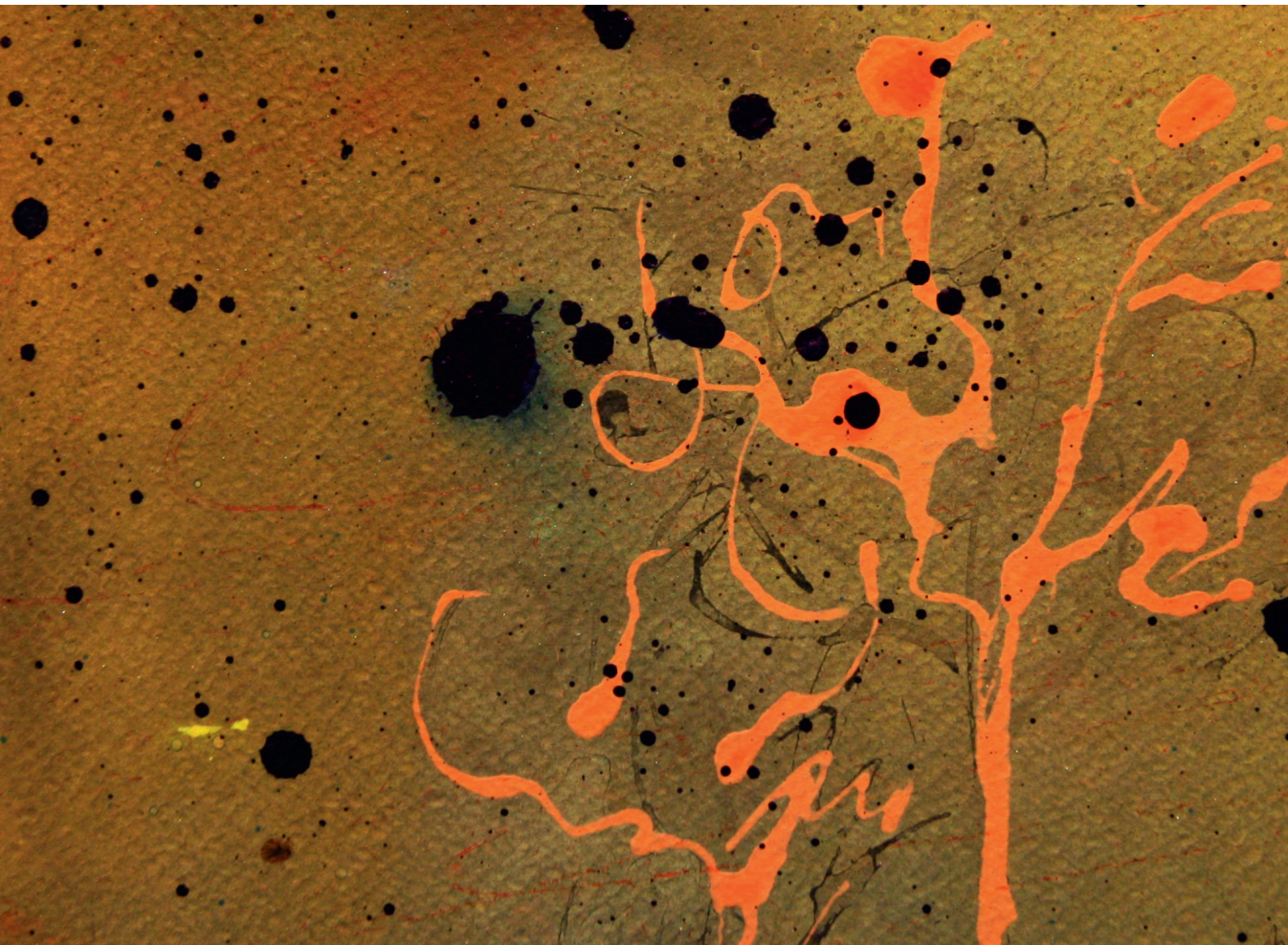


Linking security and development A Plea for the Sahel



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A Plea for the Sahel

Linking security and development – A Plea for the Sahel

A publication by Ferdi

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63000 Clermont-Ferrand
France
www.ferdi.fr

ISBN : 978-2-9550779-3-1



This publication has been produced with the support of the French Government, and led by the French National Research Agency (Agence Nationale de la Recherche, ANR) as part of the “Investments in the Future” (Investissements d’avenir) programme, ref. ANR-10-LBX-14-01.

Cover illustration : Aude Guirauden, *Baobab III*.

Graphic design : Isabelle Durand.

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sur le développement international (Ferdì), 2016.

Linking security and development A Plea for the Sahel

Volume 1

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The opinions expressed in this publication are personal and do not represent the views of the institutions to which the working group members belong.

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Key messages

The situation in the Sahel has worsened significantly in the last 10 years, especially in the area of security. While rural areas of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad are markedly different from one another, they share a common destiny—all have fallen into a vicious and mutually reinforcing cycle of poverty and insecurity. Unless local authorities and the international community take concerted and decisive action, these areas—like Afghanistan, Somalia and the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo—could succumb to a series of conflicts from which they will struggle to emerge.

A permanent crisis, driven by mutually reinforcing poverty, criminal activity and armed conflict, comes at an exorbitantly steep cost. A human cost for populations living in the affected regions, who are the first people to suffer from violence and food, economic and legal insecurity. A cost for the affected countries, with threats to their development outlook and political systems. A cost for neighbouring countries in the Maghreb and Central and West Africa, which have already suffered the knock-on effects of the crisis in the Sahel. And a cost for Europe and the rest of the international community, with a stream of drugs and refugees crossing their borders and the growing menace of terrorist attacks.

Peace in the Sahel is a public good, the consequences of which are felt beyond the continent of Africa. This peace is intimately connected to the development of the region, with its fast-growing population. **This publication's first message is that the human, financial and political cost of investing in this public good will be less than the cost of managing the fallout of an extended, deep-rooted and expanding crisis.** The experts we questioned disagree with the generally pessimistic outlooks on the Sahel's development potential. The region has significant, yet historically under-exploited growth potential. However, this potential is now under threat from growing insecurity. Fast-paced population growth in the region means that it is now essential to tap into this potential.

The situation has reached crisis point. While researchers, diplomats, humanitarians and security and development experts share concerns about the state of the Sahel, these professionals rarely have an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the matter together. **This publication's second message is that effective responses to these challenges are only possible if researchers, diplomats, humanitarians and defence and development experts work together.** Without a joint understanding of the issues at stake, it will be impossible to break the downward spiral in which the region currently finds itself. This does not, however, mean blurring the lines between the remits of these professions, especially military and

development experts. While quick, decisive action is needed, these experts must still remain within their own fields of expertise.

Violent conflicts in the Sahel are a result of both external and internal factors, driven by widespread fragmentation of societies across the region and crumbling institutions (formal, informal and hybrid). Moreover, the weak economic and social development outlook and environmental degradation are making the region even more vulnerable to crises and violence. **This publication's third message is that each and every one of these vulnerabilities—demographic, economic, social, environmental and institutional—can be addressed through targeted programmes and close cooperation between the public and private sectors, working in collaboration with local and international NGOs.** This principle applies to the agriculture, education and local governance improvement programmes that form the main thrust of this publication. Yet once these vulnerabilities converge to form a widespread, general crisis, it will be too late to act. There is still time to invest in rural development, education and decentralisation support programmes. But international aid mechanisms and procedures will need to be adapted to reflect the changing realities of these conflict-affected States. Insecurity cannot be an excuse for inaction. As things stand, however, no appropriate funding mechanisms exist.

“Winning the war but losing the peace” was how the French Chief of the Defence Staff described the situation in an opinion piece published in *Le Monde*. **This publication's fourth message is that France's Sahel budget is heavily weighted against development expenditure, and that the country runs the risk of playing a role of “policeman” in the region** rather than a supporter of its economic and social growth. The size and structure of France's official development assistance (ODA) budget mean that AFD has limited resources for grant disbursement. Yet grants are critical to effective action in least developed countries (LDCs), especially those in the Sahel. Unlike its main partners, France has reduced its bilateral response capabilities in the Sahel. The battle for peace is therefore in peril.

It is a widely accepted fact that security cannot be achieved without development, and that development depends on at least a basic level of security. **This publication's fifth message is that the international community must shoulder a portion of security expenditure in the Sahel.** This demands coordinated security capacity building support for governments and the introduction of effective spending accountability and transparency mechanisms. Moreover, the term “security” and its associated mechanisms will need to include day-to-day security for people living in the region—something that is almost entirely overlooked by governments and existing international instruments.

1. Introduction

This publication calls for a European and French development policy for the Sahel—a policy that is robust, is aligned with the region’s real security challenges, and that reflects the diverse realities on the ground. For the purposes of this publication, the term “Sahel” is understood as the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger)¹—a grouping formed to address security challenges in the region. The Sahel’s future affects Europe as a whole—a fact recognised by the European Commission in its 2011 “EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel”. France has a vested interest in economic development in the Sahel due to its military involvement in the region, and to its COP 21 pledge to fight the detrimental effects of climate change in poor countries—effects that are felt particularly strongly in the Sahel. Moreover, economic development in the Sahel is in France’s long-term strategic interest, on account of its geographic and linguistic ties with the region, migratory flows from the Sahel to France, and the fact that the country has long-standing cooperation experience in the region. Although the National Assembly announced, in 2015, that “our concern is not limited solely to external trade, return on investment on ODA, or business opportunities for our companies”, a prosperous Sahel will nevertheless have a positive impact on the French economy. Southern Europe is also likely to be affected by any further deterioration in the situation in the region.

This publication seeks to overcome the prevailing pessimism about the Sahel’s economic potential, which leads some to take the view that the only solution is for people to leave. It is aimed at all decision makers: government and authority officials and members of parliament in both African States and donor countries (especially France and more generally in Europe). It is also intended for leaders of African regional institutions and multilateral aid organisations, as well as civil society in general.

Its aim is to further discussion about effective ways to combine security and development efforts². We firmly believe that, without development, the security situation in the Sahel will worsen, generating enormous human and financial costs for countries in and around the region, as well as in Europe.

1. There is no universally accepted definition of the Sahel. Geographers define it as the area receiving rainfall of between 200 mm and 600 mm per year (Laurent Bossard, 2015), which encompasses Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad (OECD/SWAC, 2014), possibly extending into Burkina Faso and northern Senegal. A narrower definition is generally used for development policy purposes, covering those countries targeted specifically by Sahel development programmes.

2. The term “global approach” is loosely used within the international community to refer to combined security and development actions.

► Methodology

The *Fondation pour les Etudes et Recherches sur le Développement International* (Ferdi) established a committee to oversee the production of this publication (see list on p.3). The committee interviewed a number of persons from different backgrounds, including African leaders, military experts, sociologists, economists, business leaders, and NGO and development assistance institution heads³. Although no new studies were carried out, this publication draws extensively on social science research covering the Sahel, as indicated in the list of references at the end of the appendices.

► Overview

1. The first step is to assess the origins of violence in the Sahel. Insecurity in the region is the result of both external and local factors. While poverty does not necessarily drive people into crime or force them to join jihadist groups, it nevertheless creates an environment conducive to violence. It is therefore important to look at the mutually reinforcing relationship between a negative economic and social outlook and a rise in violence, especially in a context of rapid population growth. It is precisely because of this strong link that we call for combined action to tackle both poverty and economic and human development challenges.

2. This assessment calls into question the relevance of the international community's security and development response in the Sahel in recent years, in terms of both resources and approaches.

3. This critique of donor action means that we first need to assess how the international community can step up its security work while at the same time adapting its methods to reflect fragile environments.

4. We then need to consider how the international community might better support development, especially in areas where insecurity remains a prevailing challenge. Ultimately, long-term peace cannot be restored without development. The economies of the Sahel are vulnerable for many reasons, and the donor response needs to reflect this general situation. On the one hand, humanitarian aid and development assistance complement each other. Yet the restoration of peace can only continue if the dividends are felt quickly by local populations. That is why there is a need to strike the right balance between rapid-impact actions and development responses that deliver longer-term benefits. On the other hand, the international community has long overlooked a number of sectors that are central to the Sahel's vulnerability, especially education, rural development, and transport and communication. Donors need to turn their attention to these areas and work closely with the private sector.

3. The list of people interviewed can be found on p.4.

5. Ultimately, responsibility for security and economic development in the Sahel lies with the region's national governments. Yet these governments have a number of weaknesses. The international community must therefore support institutional strengthening efforts across a wide range of areas, targeting central governments, local authorities and regional institutions alike.

This publication features a number of boxes, each containing excerpts from our interviews. It also has five appendices, covering: (i) statistical data; (ii) demographics; (iii) a comparison of military and development spending in the Sahel; (iv) the impact of development assistance on conflict and insecurity; and (v) the issue of fragile States.

2. The Sahel: an economic, social and political breeding-ground for violence

► Persistent security challenges

The nature of violence in West Africa has changed over the last decade. New forms of conflict have emerged. As well as conflict between States and civil wars, we have also seen electoral violence, border region clashes between groups of armed insurgents, and banditry. The emergence of these guerrilla groups and criminal gangs has been driven by drug and arms trafficking and by religious extremism.

The security situation hit rock-bottom in January 2013, when violence in Mali prompted a military response from the French government (Operation Serval). The situation has improved since then, and notably following the peace deal between the country's government and armed groups operating in the north on 20 June 2015. The Sahel's governments have come to realise that terrorism is a regional threat, with growing cooperation between extremist and terrorist groups across the region⁴. For example, the Multinational Joint Task Force (comprising troops from Cameroon, Niger, Chad and Nigeria) has begun engaging in joint military campaigns against Boko Haram. The creation of the G5 Sahel (comprising all the countries covered in this publication) is also indicative of the same commitment to joint action, especially on security matters⁵. Yet the most recent *Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa*⁶ States that "the overall security situation in West Africa remains fragile".

Efforts to implement the peace agreement in Mali have been ongoing for the last nine months, although progress has been slow. Moreover, the interim administration mentioned in the peace deal has yet to be established in the country's

4. As evidenced by the Grand-Bassam shootings in Côte d'Ivoire on 13 March 2016 and the attacks in Ouagadougou on 16 January.

5. The G5 Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad) established a list of priority projects in 2014, comprising 33 projects for implementation between 2015 and 2017, at a total cost of EUR 11 billion, and divided into four components (security, governance, infrastructure and human development). The budget for the security component amounts to EUR 1.575 billion. The G5 Sahel's Defence and Security Committee met in N'Djamena on 18 November 2015, with French and U.S. representatives in attendance as observers. (Cantens and Raballand, p.14.)

6. December 2015 report (report published every six months).

northern regions⁷. The most dramatic attacks—at the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) camp in Kidal, Oursi police station and the gendarmerie brigade in Samorogouan (just across the border in Burkina Faso)—left many dead and injured. While these attacks rightly shocked the international community and raised the spectre of terrorism for people living in West Africa's cities, the casualties pale in comparison with the sheer scale of unreported deaths in rural areas at the hands of armed groups.

“Extremist and terrorist groups maintained their determination to undermine the peace process, increasingly targeting its supporters, including the signatory parties, civilians, civil servants and the international presences in the central and northern regions. Threats and intimidation campaigns against civilians by the *Front de libération du Macina* and *Ansar Eddine* in Mopti, in addition to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, intensified”.⁸ The Malian defence and security forces, the French army and MINUSMA remain the target of the attacks. The assaults are increasingly sophisticated, using rockets and mortars, roadside explosive devices and suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. Armed banditry constitutes the most significant threat to civilians in the Gao and Tombouctou regions. Intercommunal conflict persists in the Ménaka and Tombouctou regions (between the Daoussak and the Ibogaletane communities, as well as between the Daoussak and the Fulani communities).⁹

Attacks by the Boko Haram terrorist group continue in Nigeria, having extended into the Diffa region of Niger on a number of occasions. The Government of Niger has declared a state of emergency in the region, leading to restrictions in trade between residents and outside communities and causing food prices to rise. The security situation has also caused some civil servants to abandon their posts, especially in the health services sector, and the situation has been further compounded by the influx of more than 200,000 refugees from Nigeria. The Bosso attack on 3 June 2016 left many dead and showed how Niger's armed forces are unable to stand up to Boko Haram.

► Sources of violence and the need for development

There is a pressing need to better understand the complicated interactions between the root causes, triggers and accelerators of complex modern-day conflicts, while keeping an eye on their historical trajectory¹⁰. Violent conflicts in the Sahel are a result of both external and internal factors, driven by

7. Reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (December 2015 and March 2016).

8. *ibid.*

9. *ibid.*

10. See Enrico Spolaore and Romain Wacziarg (2013) for more about the general importance of historical origins.

widespread fragmentation of societies across the region and crumbling institutions (formal, informal and hybrid). These conflicts are also almost certainly driven by the region's lack of economic and social development.

1. Interconnected hotbeds of violence creating a “conflict trap”

Hotbeds of violence were once isolated, driven by unique local and historical contexts. Over the years, however, they have become increasingly interconnected as a result of trafficking (arms, drugs, contraband and migrants) or a shared interest in destabilising a region. Local conflicts (e.g. family conflicts over land) resonate with national conflicts (e.g. Tuareg demands). These, in turn, can lead to instability across an entire region (e.g. movements of fighters between Libya and northern Mali), as various groups state their own demands under a thin veil of global conflict and religious ideology (e.g. affiliation to Al-Qaeda or Islamic State—organisations that help to raise their media profile). The lines between armed groups in the region are blurred, including signatories and non-signatories to the Algiers Agreement, so-called “highwaymen”, criminal gangs and mafia-style organisations, which “often profit from media focus on terrorism by adding terrorist acts to their arsenal... The ideological confusion is further exacerbated by multi-faceted ties and connections” (Raincourt and Conway-Mouret, 2016, p. 27). “Conflict systems” develop across national borders. Yet while these borders form the boundaries of legal trade and government action, they are exploited by traffickers and fighters. Vast swaths of land therefore fall into “conflict traps”, with knock-on effects that make the outcomes of these conflicts even more complex. This is especially true because these same areas were already fragile “poverty traps”, with a lack of human capital (alarming education and health indicators), demographic and environmental pressures, and ineffective public institutions¹¹.

Since 2005, West Africa has become a hub for cocaine trafficked from South America to Europe and a growing trade in methamphetamine and heroin has also developed in the region (UNODC 2013). In addition to drugs and arms, the region has long been a cigarette trafficking hotspot (OECD/SWAC 2014, chapter 9). Following the fall of the Gaddafi regime, thousands of poor, unemployed soldiers and armed men who had served under Gaddafi returned to the Sahel. This, in turn, brought a new supply of modern, sophisticated weapons from Libya. Algeria expelled Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) fighters to the south, forcing them to continue their operations in the Sahel rather than in Algeria. Boko Haram's growing power and influence (the Nigerian Government having made no effort to combat the group until Goodluck Jonathan was elected President) has given rise to terrorist attacks in the neighbouring countries of Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

Fragmentation along ethnic, language and religious lines has also eroded identity in the region. The Tuareg rebellion is symbolic of this phenomenon. It has

11. See P. Collier, Appendix 5.

a long history, dating back to the first French colonial incursions into the northern Sahel in 1890. The Tuaregs were left in the political wilderness following the withdrawal of the colonial powers, since their lifestyle was at odds with that of sedentary populations. This led to rising tensions during periods of drought, but the region's governments failed to respond in any meaningful manner.

