

**PROGRESS REPORT ON WEST AFRICA LANDNET ACTIVITIES  
DECEMBER 2000  
(Joint report by Hubert Ouedraogo & Judy Longbottom<sup>1</sup>)**

## **Background**

The West Africa LandNet process commenced following the DFID sponsored Africa Land Networking meeting in Addis Ababa in January 2000. At the meeting, participants were keen to begin an Africa-wide networking process (named LandNet Africa) by developing sub-regional networks in West Africa, East Africa and the Horn, and Southern Africa. Working groups of representatives from these sub-regions developed proposals for an initial programme of activities. In the case of West Africa, this was funded by DFID<sup>2</sup>. Hubert Ouedraogo, an independent consultant based in Burkina Faso, was nominated as interim network coordinator.

The purpose of LandNet West Africa is *to build consensus on progressive, workable and acceptable land policies in the interest of all stakeholders for sustainable development*. Its objectives are to:

- Share experiences and good practice to improve tenure management
- Develop institutional and individual capacities on land issues
- Provide support to different stakeholders to influence the decision-making and implementation of land policies
- Create a database of land information
- Promote interaction and collaboration amongst stakeholders

The first activity was to disseminate the results of the Addis meeting. Further activities include:

- a) To expand the network of resource persons in the sub-region.
- b) To plan a longer-term work programme by holding national workshops in each of the four 'priority' countries which were represented in Addis (Burkina, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria).
- c) To hold a sub-regional workshop to discuss the benefits and constraints of collaboration within the sub-region and to develop a future workplan.

## **General Activities**

### *1. Dissemination of documents*

The Addis workshop report was translated from English into French and distributed to country coordinators who organised appropriate dissemination in their countries. The report included the proposal for activities in West Africa which was developed by the WA working group at Addis. Efforts were also taken to disseminate the documents to other countries in the sub-region. GRAF published the 'declaration of the Addis meeting' on its website<sup>3</sup>.

### *2. Contacting other interested individuals/organisations*

Hubert Ouedraogo has been actively identifying interested people in other countries in the sub-region, namely Mali, Guinea, Benin, Togo and Niger. These contacts have been established during Hubert's other professional visits throughout the sub-region. People in

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<sup>1</sup> For further information or requests for documents please contact either [o.hubert@fasonet.bf](mailto:o.hubert@fasonet.bf) or [judy.longbottom@iied.org](mailto:judy.longbottom@iied.org)

<sup>2</sup> A report of the meeting, including the sub-regional proposals, is available in English and French. Another report (available in English) was commissioned for the meeting on the information and communication aspects of networking.

<sup>3</sup> GRAF - Groupe de recherche et d'action sur le foncier. Website [www.citeweb.net/graf](http://www.citeweb.net/graf)

Congo Brazzaville and Cameroon have also expressed a strong interest in joining the West Africa process. Country coordinators have widened the network of those interested in land issues in their own countries. IIED's *Haramata* has been used to notify readers of their sub-regional coordinators and advertise the objectives of the network<sup>4</sup>. Hubert has made contact with several West African institutions and has given them information about LandNet Africa and the West Africa work programme for the interim phase. These institutions include CILSS, IUCN, UEMOA, IPD-AOS, SADOAC, Oxfam<sup>5</sup>.

### *3. Organising national workshops to plan a work programme*

Each national coordinator has been asked to organise a national workshop. No strict guidelines were given for this activity but coordinators were encouraged to concentrate on drawing together a small but committed team of individuals who can develop a relevant workplan for the country. This team can be enlarged as activities develop.

### *4. Organising a sub-regional workshop*

The proposed dates are 22-24<sup>th</sup> January 2001, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

## **Country activities**

### ***Burkina***

An existing network – GRAF has become the locus of the Burkina LandNet. GRAF has operated on an informal basis for two years, holding meetings, reflecting on topical themes, assembling information and carrying out research and policy activities with funding raised from donors interested in supporting GRAF. It produces a newsletter - GRAFinfo - three times/year, has developed a website and a database of land literature which exists in Burkina.

GRAF organised a national meeting which was held in Ouagadougou on 30<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2000 and attracted 21 participants from various parts of the country. The meeting was funded by the French Ministry. Two papers were presented. The first on tenure in irrigated areas and the second on pastoral tenure and the Pastoral Code. Both papers generated keen discussion. A presentation on the database of land literature in Burkina followed. The meeting also discussed the draft constitution of GRAF which was based on GRAF's operational experience during the preceding two years. Topics covered were: aims and objectives, membership, finance, and terms of office of GRAF officials. The third agenda item was a discussion of the establishment of a GRAF office, election of official posts and proposing a programme of activities<sup>6</sup>.

