The Segou Experience:
landmarks to guide concerted action

Regional Encounter in Segou (Mali)
on local-level natural resource
management, May 22-27, 1989
The town of Segou, Mali, was the setting for a Regional Encounter in May which brought together representatives of the three principal partners of rural development in the Sahel: rural organizations, officials of governments and aid donors, on the theme of local-level natural resource management. The Encounter agreed on an eight-point programme of action contained in its final statement, The Segou Experience.

Haramata is pleased to present this document on behalf of CILSS and the Club du Sahel. A fuller report of the meeting is now in preparation and will be available in due course from the sponsoring organizations. A second paper from the Segou Encounter - 'Women and the struggle against desertification in the Sahel,' by Marie Monimart - will be published in the Issues Envelope with the December edition of Haramata.

For further information, please contact: Club du Sahel, OECD, 2 rue Andre Pascal, 7577 Paris Cedex 16, France; or CILSS, BP 7049, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
FROM THE NOUAKCHOTT STRATEGY TO A REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE APPROACH: THE SEGOU EXPERIENCE

For twenty years, the Sahel has suffered from persistent drought and ecological degradation, which combined with the economic crisis and population growth have put considerable strain on the Sahelians and have hampered the development efforts of the countries in the region.

At the initiative of the CILSS and the Club du Sahel, Sahelian leaders met in Nouakchott in 1984 to discuss the situation. Proposals were made there for a desertification control strategy. Such a strategy was subsequently adopted by all the Sahelian countries, and received the support of those countries' partners in the international community.

Since Nouakchott, Sahelian governments have drawn up national plans for desertification control and socio-economic development. They have also embarked upon large-scale programs to put those plans into action.

1) It has become apparent that these programs and projects have encountered problems in transforming the key points in the Nouakchott strategy into concrete action (e.g. popular participation, local level natural resource management, the global approach).

2) At the same time, it has become clear that a growing number of local development initiatives by rural organisations of all kinds have been successful in all types of agro-ecological situations. However, these initiatives have not spread on a larger scale in a process of sustained development.

3) Similarly, development partners expressed concern that their aid was having little real effect on promoting sustained development in the Sahel.

4) Meanwhile, the effects of desertification have continued to spread, further aggravating the socio-economic difficulties encountered by Sahelian population groups, their organizations, and governments.

Recognizing this situation, the CILSS and the Club du Sahel decided to organize in Segou a consultation meeting bringing together the three parties involved in the development process: rural population groups, represented by their local organizations, governments, and their partners in the international community, and NGOs).
The Segou Encounter was the first of its kind, and its primary objectives was to apply to practical situations the concepts of popular participation, local level management of natural resources and the global approach so that the Sahel can undertake to move towards sustained development.

The debates in Segou were open, fruitful and lively. A wide variety of successful initiatives were used as the basis of discussions, and all the participants put across their respective viewpoints in a spirit of mutual respect. At the Segou meeting, rural organizations, governments and development partners outlined a frame of reference for the future, within which the success of all subsequent endeavours can be measured.

LANDMARKS TO GUIDE CONCERTED ACTION

1) Ecological rehabilitation: restore a degraded asset

Problems of land tenure, outdated production systems and farming techniques, and successive droughts have led to serious degradation of the natural environment. Part of this initial capital has thus been lost, and there is now an urgent need to reconstitute those assets.

The cost of this rehabilitation is high. Many techniques could be used: certain could be applied immediately by local groups, while others are more complex and costly, and depend on government action. Local populations' awareness and determination to participate in the rehabilitation process are essential but not sufficient.

External aid will be indispensable, as good intentions at the local level clearly have their limits. If producers are struggling just to make their farming operations survive, they will tend to favour solutions that generate income in the short term. Rehabilitation, on the other hand, involves investments that will only pay off in the medium to long term. Incentives and aid in the form of logistic support, supplementary income, etc., should thus be made available so that producers will make the necessary long-term improvements. In this respect, future structural adjustment programs will have to take ecological constraints into account adequately.

Furthermore, land rehabilitation must be seen not only as a way of conserving the environment, but above all as a way of improving production and generating sources of incomes in order to cover the costs incurred by producers.

For effective action to be taken, technical support from the relevant government departments is needed. Thus, those
departments must have the means to fulfil their roles.

2) Local level natural resource management: share responsibility with local communities

Ecological rehabilitation involves systematic management of renewable natural resources at the local level. Numerous techniques must be used here. Certain are suitable for grazing land, while others must be applied to the local areas that are suffering from ecological deterioration. Areas with higher rainfall call for yet other techniques which are better suited to more intensive forms of agriculture.