The lack of a trustworthy government with the power and capability to arbitrate such conflicts has further driven ethnic and religious fragmentation. At the same time, this fragmentation has made governance even more difficult. Formal institutions (prefectures, regional councils and local authorities) exist alongside traditional institutions (chiefdoms and religious communities) in a sort of hybrid system with a varying ability to deal with day-to-day conflicts. At both the local and national levels, governing officials are often prisoners to those who put them in power (interview with Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan) and, at the same time, to rigid governance systems that lack the flexibility to shift the balance of power, reflect changing lifestyles or heed calls among the (majority) young population for participation (Clara Arnaud, 2016).

The importance of culture and religion

"BURKINA FASO appears to be less affected by religious conflict than any of its neighbours in the Sahel. Muslims (60.5% of the population), Christians (23.2%), animists (15.3%) and people of other faiths (1%)¹² live side-by-side in peace. In other countries such as Mauritania (officially an Islamic Republic), Mali and Niger, the population balance is 94% Muslims, 4% Catholics and 2% animists. Here, fundamentalism is on the rise, threatening the stability of these countries.

The religious situation in Chad, however, is markedly different from that in the previous three countries. The country is divided along religious and geographical lines. The north is largely Muslim, with Islam brought into the region by Arab migrants and merchants. Christianity dominates the south, meanwhile—a legacy of the European colonial period. Some estimates suggest that 50% of the population of Chad is Muslim, 35% Christian and the remainder of other, traditional faiths.

While religion and ethnicity do not automatically give rise to conflict, the manner in which they are used injudiciously in political and religious rhetoric has created fragility and instability in some countries in the Sahel."

(Tertius Zongo, 2016)

"I'M NOT AN EXPERT IN RELIGION IN GENERAL, or in Islam in particular (although you can refer to the work of Abdoulaye Sounaye, a colleague

12. General Population and Housing Census (GPHC), Burkina Faso, December 2006

at LASDEL and acclaimed Islamic studies expert who also works at the University of Niamey). I'm going to talk about the growing influence of Wahhabism in Nigerien society, as I've observed it in the last 50 years.

Wahhabism—or Izalim as it's known in Niger—has won the ideological battle in the country. The Salafists have succeeded, unopposed, in imposing their rules on society (although they have not yet conquered the political sphere). This has a number of practical consequences on day-to-day life in Niger:

1. Very few women dare to step outdoors without wearing a hijab, and an increasing number of women are now wearing the burqa (i.e. dark clothing covering the entire body). Many girls, including very young girls, also wear the hijab at school.
2. No Nigerien woman, regardless of her religion, will ever offer her hand to a man in public for fear that he might refuse. I've even had a female doctor refuse to take my hand in hospital.
3. There is a mosque in every single public building. This would have been unthinkable in the past.
4. "Prayer breaks" are now included in the programme at all conferences, seminars and workshops and, in most cases, an imam is invited to deliver a *fatiha* (opening prayer).

As a religious organisation, Wahhabism is in the minority in Niger. There is a difference between Wahhabism as an organisation and Wahhabism as an ideology. This is what I mean by the "growing influence of Wahhabism" in Niger. We have seen the emergence of an obsessive, mediaeval ritualism, including at the University of Niamey, where people pour out of lecture theatres at prayer time. The university's most important building is now its mosque (built by the former rector), which is run by an erudite Salafist imam. The student association (which rules the roost in the faculty) is also Salafist. Some people are now calling for men and women to be separated in university dining facilities. Some university bus routes have separate coaches for men and women.

This does not mean that everyone is a devout Salafist. But many aspects of daily life have changed. The Wahhabist ideology has taken over Nigerien society, to the extent that nobody dares to question or criticise it. The Salafists' number one enemies are other Muslims (Christians are treated as a sort of secondary foe). The Salafists tightened their grip in Niger first by attacking the existing imams, whom they considered ignorant, heathen or corrupt.

The Izalim movement originated in northern Nigeria. Originally, Izalists differed from the rest of Nigerian society because they refused to mix with other Muslims, establishing their own places of worship and adopting

separate customs and practices (criticism of Mouloud and other customary ceremonies, women wearing a full veil, etc.). Their approach bore many similarities with Pentecostalism. Their arrival was very much like the rise of Weber's "Protestant Ethic"—they rejected extravagant expenditure on customary and Muslim ceremonies. They were therefore akin to a puritan movement, decrying ostentatious commemorations, including in Islam. They kept out of politics, instead seeking to convert Islam from the inside. This was the key to their success—not financial backing from Qatar or Saudi Arabia, but their ability to spread a more Salafist, puritanical form of Islam from within. They then spread gradually over time, extending their ideology far and wide—especially in the public sector—and moving from a small, widely mocked and derided community to a group firmly anchored in society. This movement comes alongside initiatives by Gulf States such as Qatar, which funded mosques (and imams) and hosted students at Koranic schools. In other words, there are two separate yet complementary movements.

The situation within Islam today is one of pluralism and turmoil. Even IZALISM is no longer a single movement. There have been numerous splits and re-mergers, and tensions remain about the question of political Islam. There are also many young preachers who belong to the Salafist movement but who act independently and are not directly connected to the IZALISTS. A number of Shia factions are also emerging and expanding. Wahhabism—or Salafism—is the dominant ideology in this diverse religious landscape, but it remains a peaceful ideology. Boko Haram, however, has added a new ingredient into this mix with its political and extremist brand of Salafism. The group follows an ultra-violent form of Salafism that initially targeted other Muslims. Boko Haram recruited hundreds, even thousands of young people from Niger, capitalising on the prevailing Salafist ideology and pushing it to the extreme by calling for a political revolution and the installation of a caliphate. It staked a claim to be the only radical opposition movement to the existing regime—to the Government, to public services and to the West.

Wahhabism has, without a shadow of a doubt, gained ground in West Africa and elsewhere in the world, especially in Asia."

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan

Weak governance and predatory behaviour

"Most residents appear frustrated by the lack of effective governance and development that perpetuates their abject poverty and extremely limited social mobility. This is particularly pronounced where the government is seen

as predatory, or there is little or no central State presence, but also in areas where misrule, particularly acute corruption, has contributed to preventing development and service delivery. For decades, central governments in the region paid little attention to the peripheries. Since they often were not an immediate threat or a power base for powerful politicians, they allowed them to stagnate, while sharing in the profits of local corruption. In those States that do partially redistribute resources to underdeveloped areas, this often benefits local power-brokers and corrupt elites. Too often this leads to more insecurity, elite involvement in illegal activity and, ultimately, alienation from the State that renders the areas vulnerable to insurgency and manipulation by actors who feed off and aggravate social tensions. Criminal networks may thus become power-holders, by either entering into or overpowering State institutions.” (The Central Sahel: A Perfect Sandstorm, Africa Report no. 227, International Crisis Group, June 2015).

“As we have seen in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the greater the security challenges, the more this situation tends to lead to predatory behaviour and trafficking in all its forms”.

Benoît Miribel

2. Economic and environmental vulnerability

Alongside identity and political vulnerabilities, the Sahel is faced with economic fragility and environmental challenges. All countries in the region—Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad, as well as Sudan and Ethiopia to the east—are classified by the United Nations as LDCs. There are currently 48 countries in this category, most of them in Africa. The international community has pledged to provide priority development assistance and special trade arrangements for these States. The classification is based on three criteria: low income per capita, a lack of human capital (health, education), and substantial economic vulnerability—a factor driven in part by the magnitude of the exogenous shocks suffered by these countries regardless of their economic policy, and in part by their level of exposure to these shocks¹³. In the Sahel, both magnitude and exposure are particularly high. As LDCs, these countries are recognised as being structurally vulnerable and at heightened risk of sustained poverty (Guillaumont, 2009). Table 1 in Appendix 1 shows that the five Sahel countries, when compared with all developing countries, score higher on the structural economic vulnerability index (with the exception of Mali) and significantly lower on the human capital index. The physical vulnerability

13. The magnitude is measured by assessing instability in the export of goods and services, instability in agricultural production, and the number of people affected by natural disasters. Exposure, meanwhile, is calculated by looking at total population size, the overall contribution of agricultural value-added to national product, and export concentration.

to climate change index (PVCCI), as calculated by Ferdi, comprises two components. The first measures vulnerability to gradual shocks (such as flood risk from rising sea levels or decreasing rainfall), while the second concerns vulnerability to more intense recurring shocks (rainfall, temperature, cyclones). The Sahel countries score significantly higher on this index than all developing countries, all African countries, and even other LDCs.

Lake Chad: a flagship example of climate change

The Lake Chad region is a centre of agricultural production that spans four countries. The region is under attack from Boko Haram. It is also a flagship example of the impact of climate change in the Sahel—and of the intimate link between environmental, social and political vulnerabilities. Recent reports on Lake Chad draw the following conclusions: although the lake is one-third the size it was in the 1960s, it is still an attractive rural hub by virtue of its resources (water and land) and jobs (economic and food production) and a vital lifeline for the millions of people who live in the region. The lake's drainage basin is home to around 50 million people. It encompasses the Diffa region (Niger), Borno and Kano States (Nigeria), the far north of Cameroon, the southern half of Chad and the extreme north of Central African Republic. The lake and its drainage basin have a vibrant trade and commerce economy, driven primarily by fisheries, agriculture and livestock farming. Over time, the 2 million people who live on its banks and many islands have become experts at exploiting the lake's resources in uncertain circumstances. They know how to make best use of its variable environment—ranging from shallow, open expanses of water and flooded marshland to areas of vegetation according to the season and rainfall. The smallholder farms that exist around the lake are successful because the people who run them are mobile and versatile, and because the soil is suitable for multiple uses.

Until 2014, the region was a net exporter of food within the Sahel and an important source of employment. Lake Chad and its basin have substantial development potential, but this potential is under threat from a combination of structural and cyclical factors. While the region boasts rich biodiversity, its ecosystem is fragile and is coming under increasing threat from climate change and human pressure. Lake Chad provides essential ecosystem services to the wider Sahel/Sahara region, where low rainfall and limited water availability are ongoing challenges. The sub-region has one of the highest population growth rates in the world—a factor that places even greater pressure on this ecosystem. This has led to growing tension over access to resources (land, fodder crops, fish, etc.). Traditional dispute

resolution mechanisms are barely able to cope with escalating conflict, and existing farmland is saturated to the extent that new land is needed to grow additional crops, or new ways need to be found to improve productivity. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the local communities—who have welcomed refugees and displaced people fleeing Boko Haram during the early years of the crisis and shared their land and food despite their own vulnerability—will continue to display such generosity. (source: AFD)

3. Per capita income growth curtailed by rapid population growth

Although the Sahel countries have experienced relatively rapid economic growth in recent years, this trend has been highly unstable, punctuated by periods of contraction (Appendix 1, table 2). At the same time, these countries have sustained high losses of natural capital (Appendix 1, table 4). As a result of population growth, per-capita income growth is low (1% to 4% between 2011 and 2015, with differences by country) (Appendix 1, table 3). The population is growing rapidly and is likely to continue doing so, as evidenced by recent United Nations forecasts (despite uncertainty surrounding the fertility index).¹⁴ By 2100, each of the Sahel countries is forecast to have a similar population to France (75 million people), with the exception of Mauritania (which will have a smaller population) and Niger (where the population could be more than double this figure) (see Appendix 1, table 5 and Appendix 2). Although the majority of this population growth will be seen in cities (average urban population growth of 6.6% per year over the last 6 years), rural population will also grow rapidly (potentially around 2% per year).¹⁵ Due to growing rural population density and ever-scarcer rainfall (and climate change), agricultural productivity is falling and tensions are increasing—in some cases leading to violent conflict and mass population exodus (Sévérino and Ray, 2010).

Yet population growth is a long-term phenomenon. The age profile of the Sahel's population means that this trend cannot be corrected rapidly. Some commentators have called for active family planning in an effort to curb the region's population growth. "While family planning is rapidly gaining traction in cities across the Sahel, it remains an ongoing challenge in rural areas—as is the case throughout Africa. The long-term outlook for the birth rate—the main driver of

14. "Available population data for the Sahel is imprecise. None of the countries has comprehensive civil registry records, meaning there are no time-specific datasets covering births and deaths, nor regular and reliable migration counts. The total population figure may be up to 10% out in either direction, and the same probably applies to the fertility and mortality rates. The uncertainty is even greater when it comes to migration data. Despite this uncertainty, however, population growth across the Sahel is a well-established fact, the major trends are clear and the long-term forecasts are realistic, assuming that current fertility and mortality trends continue." Michel Garenne

15. Population growth in the Sahel zone of Mali (Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal regions) appears slower than in the remainder of the country, due to a lower fertility rate and migration (Bossard 2015).

population growth—therefore remains highly uncertain. The situation in Niger is of particular interest, where there are compelling signs of a falling fertility rate in rural areas” (Michel Garenne, Appendix 2). In any event, donors cannot implement a birth reduction policy unilaterally, since this could be interpreted as a deliberate population control effort by the West. International aid could be used, however, to improve the health of women—especially those who have recently given birth and want to wait longer until having their next child (a major factor in reducing infant mortality), and teenage girls (who often have to deal with unwanted pregnancies alone). Existing health systems fall well short of needs in these areas. Yet leaving longer intervals between pregnancies will not, on its own, solve the population growth issue. The fertility rate will only fall in rural areas when parents no longer decide to have multiple children to give them a safety net in their old age. The way to change this mindset is to ensure that children survive infancy, gain an adequate education, and subsequently secure a job and receive a stable income. Something must be done to address the population growth rate, in the interest of the Sahel’s development. But this cannot be achieved simply by limiting the birth rate. It would be unrealistic to believe that a demographic transition can be achieved without economic development.

Population pressure and land use

THE TUAREG AND FULA PEOPLE often come into conflict over land. In Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, the Hausa people are increasingly moving further north to find new farmland to grow millet. Yet in doing so, they come into direct conflict with local livestock farmers, who also grow millet for their own reserves. This, in turn, often leads to violent confrontations along ethnic lines. Competition for land in the savannah region is not a new phenomenon, and it will continue to grow. The urban population in West Africa is growing so rapidly that vast new areas of farmland will be needed around the outskirts of the region’s towns and cities. And this situation is likely to further exacerbate tensions over land. Every one of these potential tension triggers further exacerbates ethnic and religious opposition and paves the way for conflict.

Michel Griffon

Birth control

“JUST BECAUSE WOMEN REQUEST CONTRACEPTION at certain times in their reproductive life, this doesn’t necessarily mean that they want to limit

the number of children they have (it is still possible to have 10 children with a gap of two or three years between births). A high birth rate makes economic sense, especially in rural areas, since this is the best way to guarantee that parents will be cared for in their old age (Niger has no pension or social protection system). Having a high number of children almost guarantees that there will be at least one, two or three who survive long enough to care for their parents in later life. It is also seen as a positive social marker—a sign of prestige and success. “Communication” about the urgent need for family planning due to the “demographic time bomb” involves promoting “behaviour change”, i.e. a deliberate attempt to replace behaviour that is both perfectly rational and socially accepted with a different form of behaviour based on collective principles and objectives that the majority of Nigeriens do not share (and where so-called “stowaway” strategies are therefore seen as legitimate). At the same time, the demographic transition among Niger’s urban population and middle and upper classes is happening spontaneously due to increased life expectancy and the costs in educating children. This is the same course that the demographic transition has taken in the Western world, i.e. through development rather than propaganda.”

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan

“WE NEED TO TRY TO ENCOURAGE all aspects of family policy. I deliberately use the term “family policy”, rather than “family planning” because we take a firm view that this is a technical and medical matter. Where once we might have tended to see this mainly as a question of health and contraception (which are part of the issue, admittedly), there is a pressing need for dialogue with communities and governments. We have to persuade them that their countries will only achieve successful development through moderate, gradual population growth. There is no question of Westerners demanding Africans to limit their population. That would be inappropriate and doomed to failure. It would be seen as a Western conspiracy. It has to be something that Africa itself wants.”

Jean-Pierre Marcelli

“THE SAHEL’S ELITES NEED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES of family planning and birth rate control, since they are fully aware of how much it costs to raise and educate a large family. They also understand the poverty trap that results from exceptionally high population growth in the region. Ultimately, it is they who are responsible for intervening on this question, given the immense cultural and religious barriers that exist. Yet other Muslim countries, like Bangladesh and Indonesia, have managed to address this issue with success. There are ways to do it, such as educating young girls, prohibiting

early marriage (as Chad has done recently), providing modern contraceptive methods and suitable advice (including in remote rural towns and villages), and conducting information and awareness-raising campaigns.”

Serge Michailof

4. Social and educational vulnerability

Low per-capita income growth goes hand-in-hand with high social vulnerability. While extreme poverty has fallen in the Sahel in recent years, it nevertheless remains high (between 40% and 50% of the population, as indicated by the region's performance against Millennium Development Goal (MDG) #1 “halve the number of people living in extreme poverty”—see Appendix 1, table 6). The region's economic growth has not been inclusive, and geographical and generational imbalances have widened (north vs. south, town vs. country, young vs. old). Exports of primary products have been the main driver of economic growth, and rural regions—especially those in the north—have seen few benefits from this growth. Moreover, population growth, greater climate variability and conflicts have combined to accentuate food insecurity among the poorest populations (see Appendix 1, table 7).

Although Africa's population has aged since the 1980s,¹⁶ young people still make up the largest percentage of the population in the Sahel (40% to 50% of the population is under 14)¹⁷ and have limited education and job prospects. This, in turn, poses an ongoing integration challenge. The percentage of the population aged 15-29 will continue to grow in the Sahel, reaching 28% in around 2030, before falling away gradually thereafter. In Niger, the peak will come even later (2050) (Michel Garenne, Appendix 2). Because these young lack their own financial means, they are condemned to enter adulthood ever later in life. This leaves them “feeling excluded from economic, social, political and civic life, in societies with deeply entrenched inter-generational hierarchies.”¹⁸ Although the Sahel countries, like the rest of Africa, have seen steep rises in the primary school enrolment rate, the public education system does not stand up to parental scrutiny. As such, children spend an unusually short amount of time in school and do not therefore learn to read and write properly. Falling teaching standards and lack of professional training make the educational provision out of synch with labour market needs since the access to public sector employment has dried up. The public education system does not prepare students for jobs in the agricultural sector (jobs to which young people do not aspire), while roles in the manufacturing and service industries seem to be reserved for people with secondary or even higher-level qualifications.

