

Aid for Agriculture: Turning Promises into Reality on the Ground

Co-ordinating Donor Interventions in Three West African Countries

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'Unfortunately, the last 25 years have been marked by a threefold neglect of this sector: neglect by our States, who have gone from an administrative and interventionist vision of the agricultural sector to an absence of any vision whatsoever, leaving market forces to guide any changes that occur; neglect by the business community, which has generally focused on the sector's growth activities, particularly import trading; and neglect by the international community, whose aid to agriculture has dropped to dangerous levels. I would add also a fourth kind of neglect: that of the producers themselves, who, discouraged and isolated, have often sought a way out by diversifying their incomes with activities other than land and livestock farming (...).

'We cannot rise to meet the challenges presented without massive reinvestment on the part of each of these actors. If even one of them fails to heed the call, then our efforts will meet with failure.

'[We have to rise above] a mindset of successive trends, to combine clear and encouraging public policies, stakeholder financing strategies and tools in a consistent manner, adapting them to the diversity of needs. Development partners are often impatient to see our strategies translated into operational action. This search for overall coherence is the starting point for an agricultural revolution that will cost us dear in terms of dialogue and conception. It can nevertheless no longer be ignored (...) Africa is tired of international conferences and pledges that lead to nothing.

'In Maputo, our Governments undertook to dedicate at least 10% of their State budgets to agriculture. I invite you to build up a global partnership founded on reciprocal agreements and to define together the means required to ensure they become a reality.'

Extracts from the address by **Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas**, President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, during the opening of the 'Investing in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa' Forum, 8 December 2008, Paris.¹

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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean, Pacific Group of States
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFSI	L'Aquila Food Security Initiative
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CDF	Common Donor Fund (Niger)
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund (UN)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DNPGCA	National Body for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (Niger)
ECOWAP	Economic Community of West African Agriculture Programme
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (Ghana)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MDBS	Multi-Donor Budget Support
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture (Ghana)
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (Ghana)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PADAB	Programme d'Appui au Développement de l'Agriculture du Burkina Faso
PMU	Project Management Unit

PNIA	National Agricultural Investment Programme
PRIA	Regional Agricultural Investment Programme
PROSDRP	Programme Sectoriel de Développement Rural Productif (Burkina Faso)
ROPPA	Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa
SDR	Rural Development Strategy (Niger)
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Translator's note:

For simplicity in the text in the English version of this report we have chosen to use the word 'donor' to refer to all technical and financial partners, including, for example, the FAO.

Executive summary

Between June 2008 and July 2009, over 40 billion dollars were pledged by the main donor countries to provide emergency response to the food crisis and to sustainably invest in agriculture in developing countries. In addition, the donor and beneficiary countries, the United Nations, the World Bank and other actors called for better coordination of interventions on the ground, as well as increased investment in national strategies and policies. These two elements were identified as essential points for action in the joint statement on food security made at L'Aquila, during the last G8 summit.

A year and a half after the "high level conference on global food security" organised in Rome by the FAO, this study attempts to present an initial review of the undertakings made at international level and how they translate into reality in Niger, Ghana and Burkina Faso. Based on these concrete examples, it outlines the main challenges and stakes facing these countries that will determine the future of agricultural development in the three countries studied.

Agricultural aid: a well established but ineffective system

In the first section, this report reviews the current status of Official Development Assistance (ODA) for the food and agricultural sectors in the three countries (part 1). Despite the relatively low levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) dedicated to this sector, investments by donors have, over recent years, come to represent between 60 to 80% of budgets for the rural sector. Coordinating their interventions is therefore crucial to ensure consistent development in this sector. However, their interventions are implemented through a plethora of different projects that are often poorly coordinated and at times disengaged from national programmes. Instead of building up government capacities, this multitude of projects has weakened local resources. The creation of parallel management entities competes with the State's technical departments. Government human resources are monopolised by short-term management of projects, monitoring procedures and evaluation missions that are specific to each donor. In the field, the diversity of approaches and means of intervention employed by donors often makes their global activity inconsistent. Despite the existence of sector-wide co-ordination bodies, donors struggle to make much progress towards better coordinated interventions. Donors are loath to question their own logic and so most fail to dedicate the human and financial resources necessary to coordinate their interventions. In light of the lack of clear state directives and sector-wide agricultural programmes that are capable of drawing together donors' actions into common objectives, this situation has perpetuated for many years. Agricultural aid is well established but ineffective.

The crisis as an opportunity for change.

The study puts forward an initial review of the funding and interventions implemented in the three countries in response to the 2008 food price increases (part 2). The data presented is not exhaustive, but helps to draw a certain number of lessons learnt and to evaluate if the commitments made at international level are becoming a reality on the ground. Even though we have seen a certain amount of renewed financial commitment since 2008, interventions mainly focus on emergency activities that aim to relieve the suffering of the most vulnerable populations, support government emergency measures or ensure that in the short term there are adequate harvests. Furthermore, the majority of the funding does not appear to be a reflection of sustainable, additional aid, but rather a reallocation of finances originally destined for other development sectors. Despite the

establishment of national programmes to subsidise fertilizers or seeds in Burkina Faso and Ghana, these states do not appear to have received the financial support expected from donors to implement them. Furthermore, several donors and technical partners such as the FAO, the World Bank, IFAD or the African Development Bank have financed similar kinds of projects that are more or less independent of national programmes. The urgency with which the projects have been implemented has not encouraged donors to coordinate their interventions. Without a drastic change in approach in the field, and more specifically for the projects currently being drafted, then no change will be made in the intervention and funding approaches adopted by donors. The donor pledge to support the CAADP (Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme) in West Africa gives an important opportunity to bring about this change in approach in the three countries, but many challenges still remain.

Strengthening national policies, a major challenge for agricultural development

The lack of finalised sector-wide agricultural programmes in the three countries highlights the failure of donors to be consistent in their approach. Based on a description of the current process to draft and implement sector-wide agricultural programmes, the study tries to highlight the stakes that will determine the future development of the agricultural sectors in the 3 countries under study (part 3.) At present we are seeing two parallel processes in the countries studied. One is 'grassroots' initiated and covers those sector-wide agricultural programmes being drafted in each of the countries; the other has been initiated at regional level and is the national agricultural investment programmes (PNIA), the national instruments for implementing the ECOWAS agricultural policy. The stakes linked to bringing these two processes to completion are crucial: the final programmes will be the concrete tools for aligning the donors, guaranteeing that their interventions are properly linked. However, governments must first of all ensure that these two processes lead to a single, same sector-wide agricultural programme for each country. Furthermore, the gradual move from the project approach to the programme approach demands an in-depth redefinition of the roles and interventions of all stakeholders: donors, Government and civil society. The implementation of a sector-wide agricultural programme demands specific skills from both donors and the State and implies that capacity building be conducted beforehand. This entails a process of mutual lesson sharing and requires specific human and financial investment as well as serious flexibility from donors to ensure the procedures and national priorities are aligned. Finally it is essential that donors move away from project implementation towards providing technical support or providing support for national policies. It is also important that civil society, particularly the producer organisations, is fully involved in the process for drafting and implementing the programme. In order to fully involve the donors, States must clearly demonstrate their commitment to implementing these sector-wide programmes by making the food and agriculture sector a real budget priority.

Recommendations

For donors:

- ❖ Concretely invest in the drafting and implementation of sector-wide programmes;
- ❖ Use and strengthen existing bodies and procedures and support the work of existing agriculture actors;
- ❖ Move on from the dialogue stage to real coordination of interventions;
- ❖ Transform financial pledges made at international level into additional, long term, predictable funding to strengthen ongoing national and regional processes.

For Governments:

- ❖ Actively provide direction to the drafting and implementation of sector-wide food security and agricultural policies and programmes;
- ❖ Ensure proper leadership in coordinating donor interventions; work on implementing a regional trade policy that ensures the development of the agricultural sector at both regional and national levels;
- ❖ Make agriculture and food security real budget priorities.

For Civil Society Organisations and NGOs:

- ❖ Invest in coordination, decision-making and policy-drafting bodies for agriculture and food security;
- ❖ Insist and ensure that aid from international NGOs is held up to the same quality standards. .

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the agricultural sector² has gradually dropped down the list of priorities for Official Development Assistance (ODA), as well as that of many Southern governments. In 2006, the sector represented only 3 per cent of global Official Development Assistance (ODA), falling to its lowest level in decades.³ At the same time, more people around the world are going hungry, due in part to the recent hike in food prices. Today, hunger affects one in six people – over a billion people in total.

West Africa has not been spared the effects of food price rises. In some areas of the Sahel, a third of households have had to reduce the amount of food they consume. Almost a quarter of households have reduced the number of meals they have each day or can no longer afford basic foods. These price hikes have come on top of a nutritional situation that is already structurally weak. In August 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that the rate of chronic malnutrition among children in Burkina Faso and Niger was more than 40 per cent.⁴ Everywhere, women and girls are the first to be affected: often, they eat last and least, despite the fact that they are the ones who produce the food.

In Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana – the countries that were studied for this report – the vast majority of the population is rural and depends on agriculture, mainly food crops, for their livelihood and survival. Agriculture is both the driving force for economic growth and the main means of reducing poverty, since the sector employs the majority of the population. An improvement in living conditions for people engaged in agriculture would help to reduce poverty overall as well as to ensure better food security at national level.

Despite the relative downturn in Official Development Assistance (ODA) granted to the agricultural sector in these three countries, many projects are actually being implemented by donors. However they are not well coordinated, sometimes with few links between them, and give rise to inconsistencies in the field that in the end weaken local capacities, especially those of the government. Only with a coordinated approach towards agricultural and food security policies that include a common vision of agricultural development, will these projects succeed..

The projects that have been put in place over recent decades are no substitute for effective real agricultural and food security policies. Where such policies do exist, they are often ineffective and remain underfinanced by donors. Consequently, the situation continues to worsen. The lack of effective trade policies, or problematic implementation of them, has resulted in a lack of protection for agriculture markets, thus reinforcing the trend. The ongoing negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) risks exacerbating this fragile situation even further.

In this context, and in order to respond to the food crisis, the international community mobilised itself. Between June 2008 and July 2009, no less than four international summits took place that focused, at least in part, on global food security.⁵ Over \$40bn has been pledged by donor countries to provide emergency response and invest sustainably in the agricultural sectors of southern countries. Donors have also committed to better coordinate their interventions and to support government programmes and agricultural policies.

Members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have reaffirmed their commitment to putting in place a regional agricultural policy, ECOWAP. In June 2008, the region's Heads of State adopted the 'regional offensive for food

production and to combat hunger'. West African governments are currently drafting their national agricultural investment programmes (PNIAAs).

After decades of being forgotten, agricultural policies are once again coming to the fore. The 2008–09 food crisis has created a real opportunity for change.

A year and a half after the High-Level Conference on World Food Security organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, this study attempts to put forward an initial review of the commitments made by the international community, based on the reality on the ground in three West African countries: Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Niger. This research does not claim to present an exhaustive overview of whether financial pledges, co-ordination of interventions and support to national strategies have become a reality on the ground or not. But by giving concrete examples, it presents the major challenges and stakes that will determine the future development of the agricultural sector in the three countries studied. It concludes with some recommendations for action by the three main stakeholders: donors, governments, and civil society organisations and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Prices remain unpredictable

The price of local dry cereals on West African markets still remains higher than the average of the last five years. Despite a price variation in mid-August 2009 (5 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively in Burkina Faso and Niger)⁶ due to the forthcoming harvest, there are still concerns about poor households' access to cereals in rural (especially pastoral) areas, as well as urban and peri-urban areas; the problem became worse in Niger, northern Nigeria, northern Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad over the 2009 Ramadan period. In Ouagadougou, the August floods, which destroyed food, livestock and harvest stocks, could cause an increase in essential foodstuff prices.⁷

The food security situation is even more worrying according to FEWS NET (Famine Early Warning Systems Network), as state and household cereal stocks in sahelian countries remain below their optimal level for the 'hunger period'. In March, government stocks in many countries had fallen below the desired levels; in Niger, they stood at only 3 per cent of the optimum level. This could influence price setting by increasing demand at stock rebuilding time, in the fourth quarter of the year. Furthermore, the relatively low level of government food stocks limits possibilities for government intervention to tackle temporary food insecurity. This poses questions about the effectiveness of food security instruments being used in the region, and how they need to evolve.

