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ACTIVITY REPORT

REPORT 1996-1997

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ICA - ROWA

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1996-1997 ACTIVITY REPORT

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ADDRESS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT



A year has already passed since the organisation of our second Africa Regional Assembly. I am honoured and privileged to thank you once again for your great mobilisation on the occasion of this two-yearly event, which was for the second time brilliantly organised by

our Regional Council. As a prelude to this Regional Assembly, we successively held:

- a seminar on information, education, and training;
- a workshop to develop a four-year activity plan.

It is up to us today, within each of our unions, to take a retrospective look at the conclusions of our seminar and the commitments contained in our four-year plan related to our achievements and future actions. The benefit of this annual self-evaluation is that we will manage to re-centre and re-adjust our resources and efforts to better reach our goals.

For reasons you are already aware of, our regional office was moved to Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. On behalf of you all, dear friends and co-operators, it is a pleasure for me to commend the great generosity, ardour and effort put forth by the Regional Director and his personnel in achieving this relocation. For the personnel who left us due to this move, we hope they will find here the evidence of our gratitude, our acknowledgement and our sympathy for the various and numerous services they rendered with self-sacrifice and devotion for all their years spent with Co-operative Movement of West Africa.

Considering their sacrifice and devotion, we must mobilise to implement the conclusions of our seminar and achieve the goals contained in our four-year plan. What have we been able to convey, arouse, communicate and disseminate as useful information and training? What communication strategies did we use to better establish our education policies? What were the targets which benefited from all these actions? What are the expected results? What is the knowledge acquired?

Speaking of targets, what have we been able to achieve regarding the promotion of women and youth in our grassroots and higher level organisations? I would like to emphasise my satisfaction with the FECECAM women, who, like those in the UNCAS network, created a committee. Women in the other unions must work in the same direction as their sisters of FECECAM in order to contribute to and support the carrying out of our resolution related to the creation of an ICA Women's Committee for West Africa. Of course, for some unions the road is long because it is filled with obstacles represented by:

- resistance to change;
- customs and practices not complying with our cultural values and which strangle the real nature of relationships between men and women;
- refusal to share or simply the failure to recognise the responsibilities that men and women themselves must take.

This is the reason why we are inviting the unions to integrate the Gender Approach in their training and sensitisation strategies. Implementing the seminar conclusions implies, on our part, the mobilisation of our internal human and financial resources. This mobilisation, if planned, must have the objective of a periodical evaluation for its execution and the use of available resources. We have to find a framework for sharing credit and savings experiences in our organisations.

We also planned to develop an inter-regional network for commercial exchanges. It is imperative to begin the surveys for creating a data base on stocks and prices. We must also look for and establish co-operation in the mobilisation mechanisms for funding the collection and the marketing of these.

Other unions have emerged in many associative and co-operative sectors in our various countries. It is our duty to provide them with information on the existence of our organisation and to welcome them whenever they express the desire to join. I keep hoping to welcome into our organisation, in the near future, co-operative and associative organisations from Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, and hopefully with the coming of peace, those of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Our Regional Council must also build a bridge between the South/South Co-operation and co-operative organisations from Arab Africa, such as Morocco, Tunisia, etc.

Dear friends and co-operators, the principles and ideals of co-operation and solidarity which gather us under the banner of the International Co-operative Alliance must serve as ferment for the achievement of our self-development.

Dieng Ousseynou
Member of the ICA Board
Dakar, July 1997

**76th International Co-operative Day
(Saturday 4 July)**

Message from International Co-operative Alliance

Co-operatives and the Globalisation of the Economy

« In an increasingly interdependent world, we must all recognise that we have an interest in spreading the benefits of economic growth as widely as possible and in diminishing the risk either of excluding individuals or groups in our economies or of excluding certain countries or regions from the benefits of globalisation. »

Source : Final communiqué of the G7 Summit in Lyon

The positive effects of globalisation have not yet been felt by a large number of people in the world. The end of the cold war, deregulation and free trade agreements and the unprecedented advances in telecommunications and information technology have not brought about the peaceful and prosperous society for all we might have hoped. Instead we have more economically polarised societies which struggle with unemployment, conflicts and global environment problems.