16. Michel Garenne, Appendix 2.

17. Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicators*.

18. Clara Arnaud (2016).

There has also been a rise in the number of Koranic schools offering different levels of education. What they have in common is that they all propose a different education model aimed to prepare the pupils to enter in a social network dominated by religious values. In Niger and eastern Mali, devout Salafist Koranic schools are on the rise as traditional Islam loses ground (interview with Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan: “Salafism has won the battle for minds in Niger”).¹⁹ Religious organisations, funded by the kingdoms and principalities of the Persian Gulf are investing ever more heavily in social and humanitarian activities, stepping in where governments have withdrawn, especially in the northern regions of the Sahel and more generally in rural areas left impoverished by public energy supply, drinking water, education, dispensary and hospital policies. These religious organisations are also stirring social and political conflicts. A growing number of young people with little hope for the future are falling victim to drug traffickers and religious extremists.

When the French military intervened in northern Mali, they cut off the local population's income stream from trafficking (in all its forms). Yet, in a context of zero economic growth, they failed to offer a substitute source of revenue. For young people, the prospect of joining the rebellion is a tempting one, often driven by pure survival instinct or a desire to regain a prominent role in society, for ideological or religious reasons.

The Sahel's demographic outlook suggests a future increase in migration from rural areas to cities (both capitals and secondary cities)²⁰ and from north to south (both within the region and to neighbouring countries to the south, where economic development prospects are more favourable). However, this migration is nothing new since the Sahel has a long-standing history of population mobility (OECD/SWAC, 2014, chapter 1 and Appendix 3). Many commentators argue that migration will be a central theme of the Sahel's future. Yet doubts remain about the ability of the Sahel's southern regions and neighbouring countries to absorb these migrant populations. There are also fears that mass migration could lead to tension and violence across West Africa.

African governments appear to have recognised the need for a combined approach to security and development. In 2010, the Malian Government launched the Special Programme for Peace, Security and Development in Northern Mali. More recently, the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali established a Northern Development Zone. Nevertheless, the responses to date fall short of the mark in terms of both quality and quantity.

The structural vulnerability of the Sahel countries—political and economic—may therefore be pinpointed as the internal origin of insecurity (Marc et al, 2015). These vulnerability factors exist in combination, alongside complex cultural and religious situations (see Appendix 4). Genuine peace cannot be achieved in the

19. Salafism is also extending southwards in the Sahel (into Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria), marginalising traditional Islam and its organisations in the process.

20. “Africapolis”: <http://www.afd.fr/home/publications/travaux-de-recherche/archives-anciennes-collections/NotesetEtudes/Africapolis>

Sahel without inclusive economic development²¹. Inaction would come at a considerable cost, allowing pockets of insecurity and extreme poverty to develop across West Africa. This, in turn, would force more people from the Sahel to migrate to coastal countries and to Europe and would perpetuate an increasingly restrictive, expensive and inefficient security response, given the sheer size of the Sahel region.

► Summing up

Insecurity persists in the Sahel, despite international recognition of the pressing need to tackle terrorism in the region, despite successive military interventions, and despite the signature of the Mali peace agreement. This insecurity is characterised by dramatic armed terrorist attacks and acts of banditry that have serious repercussions for rural populations.

Violent conflicts in the Sahel are the result of both external and internal factors. Hotbeds of violence were once isolated, driven by unique local and historical contexts. Over the years, however, they have become increasingly interconnected with trafficking (arms, drugs, contraband and migrants) and a shared interest in destabilising the region.

Fragmentation along ethnic, language and religious lines has eroded identity in the region and has made governance even more difficult. Moreover, all the Sahelian countries face economic fragility and environmental challenges which make them particularly vulnerable to exogenous shocks and climate change. As such, they will find it difficult to escape a “poverty trap”. Although the Sahelian countries have experienced relatively rapid economic growth in recent years, this trend has been highly unstable and growth has been curtailed by the region’s extremely high population growth rate. Low per-capita income growth goes hand-in-hand with high social vulnerability and is accentuated by geographical and generational imbalances. In the Sahel, the percentage of the population aged 15-29 continues to grow, but these young people feel excluded from economic and social life and the public education system is unable to cope with this problem.

21. During his interview, General Beth backed this view by citing the example of the UK’s intervention in Sierra Leone in 1998-2000, where large numbers of military forces and civilian aid workers operated side-by-side. “This was DFID’s great triumph. We barely hear about Sierra Leone any more. The country is changing gradually and is experiencing economic growth.”

3. The weakness and imbalance of the international action

The international community's response in the Sahel merits criticism on two grounds—first the volume of aid disbursed, and second the choice of sectors and interventions.

► “Winning the war is not enough to win the peace”²²

We decided it would be worthwhile to compare the international community's military and development assistance expenditures. Appendix 3, entitled “Comparison of military and development spending in the Sahel”²³ (written by Camille Laville), details France's military spending on Operation Barkhane and the United Nations spending on the MINUSMA programme.²⁴ This provides a comparison of military expenditure financed by African budgets and ODA received by Sahel countries. In order to calculate potential development spending in the region, we used the “country programmable aid” (CPA)²⁵ concept developed by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This is defined by subtracting from total gross one-off grants and loans all flows that are not paid in recipient countries (i.e. administrative costs, imputed student costs and costs related to refugees in donor countries). We then added to this figure gross humanitarian and food aid payments (not included in development assistance as per the OECD's definition), since emergency relief

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22. “Winning the war is not enough to win the peace” (in French, “Gagner la guerre ne suffit pas à gagner la paix”). Opinion piece by Pierre de Villiers, French Chief of the Defence Staff on [lemonde.fr](http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/01/20/gagner-la-guerre-ne-suffit-pas-a-gagner-la-paix_4850136_3232.html): http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/01/20/gagner-la-guerre-ne-suffit-pas-a-gagner-la-paix_4850136_3232.html

23. In the remainder of this publication, the majority of the figures on military and aid expenditure are taken from Appendix 3.

24. Our comparison does not include the United States' Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI), since it is both a non-military development assistance initiative and an inter-military training programme. We have also excluded U.S. support for Operation Barkhane, since we were unable to put a figure on this assistance.

25. “Country Programmable Aid (CPA) is the portion of aid that donors programme at country or regional level. CPA for bilateral donors is defined through exclusions, by subtracting from total gross bilateral official development assistance (ODA), all activities that: (i) are inherently unpredictable by nature (humanitarian aid and debt relief); or (ii) entail no cross-border flows (administrative costs, imputed student costs, promotion of development awareness, and costs related to research and refugees in donor countries); or (iii) do not form part of co-operation agreements between governments (food aid, aid from local governments, core funding to NGOs, ODA equity investments, aid through secondary agencies, and aid which is not allocable by country or region).” (OECD DAC)

and development actions form a continuum with no clear demarcation. Moreover, efforts to tackle extreme poverty, deprivation and malnutrition are necessary precursors to development activities. It is possible to compare military and aid expenditure because the DAC does not count security expenditure as development assistance (with a few minor exceptions).

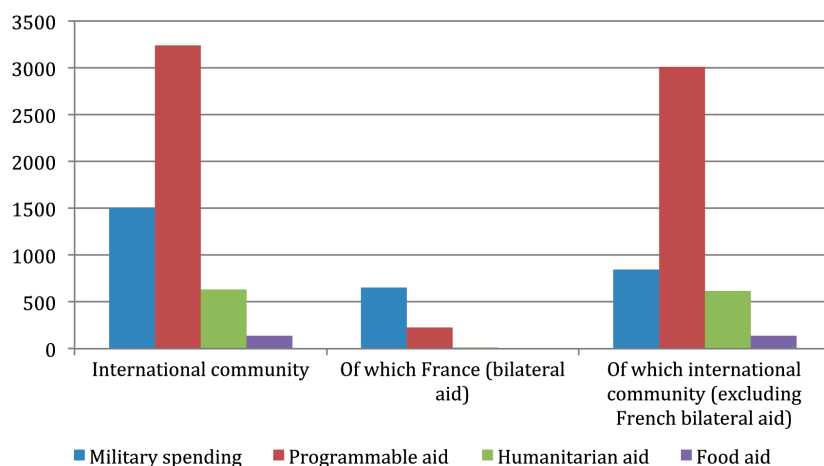
This analysis reveals a number of key insights. Overall, the international community spends considerably more on development assistance for the Sahelian countries than on military intervention. In 2014, global military expenditure in the Sahel stood at approximately USD 1.5 billion while gross development assistance spending (CPA plus humanitarian and food aid) amounted to just over USD 4 billion (first row in columns 1 and 2 in table 1). Multilateral aid accounted for half of total development assistance spending (Bretton Woods Institutions, United Nations, European Commission, international funds, etc.). However, France's position differs markedly from the rest of the international community.

Table 1. Comparison of military expenditure and international development assistance in the Sahel* in 2014 (*in millions of USD*)

	(1) Military spending	(2) Aid (gross disbursements)			
		(a) Programmable aid	(b) Humanitarian aid	(c) Food aid	(a)+(b)+(c) Total
International community	1,500	3,240	630	136	4,006
Of which France (bilateral aid)	653	228	12	1	241
Of which international community (excluding French bilateral aid)	847	3,012	618	135	3,765

* Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad.
Source: see Appendix 3.

Figure 1. Comparison of military expenditure and international development assistance in the Sahel in 2014 (in millions of USD)



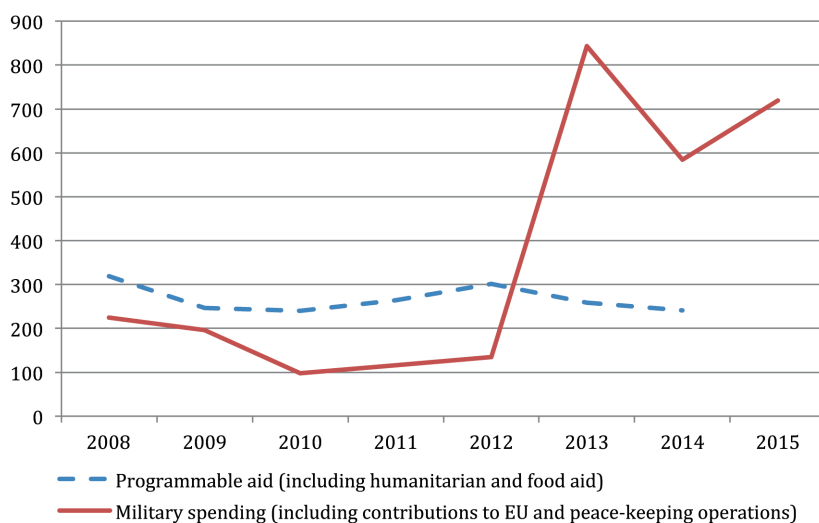
Sources: see Appendix 3.

In 2014, France's military spending in the Sahel (added military expenses due to the Operation Barkhane, plus contributions to the EU-Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali and to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, MINUSMA) was significantly higher than its total expenditure on programmable aid plus emergency relief aid (USD 653 million vs. USD 241 million (see table 1), i.e. a ratio in excess of 2:1). This imbalance has accentuated over the last 10 years (see figure 2). As a result, France runs the risk of playing the role of "Sahel's policeman" with no civil-military cooperation, leaving other powers to address economic and social matters. There is widespread agreement on the need to tackle the root causes of these crises, the effects of which are now being felt in Europe.²⁶ The United Kingdom has invested heavily in humanitarian aid and development assistance in the most fragile States. Germany is also ramping up its development spending, assigning the largest ODA budget in its history in 2016²⁷ with a stronger emphasis on fragile States. Focusing specifically on the Sahel countries, figure 3 shows that UK aid remains minimal, US spending (the highest of all countries) has increased substantially and French assistance has remained unchanged (or even fallen). Germany, while making a growing contribution, still spends less than France on ODA in the region. While total bilateral aid declined in 2013 and 2014, multilateral aid continues to rise (see figure 4).

26. "UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest". British Government, November 2015 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478834/ODA_strategy_final_web_0905.pdf

27. EUR 7.4 billion in 2016.

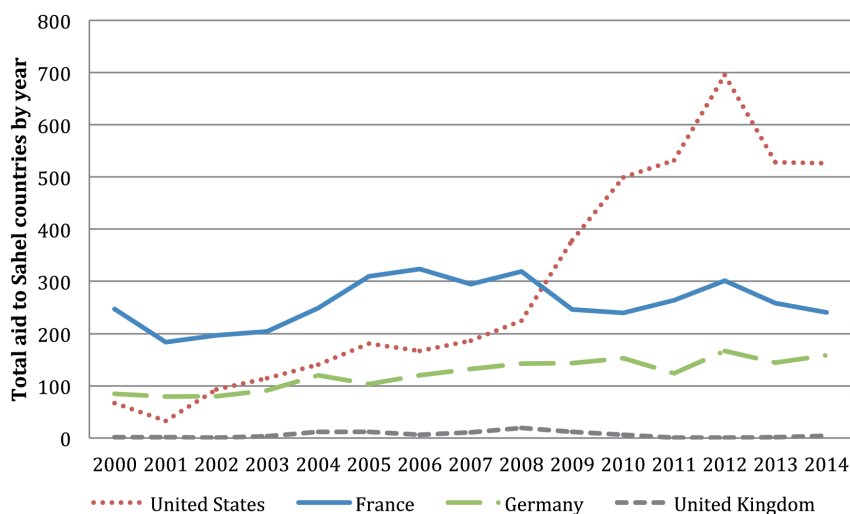
Figure 2. Comparative trend of French military and development assistance spending in the Sahel (*in millions of USD*)



Source: see Appendix 3.

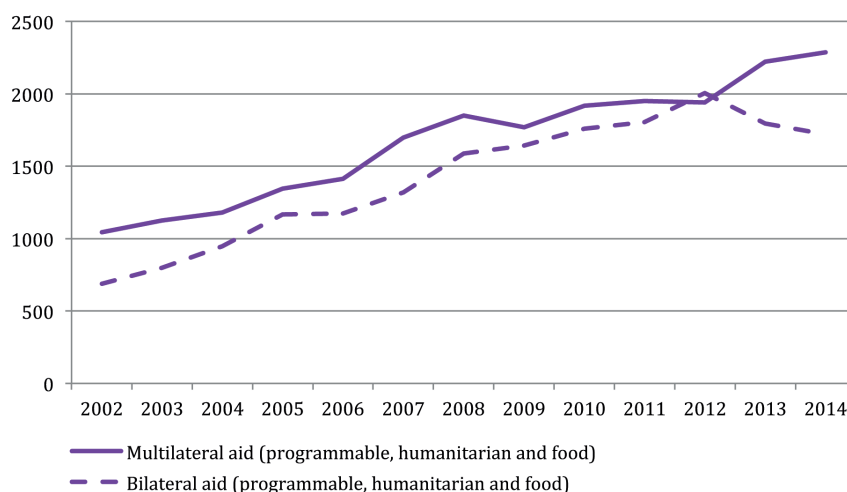
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Figure 3. Country programmable aid (including humanitarian and food aid) to countries in the Sahel, by donor country (2000-2014) (*in millions of USD*)



Source: OECD, see Appendix 3

Figure 4. Multilateral and bilateral programmable aid (including humanitarian and food aid) to countries in the Sahel (2002-2014) (in millions of current USD)



Source: OECD, see Appendix 3.

These trends do not, however, call for France and the international community to reduce their military engagement in the region, since the actual number of military personnel per square km remains low (interview with General Beth)²⁸. Moreover, this would be an unrealistic move in the short term. Instead, there is a pressing need for France to step up its development assistance spending in the Sahel so that it is in a better position to “win the peace”.

However, when assessing France’s aid effort in the Sahel, it is also important to consider the country’s contribution to multilateral aid, some of which is channelled to the region. Indeed, multilateral aid expenditure accounts for around 40% of France’s total outlay on aid spending²⁹. Its indirect expenditure on the Sahel (unconditional aid) stands at around EUR 176 million,³⁰ slightly lower than its total programmable aid outlay in the Sahel (EUR 228 million). Furthermore, unlike the United States, France makes little use of the non-core channel for its multilateral aid contributions. In fact, only around 3% of France’s total multilateral contributions were made through this channel in 2013, and 14% of this money went to the Sahel, even though this is an effective way to target specific countries³¹.

28. Compared with the number of soldiers deployed in Kosovo or Afghanistan.

29. And around 60% of its budget effort.

30. This figure is approximate. It is calculated by multiplying France’s proportional contribution to the main multilateral development assistance institutions by the amount spent by each of these institutions on the Sahel (see Appendix 3).

31. In 2013, France’s total outlay on conditional multilateral aid to the Sahel stood at around USD 19 million, compared with USD 14 million in 2014.

Another important fact is that African governments, with the exception of Chad and Mauritania, allocate a relatively low percentage of their total budget to military expenditure, even though military spending has risen rapidly everywhere (the figures on military spending are uncertain, however). According to the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, military outlay in 2010-2014 stood at USD 1.136 billion on average per year, with Chad accounting for more than half of this total figure (USD 613 million, or 7.1% of GDP). In the rest of the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) annual military spending averaged USD 130 million per country. Although military spending accounts for a high share of GDP in Chad and Mauritania, it remains lower across Africa, on average, than in the rest of the international community. This is due, in no small part, to donors' traditional reluctance to see aid channelled directly or indirectly to military spending. However, this stance is almost certainly no longer valid given the security challenges that the Sahel countries now face.

Finally, the majority of international programmable aid, humanitarian aid and food aid to the Sahel comes in the form of grants. This is understandable given the political and economic situation in the region. In 2014, grants accounted for 73% of total multilateral aid and the United States, which became the leading bilateral donor in 2009, provides 100% of its funding through grants. France once again stands out with 38% of its commitments and 18% of its disbursements coming in the form of loans in 2014. This situation was more due to limited grant resources than to any specific consideration of the types of programme it funded. The high share of loan commitments goes some way to explaining the gap between commitments and disbursements (disbursements stood at just 75% of commitments)³².

► The French paradox

In 2015, French ODA (disbursements minus loan repayments) stood at USD 9.23 billion, according to the DAC definition. This amounted to 7% of global development assistance. This makes France the world's fifth largest aid donor, after the United States, the United Kingdom (USD 18.7 billion), Germany and Japan (both have similar figures to France). When ODA is expressed as a share of gross national income (GNI), however, France falls to eleventh on the global list, at 0.37%. This figure is higher than the DAC average (0.30%) but well short of the international community's 0.7% target. Moreover, France's ODA/GNI ratio has fallen consistently in recent years, from 0.45% in 2012, to 0.37% in 2014. This remains higher than the historically low figure recorded in 2000 (just 0.30%). In terms of CPA plus humanitarian and

32. France's loan commitments included USD 29.8 million from AFD to fund a solar power plant in Burkina Faso to mitigate climate change impacts in the region (a project that should materialise some time between 2016 and 2019), and a USD 39.8 million loan to expand Niger's electricity grid (which should materialise between 2016 and 2018).

food aid, this figure stood at just 0.21% in 2014, marking only a slight increase since 2002 (0.19%)³³.

