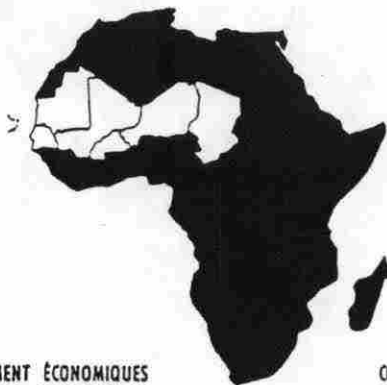


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PERMANENT INTERSTATE COMMITTEE FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL

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WOMEN AND SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

An Analysis of National and Aid Agencies Policies
in Burkina Faso and in Mali

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INTRODUCTION

The earlier study on the women's participation in the fight against desertification led to a more detailed study of national and major donor-organization policies concerning the integration of women into rural development.

This study was prepared for the Segou (Mali) Regional Encounter on Sahelian Village Land Management. Because of the limited time available, only two countries are dealt with - Burkina Faso and Mali.

It is not easy to consider the installation of a new socio-ecological balance without taking into account the special role of women in the sphere of rural development and the fight against desertification. Women - who represent a national majority (over 51% of the population) - are responsible for 60 to 80 % of all agricultural work. Intensified migration of men has left more deprived land in the hands of a majority of women.

The three themes of the Segou Regional Encounter; the participation of rural populations, the fight against erosion, the conversion of agrarian systems, can only be effectively discussed by placing particular emphasis on the role of Sahelian women-farmers. Women - as agricultural producers, users of the environment (via multiple gathering activities), primary suppliers of wood and water, mothers of the ever-increasing number of families, educators (frequently the only ones) of the 80% of the country's uneducated children - have an essential role to play in sustainable development in the Sahel.

The women's role in development is tending to gain increasingly with recognition from both the Sahel countries and aid agencies.

This study analyses, under the following sections, the situation in both Burkina Faso and Mali :

- 1- An evaluation of Burkina Faso's national policy
- 2- An evaluation of Mali's national policy
- 3- An evaluation of the main multilateral and bilateral aid agency policies
- 4- A summary of the situation in both countries aimed at defining the issues and questions which will enable the Regional Encounter to take a positive approach towards improving women's contribution to the establishment of a new socio-ecological balance in the Sahel.

1 : BURKINA FASO NATIONAL POLICY

1.1. General policy

1.1.1. Background

It has long been recognized that women in rural areas, dominated and exploited, experience difficult conditions. This is particularly true for the women of Mossi. The governments that followed on from Upper Volta's Independence did not introduce any legislation aimed at radically altering the status of women.

The advent, in August 1983, of the Révolution Démocratique et Populaire (RDP) resulted in a major upheaval of the country's political life and led to major changes concerning the question of women. Political intent in the area of the advancement of women has been based on the profound conviction that the emancipation of women is indispensable to the country's progress and determines their participation in its development. New thinking emerged and gave way to some results. The position of women in development matters was strenuously affirmed : "Decision-makers must concern themselves with women's issues. To devise development planning without the participation of women is like using four fingers when you have ten". (Captain Thos. Sankara, in his speech of March 8th 1987). The new government took a political risk by blaming "feudalistic and reactionary" male behaviour patterns. The government opened up positions of genuine responsibility to women (Ministries, High Commissionerships). A Ministry of Family Development and National Development was created to coordinate measures aimed at improving the situation of women and families and a Family Law plan was devised and discussed at provincial level. The RDP supported the creation of a political organization comprising women only - the Union des Femmes du Burkina (UFB). A dynamic was established and was widely responded to by the rural world.

A "Rectification" process followed on from the advent of the Popular Front on October 15th 1987. The Ministry of Family Development was dissolved and became a secretariat under the newly-formed Ministry of Health and Social Action. The Popular Front stated that it "would work towards women's emancipation (...) and would accord maximum importance to all claims made through their organization".

1.1.2. Legal aspects

The Individual Persons and Family Law Act was voted in on November 9th 1988. The act introduced major changes favouring women in areas considered to be highly sensitive : establishment of monogamy as the basis of common-law marriage (with tolerance for optional polygamy), the principle of free choice of spouse, both partners exercising parental authority, etc.

Burkina, the "tail-ender" regarding the legal status of women, now has the most advanced family law in Sahel. As with the

other countries however, there remains the major problem of its application : although the new legislation could effect women in the more privileged urban social strata, it will apparently take some time before the women in rural areas will feel - not without some difficulty - its effects. The legislation will undoubtedly meet with lively resistance in traditional and religious environments.

The Convention on the elimination of discrimination against women (United Nations, 1979) has not yet been ratified by Burkina.

The Labour Laws

The Labour Laws Act (1962), amended by statute 9-73 AN of 1973, guarantees the workers of Burkina equal rights without discrimination on sexual grounds. Women enjoy equal access to most departments within the public service. Since 1984, some of the previously strictly male bastions have been opened up to women: community service, police, customs, etc. In addition, female public servants enjoy specific rights : 14 weeks paid maternity leave, as well as time-off for feeding (1 hour per day for 15 months).

The principle of equality in work does not, however, always conform with the reality. Women remain on the fringe of the salaried private sector (5.4%). De facto discrimination exists within the public service which is still 80% male, and women are limited to middle-management and the least secure positions. Although not in great numbers, more women are gradually being given responsible positions within the Ministries and the Public Service. Although the gains should not be seen as unimportant, they still only concern a tiny minority of Burkina's female workforce.

1.1.3. Political aspects

Union des Femmes du Burkina (UFB)

Since 1983, following the advent of the Révolution Démocratique et Populaire, the Department for the Mobilization and Organization of Women brought together a number of activists who undertook - in collaboration with the Ministry for Family Development - a massive awareness programme, operating on a grass-roots level throughout the thirty provinces of Burkina. In September 1985, the Union des Femmes du Burkina (UFB) was created. Even though provincial, departmental and village organizations are being set up rapidly, it will be necessary to await the first UFB Congress in November 1988 to see the clarification of these statutes and the establishment of a national office.

The Women's National Action Plan has been widely debated. The plan's main themes are as follows:

- 1° in the political sphere: initially, it is necessary to "create new attitudes on the part of women enabling them to become involved, along with men, in their country's future"; to raise the consciousness of women to enable them to exercise political power; to group them around the UFB.
- 2° in the legal sphere : the UFB will work towards familiarizing women with Family Law, and monitor its application.
- 3° in the socio-economic sphere: in the agricultural sector, agricultural extension campaigns, access by women to improved land in the valleys; the encouragement of women's cooperatives; alleviation of chores, etc.
- 4° in the social sphere: promotion of education and literacy; sex education in schools, family planning and health.

Once the Popular Front has given its backing to this plan, organizations working to support women should become integrated with it. Burkina Faso's political choice is that UFB should assume the role of Action Plan supervisor - since this is the only political organization representing the women of Burkina - and that it should coordinate all activity beneficial to women.

The last five years have seen major changes in conditions for the women of Burkina. Discriminatory customs, illiteracy, isolation, daily hardship and poverty, are all still formidable obstacles. The dissolution of the Ministry for Family Development could well be a set-back. In making the UFB the only recognized national organization dealing with women's advancement, as well as supervisor of the women's National Action Plan, the Popular Front has given it partial ministerial responsibility without the advantages of state resources. It is now up to the UFB to show that a women's association - in collaboration with State services, the donors and the women themselves- can successfully handle the task. The title of the speech of March 8th, 1989 still remains valid for Burkina : the liberation of women is a requirement of the future.

1.2. Sectorial Policies

Within the terms of the Five-Year Development Plan (1986 - 1990), the upgrading of status of the woman as an agent for development occupies 4th place in its development strategy, behind the development of national resources, agriculture and fight against desertification : "special emphasis will be placed on the advancement of women in order to place them in the forefront of the fight against under-development, malnutrition, ignorance and illiteracy".

On a sectorial policy level, the advancement of women in the rural world is part of integration strategy : "The plan will

support any activity which will enable women, their groups, to occupy a prominent place in rural community development".

Although the national desertification control plan - "To triumph over hostile nature" (1986) - refers to the participation of the people, the women's role is not specifically mentioned, except in reference to "improved stoves".

