



Strategies and initiatives for security and development in the Sahel

Introduction

The Sahel is one of the world's poorest, least developed and most food insecure regions, with the fastest growing population¹. The region's underdevelopment has also been a driver of spiralling irregular migration, transnational organised crime and trafficking, internal conflicts, religious extremism and other terrorist-linked security threats. All of these challenges pose serious problems, and not only to local populations in the Sahel region; spill over effects have consequences for neighbouring countries, such as those in North Africa, and increasingly, on the interests of the European Union (EU).

It is widely acknowledged that insecurity and conflict hinder social, and economic development². Therefore, improving the security situation is an important priority in the short term. However, in the longer term, many believe that an approach

that fosters development will also be beneficial for security, even if the precise pathway remains unclear. Part of the difficulty in fostering development is that state authority is often weak and institutions fragile, and the Sahel region stretches across a vast and sparsely populated area. Clearly, the cross-border challenges experienced by Sahel countries defy simple solutions.

The Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) supports the view that security and development opportunities are linked. By taking a commodity focus, CFC works to develop the potential of commodity production, processing, manufacturing, and trade for the benefit of the poor, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development in the Sahel. By investing in commodity development, CFC has contributed to employment generation, increased household incomes, improved food security and greater resilience to shocks.

¹ On average, an estimated 20 million people face food insecurity every year during the lean season. Malnutrition rates are among the highest in the world, with 5.9 million children under the age of five acutely malnourished in 2016, and one-third of the world's under-five mortality due to undernutrition. See: FAO. (2017). Social Protection in the Sahel and West Africa, strengthening resilience for food security. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6226e.pdf>

² See, for example, United Nations Human Security Approach. (No date). Available at: <http://www.un.org/humansecurity/human-security-unit/human-security-approach>

Characteristics of the Sahel

The Sahel zone stretches across the south-central latitudes of Northern Africa, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, comprising a transitional ecoregion of semi-arid grasslands, savannas, steppes, and thorn shrub lands. An important characteristic of the Sahel is its sparse rainfall. Annual rainfall varies from around 100–200 mm in the north to around 600 mm in the south. The zone is mainly flat, and varies from several hundred to a thousand kilometres in width across the African continent.

The Sahel zone encompasses only part of each 'Sahel country', comprising parts of northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central Mali, northern Burkina Faso, the extreme south of Algeria, Niger, the north of Nigeria, central Chad, central and southern Sudan, and the extreme north of South Sudan, Eritrea, Cameroon, Central African Republic and Ethiopia.

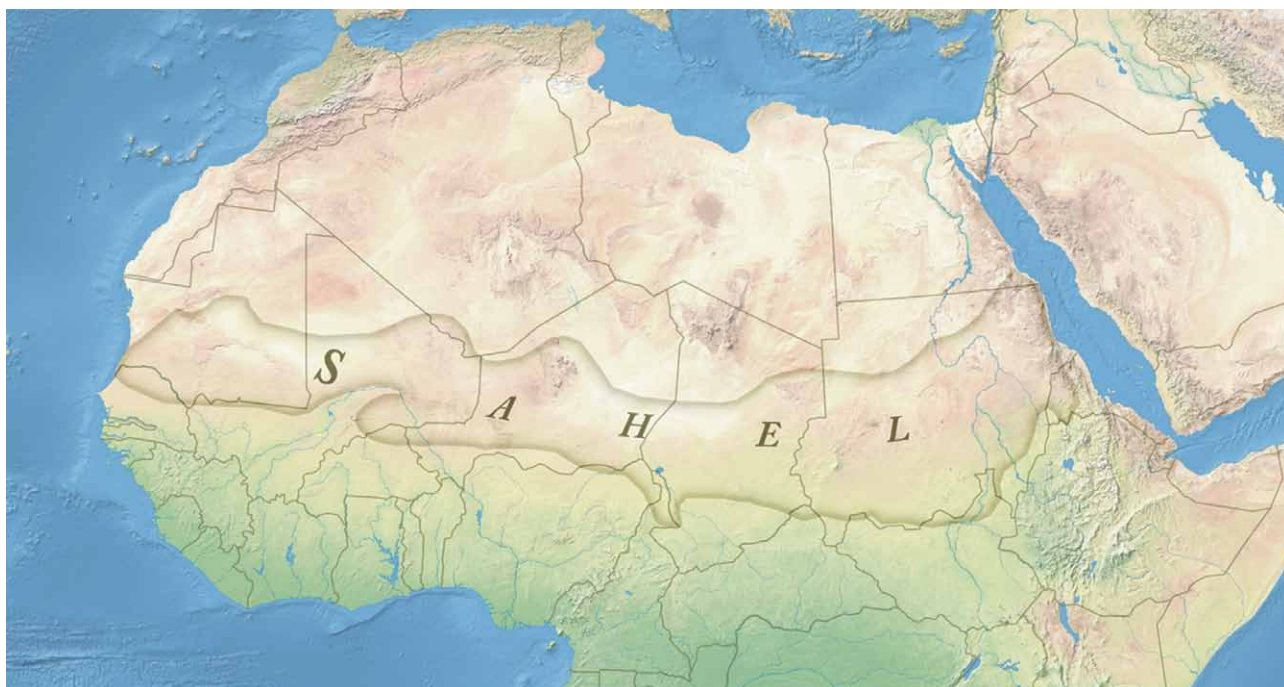
The Sahel countries rank among the lowest on the Human Development Index, with many of the Sahel population living in extreme poverty³. Population growth in the Sahel has also been rapid. Between 1990 and 2010, the population in the Sahel grew by an average annual rate of 3.3%, almost doubling from around