DAC figures show that France's total programmable aid plus humanitarian and food aid stood at USD 5,826 million (or EUR 4,370 million) in 2014. Yet for the five Sahelian countries, this figure was a meagre USD 241 million (or EUR 181 million), including USD 228 million of programmable aid. This represented an average of just EUR 36 million per country and only 4% of its total programmable aid spending. In other words, while France's total spending on programmable aid plus humanitarian and food aid has risen over the last decade, the percentage of this aid channelled to the Sahel has fallen sharply over the same period, from 10% in 2006 to 4% in 2014. By comparison, the US percentage has increased and multilateral aid, as a proportion, has remained almost unchanged. How can this situation be explained?

The majority of France's programmable aid to the Sahel is channelled through AFD³⁴. In 2014, AFD commitments to the five Sahel countries stood at EUR 391 million,³⁵ including around EUR 190 million in loans. Yet disbursements barely topped EUR 120 million. This low figure—less than total French programmable aid disbursements—clearly shows how French aid sources have become fragmented, and points to a lack of grant funding at AFD. In 2014, AFD's total grants to developing countries stood at EUR 758 million. Yet debt reduction and development contracts (EUR 426 million) accounted for a significant percentage of this figure. With the exception of Mauritania, the Sahelian countries do not receive aid through these contracts because the majority of their past funding has come through grants rather than loans. The combined total of project aid under Programme 209³⁶ and budgetary aid (less and less of which is allocated to grants) stood at just EUR 225 million. AFD's limited grant activity cannot justifiably be offset through loans, even though the agency is technically entitled to issue loans (under the IMF's Lagarde doctrine) to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Yet loans can only be justified for productive projects that will deliver guaranteed profitability. This rule is not always followed in practice, however, because the economic and political environment in these countries means that even sectors that would normally be profitable are fragile.

France's limited grant budget is the result of a deliberate political decision to limit aid from the public purse. Given that AFD currently borrows at exceptionally low interest rates on financial markets, and given the 10% figure used to calculate

33. The earliest available figure.

34. AFD is funded in part by its own resources (equity and public bond issues on financial markets) and partly by public funds. The French government does not subsidise AFD's internal operations. It does, however, provide public funds to finance development projects. All public funds received by AFD are known collectively as "the financial effort of the State". The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides funding that the agency deploys as grants for projects and NGO-led initiatives. The French Ministry of Finance provides funding that serves specific operations, such as budget support or debt relief in the form of debt reduction-development contracts. Finance ministry funding also subsidises loans by paying for interest rate points, reducing the borrower's cost.

35. Including guarantees, debt reduction and development contracts, and European grants.

36. Grant package from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while budgetary aid comes from the French Ministry of the Economy and Finance.

the grant component of loans, AFD is able to issue loans with a grant component of at least 25%. As such, these loans are included in development assistance at a stable, almost zero financial cost. As a result of these unique circumstances, France's ODA/GNI ratio has fallen only marginally (see below), with loans costing the State just EUR 311 million in 2014. Yet downward pressure on grants has reduced the proportion of State aid allocated to the Sahel—fragile States that have little capacity for debt—and to non-productive sectors (health, education, rural development, etc.). Generally speaking, France falls well short of the UN target for developed countries to spend 0.15% to 0.20% of GNI on LDCs. In 2014, it achieved a figure of just 0.9%.³⁷

The crucial role of grants

"We have to increase grants if we want to respond to the challenges facing crisis-affected and vulnerable countries and social sectors, and develop innovative financial instruments"

Rémy Rioux 2016

► Development assistance outlook in the Sahel

40

What is the outlook for French assistance in the Sahel? Reflecting the will of the French President, the Council of Ministers stated on 14 October 2015 that "French climate funding will increase from EUR 3 billion per year today to EUR 5 billion per year in 2020. To meet this target, AFD's annual lending capacity will rise by EUR 4 billion by 2020". To maintain AFD's loan/grant ratio, there are also plans to "increase the volume of grants gradually over the coming years, to a level EUR 370 million higher in 2020 than it stands today". Project grant authorisations (Programme 209) stood at just EUR 207 million in 2014 and EUR 210 million in 2015. The level has been set at EUR 264 million for 2016. Despite France's challenging public finances, it is absolutely necessary to continue expanding Programme 209, especially since debt reduction and development contract grants will dry up over the next few years and the scheduled amount of 580 million³⁸ although an increase, remains well short of needs. AFD-managed aid grants are also supplemented by grants delegated to other donors, notably the European Commission (141 million in 2015). While this funding source may well increase in 2016 and beyond, thanks to the Sahel and Lake Chad Window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the fund comes with a number of restrictive conditions and it is not in AFD's interests to move from a donor (joint funding with the Commission) to become an operator of the

37. See *Development finance: achieving a better distribution of ODA—an action plan to meet the UN commitment of 0.15-0.20% of GNI as ODA to LDCs*. DAC Senior Level Meeting, 7-8 October 2014, OECD Conference Centre, Paris.

38. EUR 210 million (current amount) + EUR 370 million (planned increase).

European Commission in the Sahel. As suggested repeatedly in various parliamentary reports over the last 10 years, a more desirable move would be to redress the balance between the multilateral and bilateral portions of French development assistance in favour of the latter and to coordinate France's bilateral and multilateral funding more effectively. Questions may be asked about France's current donation to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which stands at EUR 360 million per year—a figure that seems excessive when compared with direct French assistance for health systems strengthening projects (more than 10 times lower than this number).

The international outlook is more encouraging. The European Union pledged its support for the Sahel back in 2011, when it adopted the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. Initially covering Mali, Mauritania and Niger, the strategy was expanded to include Burkina Faso and Chad in March 2014³⁹. The Action Plan, adopted in April 2015, sets out plans to mobilise EUR 5 billion, including EUR 2.5 billion under the European Development Fund (EDF). At the 2015 Valletta Summit, the EU created an Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. The fund was assigned EUR 1.8 billion of European funding, including a ring-fenced component of EUR 1 billion for the Sahel and Lake Chad. In 2013, the World Bank launched a Sahel Initiative targeting the same five countries, including a development pledge of EUR 1.5 billion and a commitment to coordinated action at the regional level. Will disbursements from these two initiatives match the stated pledges? Will resource allocation align with actual needs in these countries? Past experience has shown that sectors key to stability in the Sahel, such as agricultural development, local development, technical training and population growth limitation, have historically been overlooked by multilateral aid.

► Recurring criticism of donor responses

International aid has long been the subject of criticism, including from recipient countries (Cohen & al. 2006). This criticism has tended to soften in recent years, particularly following the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness in Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011).⁴⁰ Yet many problems persist, especially when it comes to assistance for fragile States (OECD DAC, 2016).

39. The EU disbursed USD 18,453.72 million to developing countries in 2014. Only USD 967 million of this funding went to the Sahel. France paid USD 2,349 million to the EU in the same year, with approximately USD 123 million destined for the Sahel.

40. The five fundamental principles of aid effectiveness are: 1. Ownership: Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption. 2. Alignment: Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems. 3. Harmonisation: Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication. 4. Results: Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured. 5. Mutual accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results.

The first question, which we have already discussed, is the often lengthy delay between commitment and disbursement—a situation that is at odds with urgent needs in the Sahel. This delay is due, in part, to the myriad conditions imposed on recipient countries because donors do not trust governments to implement the necessary reforms and because they fear that aid will be used for a purpose other than to help the target populations. Yet this behaviour is contradictory to the principles of recipient country ownership of policy and donor alignment with the latter. Because donors impose their own conditions and make little effort to harmonise their procedures between themselves, public administrations in the Sahelian countries have to spend a lot of time managing their relations with the donors, although they are already weak. It is a challenge to establish a climate of trust between donors and aid recipients, to ensure more effective task-sharing between donors, and to coordinate their activities on the ground. Progress has been made in recent years to try to establish a European development assistance system drawing on the combined expertise of European bilateral aid agencies and the European Commission; there is hope that these efforts will bear fruit.⁴¹ There have also been significant improvements in terms of cooperation between the Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and IMF) and the UN. There nevertheless remains a prevailing trend for some sectors or regions to be overwhelmed with interventions while others are left out in the cold.

Local capacity building is often relegated to a position of secondary importance in fragile or conflict-affected situations where the need for urgent action means that international operators (NGOs, UN agencies and consulting firms) have to be called in. The weakness of public authorities means that donors often have to set up ad hoc services or agencies to manage their projects, seeking short-term impact over long-term institutional strengthening. Yet capacity building is a highly effective way to prevent recurrent crises. Relieving local authorities of even their most basic sovereign duties serves to perpetuate the image of the “incapable government” and involuntarily lands the country in an inescapable “humanitarian trap”. Donors have little incentive to build local government capacities. Because capacity building programmes only bear fruit in the medium and long terms—outcomes that are difficult to sell to the public (unlike schools, bridges and health centres). Over recent decades, the Sahel countries have gradually established the necessary legal frameworks and financial systems to ensure better spending transparency. Yet this system suffers from a failure to build the capacities of local institutions, which are therefore unable to provide services effectively at the point of delivery—even though this is essential to restoring stability in crisis-affected areas. One of the objectives of aid should be to ensure that public authorities have the capacity to deliver the services that their citizens need on the ground. This means that funding should be aligned with the so-called “3Ds” approach—decentralisation, deconcentration and devolution (of public services to private and/or non-profit operators).

41. EU Practitioners’ Network working papers no.1, “Towards an improved European response to situations of crisis and fragility”, 2016.

The social and political situation in the Sahel is complex, variable across territories and liable to change rapidly. This means that aid organisations need to understand the history of these societies, the political economy of institutions, and the needs of local populations—something that can only be obtained through an in-depth assessment of the situation on the ground. Yet aid agencies working in the Sahel are under-staffed and are under intense pressure to commit and disburse funds. The combined influence of urgent needs and limited financial resources leaves little time for surveys, sociological studies and experiments. It also means that development interventions may inadvertently compound tension or conflict factors. While other countries have established close working relationships between aid researchers and operators and between donors and think-tanks, France seems to have made little effort to base its aid decision-making on research findings. There is therefore a pressing need for closer cooperation between the spheres of theory and practice, with aid institutions making a more meaningful contribution to the production of academic knowledge⁴².

Criticisms of aid mechanisms

“DONORS, HAUNTED BY THE SPECTRE OF IMPROPER USE OF FUNDS (and therefore of budgetary aid), have established a highly restrictive system involving strict spending controls and financial system audits that slow down, and in some cases block, the implementation of funding. On the one hand, donors want to give governments more power and sovereignty (especially budgetary sovereignty). Yet on the other hand, they do not trust governments to manage these funds without undue influence from lobbyists and corrupt forces. Yet the checks and controls are so stringent that they undermine their very objective. In short, this system is an attack on State budgetary sovereignty. Civil servants working for African governments have likened their situation to “monitored freedom”.

[...] “In a recent article,⁴³ I explained how decades of development assistance policy have led to a sort of “two-speed” government, creating small pockets of bureaucracy with immense privileges (high wages, fuel, computers, etc.). For better or worse, these elites always manage to achieve their own objectives. This situation stands in stark contrast with the rest of the system, mostly outside the capital, where resources are scarce. This policy tends to exacerbate internal conflicts within public authorities and intensifies corruption. Some civil servants see their colleagues (with the same educational

42. Tools for analysis that meet the best international standards will need to be mobilised (such as “do no harm” to help develop more conflict-sensitive aid, and “theory of change” methods that seek to explain the underlying assumptions of interventions and link them to robust research findings).

43. “Une administration à deux vitesses. Projets de développement et construction de l’Etat au Sahel”, Cahiers d’Études Africaines, LI (2-3), 202-203, 2011, pp. 427-452.

background) put in charge of development projects or working as consultants and earning in two days what they earn in a month. And of course, they want to follow the same path. So they do whatever is necessary to achieve that ambition. When people get appointed to lead a project, others think they must have curried favour to get there. This, in turn, has fostered predatory behaviour among segments of the government outside the aid sector."

Giorgio Blundo

"IN MANY CASES, THE INPUT OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS is not sorted readily as that of managers, agronomists or engineers. Development actors rarely take the time to talk to anthropologist because they are drowning under the weight of time-consuming administrative and bureaucratic pressure and have to spend a considerable amount of time writing reports. In general, people simply don't take time to talk to others. It's an appalling situation, especially given how important it is to understand the context and the interplay between actors."

François Grünewald

Given the extremely unstable context in the Sahel, aid projects need to be flexible enough to adapt to the rapidly changing realities. This, in turn, demands an overhaul of aid allocation procedures whereby decision-making bodies (boards or delegations) only have a say on the general outlines of projects and programmes, even if this means reporting back to these bodies later on project implementation⁴⁴.

► Are multi-donor trust funds the answer to ineffective donor coordination?

Multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs)—designed to pool funding in post-crisis contexts—have been around for more than 20 years. MDTFs have a mixed track record. Some have helped improve aid quality in contexts demanding vast resource mobilisation and effective donor coordination,⁴⁵ while others have been assembled too quickly, adding a further layer of complexity to the aid architecture and pushing up transaction costs⁴⁶.

44. Such as the World Bank's "Adaptive Program Lending" (APL) mechanism.

45. This was the case with the MDTF in Afghanistan, which managed only a small fraction of international aid yet clearly demonstrated the benefits of this type of mechanism.

46. "Effective coordination between donors is critical when it comes to country strategy. When dealing with complex situations, vast needs and weak governments, efforts to pool information and intellectual resources and distribute roles and tasks help to eliminate duplication and waste and guarantee against contradictory interventions. Often, however, attempts to build centralised multi-donor intervention programmes are often more costly in terms of time and transaction costs. As the saying goes, less if often more." Castellanet (2010) p.54.

In 2013, the European Commission signed an agreement with other donors authorising it to set up and manage European trust funds. These new EU funds are specifically designed to deal with crisis or post-crisis situations. The Commission's new funding instrument adds to the EU's existing aid system, in the same manner as the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF). The Commission now has the power to facilitate collective European action where such action is necessary in fragile contexts. It can do so by encouraging joint aid implementation, handling "public goods" that are of benefit to all members of the European aid system (pooled analyses, expertise, implementing capacities, etc.).⁴⁷

The EU therefore deserves praise for establishing the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa-- or the "Emergency Trust Fund" for short-- at the Valletta Summit in 2015.⁴⁸ The fund has three separate windows: Sahel and Lake Chad,⁴⁹ Horn of Africa, and North Africa.⁵¹ Its stated aim is to supplement existing European aid instruments (which are considered too laborious and long-winded to cope with urgent situations) by offering a flexible and rapid response to challenges in the region. The management committee, including representatives of the European Commission and contributing Member States, decides on the operations that the fund will finance (following bids from various European Member State aid agencies). The fund reflects the EU's understanding of the need for urgent action. However, by delegating responsibility for project implementation to development agencies, foundations and NGOs, the Commission limits its own decision-making time but does not necessarily fast-track project implementation.⁵²

47. The EU created its first MDTF—the Békou Trust Fund (*békou* means "hope" in Sango)—in July 2014 (represented by DG DEVCO, DG ECHO and the EEAS) alongside three Member States (France, Germany and the Netherlands), in order to stabilise and rebuild CAR. The experiment appears to have been a success, and we would like to thank Irchad Razaaly, the fund's manager, for his testimony.

48. The Trust Fund pools together money from different European Commission financial instruments under the EU budget, the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) reserve, and the integration of some funds from the Regional Indicative Programmes for West, Central and Eastern Africa, along with contributions from National Indicative Programmes for the Horn of Africa. Further funding has been drawn from other financial instruments such as the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) to address the crises across the regions concerned. The Commission-managed instruments amount to EUR 1.8 billion and are supplemented with new funds from EU Member States and other donors. France has contributed EUR 3 million. The fund has already committed funding of EUR 500 million to 36 projects and programmes in the Sahel.

49. We would like to thank Roland Sourd, manager of the Sahel and Lake Chad Window of the Emergency Trust Fund (European Commission, DG International Cooperation and Development), for his valuable and informative interview.

50. The eligible countries are: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

51. The fund covers the following areas of action: prevention of irregular migration, repatriation assistance, stability, security and resilience, with the young being the principal beneficiaries of these programmes. The overall aim is to provide assistance in marginalised outlying areas and to help local forces counter violent extremism through a holistic approach.

52. European aid is funded by Member States. When the European Commission delegates part of its resources to a Member State (or its public development agency), this makes the financial circuit more complex than simple bilateral funding, and pushes up administrative costs.

In conclusion, an MDTF is a supplementary structure that complements the traditional bilateral and multilateral donor system without replacing it. In order to address the proliferation of aid sources, a single donor government needs to be responsible for implementing the multi-donor fund (at least in the Sahel or in a given sector). However, in political terms, this is not a realistic proposition.

► **Summing up**

The international community spends considerably more on development assistance than on military intervention. However, France's military spending in the region is significantly higher than its total expenditure on programmable aid plus emergency relief aid (food and humanitarian aid). There is a pressing need to redress the imbalance between France's military outlay and its development assistance spending by increasing the latter. France needs to increase the bilateral portion of its development assistance spending and to disburse more of its aid in the form of grants (which are essential to action in the Sahel). This, in turn, would increase France's CPA share spent on the Sahel, which fell from 10% in 2006 to 4% in 2014.

The international community has launched a range of initiatives, including the Sahel Regional Action Plan and the World Bank's Sahel Initiative. The Sahel and Lake Chad Window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund is a welcome contribution.

There is a pressing need for closer cooperation between theory and practice with aid institutions making a more meaningful contribution to the production of academic knowledge to help address the complex reality on the ground.

Urgent development needs in the Sahel must compel the international community to be more flexible and to relax its conditionality. This, in turn, would help to reduce lengthy delays between commitment and disbursement.

4. Insecurity at the heart of initiatives

The ongoing violence in the Sahel should prompt the international community to strengthen its security activities and adapt its intervention methods to support development—because insecurity should not be a pretext for inaction on development objectives.

► Day-to-day security: the missing link in international initiatives in the Sahel

Beyond the military actions led by France and the United Nations, the aim should be to strengthen national security forces, in particular by allowing them to address the causes of day-to-day insecurity. In practice, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is struggling to fulfil its mission of protecting the population because its resources are needed to defend its own barracks and to accompany the supply convoys that are continually coming under attack from jihadists or armed groups. Yet, the national armies in Mali, Cameroon, Niger (and Nigeria)⁵³ are facing an extremely difficult situation. Their equipment is a disparate mix of items from different sources, often from China or Russia, and poorly maintained. In Mali, both the army and the National Guard are in more acceptable shape than the air force which lacks the helicopters that are essential for covering great swathes of land and particularly the road network. Despite the existing training schemes implemented as a result of international aid, the armies face a severe lack of well-trained officers.⁵⁴ In addition, there is no national structure (and even less of a regional one) for intelligence coordination (interview with General Beth).