It is proving increasingly essential to understand and take into account households' cash income and purchasing power in the management of food security brought on by factors that are universally accepted to be chronic. The recurrent temporary crises are, in fact, nothing more than the sudden and visible manifestation of the everyday experience of poor people – that is, widespread chronic poverty.

1 Aid for agriculture: a well worn but inefficient system

"Maybe we are in the driving seat, but the vehicle still belongs to the donors."

Official of Ghanaian Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning

Despite the relatively low levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) dedicated to food security and agriculture in Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana over recent decades, the sector still remains an essential component of the national budget in each country. In 2005, emergency aid enabled the governments of Niger and Burkina Faso to mitigate the impact of the food crisis, which had severely affected their populations.

In 2008, in the face of steep increases in food prices, emergency aid once again helped to preserve livelihoods for some of the poorest households. Households found themselves forced to sell their livestock or sell their belongings simply to afford basic food. External aid to agriculture over recent decades has enabled these three countries to maintain a certain level of investment in their agricultural sectors.

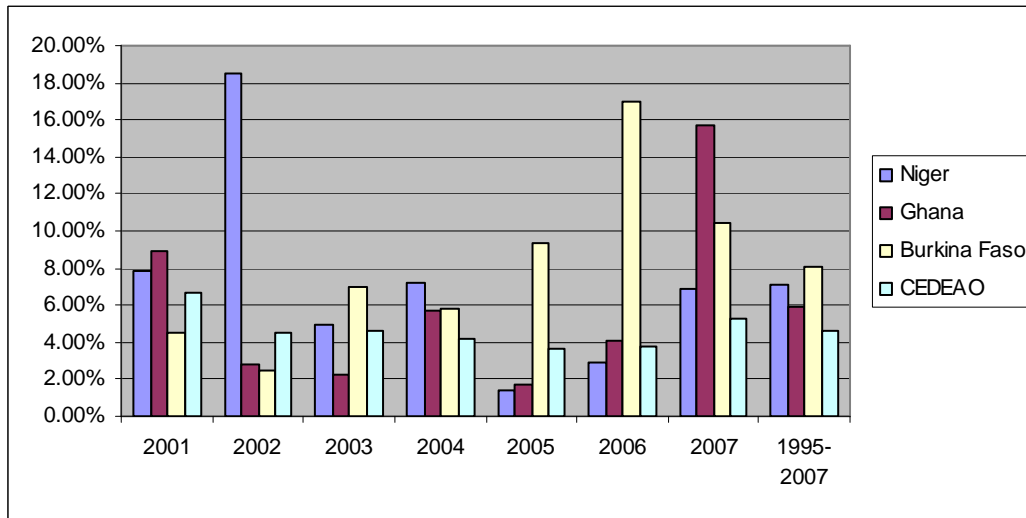
Nevertheless, this aid is largely inadequate to allow for any real development of the sector. It has largely been delivered in an unsatisfactory manner. Official Development Assistance (ODA) should help to strengthen the governments of the beneficiary countries and to support them in drafting and implementing public policies that will help the state and its citizens to effectively combat poverty and inequality.

In the three countries studied, the aid provided has not fulfilled these essential characteristics. Aid is often provided in a haphazard way, through a multitude of short-term projects that are poorly co-ordinated and have neither strengthened nor substituted domestic food and agricultural policies. Donors remain strongly attached to their priorities, methods of intervention and internal procedures – all of which makes co-ordination even more difficult.

A. Agriculture: a priority sector neglected by Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Agriculture generates 35 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and 15 per cent of export receipts for ECOWAS countries,⁸ and directly employs at least two-thirds of their populations. Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana, like other countries in the region, have made the agricultural sector a strategic economic growth sector, as a vehicle to sustainable poverty reduction and to achieving food security. However, despite this being a stated priority in poverty reduction strategies,⁹ Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the agricultural sector represented only 4.7 per cent of development aid on average for all ECOWAS countries between 1995 and 2007 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) dedicated to the agricultural sector* by DAC countries and multilateral donors between 2001 and 2007



*Corresponds to sector 310. III. 1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

Source: OECD / DAC

Despite the relatively low levels of ODA allocated to agriculture, external financing has long represented the vast majority of sector financing in the three countries studied. The 2008 rural budget for Niger showed that financing from donors would account for over 74 per cent of total budget receipts for the sector, the rest being spread over 'own funding' (20 per cent) and resources from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative covering 5.7 per cent.¹⁰ The situation in Ghana is similar; donors' contribution to the Ministry of Food and Agriculture's budget stands at 63.3 per cent for 2008 and the forecast for 2009 is 68.5 per cent.¹¹

The proportions of external support are even more significant looking at actual year on year spending, rather than just budgets. An official in Burkina Faso estimated that 90 per cent of actual spending came from external resources.¹² Similarly, if we look at rural investments, in 2007, 91 per cent came from external financing for Burkina Faso, not including HIPC or global budget aid.

It would appear to make sense for all three countries, as far as possible, to direct external financing towards agriculture, this priority sector, for the good of economic development. However, such dependence is not without its difficulties. Because this aid is provided in the form of a multitude of different projects of varying lengths and means, financed or implemented by agents whose visions of agricultural development are sometimes wildly divergent, it can prove problematic for states to ensure consistency and co-ordination in investments in the agricultural sector.

B. The negative effects of project aid

According to the information provided in the 2008 budget for the Niger rural sector, no less than 28 donors were involved in 67 projects.¹³ Even this figure does not reflect the real situation on the ground, as many projects are implemented by donors or non-

government organisations (NGOs) that are not linked to the rural development ministries are not reported in the budget. A study carried out in the region of Diffa on the regional implementation of the rural development strategy estimates the total number of projects and programmes that have been or are being carried out to be 78.¹⁴ It is probable that in Niger, there are over 100 projects just in the agriculture sector. The situation in Burkina Faso and Ghana is likely to be similar, with 80 and 63 projects respectively being implemented within the Ministries of Agriculture alone¹⁵.

Project approaches are not, in themselves, a problem. They can come in the form of an essential intervention – for example, for specific investments such as road infrastructure or for hydro-agricultural development projects. However, there are major problems associated with an ‘integral project approach’, as is the case in Burkina Faso, for example, where total external financing for the agriculture sector is implemented through the project approach (see Box 1). Some projects are scarcely aligned with national priorities. They weaken local capacities in administrative and financial management and put in place independent management structures that hijack major human and financial resources from productive investment. This ‘project’ approach, for too long characteristic of donor interventions in the three countries studied, has failed to achieve the anticipated results in terms of agricultural development or food security for the population.

Box 1: Burkina Faso – a country of projects

‘Burkina Faso is a country of projects, although projects should, in fact, be exceptions to the norm.’

Official in the Cooperation Department, Ministry of Finance

In 2007, 27 development partners were working in Burkina Faso supporting agriculture, forestry and pastoralism, through 131 projects (out of a total of 551 projects registered in all sectors).¹⁶ This project approach represents the only financing modality for the rural sector.¹⁷ In 2009, 80 development projects or programmes are being carried out just within the Ministry of Agriculture.¹⁸

According to a Ministry of Finance official, ‘Each partner is promoting his (sic) agricultural or food security development approach, and the final project, if it is discussed at all with the government, strongly reflects the partner’s approach: with each remaining master of his area of intervention and the objectives he is pursuing. In the field, the donors have such different intervention methods that they are becoming incomprehensible to the actors they are supposed to be helping.’

Problems associated with project interventions in Burkina Faso, Niger and Ghana

- **Lack of financial predictability:** the ability to predict financing for projects is much lower in Burkina Faso than for aid given in budget support, whether granted in the form of gifts or loans. Projects are, for the most part, implemented over three to five years, with no guarantee of renewal; they are hardly ever aligned with national budgetary timeframes, which complicates accounting and reporting.¹⁹
- **Creation of parallel management units:** Many donors create project management units (PMUs) in order to facilitate financial disbursements and project management, and so that they can use their own procedures. The 32 projects reviewed in 2009 in the agricultural sector in Burkina Faso had all put PMUs in place.
 - These independent structures are parallel entities that substitute and compete with the state technical department, instead of helping to build capacities.

- Financing assigned to PMUs is accounted for within the total financing allocated to the rural sector, even though the funds are not allocated to direct investment in the sector. These costs could be drastically reduced if existing structures within the civil service were used instead. Detailed analysis of some projects implemented in the rural development sector of Niger, based on information submitted to the government by donors, shows that funding for PMUs accounts for between 15 and 60 per cent of total project funding.²⁰ During the annual expenditure review,²¹ it was revealed that 30 to 40 per cent of the total is made up of 'funding experts' or given over to 'co-ordination', which cannot be attributed to any rural development strategy programme in Niger.
- By directly implementing project funds through these PMUs, donors do not make any contribution to capacity building for the civil service's financial and administrative management. This is despite the fact that this lack of capacity and transparency on the part of national financial systems is one of the main arguments put forward by donors to justify using their own disbursement procedures. By bypassing national structures and procedures without dedicating resources to improving them, donors are perpetuating the vicious circle.
- **Monopolising human resources:** projects can create a dual system. In 2007, projects in Niger had a budget for running costs that was, on average, double that of the agriculture sector civil service department.²² The differences in salaries, equipment and working conditions often prove irresistible for state personnel, who jump from one project to the next or are directly employed by donors. Ironically, donors then complain about the weak capacity of the civil service; even those financing capacity building projects are sometimes the ones that recruit experts from the civil service to represent them locally.²³
- **Weakening local capacities:** the increasing number of projects undermines the capacities of the civil service by taking personnel away from it to work on the daily monitoring of donor projects, and by using the procedures specific to each donor to the detriment of programming and evaluation activities. The civil service is often approached for studies and evaluations on donor projects: Burkina Faso, for example, received almost 330 missions from donors in 2007, of which only 49 were co-ordinated.²⁴ Generally, these missions comprise several workshops (presentation, launch, validation and summary of results, etc.) that involve the civil service and result in 'action plans' to be implemented by the civil service.²⁵ In Ghana, these missions are so numerous that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) has had to develop a code of conduct on the issue, and now imposes a 'mission-free period' while the annual budget is being drafted from 15 September to 15 November.
- **Proliferating procedures:** the complexity of the specific procedures demanded by each donor tends to make the civil service 'specialise' in certain donor groups. The number of units within Ghana's MoFEP is indicative of the complexity of donor project management for the government (see Table 1).

Table 1: Ghana, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning donor units

1	External Resource Mobilisation (Multilateral Division)*	9	BADEA (Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa)/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)/Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Unit
2	External Resource Mobilisation (Bilateral Division)	10	Italy/UK/Belgium Unit
3	Aid and Debt Management Division (ADMD)	11	India/Kuwait/Iran/Saudi Unit
4	Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS)	12	Germany/France/Holland Unit
5	World Bank Unit	13	Canada/USA Unit
6	United Nations Systems Unit	14	Japan/Korea/China Unit
7	Nordic Unit	15	Denmark/Spain Unit
8	Africa Caribbean Pacific – European Union (ACP/EU) Unit	16	African Development Bank (ADB) Unit

* The head of this unit is also in charge of the ACP/EU unit.

