WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PROGRAM

Activity Data Sheet

Program: West Africa Regional Program
Title and Number: Food Security and Environmental and Natural Resources Policies and Programs Strengthened and Implemented in West Africa, 624-006
Status: New
Planned FY 2001 Obligation and Funding Source: $4,551,000 DA
Proposed FY 2002 Obligations and Funding Source: $3,685,000 DA
Initial Obligation: FY 2001 **Estimated Completion Date:** FY 2008

Summary: The purpose of this activity is to enhance and expand efforts at regional coordination that relate to natural resources management, environmental policy, and food and agricultural policies and programs. The ultimate beneficiaries are the inhabitants of the rural sector in West Africa. As benefits accrue to the rural sector, however, they will also be reflected in greater food availability in the markets. Therefore, urban populations are also considered to be beneficiaries. Powerful synergistic outcomes are anticipated from this program, because of prior USAID-related West African regional activities in the areas of economic integration and trade and in population and health. Poverty alleviation involves a combination of well-targeted programs and investments across sectors, at both bilateral and regional levels, and this program is expected to reap the benefits of a high level of programmatic integration.

Two-thirds of West Africa's population is rural and is directly engaged in the use of natural resources to produce food and generate income. Food produced within the region is thought to account for about 75% of the food consumption in rural areas and 60% of the food consumption in urban areas. The region is thus highly dependent on rural production systems, and the environments upon which they depend, for food security, trade and continued economic growth and development. West Africa's extraordinarily high population growth threatens both food security and the environment. Population growth in West Africa exceeds that of any region in the world and has nearly tripled since the early 1960s. Prospects for the future remain disturbing, with nearly 50% of the population below 15 years of age.

Food security remains a preoccupation of countries throughout West Africa because of low absolute levels of food availability per capita and the very low-income levels of most people in the region. Poverty levels are extremely high and heavily concentrated in the rural population: about 60% of all people in Sahel West Africa live in poverty, and over 80% of the poor live in rural areas. In some countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire, poverty levels have increased over the last ten years because economic growth has been low or non-existent. In others such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, economies have virtually been destroyed in the wake of violent conflict. In countries like Chad and Niger, the levels of basic development are so low that populations are locked at minimum subsistence levels. The low levels of income and development and a fragile resource base in most West African countries contribute to high levels of undernourishment. There have been some improvements in nutrition in the region over the past 10 years, but chronic undernourishment remains high. In 1997, nine of the 17 countries covered by WARP had at least 30% of their populations classified as "chronically undernourished," and undernourishment levels in several countries exceeded 40% of the population. Of great concern are: (1) the extent of undernourishment among

the lowest income groups, and (2) the poor nutritional patterns among women and children. For example, 50% of Malian children under five are visibly stunted. Of the 20 nations with the highest per capita dietary energy deficiency for those who are seriously undernourished, five are in West Africa.

While there is considerable diversity among the environmental and natural resources issues in the West Africa region, it is possible to assess and characterize these in a regional context. There are pockets of high bio-diversity, and considerable investments have been made to establish national parks, forest reserves and other protected areas. On the other hand, in a region where basic needs go unmet, bio-diversity conservation is not a development priority for most people and institutions, with predictably negative impact on the environment and natural resource base. There has been a significant decline in the area of moist tropical forest in several West African coastal countries, most notably with millions of hectares of clear-cutting in Liberia, but also some decline in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. A more widespread problem, however, is the overuse and gradual degradation of the vegetative cover of rangeland, farmed parklands, savannas and woodlands that dominate the region. In West Africa, desertification is a key issue. The most critical environmental issues have been those related to low and erratic rainfall, periodic drought, water shortages, uncontrolled land clearing and reduction of fuel wood stocks, wind and water erosion and declining soil fertility. All of these problems have been exacerbated by continued high rates of population growth, inadequate investments in education and health, gender inequity, and generally weak governance.

This activity directly supports the USAID Agency goals in economic growth, the U.S. National Interest of "Environment, Global Climate Change" as defined by the SPIAA, and the U.S. Government's "Food Security Action Plan."

In FY 2001 Development Assistance (DA) Agriculture funding totaling $2,347,000 will be used to improve data collection, analysis and syntheses in collaboration with regional institutions and rural associations to improve information flow and networking which leads to improved food security. In FY 2001 DA Environmental funds totaling $2,204,000 will be used to improve data collection, analysis and information sharing on the environment and natural resource management to strengthen information systems and networking that provides for rational, sustainable use of resources in West Africa.

In FY 2002 a total of $3,685,000 of DA funds will be used to continue assistance in the areas of natural resources/agricultural policy and food-related disaster monitoring and mitigation. Expansion to the West African coastal states is also planned.

Key Results: The WARP program activities in the areas of food security and environmental management are expected to contribute to a significant decline in the size of the food insecure population in West Africa. USAID assistance provided to the Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) through the Sahel Regional Program (SRP), over the years, has helped to assure that food security monitoring, disaster mitigation systems, natural resource and environmental policies and associated programs have become well established. Helping CILSS member countries to create food early warning and food balance monitoring systems has successfully averted food crises in the Sahel for almost two decades. Efficiencies have also been gained from the coordination of food aid and food policy. Finally, food needs assessments in the region are evolving to cover more than just cereals.