There is a dangerous hiatus between the international community's conception of security, which is dominated by jihadist terrorism, and the view of the people who are more affected by the crime and racketeering they experience on a daily basis than by the breakthrough of jihadist groups which often look after their local roots.

53. The degree of harm caused by Boko Haram and the weakness of the Nigerian army also argue in favour of strengthening the armies in Niger, Mali and Cameroon, which are involved in the struggle against the group.

54. According to General Beth, the armies in Chad and Burkina Faso are "effective at peacekeeping missions but not at combating terrorism". Mauritania, for its part, has tackled the security issue seriously and, having been the country most affected by terrorism in 2008-2009, no longer comes under attack.

In practice, the costly international security measures put in place in the Sahel, designed to combat “terrorist armed groups”, are not providing security and justice for people on a day-to-day basis, nor addressing the significant increase in trafficking in the region. The police and local gendarmerie are relatively undeveloped despite the fact that they are essential for the security of the people, leading some to join the armed groups to protect themselves in an increasingly dangerous environment (Cf. General Clément Bollée, Paul Collier and François Grünewald and ICG, 6 July 2016). It will only be possible to break the vicious circle of insecurity if there is a significant investment in combating criminal activity and trafficking, particularly in rural areas where there is either no gendarmerie or they have no resources. This needed investment is sorely lacking from the budgeting process of the main international donors.

Peace-building operations can be run alongside security actions. These might include multi-party dialogue initiatives to strengthen the warring parties’ capacity for resolving their problems without violence, or programmes to increase civil society’s capacity for imposing transparency on decision makers. According to military leaders themselves, the operations carried out to support the negotiations between the various parties to the Algiers Agreement and the support for all stakeholders to strengthen the legitimacy of emerging from crisis through dialogue are just as important as the presence of national and international armies, according to military leaders themselves.⁵⁵

The damaging effects of criminal activity

“PEOPLE IN MALI TOLD US, “We won’t have confidence in the State until there are people who can prove to us that there is a justice system that ensures our animals won’t be stolen when we get to the market. And that if someone does steal from us, the thieves are caught and sent to prison. The rest (education, health, etc.) we can deal with it. But if we’re afraid to go to the market, if we’re afraid to send our girls out to fetch water and collect wood because they’re going to be raped, if we’re afraid that there are no gendarmes or police or a justice system that isn’t corrupt, then the rest counts for nothing. There’s no point building schools or installing water supply points because people won’t use them.”

François Grünewald

It is essential to allow governments to increase their spending on security. We have noted the very long-standing reluctance among international donors to fund military or police spending for fear of encouraging coups d’état or strengthening

55. Without additional grant resources, the mission risks underinvestment. The United Nations could also invest more in this essential aspect of international cooperation, rather than providing humanitarian aid—a role that can be fulfilled by NGOs at a much lower cost (Benoît Miribel).

armies that show little respect for human rights, or because of concerns about security costs, which are very high, ousting spending on the development aid needed to eradicate the economic and social causes of crises. Security spending (apart from some exceptions—cf. Appendix 3) is therefore not included in development aid by the OECD's DAC. An increasing awareness of the importance of personal security for development has recently led the OECD to launch a discussion on the appropriateness of including security spending more broadly in development aid. This means recognising the complementary relationship between security and development spending and, for the Sahel, the need for additional resources. An indirect way of enabling governments to devote a larger share of their budget to spending on the military, police and gendarmerie is to use budget assistance, which, whether or not it is allocated to particular items, creates some room for manoeuvre. Most donors, however, currently view the transparency and effectiveness of the public finances as too weak for widespread use of budget assistance in countries in the Sahel. Transparency and accountability mechanisms for security spending therefore appear to be a prerequisite for increasing international funding of security spending in African States. This transparency could be based on preparing white papers to clearly identify the threats and how to respond to them, and by military programming laws, with these various documents being validated by the national forces directly involved in the countries' military support.

In practical terms, strengthening the capacity of the African security forces to interact with civilians is necessary for security spending to contribute effectively to security in the Sahel. Capacity building programmes for armies, gendarmeries and police forces in the Sahel must be part of a long-term approach, of probably more than a decade—the minimum time required for these activities to have a real impact. Many donors (such as the United States, France, Great Britain and the European Union) fund training courses in security occupations, but they are too dispersed and suffer from a lack of continuity. Although we can only assess the results of such training in the long term, not taking action to build capacity among key players in African security is not an option. Innovative activities could be envisaged, such as establishing civil security bodies dedicated to keeping the population safe, combining the roles of firefighting, first aid and local police. Uniformed forces of this kind, from diverse ethnic groups, exclusively dedicated to the protection of civilian populations, could be used to train and employ tens of thousands of young people in the Sahel while helping to pass on a civic conscience and ensure a presence of State representatives close to citizens. Lessons could be learned from the experiences of adapted military service⁵⁶.

56. The initiative in Chad for a "mobile gendarmerie" that uses light motorised equipment and officers who lead a nomadic life on camels could inspire similar initiatives in other countries in the sub-region, that are facing rising rural insecurity largely due to problems with securing pastoral mobility. Broadening the response to include criminal activity in the Sahel should involve international organisations such as Interpol, which would be given a mandate for capacity-building and the corresponding resources.

Another important initiative would be to activate the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR) provided for under the Algiers Agreement, whose implementation has been slow (Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Mali). Although each context is specific, there are lessons to be learned from the successful experience in Côte d'Ivoire led by General Bruno Clément-Bollée. This shows, in the box below, how ex-combatants can contribute to the development of an informal "secure" sector provided they are "resocialised".

Lessons from the Ivorian experience of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER EVERY CASE AS UNIQUE. There are no ready-made solutions. Nonetheless, many points in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme in Côte d'Ivoire apply to Mali.

Since 1990, there have been 23 DDR programmes in Africa, whose common characteristic is that they have all failed in broad terms, in some cases even feeding a further crisis. Only one, in Côte d'Ivoire, can be viewed as a real success. The conditions for the success of DDR, in this particular case, were down to a combination of positive contextual factors (peace had been restored and accepted by all Côte d'Ivoire citizens, and it is an affluent country with the resources needed for reconstruction), sensible and appropriate decisions taken by President Ouattara, a realistic approach to job creation and a willingness to take bold steps to lead the process. But probably one of the major reasons is the fact that Côte d'Ivoire was willing to take ownership of the management of its DDR. Indeed, the national authorities told the international community that it intended to lead the process and ask it to support it, not impose it on them. In all other cases, it has generally been the local United Nations mission that has imposed its vision, standards and methods, creating mistrust and suspicion among those on whom it wants to impose its rigid and dogmatic planning (which is the case in the Central African Republic (CAR) today, with a robust dialogue taking place between the national authorities and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic—MINUSCA). Côte d'Ivoire was thus able to assert its point of view, which allowed a new, appropriate and original phase—resocialisation—to be designed and implemented in DDR processes. Resocialisation is based on the principle that reintegration into the workforce is not sufficient to ensure the sustainability of the process; there also needs to be social reintegration that provides first, an opportunity for ex-combatants returning to civil society to be prepared

psychologically and secondly, raises awareness among future host communities to help them accept this particular group of people.

The DDR process in Côte d'Ivoire was carried out in only three years (2012-2015), a deadline imposed by the country's political calendar, with presidential elections taking place at the end of 2015—which meant that the DDR issue had to be dealt with in advance to ensure a peaceful electoral process. In total, 69,506 of the 74,000 ex-combatants identified were disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated. It therefore proved possible to create around 70,000 jobs in just under three years, after providing training for all programme participants.

In terms of reintegration into the workplace, widespread use was made of the informal sector, which represents more than 80% of economic activity in Côte d'Ivoire (including mechanics, bakers and other small jobs carried out on the street). It was important to be realistic and using this sector was therefore inevitable, particularly as it sparked interest among ex-combatants in terms of redeployment and there was scope for some work to be done around “formalising” small activities in the informal sector.

Indeed, the main characteristic of the informal sector is the extreme precariousness of the occupations people are employed in. It was therefore important to make informal economic activities more secure, in order to avoid people tipping from precariousness into destitution, which unfortunately happens regularly with occupations of this kind all over Africa. Several tools were therefore implemented to secure jobs in the informal sector taken by numerous ex-combatants.

Four keys to securing activities in the informal sector:

“Firstly, throughout the DDR process, ex-combatants received a payment of 40,000 CFA francs (about 67 USD) from the UN. We made them all open an account and used it as something of a learning tool: “You’re getting 40,000 CFA francs a month—now you can plan.” The idea of planning what they are going to do gives them a new perspective which, with some support, can have very positive results.

Secondly, there was a solid training course in place, certified by a qualification issued by an official State body, for any proposed activity that could lead to an occupation. As a result, ex-combatants were officially certified to do their job.

Thirdly, each economic activity was registered with the relevant professional association. That means the activity is officially recognised by the State. Moreover, the fact that it is registered, which implies the payment of some kind of annual tax, contributes to the beneficiary’s social re-education, so there is a reward for their financial efforts.

Fourthly, registering for welfare insurance (about 1,000 CFA francs a

month) covers 80% of their own and their families' health care expenses. Overall, combining these four mechanisms with occupations in the informal sector helps to secure each beneficiary's professional activities.

The private sector was initially very reluctant about the DDR process, following the difficulties it had encountered during the ten years of crisis. Nonetheless, it was possible to bring people around by focusing on very specific issues, pointing out that unless everyone, in their own way and at their own level, made a little bit of an effort to solve the security problem, there was a real risk of returning to crisis. A second argument was that we didn't simply expect them to hire people and that there were other ways of participating, by taking part in vocational training, for example, or purchasing services from ex-combatants (i.e. paying for the work done by them). Moreover, it is quite risky to hire people who have lived through ten years of crisis and simply put them into host communities overnight without preparing them first. There needs to be social as well as professional training to ensure the long-term viability of the process. Once an ex-combatant who has reintegrated feels comfortable in their village, then everything's fine. So to meet this requirement, we developed the concept of resocialisation: a month boarding in the camps (supervised by specially trained teams of gendarmes), during which the ex-combatants took part in modules developed by UNHCR, the ICRC, the UN, etc. on the basics of civic behaviour, managing a family unit, human rights, gender, drug and alcohol prevention, AIDS, etc. The aim was to support them in reflecting on what they had experienced and help them "close the door" on a past they needed to leave behind. The other aspect of resocialisation was preparing for the future ("closing one door to open another"), so we had ex-combatants who had already reintegrated come in and talk to them about what they had done. We even had some businesses, training centres and so on do the same."

General Bruno Clément-Bollée

In fact, all sovereign institutions (army, gendarmerie, police, justice and territorial administration) need to be strengthened as quickly as possible. This involves significant costs for recruiting, training and equipping them. Security and administrative controls are necessary even in underpopulated regions, otherwise they risk becoming grey areas where the rule of law does not exist and is replaced by parallel powers that provide a cursory form of security and rudimentary justice but are nevertheless viewed as preferable to widespread chaos.

► Insecurity: a pretext for inaction

The insecurity that is rife in the Sahel must not be a pretext for inaction, given that the very absence of development is a factor in violence. But it is also why donors must adapt their ways of working.

Given the sociocultural complexity of the Sahel, international aid can, unless care is taken, actually exacerbate conflicts. The requirement “do no harm” has therefore been viewed as a principle governing interventions in States in crisis (Anderson 1999, OECD 2007, Aline Brachet Appendix 4). In practice, it is less poverty or inequalities that are a source of conflicts than the sense of discrimination some ethnic, religious and generational groups feel. Any international cooperation programme can involuntarily favour certain groups over others, which is why the determination “do no harm” must feature in the choice of projects both when they are being examined and throughout their implementation. This means making space for field studies in order to get a clear understanding of the sociocultural and economic origins of tensions and ensure that the behaviour of aid participants do not exacerbate them. Training for personnel in charge of cooperation programmes and their local partners is undoubtedly necessary to raise awareness and establish professional instincts that are sensitive to conflicts.

In areas of high insecurity, development agencies are unable to send their own expatriate personnel into the field. Yet numerous local non-governmental organisations work there on a daily basis. Using these organisations means taking into account the risk of passing the dangers onto local stakeholders and adapting the methods used for managing and monitoring funds. In fact, using local NGOs helps national stakeholders to take ownership of aid.

The relationship between development professionals and the army is complex and not a matter for taboos or simplistic shortcuts. Both professional communities share the same end but have different and complementary interim objectives; they need to learn to understand each other better to cooperate more effectively in the field. Several types of interaction help reaching both sides’ objectives: in the first place, the military and development professionals have a lot to gain by sharing their analyses of changing contexts and needs (cf. François Grünewald)—although it is accepted that they cannot share everything. In some contexts, the army can also secure the construction of a road, dam or factory, make sure projects receive the supplies they need or oversee infrastructure maintenance as part of their patrols. But looking back over two decades of living together in conflict areas, it is clear that there are risks associated with combining the two roles. This contributes to confusion in the eyes of the population between the parties involved in the conflict and international aid actors. “The AFD’s position is that, if the objective of an operation is to encourage the population to support military stakeholders, then it is for the army to implement it, without any visible cooperation with development actors. In practice, once the “security bubble” has burst, the people who have implemented development projects risk being targeted because of their association with the

armed forces. If the aim is development work or providing humanitarian aid, then it is the development professionals who should be in charge, without any visible connection to the security sector. These principles don't prevent frequent discussions between the two sides, but they do stop them from sharing any kind of platform in areas of armed conflict" (Olivier Ray). The development agencies need to retain control over where to locate their projects and diversify the areas in which they work so as not to give the population any incentive to continue or resume the violence, in order to benefit from development projects.

Finally, we should be aware that the difficulties inherent in development activities in areas of insecurity justify attempts, as a priority, to secure the regions that border areas of high instability but which themselves are not yet considered dangerous, in order to avoid spreading insecurity.

How aid organisations and the private sector can act in areas of insecurity

"THE OBLIGATION TO USE LOCAL NGOS has positive as well as negative effects; it entails knowledge sharing and training. We know there is some "leakage" (there can be fraud even with invoices!) but it is still possible to work together. It is important to remain vigilant: national personnel can sometimes be in danger themselves if they are identified as being affiliated with an international organisation. And sometimes the actions of NGOs can be picked up by those in power locally."

Benoît Miribel

Marc Vergnet gives the example in Agadez of the business run by a Tuareg technician who installed and maintained a pump (in collaboration with Aventus and the Observatoire social international).

"THE FACT THAT A LOCAL PERSON WORKS under international funding doesn't seem like a source of insecurity to me. First of all, the Tuareg man we chose was from the local area and worked with local businesses. Secondly, you're improving well-being for the pastoralist communities. The watering points used by pastoralists are very sensitive, because they are part of a historical cultural activity. If I were a terrorist, I'd be careful before I started attacking them. So I don't think it's problematic if we have locals working on the project. On the contrary, they'll be in a stronger position; they'll be creating jobs and they'll be a barrier and a way of preventing the terrorist groups from penetrating. For me, insecurity has increased because we've stopped doing anything; and the more insecure things are, the less people do."

Another example is Northern Cameroon.

We had a programme of 2,500 villages and it was easy to find

facilitators who went to each of them an average of eight times to help people understand and organise themselves. A project is successful when it satisfies a real need. You provide water to the people you've been talking to, who've had the time to understand what you're going to do and who are prepared to take ownership of the project. Where we made a mistake was installing pumps in villages that weren't asking for one or without defining the rules of the game clearly (i.e. that they needed to maintain them).” The same kind of project could be set up in Kidal.”

Marc Vergnet

As Adeline Lescanne Gautier explains, it is difficult but not impossible for the private sector to work in the Sahel.

“WE FACE A FEW DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF INSECURITY. Now, for example, it's really complicated in Niger, where we send people fairly regularly. The people who come from Nutriset don't stay in hotels in Niamey but with our partners. We adopt specific security standards. For example, we make sure that missions stop on a Friday and that people aren't here on the final evening. Our staff do not go out except to visit the factory with a driver who is sent by the factory and whom we know. Also, we try to take different routes each day.

Sometimes local employees can also face problems because they are working in a franchise of a French company. There aren't many food-processing companies in Niger and we quickly became the biggest one in the country. So we were soon targeted. We also became the subject of political discourse about wanting “to get the French out because we are capable of managing our own development”, particularly during election periods. There is this kind of background message that “the French are making money off us”.

Adeline Lescanne-Gautier

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Keeping the right distance between the army and humanitarian aid

“IN THE CASE OF A NATURAL DISASTER OR EPIDEMIC there are no problems around effective cooperation between the military and NGOs; when the crisis is political it's much more complicated. In that case there are different stakeholders and if there is an intervention or peacekeeping force, it's rarely seen as being very fair. It's seen as a representative either of the west or some local alliance. As a result, when NGOs cooperate openly and closely with the military it can sometimes harm their ability to reach local populations. In

this respect, we could criticise the “United Nations integrated missions” (i.e. when the UN is both a provider of “humanitarian” services and is responsible for maintaining or rebuilding peace). The quick-impact projects carried out by the military may make sense to local populations, but the problem comes from the imprint they leave: the helping hand is also the hand that can clamp down. In the political context of the Sahel, it is dangerous because it undermines the ability to respect impartiality and neutrality. Conversely, it is essential that NGOs should not have to arm themselves to ensure their own protection. That’s the role of the military and the gendarmes”

Benoît Miribel

► Summing up

To reduce the gap between the international community’s conception of security, which is dominated by jihadist terrorism, and the view of the people, who are more affected by the crime and racketeering they experience on a day-to-day basis, particularly in rural areas, the international community needs to agree to fund a share of national security spending, which represents a significant share of African budgets.

Building capacity among local security actors, whether they are military personnel, gendarmes or police officers, requires long-term programmes (a decade long!) to make a difference to citizens’ quality of life. If local people are to accept national security actors, the latter should also take on significant roles in civil protection or as firefighters, first-aiders and local police officers.

Activating the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR) programme provided for under the Algiers Agreement is necessary and could draw on the successful experience in Côte d’Ivoire.

Insecurity must not be a pretext for not supporting development. This implies cooperation between military forces and development actors in terms of information. But each must remain within its own area of expertise to avoid the risks associated with combining the two roles. This contributes to confusion in the eyes of the population between the parties involved in the conflict and international aid actors.

5. Actions for development

The great development potential in the Sahel

"We need to challenge the view that has prevailed for several decades (even before countries gained their independence), which has seen the Sahara-Sahel region as big, empty, without potential and useless. The only valid question is: how are we going to develop it?"

Laurent Bossard

► Maintaining a balance between quick-impact activities and actions that are effective over the long term

However necessary they may be, the most structuring activities that ensure development have little impact in the very short term. To move away from violence, people need to rediscover their faith in progress and feel more confident about the role of the State. This is why it is important to combine quick-impact activities with long-term actions, so that people perceive the benefits of stopping the violence or "peace dividends". Moreover, activities with a significant social component are the foundation on which development activities can be built.