Source: MoFEP website, www.mofep.gov.gh/

The drawbacks associated with the ‘project approach’, that for decades have characterised donor investments in agriculture and other sectors, have long been known, and much has been written about them. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, signed in 2005 by donor and recipient countries, and the Accra Agenda for Action, drawn up in September 2008, commit the signatory countries to combating these negative effects of project aid (see Box 2). However, observations in the field demonstrate that the road is long and progress is extremely slow.

Box 2: The founding principles of the Paris Declaration, 2005

Noting the lack of impact of Official Development Assistance (ODA) interventions carried out over three decades despite the major funding allocated, a new vision for the way ODA is provided and implemented has gradually been developed. This change led to the adoption in 2005, under the aegis of the OECD, of new principles and intervention mechanisms for ODA: the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Now, ODA interventions must subscribe to national, global and sectoral strategies, set out in the form of programmes, which are overseen by national institutions: *the principle of ownership*. When identifying and carrying out activities, national strategies, priorities and procedures prevail; where they are adequate and fully operational, they should override those of the donor: *the principle of alignment*. Technical and financial partners must ensure that they co-ordinate with each other and discuss issues together to improve the effectiveness of their activities: *the principle of harmonisation*. These principles are completed with an approach that centres on *results-based management and mutual accountability* for both donors and partner countries.

Concretely, this declaration commits:

- Partner countries: to establish clear strategic priorities, linked into a framework of medium term expenditures; to improve public expenditure management and procurement systems.

- Donor countries: to improve funding forecasting and align it with national budget processes; freeing up their aid; using national state financial management and procurement systems; avoiding setting up parallel structures for implementing projects; co-ordinating their financial and technical provisions; reducing the number of individual missions; harmonising their procedures.

The situation in Ghana differs from that of Burkina Faso and Niger in this respect, since in addition to the 63 projects in the agricultural sector, the government also receives sectoral budgetary assistance from the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the implementation of its Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) ²⁶ (see Box 3).

Box 3: Sector-wide budgetary support in Ghana

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) began its sectoral budgetary aid programme (Food and Agriculture Budget Support – FABS) in 2004, with C\$85m for a five-year period. The funds are disbursed through government financial channels and serve to implement Ghana's Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP). In 2006, CIDA was joined by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which became its 'silent partner' until June 2009. DFID is therefore represented by Canada in discussions with the government and adopted almost exactly the same disbursement conditions as CIDA.

In 2009, CIDA embarked on a new four-year phase and pledged C\$100m. In 2008, the World Bank also started up a three-year sector budget aid programme, AgDPO (Agriculture Development Policy Operation) with \$55m, paid out by the Ghana Ministry of Finance.²⁷ Like CIDA, the Bank funds are disbursed dependent on achieving so called 'basic' and 'performance' criteria, negotiated with the government. To facilitate financial management, work was initiated in 2009 by the World Bank and CIDA to develop a common matrix of criteria and triggers for budgetary aid.

C. The limits of dialogue

The plethora of projects in the agricultural sectors in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Niger raises the issue (in addition to the constraints outlined above) of co-ordination, and state and donor capacities to ensure consistency of investments for long-term development.

When projects reflect each individual partner's approach and agenda, this can lead to a lack of consistency in the field (see Box 4). In Burkina Faso, for example, the government has drafted several action plans for the cereal, market gardening and livestock industries, which are frameworks into which donor actions should fit. However, these action plans have remained under-financed: donors prefer their own approach.

The six programmes financed by the World Bank and the German, Danish and Canadian international development agencies support around 30 industries. Government choices are not consistently included in donor programmes, which are also poorly co-ordinated, even among themselves. Some industries consequently receive support from several programmes (e.g., sesame, *niébé*, soya, onion, shea, livestock/meat, poultry farming, milk) while other industries such as maize and rice receive much less support in the target regions, despite the fact that they are priority areas for the government and important for food security.

Donors often 'specialise' in regions or areas where they may have had a presence for several decades, even though this does not meet any demand from the government or is not co-ordinated with other donors. As a head of bilateral cooperation in Niger stated: 'Each partner chooses its specific activity area and intervention area. This would be utterly impossible in Europe! If there were proper co-ordination at national level, this would not have happened.'²⁸ In Burkina Faso, for example, the geographical distribution of industry support programmes is highly uneven: the programmes are concentrated in the North, the Sahel, the East, the Boucle du Mouhoun and Central North. The Cascades region, the Central South and the South West receive much less support.

Box 4: Support for the rice industry in Ghana

According to Ghana's Agriculture Sector Plan for 2009–2015, 13 projects are currently being implemented in the rice industry, a particularly important sector for food security.²⁹ However, due to the lack of an agreed development strategy for the industry and a lack of designated interlocutor within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) to oversee co-ordination, the projects have very different approaches.

In the three northern regions, where people are most vulnerable and worst affected by food insecurity, some projects support the industry as a whole, while others concentrate on production and seed distribution, without linking up with each other. Consequently, different varieties of rice are promoted by the projects, in the same intervention zones, then mixed together at the drying stage, thus reducing the quality of the rice. This adds to the structural constraints faced by the national industry and partly explains why Ghanaian rice is less competitive than imported varieties.

There are, in the three countries under review, 'co-ordination bodies' that are formalised to a greater or lesser degree, focusing on rural development, food security and food crisis management or nutrition, which have been put in place by donors (see Annex 2).

In Burkina Faso, for example, the rural development co-ordination committee (CCDR) for technical and financial partners was created in 2002, with Germany as its driving force. Bringing together European countries initially, it has expanded to include Canada, Switzerland, Japan and international organisations (the World Bank, the African Development Bank (ADB), IFAD and FAO). It has latterly integrated a number of pre-existing informal groups³⁰ and is now one of the main functional bodies between the government and donors working in rural development.

In Niger, in addition to the state–donor dialogue framework for the rural sector, there are (at least on paper) state–donor dialogue frameworks for each of the 14 programmes³¹ and one for each of the country's eight regions. In addition to these institutional frameworks, there are other dialogue forums such as the 'sectoral group for dialogue on emergency interventions and agropastoral rehabilitation', which meets fortnightly and is chaired by the FAO.

But even if these groups share information, they are often far from promoting real co-ordination for the different stakeholders' interventions or harmonising their practices in the field, let alone developing common projects. The only body that might be an exception is the Niger National Body for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (DNP-GCA) (see Box 5).

Box 5: The National Body for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (DNP-GCA) in Niger – a model for co-ordination of food security interventions?

According to its members, this is an effective co-ordination mechanism for actors in the area of food security. Every year, on the basis of information given by the Early Warning System (SAP) and common vulnerability and nutritional surveys, the food crisis cell (CCA) drafts a support plan that includes DNP-GCA's intervention priorities, the activities being implemented and the financial or technical participation of different stakeholders.

Since its creation in 1998, 13 donors have signed the framework agreement that commits them to discussing the definition of operational objectives and co-ordinating the resources necessary for dealing with food crises. The DNP-GCA is equipped with certain tools, particularly the common donors fund (FCD), sustained by development partners and use of which is based on common agreement. While the creation of a common fund would be hard to imagine for the entire rural development strategy for Niger, the body has succeeded in gaining the trust of stakeholders, particularly thanks to an annual audit carried out by the European Commission that guarantees transparency in the way the fund is used. All disbursement decisions are co-signed by the donor lead and the national party.

However, even though the DNP-GCA partially integrates the rural development strategy and is directly linked to the Primature, the decision-making process by consensus is such that the government cannot in theory question a collective decision taken by the donors, as they retain control over their funding.

The limitations of co-ordination bodies

- **Restrictive internal decision-making processes:** even though some technical agencies may be very willing to co-ordinate their activities within a certain country, they come up against difficulties with the donors' internal procedures. Policy and sometimes project strategies are generally drawn up at headquarters, which makes it difficult to redirect interventions, share responsibilities or have common interventions.
- **Lack of thematic groups:** the rural development co-ordination bodies do not offer adequate opportunities for working in thematic groups that can discuss and share interventions and work towards harmonising practices. In Ghana, thematic groups have been created and are co-chaired by an official from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoFA) and a donor lead. They cover financial management, human resources management and the process for drafting an agriculture sector-wide approach (AgSWAp). However, the initiative has gradually run out of steam due to a lack of real motivation from donors. In Niger, efforts to harmonise practices on a thematic basis are just beginning in the sub-sectoral co-ordination bodies, for each programme, and at a regional level.
- **Limited participation by wide range of donors:** even though the dialogue bodies generally bring together the 'traditional' rural development donors, they struggle to include the emerging developing countries such as China and India, or development agencies from Arabic countries such as Libya or Saudi Arabia, who are increasingly involved in the region's agricultural and food security sectors. Furthermore, as there is no formal obligation for institutions to participate in these forums, attendance seems to depend on the individuals' level of interest in taking part.
- **Limited participation by civil society groups:** while the statutes of several institutional frameworks focusing on rural development or food security make provision for the inclusion of civil society, the reality is that NGOs and professional organisations hardly ever attend meetings and have little access to information. This is true, for example, for the Ghana MoFA Policy Forum, where the professional producer organisations are never represented, despite the fact that they represent the

main actors in the sector and are also the principle targets for the TFP and government interventions (see Box 6).

- **'Sectorised' co-ordination:** discussions remain sector-based and the discussion frameworks are sometimes separate from each other. This results in a gap between discussions and decisions about rural development and agriculture, on the one hand, and people's access to food security and nutrition on the other. This is particularly so in Burkina Faso and, to a lesser extent, in Niger (Ghana has no special discussion body dedicated to food security issues). It complicates enormously the continuum between emergency interventions to respond to temporary food crises and medium- and long-term investment in the agricultural sector. This sort of interaction between short- and long-term aid is essential for the achievement of food security and agricultural development objectives over the long term. For example, during the 2008 food crisis, cereals were available on the market but were too expensive for many people. In these conditions, the large-scale distribution of cereals, for instance, meant that poor families received vital nutrition, but this also jeopardised the producers' chances of selling their cereals at a price they could live on. In the medium term, it is now a more significant part of the population who will need international assistance.

Box 6: Civil society groups absent from co-ordination frameworks

In Burkina Faso, the national dialogue framework for rural development partners in theory allows for representation from the different actors (private agricultural sector, civil society, donors, members of the three rural development ministries). But, in reality, there is very limited participation, and farmers' organisations are not represented at all. Similarly, in Ghana, the voices of farmers' organisations are completely absent from the MoFA's Policy Forum meetings and the multi-actor dialogue framework, which does have some civil society participation. In Niger, the 'Partnership framework for the implementation of the rural development strategy between the Republic of Niger and its technical and financial partners', does not actually include any involvement of civil society in policy discussions.

In Niger, even though farmers' organisations are represented on several programme steering committees for the rural development strategy, they have not so far been seriously involved at a national level. According to several actors, however, their participation in the rural development technical committee, a joint body of the rural development strategy institutional plan, could be more likely.

An interesting change came about during the recent roundtable on Niger's National Agricultural Investment Programme (PNIA) held from 29–30 September 2009. A 'national ECOWAP (Economic Community of West African Agriculture Programme) / CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) charter for Niger to support the implementation of the rural development strategy' has been signed by all actors present, including the farmers' organisations, who are recognised as 'development partners'. This charter includes common and specific undertakings by each category of stakeholders and implies that more systematic and effective participation by farmers' organisations will be possible in the future.

