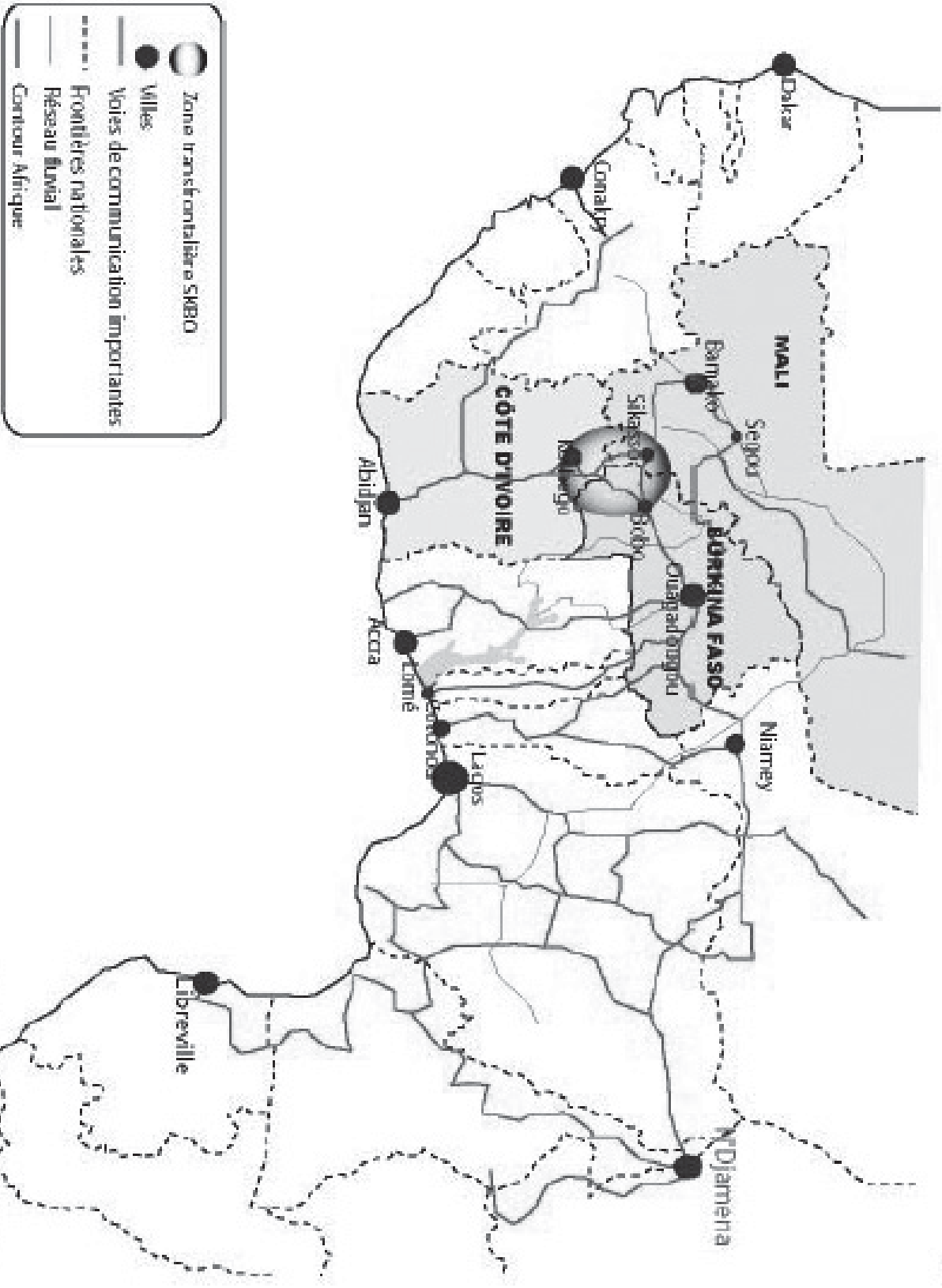
2) The Council of Ministers: is responsible to the High Authority, meets at least once a year and it is made up of equal number of representatives of the two Governments of analogous status. The Chairmanship of the Council of ministers is assumed by the Country that hosted the last meeting.

3) The Permanent Secretary: responsible for the daily functioning of the Commission and carrying out the decisions of High-level authorities and the Council of Ministers. The General Secretary is nominated jointly by both States through suggestions by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Government of the Republic of Niger. Both share the level of Administrative Ambassador.●



Ambassador Sandy Yacouba, Deputy Secretary general.