1.2.1. The agricultural sector

Self-sufficiency, food security, improved incomes and living standards of producers and their families, are all included in Burkina Faso's agricultural policy. The Five-Year Plan, Desertification Control Plan and Action Plan in favour of women, are all consistent in their attitude to the woman's role in agricultural production.

Agricultural extension

The Department of Agricultural Extension, believes that the approach to agricultural extension is too general. Although it is intended for both men and women, the latter are in the minority and only rarely benefit from separate training. Burkina's agricultural policy is currently seeking new, more egalitarian ways to benefit women producers. Management training - identical for both sexes - and training seminars aim at providing women with more efficient production methods.

Agricultural and land reform

Under the terms of the 1984 Agricultural and Land Reform Act, the State is the sole proprietor of the nation's land and individuals can hold the status of tenant for an undetermined duration. Women, however, continue to suffer from discrimination where land is concerned. The women are offered only collective access to land through women's groups. Certain project managers are looking at the "economic relevance" of personal plots for women. The National Village Land Management Programme refers more to the equitable sharing of operating incomes and to the alleviation of chores than to land access. If care is not taken, the present way in which the land development programme is being implemented runs a grave risk of generally depriving women of their land and down-grading their socio-economic status in rural environments. Consequently, by refusing to allot parcels of land to women, the Volta Valleys Development Project has not been able to meet the call for the economic autonomy of women, to which the best reply is still cultivation of a personal plot. Women are actually excluded from this modern collective organization, currently being set up in the Volta Valley project.

Except for some support for small-scale domestic breeding, no specific activity concerning women is anticipated in the area of animal-breeding.

Burkina's agricultural potential can only be fully realized if all agricultural producers, men women and children, are

involved. More rational management of rural land family farming activity does not make any sense in developmental terms if it produces a regression in the socio-economic status of more than half of the population.

1.2.2. The environmental sector

After pursuing a somewhat conservative policy regarding women and forestry, the Ministry for the Environment and Tourism is currently revising its approach. Until now, their activity, as far as women are concerned, has mainly been centred around improved stoves. Burkina Faso is certainly very advanced in this field, but the objectives for 1990 (to reduce the consumption of wood from 25 to 50% and to equip all households with improved stoves) will be difficult to attain.

The relative failure of the Village Wood Programme led to a re-orientation of the MET's forestry policy. The forestry service, whilst remaining conservationist, now wishes to function economically, and is aiming at meeting demand with forestry products. Women - whose role has been under-estimated - will now be involved in all levels of forestry activity, and specifically in the marketing of wood, nursery plant production, fish-breeding and fauna. Moreover, the MET is seeking to bring about a change in the forestry industry's attitude towards women : less repression, concern with meeting basic needs, a spirit of collaboration, recruitment of female personnel.

A significant number of women are involved in CES/DRS. They represent 60 to 80% of regular workers on FEER and CRPA (ex Rural Development Organization) sites and in the various NGO schemes. However, considering land restrictions and men's priority of access to the plots, the women rarely have the opportunity to use their knowledge for their own plots.

In long term, the labour they supply in the men's fields threatens to further emphasize the qualitative imbalance in respect to their own plots. The fight against erosion is creating an even more severe land problem for women, and is raising questions on their involvement in agro-forestry.

The Burkina Faso government is now placing emphasis on the integration of women into natural resources development. However, such matters as the collaboration between women and foresters, a guarantee of women's personal rights to planted trees, respect for women's knowledge and needs, still have to be put into concrete terms. A reduction in fuel wood consumption can only be achieved if these conditions are met. A woman must have choices other than the forester fining her for cutting wood illegally, or a beating from her husband if the millet is not cooked... or, indeed, both.

1.2.3. The health/population sector

Similarly to all WHO Member States, Burkina signed the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration on basic health-care ; family planning (FP) is one of its components. The Five-Year Plan advocates improved domestic conditions and the liberation of women through family development policies : the alleviation of domestic work ; the economic advancement of women ; day-nurseries ; family planning.

regarding population policies, Burkina is giving more support to the spacing-out of births (with the aim of conserving the mother and child's health and fostering family well-being) than the population control in its strictest sense. A certain number of measures were nevertheless recently taken make it easier for men and women to obtain contraceptive aids: repeal of the section of the 1920 act relating to contraception (1986) ; elimination of the obligatory paraclinical examination necessary for the prescription of oral contraceptives (the "pill") ; a lowering of contraceptive prices, etc.

In 1985, a National Family Planning Action Plan was adopted. Its medium-term objectives included the intention to "bring the people (men, women and children) to an understanding of the interaction between population and development and the benefits of contraception as a means of combatting infant and mother mortality, clandestine abortion, delinquency and unemployment" and to "provide women greater freedom so they can become involved participants in the socio-economic development of our country" (...).

The national family planning programme has progressed remarkably since its initial launching. FP services are now available in 52 health centres spread throughout 28 of the country's 30. The plan still only affects a very small proportion of men and women who wanted to at least revert to traditional birth spacing, and who are more conscious than might be believed of the negative effects of the excessive birth-rate on the well-being of the family and the environment.

As regards population policy, Burkina has more than made up for lost time in relation to other Sahelian countries. The State's political will has been a decisive factor in the situation: collaboration between State services and the various NGO's involved in FP has been constructive. The programme has benefited, and continues to benefit, from strong financial support coming from backer-organizations.

1.2.4. The education and training sector

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest levels of school-attendance in the world. 1985-86, it was estimated at 22% for primary level, with heavy regional disparities: 59.2% in Kadiogo (Ougadougou) as compared with 63 % in Oudalan (Gorom-Gorom). The proportion of girls in overall primary school figures stands at approximately 36%.

Despite some progress, the women and girls of Burkina are still victims to striking inequality in education and training,

especially in the rural world. Wide-scale intensive female literacy campaigns (such as Bantaaré 1) have affected thousands of women, bringing up the female literacy level to 43%. Although women have been mobilized throughout the country, it is still too early to know if their newly-acquired knowledge is being put to good use.

1.2.5. Rural Organization

The Department of Cooperative Activity comes under the Ministry of farmer Cooperative Activity (ex Ministry of Farmer's Issues). It covers three types of rural organizations:

1 - Traditional farmer Associations

These are production and mutual aid associations: The Naam group - revitalized by the ONG "Six S" - is the best known organization of this type. Both sexes are involved in the Naam group although all-women groups do exist. The Naam associations are grouped within the Union des Fédérations des Groupements Naam which involves 2453 Burkina groups, including 1113 women's groups. Women represent 54% of the members. However, they do not have a great deal of responsibility in the mixed groups, and there are only a very few women in the upper ranks of the movement.

2 - Village Groups created on the initiative of the management structure

The Village Groups (VG) are defined as "voluntary rural producer organizations of a social and economic nature with common and mutually beneficial interests". On December 12th 1987, the count in Burkina Faso was: 2,800 m's village groups, 850 women's village groups, 780 mixed village groups and 450 Young Farmers groups.

The percentage of Women's VGs is not insignificant in comparison with Men's VGS (over 30%). The women quickly understood that the creation of a group gave them both social recognition and new openings. Today, development projects are rarely undertaken with women who are not established in groups.

3 - Cooperatives

Current Burkina policy is aimed at "the promotion of farmer's cooperatives as an indispensable tactic in organizing and improving productivity". Priority is to be given to those whose land is equipped for irrigation and water-supply. The place of women in the cooperative projects raises several problems: less organized and not as well trained as men, they rarely meet the criteria of "the model farmer, literate and amenable to communal living". Obvious obstacles are created when land on the developed plains is distributed amongst cooperative members. The Ministry is aware of this problem and is being assisted by several schemes.

4 - Other types of rural associations

The "Vive le Paysan" (French initials - AVLPE) of Saponé (Bazega) is a local peasant association comprising over 1000 members (42 men's groups and 42 women's groups). AVLPE projects cover the environment and agriculture, health, education and training, and the improvement of the role of women in development (allotted 23 % of the association's budget). The new and determined efforts aimed at integrating women into development prove that, in this area, the rural people can, on their proper initiative, turn discourse into action.