Despite a certain level of donor and government investment in the agricultural sector over recent decades, the sector has not seen the desired levels of development that would have assured household food security and helped to reduce poverty. The relatively low levels of ODA dedicated to the sector are not the sole explanation for this situation. The escalation in the number of projects and the constraints that are associated with them, as well as the way interventions are distributed geographically, have not up until now been a guarantee for consistency across the sector.

Instead of assisting governments in drafting proper state policies, all too often donor interventions contribute to undermining local capacities that are already affected by decades of structural adjustment. Government human and financial resources are

mobilised for the short-term management of projects and procedures that are particular to each donor, to the detriment of civil service capacity building in programming and evaluation. The co-ordination bodies, some of which have been going for decades, still have not improved co-ordination of interventions. The majority of donors do not give themselves adequate means to establish real collaboration in the implementation of their interventions, nor do they harmonise their practices in the field. Governments, partly because they are dependent on external funding, have not shown much willingness to bring about a radical change in the donors' approach. The system has remained largely unchanged, despite its proven lack of effectiveness.

The 2008 food crisis, sparked by soaring prices and food shortages, has shed light on the failures of aid for agriculture. It thus offers an opportunity to break with the system and to bring about a profound change in approach, both on the part of donors and the governments of the three countries concerned. Since the latest international summits on global food security held in Rome and Madrid, the discourse being put forward by major donors and recipient countries speaks of change. They are calling not only for massive reinvestment in the agricultural sector, but also better co-ordination in the field and strengthened national strategies and policies. The challenge now is to translate these words into action.

2 The crisis as an opportunity for change

'What we need is more effective co-ordination within countries... underpinned by significantly greater resources.'

Declaration by the United Nations Secretary-General, the Madrid summit on food security (High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All), 27 January 2009

In response to food price increases, many donors have announced greater investment or reinvestment in agriculture and food security. Between June 2008 and July 2009, over \$40bn was pledged during the international summits by donor countries (see Annex 1). In addition, all the summit participants called for better co-ordinated interventions in the field, as well as increased investment in national strategies and policies. These two points were particularly identified as fundamental action principles in the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, arising from the most recent G8 summit.³²

Moreover, several special funds have been set up within multilateral institutions: in December 2007, the FAO launched its Initiative on Soaring Food Prices; the World Bank launched its Global Food Crisis Response Programme in May 2008; the ADB launched its African Food Crisis Response in July 2008; and the EU launched its Food Facility in December 2008 (see Box 7). Even though this influx of funding is necessary and opportune for a sector that has long been neglected in terms of international aid priorities, it is not without its problems for beneficiary countries, which have to go, hat in hand, to several donors. In addition to the problem of planning for the available resources, the conditions attached to external funding are often very different. Some donors want to keep a certain amount of visibility and control over their aid, which can make it hard to fund national food crisis response programmes (as is the case in Burkina Faso) or to co-ordinate interventions.

Field research carried out in June 2009 failed to provide an exhaustive overview of the funding and interventions being implemented in the three countries in response to the food crisis, partly due to the time lapse noted between donors' pledges and disbursements on the ground. The data presented in this section is mostly drawn from interviews and is only partial. However, they do enable us to draw some lessons from the reality and nature of the assistance provided by donors over the past 18 months, and to assess whether the pledges made are a reality on the ground.

A. Priority support for short-term action

The support provided thus far by donors to Burkina Faso, Ghana and Niger has essentially focused on short-term actions. These include providing assistance to the most vulnerable populations through emergency projects, as well as supporting measures being put in place by governments to mitigate the effects of food price rises.

Budget support

Since the beginning of 2008, several countries in the ECOWAS region have put in place budgetary and fiscal measures to mitigate the effects of the price increases in food products and agricultural inputs. The Burkinabe government, for example, for a six-month period from February 2008, reduced customs duties and suspended VAT on imports of certain basic products (rice, salt, food preparations for children, edible oils,

hydrocarbons, etc.).³³ In Ghana, since July 2008, the government has put in place a subsidy programme for fertilizers via a coupon system distributed to farmers, guaranteeing them a fixed purchase price.

These measures have generated extra expenses or loss of major customs revenue for the two countries concerned. In Ghana, the shortfall in fiscal receipts generated by the 20 per cent reduction in import duty on rice alone is estimated to be more than 43m Ghanaian cedis (about 40m \$³⁴) for the period 13 June to 31 December 2008. To help governments to meet the cost of these measures, several donors have provided exceptional budgetary support, targeting the agricultural sector or, more generally, the 'rising cost of living'.

Burkina Faso has received exceptional budgetary aid amounting to \$2m from the World Bank. The European Commission has also freed up €5.42m of emergency aid from the European Development Fund (EDF) geared to finance unforeseen costs.

In Ghana, in addition to the global budgetary aid provided by the EU through its Food Facility (see Box 7), the World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) increased their budget support for the agricultural sector in 2008. These increases of \$10m and 15m Ghanaian cedis (about 14m \$³⁵) respectively have followed on from the MoFA drafting specific programmes to respond to the food crisis and submitting them to donors for funding (see Table 2). This exceptional funding has helped mitigate the cost to the government of measures designed to combat the rise in basic foods and energy costs in the short term.³⁶

Table 2: Use of exceptional sectoral budgetary aid provided to Ghana by CIDA and the World Bank

Increase in sectoral budgetary aid	
World Bank: \$10m	CIDA: 15m Ghanaian cedis (about 14m \$)
\$5m to support the government's fertilizer subsidy measure	2m to support the service costs of MoFA for the final quarter
\$1.9m for seed supply to 2007 flood victims for rainy and dry season farming	1m for agricultural research
\$1.1m to promote dry season farming in Upper East, Upper West, Northern and Brong-Ahafo regions	4m for procurement of motorbikes for extension staff, audio - visual vans and equipment
\$2m for the rehabilitation of broken dams in the three northern regions of Ghana	5m for irrigation development (3m for the rehabilitation of broken dams in northern region and 2m for the exploration of underground water resources)
	3m to support agricultural statistics generation

Because this budgetary aid was provided to support the emergency measures decided on by the governments, it is properly integrated into national strategies, even if it does not cover all the costs. From this point of view, this exceptional funding does reflect the commitments made by donors to invest in national policies and strategies.

However, the issue of sustainability does arise, since the exceptional funding came about to finance emergency measures put in place by governments, which in some countries are not likely to continue. It is not certain at this time whether donors will support governments in the implementation of policies to subsidise inputs for the medium or long

term, even though they may deem it necessary to respond to a more structural crisis situation.

This is the case in Ghana, for example, where CIDA, which has been supporting implementation of the government's agricultural policy since 2004 through sectoral budget support (see Box 3), has found itself in disagreement with the government over continuing the fertilizer subsidy policy in 2009. Even though CIDA has accepted to partially finance the cost for 2008, due to the food crisis, it does not believe that the situation in 2009 justifies maintaining this measure.

Emergency interventions

Beyond exceptional budgetary support, donors present in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Niger financed several emergency interventions in 2008 aimed at improving the food and nutritional situation for people worst affected by the food price rises. This involved free or subsidised food distributions; cash transfers and other social protection measures; food or cash for work projects and nutritional programmes, etc.

These projects have mainly been implemented by:

- **Specialist United Nations agencies (WFP, UNICEF, FAO):**

In Ghana, for example, CIDA has allocated C\$3m to UNICEF and C\$9m to the World Food Programme (WFP) for food security programmes.

In Burkina Faso, FAO has received around \$4m of contributions for food security projects; WFP received \$2.25m from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and UNICEF received \$1.85m for nutritional projects.

In Niger, WFP has received contributions of about \$10m from Saudi Arabia, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Japan and CERF, which have gone towards implementing around 70 per cent of the pre-existing nutritional programmes that had been under-financed up until now.

- **Government-managed food aid:**

In Ghana, for example, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) made a donation of food aid equivalent to \$6.96m in 2008, and in 2009 Japan provided food aid to the tune of 13m Ghanaian cedis (about 12m \$³⁷) in three regions in the north of the country that had been affected by floods in 2007.³⁸

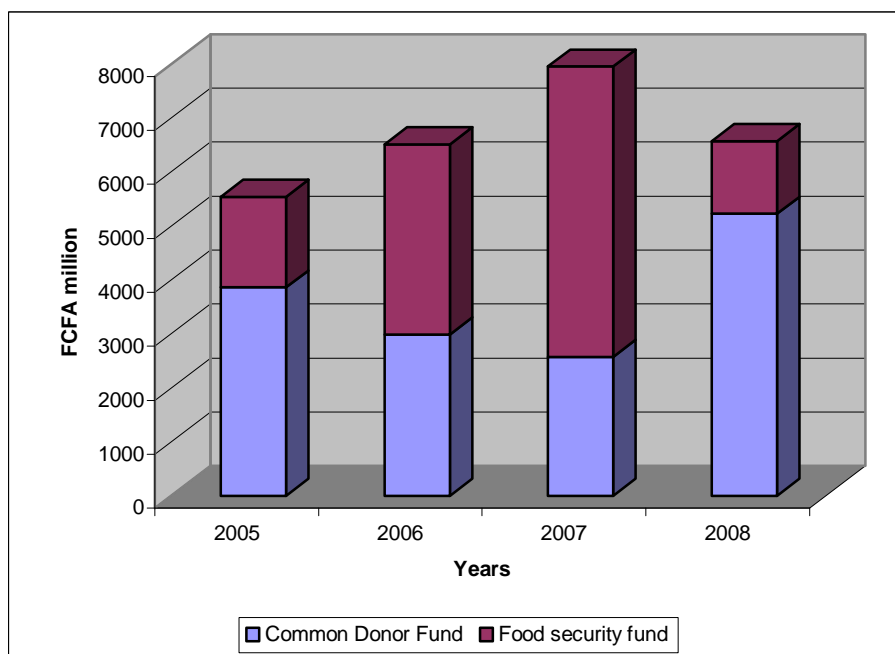
In Burkina Faso, Japan made a donation of 800m yen to purchase wheat flour (replacing an annual donation of 400m yen to purchase rice), which should be delivered in September/October 2009. Other donors such as Libya and Saudi Arabia have also provided food aid.

In Niger, Japan has also made a food aid gift of 5,000 tonnes of cereals, which were monetised in country and paid into a compensation fund.

- **Prevention and management measures for food crises:**

This applies particularly to Niger, where the National Body for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (DNPGCA) brings together the majority of donors involved in food security (see Box 5). Despite a significant downturn in the funding allocated to the body between 2007 and 2008, the trend from one year to the next reveals a shift in the funding granted to the common donors fund (CDF) and to the food security fund (FSF). Although the FSF is a fund reserved for purchasing cereals, the CDF helps to finance cash transfer and other food security projects. The CDF has proved to be more flexible, and is better adapted to respond to the 2008 food crisis, characterised by people's inability to afford basic food, and not simply by localised production deficits (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Trends in contributions to the DNPGCA



Source: DNPGCA, Niger

For 2009, the EU plans to transfer €10m from its Food Facility to the common donors fund, but this fund is currently suspended until further notice due to the current political situation in Niger.

- **International or national NGOs:**

International NGOs, and to a lesser extent national NGOs, tap into major funding and are big stakeholders in the implementation of emergency interventions. However, information regarding funding of these interventions is particularly sketchy. The origins of much of this funding (bilateral and multilateral agencies, UN agencies especially WFP, funds generated by food crisis prevention and management bodies, private funding, etc.) make it hard for governments to assess the amounts they are spending or even sometimes the interventions that they are implementing. The EU's Food Facility plans to launch project bids for NGOs (and also for development agencies of EU member countries and other private and public actors) amounting to €3.2m for Niger, €5.9m for Ghana and €5m for Burkina Faso. This funding covers the implementation of medium-term and emergency projects. However, the Food Facility is, of course, only the tip of the iceberg.