200km



Source : PDM Septembre 2005

KURUMBA, 1 YEAR ALREADY: ALMOST FULLY OPERATIONAL

After a year that included 6 broadcasted programmes, co-production and broad dissemination in border zones, the Kurumba network is finally going to be financially and managerially autonomous.

Without pomp and circumstance, the “Kurumba” network of community radio stations in the S.K.Bo zone (Sikasso-Korhogo-Bobo) celebrated its first anniversary on 13 April 2007. Instead of throwing a party for which they could not afford food and beverages, the Kurumba network chose to hold its second General Assembly on 3 and 4 April 2007 at the Hotel Maïssa in Sikasso where the Cross-border Initiatives Programme (CIP) was launched.



The first year was a landmark devoted to the pilot phase; the second year will be that of becoming fully operational. In addition to the historic landmark for ECOWAS and the “cross-border concept or local integration” Memorandum adopted in 2005, the Kurumba network’s first year saw the concretization of the promotion of cross-border cooperation local initiatives.

It proved that with consistent, not necessarily ostentatious, support cross-border initiatives can be created.

The Kurumba network is made up of community radio stations of Mali (Zégoua, Kadiolo and Sikasso) and Burkina Faso (Banfora).

It is also awaiting a change in the political situation in Côte d’Ivoire (Korhogo) to enable the integration of these counterparts into the process.

The network relies on radio stations’ existing professional expertise, even though the implementation process includes specific training to improve the co-production of broadcast programmes.

In this current phase, still anticipating participation of the Ivorian counterparts, the Kurumba network takes advantage of the international collaboration between radio station journalists of Mali and Burkina Faso.

Each radio station nominated one journalist to be part of a writing team which will produce a joint programme: the Malian community radio stations “La Voix du Kéné Dougou” of Sikasso, “La Voix du Folona” and “Radio Yeelen” of Kadiolo, “Radio Danaya” of Zégoua and the community radio stations “Radio Munyu, La Voix de la femme” of Banfora.

The Kurumba network has three advantages:

First, addressing topics within the border area of at least two countries and providing various perspectives; Increasing its listening audience by broadcasting over the borders, in common border areas of Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire.

Although radio stations on the Ivorian side of the S.K.Bo zone are not yet involved in production due to the politico-military crisis situation, the Ivorian border area is covered by network radio stations set up in Zégoua and Kadiolo (Mali) and in Banfora (Burkina Faso); and

Producing programmes in one universal language, such as "Bamana", one of the common languages of the three communities living in this area. This linguistic bond is only one of the symbols of the cross-border nature of the S.K.Bo zone, a true "cross-border area".

As an anecdote, the name of the network, "KURUMBA", is a term in Bamana meaning a step stool with three legs, inherent in the region. The tri-legged step stool symbolising the three countries involved in the network: Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

The network's name also has the phonetic association of the term "S.K.Bo"

in French [eskabo] setting out its cross-border geographic, historic, cultural and economic area.

The Kurumba network thus writes, produces and disseminates 30 minute programmes using numeric equipment. It has completed six important steps:

1- The selection, within the first quarter of 2006, of five radio stations able to make up the core and impetus of the network;

2- The organisation of the network as a veritable structure with the election of its presenters (7 journalists of which one is coordinator and one editor in chief), the choice of 2 editing centres (radio Yeelen of Kadiolo and radio Munyu of Banfora) and deciding on its way forward;

3- The support provided by the MDP by way of numeric recording and production equipment (recorders, battery charger kits, computers, audio auditing software, blank CDs, DVD/VCD players, etc.);

4- The pilot production session, called "PC1" or first production committee in May 2006 in Kadiolo (Mali): meeting of the production team for its drafting, reporting and studio production conference, resulting in 3 CD supplied broadcast-ready programmes;

5- The training session (Banfora, July 2006) for using newly acquired numeric production equipment;

6- The PC2 or second production session, with the drafting meeting in July 2006 in Banfora (Burkina Faso) and production in Kadiolo in August 2006, of 3 new programmes.

This process covered the period from January to August 2006 financed exclusively by the MDP following its involvement at the CIP launching workshop in Sikasso in September 2005.

The network succeeded in amalgamating the expertise of journalists and radio station professionals.

It is the result of team work of journalists from various radio stations set up in different countries yet production is carried out together on the basis of content defined at a drafting conference.

The reports are combined into a programme by the journalists in one of the two network studios and this programme is then distributed and disseminated on the radio stations network (for now).