5 - The "Pag-La-Yiri" Women's Association of Zabré (French - AFZ)

The AFZ sprang from a more restricted association, established in 1975, following on from an initiative taken by individual women. In 1988, there were approximately 10,000 members spread throughout 113 villages in the sub-prefecture of Zabré. The AFZ employs 10 salaried organizers. Their numerous activities involve the establishment of Economic Units or "complexes" in the villages which entails the setting-up of triple-use building: cereal bank, pharmacy and village shop.

As a genuine grass-roots women's organization, the AFZ has enjoyed indisputable success, as can be seen by its high membership. It is, however, currently undergoing a growth-crisis on an organizational level, and experiencing problems with equipment, financial and human resources. The women of the region are insistent in their demands and the management team are exhausting themselves through travel and the search for finance. The AFZ provides a notable example of the complexity of State, NGO and financial back-up structures in providing effective basic support for women's organizations. A much greater flexibility is imperative, and all the more so as the AFZ is operating within an enclaved region which is not well-liked by the large project organizers.

The Burkina women have eagerly committed themselves to the new modes of village organization which have become increasingly prevalent since 1983/84. The heavy participation of women is accounted for by the many advantages they reap from these organizations. There are still many restrictions which continue to limit the advancement of women in farmer organizations. Although there are a good number of women's village groups, women do not hold very strong positions in the cooperatives. Some local associations appear to pay more attention to the problems and the place of women in their schemes. These localized, pragmatic responses could provide an alternative to the political and organizational centralization of the cooperative or the UFB approach. It is also up to the loan organizations to modify the way in which they operate; less red-tape, faster and more flexible financing.

2 : MALI NATIONAL POLICY

2.1. General Policy

2.1.1. Background

When Mali became sovereign nation, it seemed imperative to release Malian women from their position of legal inequality. The 1960 Constitution granted them full civil rights. The 1974 Constitution stipulates that "the Republic ensures legal equality for all, regardless of origin, race, sex, language of belief". Since the country became independent in 1962, Malian policy advocated support of the advancement of women. In March 1983, during the Third Ordinary Congress of the Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien, Président Moussa Traoré recalled "the fundamental role that women play in the production process, in education, and in coordinating and executing Party directives.

2.1.2. Legal aspects

The 1962 **Marriage and Child Custody Laws** introduced substantial reforms to improve the status of women including: women's consent to marriage, the secularity of marriage, the right of women to ask for divorce, to gain custody of children and to be awarded alimony.

The Malian woman nevertheless remains in a dependent situation under this law : the husband is the only recognized head of family ; the option of monogamy is only available to the husband ; the woman can only operate a business with her husband's consent. There is no legislation covering inheritance. It is thus either customary or Islamic law which prevails, which in most cases are detrimental to women. In its 25 years of existence, Malian Family law has never been applied, and yet there is talk (especially in the capital) of amending it... This situation goes to show that the institution of Family Law is, in itself, not sufficient: the means by which it is applied are equally important.

The Labour Laws

The labour Act (1962) provides that "given equal conditions of work, qualifications and efficiency, wages shall be equal for all workers, regardless of their origin, sex, age or status". Results of a general census of workers under the Labour Law (taken in 1984) show a total number of 51,864 wage-earners, including 45,507 men and 6,357 women - the majority of whom are employed in public service. Legislation exists which provides support for pregnant women (three months paid leave) and feeding mothers (one hour's break per day over 15 months).

Women also enjoy equal access to most position within the Public Service, but they only represent 20.2% of all Malian civil servants, with only 12.5% at Grade A, as compared with 30% at Grade C. There are very few women work in regional department: two out of every three women work in Bamako. Facts show that the

provisions of the Labour law only affect a very small minority of female wage-earners in the formal sector.

The Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination affecting women (United Nations 1979) was signed by Mali in 1986. Certain sections of the Family and Labour Laws are inconsistent with the Convention. Concerning contraception, the Malian woman must obtain her husband's consent, whereas Article 16 of the Convention provides that women shall have "...the same right to freely and knowingly decide the number and frequency of births and to have access to any information, education or means that will enable them to exercise these rights". Article 14, entirely devoted to rural women, recommends that aligned States "ensure, on the basis of equality of the sexes, the equal participation of men and women in rural development and its benefits and receive equal treatment in agrarian and land reforms and in rural development schemes".

Together with Senegal, Mali is the second Sahelian country to support this Convention. Support, however, has remained essentially formal: "regardless of the text of the Convention, the people have not supported the reforms. There has been no change in the behaviour of men or women..." (Madame Diakité Manassa Dianoko, Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali Seminar, 1988). The will to have the texts applied must be accompanied by a massive information campaign aimed at women as well as men.

2.1.3. Political aspects

Mali's Electoral Law provides women with the right to vote and to stand for election. In the application of the law however, only the Bureau de la Commune V has a female representative. The Bureau Exécutif Central de l'Union Démocratique du Peuple Malien does not have an elected female representative (the President of UNFM is a statutory member). On a governmental level, two women hold ministerial posts, and Women's Departments have been set up within certain ministries.

The Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali (UNFM)

The UNFM was set up in December 1974 in Bamako at the close of the constitutive assembly. The first article stipulates that "the UNFM shall be the sole organization for Malian women and shall abide by the statutes regardless of race or religion".

Since its creation, the UNFM has been active in the areas of alleviating chores and in craftwork. Two training centres for rural organizers have been set up with assistance from Canada.

A centre for the professional training of women and a branch of Women's World Banking were set up in Bamako at the UNFM headquarters. The UNFM has also organized a number of seminars and workshops covering various themes, including "Woman and Development - her evolution" (June 1988).

During its 4th Congress, held in January 1987, the UNFM formulated the Triennial Programme 1987-1989. The broad themes were as follows:

- 1° political: the strengthening of national political unity.
- 2° external relations: an intensification of national and international communication, particularly with UN agencies and NGOs.
- 3° economic: consideration of the mounting fight against drought and desertification and food self-sufficiency.
- 4° welfare: amongst other considerations, the "restoration of high moral principles", a review of marriage laws, Family Planning, etc.
- 5° information: wide promulgation of the Congress recommendations, lectures, seminars, etc... broadcasts on radio and television
- 6° cultural activities: support for women's literacy activities centres, theatre, etc...

The document states in its conclusion: "This programme will reinforce women's participation in the achievement of the politico-socio-economic objectives defined by the Party's programme, in political decision-making, and in their integration into the nation's institutions.

The UNFM is, predominantly, a political association, a subsection of the sole party in power. This politization is not so perceptible on a village level where local UNFM committees have a limited role - it creates much more friction on a national level. The UNFM does tolerate the existence of women's associations outside its jurisdiction. This does not make it easy to create women's NGOs. By their very nature, NGOs can not be dependent on state organizations. On the other hand, the UNFM wants to be the sole intermediary between the donor organizations and the women beneficiaries, even though it does not have the necessary human resources to ensure the implementation and follow-up. Obstacles tend to be created by the excessive monopolization of women-oriented undertaking - and this includes rural development.

Collaboration with the technical services also has its problems. In 1975, the Malian government set up, within the framework of the UNFM, a commission for women's advancement. Its mission was to coordinate women's activities on a multi-departmental level. This commission did not achieve a great deal but it did contribute to setting up departments of "Women's Advancement" at ministerial level (Agriculture, Territorial and Cooperative Administration, Education - with the notable absence of Environment). With no efficiently functioning coordination structure, the various departments tend to work within their

particular sectors and the different ministerial heads finds it difficult to collaborate with the UNFM on rural development matters.

The above brings to light the UNFM's contradictory situation, as the sole women's organization, spread throughout the country and assured of support of the Single Party's and the State, the UNFM functions politically and is capable of mobilizing women throughout the country. It is, however, ill-equipped, and lacks the support necessary to ensure development activities. Moreover, Malian policy is, in general terms, ambiguous when it comes to women's advancement. Their texts and discourse show short of requirements, and has only a minimal effect on the vast majority of rural women.

2.2. Sectorial Policy

The 1987-1990 Five-Year Plan on Social and Economic Development and the Programme covering the fight against desertification and the advancement of the desert do not specifically refer to women. The top civil servants are irritated by the concept of women in the development (WID). As far as they are concerned, Malian women are integrated into rural development. The women do not, however, always benefit from the projects.