It seems that, in the three countries under review, most emergency interventions, including food aid, have been financed by additional resources. This is particularly true for the funds mobilised by UN agencies that made specific appeals to donors for contributions. However, by definition, emergency aid remains, for the most part, temporary, and a WFP executive in Niger observed in June 2009 that already there was a certain 'return to normal', which unfortunately means a situation of under-financing for the organisation's nutrition programmes.

This kind of intervention has become the most 'polished' one over recent decades, with funding from donors being more directed towards responding to emergency situations than to long-term investment in agricultural development. Seeking to be effective in very short-term interventions, the majority of donors prefer the specialist UN agencies and NGOs, whose logistical and human capacities are often greater than those of the developing country government. That said they do not always strengthen the national food security systems, which further undermines their capacity to deal with the next crisis.

B. Poorly co-ordinated investment over the medium and long term

In addition to emergency interventions, a certain number of donors implement programmes that support agricultural production over the medium term in countries worst affected by the food crisis. This includes fertilizer distribution and improved seed generation and distribution to farmers, which helps them to ensure an adequate harvest to improve the availability of cereals on the local markets, to rebuild local and national stocks and to mitigate the effects of food price rises. This is one of the stated objectives of the EU's Food Facility in Burkina Faso, as well as of the World Bank, FAO and ADB, who all implemented input distribution projects in 2008. In Ghana, in April 2008, as part of its Initiative against Soaring Food Prices, the FAO launched a one-year project to improve availability of agricultural inputs for vulnerable populations, financed from its own funding to the tune of \$500,000.³⁹

In August 2008, CIDA also launched a food security project in Ghana, through its food security and environment facility, which has a budget of C\$15m until the end of 2015. This project aims to implement and encourage innovative action on food security and sustainable agricultural production in the three regions in the north of the country. Also in northern Ghana, the ADB and IFAD⁴⁰ are co-financing a \$103.6m programme from 2008 to 2016, the Northern Rural Growth Programme. This aims to increase incomes for rural populations. Initially drafted to help local populations deal with the consequences of floods in 2008, the programme has partly been redirected towards interventions to respond to food price increases.

Other projects are being developed within multilateral institutions and by some bilateral donors. In Burkina Faso, for example, the World Bank is currently devising two projects, of close to \$40m each. One is on rain-fed agriculture and livestock farming and the other for irrigated agriculture, which marks the Bank's return to agriculture for food production. These projects are due to start in 2010–2011. Similarly, the German overseas development agency, GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), plans to increase its funding for agriculture by a third from 2010, and the MCA (Millennium Challenge Account), an instrument put in place by the US, plans a budget of \$181m for agriculture for 2009–2013.

It is, however, difficult to accurately evaluate the extent to which projects already being implemented are a reflection of additional and sustainable aid, or whether they have been financed with a reallocation of funding that had initially been intended for other development sectors.

In Niger and Burkina Faso, the majority of funding destined for medium-term investment in the sector seems to have been redirected from ongoing programmes, with the exception of the EU Food Facility. Thus, the World Bank project in Burkina Faso (\$5m) selling seeds at subsidised prices, implemented through the National Land Management Programme (PNGT), has been financed to the detriment of other programme components. Similarly, the two ADB projects responding to food price increases have

been funded by redirecting loans allocated to other programmes in the country. In Niger, even though the European Development Fund (EDF)'s food security budget has been drastically increased from €5m to €21.9m, these funds have been reallocated from initial budgets for 'rural roads' and 'village development' (which have been more or less spent) and by mobilising €6.9m from a special line of EDF, which had been allocated for Niger.

The drafting of these new medium and long-term projects has the potential to strengthen government actions and to support improvements in agricultural production in the three countries concerned. However, this influx of money has also provoked a 'race to get the funding' between specialist agencies, with each positioning itself as the most effective channel to respond to the crisis, even if this provokes some confusion in the mandates of each stakeholder. The FAO in Burkina Faso, for example, is receiving more funding for its 'emergency and rehabilitation' department to implement input distribution programmes than for its 'traditional' activities of providing support to agricultural development programmes. For its part, WFP is involved in supporting cereal industries through its pioneer Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme,⁴¹ whereby the organisation promotes the local purchasing of cereals and then organises distribution of these in the sub-region.

Furthermore, the need to act fast to provide support to farmers has in some cases been acted upon to the detriment of co-ordination among donors. This is the case, for example, for seed distribution projects implemented in 2008 in Burkina Faso by the FAO and the World Bank; neither could agree on the strategies for targeting the beneficiary populations.

The emergency also gave rise to a gap between those actions funded by donors and the programmes or policies put in place by the governments. In Burkina Faso and Ghana, the governments have put in place input distribution programmes, which have not received the anticipated support from donors, despite the exceptional budget support that has been granted.

Box 7: The EU Food Facility

The EU Food Facility, adopted in December 2008, aims to support agricultural production in the medium term in those countries worst affected by the food crisis; but it has not yet delivered on the ground in the three countries studied. In reality, the objectives, modalities and channels for financing are very different from one country to the next. It should be noted that even if the agriculture sector in each of the three countries is targeted by the Food Facility, none of them are a focus sector for the 10th EDF.

In Niger, half of the total country budget (€10m of its €19.2m) is allocated to the DNP-GCA via the common donor fund. These funds are therefore directly allocated to food security interventions and work through a government body, in which financial decisions are taken in a consensual manner by all signatories to the DNP-GCA's framework agreement. However, due to the current political situation in Niger, the European Commission has temporarily suspended disbursement of this aid. The other part of the budget is divided between the FAO, UNICEF (€6m) and an invitation to submit proposals by NGOs and EU member countries' international development agencies (€3.2m).

In Burkina Faso, €18.1m (or close to 80 per cent of the funding allocated to the country) will be implemented by the FAO's emergency and rehabilitation programme, mainly for projects to propagate and distribute seeds so as to ensure an adequate harvest over the coming seasons. The allocation of this funding has, however, created major tensions with the government, which feels it has been 'deprived' of its EU funding; although, in June 2008, the government adopted an 'emergency plan for food and nutritional security', which included distributing seeds and fertilizer.

In Ghana, the €15m that the country should receive under the EU Food Facility will be paid out in two parts in 2010 and 2011 through the Multi-Donor Budget Support (MDBS), the general budgetary support mechanism that brings together the 11 donors in Ghana. This funding is intended to help the Ghanaian government to improve the country's fiscal situation

following the loss of revenue due to the temporary withdrawal of import taxes for some essential products. A further €5.9 million will also be put out to tender for proposals from NGOs and other private or public actors for food security projects.

Even though we have seen a certain return on donor funding in the agricultural and food sectors in the three countries concerned since 2008, the interventions have mainly focused on short-term actions to help the most vulnerable populations, to support government emergency measures or to ensure adequate harvests in the short term. However, the 'financial reinvestment' announced by donors seems to be on the right track.

On the other hand, the same can hardly be said for the commitments made by the international community to improve co-ordination for their investments and to support national agricultural and food strategies. Most interventions seem to be cut off from national policies and structures, and emergency interventions are often made to the detriment of proper donor co-ordination.

The real changes that the international community called for are slow in coming. It is crucial that they redouble their efforts to make these changes happen now, while future donor interventions for the agricultural sector are being drafted and ODA priorities for the coming years are being defined. Without a radical change of direction in the field and proper co-ordination of donor investments to support national policies and programmes, the present problems will continue to undermine effective aid for agriculture in the three countries. It is essential that ODA both supports the most vulnerable populations and builds up state capacities to respond effectively to the challenges of agricultural development and food security in years to come.

The recent firm commitment made by donors to support the CAADP in West Africa offers important opportunities to bring about this change in approach. However, a certain number of prerequisites must be fulfilled to ensure the success of the process, and both states and donors must fulfil their responsibilities to ensure coherent programme development.

3 Strengthening national policies, a major challenge for agricultural development

“We commit to provide resources – whether financial, in-kind or technical assistance – in support of CAADP and other similar regional and national plans in Africa”

“L’Aquila” Joint Statement on Global Food Security, G8, 10 July 2009

As we have seen, the lack of coordination amongst donors is due in large part to their intervention methods, project formulation and the urgency with which projects are implemented in times of food crisis/emergencies. In Niger and Burkina Faso, the lack of finalised sector-wide policies for food and agriculture highlights the failure of donors to have a coordinated and harmonized approach to their activities. The Rural Development Strategies of these two countries are now too huge to allow donors to realign themselves to national priorities. Fully aware of these shortcomings, Burkina Faso and Niger are currently developing sector-wide agricultural programmes. Ghana’s Food and Agriculture Development Policy (FASDEP II, August 2007) is currently being reviewed.

The three countries studied in this report are now faced with two parallel processes: the sector-wide agricultural programmes, initiated at ‘grassroots level’ currently being developed in each country; and the national agricultural investment programmes (PNIAs) which are the national instruments for implementing the ECOWAS agricultural policy. The success of these two processes is crucial: they will be the practical tools for aligning the donors and are a way of ensuring their activities are properly coordinated.

Governments must first ensure that these two processes come together into a single sector-wide agricultural programme for each country. In order to fully involve donors, States must clearly demonstrate their commitment to implementing these sector-wide programmes by making the food and agricultural sector a real budget priority.

The work presented in this section is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the processes involved, whose complexity and ramifications cannot be fully reflected by a field study. It seeks therefore to simply highlight the main points and stakes that are critical to the future development of the agricultural sectors in the three countries studied.

A. From Project approach to Programme approach

In the three countries, sector-wide agricultural programmes are currently being drafted, a process that has been ongoing for several years in some cases. They have been initiated from the grassroots level and driven by the government or a small group of donors. They are different in different countries, but essentially they have the same objectives: to define an operational framework for the consistent implementation of the objectives set out in the Rural Development Strategy (SDR) or in the agricultural policy in the case of for Ghana.

Both Burkina Faso and Niger both have Rural Development Strategies, which are sector-wide adaptations of their Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategies. These documents define the strategic directions developed by the government and are reference frameworks within which donor interventions should be carried out. However, they do not necessarily represent operational alignment tools, which could ensure coordinated donor actions. In fact, the objectives defined are sufficiently broad that each donor

maintains its own strategy for its own projects, while claiming to be "aligned" on national priorities.

To address these constraints, Burkina Faso and Niger have for several years been developing sector-wide agriculture and rural development programmes. These processes should lead to the formulation of operational intervention frameworks: programmes with costed action plans that are linked into long-term budget programming. In Burkina Faso this is known as the Sector-wide Programme for Productive Rural Development (PROSDRP) and in Niger as the process for regionalising the Rural Development Strategy.

In Ghana, the situation is somewhat different, as in 2002 the government developed its first Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP), which was revised in 2007. This policy, based on the country's accelerated growth and poverty reduction strategy, is set out as an operational plan, and the latest version has almost been finalised. However, the government is still struggling to get donors to financially support its sector-wide action plan through the implementation of a SWAp – (Sector Wide Approach).

The development of these sector-wide programmes takes a different form in each country: from the 'integrated' programme approach developed in Niger, as defined in the Rural Development Strategy Action Plan (see Box 8) to the SWAp currently being developed in Ghana. The latter focuses on operational objectives including increasing productivity in the cereals, livestock and aquaculture sectors, improving food security and expanding infrastructure (Annex 3).

Nevertheless these processes start from the same basis and pursue the same overall goals: improving the efficiency of public investment and aligning technical and financial partners on policies, strategies and procedures.