In relation to education, for example, it is possible to quickly rebuild and reopen schools while implementing long-term activities, such as teacher training (see the PAQAMA project on primary education in Gao, where 25% of schools are closed). To take another example: infrastructure development can include "labour-intensive" components, which get people back to work immediately and often offer them longer-term prospects for vocational training. If activities are phased, small visible projects (such as building ponds, dykes, small irrigated areas, etc.) can be implemented rapidly in the context of local investment programmes, which can be taken over in the medium term by the public authorities—as, for example, with the "Human Security and Development in Northern Mali" project run by the AFD and co-financed by the National Investment Agency for Local Authorities.

► Reinvesting in neglected sectors: education, family agriculture and mobility of people and goods

1. Primary education.

School enrolment rates in the Sahel have grown rapidly during the last twenty years. Under current demographic growth, simply maintaining rates at their current level implies an enormous effort that is beyond the capacity of African budgets alone. Furthermore, as we have noted previously, growth in school-enrolment rates have sometimes been accompanied by a sharp fall in the quality of public schooling. This fall in quality must be addressed urgently to curb disaffection from public schools to the benefit of Koranic schools. Indeed, some teachers are barely literate and have only limited knowledge of the French language they are supposed to be teaching. They are very poorly paid and often absent, as they are busy doing other work to supplement their income. They do not provide long-term supervision of the school which becomes a place of violence, especially for girls. Finally, since the professional content of the teaching is non-existent, public schooling does not meet the requirements of families in medium-sized towns, rural areas and the outskirts of Bamako in particular.

France has particular responsibility for education in the Sahel, where most countries are French-speaking. Admittedly, in 2014 it allocated 13% of its programmable aid (APA) to the education sector (all levels combined)⁵⁷ compared with 2% for the United States and multilateral donors. However, given the limited amount of French APA (USD 241 million), payments to support education only represented USD 29 million for all five countries (or EUR 21.8 million). The limited share of APA allocated to education contrasts with the share devoted to health, a sector that traditionally attracts support from donors, no doubt because eradicating communicable diseases is viewed as an international public good. The respective shares of APA budgets allocated to the eradication of communicable diseases are: France 28%, the United States 21% and multilateral donors 9%.

Figures 5 and 6 show that the international community – including France – has reduced its aid for education in the Sahelian countries since 2009.

57. If we deduct the share allocated to French schools (USD 7 million dollars) the proportion falls to 9%.

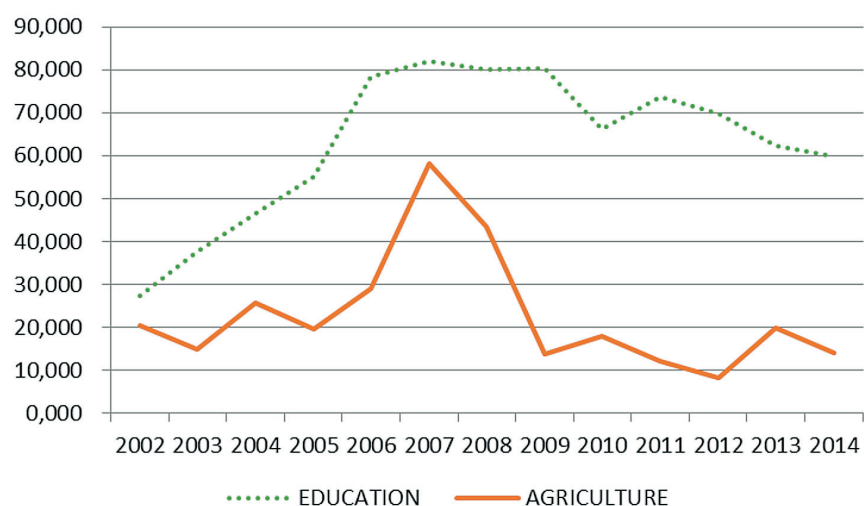
Figure 5. Change in Official Development Assistance paid in the Sahel by all donors for education and agriculture (2002-2014) (Gross payments in millions of current USD)



Source: OECD

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Figure 6. Change in Official Development Assistance paid in the Sahel by France for education and agriculture (2002-2014) (Gross payments in millions of current USD)



Source: OECD

Activities to support education should occur at both the macro and microeconomic level.

The first type of activity should aim at strengthening the ministries responsible for primary education since, without support, the Ministry of Education will have little incentive to implement real structural reforms. The central administration must be able to have a clear picture of all schools in the country, particularly in terms of the quality of teaching. It must not devote its efforts simply to building schools when training and management of teachers, supervisors and inspectors is the weak point in education policy. It is high time to upgrade the teacher training colleges, which should be obligatory for all teachers, and give inspectors the means to travel around the country. On the other hand, it may be hard to find good candidates for teaching jobs without a very substantial increase in their compensation and the assurance that they will actually be paid. There should be a degree of pay flexibility to encourage people to take up posts far from the capital and in less safe areas. It is in the remote regions that teachers suffer the most from a lack of teaching materials and have to travel long distances to get paid. The development of the mobile phone as a vector for secure financial transactions could improve the situation.

This new salary policy is obviously dependent on securing a commitment from donors to fund teachers' salaries over the long term. A policy of this kind would yield two dividends: improving the quality of primary teaching, and creating a new opportunity for young people who have continued in education at least up to their *brevet*; recruitment of this group into the civil service has dried up, which is one reason why families have left the public schools.

A whole series of initiatives has already been implemented at the local level and could be expanded, by working with the numerous NGOs specialising in these area (Clara Arnaud, 2016) and by strengthening governance and local resources. Any activity involving education must listen to the needs of families (since the aim is to stop them from turning their backs on the public school systems in favour of the largely uncontrolled Koranic schools) and solutions must be appropriate for local conditions. Several activities can be carried out to take best advantage of the existence of Koranic schools: introducing secular teaching into Koranic schools to help pupils acquire basic knowledge; establishing a requirement for children to have subsequent access to the final year of public primary schools or to public secondary schools, or creating learning centres for basic knowledge alongside Koranic schools for their pupils; and creating accelerated schooling centres for children who have fallen behind in war-torn areas where large numbers of pupils have dropped out of school. Awareness-raising campaigns can be carried out in areas where there are few girls enrolled in school, including financial incentives or benefits in kind, in particular by ensuring there is real supervision in the public schools to avoid the kind of violence to which they frequently fall victim. Finally, with regard to nomadic populations, school arrangements can be adjusted to align with their movements (with mobile classrooms, tailor-made timetables and teachers who are used to teaching intermittently); in rural areas, there can be support for

schools that teach professional agricultural skills or services linked to agriculture.

Good primary education aimed at all children is a prerequisite for helping the young integrate into economic, social and political life. This lays the foundations for economic development and social peace (Clara Arnaud, 2016). African governments will need to reflect on curriculum content. Primary teaching must give children the feeling of belonging to a national community. Many young people have lost their sense of identity, which risks pushing them towards violent action. Teaching the history of the Sahel and promoting its cultural, architectural and artistic heritage would certainly be a factor in social cohesion. Vocational training should be combined with general teaching. Thanks to new technologies, water pumps and solar panels are much less expensive than previously⁵⁸ and the costs of using them now represents an acceptable share of people's income; although in these conditions the development of decentralised access to water and energy, at least for domestic needs, may rely on the private sector, maintaining facilities means making efforts in relation to education that the public authorities should assume in certain regions.

Finally, although improving primary teaching is a fundamental objective, we should not ignore the importance of secondary and post-secondary (universities and vocational training) teaching when this is a determining factor in improving both the administration and the development of industrial activities. Major companies only hire those with post-secondary education (for example, SOMDIAA, a major food-processing group in Africa, according to its CEO Alexandre Vilgrain).

The right ways to support education

"MY PERSONAL CONVICTION is that schools are the future of our country. We can't continue not sending our children to school for education and training if we want to see a country that is developing and growing. We tell them in every village: growing crops is good, but understanding what you're growing is better; rearing livestock is good, but understanding what you're rearing is better; fishing is good, but having more capacity to fish more efficiently and feed yourself better, is better. So people understand the necessity of school and farmers don't in any way reject training for development through school... The problem today is making sure girls go to school. But for girls to go to school, we need to help women not to need their daughters from when they are very young; we need not to have girls going to get water from the marshland four or five kilometres away and that means sinking wells in the villages and building water towers. In my village, we built a water tower (unfortunately it was destroyed by the rebels), which freed up a bit of time for the women, who therefore no longer needed their daughters to help with work at home."

Younoussi Touré

58. The cost of a solar panel has reduced by 80% in six years.

"WE NEED COOPERATION over presence in the classroom because when you're dealing with education, there's no point using a cooperative to advise the Minister; they need to be put in strategic posts where they can learn on the job. Having a cooperative in an inspection is probably a good idea. We can't put in a teacher to train another teacher but it's an option in the teacher training colleges."

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan

"WE NEED TO PROVIDE FREE TRAINING in training centres so that people can dismantle and assemble a pump, install solar panels and build water towers. We need to give them the right tools and a way to recognize their talents (like overalls with Vergnet pump's logo on it!). Some repairers do make off with spare parts or sell them but it's rare, because it means they lose their job and their stability. All kinds of activities are possible provided you start with basic needs and have long-term funding."

Marc Vergnet

"The problem of energy in Africa is simply a problem of education"

Gilles Vermot-Desroches, Vice President of Schneider Electric ⁵⁹

2) Agriculture ⁶⁰

As with education, the share of aid devoted to agriculture, forestry and fishing is low: in 2014, 6% to 7% of French and US APA but 16% of multilateral APA. As shown in figure 5 above, awareness of the importance of agriculture for the Sahel increased since 2008 (undoubtedly under the influence of the World Bank's World Development Report 2008 on agriculture, which emphasised the dramatic abandonment of aid for agriculture for low-income countries). Unlike international aid as a whole, French aid for agriculture has fallen since then, no doubt because of the share of grants in French development aid (cf. above). Given the importance of agriculture (including livestock farming, fishing and forestry) in the economy of the Sahelian countries, developing it in both the north and south of the region remains a matter of urgency. It relates to both food security and employment for a growing population. The issue is becoming all the more important because of climate change.

The increase in agricultural production has been achieved by extending surface areas rather than yields. Between 1961 and 2012 there was "a significant increase in farmed land (+76%) and a small increase in grazing land (+9%). These changes vary

59. In *Bonnes nouvelles d'Afrique* "Où va l'Afrique?" Bordeaux, 10 June 2016.

60. This section owes a great deal to the interview of Marie-Cécile Thirion and to comments made by Jean-Luc François (AFD). We warmly thank them.

by country. Overall, demographic pressure, expressed in inhabitants per km² of arable land, has more than doubled in the Sahel in 50 years” (Michel Garenne, Appendix 2). With rural population growth rates of more than 2% and sometimes as high as 3% per year – which is exceptional compared with the rest of the world – human density in numerous regions in the south of the Sahel exceeds 150 inhabitants / km², while the extensive agriculture systems currently in use destroy the supply of land as soon as human density exceeds 40 inhabitants / km². Intensifying agricultural production has proven difficult. In dryland cultivation, the main obstacle to intensification and the use of modern inputs, whose consumption per hectare is currently negligible (6kg in Niger), is the scale of climate risk. Using inputs of this kind is barely profitable in years of average rainfall. And if the rains are delayed or if there is even a limited drought, the financial loss is too significant for the farmer who very rationally considers that his potential gain, given the risk, is either nil or negative.

In most regions, intensification is not profitable and is only applied to irrigated crops or in semi-urban areas, assuming as a minimum that the roads are negotiable at the end of the rainy season and if prices are good or fertilisers more or less free of charge.

The pressure on arable land has led to an extension of cultivated areas to the north and as a result, increasing conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. We are also seeing an ageing of the farming population since it is easier for young people to migrate. They are motivated by the fact that the work is hard (often still manual) and the patriarchal system in place in traditional structures is sometimes cumbersome (causing difficulties around access to land, production factors and financial independence). At a time of global communications and the development of digital technologies, these young people are highly sensitive to the isolation of rural areas.

How can this challenge be addressed? Family agriculture lies at the heart of the approach. Following is a menu of actions.

a) Increase productivity through agro-ecological intensification. “Agronomy is often dominated by a segmented, cumulative, fragmented vision of technology, but agronomic technology only makes sense if it fits within an ecological framework. That ecological framework is about the complex nature of the interrelationship that exists in all the elements that make up an ecosystem... As soon as we create more complex models in ecology and start looking at biodiversity, we know that the more biodiverse a system is, the more functionalities it fulfils, the more resilient it is. That means developing fodder resources (including woody plants in the north of the Sahel such as *faidherbia*, jujube trees, acacias, etc.) as organic matter for soil, composts improved by farmers and animal traction, and managing agrarian issues such as lineage and common grazing (René Billaz on Burkina-Faso, 2013). But agro-ecological cultivation still needs research and experimentation to take account of the social context in which it will operate. In this respect, experiences of cultivating under plant cover highlight the difficulties: this type of cultivation takes time to

be profitable and farmers are rightly keen to see improvements in yield quickly; moreover, the trials have been carried out in enclosed fields, which is not the case in real agriculture, so there is a risk that the plant cover will be taken for fodder. Agricultural research (funded to a large extent by the international community) must not be abandoned—quite the contrary—but it must be carried out in close cooperation with centres in Africa to ensure it accurately reflects the real conditions on the ground. Local investments (labour-intensive and/or mechanisable) in soil restoration, plant cover and conserving run-off water in Niger (as cited by F. Grünewald below) are agro-ecological options that have been tested for several decades and can be extended on a large scale and in other places.

b) Develop new crops, such as maize, soya or sesame (in the south of the Sahel): farmers make decisions about these crops depending on prices and the possibility of getting access to fertilisers. In Benin, we have seen an increase in soya linked to the fall in cotton prices. Soya is a legume that increases the level of nitrogen in the soil; it is easy to store and can be used to produce oil for food use, high-quality oil cakes, roasted grains for poultry farming and soya milk and cheese⁶¹. Developing new crops should not mean the end of cotton. The cotton industry provides employment for millions of people in the Sahel and a living for around 15 million, including indirect jobs. Cotton makes it possible to fund low-level mechanisation (animal traction) and to intensify family agriculture profitably in conjunction with livestock farming. The lack of profitability in cotton is sometimes linked, as shown by the success in Burkina and conversely, the difficulties in the industry in Mali, to poor governance in the sector, but also to competition from producers in developed and emerging countries (notably the United States and China), which continue to be subsidised in various ways, despite the commitments made at the World Trade Organization (WTO). It may be easier to deal with the first cause than the second.

c) Manage tensions over water resources and land at the same time. This is essential not only for farmers, but also for pastoralists. There is significant potential for irrigation in the Sahel if we look at all the technical options: from managing wadis, lowlands or recessionary crops in the main areas bordering the major rivers in the Sahel (the Senegal, Niger and Volta) and in smaller village areas. There are numerous experiences in Niger, Mali, Senegal and Burkina-Faso to draw on.

d) Make agriculture more attractive for the young. This involves introducing mechanisation to make agricultural labour less arduous and creating a living environment that aligns more closely with the aspirations of today's young people. Agricultural development that is attractive to the younger generations is therefore closely linked to village infrastructure and tackling the (physical and digital) isolation of rural areas. Developing the schools and health centres that seem to be the primary concern of people living in rural areas, but also access to drinking

61. In some cases, the choice of crop helps to improve the relationship between farming communities and pastoralists: soya cakes provide excellent fodder for livestock.

water and electricity. Young people's disaffection with livestock farming is even more marked and improving living conditions for pastoralists (with schools, health centres and access to water at reasonable distances) is even more important, given the value that livestock represents and the huge need for protein in the region and neighbouring countries.

e) Implement systems to smooth out purchase price variability for producers of export crops. In particular, it has been noted that cotton cultivation is fully determined by the prices paid to producers; it declines sharply when prices fall and vice versa. This has very negative impacts on all actors in the industry. For export crops, however, it is possible to establish systems to smooth out prices by linking them to world market prices. The price-smoothing funds used in the cotton industry in Burkina and Cameroon are examples of what can be done. Numerous pilot schemes using harvest insurance have been run in various parts of the world and it would certainly be interesting to analyse the obstacles to their adoption in the Sahel. But it is clear that without covering a basic risk through public "calamity funds" or "disaster funds", private insurance will not be possible. More simply, it is farmers' access to short-term loans (before the growing season for inputs and after the season to avoid selling at the point when prices are at their lowest) that needs to be developed. Storage loans for local stocks in the village, in the hands of producer organisations, must be a priority. At the same time, it is important to develop access to bank deposits, which should support more widespread use of mobile phones (Guillaumont Jeanneney and Kpodar, 2015). Finally, we need to help financial institutions offer medium or long-term loans for farm equipment (such as pumps, motorised cultivators, planting and small agricultural irrigation systems). This means making long-term resources available to farmers as well as support to enable them to reduce risks, including management advice for farmers, training for loan officers, guarantee funds, "calamity funds" and finally insurance.

f) In areas that are closer or better connected to urban areas, there is a place for subsistence agriculture (rice), and in urban fringe areas for fresh produce (fruits, vegetable, milk, eggs and poultry) for direct sale from producers to consumers. It is important to avoid threats to these sectors from low-priced imports.

g) There are significant opportunities for employment in African agriculture, not only in production (in areas that are not densely populated, irrigated and free from onchocerciasis and tsetse) but also upstream (in farm mechanisation), around farms (in financial services and non-financial advice) but undoubtedly and even especially downstream in both small-scale and industrial processing of agricultural products. François Grünewald also gives the example of leatherworking (from tanning to producing goods), but cotton is another one where processing is done on an industrial scale funded by foreign capital (cf. Ethiopia) but also on a small scale. In general terms, the most significant sources of employment are found in small-scale processing by micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (rice steamers, dairies, oil mills, canneries, etc.).

But food processing often encounters obstacles related to excessive production costs resulting from a lack of electricity (or power cuts) or inappropriate taxation. Local products are often inadequately protected from low-priced imports because of low customs duties, and on the other hand are handicapped by excessive fees for importing raw materials which are essential because they are not available locally. This is something to be examined and a reason for both African governments and donors to consider reforms.