Dissemination on other radio stations in different countries will be explored.



Almost fully operational

The General Assembly held in the beginning of April 2007 was pleased with the network's promising results but did not want to be overly optimistic.

Most worrisome is the precariousness of financing. Without the MDP's support, actors would totally unmotivated due to lack of network resources.

The network's technical functioning relies on the physical management from afar of these journalists and radio station members.

Production meetings examine the costs of distances to cover, journalists' room and board during the drafting meeting and studio production.

Thus, the network coordinator, the Malian Soumaïla Dagnoko, indicated that "the major difficulty facing the S.K.Bo network is its lack of financial as well as managerial autonomy. Since its creation, the network func-

tions essentially on the financing by the MDP, its sole partner."

For him, "this creates a real dependency problem".

He explains: "Even though

at the Banfora workshop radio stations insisted on their intention that members pay dues to supply the network with financing, they have only been able to provide human resources, a spot in their programming for broadcasting programmes and logistics for reporting in their respective covered zones."

The problem, continued Mr. Dganoko, is that "this undermines the network's financial situation and reduces the autonomy managerially with regard to programming its activities.

The network has been idle since the end of August 2006 due to lack of financing. This General Assembly was held solely with the MDP's financial support."

Confirmed by coordinator Daouda Mariko, the dean of network radio station member directors states "in order to remedy this situation and for its decisions to prevail, strategies geared towards financial autonomy must be implemented."

Thus, the two-fold issue of financial and managerial autonomy is brought forward and is the focus of the debates of the GA anniversary.

The context described by the coordinator is that "the network is a project of local community radio station actors in the S.K.Bo zone.

They had the idea but not the financial means.

But after one year of experience, the network must be able to create the means to reach its goal."

Reminding all the network actors of their responsibility, the coordinator stressed: "all of us have an obligation to get past this financially experimental stage supported by the MDP and go towards autonomy in order to fully assume our obligations and be more responsible."

The General Assembly concluded that the network should generate its own capital: "relying on the advantage that, in its first year the network demonstrated it could operate professionally and that's a strong base."

He reiterates that network coordination should lead to the implementation of a strategy to raise money "to develop broadcasting programmes that can be financed"●

WHAT THEY SAID

Tou Ousmane Cyrille (technician,

radio Munyu):

“Thanks to the network I have been able to work with numeric



equipment. After training, I followed the network’s consultant’s, coordinator and journalists’ advice, who said that you need to practice as much as possible to discover and have a better understanding of the equipment and software. I thank the network because it has given me an advantage.”

Mamoudou Oussen Barry (technician,

radio Munyu): “Thanks to the network I have



been able to work with numeric equipment. After training, I followed the network’s consultant’s, coordinator and journalists’ advice, who said that you need to practice as much as possible to discover and have a better understanding of the equipment and software. I thank the network because it has given me an advantage.”

Zerbo Marie-Yvonne (journalist, radio Munyu): “I have



learned a lot with the network: to work quickly while maintaining focus and quality. I have learned to be rigorous in my work, to respect deadlines.”

Jean-Baptiste Traoré (journalist, radio Munyu):

“The experience with colleagues from other radio stations has been very enriching, views which



has enabled me to ask questions while seeing how the others carry out the same work: sharing expertise, information, nice ambiance, acquiring new technical and software knowledge”.

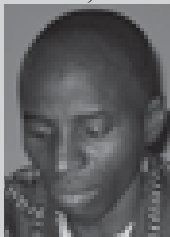
Nabilaye Issa Ouattara (journalist, radio Folona):



“I have appreciated the group’s spirit and sacrifice, the easy contact with colleagues, using numeric equipment, the rigour in the work. I have learned through the experience of other colleagues, the freedom to maintain our radio stations. The discovery of establishments other than my radio station.”

Youssef Koné (journalist, radio

Danaya): “I came to the network as a presenter. Currently I can say that I am on my way to being a journalist. I owe a lot to the network.”



Boubacar Cissé (journalist, radio Kéné Dougou): “Exchanging



experiences, supporting station heads, using computer tools... I appreciated the technical qualities of the coordinator and in this sense, we need more training sessions. The rigor, working until 3 in the morning. Before, I used to say that 24 hours was more than enough to produce a programme. I learned that you have to strive for excellence, always going further to seek quality.”

COLLABORATION BETWEEN S.K.Bo ASSISTANCE AND THE KURUMBA NETWORK



Saïdou Sanou and Ladji Sogoba

The road to autonomy requires collaboration between facilitators of the implementation process and monitoring CIP projects in the S.K.Bo zone, according to the Burkinabé Saïdou Sanou and the Malian Ladji Sogoba.