The drive for profit for profit's sake has had the effect of producing an increasingly unequal society with fewer and fewer large corporations owning most of the world's resources. While the developing world may be the most hard hit by many of these issues the developed nations are not spared. The global reach of corporations means that workforces in the developed world are now being put into direct competition with those of developing nations, thus creating unemployment and driving down wages and living standards in many countries world-wide.

But globalisation has also had positive effects, leading to economic efficiency and increased development worldwide. The globalisation process has also had a positive impact for co-operatives in many countries, opening up markets and allowing the growth of better and more efficient enterprises. However, this is a situation which differs from country to country depending on the socio-economic and political environment in which the co-operatives are operating and the ability of the different co-operatives to rapidly adapt to the challenges of the new order.

In the present environment however, co-operatives have become increasingly subject to attacks from the private sector, largely due to a lack of public knowledge about the co-operative difference. It is essential to develop a strong system of communication within the movement so that the different economic sectors understand and support each other as this will lead to stronger ideological unity. Education is essential at all levels and it is of paramount importance that the movement invest in

promoting the co-operative image and telling the world about the co-operative difference which is based on our Co-operative Principles and Values. Co-operatives play multifunctional roles that are not only economic, but also social and environmental, which cannot be acquired only through trade. A co-operative differs from other commercial organisations as its main aim is to serve its members, while also having a beneficial impact on the community in which it operates.

In the present environment countries must create a legal and regulatory environment in which independent democratic co-operatives can grow and become competitive and sustainable. In the absence of such conditions some co-operatives have been forced to change their status to that of limited company.

In order to reverse this trend, co-operatives at the regional and national level must follow the co-operative principle of Co-operation between Co-operatives and form their own alliances not only to promote their economic interests but also to form lobbies to ensure that they too benefit from global opportunities which will not only benefit their members but also ultimately benefit local communities. Wise governments will understand that co-operatives, with their seventh principle of concern for community, can be allies in the provision of services to society.

The ICA and its member organisations must take a leading role in this major battle. Co-operatives at the community level must mobilise their members to press for reforms to help other people-oriented groups build a society which puts people first and promotes social justice and environmental protection, rather than sustainable development.

Presentation

This activity report covers 1996 and 1997, i.e. two years from January 1996 to December 31, 1997. During this time, ROWA experienced two major events:

- organisation of the Second ICA Regional Assembly for Africa in Dakar, Senegal, on August 16, 1996;*
- relocation of the regional office from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.*

The ROWA team (the Abidjan and Ouagadougou offices, joined) which was at your service during those two years was composed of:



Abole Célestine
Typist



Aka N'Zi Marie Thérèse
*General Secretary
& Documentalist Officer*



Loum Anna,
*Administration &
Financial Assistant*



Ratsimandresy-Touré Sendra
HRD & Gender Officer



Yameogo Alizèta Georgette
Office Atendant



Zongo Eugénie Philomène
*Administrative & Financial
Assistant*



Essoh N'Cho
*Driver
& Liaison Officer*



Kibora Ada Souleymane
Regional Director



Soumahoro Fassiamo
Office Atendant

1996-1997 ACTIVITIES

1996 was a great year during which priority actions defined according to the 1991-1995 five-year plan remained valid until the elaboration of the new plan in August 1996. These priorities were:

- Emergence of Viable Apex Organisations that Serve their Members;
- Consolidation and/or Adjustment of Apex Organisations through Institutional Support and Development of Human Resources;
- Creating an Enabling Environment for Co-operative Development;
- Integration and Enhancement of the Participation of Women in Co-operative Movement; and,
- Inter Co-operative Exchanges.

The priority actions defined during the meeting for the strategic planning of the new 1997-2000 plan are almost the same but emphasis was also put on:

- Consolidation of Apex Organisations through Internal Financial Resource Mobilisation;
- Support to Poverty Alleviation through Grassroots Co-operative Organisations;
- the Consideration of Youth in actions aimed at Reinforcing Participation and Integration in Co-operatives;
- Establishment of a Regional Co-operative Fund (RDCF);
- Development of a Communication and Information System; and,
- Support to Co-operative Research.