24 million to more than 45 million inhabitants. Furthermore, while Sahelian countries still have some of the lowest levels of urbanisation in the world, the pace of urbanisation has been remarkable, increasing from 2% in 1950 to 25% in 2010⁴. Unfortunately, the economically productive zones of Sahel countries tend to lie in the non-Sahel areas. This means that government focus is typically not concentrated on the Sahel. Policymakers and researchers often argue therefore that the Sahel's environmental, economic, political and security problems cannot be addressed on a country basis, but rather must be addressed on a regional basis⁵.

An array of challenges

It is important to recognise the extreme political and social complexity that exists across the swathe of the Sahel. Politics and society are highly fragmented, and are shaped by the conflicting interests of ethnic groups, clan or caste sub-groups, smuggling and criminal mafia, semi-official ethnic militia, separatists, Islamists and Salafists⁶. Political regimes tend to be hybrids ranging from semi-democracy to semi-autocracy⁷, and virtually all Sahel countries have experienced civil uprisings or coups over the last few years.

Figure 1 Map of the Sahel



Source: Munion, Wikimedia Commons

³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2016). Human Development Report 2016. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>

⁴ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) / Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC). (2014). An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security. West African Studies, OECD Publishing. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264222359-en>

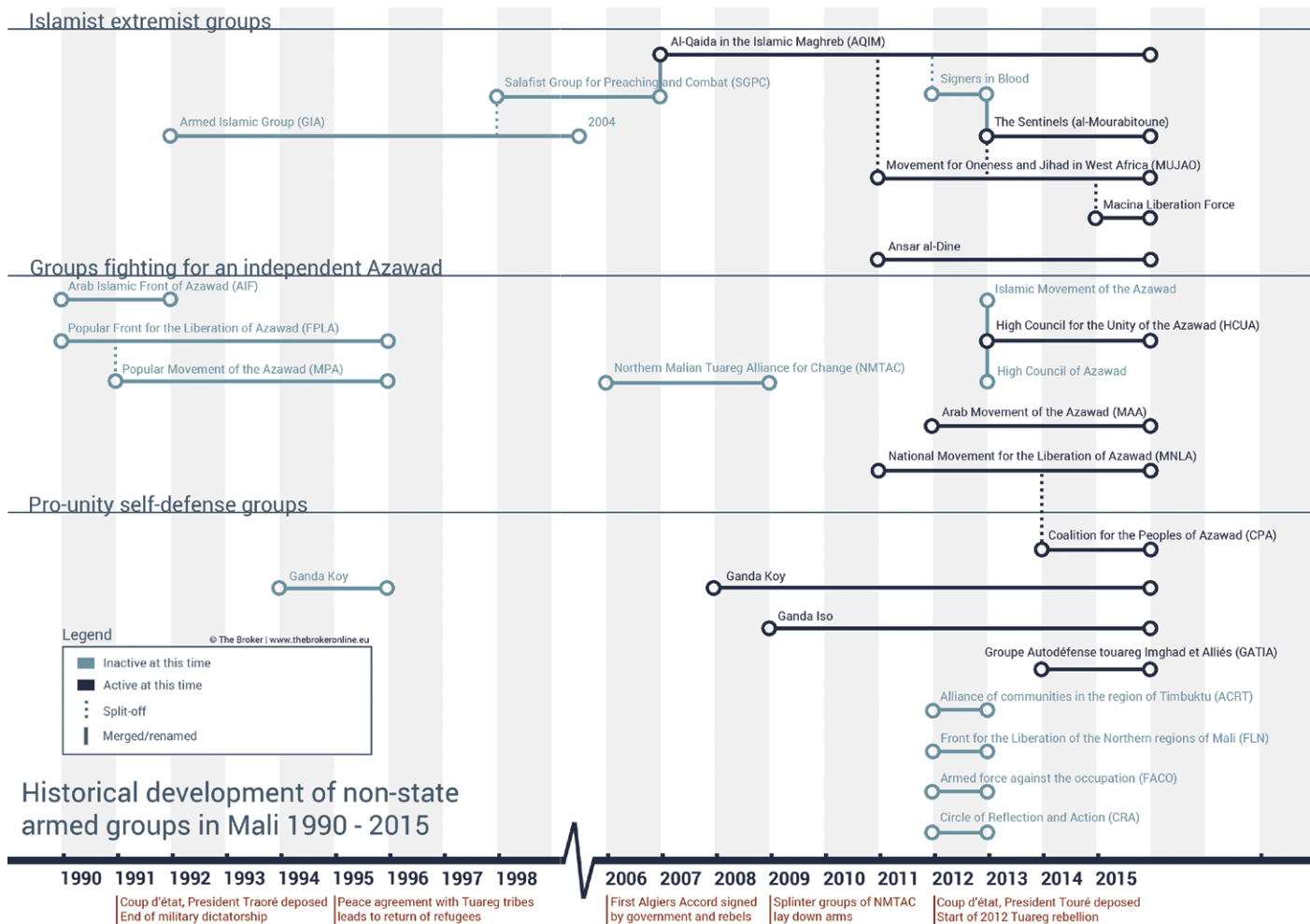
⁵ Barrios, C. and Koepf, T. (eds). (2014). Re-mapping the Sahel, ISS Report no. 19. Available at: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Report_19_Sahel.pdf