2.2.1. Agricultural Policy

The Five-Year Plan defines its basic objective n°1 as attaining food self-sufficiency and security by the year 2000, initially through the intensification of food-crop agricultural production.

The Department of Agriculture has said that, since there is no real evidence of discrimination in farming, it is not necessary to give special consideration to women. They are, at the same time, fully aware that the Malian woman is more involved in agricultural production than men. Priority is given to a "global" agricultural development scheme, the object being to improve the incomes of farming families. On a national level, the only projects undertaken which advantage women (market-gardening, lowland rice-growing) is still restricted to the women's associations able to obtain collective access to land. Projects supporting individual women-producers do not exist.

Agricultural extension campaigns are not directed towards women. The training of relay-supervisors takes place in the Rural Initiative Centres, including 12 centres which are now mixed. Women's training, however, is essentially oriented towards domestic duties and not towards improving their farming techniques. Elsewhere, agricultural training for women is almost non-existent.

Aware of the situation, certain large rural development projects (RDO) are beginning to take an interest in the specific role of women in agricultural production. The CMDT are attempting

a follow-up in two new projects: the Erosion Control Project and more particularly, the Women's Action Support Plan. The ODIK (Kaarta) and the Niger Bureau are also starting to take an interest in women's agricultural production (allotments, market-gardening etc.), but most RDOs admit to being a long way behind in this area.

The "global" approach of Malian agricultural policy seems rational, but it does not take into account different production methods, particularly those of women. The land development approach which was implemented in the test zone programmes does not support improved access by women to production means. The role of "women's crops" in food security is not taken into account, and agronomic research is still barely interested in women's cultivation or their production systems .

2.2.2. The environmental and animal-breeding sector

The specific role that women could play in the improvement and management of natural resources and the fight against desertification appears to be even less acknowledged than their role in agricultural production. The Ministry for the Environment and Animal-Breeding does not include a department which only specializes in women's scheme. This Ministry must, therefore, also use the "global" approach.

As regards the forestry sector, no innovations are anticipated as far as women are concerned. Only 2% of all forestry officers are women, despite the existence of national training colleges such as the Institut Polytechnique Rural in Katibougou. Concerning fuel economy, the law has made it obligatory (as from 21/3/87) to install and use improved stoves in all households using ligneous fuels. Contraventions to the law invoke a fine of between 2,500 and 5,000 CFA. The Improved Stove Programme has not had the anticipated results and the law making the use of improved stoves mandatory will be difficult to apply.

As with agricultural policy, there is a grave risk that the male-female global approach will "forget" women and not take into account their needs and their specific environmental skills. The integration of women into environmental defense and restoration projects is not, in itself, an objective.

2.2.3. The health/population sector

The Five-Year Development Plan includes the population problem amongst the areas considered to have relevance for the future. Mali sees its rapidly growing population as both a drawback and an asset - but with certain ambiguities. Some of the negative effects are the problems raised in attaining the goal of total school-attendance, improvements in health-cover, adequate growth in agricultural production. Amongst the assets, the Plan stresses "Mali's rapidly growing population is an

indisputable asset from the viewpoint of a large-scale mobilization of the population towards the major development objectives". It also states that "the pressure on forests, due to demographic growth, added to low regeneration rates due to drought, has led to massive deforestation which threatens to become irreversible".

Mali has clung to its policy of primary health-care and to the objective of health for all by the year 2000. Within the Ministry for Public Health and Welfare is a Family Health Division to which is attached the Maternal and Child Care and Family Planning Section. The malian Association for Protection and Advancement of the Family and a Family Planning pilot-centre have contributed to widening activities which benefit mothers and their children.

The repeal of Articles 3 and 4 of the 1920 French law pertaining to propaganda against contraception, sanctioned the practice of voluntary birth control. Access to contraceptives is, however, subject to husband's agreement for married women, and parental agreement for girls under 18.

Mali has a somewhat ambiguous policy regarding population. The concept of birth restriction is strongly rejected, giving preference to the concept of improved population distribution.

The facts contradict this: the last census revealed a lowering of population in the north-eastern regions (Gao and Timbuctou) and an increase in urbanization (21% of the population). Legislation and established structures do however sanction modern contraceptive practices - mostly in urban environments and, more particularly, in the capital where problems associated with population growth are the most acute.

It should be emphasized that, in the Five-Year Plan, women are specifically mentioned under Health. Money for medication, the decision to take children to the clinic, access to contraception - all depend, either partially or totally, on the husband. Nevertheless, despite make resistance on religious or traditional grounds, family planning has recorded some degree of success in regard to urban women.

2.2.4. The education and training sector

The traditional education system was unable to achieve its aims of schooling for all, and equal opportunity for urban and rural children of both sexes. The objective of current education policy is to eliminate illiteracy before the year 2000. The Plan covering the elimination of illiteracy - by means of national languages - gives an estimation of an 8% rural literacy rate. The project envisages the opening of teaching centres in towns and villages throughout Mali.

In 1976, the Direction Nationale de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Appliqués (DNAFLA) set up a women's promotion division to deal with specific problems of literacy among women. Absenteeism caused by excessive work loads turned out to be the principal obstacle to this division's work. The division thus took moves to attempt to reduce women's work loads in order to help the newly created women's literacy center to succeed. But these positive moves had little effect; statistics for the 83/84 campaign indicate that, out of 27,000 students, only 636 were women. Given this context, the objective of the elimination of illiteracy in Mali by year 2000 seems somewhat ambitious. Mali - similar to other developing countries - is, despite its efforts, heading towards the failure of its women's literacy programme.

2.2.5. Rural organization

The National Cooperation Department is currently responsible to the Ministry for Territorial Administration and Primary Development. A Women's Advancement Section of the Department was set up in 1975.

Several traditional 'tons'^{*} may exist within the same village. They are divided into groups according to age or activity. The women's tons are most frequently mutual aid associations for collective agricultural work (harvesting) or social vents. IN rural areas, as in urban areas, the tontines - a circulating savings bank - are highly appreciated by the women. At village level, there is always a traditional women's association dealing with social or economic matters. These differ from the local UNFM committees which are politically oriented.

The Village Association (VA) is another type of organization, found within certain Rural Development Organizations, such as in the CMDT. The associations group together all the heads of farming groups and deal mainly with social and economic matters. Women are represented in the VA through their UNFM office. In the long term, the AVs need to evolve towards taking over from the village ton.

The organizational policy for rural areas is to implement a modernized version of the village ton. Mali currently has 600 villages tons. The modern ton is responsible for village land development through a management committee and, frequently, sub-committees (covering youth, women, health etc.). The position of women in these modern tons varies considerably: it has been seen that the greater the village's contact with the "modern world", the greater the number of women in the tons. The Women's Advancement Section could play a role here in raising awareness. The National Corporation department feels that it is imperative to gradually install women on the management committees and as tons overseers.

* A Bambara word signifying group or association (Translator's note).

Cooperative development policy allows for organized women's cooperatives. The Department supports women who are seeking to organize themselves, and it wants to decentralize its activities and set up an effective Women's Advancement Section within each regional department. There are currently thirty or so approved women's cooperatives in existence.

There are still only a very limited number of women's NGOs (national or foreign) in Mali, and they are not particularly involved in rural affairs.

Despite the National Cooperative Departments declared intent to integrate women into modern rural organizations, Malian women are rarely found within the new structures. Socio-cultural obstacles, for either men or women, are still difficult to surmount, and the approach needs to be repetitive, slow and specifically women-oriented.

The absence of clearly-defined political intentions regarding the socio-economic advancement of women (and rural women in particular) explains the overall negative result that emerges from an analysis of sectorial policies. There are two co-existent approaches which are contradictory: the "global" men-women approach of the two key ministries responsible for rural development (Agriculture and Environment/Animal Breeding), and the specifically women-oriented approach in the health, literacy and rural organization sectors. These discrepancies can be partly explained by the non-existence, on a ministerial level, of a structure to nationally coordinate projects involving women.