Not everybody knows about these techniques, and efforts must be made to disseminate them and to stimulate experience-sharing. Research and development initiatives must seek to address the problems encountered by those who are most closely concerned.

The fact that suitable techniques exist is clearly not enough. Rural population groups must also organize themselves in an efficient manner. A wide variety of rural organizations and institutions already exist to deal with specific problems (management of forests, watersheds, grazing land, etc.). Most importantly, these organizations should be autonomous in their day-to-day operations, in training, and in management. In this respect, one basic requirement is for the legal system to recognize the existence of these organizations.

3) Decentralized management: increase efficiency

Governments will encourage local communities to shoulder greater responsibility if those communities show that they are genuinely able to take their development in hand. But for this transition to happen, government departments will have to help local communities to become more aware of the issues involved and will have to transfer responsibility for certain activities from the public sector to these communities.

The state must take new institutional steps to guarantee and monitor local development. Comprehensive land-use planning is needed to rationalize investments, and rural development policies must seek to increase the incomes of rural inhabitants and help the non-governmental sector to take shape.

Similarly, as part of the international community's efforts to move closer to rural organizations in order to increase the effectiveness of outside aid, donors could decentralize to their local agencies part of their procedures and decision-making power.
Since the three families of actors – local organizations, Sahelian governments and donors – are to act as partners, the ground rules of partnership must be established as clearly as possible.

4) Land tenure reform: hedge local investments

Land tenure poses numerous problems of various types at the local level, and many of those problems have become acute as available land is in greater and greater demand. There is thus a need to find a flexible way of combining the modern legal system – which is still insufficiently known – with customary laws. One solution would be to consult producer organizations in the event of disputes.

One aspect of the land tenure issue that is particularly worrisome is the development of the land market in certain areas. The poorest, marginalized producers, who are forced to sell fields to bolster their incomes, subsequently have no choice but to overfarm their remaining land, thereby contributing to ecological degradation. Newly landless farmers are swelling the ranks of the unemployed in the cities. Suitable rules are needed to avoid these problems.

In the short term, the central problem is the lack of security of investments in the land. Producers will continue to be unable to invest in improving the land if they are unsure of reaping the benefits later. Legislative solutions must be found.

5) Local credit and savings: increase local investment

The success of credit and savings systems depend on the development of viable local voluntary organizations (cooperatives, associations, etc.) based on mutual trust.

Attempts to set up savings and credit systems that meet local requirements should be encouraged.

Nevertheless, links between these systems and the banking system poses various problems that must be solved:

- liquidation periods on loans to producers should be lengthened to take into account the uncertainty of income levels due to climatic variations;

- similarly, the amount of collateral demanded from producers must remain flexible in order to take local situations into account;

- loan contracts must be clear and firm so that borrowers are fully aware of their commitments from the outset.
More globally, the insecurity of prices and markets discourages producers from contracting loans. Governments policy should thus promote conditions that limit excessive fluctuations in the prices of the main crops, assist producer organizations in gaining a better understanding of market trends, and promote processing, conservation and marketing of local produce. Food aid must be integrated into this global approach.

6) Women's participation: make it work

The historic role of women in rural areas has been altered by desertification and rural exodus. As a result, women today are performing different tasks, and, in particular, they play an essential part in ecological rehabilitation and local level natural resource management.

However, their formal status within society is still incongruous with this new level of responsibility that they are assuming. Increasingly, women are asking for sufficient land so that they can meet their monetary requirements; they are seeking access to farm machinery and, therefore, credit facilities; and they wish to take part in the decisions that affect the life of the community.

Training is needed in those areas of activity where women are now involved. Extension work is now too often aimed exclusively at the men. In addition, aid should be made available in order to lighten women's day-to-day workload and to diversify productive and other activities enabling them to find new sources of income.

7) Information and training: share experiences

Local experience is particularly useful. Valuable lessons can be learned from successes as well as from failures. Rural inhabitants are eager to find out about these experiences and appraise them directly.

If experience sharing is organized and encouraged, ideas progress faster and reach wider audiences. A genuine communication policy should be adopted in order to achieve these aims. Such a policy addressing the major issues facing the rural world would accord rural problems the priority they deserve. This communication policy would mobilize the mass media as well as alternative channels of information, and would include visits and experience sharing by representatives of the rural areas of different Sahelian countries.

To consolidate efforts to improve agricultural and environmental rehabilitation techniques, close attention should be paid to the
development of management and leadership skills required for the management autonomy of local communities. Experience sharing is needed here also, but suitable training is an even more pressing requirement.

8) Population and development: control the future

In view of the ecological, social and economic environment of the Sahel, the question of the population policies that will underpin sustained development should be examined in the light of the N'Djamena Plan of Action.