⁶ Briscoe, I. (2014). Crime after Jihad: armed groups, the state and illicit business in post-conflict Mali, CRU report.

Available at: <https://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/Crime%20after%20Jihad.pdf>

⁷ Bratton, M. (2016). Violence, displacement and democracy in post-conflict societies: evidence from Mali, Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 34:4, 437–458, DOI: 10.1080/02589001.2016.1269880

Figure 2 Historical development of non-state armed groups in Mali 1990-2015



Source: The Broker online

In 2011, the fall of the Gaddafi regime in Libya created a political vacuum, with instability spilling over to neighbouring Sahel countries. The Sahara and the Sahel were faced with huge inflows of arms, migrants, and returning ex-combatants, whom Colonel Gaddafi had long incorporated into his 'Islamic legion'. These dynamics have been identified as one of the key triggers of the 2012 uprising in northern Mali⁸. Political instability has allowed extremists to strengthen their hand, key amongst them being Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), mainly composed of Tuareg militants; Ansar Al-Dine and the AQIM and MUJAO offshoot Al-Mourabitoun. Additionally, there are extremist groups operating more locally, such as the Macina Liberation Front led by radical preacher

Hamadoun Koufa from the northern Malian Peul community⁹. The picture of Sahelian extremist groups is constantly changing with shifting ties and affiliations¹⁰. The fight against extremism in Mali and across the Sahel is ongoing, and is supported by a range of actors including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), France, the United States, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

Large stocks of weapons have also entered the Sahel from West Africa, following the Second Ivorian Civil War in 2010-2011. A further driver of instability has been the establishment of stronger and better-performing drug trafficking networks, smuggling drugs from South America to Europe via West Africa¹¹.

⁸ McGovern, M. (2013). Understanding Conflict Drivers and Resilience Factors in the Sahel, USAID/USSOCOM Joint Sahel Assessment. Available at: <https://sahelresearch.africa.uct.ac.za/files/USAID-USSOCOM-Sahel-Desk-Study-7-Jun-13.pdf>

⁹ Muiderman, K. (2016). Sahel Watch: a living analysis of the conflict in Mali. The Broker. Available at <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/Sahel-Watch-a-living-analysis-of-the-conflict-in-Mali>

¹⁰ Koepf, T. (2014). The new Sahelian Terrorist landscape – actors and challenges. In: Barrios, C. and Koepf, T. (eds). Re-mapping the Sahel, ISS Report no. 19. Available at: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Report_19_Sahel.pdf

¹¹ Bustelo, M. (2015). A sense of déjà vu: Illegal drugs in West Africa and the Sahel. The Broker. Available at: <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/A-sense-of-deja-vu-Illegal-drugs-in-West-Africa-and-the-Sahel>

Nomadic groups, such as the *Tuareg* and *Tebu*, have reportedly profited from the increase in human smuggling and used these profits to consolidate their control over the routes. These groups build on their longstanding trans-Saharan networks to traffic people, but also other illicit trade such as subsidised food and cigarettes.

