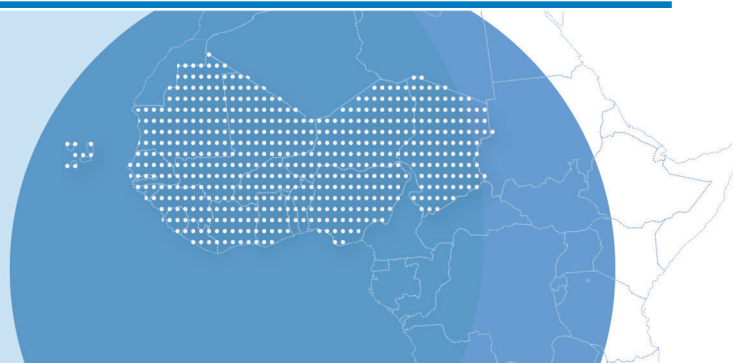


WEEKLY NEWSBRIEF OF THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB SECRETARIAT



MONITORING REGIONAL TRENDS

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Mali: international community welcomes accord on presidential election



The international community welcomed an accord between the Malian government and Touareg rebels on the holding of the presidential election scheduled for 28 July. Under the aegis of Burkinabe President Blaise Compaoré, the ECOWAS mediator in the Mali crisis, the agreement was signed on 18 June in Ouagadougou by the Malian Minister of Territorial Administration, Colonel Moussa Coulibaly Sinko, and Bilal Ag Acherif and Algabass Ag Intalla representing the MNLA and HCUA respectively. Respect for the integrity of the Malian territory and dialogue between actors were reaffirmed as conditions for the return of peace. Commending the efforts of ECOWAS, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for the immediate implementation of the agreement. "The Secretary-General is encouraged by the parties' commitment to national reconciliation and the resolution of differences through dialogue", said a statement from his office. The accord,

entitled "Preliminary Agreement to the Presidential Election and Inclusive Peace Talks in Mali", commits the parties to an immediate ceasefire as well as the cessation of all hostile activity. It provides for the return of the Malian army to Kidal with a phased deployment ahead of the presidential election. A joint technical committee on security, composed of representatives from the different parties and African organisations, will be responsible for implementing security arrangements. It will be chaired by the commander of AFISMA/MINUSMA. The Ouagadougou agreement also foresees the cantonment of Touareg fighters, but disarmament will take place only after the presidential election, with the signing of a final and comprehensive peace deal between the new government and Touareg groups. The preliminary agreement also establishes an international commission of inquiry into crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in northern Mali.

EPA negotiations top the agenda at ECOWAS Council of Ministers



Charles Koffi Diby, Ivorian minister of foreign affairs

The 70th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers was held from 20-21 June in Abidjan. Ivorian Foreign Minister Charles Koffi Diby challenged his colleagues on the need to reach a regional agreement on trade. Such an accord would allow for the conclusion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU, which has been under negotiation for more than ten years. At the 19th Ministerial Meeting on political dialogue between the EU and ECOWAS in May, the two sides agreed to complete the negotiations by the end of 2013. Given the challenges and the deadline, the Ivorian minister, in his

capacity as Chairman of the Council, urged his peers to find a compromise to break the impasse and take advantage of the next round of negotiations with the Europeans. ECOWAS Commission President Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo said the Community is at a “decisive or even historic” moment, as it begins the process of finalising a common external tariff (CET). The unanimous political support of the Council of Ministers is required to make the CET a reality, an important step in the regional integration process, according to Ouédraogo.

Senegalese President Macky Sall is the voice of Africa at the G8



Senegalese President Macky Sall

Senegalese President Macky Sall was invited to speak on behalf of Africa at an event on the side-lines of the G8 Summit, held on 18 June in Hearne Lough, Ireland. In his role as NEPAD chairman, he addressed the issue of infrastructure development on the continent. In response to concerns expressed by the NEPAD chairman, the G8 pledged to establish more effective mechanisms for collaboration on preparation, financing and risk mitigation for African regional infrastructure programmes, such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). President Sall also raised the issue of natural resources management in Africa. G8 leaders have sought to strengthen global standards and

accountability through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Multinationals would be required to report all payments related to extractive activities, while states wishing to apply the standard would voluntarily declare their revenues. President Sall also called for increased efforts to combat banking secrecy and tax evasion. He condemned the use of shell companies based in tax havens as serious obstacles to economic growth and good governance in Africa. G8 members have agreed on the principle of a “common model” of corporate taxes to force multinationals to declare income and pay taxes in proportion to their activities in each country.

