



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

WEST AFRICA OFFICE

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**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR REDUCTION OF VULNERABILITY  
TO CLIMATE CHANGE OF NATURAL, ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS, IN WEST AFRICA**

Concept Note

August 2006

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

NBA: Niger Basin Authority  
ACMAD: African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development  
AMCEN: African Ministerial Conference on Environment  
AMMA: African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analysis  
CoP: Conference of the Parties  
ECA: Economic Commission for Africa  
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States  
CILSS: Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel  
CR Agrhymet: Agrhymet Regional Centre  
IDRC: International Development Research Centre  
ENDA: Environmental Development Action in the Third World (Environnement et Développement en Afrique)  
ENSO: El Nino Southern Oscillation  
FAO: Food and Agricultural Organization  
IPCC: Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change  
IPCC-SAHEL: Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change in the Sahel  
HAPEX-SAHEL: Hydrology Atmospheric Pilot Experiment in the Sahel  
INSAH: Sahel Institute  
OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development  
MDG: Millennium Development Goals  
PANA: National Programme of Action for Adaptation  
UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme  
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme  
SSP-GEF: Small Subsidies Programme - Global Environment Facility  
MoP: Meeting of the Parties  
SBSTA: Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice  
SBI: Subsidiary Body for Implementation  
UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
UEMOA: West African Economic and Monetary Union

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## I. Introduction

1. It is accepted today that the temperature of the earth's surface has increased by an average of about 0.3 to 0.6°C since the end of the 19th century. The 1990s had seven of the ten hottest years of the 20th century. The sea level also rose by an average of 10 to 25 cm during the past one hundred years, and this is, to a large extent, due to the increase in the average world temperature. Tendencies for precipitations and temperature in West Africa vary depending on the investigators, and nevertheless, risks of rainfall deficits are confirmed.

2. Climate change is therefore considered as one of the most serious threats to sustainable development, with adverse impacts expected particularly on human health, food security, economic activity, water resources and other natural resources, as well as physical infrastructure. Admittedly, global climate has natural variations, but scientists agree that increased anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are causing climate change.

3. According to the IPCC, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere does not mean, however, that the climate would stop changing as noticed today. After this stabilization, the average global surface temperature will certainly continue to increase for a few hundred years, and the sea level will rise for several hundred years. Again, according to the IPCC, the impacts of this climate change have already been observed, and a majority of climate experts feel that prompt precautionary measures are indispensable.

4. For Africa in general, and West Africa, in particular, as from 1991, that is even before the Earth Summit in Rio and the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Climate Impact Assessment and Response Strategy Programme (WCIRP) and UNEP entrusted to the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), through the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), the responsibility of conducting a climate study for the continent. The objective of the study, which focuses on the impact of climate and climate change, was to define response and adaptation strategies for each of the eco-climatic zones of the continent.

5. Concerning specifically West Africa, where small changes in comparison to the normal climatic factors can lead to climate extremes with disastrous consequences for agriculture and animal resources, and therefore the economy, other phenomena such as desertification, deforestation and, in particular, migration of populations as a result of poverty associated to climatic effects call for urgent sensitization actions for Governments and populations on climatic risks and their mitigation; and also their integration into development strategies.

6. One of the key recommendations of the study was that the impact of current climate change (climate variability) on African societies, the economy and the environment should first be assessed, paying special attention to crop yields (food and cash crops), animal production, water resources (surface and ground water), the supply of firewood and desertification. The potential impact of climate change on these very sectors had to be studied subsequently, and in both cases, the most vulnerable areas, such as the Sahel and coastal areas, had to be examined in particular detail.

7. Of the three reports published by IPCC successively in 1990, 1996 and 2001, the third is certainly the one that for the first time contained a detailed chapter on the vulnerability of the African continent. This is because of better understanding of the scientific aspects of climate change in Africa, particularly based on:

- better knowledge of the nature of climate variability at the sub-regional level (Sahel, Southern part of the continent, etc.), the effects of the ENSO phenomenon on climate in Africa, climate variability;
- the existence of better data on the impacts of extreme events, such as droughts, floods, various epidemics, etc.);
- the use of seasonal forecast in operational mode.