These dynamics have led Mohamed Bazoum, the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs to state, "The region has been turned into a powder keg"¹². The 'Sahel Watch' programme, published by *The Broker* online, features a series of articles by over 50 experts which offer detailed perspectives on these dynamics¹³. Many of *The Broker* online articles elaborate on the tribal, regional and social fault lines within these societies and the inability of various groups to unite at the national or supranational level¹⁴.

International and regional support

The aforementioned challenges call for concerted efforts, and many initiatives have emerged with an awareness of the need for joint action. These include the EU's Strategy for Development and Security in the Sahel (2011), the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel Region (2013), the Nouakchott Process (2013), the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region (2014), and the ECOWAS Strategy for the Sahel (2014). The AU, ECOWAS, EU and UN leadership all call for the strengthening of dialogue among actors involved to achieve lasting security for the Sahel populations¹⁵.

International support

The EU was one of the first to issue an integrated strategy for the Sahel whose objectives explicitly recognised that security and development in the Sahel cannot be separated. The EU has already committed approximately €650 million to its Sahel strategy. The EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel has four key themes; firstly, that security and development in the Sahel cannot be separated, and that helping these countries achieve security is integral to enabling their economies to grow and poverty to be reduced. Secondly, that achieving security and development in the Sahel is only possible through

closer regional cooperation - this is currently weaker than it needs to be, and the EU has a potential role to play in supporting it. Thirdly, all the states of the region will benefit from considerable capacity building, both in areas of core government activity, including the provision of security and development cooperation. Fourthly, that the EU therefore has an important role to play in both encouraging economic development for the people of the Sahel and helping them achieve a more secure environment in which it can take place, and in which the interests of EU citizens are also protected¹⁶.

The AU has also developed an integrated strategy for the Sahel region, centered on three main pillars: governance, security, and development. The AU believes itself to have a clear comparative advantage on governance and security issues, given its continental mandate, and experience and familiarity with the issues¹⁷.

"The African Union's Strategy for the Sahel region focuses on three main pillars: governance, security and development. The Sahara-Sahelian areas concerned raise issues that are very closely tied to both security and development. [...] It is important to recognise that inclusion of these three elements in development plans for the region is currently quite low given the institutional isolation of the security aspect."

Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO of the NEPAD Agency¹⁸

Regional cooperation

Regional efforts for developing active economic co-operation between countries of the Sahel and North Africa are also believed to be crucial for attracting investment in infrastructure and generating trade in agricultural goods, textiles and manufactured products. In the past couple of years, several regional initiatives have been launched.

ECOWAS has called for greater efforts towards ensuring common ownership of its own 'Sahel strategy', meant to consolidate on regional responses to long-term development and

¹² Bossard, L. (2011). Insecurity in the Sahel, the Arab Spring and trans-Saharan co-operation. OECD. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/countries/niger/insecurityinthesaheltheArabSpringandtrans-saharanco-operation.htm>

¹³ Walther, O. and Tisseron, A. (2015). Strange bedfellows: a network analysis of Mali's northern conflict. *The Broker*. Available at: <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/Strange-bedfellows-a-network-analysis-of-Mali-s-northern-conflict>

¹⁴ For example, Walther and Tisseron have written on the divisions and fault lines in Northern Mali: "Tuareg and Arab societies are still divided into confederations, tribes, factions and sub-factions that may ally against segments of the same order and unite with these segments against wider segments. [...] Another fault line is between countries: Tuareg rebel movements from Niger and Mali have never merged despite a common cultural heritage and similar grievances with their respective governments. Tuareg and Arab societies are also internally divided between those who migrated to neighboring countries due to the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s, and those who stayed in their own country. Finally, economic inequalities are rising within both Tuareg and Arab societies, between those who profit from the trade of illegal goods and people across the Sahara, and those who rely on pastoralism or tourism, two industries that have been hit by recent droughts and political insecurity." Walther, O. and Tisseron, A. (2015). *Strange bedfellows: a network analysis of Mali's northern conflict*. *The Broker*. Available at: <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/Strange-bedfellows-a-network-analysis-of-Mali-s-northern-conflict>

¹⁵ OECD/SWAC. (2014). *An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security*. West African Studies, OECD Publishing. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264222359-en>

¹⁶ EU External Action Service. (2014). *Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel*. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/strategy_for_security_and_development_in_the_sahel_en_1.pdf

¹⁷ AU. (2014). *The African Union Strategy for the Sahel Region*. Available at: <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-psc-449-au-strategu-for-sahel-region-11-august-2014.pdf>

¹⁸ OECD. (2014). *An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel. Geography, Economics and Security*. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/an-atlas-of-the-sahara-sahel-9789264222359-en.htm>

stability challenges of the Sahel-Saharan zone. According to the President of ECOWAS, many sectors have great potential including pastoral and nomadic livestock herding, irrigated agriculture, mining, tourism, energy and other forms of trade. The ECOWAS strategy will encompass 31 major projects to be implemented from 2016 to 2020, at a cost of \$4.7 billion¹⁹.