PREGEC: Good outlook for the rainy season despite high cereals prices



A restricted meeting of the regional food crisis prevention and management mechanisms (PREGEC) in the Sahel and West Africa was held from 17-19 June in Cotonou. The participants expressed their satisfaction with favourable harvests at the end of the 2012-2013 growing season and during the lean season. They highlighted an increase in trade due to strong supplies from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mali. However, the experts observed that refugees and internally displaced persons from the conflict in Mali and insecurity in Nigeria raise the risk of more rapid depletion of stocks for families in host countries and regions.

Participants also raised the alarming nutritional situation in the region, in particular among the poorest households. In a press release PREGEC recommended that countries take immediate steps to support vulnerable populations facing a difficult lean season and implement contingency plans and other state support to better anticipate and prepare for interventions in the areas of food security, nutrition and other disaster risk management. Regional food security information systems (CILSS, FAO, WFP, FEWS NET) are asked to support countries in the development of relevant strategies.

UEMOA develops strategy to increase rice production



UEMOA convened a meeting of stakeholders in the rice sector in Dakar. The objective of the workshop was to foster exchange with industry players in order to involve them in the production and marketing of local rice. To reduce poverty and ensure food security in the Union, Ibrahima Diémé, Commissioner in charge of food security and agriculture, said rice cultivation remains one of the priority sectors. Targeting self-sufficiency in rice is a sustainable response to the recurrent food crises in the region, he said. According to figures from

CILSS, rice production in the UEMOA zone reached 4 million tonnes in the 2012-2013 crop year, with the bulk of it coming from Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal. Senegal, which produces only 20% of its consumption, is forced to spend CFA francs 150 to 200 billion per year on imports. The strong dependence on external supply has taken a toll on the country's trade balance. UEMOA has set a goal of doubling rice production by 2018. Senegal is seeking to contribute to the effort, setting a target of producing 1.6 million tonnes per year and stopping rice imports by 2018.

ECOWAS and AfDB partner on integration and mobility



Under the auspices of ECOWAS and the AfDB, stakeholders gathered from 20-21 June in Dakar to look for ways to strengthen migration policy for West Africa. The aim of the workshop was to seek input from various sectors of society, including civil society and the private sector, on the modernisation of migration policy in response to current realities and the needs of ECOWAS citizens. Discussions focused on how to reinforce the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the Rights of Residency and Establishment. ECOWAS citizens have a high rate of mobility, with most migration taking place within the 15-member bloc.

The Protocol on Free Movement of Persons has reinforced this trend. Member countries have also established a common ECOWAS-stamped passport and abolished the entry visa requirement for Community citizens. These measures have enabled ECOWAS citizens to cross borders more easily. However, further measures are needed to fully implement the rights of residence and establishment as well as mutual recognition of qualifications. According to the AfDB, these aspects are obstacles to social mobility for migrants and negatively impact the development of both host countries and countries of origin.

Emerging Markets Forum launches "Africa 2050"



Abidjan hosted the 4th edition of the Africa Emerging Markets Forum from 21-22 June in partnership with the American Emerging Markets Forum (EMF). About 90 experts and leaders participated in the meeting, representing the political world, regional/international organisations and the private sector from 20 countries on four continents. The discussions centred on five main topics: the Vision Africa 2050 agenda; the strategy to achieve it; demographics, inclusion and equity; growth and job creation; and governance. "African countries must go beyond the economic performance recorded in the last decade to promote productive and inclusive

growth in order to truly emerge", Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara said at the opening of the meeting. He called on African leaders, whose economies have grown on average by 5% in recent years, to rely on human potential to consolidate this strength. The region's population is expected to exceed 2 billion by 2050, with a large proportion of working-age youth. The forum endorsed the Vision Africa 2050 plan, outlined in the EMF report "Africa 2050: realising the continent's full potential". President Ouattara, the current ECOWAS Chairman, vowed to mobilise his counterparts in West Africa around the vision.

Ghana to construct 1 000 MW capacity thermal power plant



In pursuit of its goal to reach an electricity generation capacity of 5 000 MW by 2016, the Ghanaian government has partnered with US energy giant General Electric. Under the terms of the MoU, the American company will develop and build a thermal power plant with a capacity of 1 000 MW. Ghana has faced a power crisis over the past year, due to serious gas supply disruptions. The government has taken steps to address the electricity shortage, with the opening in May of three turbines

with a capacity of 133 MW as well as the new Bui dam, built with the support of China. A solar power plant with a capacity of 2 MW has been installed in the north. The president and CEO of GE Africa, Jay Ireland, said that the partnership with Ghana follows on similar projects in other African countries. The company said these projects will create at least 1.5 GW of power generation capacity across West and Central Africa over the next five years.