3. MAJOR AID AGENCY POLICIES

Although donor organizations claim to be aware of "Women in Development" problems, it is very evident that some are much more aware than others... Women's movements in the donor countries and the United Nations Decade of the Woman (1975-1985) raised questions to which some sort of answers - even if theoretical - had to be found: definition of strategies, setting up of special study-groups, expertise.

This paper deals only with the major multilateral aid agencies (World Bank, United Nations, EDF), certain bilateral agencies (Canada, France, The Netherlands, West Germany, Switzerland, USAID), and NGOs in general (through the NGO Monitoring Bureau in Burkina and the NGO Activities Coordination Committee in Mali).

3.1. Multilateral Aid Agencies

3.1.1. The World Bank

For the past twelve or so years, the World Bank has been giving much more thought to the role of women in development (WID). Its basic premise is that the situation of women has an effect on three determining aspects of development:

1. Maximum return on investment
2. The population growth rate
3. Social equality and economic growth.

The 1987 Report underlines that the questions concerning population, the environment, and women in development are now seen as being of top priority. The operational approach adopted in 1987 comprises three major themes:

- The formulation of Action Plans for certain countries;
- The development of well-supported methods and operational tools in sectors such as agricultural extension, credit, health/family planning, education/training...;
- The initiation of loan operations and analyses in given sectors.

In Burkina Faso, the Bank is involved in three rural development programmes: Agricultural research; The enforcement of producer-support services; Village land management. It is also involved in the health/population sector through its involvement in the national Family Planning Programme. A recent survey on women's agricultural training recommended that more attention be paid to the land problem and to giving specific consideration to women's agricultural production. Other programmes do not appear to pay particular attention to women producers, except where population control is concerned.

In Mali, the Bank involves itself mainly with the major RDOs such as the Office du Niger (N.O.II), the CMDT (South-Mali II), etc., and the Forestry Project. A Health/Population project (under preparation) on mother and child protection and family planning is to be undertaken at a cost of around \$25 million. In a study-proposal (completed at the end of 1988), the Bank recently demonstrated its interest in the malian woman's role in agricultural production and natural resources management. The possibility of a plan being formulated in their support will give women much more hope that Washington-defined strategies will be implemented.

Both in Burkina and Mali, the Bank is currently showing more of an interest in women from a population-control point of view than in supporting them as agricultural producers.

3.1.2. The United Nations

The various UN organizations have played a decisive role in advancing the position of women in the world, and creating awareness of their exclusion from the greater part of development activity. Within the framework of **The United Nations Decade of the Woman (1975-1985)**, and under the aegis of the CEA and the OUA, potential strategies for women's advancement in Africa beyond the Decade were formulated (Arusha 1984). In the agricultural sector, it is clearly stated that "the direction taken by agriculture is creating obstacles to women's advancement". The impact of desertification on women has been examined and it is recommended that the CILSS consider the needs of women in their programmes.

In order to remain within its framework, this study has been restricted to an examination of the UNDP, UNIFEM, the FAO and the UNSO, and does cover other organizations less involved with the problems of women and rural development.

The UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) deals more specifically with the problems of women and development through UNIFEM (United Nations Development Funds for Women) created in 1976. The establishment of a Women in Development Department was announced at the end of 1987. The Department will collaborate with UNIFEM in ensuring that women are considered as participants and benefactors in UNDP programmes and projects.

In West Africa, the UNDP - regrouping 16 countries - supports regional and sub-regional organizations (OUA, CEA) through MULPOC and the West African Sub-Committee for the Integration of Women into Development. In collaboration with CEDEAO, UNIFEM has organized an International Conference (to be held in Lome in 1988) on the strategies for the integration of women into development (WID) in African countries.

Included in its recommendations are creation, on a national level, of a section responsible for the regular planning and analysis of the situation of women; the follow-up/assessment of projects within the national coordination structure; the setting-

up of an inter-ministerial technical committee and the formulation of a national WID Action Plan.

In Burkina Faso

Within the framework of the UNDP, a certain number of projects concerning women are either under way or in the planning stage: a subregional project on new and renewable energy, a subregional appropriate technology project, a small-scale breeding project, subregional projects to promote the role of women in the informal sector...

The UNIFEM Agency - aware of the political intentions of the government and certain donor-organizations supporting the promotion of women - has prepared, within the framework of the Five-Year Plan 1986-1990 undertaking, a study entitled "An Action Programme in Support of the Burkinabé Woman" (June 1987). The study was prepared in collaboration with an ad hoc technical committee comprising certain ministerial representatives. (Planning, Health, MEFSN, MAE) and the UFB.

Another study dealing with multi-sectorial strategies supporting Burkinabe women is waiting approval in December 1988. A new committee was set up to collaborate with the various ministries, SPONG and the UFB, in an attempt to define a strategy for the implementation of accepted proposals.

The FAO is increasingly insisting that rural development projects pay more attention to women's problems. So far, there has not been any noticeable activity in this sphere.

In Burkina Faso, the UNSO is involved - in collaboration with the MET - in various reforestation projects and a project to extend the use of improved stoves.

In Burkina, the UN's involvement in the question of women and rural development shows some varying results. Although the UNDP, through UNIFEM, has been able to collaborate in a fruitful manner with numerous ministries, the NGOs and the UFB, the efforts of the FAO and the UNSO have shown to be disappointing.

In Mali

The UNDP are supplying finance to the Malian government more for institutions than for productive schemes. It does not appear, however, that the UNDP has a well-defined policy regarding WID in Mali and their initiatives are undertaken in a somewhat pragmatic fashion. It is mainly UNIFEM who finances the specifically women-oriented and sectorial WID projects. Three small projects are currently operating. Few large-scale UNDP projects reach women.

A training seminar, on the analysis of the effect that UN projects have on women, was held in Bamako in July 1988. It was reported following the seminar, that "projects within the UNDP programme have not always beneficially affected women's living

conditions and could possibly have a detrimental effect on their socio-economic situation". The participants pointed out the innovative character of this type of seminar and noted that "it was the first time they had been invited to think about the woman's aspect of development projects" (cf Report biblio).

In regard to WID, the FAO is mainly taking an interest in the role of women in food and agricultural production, but there has been very little FAO activity on their behalf in Mali. FAO representatives regret a certain number of obstacles which exist, due as much to a lack of coordination between the various UN organizations as to the attitude of the Malian women themselves who appear to lack initiative.

The UNSO Programme is very important to Mali: it is the second largest programme in West Africa following Niger. It has given particularly strong support to the Malian government for the elaboration of the National Fight against Desertification Programme (1987) and the Barrière Verte programme. The major projects: Lake Zone, Lake Faguibine, reforestation (Senegal Acacia) do not - other than the Improved Stoves campaign - take women's problems into consideration.

The results of United Nations activity in Mali has proved to be disappointing in terms of its contribution to WID. There is a large gap between the strategies as they are defined on a world-wide, regional and sub-regional level and their actual implementation. The small number of women's projects, and the health/population and village hydraulic projects do not remedy the fact that the majority of the UN's large-scale projects in Mali still widely overlook women.

3.1.3. The EEC and the EDF

The EEC's political objective concerning Women in Development is to integrate women, as participants and beneficiaries, in all phases of major development projects. The programme guide-lines pertaining to each of the ACP countries are supposed to take the role and needs of women into specific consideration.

In 1982, a "Women in Development" department was set up within the development Section Head Office in Brussels.

In Burkina Faso, the programmes guide-lines accepted by Burkina outline a principle of aid which will concentrate on a limited number of programmes aimed at food self-sufficiency and the fight against desertification: An Integrated Development Programme in the provinces of Yatenga, Passoré and Sourou (15 million FCFA) and the Integrated Development Programme in Sissili (11,000 million).

The first programme has no provision for projects favouring women; the second programme is the subject of a special study.

It is to be regretted that, in both of these wide-ranging development programmes, women have been almost totally overlooked.

In Mali, the planning formulated in 1986 led to the definition of a complete range of programmes; the fight against desertification is the concentrated area in which 60% of regional resources should be affected. No special provisions have been made to involve women in the large range of programmed environmental protection projects.