8. According to this report, the special potential impacts for West Africa will concern the Sahel for high rainfall variability, vegetation dynamics, the disappearance of species and major impacts on habitats; the Gulf of Guinea with mega cities vulnerable to rise in sea level. In addition, mention should also be made of the decline in grain yields, the change in river and waterway flows, the extension of areas affected by infectious diseases such as malaria, the aggravation of desertification, the precarious nature of habitats in coastal areas due to floods and erosion caused by a rise in sea level. Lastly, the continent's low adaptation capacity in general, due mainly to lack of economic resources and technology makes it a region particularly vulnerable to climate change.

9. Consequently, this initiative by the ECA to organize, in partnership with the UNDP, CILSS, FAO, OECD and ACMAD, an international conference on vulnerability of natural, social and economic systems to climate change in West Africa appears as the first real initiative of its kind at the sub-regional level. The results of the conference should have a unifying and integrating impact, and can, in particular, be transposed to other economic integration sub-zones of the continent by various sub-regional and regional organizations and institutions.

## **II. Context**

10. The eco-geographic region of West Africa is made up of developing countries in which the productivity of arable lands remains very low. It is a region classified in the category of socially vulnerable zones, comprising mainly populations with low incomes constantly experiencing food shortages. The importance of climate is felt in practically all aspects of socio-economic life, particularly grain yields, the availability of water resources, as well as human and animal health, to mention only these three sectors. It should be noted that the recurrence of food crises is not related to climate alone; factors such as locust invasions (four in the past twenty years) can cause serious damage to agro-sylvo-pastoral products, as well as major socio-economic and environmental disruptions.

11. The vulnerability of a region to climate depends primarily on the socio-economic, environmental and cultural characteristics of the region. The steady decline in rainfall observed in this region for more than thirty years has created desert-like conditions in regions hitherto considered as humid, leading to increased migration to the coastal areas, which themselves are not free from decline in rainfall.

12. On the whole, one can note the following impacts of climate on the socio-economic development of West Africa:

- Impacts on agriculture: Since the agriculture is mainly one of subsistence, it focuses almost essentially on grain production, which also depends on the length of the farming season that is an average of about 75 days in semi-arid areas; in addition, there could be long dry sequences during the rainy season that can lead to loss of seedlings.
- Impacts on animal production: Stockbreeding in this zone is extensive, particularly in the semi-arid areas and savannah; consequently, the carrying capacity, which

- depends on the length and severity of the dry season, is frequently disrupted during climatic crisis, which is particularly frequent in these areas.
- Impacts on water resources: Water resources vary according to climatic events; the countries in the sub-region share surface water resources concentrated in a few water catchments, the main ones being the Niger, Lake Chad, Senegal, Gambia and Volta basins. It is generally accepted today that since the 70s, flows have reduced by about 30 to 60% depending on the catchment basin, with the reduction affecting not only the mean annual flow, but also the extremes (high and low flows).
  - Impacts on natural ecosystems: In addition to climate, the natural environment in West Africa is also highly influenced by human activities. Accordingly, it is accepted that deforestation in Côte d'Ivoire has affected more than 70% of the forest area existing at the beginning of the 20th century. The other aspect concerns erosion and the degradation of catchment basins, with losses for Jos Plateau alone estimated at 6 million tons of soil per year.
  - Impacts on energy supply: Firewood is the main source of energy for use in homes and small industries. Scarcity of firewood is one of the main consequences of the deterioration of ecosystems, and it concerns more than 300 million Africans south of the Sahara today.
  - Impacts on human health and settlements: It is well established that meningitis and measles epidemics occur mainly in the dry season, and that contacts between mosquitoes and humans, the source of malaria, are rather frequent in the rainy season. In addition to the migrations already referred to above, the overpopulation of large urban centres is another factor that increases socio-economic vulnerability in this zone. For example, the population of Dakar today accounts for about one-third of the total population of Senegal.
  - Impacts on coastal erosion: many countries of this sub-region already mentioned negative potential impacts from saline water intrusion as well as, see waves upon infrastructures and coastal ecosystems, in case of sea level rise. Loss of land due to a 0.5 to 1m sea level rise will concern mostly the most productive agricultural areas and also highly populated zones. Generally speaking, big cities or fast developing cities, located in low altitude Laguna areas are the most exposed to sea level rise. Under certain circumstances, sea level rise will seriously affect rice fields, lands and infrastructures, ending up with coastal zones population displacement, water logging and salinization, and destructions of mangroves as well as negative effects on ostericulture.