The Burkina Faso sector-wide productive rural development programme (PROSDRP) roadmap highlights the existence of a multitude of technical and financial actions that are not harmonised. "In previous years, considerable efforts have been made to ensure that interventions are part of the country's national policy and that coordination improves. However, these efforts were inadequate and impeded national capacity to be fully deployed to develop and implement their policies." Likewise, the SWAp in the Ghana agricultural sector aims to "support the Government's efforts to encourage agriculture led growth; improving harmonisation and alignment amongst donors; facilitating an efficient and effective use of resources, and ultimately increasing, impact on growth and poverty reduction".

Box 8: Niger 'integral' programme approach

The Rural Development Strategy action plan, published in 2006, is based on an "integrated" programme approach i.e. with 14 programmes (10 'structuring' and 4 'priority') reflecting the all the rural development Ministries' missions. Each programme should have a specific action plan that defines objectives and precise activities. All donors' actions should theoretically be carried out according to these plans. In order to coordinate donor interventions in each programme and to ensure the programmes are co-steered, 14 State-donors sector-wide co-ordination bodies have been established.

Nearly three years after the publication of the Action Plan, less than 5 co-ordination bodies are actually up and running. Even though the joint review of the 'Water and Sanitation' Programme conducted for the second year in a row represents the beginnings of a programme approach, the vast majority of programmes are struggling to materialise yet. Despite a 'division of labour' exercise which led to the appointment of a donor lead agency for each programme, the multiplicity of co-ordination forums and the lack of availability or will of some donors to coordinate their actions slow the process down considerably. Moreover, several donors have criticised the existence of too many programmes, which makes the Rural Development Strategy look like a 'shopping list' where everyone can pick and choose to fund whatever interests them, without any coordination. As for Ministries and technical

services, some stakeholders fear 'losing control' of funding in the event of donors being better coordinated and are now reluctant to take part in programme development.

To overcome these obstacles, further the implementation of the rural development strategy and also to better adapt the programme approach to the current decentralisation context, some donors are currently pushing for the development of the Rural Development Strategy to be 'regionalised' by promoting its implementation at a regional level. Producing regional action plans should help to rank priorities at local level by selecting the priority actions for each region while ensuring they remain consistent with the programmes developed at national level. The regional action plans must be the result of concerted programming between stakeholders: donors, local authorities, decentralised community authorities and Farmer and Civil Society organisations. The first regional action plans have been developed in Diffa and Dosso regions.

The gradual shift from the 'project approach' to the 'programme approach' requires a profound redefinition of the respective roles and interventions of donors, the State and its technical services, including but also those of Civil Society.

The implementation of a sector-wide programme requires:

- Specific skills both within donors and governments. In Ghana, an official from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture deplored the lack of knowledge amongst some donors about SWAp principles and implementation. The first step is to organise joint joint capacity building training for both Ministry technical services and donors to agree upon the definition of the sector programme, and to clarify the prerequisites necessary for its implementation. Similarly Ministries sometimes lack the skills necessary for developing programming, monitoring and evaluation tools. Therefore preliminary capacity building on developing sector programmes, monitoring and evaluation tools is needed. Although the majority of donor interventions include a capacity building component, this is often geared towards the project's operational needs, and is rarely coordinated with the actions of other donors. In Niger for example, only a few donors provide support to the Ministries of rural development in formulating a global training plan to build State capacities. This initiative should receive systematic support from other donors.
- Specific human and financial investment. The definition of a sector-wide programme, the drafting of a medium term expenditure framework (MTEF), using local financial and administrative procedures etc. is a mutual learning process. It requires donors to devote human and financial resources, and time. Too often, these are lacking in projects developed by donors, which are focused on performance targets. "We do that in our spare time!" laments a representative of a bilateral agency in Burkina Faso.
- The special pace necessary for any learning process and significant flexibility to redirect interventions as needed. Few donors at country level have much room to manoeuvre in financial decisions governing the budgets allocated by their headquarters. The UN agencies we met in the three countries revealed that they have difficulty subscribing to a programme approach as the way they work involves the implementation of projects or programmes funded by external donors, which are difficult to change after they have been approved. Conversely, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) in Burkina Faso and Niger has a high level of decentralised decision-making, giving it the flexibility necessary to coordinate and align its interventions to national priorities. In Burkina Faso, for example, the agricultural development support programme (PADAB), funded by DANIDA, is one of the only two support programmes for agricultural sectors to use and strengthen existing co-ordination forums at the

regional level: the Regional Committees for the coordination of agricultural sector policies and regional chambers of agriculture.

- Donors moving away from project implementation towards technical support and/or support for the implementation of national policies and programmes.
- The effective participation of Civil Society in the development of agricultural policies, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation them and implementing them is essential. Even though the implementation of sector-wide programmes should give more weight to the State in policy decisions and in the overall management of the agricultural policy, it is important that civil society is strong enough and sufficiently organised to provide an effective counterweight. At the current time, civil society organisations, especially professional farmers' organisations and women's organisations, are not sufficiently involved (although they are the first to be affected by the agriculture sector's development). These organisations often lack the capacity to integrate and significantly influence decisions collectively. Their participation is often limited to a last-minute consultation, which reduces their actual weight in final decisions.

Even though the general discourse among donors is favourable to the implementation of sector-wide programmes in the three countries, in practice there are only few donors who actually get involved in their implementation. For example,

- In Burkina Faso, Denmark, Germany and France form a kind of 'hard core' that drive the process and initiate concrete actions promoting alignment. These include support to develop a sector-wide training plan with the Ministries concerned; technical assistance in the formulation of sector-wide programmes; strengthening dialogue, decision making, and steering structures at national or regional levels; and carrying out a joint assessment of national funding channels.
- In Niger, it is the European Commission (DCE) and the Luxembourg (LuxDevelopment) and Danish (DANIDA) international development agencies that most effectively support the regionalisation process for the Rural Development Strategy. In the Dosso region, a regional action plan was developed with support from LuxDevelopment (Box 8). Denmark, for its part, uses the State's financial channels as much as possible to implement its support for the regionalisation process.

Most donors remain on standby, expressing their readiness to support a common process and to align with a national programme but not taking any concrete steps to support the process. Many of them equate "sector programme" to "budget support" and do not hide their scepticism and fears on the State's capacity to manage such a programme.

B. Agricultural Investment Programmes are indispensable

In 2003, African leaders adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) – NEPAD's agricultural component - which is a joint framework for agricultural growth and attainment of food security. The CAADP promotes a return to massive investment in agriculture but also a fundamental change in approach by governments and their technical and financial partners. This process currently receives strong political support from African leaders and the international community as a whole.

After a period of stagnation, the CAADP is blossoming. In the coming months, 20 African countries, including 15 from ECOWAS, should sign 'partnership pacts' with donors for investments to achieve an agricultural growth rate of 6% per year. In light of this, round table talks are being or have been organised in member all countries of the region on the

National Agricultural Investment Programmes (PNIAs). Round tables provide an opportunity to ensure that the PNIA is properly integrated into the rural development strategy. Niger is the first of the three countries under study to hold such a roundtable; Ghana has just held its roundtable and Burkina Faso should follow in the coming weeks.

The signing of these 'partnership compacts' represents the culmination of a process, which will lead to the realisation of national agricultural investment programmes (PNIAs). These PNIAs should become the instruments for the joint implementation of ECOWAS' agricultural policy at the national level. In particular, they should present specific investment programmes, with precise costed objectives, providing a basis for coordinating donor interventions in the agricultural sector for the coming years. Even though they have important unifying potential, the key to their success lies in achieving an inclusive process during their development and implementation stages in order to ensure the participation and commitment of all stakeholders. They must also ensure they are entirely consistent with the sector-wide programmes being drafted so as ultimately there is single programme.

This process of alignment appears to have been successfully achieved in Ghana, where the latest version of the Agricultural Sector Plan, prepared in August 2008 should represent both the culmination of the process initiated in 2007 and that of the PNIA.

In Niger, actors involved in the development of the PNIA have agreed to keep the Rural Development Strategy as a reference framework for the agricultural investment programme. Thus the Niger PNIA has become a PNIA/Rural Development Strategy. For the sake of harmonisation and the effective implementation of the PNIA/Rural Development Strategy, stakeholders in Niger have gone further by signing a Partnership Charter between the Niger government and PNIA development partners.

Even though there is still a lot to do, the Charter commits all stakeholders (State, donors, farmer organisations, NGOs, and private sector) to "a harmonious implementation of the Rural Development Strategy". It commits donors in particular to promote the institutional mechanism set up by the Government of Niger at the sector-wide level for the coordination of aid management. This 'pact' is therefore a solid basis to re-engage States and donors in the policy dialogue on the country's agricultural development priorities.

With these processes, the donors are facing a double challenge: how to respond in a coordinated manner to a unique demand from States and how to propose methods and procedures that, while adhering to the spirit of the Paris Declaration, take into account commitments made previously to the States. This includes adapting procedures or implementing common systems that facilitate alignment with choices made by partner countries. Interventions already financed should also be linked to the investment programmes being developed in each country.

It will no longer be possible for donors to intervene without referring to the agricultural investment programmes included in the partnership pacts. The challenge for the donors is to reconcile the internal constraints related both to their funding conditions and their own procedures with the opportunities offered by the coordinated mechanisms proposed by partner countries and other donors.

The PNIAs (National Agricultural Investment Programs) are matched at the regional level by regional programmes, which are currently being drafted. Even though their final format is not yet known, these programmes should be the operational framework for the ECOWAS regional agricultural policy and ensure links between regional and national levels. Donors must seize this opportunity to better organise their cooperation at regional level. Although some donors directly support ECOWAS in implementing its regional agricultural policy, most have no coordination mechanisms at regional level that would help provide a good regional vision and ensure consistency in their interventions in the different countries. The West African market is a single market, even though it is now not completely effective. It represents a privileged area of integration in which 15 countries

have pledged to create common trade and sector-wide policies. In order to support this process of integration, it is essential that donors organise themselves at a regional level..

Box 9: Agriculture dependent on trade policies – CET and EPA⁴²

The establishment of national and regional food and agricultural policies is a necessity for the development of this sector. But efforts undertaken may well be jeopardised by the lack of favourable trade environment.

ECOWAS' protection levels seem to be out of kilter with the levels seen in most economies competing with West Africa. Analysis shows that protection in Morocco is consistently higher than that of ECOWAS, regardless of the food products. The gap averages 35 points. The comparison with the EU shows that, for all major agricultural and agro-industrial products, European protection is stronger. The gap is, for example, 32 points for cereals, 50 for milk and milk products, 16 for meats, 31 for sugar, and 8 for tobacco.

Far from stimulating the workers in African agricultural sectors, on the contrary such competition undermines their efforts to invest and make a proper living from the sale of their products and satisfy the regional market. The West African agricultural sector competes with countries that are more developed and are able to subsidise their agriculture, such as the EU. It is therefore imperative and urgent to strengthen the ECOWAS agriculture policy with a trade policy that is adapted to the interests of the region and that will meet the expectations of a production sector, which is still in difficulty due to a hasty liberalisation. Many countries, foremost among them the United States and Europe, have only developed their agriculture on the basis of a national or community preference, that is to say by protecting their markets. They continue to do so by using tools other than border protection measures (standards, direct support, etc.).

While the region's current ambition in terms of economic development relies primarily on the growth of the regional market and its supply, it is important to remedy the current lack of common trade policy by providing the region with clear instruments, the purposes and operating methods of which are transparent and appropriate to the needs of the region. In this context, the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) currently being drafted will meet the growth and development dynamics identified by these sector-wide policies in the region.