3.2. Bilateral Aid Agencies

3.2.1. Canada

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was one of the first aid agencies to integrate a "Strategy for the integration of women into development" (WID). The Canadian Minister for External Affairs, Monique Landry, responsible for the CIDA, clearly stated: "It is my aim to see the full participation of women as one of the top priorities of Canada's assistance programmes".

At the end of 1984, the CIDA formulated conceptual framework and an implementation policy regarding WID, aimed at involving Third-World women in development as both participants and beneficiaries. Nine operational aims were adopted and produced as the Agency's global action plan. The plan's implementation will be spread out over the period 1986 - 1990/91. The main aim is in regard to the WID policy and Agency planning and management systems: the five-year action plan to be updated every year; the integration of WID into all Agency initiated development policies; the modification of information systems used to integrate WID data; an assessment of the staff productivity in terms of their WID activity.

Canadian projects have been classified into three categories (I, II, III) according to the amount of funds assigned to WID. The projects are classified according to a grid developed by the CIDA which can refuse approval to project proposals or renewals.

In Burkina Faso

Canada's main involvement in Burkina is in the agricultural, environmental, and human resources sectors. Both parties have, amongst other things, agreed that as much importance must be given to the theme of women in development as is given to environmental protection. The Canadian Cooperation Centre in Ouagadougou is setting up a WID sub-section within the Human Resources sector, whose activities are coordinated by a women. Rather than a specifically female approach, those responsible prefer to develop a combined men/women approach, whilst paying maximum attention to WID aspects in all projects.

The political objectives of Burkinabe and Canada have found a meeting-ground which is proving - if only recently - to be

fruitful. The Canadian approach, careful yet firm, is an interesting one, particularly in its search for balance between medium and long-term projects: changes in attitudes, education and training of women's cadres - and short-term needs: the 50% of women for the literacy centres and schools, WID activity in all development projects, women's counter-signing of miniprojects, etc. The support for both men and women's rural organizations seems to be of fundamental importance in establishing a new socio-economic balance.

In Mali, the CIDA is one the few aid agencies to have devised a strategy specifically directed to recipient countries (Malian WID Plan), and is producing an evaluation of its activities in this regard. Concerning the Human Resources sector, the Agency employs women specialists and has engaged a high-level Malian WID Consultant. The projects carried out under the first WID/Mali were: the implementation of the CFAR project; two centres for the training of rural supervisors currently operating in collaboration with the UNFM; an analysis of WID projects and the organization of field-seminars. The 1987-89 WID/Mali Action Plan places emphasis on Canadian/Malian political dialogue; operating methods and communication with the Canadian public; A WID Equipment Guide is being prepared; a WID Documentation Centre is to be developed, and basic questionnaires are to be prepared and tested for use in socio-economic surveys. The entire Canadian project team in Mali are working to successfully implement the WID-oriented objectives.

Until now, there has only been extremely limited WID activity in Mali. A recent report on the Kaarta Integrated Development Project brought to light the very small number of women actually involved in the project. In consequence, the Bureau d'Animation Féminine - set up in response to Canada's concern for WID matters - were faced with a lack of consensus within the Kaarta project team. This incident amply illustrates the difficulties which can arise between an Aid Agency extremely committed to WID matters and the recipient country which may perceive their policies as being interfering. The matter is the subject of intense dialogue between Canada and Mali and it will be some time before the outcome is known.

3.2.2. The Netherlands

The concern over the effects of Dutch cooperative activities concerning women was the result of a report evaluating Dutch projects aimed at improving the position of women in the current Sahelian development programme (A. Papma, 1987). Few Agencies have consented to this type of evaluation. Two group have been set up in the Sahelian countries. One is in Dakar, the other in Ouagadougou.

In Burkina Faso, the Dutch contribution is concentrating its rural development efforts in three sectors: agriculture, hydraulics, ecology/environment. A "Women in Development" workgroup is based at the Netherlands Embassy and works in close collaboration with SNV/Burkina Faso. The steering committee "SNV

Women's Policies" was established to back up the Deputy Director responsible for women's development (a Burkinabé woman and high level expert). The SNV is devising a strategy on women's approaches to projects and relevant attitudes. SNV has insisted on the implementation of women's sections or specifically women-oriented projects

through women's advancement campaigns within the framework of the CRPA (ex Rural Development Organization). Surveys have been carried out on women's personal land-plots and a memo on the consideration of the woman's situation in irrigation schemes.

Dutch cooperative efforts have had a generally positive effect on Burkina Faso women, even though there are certain inadequacies in coordination efforts between activities and national organizations. The common-ground established between national policies and Aid Agency policies is creating a workable dynamic. Success is also measured by the "women's advancement" working groups established in the Embassy and in SNV, involving close collaboration with national experts.

In Mali, the Netherlands have contributed to rural development mainly in the food production, forestry, erosion-control, hydraulics and primary health care sectors. SNV-Mali carried out a major study aimed at a better understanding of the women's contribution to development efforts. A "detachment plan" specifically for women has defined a Mali-oriented strategy. A "women in development" team was set up within the SNV-Mali which includes Malian supervisors and consultants.

This action plan is too recent to measure its effect on women. Amongst current projects, the Women's Action Support Project within the CMDT, appears to be on the right tack; the PLAE is concerned with the integration of women into the fight against erosion and reafforestation efforts. SNV-Mali has produced lucid reports on the delay, in terms of the defined Head Office intentions, of involving women in these development schemes, and are adopting measures designed to make up lost time - or at least not to deteriorate the situation.

3.2.3. USAID

Regarding women and development, this American aid agency is developing a philosophy known as "Women in Development" (WID) generally similar to that of the United Nations.

In Burkina Faso, the USA-Burkina bilateral cooperation budget has been drastically reduced since 1983. Cooperation is currently concentrating on agriculture and health. Women are not involved to a great extent in the agricultural schemes; of the two specifically women-oriented projects, one has closed down and the other (Training of Women in the Sahel, Dori region) is already completed. The Health/Population project (\$ 2 million, over 4 years) comes within the - important and positive - Burkina Faso national family planning programme.

In Mali, the American aid agency is involved in three major rural development sectors: the Haute Vallée development scheme; village reafforestation; the family health programme (in progress).

After Canada and the Netherlands, USAID-Mali initiated a specific enquiry (1988) into the problems of women in development. The agency set up a WID committee which included Malien and expatriate female personnel to devise an action plan. The gap between WID policy and its implementation should start to narrow, especially in combatting the "invisibility" of the long talked-about role of women in agricultural development. Data, compiled according to sex, should at last become "readable". Although it is impossible to measure the effects of this new strategy, it can be seen that there is a desire to bring about real change in the Mali agency's overall programme.

3.2.4. West Germany

German rural development policy has so far paid little attention to the role of women. Awareness of this shortcoming has very recently led to the creation of a WID sub-section within the Ministry of Cooperation. A conceptual framework for women's advancement in rural development has been formulated. In future, all projects relating to technical cooperation will incorporate the WID question as terms of reference and as a basis for assessment.

In Burkina Faso, West Germany is mainly involved in the agricultural and environmental areas. Very few women are involved in the integrated development projects, with the exception of the Central Plateau Project which took the initiative to request supplementary finance to assist women's advancement.

Assistance given to the Burkinabe Energy Institute is mainly intended for women. The Agro-Ecology project has provided backing for women's organizations. Although initially not particularly concerned with women's development problems, German cooperation in Burkina is showing positive advancement in the area.

In Mali, German cooperation is currently involved in 19 projects. There is an evidence of interest in women's problems in some of the projects - particularly in the area of the alleviation of chores (karite presses), improved stoves, and improved training for rural women within the CARM organizations. It is encouraging to see that women's sections are being set up. Nevertheless, it is to be regretted that women are excluded from agro-forestry schemes and mini-projects, which among other projects, will develop village agricultural credit schemes.

3.2.5. Switzerland

"Swiss Cooperative development Principles" are a reminder that women are "irreplaceable participants in the process of social and economic development", and that "each time the nature of the undertaking justifies it, attention will be specifically

drawn to the woman's situation and how she may benefit from the project". This being so, Swiss Cooperation has not yet defined a policy which supports women.

In Burkina Faso, Switzerland is involved in the areas of rural development, reforestation (Village Woodlots), education and training, and support for the NGO "Six S". Although the Swiss are not especially involving themselves with women's problems, they are keeping a careful watch on the effects of their schemes and looking to improve them.