This report considers these changes in continuity and presents them as follows:

- ◊ Context of co-operatives in West Africa by Mr. Kibora Ada Souleymane, Regional Director of ICA/ROWA,
- ◊ Institutional Emergence Process,
- ◊ Consolidation of Co-operative Apex Organisations,
- ◊ Creating an Enabling Environment for Co-operative Development,
- ◊ Enhancement of the Participation of Women in Co-operative Development Process;,,
- ◊ Poverty Alleviation through Grassroots Co-operative Organisations,
- ◊ Inter Co-operative Exchanges,
- ◊ Regional Data Bank,
- ◊ Inter-institutional Co-operation,
- ◊ Other Activities,
- ◊ General Conclusion of Mr. Kibora Ada Souleymane, Regional Director of ICA/ROWA

Context of Co-operatives in West Africa .

Thanks to on-going reforms in West Africa and everywhere on the continent, talk of positive economic growth, the return of investors, and indeed a general revamping and a spirit of renewal is on the increase.

Despite these reforms and this positive growth, Africa continues to clock high levels of unemployment and poverty. Despite this slight economic improvement, Africa, in certain areas and countries, is confronted with conflicts and violence. The insecurity of men and of goods, is becoming getting worse in the towns and also in the countryside.

Civil wars and armed conflicts rage on, coupled with extreme violence. Yesterday, it was Congo and Zaire. Today, it is Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The struggle for power is most often the cause of these conflicts. Should we, for all that, conclude, that Political power in Africa, can only be obtained by force and arms? Certainly not by looking at the experiences of Benin and Mali.

Bribery and Corruption are becoming the order of the day, in numerous countries. Corruption has attained such a level that donors, such as the World Bank, are conditioning their assistance with the elimination of this canker as one of their pre-requisites. The causes and solutions are investigated both at the national and international levels. In fact the fight against this canker must go on not only in our countries, but also the developed countries, as well as the multinational societies.

The economic context in West Africa is also characterised by a Regional integration in two gears. On the one hand, we have UEMOA which brings together eight countries having a common currency. And on the other hand, ECOWAS which groups together sixteen English-speaking, French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries.

In the political sphere, the democratisation process is on-going, but at varied levels. Hardly are there elections without protests. Despite its being young, democracy seems to have broken down or to be out of breath, because of lack of respect for values and democratic principles and also the absence of vision, and of projects for society, on the part of political leaders.

Armed conflicts and insecurity are the result of poor development, lack of democracy and of human rights.

Africa, which was formerly a symbol of fruitful discussions can no longer have dialogue nor share.

Material growth, and the amassing of wealth by states and individuals, prevail over human development and the promotion of moral and civic values.

It is against such a background that co-operatives forced to thrive.

Some co-operatives have chalked slight economic successes, and even some kind of prosperity due to economic reforms, with the political and legal reforms underway. This is particularly the case with savings and credit co-operatives and others working in the field of exports. The others, on the other hand, find themselves at cross-roads, confronted with enormous difficulties and issues as to their survival. This is the case with the majority of agricultural or handicraft co-operatives. The Union of Agricultural Co-operatives in the Gambia, which have just been dissolved, is a perfect illustration of this situation.

Government policies, on account of SAP and privatisation, have changed over a short period of time, moving from support, to a total withdrawal, and even an indifference towards co-operatives. The governments, disoriented, now lack adequate policies for dealing with co-operatives.

If the co-operatives are legally accepted, as being private organisations, they are subject to political envy, especially, during elections. On the economic front, they must adapt to the market, and be sufficiently competitive, or else they disappear. At the same time, they are required to insure the functions of local and/or social development, which, among others, has been the cause of their failure in the past. These political and economic contradictions, certainly account for the incoherence which often arises with new co-operative legislation, and some development strategies particularly in the agricultural sector.