The work programme proposal is based on GRAF as a forum for exchange and learning and creating the conditions necessary to provide a centre of excellence on land tenure issues in Burkina and in the wider West African sub-region. The 5 major themes will be:

1. Developing GRAF as a centre of excellence – determining objectives and defining the 'value-added' of GRAF
2. Reviewing existing knowledge and experience of land tenure issues and land policy
3. Research on the dynamics of tenure systems
4. Developing land policy options for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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<sup>4</sup> *Haramata* is a bulletin published in English and French and has a readership of over 3000.

<sup>5</sup> CILSS - Interstate committee to combat drought in the Sahel; IUCN - Regional office for the international union for the conservation of nature; UEMOA - West African economic and monetary union; IPD-AOS - Pan-african development institute (WA and Sahel office); SADOAC - sustainable food security in central west africa

<sup>6</sup> A 2 page outline (in French) of proposed activities is available.

## 5. Contributing to the formation of LandNet Africa

Hubert has requested that the unspent LandNet budget for the national workshop be used to support GRAF activities to maintain production of the newsletter, update the website and possibly renting an office.

*Documents received:* Sub-regional progress report (Oct); Burkina national meeting report (June); work programme proposal; constitution of GRAF; GRAFinfo (April, June, Sept 99, Jan, May, Sept 2000)

*Website:* [www.citeweb.net/graf](http://www.citeweb.net/graf)

*Coordinator:* Hubert Ouedraogo, Independent Consultant, Ouagadougou

### **Ghana**

A national workshop was held in Accra on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2000 organised by Odame Larbi and Kasim Kasanga. There were 44 participants and it was jointly funded by LandNet West Africa and GTZ. The workshop was opened by the Minister of Lands: the Honorable Dr. Christina Amoako-Nuama and attended by representatives from ministries, government agencies, academia, NGOs, private sector institutions, donors, local government and chiefs. Four main papers were presented. Two papers presented discussions of current land tenure issues in Ghana; another dealt with poverty, gender and land; and the fourth on networking. Working groups concentrated on a) the structure and function of the network and b) prioritising the issues to address. It was agreed that networking has a positive role to play in serving as a bridge between government and public sector agencies, and customary land holders, NGOs and other civil society stakeholders. Three zonal coordinators (coastal, forest and savannah) will facilitate the functioning of the network. Funding raising was discussed.

A focus group meeting of 7 people was held the 26<sup>th</sup> July to plan next steps. This identified public education on the National Land Policy as a priority activity and a series of workshops on a zonal basis will be held. These workshops will also focus on good governance, poverty alleviation and conflict resolution. The first workshop will be held in Northern Ghana in February 2001. Membership forms were circulated to participants at the workshop.

In August, Kasim Kasanga attended the East Africa workshop (15-18<sup>th</sup>) providing an update to the workshop on progress in Ghana, and what he knew of progress in other West African countries. He circulated a report of the workshop on his return to Ghana.

A review meeting of LandNet Ghana was held on 9<sup>th</sup> November. 15 members (both individual and corporate) have registered. Preparation of the Northern workshop "National Land Policy, Land Management and Good Governance" to be held in February 2001 was discussed. One overview presentation and four other presentations will be made. These will address issues in relation to the national land policy of the following: traditional authorities; the role of public land management agencies in land policy implementation; district assemblies; and land markets.

The network aims to pursue the following other activities:

- Hold zonal meetings
- Prepare of a brochure outlining the objectives of LandNet Ghana
- Provide assistance with alternative conflict resolution and out of court settlements
- Facilitate land policy implementation
- Provide support to District Assemblies to respond to their land management functions

- Compile database of existing literature on a zonal basis.

*Documents received:* Workshop report (July); Focus Group meeting minutes (July); Report on East Africa workshop (Aug); Review meeting minutes (Nov)

*Coordinator* - Kasim Kasanga, Institute for Land Management and Development, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Northern zone coordinator: Saa Dittoh, University of Development Studies, Tamale

Southern zone coordinator: Odame Larbi, Lands Commission, Accra

### ***Senegal:***

A national workshop was held on 28<sup>th</sup> September and Samba Traoré took over the coordination from Lamine Sonko who attended the Addis meeting. Communication difficulties have meant that no report has yet been received by IIED.