Mali is widely considered to be a recipient of concentrated Swiss aid. Its major areas of involvement are : Food strategies, Forestry, Hydraulics, Health, Training, Village Self-Advancement. The Niafunké community development project involves itself with women's groups and stresses the reliability of repayments. The positive effects of Swiss aid on women still remain isolated and their involvement in the large forestry projects was a failure.

3.2.6. France

France - via the organizations, Fonds d'Aide et de Cooperation and Caisse Centrale de Cooperation Economique - is one of the major financial supporters of French-speaking Sahel countries.

Despite the existence of the Ministry for Cooperation and a Bureau of Welfare Assistance attentive to women's problems, it should be stated that French cooperative missions are not developing a special policy on women's developmental issues.

In Burkina Faso, France is involved in a certain number of agricultural projects in which no special attention is paid to women. The French Association, Volontaires du Progrès (AFVP) is involved in village hydraulic schemes, upgrading water source-points, site-development of lowlands and erosion-control; health. There are no programmes specifically aimed at women, even though women may be direct or indirectly advantaged by certain schemes.

In Mali, the situation is similar; the AFVP carries out small projects which could involve women such as market-gardening, bee-keeping, poultry farming... (Ségou). As things stand, women's advancement issues have no place amongst the priorities of French aid in Burkina Faso and Mali.

3.3. The NGOs

In Burkina Faso, the NGO Monitoring Bureau is a department responsible to the Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation. The Bureau was established in 1984 in order to improve understanding, coordination and planning of the schemes being undertaken in Burkina Faso by numerous NGOs. At the beginning of 1987, 92 NGOs were listed by the Bureau, but there are, in fact, many more. The Bureau is aware of the women's role in rural development and wants to encourage the NGOs to become more involved in the area. At present, there are no well-defined

policies in this area. Certain NGOs are undertaking schemes which favour women. Amongst the more progressive are NAAM/Six S, FEME/ODE, AFRICARE, OXFAM...

Due to the variety of NGOs operating in Burkina Faso, it is difficult to analyse their actual effect on women. From the exclusion of women to "presents", from spurious activity to genuine development activity, everything is possible... Cooperation - or even simple coordination - with the technical services is not necessarily the rule. In certain extremely activity-dense areas such as Mossi Plateau, it is tempting to consider as "clients" or "stakes" and it would be much more desirable to harmonize activity "in their favour".

If the questions concerning women were to be responsibly dealt with the Bureau, its involvement in the area could well improve.

In Mali, the Committee for the Coordination of Non-Governmental Activity in Mali (french initials - CGA ONG), was set up in 1984 to coordinate and index the various NGO schemes in Mali.

There are currently around 68 member NGOs. The collective liases with a government organization, the Technical Secretariat for the evaluation and control of NGOs. The organization is attached to the Minister for regional Administration and Primary Development, which is responsible for the supervision of NGOs. At least 115 NGOs are currently active in Mali, and there is an obvious need to control and coordinate the various schemes.

The NGOs in Mali cover a large range of policies concerning women in rural development, and it is difficult to determine overall results. Collaboration with national organizations is not altogether satisfactory and conflicting relations between certain NGOs and certain regional or national departments leaves a lot to be desired. Only recently, a "women's collective", meeting once a month, was set up within the CGA ONG. The CGA ONG shows support for WID support schemes, not only because they correspond to a demand, but also because the backer-organizations solicit them. OXFAM's regional office has organized a panel of NGOs to deal with women's activities. A few local women's NGOs are starting to appear, but the UNFM is making things difficult for them as it reserves the right to the acronym "Femmes" and wants to control any organization involved in women's socio-economic advancement. This is the fundamental problem, which must be resolved by means other than changing a name.

With so many NGOs operating in their own separate ways in Mali, it is difficult to assess their effect on the women. Their approach to WID appears to be in function of their particular national ideology. Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, Canadian, American and Dutch NGOs are more active than others in the WID sphere. The creation of a women's collective in the CGA ONG is an interesting initiative which could be just what is needed to coordinate and channel NGO women's development schemes in Mali.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. An overall evaluation of the policies

4.1.1. National policies

Political will is a decisive factor in the country's attitude to women's socio-economic advancement matters. This will can only become a reality if a certain number of conditions are met:

- the alignment of supportive policy with the broad outlines of national development policy: the advancement of women, is an objective in itself, both from a standpoint of social justice and of sustained development. WID policy could play a major role in successfully achieving principal national objectives: food self-sufficiency, improved management of natural resources, health/population policies, improved management rural organization.
- Clarification of objectives: women's advancement policies need to be formulated according to the terms of the women themselves and not according to the needs and prerogatives of men. Effective implementation involves certain political risk;
- the concept of WID needs to reach the entire female population of the country, and the more than 80% of women in rural areas. The concept should not be restricted to meeting the demands of privileged urban women;
- the adoption of suitable legislative measures (family law, labour Laws, availability of modern contraception methods, agrarian reform, etc.). This is a necessary, although inadequate, condition. It is also imperative - and more difficult - to apply the letter of text; this will require the vigilance and respect of everybody involved. A massive effort is required to inform and educate both men and women. The laxity of the authorities in dealing with the many infringements of the policy is weakening State credibility and not assisting women's concerns.
- the establishment of a national organization to coordinate women's schemes, responsible for the conception, execution, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of national WID policies, and to handle relations with aid agency and NGOs. There are several existing state organizations that could take a supervisory ministry or a department working in collaboration with women's associations. A complementary and non-contradictory relationship needs to be established between sole women's politically-oriented associations and the state department

responsible for women's affairs. No Sahel country has yet succeeded in fully reconciling these two structures.

- the priority of sole women's associations must be to serve women. There is a great risk that they could be used as an instrument of political propaganda and control of the country's female population. If these associations serve as a national organization coordinating women's schemes, they must be autonomous and have access to human resources and government infrastructures. This will enable the association to be the recognized intermediary for State aid and service organizations and thus capable of effectively monitoring the various projects.
- the formulation and implementation - in collaboration with the technical ministries - of an Action Plan in Support of Women which details the major guide-lines of national and sectorial policies. The inclusion of priorities in the Five-Year Development plan and the PNLCD (fight against desertification).

4.1.2. Aid Agency Policies

A survey of aid agency-implemented WID policies, carried out in Burkina Faso and Mali, reveals a certain number of common factors:

- there is an obvious consensus of ideology; all agencies are showing concern for the improvement of women's socio-economic conditions in developing countries by incorporating the closely-linked concepts of "Women in development" (WID) and "The integration of women into development" (French initials IFD).
- Large gaps have developed in the implementation of these WID options and aid agency can be classed in three categories:
 - 1- Priority given to WID policies with their actual implementation: Canada, the Netherlands, and UNIFEM in Burkina
 - 2- WID-defined policies with partial implementation: United nations, USAID, World Bank, West germany, Switzerland
 - 3- No applied WID policies: EDF, France
- A substantially wide gap frequently persists between strategies, and positions as defined at head office, and their actual implementation. There are still no agencies who are doing anything really convincing in the areas of improved women's access to production methods, to the benefits of forestry schemes, to

decision-making... Some agencies, highly committed to the WID concept, have even discovered that certain of their projects are negatively affecting women. In spite of this the projects were allowed to continue...

- There are still only very few women's schemes in area such as alleviation of tasks, training, etc., and they remain isolated. Whilst some of them have been moderately successful (mills, improved stoves), others have ended in failure. The problem of the right approach to target -groups still remains to be resolved.

The awareness, on the part of the agencies, of relative failure has led to a virtually unanimous reaction resulting in the following courses of action:

- the undertaking of socio-economic studies aimed at a better understanding of local situations;
- the formulation of action plans and strategies specific to the country involved;
- the intention to provide data classified according to sex in order to give better consideration to women's participation in committed projects.

These new strategies are the result of very recent initiatives. Although the problem of women in development has been recognized for over fifteen years, there are still only very few coherent, adapted strategies being implemented.