13. Accordingly, climate change and its future impacts in West Africa raises some questions on the types of agriculture and stockbreeding for the future (for example 2025) in this zone, how to mobilize and manage water resources to support socio-economic development, and how to effectively safeguard and jointly maintain the productivity of the environment in the sub-region. It is these questions that the conference will attempt to answer.

### **III. Motivation and Justification**

14. The international political response to climate change began with the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The UNFCCC defined the framework for action to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a low enough level to prevent “dangerous anthropogenic interference” with the climate system. The gases “subject to control” are methane, nitrous oxide, and particularly carbon dioxide. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994,

and today it has 189 Parties. The Parties to the UNFCCC meet normally once a year in the Conference of the Parties (CoP), and twice per year in meetings of its subsidiary organs.

15. In December 1997, the delegates met in CoP-3, in Kyoto, Japan, and agreed on a Protocol, under the UNFCCC, a legally binding instrument that commits industrialized countries and economies in transition to achieve quantified objectives in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. These countries, known as the Parties identified in Annex I to the UNFCCC, also undertook to reduce their overall emissions of the six greenhouse gases to around 5.2% below their 1990 levels over the 2008 to 2012 period (first period of the undertaking), with special targets varying from one country to another.

16. Furthermore, the Protocol defined three flexible mechanisms to help the Parties identified in Annex I to achieve their national objectives effectively as regards costs: an emissions trading scheme; joint implementation of emission reduction projects between the Parties referred to in Annex I; and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) which facilitates project implementation in countries not identified in Annex I. To date, 156 Parties, including 37 Parties in Annex I, accounting for a total of 61.6% of greenhouse gas emissions in 1990 of the countries in Annex I, have ratified the Protocol, thereby fulfilling the conditions required for its entry into force, which took place on 16 February 2005. The first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CoP/MoP 1) was held in conjunction with CoP 11 in Montreal, Canada, from 28 November to 9 December 2005.

17. For Africa in general, and West Africa in particular, adaptation to climate change is the most important aspect of the UNFCCC process. Adaptation is a cross-sectoral theme of the Convention, and is mentioned in various articles. In particular, Article 4.1 of the Convention stipulates that the Parties “formulate, implement, publish and regularly update national and, where appropriate, regional programmes containing measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change,” and “cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change.”

18. Article 4.4 of the Convention stipulates that developed country Parties “shall assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of the climate change in meeting costs of adaptation to those adverse effects.” Although CoP 1 in 1995 treated the issue of financing adaptation (Decision 11/CP.1), it was only after the adoption of the Marrakech Agreements in 2001 that adaptation started being more widely perceived as a preeminent area of action, as established in Decision 5/CP.7 (adverse effects of climate change). The current process of drawing up a structured programme of work on adaptation started in Milan in CoP 9 in December 2003, after consideration of the Third Assessment Report GIEC/IPCC. In what is sometimes known as the “Milan Adaptation Process,” CoP 9 requested the subsidiary body of the Convention responsible for science and technology (Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice - SBSTA) to initiate work on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts of, and vulnerability and adaptation to, climate change (Decision 10/CP.9).

19. With Decision 1/CoP.10 (Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures), the Parties took a new step as regards work on adaptation, since the CoP called on the SBSTA to develop a structured five-year programme of work on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The request mentioned, in particular, the four general issues or areas to be addressed by the programme of work: methodologies, data and modeling; vulnerability assessments; adaptation planning, measures and actions; and integration into sustainable development in the context of the terms of reference of SBSTA as referred to in Article 9 of the Convention. The

CoP also called on the Parties to submit their views on the programme of work and its implementation.

20. It is therefore on this new drive that Africa should embark resolutely. The present ECA initiative to organize an international conference on the vulnerability of natural, social and economic systems to climate change in West Africa certainly portrays the emergence of an African strategy in vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. Consequently, efforts will initially be made to:

- Draw on the sources of information already available;
- Encourage multidisciplinary efforts involving persons working in alternative sectors as well as policy-makers for the conduct and/or improvement of vulnerability and impact assessments;
- Examine sub-regional effects, as well as effects on particular countries, and target actions by partners' networks aimed at strengthening the adaptation capacities of countries;
- Collect information concerning vulnerability through a globally structured questionnaire that would treat issues of methodology and implementation costs throughout the sectors, while integrating social and economic effects as a component necessary for vulnerability assessments;
- Highlight the link between adaptation planning and integration into sustainable development.