It is of primary importance to involve local population groups in the definition and implementation of these policies.

THE SEGOU REGIONAL ENCOUNTER:

- wishes the Sahelian governments to consider the frame of reference outlined at Segou and to work within that framework whenever appropriate;

- calls upon rural organizations, the Sahelian governments and their partners in the international community to nurture the spirit of Segou by organizing three-sided coordination meetings so that concrete action can be taken to promote sustained development throughout the Sahel;

- requests the CILSS and the Club du Sahel to take guidance from the Segou landmarks and to continue their examination of the issues involved.

+  +  +  +
PARTICIPANTS

ORGANISATIONS RURALES SAHELIENNES

BURKINA FASO
M. Ibaoudo André Eugène
Secrétaire Général
Association Vielle du Paysan
B.P. 624 - Ouagadougou
M. Soulou Issa
Président
Société Coopérative Agricole de SYA
B.P. 68 - Rato Dounrou
M. Sawadogo Nabi-Naoma
Animaleur
Groupement Nom Nom Saflags
B.P. 100 - Somiya
Touvacoua
M. Tanou Fousa
Président
Groupement Villagers l'Somiya
Soubone
B.P. 39 - Soubone 1/4
CIPA Nord
Mme Baoulle Meke
Responsable de zone
Popoyouk
ZABRE - Popoyouk
Mme Ouédraogo Koutokou
Animalse CIPA Nord
CIPA Ouagouya
B.P. 37 - Yatenga
Touvacoua

ILE DU CAP-VERTE
M. Abrou dos Santos Jacinto
Consultant
Terre Brûlée
B.P. 12 - Praia

GAMBIE
Mme Dioum-Salameh Maryam
Président
Women Group Sukuta
Village
W. Diulian, Agriculture Department
Kombol North - Bantel
M. Ndour Keba
Président
Rice Growing Society
Velingara Goombé
M. Dabo Mamadou
Président
URD Division - Soma

MAUR
M. Diouma Boureima
Emissaire
Urée Pashkoura da Bant
Bamboul - Guille de Bouetica
M. Mohamed
Imamou Ag Haming
Society Administratif
Urée Pashkoura de Kothera
Nrouma-Carré de Bouetica
M. Kalla Samba
Association Villagers

DE OMAN
M. Karam Mawoutou
Société Générale
Association Vielle du Paysan
B.P. 10 - Tomblan
M. Maguey Samara
Président
Groupement Villagers de Youndou
Kofo
M. Peete Mame
Accesseur
M. Peete Mame
Société Générale
Association Villagers
B.P. 46 - Guinéenne
M. Maguey Mawoutou
Association Villagers de Youndou
M. Dikou Ali
Contrôleur technique
CUIRO<br>B.P. 1766 - Bambou
Mme Couloumb Salloum
Département Organisation
Responsable Actions féminines
Département Agriculture CMDT
B.P. 59 - Fara
Mme Sambou Saliou
Directeur
Centre de formation coopérative (CFC)
B.P. 1 - Quartier Bapouday San

NIGER
M. Ali Salahi
Vice-président
Cooperatives d'éleveurs du
du B.P. 29 - Goudou - Zinder
M. Ali Salahi Mame
Encaissement
CUIRO<br>B.P. 18 - Koudi
M. Béthio Mame Boubaou
Coopteur
Groupement Villagers de Tombouctou
B.P. 926 - Niamey
M. Sidibé Aïto
Mame
Agrocooperatif, Assecat
CUIRO<br>B.P. 12009 - Tahoua
Mme. Matamana Abdoulaye
Encaissement
Projet d'accretion
CARE/NOE - Niamey

SENEGAL
M. Gando Saliou Banda
Coopteur
Comité d'action Fongay (CAF)
B.P. 51 - Ssoumada
M. Mangou Deyaye
Coopteur
Association des joueurs
B.P. 9 - Rose Bédébi
M. Fayy Mokoko
Coopteur technique
Association Vielle du Paysan
de Bouli
B.P. 22 - Bouli par Kofrana
M. Ali Salahi Mame
Secrétaire général
Groupement Villagers de Kouroumba
B.P. 200 - Tomblan
M. Maguey Saliou
Trésorier général FAID
Fédération Association du paysage
Pour le Développement
B.P. 3855 - Dongo
Mme Dione Aminata
Animaleur
CADÉF, Flandres
B.P. 51 - Bignona - Kogonou
Mme Dia Démou Saliou
Monticule
Développement territorial
Maison Familiale de Adama
B.P. 83 - Fandji