However above all, at a time when the Economic Partnership Agreements are being negotiated with the European Union, the CET must establish a baseline from which all partial tariff elimination will be done, to be decided within the framework of a liberalisation schedule. In the absence of an adequate regional trade policy, there is a major risk of annihilating efforts made to re-launch the productive sectors, starting with the food and agricultural sector.

Although the processes for drafting agricultural investment programmes receive clear support from the international community, they remain fragile. Their success will depend on the mobilisation and inclusion of all actors, first and foremost the States involved in their implementation. But we have seen that the financial recommitment announced internationally in agriculture and food is still slow to materialise. The possibility of yet another shift in policy or simply a failure to fully deliver on expectations is unfortunately still altogether possible. In this context, it is essential that Niger, Burkina Faso and Ghana - and other West African countries - are mobilised to devote a larger part of their resources to the development, implementation and funding of sector-wide agriculture programmes.

C. Making agriculture a real national budget priority

African Union (AU) Heads of States and Governments committed themselves at the AU Summit held in Maputo (Mozambique) in 2003 to "urgently implement the

Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), planned pilot projects and the scalable agricultural development plans at national, regional and continental levels. To this end, [the signatories agree] to adopt sound policies for agricultural and rural development and within five years to allocate each year at least 10% of national budgets to their implementation ”.

Compliance with the pledges made in Maputo is more necessary than ever to sustainably support the commitments made on agricultural and food security policy and effectively promote the implementation of sector-wide agricultural programmes. This sort of commitment will give a strong signal to donors on the political will and capacity of States to invest sustainably in agriculture and food. From this point of view, it is an essential guarantee to convince donors to support national programmes.

While the proportion of agricultural spending of total public spending represents on average of 16.3% in Niger (2001-06) and 26.7% in Burkina Faso (1991-2006), compared to only 8.7% in Ghana (2000 - 07), a large portion of these expenditures recorded in the budget are the result of projects implemented by donors in the agricultural sector, as we saw in the first part of this study.

Thus, as emphasised in a recent study in Burkina Faso, "it seems the spirit of the Maputo Declaration (...) has not been respected. In 2007, for instance, there was a sharp increase in investment in agriculture for the Ministry of Agriculture (MHARH) mainly due to a major increase in external grants made by donors and not because of the increased investments funded by the State".

Furthermore, (just focussing on investments in the agricultural sector in Burkina Faso between 2005 and 2008), the proportion financed by the State out of the total budget for the agricultural sector represents 6.4% for the figure forecasted and 8.1% of the figure actually spent.

Overall, given the agricultural growth, poverty reduction and food security objectives that governments have assigned to the rural sector and to agriculture in particular in the three countries, agriculture and food sectors are still not being given the priority they should be in national budgets and actual expenditure. If States fail to devote greater funding to agriculture and food in the coming years, it is likely that current levels of funding will not be sufficient to bring the donors into line as hoped. More importantly, it is feared that the objectives of sustained growth, to achieve food and nutritional security and poverty reduction, will not be met if funding pledged by the donors is not delivered on.

Following decades of neglect in the agricultural sector by States and the international community alike, we are seeing a slight comeback by agricultural policies in the three countries studied. The deteriorating food situation since 2008 caused by soaring prices has again made States and donors painfully aware that agricultural development requires delicate guidance, which cannot be left solely to market forces. The strategy of the last thirty years, marked by the proliferation of targeted interventions geared towards short-term needs, has shown its limits. All the actors, States as well as donors, are aware that there is no substitute for coordinated and coherent food and agricultural policies.

However, major challenges still remain in all three countries. After decades of structural adjustment, which reduced the capacity of government intervention, States must build the capacities and resources necessary for the development and implementation of real sector-wide programmes. The donors must be thoroughly reorganised, change their intervention strategies and be able to coordinate their actions to provide effective support to governments, despite their very different views, procedures and methods.

Moreover, the multitude of projects must be not replaced by a variety of programmes and national strategies. It is essential that States and donors work together to ensure consistency between the current initiatives and join forces to implement a single agricultural policy. Finally it is essential that this coherence is also sought in the trade

policies implemented at national and regional levels, without which it will be difficult to build any real development for food and agriculture.

4 Conclusion

The sharp rise in prices in early 2008 caused a marked deterioration in West African populations' nutrition levels. This crisis situation and the ensuing protests against high prices was a painful wake up call for the international community: for too long, agriculture has been a forgotten area by both aid for agriculture and by public policies in southern countries.

In West Africa in general and in the three countries in particular, the reactions of donors, as well as States and ECOWAS, give cause for hope. Indeed they combine a renewed financial investment in food and agriculture and a return to agricultural policies, both regionally and nationally. They have the potential to sustainably reduce hunger and ensure agricultural development in the long term.

The donors present in the countries are currently shifting the focus of their interventions to restore the central role food and agriculture plays in the fight against poverty. Although insufficiently coordinated, agriculture and food security are now at the heart of discussions being led by regional States and major new initiatives are being developed.

As for countries and ECOWAS, this crisis has brought to the fore the need for a rapid implementation of ambitious food and agricultural policies to get a coherent understanding of sector development and to effectively coordinate donor activities in seeking common goals. It is the whole purpose of ECOWAS' regional agricultural policy and its operational components - the Regional and National Agricultural Investment Programmes (PRIAs and PNIAs).

But the technical, political and financial challenges are enormous.

The development of coherent food and agricultural policies requires effective coordination, while ensuring stakeholders take an active role. It is crucial to ensure coherence between different policies or programmes, including the PNIAs promoted by ECOWAS, with the existing sector programmes, but also with emergency programmes developed in response to rising food prices, in order to ensure a clear policy direction for all stakeholders.

As for the donors, it is now not possible for them to intervene outside the agricultural sector programmes being developed by States and the region. Therefore, they must now adapt their procedures and intervention strategies to facilitate and strengthen their alignment with the choices made by partner countries. They must also link already funded interventions and special initiatives developed in response to the food crisis to national priorities and programmes currently being developed. They can no longer fail to coordinate their activities.

By combining this financial reinvestment and a true political drive in their countries, governments and donors now have the means to invest in policies that will put an end to a vicious cycle that has lasted too long, and whose first victims are the people themselves. Significant progress is already visible in the three countries and this should encourage donors to go further in acting efficiently and building and strengthening State capacities. However, if the different actors break the rules and continue to focus on their own interests and individual practices, this will lead to great disappointment. Governments and donors should not miss this opportunity: they will be solely responsible for this failure.

5 Recommendations

For donors

Donors pledged to respond to the sharp rise in food prices in the 3 countries studied, giving real opportunities to support agricultural development and food security. However, to achieve this, it is crucial that the donors radically change their approach and:

I/ Invest effectively in the development and implementation of sector-wide programmes

Donor coordination must be built around common guidelines that reflect government priorities and help to build a coherent sector policy for the country. For this it will be necessary to:

1. **Systematically ensure interventions are in line with government (or local level) sector-wide policies.** Donors should integrate already funded interventions and future interventions into the sector-wide programmes currently being developed and support national priorities and procedures;
2. **Fully support the PNIA alignment and ongoing processes** while ensuring strong links between interventions in the different countries of the region and at the regional level;
3. **“Decentralise” decision-making process to regional and country levels** so as to have adequate flexibility in decision making and funding and align their interventions with national priorities. ‘Decentralisation’ has to be accompanied by clear guidelines to support governments in the development, implementation and monitoring of the sector-wide policy. Donors should be better organised at the regional level to ensure effective cooperation with ECOWAS.
4. **Systematically strengthen local capacity building at all intervention levels** (central, decentralised and devolved technical departments). Donors should support the development and implementation of a training plan with the government sector and also provide capacity building for local civil society, particularly farmers’ organisations.

II/ Use and strengthen existing bodies and procedures and support the work of existing agriculture actors

For this it will be necessary to:

1. **Find a way of systematically using existing dialogue or programming bodies.** These frameworks should be practical tools to align donors. Where they do not exist or are inadequate, the donors should support actors, together with the relevant authorities, in creating or strengthening permanent tools, that are consistent with national priorities;
2. **Seek to use existing procedures.** When implementing projects: avoid the creation of project management units; promote systematic participation by State representatives in the steering committee; use State benchmarks and government procedures including national procurement systems, and work to strengthen them if they are deficient, with a transitional period and clearly defined objectives;
3. **Support the ongoing decentralisation and devolution process** by empowering local authorities in planning, monitoring, and managing project funds, if possible;

III/ Moving from the discussion stage to real coordination of interventions

The three countries have dialogue bodies that are a forum for information exchange, but at present fail to coordinate interventions. It will be necessary to:

1. **Promote the creation or strengthen subsector, thematic or regional bodies** and ensure effective participation by donors in order to move towards harmonising field practices in a specific area of intervention;
2. **Ensure strong links between the different coordination bodies** on rural development, agriculture, food security, crisis prevention, nutrition, etc.;
3. **Integrate all stakeholders** into programming and coordination bodies. It is essential to ensure and support civil society's participation, including farmers' organisations;
4. **Facilitate programming and joint State-donor reviews of sector and sub-sector interventions** to ensure a common understanding of constraints and opportunities and agree on strategies, practices and concrete actions to be implemented, while enhancing transparency.

IV/ Transform financial pledges made at international level into additional long-term, predictable funding to strengthen ongoing national and regional processes

Donors should:

1. **Better align their funding procedures to that of the State and better harmonise them between donors** to reduce the government's management burden for the different mechanisms, schedules, reporting procedures, indicators, assessments, and assignments;
2. **Promote direct support to country budgets, coupled with specific technical support** to strengthen national public financial management systems. When budget supports are not achievable, donors should promote the use of a national financial system, for example through the creation of a secure account whose funds pass through the State's financial channels;
3. **Promote funding over longer periods** of 3 to 5 years to increase predictability and transparency. It would also be better to align disbursement to national budgetary schedules to facilitate integration into national accounts and reduce related costs;
4. **Provide significant and long-term funding to strengthen local civil society**, particularly producer organisations. These funds should also specifically strengthen women's organisations and activities promoting their rights.

For governments

The deteriorating food situation since 2008 brought to the fore the need to develop and implement food and agricultural policies. It is essential that the three governments seize this opportunity to ensure better coordination of donors around national and regional policies. For this, governments should:

I/ Ensure active leadership in the development and implementation of sector-wide agricultural and food security policies and programmes

1. **Introduce global food and agricultural policies** that ensure consistent interventions by all stakeholders over time as well as providing the necessary environment (trade and budgetary policy) for their creation. These policies should ensure food security for all and pay particular attention to small producers;
2. **Ensure the alignment of national agricultural investment programmes (PNIA) and previous processes with current regional processes;**
3. **Work on implementing a regional trade policy that ensures the development of the agricultural sector** at regional and national levels:
 - a. **By ensuring the implementation of a Common External Tariff that offers an adequate level of regional protection** to allow the agricultural sector to develop;
 - b. **By ensuring that the Economic Partnership Agreements are negotiated so as to favour the development** of the food and agriculture sectors
4. **Provide a truly inclusive, unifying and empowering process.** All stakeholders, especially producers' organisations should be included in the development, implementation and monitoring phases of sector-wide programmes. Producers' organisations will have to be cosignatories of the agricultural policies that are developed.

II/ Ensure effective leadership in coordinating donor interventions

1. **By playing a leading role in sector frameworks to achieve greater intervention coordination.** Governments should ensure a high level of representation within the sector consultation bodies to ensure their political vision is represented;
2. **Develop practical tools for alignment (procedures manuals, etc.) and set specific commitments for donors in the sub-sectors;**
3. **Ensure agreement and cohesion among the different Ministries** and technical departments involved in developing the rural sector, particularly in their relations with donors.