“The Saharo-Sahelian areas are largely cut off from the rest of Africa, to the south as well as the north. [...] The aim of building roads across the Sahara is to finally develop economic co-operation with North Africa, increase trade between complementary economies, and build a common future. This kind of will is necessary to help address the dual challenges of stabilisation and development within the vast desert spaces that we share.” Kadré Desiré Ouédraogo, ECOWAS Commission President²⁰

Another initiative is the G5 Sahel, established in 2014 by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The G5 Sahel was set up with the explicit aim of addressing security issues whilst promoting inclusive and sustainable regional development through good governance and better regional and international cooperation²¹.

Photo: Mahamane Touré



CFC investments in sesame in Burkina Faso and Mali

Sesame has emerged as an important agricultural commodity in Burkina Faso and Mali over the last decade, triggered by a rapidly growing global demand. Whereas cotton has in the past been labelled as ‘white gold’, agricultural producers are now diversifying their cash income by also growing sesame. The sesame sector is entirely export oriented, and there is virtually no local market. International buyers, their local agents and local traders at different levels fiercely compete to purchase sesame in the short period from the end of November to February.

CFC, recognising the challenges and opportunities for investment, invested in the project **Development of Export Oriented Sesame Production and Processing in Burkina Faso and Mali**. The project aimed to increase the value and volume of quality sesame produced and marketed from the two countries. The project intervened at three levels, productivity increase, value chain development and processing.

Productivity increases were promoted through farmer field schools and current farmer practices were compared with proposed improved practices on farmer managed demonstration plots. The main differences between

common farmer practices and improved practices are the application of modest amounts of fertiliser, use of improved varieties, sowing fewer seeds per pocket, thinning of plants to two stems per planting hole, and harvesting at the appropriate time. The improved practices increased yields by an average of 62% and 28% in Burkina Faso and Mali, respectively.

Value chain marketing linkages were also assessed in each country. Farmers can market sesame through a farmer group or through a cooperative; they can also sell to a village trader, who buys at the market or at a collection point; or they can sell to field brokers who travel to the farm to buy sesame directly from the producer. Exporters are local business people, or buying agents operating on behalf of foreign traders and processors. Improved value chain financing options were explored for each channel. Processing options were also explored, including organic, certified sesame, and the local production of sesame oil.

For more on lessons learned see:
http://common-fund.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Special_Publications/CFC2014_Paper_Sesame.pdf

¹⁹ ECOWAS. (2015). ECOWAS calls for collective ownership of the Sahel strategy. Available at: <http://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-calls-for-collective-ownership-of-the-sahel-strategy/>

²⁰ OECD. (2014). An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel. Geography, Economics and Security. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/an-atlas-of-the-sahara-sahel-9789264222359-en.htm>

²¹ See G5 Sahel. (2015). Available at: <http://www.g5sahel.org/index.php/qui-sommes-nous/le-g5-sahel>

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) has also recently been restructured and revived, following the extraordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government held in N'Djamena, Chad in February 2013. CEN-SAD approved a new treaty aimed at deepening cooperation between states on regional security and sustainable development. The ambitious treaty aims at establishing a comprehensive Economic Union, including the facilitation of free movement of individuals, capital, goods and services²².

Aligning interests and coordinating support

On the one hand it is encouraging that such a number of 'Sahel strategies' have recently been articulated and resourced, and that the broad outlines of each of these are more or less aligned. This is important because the various strategies can only effectively contribute to the stability of states and an improved quality of life for local populations if there is buy-in or 'ownership' on the part of beneficiaries at the national and regional levels.

On the other hand, there is of course a risk of resource dispersal, given the number of Sahel initiatives and stakeholders. Therefore, there has been a call for a higher degree of coordination of international support for the Sahel. The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Sahel has suggested that the UN, given its convening capacity, expertise in areas of governance, security and resilience, and its capacity to mobilise political will and resources, is well placed to bring together all stakeholders in order to harmonise different Sahel initiatives²³.