Guinea-Bissau: China is nation's leading partner on infrastructure



Authorities in Guinea-Bissau have released figures showing that China has become the nation's top partner in infrastructure development. The department for international co-operation said China has invested approximately USD 70 million in construction projects over the past five years. The projects include state infrastructure, with the construction of a USD 25 million government building housing 12 departments. Construction is currently under way on a building to accommodate

four judicial institutions at a cost of USD 13 million. China's projects in the country also include health infrastructure, with the construction of a USD 11 million military hospital, a second hospital at Canchungo, 72 km from Bissau, as well as the National School of Health. The Chinese also renovated the 24 September sports arena in Bissau at a cost of USD 5 million, and Beijing has financed the construction of many smaller buildings including military barracks and schools.

Mauritania: EU support for anti-poverty initiatives



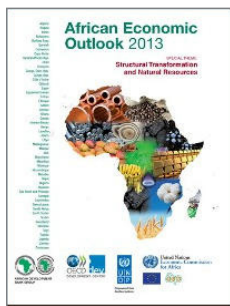
Hans-Georg Gerstenlauer, head of the EU delegation, and Sidi Ould Tah, Mauritanian minister for the economy

The EU Commission has awarded a EUR 46 million financial package to support the fight against poverty in Mauritania. The assistance comes in the framework of an agreement signed on 17 June in Nouakchott between the head of the EU delegation, Hans-Georg Gerstenlauer, and the Mauritanian Minister for the Economy, Sidi Ould Tah. The funding will support government interventions in various development sectors including education, health, employment, access to water and social protection, targeting the most

disadvantaged segments of the population. Mauritania is implementing a Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction (SFPR) that aims to provide better access to basic services for the poorest populations. The implementation of the SFPR is monitored based on a set of indicators for poverty reduction as well as a mid-term evaluation. The Mauritanian minister said the EU support constitutes "a direct budgetary support for the Mauritanian state, reflecting the confidence placed by the EU in our financial institutions."

African Economic Outlook 2013

Structural Transformation and Natural Resources



The 2013 edition of the African Economic Outlook (AEO) focuses on structural transformation and natural resources in Africa. Jointly produced by the OECD Development Centre, AfDB, UNECA and UNDP, the report seeks to impart lessons learnt on how to accelerate structural change and amplify the positive impacts of natural resources exploitation on the continent. The annual outlook projects that African economies will maintain their positive momentum, growing by 4.8% on average in 2013 before accelerating to 5.3% growth in 2014. The West African region will record the fastest growth during the 2013-2014 period.

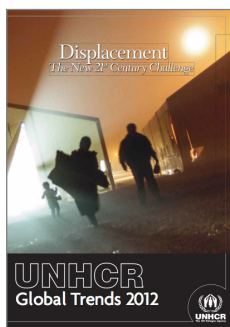
Growth is forecast at approximately 6.7% in 2013 and 7.4% in 2014, and West Africa is deemed the most dynamic sub-region on the continent. Growth rates are expected to exceed 9% in Côte d'Ivoire and 8% in Ghana, while most countries in the region are projected to grow at a rate of more than 5%. Growth will be driven primarily by the oil and mining sectors, but also agriculture and services, as well as strong demand, for both consumption and investment.

→ **Report in English:** <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/>

→ **Report in French:** <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fr/>

Displacement: the New 21st Century Challenge

UNHCR Global Trends 2012



The new statistical report from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) finds that forced displacement has reached a level not seen in nearly 20 years. It reveals that the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is now the highest since 1994. War remains the main force behind displacement. Approximately 55% of refugees accounted for in the report come from five countries affected by conflict, namely Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Syria. The outbreak of the conflict in Mali has resulted in large-scale displacement.

The report estimates that 143 000 people have fled to neighbouring countries Mauritania (54 000), Niger (50 200) and Burkina Faso (38 400). The number of refugees in the West Africa region is estimated at 267 800. Around the world, 2.7 million refugees and IDPs were able to return to their homes or resettle in 2012, including many Ivoirians (72 800) and Liberians.

→ **Report in English:** http://unhcr.org/global-trendsjune2013/UNHCR%20GLOBAL%20TRENDS%202012_V05.pdf