While referring to their general specifications, as set out in the Action Plan following the launching of the CIP, the facilitators indicated that their mission was essentially to support and follow-up:

- Follow-up and implement actions which will eventually be achieved;
- Support the final development of projects which have been drafted at the workshop;

- Carry out consultations from which new operational suggestions are likely to emerge;
- Develop a more ambitious cross-border and consultation process.

The facilitator, Saïdou Sanou, indicated that a budgetary line is foreseen in the Burkina Faso programme document in order to support community radio stations.

It specifically involves paying for local resource personnel for targeted expertise and over the short-term.●

SAÏDOU SANOU

“THE NETWORK MUST BE PERCEIVED AS A CATALYST”

As a support to cross-border communications, how can the network collaborate with the UNDP facilitator?

As a CIP activity, the network benefits from UNDP support. But it must be seen in a broader sense that the network can promote other activities set out in the Action Plan.

If we take the example of the Munyu Association, supporting Radio Munyu, it is already involved in other types of activities, notably combating the trafficking of children.

Radio Munyu covered the consultation meeting between the “Mali Yri



dey” cooperative and the “Wouol” Association which was a concrete activity.

Overall, the network must be perceived as a catalyst of dynamic cross-border cooperation.

We need the network to provide information and sometimes to produce programmes in order to support activities.

The network is essential in the cross-border cooperation dynamic.

What are you expecting from a partner like the MDP who supported the

creation, organisation and launching of the network’s activities and from whom financing is coming to an end in Sikasso?

I believe that where the network will find itself involved in the promotion of cross-border cooperation activities, it would be best to support its full development in order for it to truly be able to play its role.

This would be an improvement in which the MDP has already invested. The MDP’s primary niche is however the promotion of local communities.

I think that the MDP can contribute to mobilising support for the network.●

SITUATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NETWORK RADIO STATIONS

In Mali

Locale 1: KADIOLO in the south of Sikasso, to the south-west of Bobo Dioulasso and to the north of Korhogo.

1)- “*La Voix du Folona*” B.P 57 Kadiolo (Rep. of Mali) / Tel. +223 2 66 01 42 / Email: radiofolona@yahoo.fr / Frequency FM 94.1 Mhz / Creation Date: 12 April 1994 with the support of ACCT (currently AIF, Agence internationale de la francophonie). / Transmitter: 1 of 250 Watts / Coverage: 80km radius, covering the communities of Baguéra, Loumana, Ouéléni, Kolokoni in Burkina Faso. The radio station started an international listener club, the “circle of friends” a youth association of Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire. / Director: Mr. Zahana Diarra

2)- «*Radio Yeelen*» B.P 47 Kadiolo (Rep. of Mali) / Tel. +223 2 66 00 76 / Email: soumdagnoko@yahoo.fr / Frequency FM 92.5 Mhz / Creation Date: 1 December 1997 by the “Pain de vie (Bread of life)” Mission. / Transmitter: 1 of 500 Watts, and 1 spare of 250 Watts / Antenna ht.: 50 m. / Coverage: 80 km radius, covering the communities of Baguéra

and Kolokoni of Burkina Faso; the communities of Bengué, Diawala, Ouangolodougou and Tengrela in Côte d’Ivoire. Responsible: Mr. Soumaïla Dagnoko



Locale 2: ZÉGOUA, border town with Côte d’Ivoire, to the south of Sikasso, to the south-west of Bobo Dioulasso and to the north of Korhogo.

3)- “*Radio Danaya*” B.P 49 Zégoua (Rep. of Mali) / Tel. +223 2 66 60 94 / Frequency FM 105.5 Mhz / Creation Date: 11 July 2001 / Transmitter: 1 of 300 Watts / Antenna ht.: 50 m. / Coverage: 80 km radius, covering the communities of Niélé and Diawala in Côte d’Ivoire; the sub-prefectures of Loumana and Baguéra in Burkina Faso. / Delegated Director: Mr. Karim Dumbia.



Locale 3: SIKASSO to the west of Bobo Dioulasso and to the north of Korhogo

4)- “*Radio Kéné Dougou*”, “La voix du Kéné Dougou” B.P 139, Place du marché, Sikasso (Rep. of Mali) / Tel. +223 2 62 05 11 / Email: radiokene@afribone.net.ml / Frequency FM 100 Mhz / Creation Date: 17 October 1992 / Transmitter: 2 of 500 Watts / Antenna ht.: 50 m. / Coverage: 90km radius,

covering the Circle of Sikasso, part of the west of Burkina Faso, south of the circle of Kadiolo and the south-west of Yorosso.