Draw on past successes and be imaginative

"I THINK THE AIM IS TO GET PEOPLE WORKING LOCALLY, in their communities and their own areas; either by running small or medium-size agricultural projects or by involving them in major agricultural irrigation projects, like the ones the Malian State wants to implement at the Taoussa dam in the Gao region. Developing the rural world is something that can begin very quickly: farmers are clearly remotivated as soon as there is a return to peace, particularly along the River Niger where agricultural land can be irrigated. Almost all villages along the River Niger (my own village Niafunké is on the river) manage, with some small areas of irrigated land, to have sufficient harvests to meet their needs. In addition, activities need to be undertaken to develop the pools and lakes that are currently dried up and abandoned. The "lakes area" in the Timbuktu region is vast and fertile, made up of a chain of lakes and pools that vary in size with the people alongside them living from agriculture, livestock farming and fishing. The crops traditionally cultivated there are cereals (rice, millet, sorghum and maize) and cash crops (groundnuts, black-eyed peas, sweet potatoes, okra, etc.) The lakes area is currently stricken by low water levels, with either no or not enough water reaching it. I am confident that the people who have left the area in places will return and resettle as soon as the water supply can be managed and security restored. If Lake Faguibine (i.e. the large lake in Northern Mali covering an area of more than 80,000 ha) were flooded, it could provide a living for hundreds of thousands of people! But the lake is currently dry because the channel that brings water from the Niger to feed Lake Faguibine is silted up. Both geographically stable and nomadic populations are completely destabilised and live in total desolation. Normalising the water levels in Lake Faguibine would allow this entire area to re-establish the intense activity levels of the past. I truly believe that rapidly developing the potential of this part of the country and re-establishing its activities could bring long-term peace and stability to the area."

Younoussi Touré

“FOR A LONG TIME, people thought it was impossible to grow anything in the glacis (i.e. compact clay) areas of the Sahel. But in Keita, in northern Niger, people have managed to build reservoirs on mini-terraces along a slight slope, with blocks of pebbles and planting alongside them. The lines of rocks retain the water and are a way of gradually creating a block when heavy rains fall for sowing millet and in some cases sorghum. This is agro-ecology in the sense that the key is to retain every drop of water using micro-installations, medium-sized installations and large installations. You need to start at the top of the catchment area and work down; you gradually move down so that you can create big reservoirs at the bottom but they don't suffer the full impact of violent rainfall; instead, it's spread out: the flow is broken by all the obstacles created from top to bottom and gradually works its way down.

As a result, any rainfall, even if it isn't very much, is enough to cause a movement of biomass. This is partly for consumers, partly for animals (which restore some of the fertility) and partly for the termites. Over time, a bit of water triggers a phenomenon of ecological improvement in the basic ecosystem and gradually, the functionalities people thought had been lost begin to emerge.

The success of the project in Keita is partly technological but above all, social. It wasn't driven by French agronomic engineers but a former Italian colonist who used to live in Libya and admired the local society. Thanks to Italian aid, he spent two years talking to the village authorities until he convinced them. They gave him permission to run trials and, when they were convinced, the whole system was applied to the entire region.”

Michel Griffon

“WE MUSTN'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF MICROPROJECTS that give farmers control over their own development. For example, building small dykes to manage lowlands demands a lot of support, hence the importance of “rural development funds” which have sadly disappeared. Small earth dams allow irrigation for farming. Photovoltaic solar-powered pumping stations have significantly come down in price and represent an opportunity for the Sahel, but there need to be changes in the way they are managed, by developing a leasing system with a guarantee from the companies about use of the pumps over 15 years. The system can be co-financed by the company, international donors (70%) and users (the price of water cannot exceed one euro per cubic metre). The local authority acts as the main contractor and earns money. Local contractors need to be involved (in the drilling, building concrete structures, etc.). It's an economic model that's already been shown to work (by Vergnet Hydro in conjunction with the AFD). Everyone wins. It's a decision for local governments but they need support from international

donors. Let's pre-empt the question: we can't say that it hasn't worked in the past and hasn't prevented violence because it's a new technique."

Marc Vergnet

"URBAN DEMAND (which is set to increase with urbanisation) will be a driving force in the future. Growing vegetables in urban fringe areas is possible provided there is sufficient water and that fertility is maintained. All global societies have developed their agriculture from the urban fringe. These are not the areas that appeal to conventional farmers but people do invest and demonstrate a very considerable capacity for innovation. The problem in the Sahel is the competition between the use of ecosystems for food production and energy production (because biomass is the primary source of energy: timber, oil and alcohol). We can use the technological breakthrough of solar energy, which is now much less expensive, to avoid competition between energy produced from biomass and the food issue."

Michel Griffon

"THE LORRIES ARRIVE IN GAO FROM GHANA, load up with skins from the abattoir, and take them to Ghana where they are treated and turned into shoes. Why doesn't that happen locally? There are some magnificent Tuareg craftspeople and real potential for going upmarket to produce leather at the "Italian shoe" level, because that's what they do in Ghana. There is no reason why that can't happen in Mali because on top of everything there is good leather. There are lots of post-agricultural activities that could give the agricultural and pastoral sector a boost, some money and a collective momentum if we developed processing industries. We're obviously not going to start building car plants but we can now produce bicycles and other simple consumer goods with 3D printing. That's what's happening in China. We are on the cusp of new developments that are going to increase the choices for production in low-density areas, which are difficult to access for logistical purposes. These new production processes are going to narrow the distance between production and consumption areas."

François Grünewald

A project to support rural activities and finance agricultural activities in the Agadez and Tahoua regions in Niger

This EUR 67 million project, funded jointly by the AFD and an allocation of funds from the European Commission's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, has just been adopted by the AFD and aims to develop the infrastructures

needed for agricultural production and marketing, improve services to agriculture and facilitate access to financial institutions. It appears to be an exemplary project on three grounds: (i) a detailed prior consultation with local communities on the investments needed accompanied by an analysis of the context. Among other things, the analysis will take into account the “do no harm” requirement to limit the impact of the project on factors that cause tension in the intervention areas and seize opportunities to consolidate social cohesion; (ii) the establishment of long-term mechanisms to secure credit transactions (such as storage and professional guarantees instead of charges on property which are somewhat unrealistic in the environment of the Sahel); (iii) capacity building not only among farmers but also local authorities, guarantee management companies, decentralised services of the ministries of agriculture and the environment, chambers of agriculture and professional organisations. (Source: AFD)

Fiscal barriers to the development of local production of food products

Adeline Lescanne Gautier takes the example of products aimed at combating acute malnutrition which are more expensive to produce locally than by Nutriset in France.

“IN PRACTICE, POWDERED MILK PROTEINS, minerals and vitamins are not available in the Sahel: 50% of the raw materials are imported. It also needs vegetable oils, sugar and groundnuts which you can generally find locally, except at certain times of the year when no more stocks are available and additional supplies have to be imported. It costs more to produce this kind of product locally mainly for tax reasons, for example in Niger (where taxes on raw materials are very high, particularly for milk powder). As well as the cost, there are problems associated with the lack of local qualified staff.

In order to try to compensate for these difficulties and encourage local development, UNICEF is currently banking on the future by paying a slightly higher price for local products. At the same time, the World Food Programme – the other important donor client for emergency products – continues to apply the ‘lowest responsible bidder’ policy (which means that local producers have no chance of winning their tenders).

However surprising it may seem, French factories are more advantaged in tax terms for international invitations to tender than businesses in Niger; in particular, all the raw materials they import are then re-exported and therefore do not carry VAT.”

Adeline Lescanne Gautier

3) **Re-establish the circulation of people, goods and ideas, which drove the wealth of the Sahara in the past.**

The Sahel is a shared space common to two arbitrarily separated areas: North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. As Laurent Bossard comments,⁶² if the towns of Northern Mali or Northern Niger are perceived as settled at the edge of a territory, (Mali or Niger), they will continue to be marginalised and their populations will remain sensitive to irredentist messages. However, if they are again designed and organised as connection points between Sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, they will restore the relationship with their commercial past and regain their central role. Today, however, legal trade between Northern Mali and Algeria is hindered by bans (because trade with Tamanrasset must be balanced) and by health standards (which could be satisfied by building a modern abattoir in Gao). Kidal, which is supplied illegally by truck and road from Algeria, could develop rapidly (as a trading crossroads) if the trans-Saharan route were developed.

ECOWAS and the Club du Sahel want to promote cooperation between the mayors of Agadez (Niger), Tamanrasset (Algeria) and Kidal (Mali), which would facilitate the building of the road between Gao, Kidal and Tamanrasset in relatively safe conditions (which is a source of hope). Northern Mali has limestone and phosphate which can be used to make lime and fertilisers that could be sold throughout West Africa. There is also manganese on the border with Burkina Faso. It will also need the railway loop between Cotonou, Niamey, Ouagadougou and Abidjan built by Bolloré to be extended to Dori (by 2024?).

This is not just about the movement of goods and people, but also ideas. In this respect, the development of mobile phones and the Internet (which assumes a decentralised energy source) is crucial, given their multiple applications in areas including education, health, financial transfers, technological innovations, disseminating cultural goods, etc. It is also a prerequisite for keeping young people in rural areas and smaller cities.

The European Union and the African Development Bank have resources that would enable them to fund communications routes and systems and should accept the additional cost represented by insecurity.

All these activities are part of a long-term strategy, all the more reason to start work on them now.

62. "If we see Africa as a shared space, it becomes possible to have a completely different view of it than the one we have had until now. If we view it as a divided space, then regions such as Northern Mali, Northern Niger and Northern Chad become boundaries, "dead ends", i.e. places at the margins, both territorially and politically. Because they are "dead ends" there is nothing behind them but "walls" in the eyes of politicians and that prevents people from seeing the primary reason they are useful, which is that if you view them geographically, they are areas of transition and exchange between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Laurent Bossard.

Roads, security and development

“THE ROAD BETWEEN NIONO AND TIMBUKTU is 500 km long and poised to play an essential role in opening areas in North Mali. People from these regions have battled constantly since the country’s independence for this road to be built. Five or six years ago, the fact that funding was secured (from the European Union) and work had started, raised high hopes. But unfortunately, the start of the rebellion meant that the works were brutally called to a halt. The road is essential for Mali’s development, security and unity, and should have been finished two years ago. Today, two sections—the 200 km stretch between Timbuktu and Niafunké and the 80 km between Niono and Goma Coura—have been built thanks to a relative lull and under the close watch of the security forces. The remaining section, i.e. Niafunké - Léré - Nampala - Goma Coura is both difficult and dangerous; it demands an almost round-the-clock presence of security resources. This area comes under frequent attack from armed groups who are hostile to the return to normal conditions. They do not want to see a road that facilitates access and military surveillance in the area, which might hinder their illegal activities such as arms and drugs trafficking, theft of livestock, etc. Stabilising the area would mean deploying airborne surveillance as well as resources on the ground so that contractors could work on the site in safety. Building this road is essential for Mali, which needs to build unity and strengthen its security. The road crosses both the Office du Niger and the Méma, acting as a powerful factor in economic exchanges between the north and south of the country.

Recently, someone who lived in the town of Diré told me: “We are waiting impatiently for the road to be finished since it will secure all the local places that suffer frequent attacks by assailants. On the one hand, our people will benefit from regular, rapid supplies and on the other, we will be able to supply the markets in the capital, Bamako, with fresh, out-of-season vegetables (okra, onions, sweet potatoes, etc.) produced in Diré, Tonka and Niafunké. Our traders struggle to do that today because there are too many risks to coming and selling goods in Bamako.”

Younoussi Touré

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The trade potential between Algeria and the Sahelian countries

“PEOPLE IN TAMANRASSET (which is 350 km from the Malian border and the same distance from the border with Niger) eat meat imported from India. Algeria imports 50,000 heads of livestock by boat from France every year to

slaughter them locally. As a result, Algerians are eating Indian and French meat although they are sitting on a herd of 20 million heads of cattle circulating in Mali and Niger, a good proportion of which are reared by Algerians. Algeria imports 60% of its meat and 70% of its cereals. It no longer has a single hectare of agricultural land that is not in use (and even less irrigable land), while the figure for Mali and Niger is 15%. There is phenomenal potential for Mali and Niger to feed part of Algeria (including supplying it with wheat). One day, Algeria will naturally turn to its African hinterland, if only so it can feed itself. The Maghreb and Algeria in particular will become major textile producing countries once more (one of the largest cotton-producing areas is in this region)."

Laurent Bossard

► Summing up

The cost of inaction for development would be considerable. Reducing violence in the Sahel means combining long-term structural actions with quick-impact activities to help the population appreciate the "peace dividend".

In terms of education, France bears particular responsibility for French-speaking countries in the Sahel. Support for structural reform in the sector should be given to the Ministry of Education. Reopening schools and teacher training need to be combined with reassessment of teachers' contribution by guaranteeing them satisfactory compensation and ensuring that they are actually paid, wherever they are. School enrolment for girls should be encouraged, with protection mechanisms in place so that school is not a place where they are victims of violence. Finally, and given the lack of a sense of national identity among young people, education programmes should attach greater value to cultural, architectural and artistic heritage. They should also develop proper vocational programmes. All of this implies a long-term commitment from the international community.

The agricultural potential of the Sahel is significant, provided obstacles to family agriculture can be addressed. In this respect, agro-ecology is essential and must adapt to the diverse characteristics of the regions involved.

In order to support rural development policies, the socialisation, education and training tools represented by new ICTs must be developed as widely as possible, which means increasing support for decentralised electrification in rural areas and the urban-rural fringe.

6. Supporting the institutional reform of the States

Definition of fragile States

“STATES CLASSIFIED AS “FRAGILE” have different profiles: some are emerging from conflicts while others are going through profound political, social, economic and environmental crises. In practice, classifying States as fragile stigmatises them and can even be viewed as an obstacle to political stabilisation and economic recovery. This is why, within the abundant literature on the subject, the definition used by the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group in its 2014-2019 strategy on fragility and building resilience in Africa appears to offer a more accurate reflection of reality which states that “Fragility comes about where pressures become too great for countries to manage them within the political process, creating the risk of conflict and outbreak of violence.” (Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa: The African Development Bank Group Strategy 2014-2019-ORTS June 2014). Fragility does not therefore refer to a category of States, but rather to an inherent risk in the development process itself.”

(Tertius Zongo, 2016)

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The fragility of States is manifested at a national, local or regional level.

► Nothing will be achieved without strong support for African governments

There cannot be economic development or peace in the Sahel without a high level of involvement by the national authorities for reasons of ethics and, above all, effectiveness. The international community constantly refers, in accordance with the Paris Declaration, to the importance of national authorities taking ownership of projects funded by external partners.

As a result, external aid given to States in the Sahel cannot only focus on development in the northern Sahel, even if this area should take priority.⁶³ The support provided by States to the northern and most arid part of their region has

63. E.g. the external resources allocated to Mali.

helped their growth. In particular, spending on security (the army, police and gendarmerie) will be supported by national budgets, the scale of which will depend on economic growth. Regardless of the effectiveness of policies in the northern Sahel, the southern region will have to deal with an influx of foreign migrants.

Alongside these economic reasons there is the political situation; whilst this varies between countries, the common thread is a lack of governance (see chapter 2). This is an essential element in development policies. Since the early 2000s, a technical and management approach to “good governance” has shifted towards a more political so-called “democratic governance” approach. The democratic model as it exists in countries in the Sahel (as in many other developing countries) appears to be more formal than real. “As promoted by the international community, it has come much too late. Without cohesion and a sense of shared community, an “elective” democratic approach simply forces different groups to capitalise on their differences by accentuating the divisions between citizens. There is no evidence that this process contributes to the emergence of a common identity, the reverse is the case. The tools of the State, of this democracy, the army and the civil service undoubtedly suffer from this lack of cohesion and sense of public interest.” (Paul Collier, Appendix 5 and Collier 2009). This is why donors need to attach less importance to the formal nature of democracy – such as holding elections – than to ensuring that institutions act in the best interests of the majority rather focusing on vote-catching.

The pretences of democracy

“THE 16TH SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE OF FRANCE AND AFRICA held in La Baule (France) in June 1990 was a determining factor in the political changes that have taken place in French-speaking African countries. Before La Baule, countries in the Sahel – particularly Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad⁶⁴ – were characterised by successive coups d’état for more than two decades. The authoritarian military powers that took over, generally impregnated with Marxist references and claiming to redress the balance, stifled any ethnic or religious whims. The ultimate goal was “national unity”. Apart from Mali (thanks to General Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) who organised transparent elections without taking part in them in March 1991), other military powers were legitimised by elections. This kind of change did not survive for long, except in Burkina Faso.”

(Tertius Zongo, 2016)

64. Chad was characterised more by tribal struggles.

“THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM was having put democratic systems in place before States had been built. These systems led to political practices that blocked State-building. In French-speaking countries in the Sahel and beyond, we see a politicisation of the public administration at all levels and we find ourselves with a system that fails to put the right people into the right positions. Without skills and without clear rules governing the behaviour of actors and the relative role of different institutions, the system is not effective and cannot serve the public interest. It is somewhat complicated to propose a clear democratic political model that meets the needs of the region, but I believe we need to follow through that process and would even say it is imperative for the region. A constitutional system of checks and balances, combined with clear rules on appointments to certain senior public positions, should help to depoliticise the administration.”

Gilles Yabi

Given that the link between poor governance and violence has been clearly established, international donors must promote all activities that are likely to prevent or reduce conflicts through institutional improvements⁶⁵. This means helping States to:

a) fulfil basic sovereign functions: defence (through the army), security (through the police and gendarmerie), justice, administration and management of public policies, legislation and the regulatory framework, management of public affairs and taxation;

b) deliver an adequate number of basic public services of appropriate quality, as expected by the population, to the whole of the country;

c) ensure the establishment of constructive and truly democratic relationships, both between the public authorities and society to ensure consultative decision-making (citizens, users, private sector representatives, civil society organisations, professional organisations and trade unions) and within the various sectors of society (given the political under-representation of certain socio-cultural groups, severe inequalities between social classes, and management by the older generation faced with a young, silent majority).

Admittedly, State reform (and the emergence of opposing forces) can only come from within.” (Gilles Yabi), but international donors have an important role to play not in imposing standards on the basis of conditionality, but by providing experience and specific expertise to enable States to develop their own political system. Undoubtedly, this means increasing the share of budget assistance that can play a role in driving reforms.

65. The United Nations has introduced an objective on peace and governance in the Sustainable Development Goals, namely to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

One cannot change an entire government, but there are four or five key ministries – defence, rural and agricultural development, education and health – where it is important to negotiate the recruitment of competent people. Donors need to identify the right people to talk to: they need to avoid providing technical assistance in place of the local administration and creating parallel agencies that attract the best civil servants because of higher compensation and leaving the day-to-day administration leaderless. In situations where the State shows that it is incapable of providing essential basic services quickly, the use of external non-State service providers (such as NGOs and community organisations) may be necessary. But it is essential to include the administration, both central and local, in defining and monitoring programmes. The aim is to promote the civil service in the normal administrative bodies using recruitment methods based on competence and not on nepotism, and through better working conditions.

In the area of governance, France—which shares the French language and the basis of their law and institutions with countries in the Sahel—has a central role to play. The AFD, which has just been appointed to provide assistance on governance, will therefore have an essential new mission to fulfil in countries in the region. Without additional grant funding, it will not have the resources to do so because this type of programme is inherently expensive.