21. It would be necessary to first of all collect available materials on vulnerability and adaptation under National Plans of Action in Adaptation (PANA) and National Communications, and if possible, define the indicators for these two concepts. Since communication is a key component of adaptation, the establishment of an appropriate mechanism for the production and dissemination of information will be useful for policy makers, bearing in mind that in the final analysis, adaptation involves a change in life-style and that the long-term perspective is really critical.

#### **IV. Objectives of the Conference and Expected Results**

22. The conference will not be essentially scientific, and will aim particularly at sensitizing policy-makers and planners, development partners as well as those who reflect locally and globally on problems of climate change in West Africa to start mainstreaming aspects related to climate change into the socio-economic development of countries, in conjunction with the objectives and strategies defined by ECOWAS and UEMOA. Such development, it should be emphasized, is based mainly on the three key production systems in this zone; the systems depend heavily on rainfall, and therefore on climate in general, and also on agro-ecological zoning. It is principally a pastoral production system, an agro-pastoral system, and a farming system. Furthermore, water management for these three systems remains basically traditional nowadays.

23. The main objective of the conference will be to establish links between development policies and vagaries of climate, taking into account the multi-faceted impacts of climate change (environmental, social, etc.) so as to include climatic factors in growth forecasts in the ECOWAS zone. The key result expected from the meeting will be to draw up a programme of work that would define a sub-regional programme of action to reduce the vulnerability of the populations and production systems, as well as ensure adaptation to climate change, in line with the Sub-regional Programme of Action to combat desertification in West Africa and Chad.

24. The West African region will become aware of the fact that in climate change, the adaptation capacity is in every respect highly dependent on the capacity to act collectively, especially when the economies of the countries are so interdependent; the region will also become aware of the fact that anticipation is probably the best response strategy for future impacts of this climate change.

## **V. Proposed Programme for the Conference**

### **i) The main themes of presentations and potential speakers:**

- Climate change: West Africa and the political process (UNFCCC/Kyoto Protocol; NAPAs)  
Potential Speakers: HONADIA MAMADOU and MAMA KONATE.
- Models and their adaptation to West Africa, climate forecasts, potential impacts, the conclusions of working groups I and II of IPCC in the Third Assessment Report  
Potential Speakers: Climate and Environment Department ACMAD, Climate Change Project of Agrhymet RC.
- Climate variability and desertification in West Africa, the socio-economic consequences  
Potential Speakers: 2 speakers from the CILSS system.
- Forest Management and Climate Change in Africa  
Speaker: Pr. Daniel GBETNKOM (ECA).
- The expected impacts of climate change in West Africa for water resources, agriculture, health, forestry, environment and coastal erosion  
Potential Speaker: Isabelle Jeanne, Pr. Adotey, Dr Jacques André NDione, Mahamane Lawali, ENDA, 3 experts from the Agrhymet RC.
- Summaries of national communications and other national plans of action for climate change, submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat by West African countries  
Potential Speakers: Isabelle Niang
- Scientific networks in West Africa (IPCC-Sahel<sup>1</sup>), AMMANET<sup>1</sup>), FIRMANET,  
Potential Speakers: DR Badolo, Dr Diedhiou, Dr Ouaga
- Centres of excellence in climate, environment and sustainable development located in West Africa;  
Potential Speakers: experts from CILSS, ACMAD, NBA, ENDA, etc.
- Specific projects in the sciences of climate change and impacts and adaptation in West Africa and the results obtained/expected;  
Potential Speakers: Experts from ACMAD, Agrhymet, IRI/DFID/GCOS/ECA
- Presentation by the United Nations Development Programme.
- Climate information and decision making.  
Potential speakers: To be identified.

- Governance and adaptation policies to climate change  
Potential speaker: Dr Elie Ouedraogo
- Introductory theme on the strategy and organization to be adopted in light of the expected results, how to integrate climate change into ongoing poverty reduction and/or rural development strategies in the countries of the sub-region, how to operationalize climate-related MDGs, and what opportunities currently exist for financing of field activities  
Moderators: CILSS (M. Bikienga), CRDI, UNDP (GEF-SGP), partnership IRI/DFID/GCOS/ECA, Dr J. Oguntala (CLIMDEV).
- Call for papers and posters for all above listed themes.

<sup>1)</sup> See ANNEX

## ii) Focus Groups

25. During the reflection, there will be discussions on the strategies to be adopted to integrate climate change into the development process in West Africa, taking into account all the information provided by the conference. The groups, three for this first meeting, should be chaired by economists/planners aware of environmental issues to ensure that discussions are guided towards making proposals for socio-economic development action in line with ECOWAS and CILSS visions.