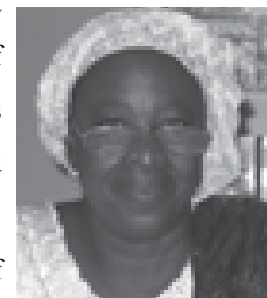


/ Director: Mr. Daouda Mariko.

In Burkina Faso

Locale 4: BANFORA to the south-west of Bobo Dioulasso, to the south-east of Sikasso and to the north-east of Korhogo.

5)- “Radio Nunyu” “La Voix de la femme” B.P 298, Banfora (Rep. of Burkina Faso) / Tel. +226 20 91 08 08 / Email: ass_munyu@yahoo.fr / Frequency FM 95.2 Mhz / Creation Date: authorisation 14 July 1999, first broadcast 6 June 2000. UK Oxfam support and members’ dues. / Transmitter: 1 of 2 Kilowatts and 1 back up of 500 Watts / Antenna ht.: 300 m. / Coverage: 150 km radius, covering the provinces of Comoé and Léraba (Sindou) of Burkina Faso; a part of the provinces of Houet and Kéné Dougou; Sikasso of Mali and Ouangolodougou in Côte d’Ivoire. / Station Head: Mrs. Juliette Sougué.



What they said (continuation of page 43)

Soumaïla Dagnoko, Director of radio “Yeelen” de Kadiolo, network coordinator: “The assessment of the first year and the network’s work has



been good overall, even if the General Assembly did not enable us to adopt texts. There is however a base, a draft that we should fine-tune for our next General Assembly. We can attest that in six months of activity we have achieved concrete results: 6 produced programmes widely disseminated throughout the S.K.Bo zone, an endowment to the network of numeric equipment and radio station members learned how to use it. On the other hand, with a view

to supporting community integration in the S.K.Bo zone, the network will have enabled its members to integrate among themselves which is already a great achievement.

This second General Assembly also enabled us to think of our financial and managerial autonomy. It is a positive sign to have come up with and affirmed the willingness to achieve this and also to identify strategies to develop to this end. This marks a turning point for the network. This already demonstrates the willingness for the network to be fully operational. Consultations will continue between us via the IT system in order to achieve the development sought. Although the road seems full of pitfalls, we think that the prospects are good because it’s a team of volunteers that we have seen in Sikasso: network members associated with the UNDP facilitators and the MDP.”



Edmond Sougué, chargé de programme au PDM and Michel Bolouvi, Journalist-consultant.

Daouda Mariko, Director of radio “la Voix du KénéDougou” of Sikasso, dean of network member radio station heads