"Co-ordination of the regional and international players working in the Sahel is key to the success of the different initiatives for this region. That is one of the UN Secretary-General's key messages."

Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, UN Special Envoy for the Sahel²⁴

Development transformations in the Sahel

Aside from security related challenges, Lambin *et al.* (2014) point to a list of social, economic, environmental and political transformations currently happening in the region. These include rapid urbanisation; migration of young men leading to reduced labour

CFC olive oil projects in Algeria

The Common Fund has financed and implemented five olive oil projects in Algeria²⁵, focusing on both pre and post-harvest interventions. The projects have aimed at addressing the critical success factors of the olive oil value chain. For example, specific projects have focused on genetic olive improvement; conservation, characterisation and collection of genetic resources in olive; recycling of vegetable water and olive pomace on agricultural lands; and the creation of pilot demonstration nurseries and training to improve olive oil quality.

The CFC's investments in olive oil have greatly contributed to disseminating modern cultivation and processing technologies and best agricultural practices in the region. By boosting quality and productivity, whilst mitigating the environmental impact of olive cultivation, the CFC has helped to increase incomes for smallholder farmers and olive oil processors.

For more on CFC olive projects in Algeria, see <http://common-fund.org/projects/projects-overview/>

availability in rural areas; increased food imports with fluctuating prices; introduction of new crop varieties, cattle breeds and farming technologies; and increased commodification of agricultural production for urban and international export. Changes are also observed in property right regimes with land privatisation and the emergence of land markets; encroachment of large-holders in areas traditionally dominated by communal land ownership; changing donor policies and priorities, and some large investments in external infrastructure projects (such as dams, oil pipelines, mines, irrigation schemes and power grids)²⁶.

Three transformational issues which are of particular interest for CFC and its mandate for supporting commodity development, are elaborated further in the following section. These are youth employment, climate-smart investments, and water as a resource and commodity.

Targeting youth employment

Unemployment is high in the Sahel, particularly among youth²⁷. This is an important issue, in a region with a burgeoning youth population. Youth protests against rising unemployment, feelings of marginalisation and exclusion, and disconnection from global economic and political networks can manifest themselves in both positive and negative ways²⁸.

²² CEN-SAD. (2013). CEN-SAD - The Community of Sahel-Saharan States. Available at: <http://www.uneca.org/oria/pages/cen-sad-community-sahel-saharan-states>

²³ OECD. (2014). An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security. An institutional point of view on the challenges of the Sahara-Sahel.

In Chapter 10, Strengthening State Ownership of Strategies and Initiatives and Coordinating international support for stability in the Sahel.

Ms Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for the Sahel, page 245.

²⁴ OECD. (2014). An Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel. Geography, Economics and Security. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/an-atlas-of-the-sahara-sahel-9789264222359-en.htm>

²⁵ Whilst not strictly a Sahel country, the southern part of Algeria is a part of the Sahel zone.

²⁶ Lambin, E., D'haen, S., Mertz, O., Østergaard Nielsen, J. and Rasmussen, K. (2014). Scenarios on future land changes in the West African Sahel, *Geografisk Tidsskrift-Danish Journal of Geography*, 114, 1, 76-83.

²⁷ Geling, A. (2017). Youth inclusiveness in agricultural transformation: the case of Mali. Food and Business Knowledge Platform.

Available at: http://knowledge4food.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/161130_youth-inclusiveness-agri_mali.pdf

²⁸ Willemse, K., de Bruijn, M., van Dijk, H. and Muiderman, K. (2015). What are the connections between Africa's contemporary conflicts. The Broker. Available at: <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/What-are-the-connections-between-Africa-s-contemporary-conflicts>

On the positive side, youth are on the forefront of movements challenging governments to be more inclusive, democratic and accountable. Examples include the Balai Citoyen movement in Burkina Faso and the Y'en a Marre movement in Senegal. These grassroots movements mobilised youth to stand up against corruption and grew quickly through the use of social media and with support from well-known artists²⁹. But there are also less positive examples. Youth have also been receptive to 'alternative' messaging on social media and recruitment by extremist movements, which can appeal to young people's feelings of oppression and marginalisation³⁰.

Job creation has been central in debates on the interdependence of economic development and peace held by, amongst others, the World Bank³¹. In 2016, the International Security Development Centre (ISDC) looked at more than 400 programmes, analysing the effect of jobs on peace. The ISDC report suggests that jobs can contribute to peace in three ways; firstly, having a job makes the costs of being part of violent activities higher (e.g. losing a day of work). Secondly, having a job boosts the sense of being part of a group and thereby reduces grievances and conflict risks within that group. Thirdly, bringing people together from different groups (e.g. ethnic groups) can break down the barriers between them³².