## VI. Conduct of the Conference

### VI.1 Preparations for the Conference

#### a) Date and Venue

26. Since the probable dates of the conference are 1, 2, 3 and 4 November 2006, having in mind that the main conclusions from this meeting are likely to be a side event at UNFCCC COP12 meeting in Nairobi, the week after. Hence, it would be necessary to immediately:

- set up a technical group responsible for the programme of the conference (presentations and speakers, scientific coordination); the met on 31 and 32 August 2006 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso);
- set up a group responsible for the resource mobilization strategy and material organization of the conference.

#### b) Participants

27. The following participants could be selected from each country, namely:

- a representative from the national CILSS component or equivalent in non-CILSS countries, for issues concerning the vulnerability of the populations and production systems;
- a representative from the national ACMAD component, for issues relating to the climatic context of the country;

- a representative from the Ministry responsible for planning and economic development, Ministries of agriculture, water resources, health, environment and energy;
- a representative from end users;
- the national policy focal point of the Convention on climate change;
- a representative from women NGO;
- an advisor at Presidential Cabinet, in charge of environment and sustainable development issues.

**c) Partnership**

28. The conference will be organized in partnership with the following organizations:

- The African Union;
- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
- The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) ;
- The Sahelo-Saharan Countries Economic Community (CENSAD);
- The West African Development Bank (BOAD);
- African Development Bank (ADB);
- The Niger River Basin Authority (NBA);
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);
- The world Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- The World Health Organization (WHO);
- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);
- The Secretariat of the UNFCCC;
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research-UNITAR;
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF);
- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) ;
- The French Cooperation;
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD);
- The Sahel and West African Club;
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Regional Office Accra;
- UK Department for International Development – DFID;
- Institut de Recherche pour le Développement – IRD ;
- Météo France ;
- International Center for Research in Agro-forestry – ICRAF;
- The Sahara and Sahel Observatory- OSS;
- The African Network for Environment – RAE.

## **VI.2 Conduct of the Conference**

### **VI.2.1 Day 1**

- a) Opening Ceremony to be chaired by HE the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso.
- b) General presentation on the climate change process in terms of negotiations, benefits and expectations of West Africa, by negotiators of the sub-region who permanently monitored the process

c) **Session I: Certainties and uncertainties at the scientific level, scientific networks in West Africa**

- Scientific aspects of climate change (models and forecasts for West Africa);
- Centres of excellence and scientific networks in climate-environment-sustainable development in West Africa;

d) **Session II: Impacts of Climate and Vulnerability in West Africa**

- Climate variability and desertification in West Africa, socio-economic consequences;
- Expected impacts of climate change in West Africa as regards water resources, agriculture/livestock, health, forestry, energy, environment and coastal erosion.

e) General discussions on impacts and environmental policies to reduce vulnerability to climate variability and its extremes, climate change, desertification, as well as on mobilization and protection of water resources, summary for the day.

**VI.2.2 Day 2**

**Session III: Implementation of UNFCCC in West Africa and Adaptation to Climate Change**

- Summary of national communications by West African countries:
  - ✧ Greenhouse gas emission;
  - ✧ Impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (including NAPAs) ;
  - ✧ Technology transfer.
- Specific projects in the sciences of climate change, and the impacts and adaptation in West Africa and the results obtained/expected.

General discussions and summary for the day.

c) **Day 3**

**Session IV: Prospects for West Africa**

- Identification of the needs of planners and policy-makers as regards information and climatic products in the short, medium and long terms.
- Strategy and organization to be put in place, financing opportunities, and facilities for field activities.
- Start of work in groups: Three sub-themes are proposed as follows:
  - The potential impacts of climate change in West Africa;
  - Adaptation to climate change in West Africa;

- Strategy for Integration of climate change into development policies in West Africa.

#### **d) Day 4**

29. Continuation of work by the focus groups: strategy and organization to be put in place to ensure integration of climate change into the development process in West Africa. This will consist mainly in conducting an exhaustive identification of adaptation requirements as regards corrective actions for current socio-economic development strategies and policies, including new actions to be taken;

- summary of results and planning for follow-up of the conference;
- End of the conference.