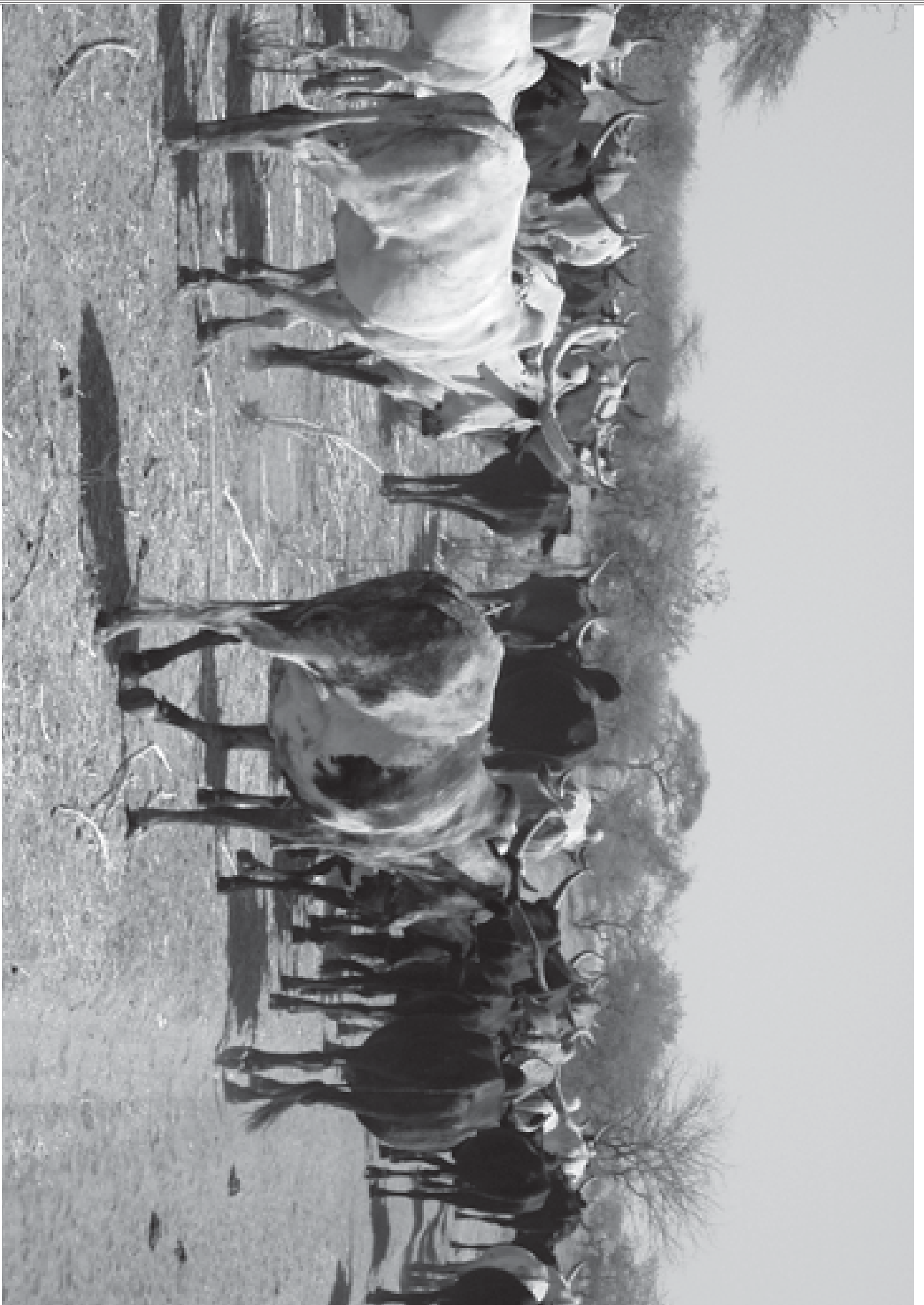


“I think that the network is in the process of becoming fully operational. The Assembly in Sikasso gave the actors confidence, enabled self-evaluation.

The elements which were examined and analysed enabled us to believe that the network is on the right path. I am very satisfied with everyone’s contribution. We put together a young team, who despite their inexperience, but with the support of the MDP, a strategic and financial partner, they were able to produce serious programmes.

The network’s path has been documented which is very rare.

And this approach is positive because without documentation we cannot be convincing. I think that the small achievements have been very beneficial and even if there are imperfections, they are linked to the path of the all-new organisation.”



LIVESTOCK BREEDERS FROM NIGER AND MALI EVALUATE THE SITUATION IN TILLABÉRI

As cattle move freely seeking pasture, livestock breeders pay no attention to borders.

This works when there is equal compensation on both sides of the border and when there are no cattle thefts. Despite so-called technical meetings between border authorities of Niger and Mali, the violence was increasing.

The border populations' concerns led to the organisation of a Forum held from 17 to 19 March 2007 in Tillabéri (Niger town on the border with Mali) to examine the security issue linked to cross-border transhumance.

Continuous cattle thefts, retaliation, livestock breeder's daily lives in the Niger-Mali border area, more specifically in the regions of Tillabéri in the north of Niger and Gao in the south-east of Mali, are fraught with fistfights fostering a climate of insecurity like those of the days of armed rebellion.

Mali and Niger share a border of approximately 900 km. The main activity of populations living on both sides of this border is nomadic and transhumant pastoralism. In principle, this age-old common way of life should foster integration and cross-border harmony.

Certainly, there are constant conflicts between livestock breeding communities along a border, but they were manageable when they stayed within the traditional framework of sword and stick fights. This was the case until

the 1990s until the fatal combination of armed rebellions and the problematic exit from years of drought.

The only solution to climatic problems is begging the heavens for mercy. The solution to the problem of rebellions was the Peace Agreements of 24 April 1995.

Everything went back to normal, except that the rebellion had created a new type of thug.

In fact, the Tuareg rebellions in Niger and Mali fostered the proliferation of weapons in the zone.

This is no longer a matter of a rebellion along the border but insecurity connected to seeking easy income with the use of weapons: cattle and vehicle theft, often resulting in human deaths, and the circulation of illegal weapons.