TOCH
M. Dibba Vieux
Cultivateur
Organisation paysanne
de Boomghar
Mision catholiques de Monga
B.P. 2 - Gouré
M. Bouguerou Salloum
Coopteur
Comité Local Agriculture
de Boomghar
Mision catholiques de Boomghar

REPRESENTANTS DES ETATS MEMBRES DU CISS

BURKINA FASO
M. Coulibaly Mamadou
Directeur du Plan et de la Planification
Ministére de l'Action Coopérative
B.P. 350 - Ouagadougou
M. Séguéla M. Michel
Direction Recherche
Membre du Comité de recherche scientifique
B.P. 2192 - Ouagadougou

CAPE VERT
Mme Dias Aminata
Technicienne adjointe MDRP
Ministére du Développement rural
B.P. 116 - Praia

GAMBIE
M. Jagne Ahmad Al Hassan
Consultant
Ministère de l'agriculture
26 Haar Street - Banjul

GUINEE-BISSAU
M. Germa Dias Nielsen
Directeur de la Planification
Ministére du Développement rural
P.O. Box 74 - Bissau
M. Camara José
Directeur du FNP
Secrétaire du Plan
B.P. 6 - Bissau

MAUR
M. Dalki Diamo
Président de l'Assemblée
Nationale de la République du Mauritanien
S.E. M. Mobile Salloum
Gouverneur de la région de Sfax
M. Diove El Hassan
Commissaire National du CISS
Ministére de l'Agriculture
B.P. 61 - Bambou
M. Mamadou Yeneba
Directeur National de l'Agriculture
Ministére de l'Agriculture
B.P. 1093 - Bambou
M. Baguette Natonou Salloum
Directeur Général Adjoint
Ministére de l'Agriculture
B.P. 1093 - Bambou
M. Tawar Ouamara
Directeur National
Ministére de l'Agriculture
B.P. 155 - Bambou
M. Bamba Alassou
Directeur Adjoint
Ministére de l'Agriculture
B.P. 155 - Bambou
M. Tawar Ouamara
Directeur National
Ministére de l'Agriculture
B.P. 155 - Bambou
M. Tawar Ouamara
Directeur National
Ministére de l'Agriculture
PRESSE ET MEDIAS

M. lagarde Vincent
Système Français d'Information Agro-pastoral (SFIPA)
BP. 16, Taminon - Mal
Mme Pantale Monais
Coordination CTA/CTA
BP. 10, Taminon - Mal

LES DOCUMENTS DE BASE

- Développement des échanges de céréales (Société Togo) RIC-D32
- Approche de la politique des États au sein du développement agricole et de la lutte contre la désertification (Algerie) ENTEC et Séminaire (Côte d'Ivoire) RIC-D2
- Formation et développement de la culture de la Sécurité (Ethiopie) ENTEC RIC-D2

LES DOCUMENTS D'APPEL A LA RENCONTRE

- Études de décryptage de la production et du commerce international des ressources naturelles dans le Sahel (Sénégal) RIC-D32
- La sécurité en Amérique latine et en Afrique (Haïti) RIC-D32
- Le plan de développement et du commerce international des ressources naturelles dans le Sahel (Sénégal) RIC-D32
- Répartition des ressources et gestion des ressources naturelles dans le Sahel (Sénégal) RIC-D32
- Analyse des ressources et études de production dans le Sahel (Sénégal) RIC-D32

INSTITUT DU SAHEL

M. Jallou Amadou Tijn
Directeur général, Institut du Sahel
BP. 64, Moussa Bouati
Dakar, Sénégal

SECRETARIAT EXECUTIF DU CIILS

M. Ismail Mahamat
Secretaire Exécutive
Programme de Coopération Palestine-Seiches (PCPS) RIC-D32

SECRETARIAT DU CLUB DU SAHEL

M. Goulissant Jean-H
Directeur Régional de la FAO
M. Benlamrane Jacob
Directeur Régional de la FAO
M. Pradel Jean-Marc
Directeur Régional de la FAO
M. Ndiaye François
Agéat Administratif

LISTE DE LA DELEGATION REGIONALE DE SEGOU

M. Soro Maoula
Ministre des Travaux Publics et de l'Urbanisme
(Directeur Régional des Travaux Publics)
M. Macaloul Abouda
Directeur Régional (Direction Régionale des Affaires Sociales)
M. Macaloul Abouda
Chef de Division (Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêts)
M. Ag Hamady Mohammed
Chef de Projet Aménagement des Terres (RESP) RIC-D32
M. Moktar Abdou
Directeur Opérationnel RIC-D32
M. Sembé Abrahim
 Chargé du Développement du Gouvernement
(Gouvernement)
M. Damba Mahamadou
Directeur Régional de l'Agriculture
M. M. Allaboe Mohamed
Directeur Régional du Plan