In search of reformers

“WE NEED TO SUPPORT LEADERS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO REFORM. They do exist: take the example of the High Commission on State Modernisation in Niger. It is a group of reformers who report to the Prime Minister and which organises meetings with ministries on behavioural change.”

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan

“IN SOME DECENTRALISED ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES, state officials use illegal deductions to buy the equipment they need to run their departments, but they take it with them when they change jobs. However, there are a lot of young civil servants who want things to change; they’ve come from NGOs, the private sector or unemployment and they no longer see the administration in the way their predecessors did.”

Giorgio Blundo

“IT’S NOT JUST THE MINISTERS AND THE VERY SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS who matter; competent executives in the various ministries and agencies are also needed. Executives in the private sector have much higher levels of competence than in the public sector; incentives for recruiting high-quality staff into the civil service are lacking. Obviously, there’s a difficult balancing

act between establishing a high-quality civil service and the number of civil servants needed. The question of administration is critical, even if there is no ready-made solution.”

Gilles Yabi

An example of successful institutional reform: the Afghan Ministry of Rural Development and Reconstruction

“THE FRAGILITY OF STATES is broadly linked to the fragility and ineffectiveness of their institutions and the best way of strengthening them is precisely to build or rebuild their institutions, particularly their sovereign institutions. Various Afghan examples show that it is perfectly possible, within reasonable time frames of between three and five years, even in a country as complex and difficult as Afghanistan. One typical example was the construction of a Ministry of Rural Development and Reconstruction (MRRD) by Hanif Atmar in the early 2000s. Ultimately, his approach was simple. His assessment was that ethnic and political networks and vote-catching utterly corrupted all Afghan public institutions, which had lost any sense of ambition in terms of effectiveness, while the networks simply sought to extract various kinds of income and profits. He took the view that combating corruption meant getting back to the fundamentals that determined the effectiveness of modern institutions: recruitment based on merit, promotion based on performance, an organisational structure that allows management by objectives, defining clear procedures so that any sanctions are decided on an objective basis, selecting executives using an open process based on their competence and integrity, job descriptions and skills assessment to remove people who are not performing effectively, and setting salary levels on the basis of market prices. The results were spectacular.

If one compares the success of the MRRD – which has functioned remarkably well for over ten years – with almost all the other Afghan institutions today, despite the fact that some have been given a great deal of support (including technical assistance, training programmes, placements abroad, motivational seminars, multiple bonuses, etc.), one quickly reaches the conclusion that there is one good but numerous bad ways to reform institutions that have gone adrift. In fewer than four years, a ministry built and run by a minister who combined charisma and managerial capacity was functioning as a modern institution, and its achievements could be seen all over the country. But the remarkable National Solidarity Program he implemented, which provided small grants intended to fund projects identified by villagers, was unfortunately under-funded for a long time.”

Serge Michailof

► Reviving municipal and local development

In the context of a fragile State, the difficulty of ensuring the necessary cohesion for the harmonious development of a national administration should not prevent efforts to develop a decentralised system which is probably more effective at the local level (Paul Collier, Appendix 5). Although decentralisation is a well-established practice in the Sahel, its effects have not always been positive. In Mali, for example, decentralisation was intended as a means of giving more autonomy to the Tuareg community but it did not produce the results expected.

Decentralisation cannot be dictated from the outside at the risk of producing contradictory decisions. One example is the reform of forestry services in Niger: on the one hand, responsibility for forest management was given to local communities and organisations, but at the same time the national forestry services adopted paramilitary behaviour. There are fears that a similar phenomenon could occur with the “Security and Development in Northern Mali” project that has just been adopted by the AFD (partly funded by the European Union): this rightly intended that the initiative for investment projects should lie with local communities, but that their decisions should then be approved at the regional level and subsequently forwarded to the national level to assess their suitability. Are three levels of assessment really necessary or do they reflect the central authorities’ fear of being stripped of part of their power?

Successful decentralisation means respecting local communities’ responsibility and giving them long-term financial resources. For economic and social development to reduce the temptation for criminal activity and violence, projects need to start with the needs expressed by local people⁶⁶. It is true for rural towns and smaller cities where young people ought to be able to find a modern lifestyle, for example cybercafés (François Grünewald); it is also true for villages and small rural communities which can be ideally suited for defining and running small community development programmes, provided some work is done on organising mini municipal councils or development committees based on democratic processes to avoid prominent local leaders taking complete control. In any event, local authorities and grassroots village communities are the best placed to express the priorities of local people. As a result, it is essential not to sideline or delegitimise them.

The question of municipal funding is linked to a reform of the public finances to introduce greater transparency over which donors, particularly the IMF, exercise control. This means helping municipalities to assume their responsibilities in the mobilisation of local tax revenue. It would also be possible to establish an automatic mechanism for sharing mining rents to the benefit of local authorities.

66. The PNDP (National Participative Development Programme) supports decentralisation by financing infrastructure in municipalities in Cameroon (AFD). The AFD currently has no money to invest in grants for the PNDP.” (Olivier Ray)

The unpredictability of decentralisation

"INITIAL EFFORTS IN MALI to respond to the demands and concerns of the tuareg community resulted in promoting a "special status" for the north. In 1991, the Tamanrasset agreement recognised the special status of the Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu regions, and promised to strengthen development efforts in these parts of the country. The National Pact of April 1992 approved a new administrative reorganisation in the north. Unfortunately, the special status for the north never really materialised and Mali opted for a single decentralisation model throughout the country. Decentralisation has not helped to strengthen trust in the State and the 2012 crisis highlighted the question of whether decentralised independence and local elections really strengthen peace and territorial integrity. Providing public services in the north poses a real challenge. The cost of services per inhabitant is very high because of the small number of users and high prevalence of nomadism. In addition to the question of the financial viability of the system overall, issues of cohesion in the northern region have not been resolved by the various waves of decentralisation reform in recent decades. On the contrary, decentralisation has destabilised the power of traditional authorities and contributed to its erosion. As a consequence, traditional chiefs were faced with an alternative: either they accepted positions within State structures, or they resolved to dispute the legitimacy of State authority. Ultimately, it is the traditional hierarchies that used to regulate social interactions between ethnic groups that will fall away, creating fertile ground for the expansion of criminal networks and a foothold for religious fundamentalists."

(Tertius Zongo, 2016)

"I THINK THAT IF THERE IS A RETURN TO SECURITY, we can really revive local authorities and enable people to manage and administer their own affairs; but in the short term they won't have the capacity for settling city problems. Stronger decentralisation therefore needs to be accompanied by training for local managers. Mayors, municipal councillors and presidents of area councils are elected by local people but it is rare to find individuals who have the capacity to drive satisfactory local development. It is because they do not have the necessary political framework to do it, nor any transfer of resources or technical support from the State. Some people believe that things will improve with the return of security and appointing new managers. This will not be as easy as one might believe since developing an understanding of local governance will take time for the men and women who will be taking control of public affairs. First of all, it is important to ensure that they get appropriate basic training and adequate financial and technical support. In

Mali more than elsewhere, this precaution has been made necessary by the current situation where the peace agreement that grew out of the Algiers process requires the establishment of interim authorities. I am convinced of that."

Younoussi Touré

"THE LATEST DECENTRALISATION REFORM IN NIGER and Senegal involved removing certain powers associated with managing forestry resources from the forestry services. Some spaces now fall under the authority of municipalities or local communities through the implementation of what are known as "local agreements" (where the population decides how to manage the forest in consultation with the forestry services). Everything therefore argues in favour of the State gradually abandoning the prerogative of control it had over forest areas and maintaining its role of providing support and advice at a technical level. At the same time, the reform movement, which involved political decentralisation of the management of natural resources (therefore more power at the local level and less power for the administration) went hand-in-hand, practically at the same time, with internal reform of the forestry service, towards increasing militarisation. In the mid-2000s, most forestry services in West Africa wanted to move to a paramilitary structure that gives them the possibility of being armed, more rigour, more discipline, etc. Yet these two public policies were contradictory. Among other things, the militarisation of forestry services reflects resistance within the administration, which seems to want to maintain control over resources, that are gradually slipping away from it."

Giorgio Blundo

"WE NEED TO AVOID SIDELINING COMMUNITIES and undermining their credibility, as when NGOs use European funding to make cash transfers to poor people that are much higher than municipal aid, when support for the poor is actually the responsibility of the municipality, or when invitations to tender are issued without consulting the municipalities. Often it is only international experts who are equipped to respond to invitations to tender although they don't understand the reality on the ground."

Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan

"IN CONCRETE TERMS, either because of a lack of resources or because of the fact that they are not actually collected because of vote-catching type arrangements, local authorities cannot yet implement their policies. Very often, they follow a redistribution approach that follows the line of political factions... They follow a national or local leader and then it's that leader,

once they are in power, who tries to redistribute resources... The question of taxation goes back a long way, but I have the impression it still hasn't been resolved."

Giorgio Blundo

A successful example of a national local development programme: Afghanistan

"THE AFGHAN NATIONAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAM is one of the rare unquestionable success stories in international aid to Afghanistan. It is a remarkable example of a local development programme led by a purely national institution and recognised as a model of its kind. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and Reconstruction (MRRD), the programme was a starting point for organising things at the village level and grassroots democracy by forming development committees to manage small financial donations from various donors brought in by the World Bank.

The programme involved making small donations to village councils set up specifically for this purpose so that they could carry out projects that mattered to them, such as micro hydraulic schemes, road repairs, building small warehouses, schools or health centres, creating a drinking water supply, local electrification, etc. All of this may sound simple but it is very complex to manage and stay on track when a programme of this kind covers an entire country – particularly one as socially complicated and difficult to access as Afghanistan – and involves over 60,000 small projects spread right across the country in 28,000 villages (with many located in remote and barely accessible valley bottoms). It is particularly difficult to manage if the aim is for projects to last in technical terms, for small dams not to be swept away by storms and for a serious participative democratic process to be implemented.

Atmar and his team, who were, in fact, inspired by a similar project in Indonesia, clearly achieved an outstanding result with this programme. In the past, French aid in Mali financed so-called "rural development funds", which were based on a very similar idea, throughout the 1990s⁶⁷. There is also an institution in Mali, the Fonds National d'Appui aux Collectivités Territoriales (National Local Authorities Support Fund—FNACT), and a decentralisation process, although it is not complete. The resources allocated to this fund by donors were historically ridiculously low and their actions

67. Cf. "Répondre au défi du développement local en milieu rural: l'exemple du Mali", Marie-Jo Demande and Alain Félix, in Michailof *À quoi sert d'aider le Sud*, Economica.

in this area mainly consisted of bypassing rather than strengthening the institution. Why not revive this fund, check its procedures and see whether, on this basis, it is possible to create a mechanism which, in time, will be able to manage a programme similar to the NSP? A fairly similar approach is underway in Niger, with the creation of the Agence de financement des collectivités territoriales (Local Authorities Funding Agency—ANFICT). Both agencies are, in fact, intended to fund programmes in formally constituted local authorities, of which there are 255 in Niger. But a much more ambitious and less “formal” process will be needed to reach the smallest villages and communities. The experience of the Afghan NSP shows that it is possible.”

Serge Michailof

► Taking account of regional considerations (ECOWAS, WAEMU, SAHEL G5)

The Sahara-Sahel is an area of mobility, which can only be governed on the basis of regional cooperation involving all States in the region. As a result, external aid should include a strong regional dimension. This requirement is particularly strong in the security field, as evidenced by the creation of the G5. The advantage of a strong regional defence force, particularly on the scale of ECOWAS, is often mentioned. But this force can only be formed from strong national armies (Tertius Zongo), which comes back to the problem already mentioned of funding military expenses for States in the Sahel. In the area of international aid, the African Development Bank has a particular role to play in promoting development projects on a regional scale, thanks to its dedicated window, whose importance could be increased. This is also the case for Europe and France, which have provided financial assistance to the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) for several years.

► Summing up

The democratic model as promoted by the international community currently feels more “formal” than “real”. In this context of fragility, the issue is how to help States to assume their essential role, namely their sovereign or public service functions throughout the country. Training for public administrative authorities should be a long-term priority for donors. As a result, they must accept that local administrative authorities should be involved in project management, even if this appears less effective and more expensive. The middle-management level is where the shortage of skills is starkest, particularly in local authorities. Incentivising young people

to return from the diaspora could, in this case, be an effective means of providing training in good practices.

The international community must also act at the regional level, given the small size of countries in the Sahel and the fact that criminal activity and terrorism have no borders. As a result, creating a regional defence force would help to increase the effectiveness of military action but that first means strengthening national armies. Regional command should limit the risks of a loss of control and make it easier to secure support from donors. In addition, it would enable certain types of necessary equipment, which no single country could buy or maintain, to be pooled.

7. Conclusion

Although it is widely held, no one interviewed supported the idea that there was no future for the Sahel in terms of development and that the only way out was migration. But at the same time, they emphasised, firstly, the importance for Africa, Europe and the world of the Sahel not falling into a conflict trap and, secondly, both the difficulty of the task and the joint responsibility of African governments and the international community. Several clear points emerged over the course of the interviews and during our reflections:

1. It is essential that aid provided by the international community should not only be curative but also aimed at preventive actions and that it should not only cover current areas of insecurity but also vulnerable areas that have the potential to tip into crisis. This is particularly true for areas on the edge of crisis zones, where the objective is avoid the risk that it spreads. If we take Mali as an example, it is not only about intervening in Gao or Kidal, but also in the regions of Mopti and Ségou. In the area around Lake Chad, investments need to be targeted to the regions that are not currently at the heart of the crisis but could be brought into it because of an accumulation of economic, social, environmental, political and security pressures. In the long term, the cost of inaction would be much higher than the cost of conflict prevention.

Moreover, regional development in the Sahel is inconceivable without development in all the countries they belong to (and beyond); the need for aid is therefore not confined to regions in the Sahel only.

2. The lack of jobs for the young with little or no education — who represent most of those who arrive on the labour market — means that they get involved in illegal trafficking networks and mafia groups linked to terrorism. For them, this is the most attractive option as it allows them to earn a living and get married. As a result, primary and vocational education, particularly in rural areas, support for agriculture and opening up the countryside appeared to us the key areas for international aid to focus on. Following the commitments made at COP21 and given the dramatic effects that global warming has already had in the Sahel (which are set to intensify), the international community must take responsibility for food security for people in the Sahel where the population is growing and, regardless of what anyone does, will continue to grow very fast for a long time. Yet, in recent decades, donors have abandoned support for agriculture, including both small and large-scale irrigation projects. The slight recovery in aid for rural areas needs to be massively increased. Similarly, municipal and local development aid should

be the subject of a massive investment of international aid, particularly given that institutions exist in certain countries in the Sahel to facilitate these schemes and that successful models exist elsewhere, including in areas of insecurity, as shown in Afghanistan.

3. The military, humanitarian and development workers are complementary players, but with different skills and missions. As a result:

- There is a need for close cooperation with regard to information in areas such as knowledge of the field or knowledge of each other's interventions. However, development actors need to be careful not to endanger their partners through information targeted at some people. The neutrality of both development and humanitarian actors in relation to the warring parties is essential to ensure the effectiveness of their actions;

- Development agencies cannot finance or implement quick-impact projects whose aim is to strengthen the population's trust in the army. This would run the risk of causing confusion in people's minds between the security forces and development actors. This does not mean, however, that aid should not contribute to the peace dividend through quick-impact actions, for example through labour-intensive projects;

- Development agencies need to retain control over where to locate their projects and diversify the areas in which they work so as to avoid offering any incentive to resume the violence in order to benefit of development projects. This does not mean that, on a case-by-case basis, the army cannot be used to secure supply lines for projects or check the maintenance of infrastructure built using international aid when they are on patrol.

4. In these regions which are extraordinarily vulnerable from an economic, social and security point of view, aid must essentially be given in the form of donations. France's temptation of granting loans because of a lack of grant resources could prove illusory in the long term, even in areas that are normally considered profitable given the unusual risks. The shifting and diverse context of regions in the Sahel means that donors must accept that some of their actions will fail. Moreover, aid must be flexible to be able to adapt projects quickly to the context. This means strengthening the teams (in terms of both numbers and capacity, through training in relevant tools and methods) to ensure better knowledge of the field thanks to a closer relationship between development actors and researchers to avoid doing harm, and for careful monitoring of projects, which is admittedly made difficult by insecurity and demands new methods. The administrative costs of managing this type of aid, which some might tend to view as excessive, is in any case significantly lower than the costs of the crisis we can expect if donors do not adjust their ways of working to the specific context of the Sahel.

5. It is often said that international aid is undermined by the limited absorption capacity of developing countries, particularly in the LDCs. This is true, but increasing that capacity is precisely the reason aid exists and it depends on how it is given. In this respect, capacity building is crucial, in particular with regard to donors'

requirement for accountability, which is sometimes excessive and has a deadening effect. This component of international aid appears to be underfunded because the results are difficult to quantify. It is characterised by disparate actions, disorganised use of permanent technical assistance as a substitute and time-consuming courses, seminars and training programmes. Governance capacities need to be improved at every level of the administration: central, regional and local.

Since the reforms face strong resistance because they involve re-establishing merit, rather than vote-catching, as the decisive factor in managing human resources, starting from the principle that the ministries of finance have generally already been brought up to standard thanks to support from the IMF and the French Ministry of Finance it will no doubt be better to limit their ambitions to a small number of key institutions: the main sovereign ministries (defence, the interior and justice); the main economic ministries (agriculture and energy), and the two social ministries of primary education and health.

6. Security spending in Africa has shown rapid growth in recent years but is still lower than required by the situation of insecurity in the Sahel and the international community's spending on its own interventions. The proportion of this spending in African budgets is increasing and is incompatible with maintaining spending on social services and development, which is already much lower than it needs to be. Although security in the Sahel is a global public good, the international community remains reluctant to support an increase in spending. Several actions are possible: a) continue with advocacy in the Development Aid Committee to include some security spending in definitions of official development assistance; b) awareness-raising with the World Bank, IMF and European aid organisations so that donors that contribute budget assistance to these countries accept higher levels of military spending than currently and commit to funding this spending for several years at a time; c) awareness-raising for African governments on the necessity of transparency in security spending which could be based on military planning laws approved by the donors.

Linking security and development

A Plea for the Sahel

The situation in the Sahel has worsened significantly in the last ten years, especially in the area of security. Great swathes of land have fallen into a vicious cycle where poverty and insecurity are mutually reinforcing. Unless local authorities and the international community take concerted and decisive action, these areas could succumb to a series of conflicts from which they will struggle to emerge. A permanent crisis, driven by mutually reinforcing poverty, criminal activity and armed conflict, comes at an exorbitantly steep cost.

This plea calls for significant evolutions in the European and French development policies for the Sahel. They should be robust, aligned with the region's real security challenges, and reflect the diverse realities on the ground. For the purpose of this report, the term "Sahel" is understood as the G5 Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger).

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Cover illustration: Aude Guirauden, *Baobab III*, 2015.

ISBN : 978-2-9550779-3-1



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