However, in some countries, the agricultural co-operatives and the farmer organisations have come together to create lobbies, to defend their interests.

The Federation of the Producers' Union of Benin (FUPRO) or the National Council of Rural Concertation of Senegal, have become essential government partners, and donors of their respective countries. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Regional Union of Savannah Co-operative Enterprises (URECOS-CI) has submitted, without success, a bid for an international bid for tenders for the privatisation of a mill for cotton processing. Even if the objective was not achieved, the example has a symbolic value.

These three examples enable us to draw the following conclusions:

The co-operatives are aware and must be even more conscious of the fact that, their salvation will not come from outside, but from within their outfits. The challenges to arise, and the battles to be won, are both political and economical at the same time. These challenges, and battles are at their doorstep, and the little they can do is to gather the courage to question themselves, and adjust themselves with regards to the internal constraints and the demands of the public.

Kibora Souleymane,
Regional Director - ICA/ROWA

Institutional Emergence Process

The programme consists in organising monographic, diagnostic and analytical studies, in a co-operative sector where the need is felt, and where there is a potential for institutional organisation and a favourable environment. This programme is composed also of sensitisation campaigns at local and regional level, as well as studies in order to conscientise and incite the future members to participate. When the means and the conditions enable it, the procedure includes educational tours inside the country or in other countries of West Africa, to draw inspiration from existing examples.

In 1996, ROWA supported three studies (in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo), a constitutive assembly (in Senegal) and a sensitisation day in Burkina Faso.

COTE D'IVOIRE

The study conducted in Côte d'Ivoire, was aimed at analysing the feasibility for the emergence of a union of GVC women food producers in the areas of Bongouanou and Daoukro.

The study enabled the following:

- analysis of the women groups in question,
- identification of the difficulties that women groups encounter in the executing of their activities and the marketing activities of the food producers.
- the creating of a strategy, activities and the costs of the emergence of a union of women GVC of production and the marketing of the produce of food producers in the areas.

The study was conducted by the ex DMC in collaboration with the Ministry of Family Welfare and the Promotion of Women. A report on the study was submitted in December 1996.

TOGO

In October 1996, ROWA and the Federation of Unions of Savings and Credit Co-operatives (FUCEC) of Togo signed a Protocol of Agreement, for the conducting a feasibility study on the subject of the emergence of unions in the coffee/cocoa and cotton sectors in the country. The study was conducted by the study unit of the FUCEC and the conclusions, submitted in June 1997.

The study enabled the following:

- to carry out a data inventory of areas having the potential of a dynamism of institutional emergence;
- to conduct a diagnosis of co-operatives involved in the process of union emergence that of their environment;
- to describe and analyse the institutional of a union or of an agricultural federation in the Togo context.
- to design a schedule, strategy and estimates of the institutional emergence process.

Contrary to previous procedures in other countries, studies conducted in Côte d'Ivoire and in Togo, did not have the emergence of the two unions

as an outcome. The Political wish of the authorities and the commitment of first interested parties were lacking.

If the current economic situation is favourable for the emergence of second and third level apex organisations and if grouping co-operatives together is really necessary in view of economic and political benefits and constraints, nevertheless there are still issues to be addressed:

- Are the initiators and individual promoters or the NGO's still serious and trustworthy?
- Is there a political awareness and will to support the institutional emergence which constitute, in a way, a power check?
- Isn't there a risk of political take-over since the co-operatives constitute a political force consciously or unconsciously?

In the context characterised by the weakness of trade unions and of opposition parties, co-operatives, sometimes remain the only serious alternative, especially in the agricultural sector.

Sénégal

Since December 1995, ROWA supported the emergence of a national union of handicraft co-operative regional unions of Senegal. The process of the emergence was the following:

- a 45-day national study on the situation of handicraft co-operatives,
- sensitisation campaigns through broadcasting,

The attaché case in woven material gifted to the invitees was made by artisans of Handicraft Regional Union of Dakar(UNCAS Photo)



- a mobilisation trips with organisation of meetings, tours and regional constitutive assemblies,
- a national five-day seminar with the constitutive assembly of the National Union on 14 August 1996 in Dakar.