*Documents received:* Introductory note and plan of action for the network (July 2000)

*Coordinator:* Samba Traoré, Uni Gaston Berger, St. Louis

### ***Nigeria:***

Minimal contact has been maintained with Janaidu Maina and Safiyanu Harrisu due to poor communications facilities. We received a progress report from Audu Grema of the DFID office in Kaduna on 24<sup>th</sup> October. He indicated that Harrisu is attempting to organise a first workshop but this is unlikely to take place before Christmas. Dr Maina has been promoted within the Ministry of Agriculture in Abuja to Deputy Director for Livestock and Animal Health and has moved away from core land tenure issues, but may be very useful for policy influencing. Two other related events have been held: a land tenure workshop organised by Dr Sanni of the Dept of Agricultural Land Resources (who came to the Sunningdale workshop); and a seminar on land tenure and ecology organised by a Lagos based NGO, Community Conservation and Development Initiatives sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Goethe Institute. Audu recommends inviting Ako Amadi from CCDI and someone from the Dept of Land Resources to the WA workshop.

*Coordinator:* Safiyanu Harrisu, Min of Environment, Kano

### ***Togo***

Workshop to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> Dec 2000 to include representation from Benin – possibly Ibila Djibril of the Ministry of the Environment who has been in contact already with Hubert. The workshop is being organised by Koffi Alinon. LandNet West Africa will co-finance the workshop and has transferred £1,000 to Koffi. He is seeking additional funds from UNDP, WB, FAO, Mission Francaise. Koffi has already set up a common mailbox: [landnet\\_tg@yahoo.com](mailto:landnet_tg@yahoo.com)

*Documents received:* Proposal for setting up Togo/Benin network (November)

*Contact:* Koffi Alinon (Togo); Ibila Djibril (Benin)

### ***Mali***

A workshop is proposed prior to the West Africa meeting (possibly January). We propose co-financing this workshop and will transfer £1,000 to Cheibane and encourage him to seek additional funds in Mali.

*Contact:* Cheibane Coulibaly

### ***Guinea***

A project called “Déclaration de politique foncière en milieu rural (DPRMR)” held a workshop on 21<sup>st</sup> November. One of its organisers contacted Hubert to invite him to the meeting (at rather

short notice and without providing funds). The workshop brought together public and private sectors, producers and donors. Ibrahima Diakité identified several people who were interested in the process of networking in West Africa and wanted to use the workshop to establish a land network in Guinea.

*Contact:* Ibrahima Diakité

## **Communications**

The lead communicator has been Hubert Ouedraogo in his role as interim coordinator of the WA network. His attempts to maintain contact with all the country contact persons has been hampered by many communications problems which he feels constitute a serious constraint for the efficiency of the network. The main form of communication is emails but also use of the phone within and between the francophone countries. There has been no success in telephoning between Burkina and the Anglophone countries. Communications have tended to be sporadic and linked to specific activities. This is due to other work commitments of all concerned.

Contact with Ghana was very poor at first but has improved since Kasim Kasanga finally obtained his own email address, but this connection seems to still be unreliable. However, organising Kasim's attendance at the East Africa workshop at short notice was greatly facilitated by email. A recent request for funds for a Togo workshop was quickly responded to Hubert and IIED. Email contact with Nigeria has been almost non-existent. It seems that messages are reaching both contacts, but Hubert has received no reply for several months. Hubert's contact with Senegal has been very frequent and regular. Some contacts in countries other than those that were represented at Addis do not have a clear email address and many messages have not been delivered to them.

Language has not really been a problem for the network, as Hubert is communicating in English with English speaking countries and in French with French speaking countries. But this requires more work, as messages have to be written in French and in English. Hubert suggests the need to take a decision about language of communication, at least to circulate information from him.

## **Main lessons from the interim phase**

1. There is no clear idea of the impact of the dissemination of documents. We need to review what has been done so far and what further action is needed. The dissemination should continue with better targeting of people or institutions we would like to join or support the process.
2. The subregional institutions are impressed by the networking process in West Africa. How can we capitalize on such a good impression? What kind of concrete actions can we suggest to those institutions? The identification of other institutions is necessary (mainly those not based in Burkina such as ECOWAS and CODESRIA).
3. There is a clear interest in networking within countries not represented at the Addis meeting. Hubert has made contact mainly by email, but it seems that this is not enough to encourage people to set up a national group. Face to face discussions held in Mali and Guinea seem to give better results. How can we identify a committed group to start the process in a country? How can we mobilize a minimum of funds to help realize such a task?

(for example, disseminating documents is expensive). It might be a good alternative to invite at least one person from the 'non-priority' countries to the West Africa workshop, so that they have opportunity to discuss with teams from countries who already have organised themselves. This may encourage other countries to do the same.