However, while the researchers and policymakers are generally positive about the potential for employment to contribute to peace, there remains a lack of evidence that can empirically support this claim. There is need to find ways to assess what types of jobs lead to stability, and how the process of creating sustainable job opportunities can be supported in the Sahel³³.

Climate smart investments

Development investments will also need to take into account the effect of climate change on the Sahel, materialising in the form of temperature change, rainfall and drought, and the occurrence of sudden, extreme flood events. Sub-Saharan countries are among the most climate-affected countries³⁴. According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), these changes in climate can act as threat multipliers to existing vulnerabilities.

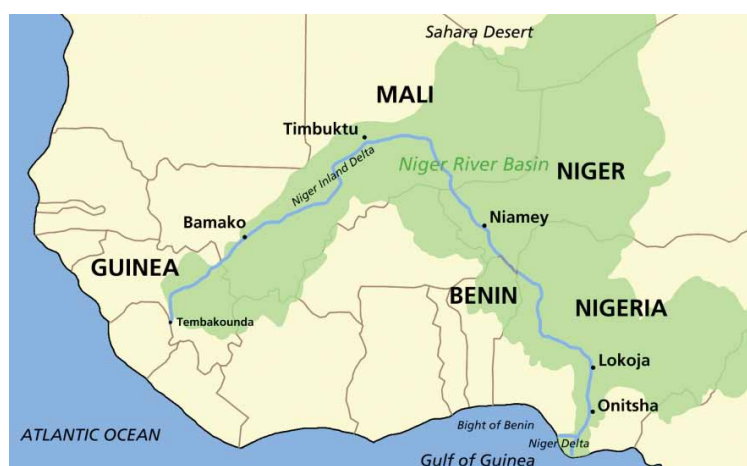
For example, reoccurring drought in Niger has pushed northern pastoralist groups southwards into regions used by sedentary farmers. At the same time, farmers have expanded cultivation into lands used primarily by pastoralists because demand for food has increased. These changes have led to greater competition, tensions and violent conflict between the different groups³⁵.

Therefore, research and investment will also be required to address the likely impacts of climate change on Sahel communities and their potential effects on stability and security. This should also apply to mobile groups, such as pastoralists, who in the past have been excluded from decentralised decision-making arenas³⁶. Sahelian people have long dealt with drought and climate variability, and their knowledge can be used to help develop effective conflict-sensitive climate responses.

Water for commodity development

Water has long been the most important resource in the Sahel region. Investing in improved access to water is therefore a priority for commodity development in the Sahel. The Niger River is a vital water supply, arcing 4,200 kilometres through Guinea, Mali, Niger and entering the Atlantic Ocean in Nigeria. The entire river basin includes Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad and Cameroon and is considered the lifeline of Sahelian communities³⁷.

Figure 3 Niger river basin



Source: Wikimedia commons

²⁹ Roger, B. (2015). Y'en a Marre, Balai Citoyen, Filimbi: l'essor des sentinelles de la démocratie, Jeune Afrique. Available at:

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/228193/politique/y-en-a-marre-balai-citoyen-filimbi-l-essor-des-sentinelles-de-la-democratie/>

³⁰ Willemse, K., de Bruijn, M., van Dijk, H. and Muiderman, K. (2015). What are the connections between Africa's contemporary conflicts. The Broker.

Available at: <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/What-are-the-connections-between-Africa-s-contemporary-conflicts>

³¹ World Bank. (2013). World Development Report on Jobs. Available at: <http://go.worldbank.org/F9LTU2LSS0>

³² Brück, T., Ferguson, N., Izzi, V. and Stojetz, W. (2016). Jobs and Peace, A Review of the Theory and Practice of the Impact of Employment Programmes on Peace in Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries. Available at: <http://isd-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Employment-Interventions-and-Peace-Final-Report-Final-Version-2016-09-16.pdf>

³³ Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law. (2014). Private Sector Development for employment and stability. Network event, The Hague. Available at: <http://www.kpsrl.org/browse/download/t/private-sector-development-for-employment-and-stability-2>

³⁴ Alavian, V. et al. (2009). Water and climate change: understanding the risks and making climate-smart investment decisions. Available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/71e0/53710152adaea2ece28c7ce81419f7482ab0.pdf>

³⁵ UNEP. (2011). Livelihood Security: climate change, migration and conflict in the Sahel, United Nations Environmental Programme; Turner, D. (2004). Political ecology and the moral dimensions of 'resource conflicts': The case of farmer-herder conflicts in the Sahel Political Geography, 23, 863-889

³⁶ Brockhaus, M., Djoudi, H. & Kambire, H., (2012). Multi-level governance and adaptive capacity in West Africa. International Journal of the Commons. 6(2), pp.200-232. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.331>

³⁷ The Niger River originates in Guinea and the Ivory Coast, passes Mali, Niger and enters the Atlantic Ocean in Nigeria. The Niger Basin also extends over Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Cameroon. The river basin of the Niger covers 7.5% of the continent and spreads over 10 countries.