USAID has helped West Africa to improve the policy framework for environmental and natural resource management, as well for food security. Natural resource information collection and management, along

with environmental monitoring techniques, have been strengthened. Broader use of intensified agricultural production systems is being encouraged through policies that provide greater security of tenure, broaden producers' access to competitively-priced fertilizer, expand access to markets, and increase producers' knowledge about the results of improved farming systems. CILSS has spearheaded the implementation of the Africa Annex to the Desertification Convention. The Early Action Program under the Convention for Africa has been initiated, and CILSS has taken the lead in developing a "Food Security/Poverty Reduction Strategy" and action plan for West Africa. Finally, CILSS has made gains in increasing gender equity, as witnessed by the recent approval by the CILSS heads-of-state of a resolution to give the Sahelien Women's Network (a network of Sahelian women's organizations) "observer" status at the CILSS statutory meetings.

The WARP program will support enhanced and effective implementation of reforms through advocacy and the exchange of information at regional organizations and fora. Activities are designed to inform policy makers about critical issues and to strengthen the advocates for improved agricultural, natural resource and environmental programs. USAID-funded activities will help producers learn how to adjust more effectively to new management challenges. They will also strengthen regional capacity for data collection, analysis, and dissemination related to improved natural resource management practices. As a result, West African institutions will be better equipped to identify priority issues in the area of food security and environmental and natural resources management. More importantly, they will be able to collaboratively design and implement development programs and investment strategies in these critical areas.

Performance and Prospects: Continued assistance is planned to improve the capacity of West Africans to: (1) administer natural resources and agricultural policy, planning, and monitoring and (2) maintain and strengthen food-related disaster monitoring and mitigation systems. As Sahelian states are the most vulnerable to food deficits, the WARP will focus on food security activities in CILSS member states. However, the WARP will expand its activities in the areas of food security assessment and resource and environmental monitoring into the coastal states. It will also emphasize the coordination of food security programs with the priorities and activities of other USAID entities (i.e., the Bureau for Humanitarian Response and the Africa Bureau), as well as those of the World Food Program and other key donors.

The WARP will assist West African institutions, primarily CILSS and ECOWAS, to build their capacity to maintain and improve regional environmental and natural resource management monitoring and impact reporting systems over the long-term. Coordination with other USAID-funded environmental and natural resources management interventions, as well as interaction with key regional interventions by donors will also continue.

Finally, the WARP will expand and facilitate the capacity of West African agricultural and environmental organizations and networks to share information and to advocate for sustainable, transparent and accountable food security and environmental policies and programs in a collaborative manner. It will also seek to strengthen existing West African capacity to develop more effective networks and advocacy fora, as well as policy, planning, monitoring and impact reporting systems for the agriculture/natural resource/food security nexus.

Possible Adjustment to Plan: No major changes are anticipated.

Other Donors: The majority of this activity has been designed and is being implemented with CILSS, representing the nine Sahelian member states. Other donors include Germany, the Netherlands, Canada,

France, and the European Union. CILSS member states made in-kind contributions valued at 5% of the external contributions.

Principal Contractors, Grantees, or Agencies: USAID provides support to this activity through grants to CILSS, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development for the Club du Sahel Secretariat, and the World Food Program. Grants, contracts and other agreements with U.S. entities including: The Mitchell Group, Inc.; Development Alternatives, Inc.; The Futures Group; Associates in Rural Development, Inc.; the Research Triangle Institute; Michigan State University; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and the U.S. Department of Interior EROS Data Center.

Selected Performance Measures: Selected performance measures exist for the SRP, the predecessor program of this strategic objective, and will be reported upon in 2001, as appropriate. At the same time, WARP is a new program with the first obligation planned in 2001. Therefore, appropriate baselines and targets are currently being developed.

U.S. Financing

(In thousands of dollars)

	Obligations		Expenditures		Unliquidated	
	0	DA	0	DA	0	DA
	0	CSD	0	CSD	0	CSD
	0	ESF	0	ESF	0	ESF
	0	SEED	0	SEED	0	SEED
	0	FSA	0	FSA	0	FSA
	0	DFA	0	DFA	0	DFA
	0	DA	0	DA		
	0	CSD	0	CSD		
	0	ESF	0	ESF		
	0	SEED	0	SEED		
	0	FSA	0	FSA		
	0	DFA	0	DFA		
	0	DA	0	DA	0	DA
	0	CSD	0	CSD	0	CSD
	0	ESF	0	ESF	0	ESF
	0	SEED	0	SEED	0	SEED
	0	FSA	0	FSA	0	FSA

	0	FSA	0	FSA	0	FSA
	0	DFA	0	DFA	0	DFA
Prior Year Unobligated Funds	75	DA				
	0	CSD				
	3,000	ESF				
	0	SEED				
	0	FSA				
	0	DFA				
Planned Fiscal Year 2001 NOA	4,551	DA				
	0	CSD				
	0	ESF				
	0	SEED				
	0	FSA				
	0	DFA				
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2001	4,626	DA				
	0	CSD				
	3,000	ESF				
	0	SEED				
	0	FSA				
	0	DFA				
			Future Obligations		**Est. Total Cost**	
Proposed Fiscal Year 2002 NOA	3,685	DA	46,637	DA	54,948	DA
	0	CSD	0	CSD	0	CSD
	0	ESF	0	ESF	3,000	ESF
	0	SEED	0	SEED	0	SEED
	0	FSA	0	FSA	0	FSA
	0	DFA	0	DFA	0	DFA