### **VII. Strategy for mobilization of participants**

- Procedure: the ECA Executive Secretary to send invitations letters to Head of States of ECOWAS and CILSS countries, mentioning the concerned by the conference Ministries.
- Media announcements: newspapers (Jeune Afrique), radios (Africa No1, RFI, BBC).
- Financial mobilization: the conference budget to be elaborated by the organizing committee with expected contributions from ECOWAS, UEMOA, BOAD/WADB, ADB, IDB, AFD, DFID/IRI, GEF, WMO, FAO, UNEP, UNDP, CIDA, the African Environment Network (RAE). For this issue the leading institution will be BOAD/WADB, CIDA being Deputy.

### **VIII. Set-up of the Conference Organizing Committee**

The Conference organizing committee comprises 2 committees working in close collaboration:

- The sub-regional organizing committee in Niamey (NIGER) composed by ECA,; ACMAD, Agrhyment RC and IRI;
- The National organizing committee, under CILSS chairmanship, in Ouagadougou (BURKINA FASO), who will take care of implementation and local organization.

ECA will chair the conference organizing committee from Niamey, and will be assisted by a consultant whose duties are the implementation and follow-up of the actions decided by the 2 committees.

### **IX. Post-Conference**

30. The integration of adaptation into sustainable development should take into account the importance of partnerships, including with local authorities, by conducting a number of adaptation activities, encouraging the mainstreaming of products and short-term objectives, and implementing demonstration projects. At the end of the conference, as regards actions to be taken, it would be necessary to provide policy-makers and stakeholders with the best information to improve the adaptation capacities of natural, economic and social systems in

West Africa, laying emphasis only on sustainable development issues related to climate change.

31. We can anticipate that it will be necessary to organize a seminar to prepare a programme of work on the effects, vulnerability and adaptation to Climate Change in West Africa. This would require agreement on and common understanding of the contents, structure and process of implementation and modalities of the programme of work. The seminar will be convened by ECOWAS in collaboration with the economic and monetary unions of the zone. It should focus on the four thematic or action areas determined in Decisions 1/CP.10 of UNFCCC, in particular: methodologies, data and modeling; vulnerability assessments; adaptation planning measures and actions; and integration into sustainable development. This would bring the ECOWAS zone in line with global efforts in the process conducted by UNFCCC, and place the zone in the forefront of the implementation of the most relevant concepts of the said process<sup>2</sup> on the African continent.

32. Lastly, it would be necessary to define the most appropriate interface to be put in place so that the results of the scientific investigations in climate change in West Africa and globally are consistent with policy decisions for short, medium and long-term development.

<sup>2</sup>) See Annex.

## ANNEX

### <sup>1)</sup> **GIEC-Sahel**

*The Intergovernmental Group for Studies and Assessment of Climatic Effects in the Sahel (GIEC/Sahel) was established in 2003 by Decision of the Executive Secretary of CILSS. GIEC/SAHEL is mainly a consultative structure in CILSS Executive Secretariat, and it is responsible for giving scientific and technical opinions and advice to the community of CILSS member States on climatic effects, and strategies to be implemented in all respects to address them. These opinions and advice cover, in particular, the following fields:*

- *The preparation of communications, strategies and other national plans of action relating to the implementation of environmental conventions;*
- *The harmonization of approaches between countries to form a CILSS negotiation group for the various Meetings and Conferences of the Parties;*
- *The optimization of actions in environmental management for sustainable development through the preparation of synergy facilities between the main environmental conventions.*

*The effective establishment of this network will be an important facility for the implementation of post-Rio conventions in West Africa.*

### <sup>1)</sup> **AMMA Programme**

*It is the first large-scale research initiative in West Africa since HAPEX-SAHEL; its objective is to provide better understanding of West African monsoon mechanisms and its multiple impacts. Considering the enormous resources required for investigation, the expected results should have a significant impact on the development of global and regional climate models which, as regards climate change assessments, should provide better tools for future climate forecasts for the zone. It should also be noted, still concerning climate change, that multifaceted aerosol measures to be taken in this programme will certainly contribute to better description of radiative forcing of mineral dust present in the atmosphere of this zone.*

<sup>2)</sup> **Nota Bene:** *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Article 12.8 relating to communication of information related to implementation of the Convention, offers a provision which could be interesting for joint participation of ECOWAS countries in the process: “Any group of Parties may, subject to guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties, and to prior notification to the Conference of the Parties, make a joint communication in fulfillment of their obligations under this Article, provided that such a communication includes information on the fulfillment by each of these parties of its individual obligations under the Convention”.*