A seemingly promising solution to rainfall dependency is the development of hydroelectric and hydro-agricultural irrigation schemes, a theme explored in detail in the publication *The Niger, A lifeline*³⁸. However, as always, understanding the context is important. The Inner Niger Delta supports an estimated 1.5 million people directly, supplying fish, grazing grounds for cattle and fertile land for rice paddies and other crops³⁹. But Wetlands International, a global not-for-profit organisation, reports on how dam building and hydropower can negatively affect downstream countries such as Benin, Niger and Nigeria⁴⁰. The situation is clearly complex and sensitive. Whilst it is advantageous to harness water resources for commodity development, environmental assessments must take the concerns of downstream beneficiaries seriously, so as not to exacerbate water resource conflicts.

The importance of institutions for inclusive development

A major challenge when developing untapped potential, is to ensure that broad, inclusive growth follows. For example, the development of mineral and oil revenues in Chad have had negligible impacts on social development in the country. While the mineral and oil resources could generate jobs and ultimately contribute to economic growth and development, this does not necessarily happen⁴¹. This theme is explored in *Why Nations Fail*, in which Acemoglu and Robinson argue that economic prosperity depends above all on the inclusiveness of economic and political institutions. Institutions are 'inclusive' when many people have a say in political decision-making, as opposed to cases where a small group of people control political institutions and

are unwilling to change. The authors also argue that inclusive institutions promote economic prosperity because they provide an incentive structure that allows talents and creative ideas to be rewarded⁴². This suggests that investments in development coupled with better security in Sahel countries, will not have positive, long run impacts, unless accompanied by an improvement in the quality and responsiveness of country's institutions.

Linking development and security, in the short and longer term

The scope of this paper only allows for a superficial analysis of the inherent complexities within the Sahel, and the broader theoretical linkages between security and development. What is certain is that there is no easy pathway forwards. Development investments are not on their own a 'silver bullet', but should be part of a broader package of interventions.

In the short term, regional and international actors broadly believe that the path forwards revolves firstly around security interventions that help restore peace, combat extremism, manage organised crime and restore the rule of law. Resources also need to be available to quickly respond to specific humanitarian crises as they occur.

Concurrently, lasting solutions need to be found. These will need to entail political and institutional reforms, and enhanced regional cooperation on a range of topics, including defence and security matters, socio-economic and cultural development, reconciliation, justice, and humanitarian issues.

Of course, this is easier said than done. To have legitimacy, stakeholders will need to be willing to embrace a wide range of voices in their decision-making processes. If this can be achieved, an improved security situation should facilitate new infrastructure investments that can rebuild trade networks and revive Sahel economies. This is where CFC can step in and mobilise its resources as a supporting partner in commodity value chains.

Authors: Roger Bymolt, r.bymolt@kit Royal Tropical Institute and Karlijn Muiderman

Unless expressly stated otherwise, the document contains findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed by the authors who prepared the work, and do not necessarily represent the views of the CFC.

³⁸ Zwarts, L., van Beukering, P., Kone, B. and Wymenga, E. (eds.) (2005). *The Niger, a lifeline*. Effective water management in the Upper Niger Basin. RIZA, Lelystad / Wetlands International, Sévère / Institute for Environmental studies. (IVM), Amsterdam / A&W ecological consultants, Veenwouden. Mali / the Netherlands. Available at: http://www.altwym.nl/uploads/file/361_1289481552.pdf

³⁹ Kortlandt, J. (2016). New irrigation plans threaten food production Inner Niger Delta. Wetlands. Available at: <https://www.wetlands.org/news/new-irrigation-plans-threaten-food-production-inner-niger-delta/>

⁴⁰ Food production will increase in the region of Office du Niger, a semiautonomous agency of the Malian government, by 58%. <https://www.wetlands.org/news/new-irrigation-plans-threaten-food-production-inner-niger-delta/>

⁴¹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2017). Available at: <http://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=1214>

⁴² Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. (2012). *Why Nations Fail, the origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. Available at: <http://whynationsfail.com>