Border authorities of both countries initiated technical meetings on 13 and

14 April 2001 in Gao (Mali) and on 23 and 24 April in Tillabéri (Niger). The increase in the number of resolutions however did not stop the violence.

Mother nature continues to ravage the country and anger builds up in the border areas: strong pressure on natural resources and the desire for ever greater control and appropriation of these resources; less pastoral space; emergence of inter-community intolerance.

Livestock breeders leave it to civil society organisations who contact the High Commission for the Restoration of Peace and Strengthening National Unity created on 14 January 1994 within the framework of the peace process.

With UNDP financing, the Forum on "cross-border insecurity and pastoralism" was held in Tillabéri from 17 to 19 March 2007 for the key actors on the Niger-Mali border to meet face-to-face.

Chaired by Mohamed Anako, The High Commissioner for the Restoration of Peace, the Forum also welcomed Albadé Abouba, Minister of the Interior and Decentralisation of Niger, Colonel Amadou Baba Touré,

Governor of the Gao region and Ider Adamou, his counterpart of the Tillabéri region, as well as the Security Counsellor to the President of the Republic of Niger, Deputies, public administration frameworks, defence forces, security services, group heads, cantons and factions, livestock breeder representatives and their socio-professional organisations.

As affirmed by Mayaki Abderahamane, governance expert (Good Governance and Better Distribution of Sustainable Growth Programme/UNDP), “a panel of people with whom the implementation of the conclusions can be achieved and a joint vision for the development of this region united by history and geography” is needed.●

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FORUM

1. Collect, harmonise and disseminate texts related to pastoralism between the two countries and countries of the sub-region at all levels;
2. Capitalise on existing experiences within the ECOWAS zone with regard to conflict management and prevention linked to pastoralism;
3. Develop a conflict prevention and management programme, harmonised action plans, evaluation implementation and monitoring mechanisms which will be submitted to technical and financial partners interested in this sector;
4. Set up a restricted committee of experts from both countries responsible for developing said programme;
5. Create a consultation framework on cross-border transhumance;
6. Authorise joint inter-regional units to conduct police operations;
7. Set up a radio frequency network between border authorities;
8. Create a project strengthening peace in the zone with a view to the socio-economic re-insertion of the younger generation;
9. Organise periodic cross-border fairs and socio-cultural events;
10. Support financially the implementation of this Forum’s recommendations;
11. Set up a joint monitoring committee of the Tillabéri Forum’s resolutions under the leadership of the High Commissioner for the Restoration of Peace, governors of border regions, representatives of ministers responsible for border issues, representatives of security and defence forces and representatives of civil society of both countries;
12. Hold periodic meetings between ministers responsible for livestock breeding;
13. Request governors of regions concerned for a budgetary allocation to address border issues;
14. Restrict and disarm systematically individuals and organised groups.



MAYAKI ABDERAHMANE,
GOVERNANCE EXPERT, GOOD GOVERNANCE
AND BETTER DISTRIBUTION OF SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH PROGRAMME/UNDP (EACG/
PNUD)

**«UN ÉLEVEUR NE FONCTIONNE PAS
EN TERME DE PAYS
MAIS DE TERRITOIRE D'ATTACHE»**

This Cross-border Forum falls within which framework?

Since the 1995 Peace Agreements and more precisely the Tahoua Roundtable for the strengthening of peace, the UNDP supports Niger's efforts as the government is focusing more on the promotion of good governance.

Hence UNDP supports all of Niger's endeavours with regard to strengthening peace.

This includes the reinsertion of ex-combatants as well as supporting activities in the promotion and culture of peace.

UNDP thus assists the High Commission for the Restoration of Peace whose mission is to intervene in Niger.

At the request of the High Commission and more particularly that of civil society organisations, UNDP supported the cross-border Forum addressing transhumance and security issues

between Mali and Niger held on 17 to 19 March 2007 in Tillabéri.

Which organisations wanted this Forum?

Livestock breeders' organisations in Niger, in particular, contacted their counterparts in Mali initiating the organisation of a meeting to discuss security and transhumance issues on the border between Niger and Mali.

On both sides of the border, there are cases of violence that sometimes result in human deaths and livestock theft to the extent that populations started to believe that technical meetings among authorities did not change very much in their daily lives.

This Forum's particularity is founded in the need to hold such a meeting by civil society organisations. They wanted to be involved since they are the veritable actors in this insecurity on

both sides of the border. By knowing each other and coming to an agreement before State leaders of both countries, they believe that they have a better chance of obtaining positive results.