4. Most of the expected national workshops have been organised successfully. We hope that the four priority countries will have a national team when coming to the West Africa workshop. Nigeria remains less advanced in this respect.
5. The language is not such a big problem for the network. It is desirable that we progress toward the use of one language for the coordination of the network. But each country must be free to circulate information in it's own official language. An effort is expected from everybody.
6. We must be clear that the email is the way we are going to circulate information and make contact. This being so, all the participants in the network need to resolve their email and connection problems. It is clear that email is not working properly in all African countries, but it is still the easiest way to communicate.
7. We need a web site for the West Africa network. This could be a site, with links to national sites or pages for national teams. This idea will be discussed at the workshop in January.

## CONTACTS FOR LANDNET WEST AFRICA

<p><b><i>Sub-region and Burkina</i></b>          Hubert Ouedraogo          05 BP 6082          Ouagadougou 05          Burkina Faso          tel: +226 33 07 14          dir: +226 31 30 33          fax: +226 38 31 33          email: <a href="mailto:o.hubert@fasonet.bf">o.hubert@fasonet.bf</a> or  <a href="mailto:did@lptinfor.bf">did@lptinfor.bf</a></p>	<p><b><i>UK</i></b>          Judy Longbottom          International Institute for Environment          and Development (IIED)          3 Endsleigh Street          London WC1H 0DD, UK          tel: +44 207 388 2117          fax: +44 207 388 2826          email: <a href="mailto:judy.longbottom@iied.org">judy.longbottom@iied.org</a></p>
<p><b><i>Senegal</i></b>          Samba Traoré          UFR Sciences Juridiques et Politiques          University Gaston Berger de Saint Louis          BP 234, St Louis          Senegal          tel: +221 961 22 01/961 23 02          fax: +221 961 18 84          email: <a href="mailto:sbtraore@yahoo.com">sbtraore@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b><i>Ghana</i></b>          Kasim Kasanga          Institute for Land Management and          Development          University of Science and Technology          Kumasi, Ghana          tel/fax: +233 51 60454          email:  <a href="mailto:kasim-ilmad@avuust.africaonline.com.gh">kasim-ilmad@avuust.africaonline.com.gh</a>          or <a href="mailto:ustlib@libr.ug.edu.gh">ustlib@libr.ug.edu.gh</a> (attention of ..)</p>
<p><b><i>Togo</i></b>          Koffi Alinon          email: <a href="mailto:kalinon@tg.refer.org">kalinon@tg.refer.org</a>  <a href="mailto:kof30al@yahoo.com">kof30al@yahoo.com</a>          or <a href="mailto:landnet_tg@yahoo.com">landnet_tg@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b><i>Nigeria</i></b>          Safiyanu Harrisu          Federal Ministry of Environment          PO Box 13920          Kano          Nigeria          tel: +234 64 649867/668369          email: c/o <a href="mailto:rnrscdfid@compuserve.com">rnrscdfid@compuserve.com</a>          (attention Audu Grema)</p>
<p><b><i>Benin</i></b>          Ibila Djibril          email: <a href="mailto:idjibril@hotmail.com">idjibril@hotmail.com</a></p>	<p><b><i>Mali</i></b>          Cheibane Coulibaly          email: c/o <a href="mailto:cumbu@malinet.ml">cumbu@malinet.ml</a> (attention          of..)</p>
<p><b><i>Guinea</i></b>          Ibrahima Diakité          Email: <a href="mailto:diacki@yahoo.com">diacki@yahoo.com</a></p>	

## Financial

	<b>Budget (£)</b>	<b>Actual * (£)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
IIED coordination fees	8,960	6,720	
IIED office costs	0	223	No budget for office costs. Does not include Oct/Nov
<i>Sub-Total IIED costs</i>	<i>8,960</i>	<i>6,943</i>	
Network coordinator fees	3,750	2,000	
Exchanges with other sub-regions	2,666	1,659	Visit by Kasim to EA workshop
Planning meeting for w/s	2,666	0	Unlikely to be used
Sub-regional workshop	8,000	4,000	Workshop due end Jan. Funds not yet spent.
Burkina activities	5,617	2,666	Some funds not yet spent. Includes coordination costs
Ghana activities	5,617	4,513	Includes coordination costs
Senegal activities	5,617	500	Includes coordination costs Funded through IIED Senegal account
Nigeria activities	5,617	0	Includes coordination costs
Togo activities	0	1,000	To support Togo/Benin workshop December 2000
Mali activities (proposed)		1,000	To support Mali workshop January 2001. Sent via IIED Senegal
<i>Sub-Total West Africa costs</i>	<i>37,000</i>	<i>17,338</i>	
<b><i>Contract Total</i></b>	<b><i>45,960</i></b>	<b><i>24,281</i></b>	
Additional funds verbally approved (but not contracted)	20,000		

\* these figures include expenses already incurred and funds transferred to WA as yet unused