III/ Making agriculture and food security main budget priorities

1. **Devote at least 10% of national budgets to implement agricultural and food security policies.** More specifically:
 - a. Devote a significant share of State owned resources to achieve this goal;
 - b. Devote a significant share of these funds to productive investment
 - c. Devote at least 50% of national budgets destined for agriculture to supporting small family run farms
2. **Ensure greater transparency for national budgets** so that the proportion allocated to supporting the food and agricultural sector can be properly evaluated, especially in terms of supporting small-scale farmers.
3. **Support capacity building for producers' organisations and women's organisations,** including institutional strengthening and capacity building for formulating and monitoring agricultural policies.

Civil society organisations and NGOs

I/ Investing in bodies focusing on coordination, decision making and agricultural and food security policy development. Farmers' organisations in particular need to increase their presence in these frameworks, based on their field knowledge.

II/ Insist and ensure that aid from international NGOs is held up to the same quality standards. In particular:

- By respecting priorities expressed by people living in poverty;
- By gathering sufficient background knowledge to ensure the relevance of its actions at social, cultural, economic, and political levels;
- By adapting their interventions to national and local policy options and in coordination with other actors at local, national and regional levels according to their sphere of intervention;
- By assuming their responsibilities towards beneficiaries and their partner organisations;
- By respecting the fact that citizens, local civil society and governments in developing countries are the primary development actors - not international NGOs;
- By ensuring that commitments and long-term funding are predictable and disbursed on time;
- By harmonising their practices and procedures with other donors to minimise aid related costs and avoid duplicated interventions, while ensuring there is some diversity in approaches. This is particularly crucial for their relationship with partner organisations;
- By maintaining transparency towards third parties by publishing their internal governance procedures, taking part in international initiatives aimed at greater transparency, and respecting their abilities and limitations;
- And by respecting serious assessment procedures, integrating all the involved persons and disseminating lessons learned to inform other actors.

Oxfam works with other international NGOs to ensure that support is provided in this way.

ANNEX 1

Summary of the main financial pledges made for agriculture and food security since the end of 2007

Pledges from International Summits: 43 billion \$

- On 3-5 June 2008, during the FAO summit organised in Rome, the United Nations agencies working on food and agriculture, 43 Heads of State and 181 countries announced their renewed commitment to the sectors of agriculture and food security. Close to 6 billion dollars were pledged during this summit and FAO estimated that shortly after the summit 22 billion dollars were pledged as a result of the summit. In January 2009, it lamented the fact that less than 10% of this sum (2.1 billion dollars) had in fact been paid out, mainly for emergency activities.
- In the "Declaration on global food security" made at the G8 in July 2008, the G8 leaders stated that since the beginning of the year they had dedicated "over 10 billion dollars to deal with the effects of the crisis, through food security measures and to increase agricultural production in the countries affected". They did not announce any new financial measures for the countries worst affected.
- In January 2009, the Madrid summit on 'Food Security for all' provided Spain with an opportunity to announce a new investment of 1 billion € over 5 years for food security and agriculture.
- Finally during the G8 summit in L'Aquila, Italy, in July 2009 the G8 leaders, under the aegis of the American President, Obama, announced 20 billion dollars to improve global food security. Details to be announced by donor countries.

Recommitment from international institutions:

- In December 2007, the FAO launched its Initiative on soaring food prices (ISFP) with a budget of 109 million \$ (of which 36 million are from TCP resources and 73 million from donor countries). Since June 2008, FAO estimates it has received 22 billion in promised funding.
- In April 2008, IFAD announced it was making 200 million \$ available (non-additional) to support agricultural production by poor farmers and the 8th replenishment of IFAD's resources in 2008 saw an increase in resources of 1.2 billion \$.
- WFP announced it had spent 5.1 billion \$ in 2008 and the 2008-2009 work programme, initially estimated at 5.8 billion was revised up to 11.8 billion \$ (5.8 for 2008 and 6 billion for 2009) to be presented to the board in June 2009.
- In May 2008 the World Bank (WB) launched a Global Food Response Programme (GFRP) with an initial figure of 1.2 billion \$, raised to 2 billion \$ in April 2009. This fund aims to finance interventions in 36 priority countries. Furthermore, the WB announced its intention to increase the global level of its loans to the agricultural sector, taking it up from 4 billion to 12 billion \$ by 2010, and tripling its investment in security safety nets and other social protection programmes for food security, bringing it to 12 billion \$ over the next 2 years. The WB has also increased its investment in agro-business via IFC and received extra funding from Australia, Russia, the European Commission (Food Facility) as well as extra contributions from IDA.
- In May 2008 the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) announced a credit line of 500 million \$ allocated to the food crisis and 20 million \$ reserved from its Social Fund.

- In May, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced 500 million \$ (non additional) in immediate budget support for 7 countries and the Pacific region, and a redoubling of its aid to agriculture in 2009, bringing it to over 2 billion \$.
- In June 2008, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) announced 1.5 billion \$ of loans and gifts to support 25 countries over 5 years, under the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development.
- The African development Bank (ADB) launched the Africa food crisis response initiative (AFCRI) in July 2008 which should mobilise 496.57 million UA in the short term (745 million \$) and 1.4 billion UA (2.1 billion \$) in the medium and long term.
- On 18th December 2008, the European Parliament and Council adopted the creation of an exceptional Food Facility with a figure of 1 billion €, designated for 50 countries and spread over 3 years, mainly channelled through international organisations (the UN and IFI) and NGOs. This facility is in addition to the 800 million € allocated by the EU to improve harvests in 2008-2009.
- In June 2008 the IMF announced political and budgetary assistance for 4 countries in difficulties; it also granted concessional loans under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) to 8 countries for a total of 750 million \$; and revised access conditions for the Exogenous Shocks Facility which resulted in 155 million \$ of support for three countries.

Some bilateral

- The United States remains the biggest food donor for 2008-2009 with over 5.5 billion \$ over 2 years of which 4.75 billion passes through USAID.
- In April 2008 the United Kingdom announced an assistance 'package' of 455 million £ (WFP, agricultural research and finding for Ethiopia) and DFID allocated over 240 million \$ a year to increase agricultural production in developing countries and 70 million \$ to reduce transport costs in Africa.

Other donors:

- The Gates Foundation announced in May 2008 that it would allocate 17.6 million in aid as part of its Emergency Relief Initiative in 12 countries via WFP and American NGOs. In February 2009, the Foundation sealed two partnerships, representing 48 million \$, targeting cashew and cocoa growers in sub-Saharan Africa. The FAO received 5.6 million over 2 years to improve information systems in 17 sub-Saharan countries and collaborated with the Foundation on two other donations of 164.5 million \$ over 5 years (AGRA) and 26.8 million \$ over 3 years for a research project.

Sources: internal memo from the French permanent representative to the United Nations agencies for food and agriculture in Rome (FAO, WFP, IFAD).

ANNEX 2

Main sector-wide, formal and informal, consultation bodies in the three countries

	Rural development / Agriculture		Food security / Food crisis management / Nutrition	
	State-donor parity frameworks	Donor dialogue bodies	State-donor parity frameworks	Donor dialogue bodies
Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > State-donor dialogue body on rural development > Sub-sector-wide consultation bodies (only 4 to 6 bodies of the 14 are up and running) > regional consultation bodies (only 2 or 3 are up and running) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Informal meetings between donors and the rural development lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consultation body for the prevention and management of food crises * 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Sector-wide dialogue forums on emergency and rehabilitation agro-pastoral interventions lead by FAO > Thematic UN inter-agency coordination group for rural development and food security.
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > the national consultation body for rural development partners (CNCPDR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > consultation body for rural development (CCDR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > national food security committee (CNSA) and its technical committee > Reflection and monitoring committee for the cereal and food security policy (CRSPC), within CONASUR. > national consultation council on nutrition (CNCN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Humanitarian coordination meetings set up by OCHA and coordinated by WFP: brings together UN agencies, NGOs and some donors
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > MoFA-DPs policy dialogue forum > Thematic groups (Policy; Financial Management; Human Resources) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Development Partners Sector Group 		

This dialogue body is in fact programme framework 9 of the rural development strategy: 'Reducing household vulnerability' but has the specific role of drafting a charter (framework agreement) and is directly under the Primature and not under the central Ministries for the rural sector.

Process for drafting sector-wide investment policies and programmes in the three countries

Niger	Burkina Faso	Ghana
Programme approach set out in the SDR action plan (2006) and the ongoing process to regionalise the SDR	Sector-wide productive rural development programme (PROSDRP) Road map for PROSDRP adopted in 2007; ongoing process.	Sector Wide Approach in Agriculture (AgSWAp) Process initiated in 2006; road map being validated between donors and the State
An integral programme approach	A programme approach centred on investments	A programme approach centred on investments
It reflects all the rural development Ministries' missions in its programmes, linked to precise objectives and activities. The SDR action plan defines 14 programmes (10 structuring and 4 priority) into which should fit all TFP actions. Each programme should receive joint intervention programming.	The PROSDRP is one of the tools for putting into operation the SDR, in synergy with other national programmes linked to rural development. It is based on investment programmes by the three rural development Ministries and should define a joint programming and budget framework as well as common monitoring and evaluation which the different stakeholders should then subscribe to.	AgSWAp was conceived as an operational tool for implementing FASDEPII (Food and Agriculture Development Policy) adopted in 2007.
Regionalising the SDR should make use of the programme approach at the different regional levels in Niger, so that priorities can be ranked at regional level, selecting priority actions for each region.	A regionalisation process for SDR activities is underway and should give rise to 13 regional specialisation programmes (PROSPER) drawing together all the available resources for each region.	Sustainable Development Initiative for Northern Ghana (NDI): the document is still being drafted.

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Notes

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11 Ghana: 2008 MoFA's Annual Financial Report ; 2009 MoFA's financial report for the first quarter.

12 Burkina Faso: interview with a chief MAHRD official, June 2009.

13 These were respectively 24 donors and 69 projects included in the 2007 budget, and 22 donors and 55 projects in the 2006 budget. See budgets 2006–2008.

14 Refer to the regional action plan, Diffa Region, initial draft, June 2009.

¹⁵ Burkina Faso : reference to decree MAHRH-MEF, 2009 ; Ghana : Agriculture sector plan 2009-2015.

16 Projects registered in the sectors 'Agriculture', 'Fishing' and 'Forestry' according to the OECD classification. These 131 projects include some food security projects but not all, some are classified under 'Humanitarian Aid'. However, livestock farming projects are not included in this 'agriculture' sector. Source : *Coopération pour le développement : Etat de mise en œuvre de la déclaration de paris au Burkina Faso, Rapport 2007*, pp. 119–163.

17 Ibid, p. 66.

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19 For more details on comparing project aid effectiveness and budgetary aid, see F. de Lucca and M. Raffinot (2007) 'Aide budgétaire : le cas du Burkina Faso', *Afrique contemporaine* n° 223, pp. 193–218.

20 Calculations based on a compilation of 'project files' carried out in mid-2006 by the Niger government based on information passed on by technical and financial partners.

21 In Niger, the annual expenditure review consists of adding together the disbursements made by the different projects and redistributing them by theme in the budget.

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- 22 See 'Prise en compte du CDMT 2007–2009 du secteur rural dans la Loi de Finance 2007', Secrétariat exécutif du Comité interministériel de pilotage de la Stratégie de développement rural (SE/SDR), Niger.
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- 34 Calculated on the basis of 2008 average exchange rate
- 35 Calculated on the basis of 2008 average exchange rate
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