This Forum was particularly important as it brought Tuareg livestock breeders from Mali and Fulani livestock breeders from Niger face-to-face.

Why are livestock breeders being singled out?

After years of rebellion and thus the use of weapons and loss of human lives, border authorities from Niger and Mali held several meetings with a view to strengthening peace.

For border populations, problems were resolved. But the clashes continued, notably between livestock breeders on both sides.

Populations on both sides of the border wanted to find a solution to the continued acts of violence linked to

transhumance but masking the actual crimes being committed.

What is their version of the situation, as they are also the actors?

According to the border populations, poverty continues to be the overriding problem followed by the deterioration of natural resources and the lack of grazing areas in the north of Tillabéri.

They also attested that livestock breeders do not function in terms of country but in terms of zones which they frequent.

Livestock breeders use these areas periodically according to the availability of the grazing area and the animal's intuition in their roaming.

Furthermore, they affirmed that border populations have dual nationality.

Thus, for them, they have always evolved in one area and do not understand the idea of two distinct territories.

To complicate matters, they also confirm that transhumance codes differ from one country to the other.

This Forum was also the opportunity to find a solution to the problems between livestock breeders who accuse each other of wrongdoing.

One significant result was a list they compiled of the veritable bandits who were taking advantage of the situation



created by their conflicts and retaliations.

What was expected from this Forum?

I would say they sought a positive reaction and the effectiveness of the authorities and development partners.

I still strongly believe that the legal texts on transhumance and criminal activity in border areas of both countries should be examined and adapted.

This has resulted in the setting up of a joint committee of experts, another for following-up resolutions and a joint police mission.

This was an opportunity for authorities to mention the lack of financial resources, and by so doing begin discussions on this issue.

Now they expect development partners to invest in the zone, in pastoralism.●

Interview conducted by Michel Bolouvi

**MOHAMED ANAKO,
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR THE
RESTORATION OF PEACE**



**«DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERS HAVE NOT
SERIOUSLY SUPPORTED
US»**

In the recent assessment of the follow-up to the application of the 1995 Peace Agreement, you lamented the lack development partner's involvement. What are you expecting exactly from development partners?

Actually, with regard to their commitment to the Tahoua Roundtable which immediately followed the signing of the 1995 Peace Agreements, I affirmed my disappointment.

All development partners brought together at this meeting were asked to support the peace process.

Declarations of intention set forth at the time did not materialise as we had envisioned them.

Certainly, there was what we call “urgent measures” by the French Cooperation, also by Prozopas which failed in the pastoral zone.

As for the genuine sustainable development projects concerning Aïr, Kawar, Azawak

and Manga, in accordance with the Peace Agreements, I must say that we are disappointed. Is this in relation to the measures undertaken by the World Bank and the FMI at the time? Overall, development partners have stayed on the sidelines.

Are you still hopeful that development partners will change their attitude?

It involves a global country policy and it goes back to Niger, for the government to be pro-active with regard to its partners to negotiate sustainable development in these areas and throughout Niger in general.

A clear policy is needed and development partners are always attentive

when problems are expressed clearly.

I believe that the government is aware



of this and is working for the country’s genuine development.

Without being the main source of revenue for ex-combatants over these last years, can the difficulties of clandestine immigration be linked to the resurgence of armed group’s attacks?

First, we cannot control these issues one at a time. Up to now, there is no Security Council resolution for clandestine migration and one country alone cannot deal with it. Indeed, it is true that the ex-combatants know the area. After the Peace Agreements, within the framework of socio-economic reinsertion, we gave each ex-combatant 300 dollars. This sum is ridicu-

lous! You can’t give 300 \$ to a head of family who has waited 10 years, and

then say to him, “you are now reinserted”.

But, the ex-combatants decided not to jeopardize the Peace Agreements.

They picked up an active life.

Some are actually transporting these immigrants, others are working in so-called “tourist agencies”, etc.

This why I say that development partners have not seriously supported us.

At the Tahoua Roundtable, the issue was truly development of these zones, sustainable development.

It is that the two parties, the government and the ex-rebellion, decided on a joint agreement to present to development partners as a resolution.

If these resolutions were applied, there would have been development in these zones and guaranteed peace.

All forms of insecurity are linked to unemployment and poverty. And in speaking of partners, this includes mining companies who must also contribute in order for there to be security.●

Interview conducted by Michel Bolouvi

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