4.1.3. The influence of foreign-aid schemes on national policies concerning women

The slow response of aid agencies has created a time-lag which has proved detrimental to both development and the socio-economic advancement of women. The World Bank has suggested that the lack of interest in women has produced a negative influence on investment profitability, economic growth, increased population growth-rate. Project initiators and decision-makers - both national and expatriate - have overlooked the role of women in the planning of development projects.

- Aid agencies more advanced in WID thinking can support clearly defined national policy regarding women and assist in its implementation by supporting national organizations, providing human resources, and considering women in all programmes and development projects.
- The less-advanced aid agencies can, to the contrary, pander to the apathy of national policy, or slow down the implementation of a WID-committed national policy by not involving women in their activities.

- The more advanced donor organizations, can - under pressure from their own national policy - put pressure on the recipient country. This could be perceived either as interference resulting in obstacles or as conventional acceptances, but not implemented. Women will thus be viewed more as a stake in the game than as the beneficiaries of development policies.
- The more advanced backer-organizations are showing a positive tendency to set up specialized structures, within their agencies in recipient country, to deal with the question of women. They collaborate with experts from the country concerned and have formulated a specific national strategy.

This option invites a few remarks:

- The lack of agreement and coordination between the various aid agencies disperses activity and creates duplication which subsequently slows down the formulation and implementation of WID strategies. It would be advantageous to set up a WID collective within the NGOs and aid agencies.
- The lack of agreement and coordination between aid organizations and national WID structures prevents the sharing of methodology and skills required to formulate national action plans and sectorial strategies.
- The representatives of national and foreign-aid WID organizations should systematically sit in at bi-partite State/Backer-organization discussions so as to ensure that WID policies are systematically considered when selecting programmes and projects.

Both the aid agencies and the States are continually reaffirming their will to support the socio-economic advancement of women. Both parties believe that women play a substantial role in development activity, but do not benefit from it. Rural development policy, in targeting schemes towards men, is leaving aside 60% of human resources. In this waste humanly and economically tolerable at a time when the sahel countries are going through an unprecedented socio-economic crisis and needing all the strength they can muster ? Along with the national policy, the aid agencies carry the full weight of responsibility and credibility for women's participation in development.

4.1.4. Sectorial policies

Although there is possible consensus on WID issues at general policy and decision-making levels, actual implementation is carried out on a sectorial policy level. The following points would appear to be decisive:

- Management of natural resources

Women are finding it increasingly difficult to gain individual access to the land. The new approaches to village land management which are being implemented do not, in most cases, involve women. Certain decision-makers - both national and expatriate - are questioning the "economic relevance of women's plots" and prefer to talk about more equitable distribution of farming incomes.

This is a worrying development and re-poses the question of the woman's role in agricultural production: to deprive women of the major production means - the earth - is as good as depriving them of access to agricultural extension, credit, literacy, organizational support - in fact... to development assistance.

The vast majority of rural women would like an individual plot. It is their only guarantee of an independent source of income without a great deal of risk attached. There is not enough data classified by sex, ethnic origin, production system, crop-type etc. on women's agricultural production to judge the "economic relevance" of women's plots. To believe that the head farmer will distribute revenue more equitably (i.e. harvest gains) to the women, is Western-style thinking. From the standpoint of sustained development posed by individual women's plots cannot be avoided and will remain a problem until the relevant answer is found to the question of new income-earning activities for rural women.

Agricultural extension schemes are not presently aimed at women. It is consistent with their status regarding land, although contradictory to the fact that 60 to 80% of farming is carried out by women. The "technical packages" do not take into account the sexual division involved in farming work. There is no specific agronomic research being carried out in the area of women's agricultural production. Women's agricultural training schemes and involve male instructors. Big stakes are involved... Are the 60% of human resources in agriculture destined to become skilled producers or simply agricultural labourers? Although the socio-economic advancement of rural women is politically desirable for both the State and the aid agencies, women must be guaranteed agricultural training and access to production means - including land.

The women's role does not appear in either State or agency aid policies on animal breeding. To appreciate the effect of women's activity in this sector, it is essential to have data on female owners of cattle and smaller livestock, herd management, milk by-product processing, feed, etc. There is a great deal to be done in this area...

The role of women in the use and restoration of environment is not given any consideration. Women have specific needs and knowledge. Overlooking them partly explains the poor results of the improved stove extension campaigns and the village plantation programmes. The integration of women into natural resources

management is imperative. To achieve this it will be necessary to change the attitudes of the forestry officers in regard to women. Women must be given a guarantee that they will benefit from any activity undertaken with their own assistance.

Human resources

Burkina Faso and Mali's health and population policies do not have the stated objective of controlling population growth. However, recent legislation and family planning programs favor access to modern forms of contraception. Burkina Faso has stressed its determination to ensure that the country's inhabitants understand the interaction between population and development and the benefits of contraception for the well-being of the family. Mali speaks of the population problem in terms of assets and constraints. Throughout the CILSS area, the idea of controlling population growth is gaining acceptance among Sahelians, and for certain donor agencies, control of population growth is a development priority. Bringing national aims into line with donor's aims is crucial to the success of health and population programs.

Controlling population growth is a national and regional challenge. If the governments of the Sahel wish to control the fertility of their peoples, they will be forced to focus their attention on the women, starting with women in rural areas, who are becoming increasingly aware of the negative consequences of population growth on the well-being of the family and on the environment. But men must also be involved in these initiatives. Health and population policies focus on women and children, while the role and responsibilities of the men remain in the background. Men are most often responsible for deciding whether to have and bring up a child, and whether to use modern forms of contraception (the money to buy the contraceptives is also in the hands of the men). The more access to health care depends on monetary factors, the more it should be the concern of everybody in the community.

Despite considerable efforts on education and training, the overall failure of women's literacy programs poses major questions for the future. New approaches of the type adopted at Bantaaré in Burkina Faso, involving intensive literacy courses for women, are too recent to be assessed, except in quantitative terms.

The women's literacy issue is central to the debate on the IFD. How can the vicious circle of dependance and ignorance be broken? Women's literacy is a priority that should be adopted alongside moves to lighten their work loads, PMI/PF initiatives, agricultural extension work, and activities that generate incomes. New forms of rural organizations (cooperatives, modern tons) require more training. Like the men, the women cannot become literate unless such new knowledge corresponds to precise needs. Aid agencies may support literacy campaigns, but even their own projects do not always adopt rigorous approaches with regard to women's literacy. Further discussion is essential at the sub-regional level on the subject of women's literacy.

Rural organization

The position of women in village organizations is the keystone to their participation in development. The success of the women's village groups in Burkina Faso is an indisputable sign of women's willingness to be informed, to participate in schemes which interest the collective and to have their claims heard. As a general rule, the State services and aid agencies deal with women's issues. Support for the sole women's group does however provide a collective response to development concerns, but does not satisfy individual needs in terms of cash incomes. Within the context of sustained development, it is important to meet this need since penniless women will frequently make demands on the environment in order to replenish their income.

The stated intention of both Burkina Faso and Mali to make the cooperative the common mode of women-farmers organization does not appear to greatly please rural women. The cooperative model, generally considered by the men to be inadequate, is even more so for the women who are just beginning to learn organizational methods. Local associations appear to offer the women an interesting alternative as they have to progress from traditional mutual aid up to the modern type of organization.

4.2. An outline of the issues concerning rural women's participation in the search for sustained development in the Sahel

Three basic themes must be dealt with:

- **Farming, forestry and pastoral production:** to fully recognize women's function as producer and thus their right of access to means of production: land, agricultural extension, credit.
- **Control of population growth:** to respond to the growing acceptance of rural women to birth control as a contribution to the well-being of the family and considerations of space.
- **Rural organization:** the right of women to set up organizations and to receive related support.

State and Foreign Aid policies relating to these three areas are still, by varying degrees, too indecisive or ambiguous. The major uncertainty has been the continuing gap between high-level planning and its implementation. The rural woman is subjected daily to hardship; her needs are very real - and urgent. The few, limited, but nevertheless significant, examples cited indicate that development activity which supports both men and women vastly improves its potential to succeed. Women, far from slowing down development activity, are a potentially massive source of energy and can only further its progression. In their search for sustained development in the Sahel, both State and Aid

organizations should make it their duty to respond urgently - and without ambiguity - to women's demands.

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