Burkina Faso

Further to the request of the Government of Burkina Faso, ROWA financed a one-day conference on Housing Co-operatives in Africa. The aim of the conference was to inform and sensitise people on the benefit and favourable conditions for the emerging of housing co-operatives in Burkina Faso.

The conference took place in Ouagadougou on July 27 and a Senegalese consultant was invited as facilitator.

Consolidation of Co-operative Apex Organisations

The objective of this program is to support to the institutional and autonomy of already existing unions and federations, through the retraining and development of their human resources. The final beneficiaries are the individual members, those of elected organs and the employees of co-operatives affiliated to unions and federations.

ACOODER and FECECAM in Benin, URECOS-CI, SCAGBO, DJIBOUA and UCAO in Côte d'Ivoire, UNCAS in Senegal as well as INC in Cape Verde benefited the ROWA support.

Association Coopérative pour le Développement Rural (ACOODER) *(Association of Co-operatives for Rural Development)*

Since 1995, ROWA has supported a three-year human resource development with three components:

- the training of 20 literacy trainers (10 men & 10 women) who will be in charge of permanent literacy of members,



Literacy training for women in Banikoara (ROWA Photo)

- the training of 20 learners (10 men and 10 women), in co-operative organisation and management through distance learning of ISPEC,
- functional literacy training of 500 members (250 men et 250 women) in 20 literacy training centres in reading, writing and basic arithmetic.

The two components of training were achieved in 1995, but the literacy finished in January 1997. The functional literacy programme was carried out by a specialised NGO, DERANA.

Fédération des Caisses d'Epargne et de Crédit Agricole Mutuel du Bénin (FECECAM)
(Federation of Agricultural and Mutual Savings and Credit Banks)

FECECAM's consolidation was supported through the financing of training sessions for staff members at ISPEC (Cotonou). Each beneficiary participated in a separate module, adapted to his level and responsibilities within the FECECAM or in its local bank.

From 24 to 27 April 1997, four officers (a manager, a cashier of two local banks, a male officer in charge of studies and research, and another in charge of training at the headquarters of the Federation) attended the following modules:

- The promotion of decentralised financing systems.
- The methodology of Research.
- The techniques of education and the training of co-operatives.
- The techniques of communication and group dynamics.

Union Régionaie des Entreprises Coopératives des Savanes de Côte d'Ivoire - URECOS-CI.

(Regional Union of Savannah Co-operative Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire)

Further a request of URECOS-CI, ROWA supported a session of three-day round table which gathered the Union, representatives of Government and development partners. The aims of this meeting were:

Co-operators in commission at the round table -(URECOS-CI) Photo)



- to identify the weakness and constraints of the Union,
- to identify concrete activities supported by partners which enable the Union to assume its responsibilities,
- to make proposal of regular meetings between the partners in view to co-ordinate activities/interventions,
- to identify activities that these partners could support.

53 participants including 31 co-operators attended this meeting.

Société Coopérative Agricole d'Agboville – Union des Coopératives Agricoles d'Oumé – Union des GVC Djiboua de Divo (Côte d'Ivoire)

(Agricultural Co-operative Association of Agboville - Agricultural Co-operative Union of Oumé - Union of Djiboua Co-operative Groups)

These three unions of the coffee/cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire and ROWA have agreed on a three-year collaboration (1997-99) for the implementation of a training program to the benefit of administrators and personnel of primary co-operatives which are affiliated to them.

The overall aim of this triennial programme is the development of basic human resources of co-operatives with the view of a professionalised management and a significant improvement of revenues of individual members.

In the course of the year 1997/98, the program allowed the training and retraining of 1460 administrators, 108 accountants, cashiers and storekeepers, from 50 primary co-operatives.

The topics covered were: the organisation and functioning of a co-operative; keeping of accounts documents; the collection and quality control of products.

The institutional aim of this program is the gradual emergence of endogenous units, charged with training and education of its members as well as collaboration between members (membership development and conflict resolution).

Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal (UNCAS)

(National Union of Agricultural Co-operatives)

The National Union of Agricultural Co-operatives in Senegal (UNCAS) benefited from two grants meant for training at the Agricultural Co-operative College in Seoul, Korea. These courses which took place from 25 April to 8 May 1997, essentially focused on rural development, farm economy, co-operative management and the role of the state.



Group picture of the invited trainees (UNCAS Photo)

In addition to the development of human resources, one of the objectives of these courses was to encourage exchanges between UNCAS and the agricultural co-operative movement in Korea.

Institut National des Coopératives (Cape Verde)
(National Institute of Co-operatives)

Upon the request of INC, ROWA supported the training of 15 co-operative organisation inspectors. The purpose of this training was to provide technical and behavioural competencies to local INC co-ordinating technicians so they could become inspectors of co-operative organisations. The session took place in Praia from January 21 to February 8, 1997. The participants attended 120 hour class hours composed of 15 sessions. From this training, a manual of co-operative organisation inspection was drafted for these future inspectors' use.

It is important to note that the role of these inspectors is firstly educational to allow in-house training of co-operative leaders. «*The inspection is perceived as a means of general education of co-operators, rather than a method of monitoring good management of affairs and the implementation of fundamental principles of co-operativism,*» according to the INC project document.

Practical follow-up sessions were organised after this training.

Creating of an Enabling Environment for Co-operative Development.

Political, social and economical changes in our region raised the governments awareness on the need to adapt co-operative legislation and policies to the new environment. The definition of policies and the amendment to laws are meant to contribute to the improvement the co-operative environment. Improving the co-operative environment has become a priority in our day, given the new political, economic and social changes and the inadequacies of co-operative policies and laws to the current context.

ICA/ROWA and the ILO have undertaken joint actions to support governments in Burkina Faso and Guinea Conakry in defining new policies and amending co-operative laws. Several missions, reflection, sensitisation and information seminars and workshops have been conducted.

Guinea Conakry

In September, 1996, ICA/ROWA and the ILO COOPREORM programme undertook an identification and analyses mission in Guinea.

The ILO/ICA mission had audience with seven Ministers who are technically or legally responsible for co-operatives or who are in partnership with the Guinean co-operative movement.

Upon completion of the mission, a document on the analyses of the situation as well as an activity programme was proposed to the political authorities for formulating a new policy, and a scheme for examining and amending the laws in force.

The reform process is being implemented, thanks to a UNDP funding.

Burkina Faso

The process started in October 1996 through an audience with the Minister of Agriculture and a national sensitisation and launching workshop which brought the major partners together.

After this first workshop, ROWA, in collaboration with ILO (ACOPAM a COOPREORM programmes) and the local authorities wrote the terms of reference of the workshops, the consultants' mandates and the analysis guides.

From September to December, 1997, ROWA contributed to:

- the holding of 12 regional workshops, 3 consultations and 1 national conference which enabled the various actors (State, NGOs, Co-operatives, ICA, ILO) to reflect on and exchange ideas in order to define a new policy and a new legal text.
- a national policy document
- a draft of a new legislation

Four national consultants and an international one were recruited and involved in the process.

The two documents are being reviewed by the government.

Côte d'Ivoire

Since 1995, ROWA provided support to the political authorities and co-operative movements in Côte d'Ivoire in order to amend the co-operative legislation of this country.

On 23rd December 1997, the new law was promulgated with the following innovations:

- The cancelling of « pre-co-operatives - GVC» and the transition phase. Only the actual co-operative form is recognised by the new law.
- The strengthening of powers of auditors.
- The decentralisation of registration at the regional administration level.

Cape Verde

At the beginning of 1996, there was the idea of inserting co-operative legislation into the Commercial Code. Let us recall that ROWA had to support INC in 1993 for the amendment process of the fundamental law regarding co-operatives. National consultants took a two-month field trip (from October 1 to November 30, 1993) in order to collect the information necessary to draft the legislation. A national meeting was also organised on December 15 and 16, 1993 in order to discuss the text of the drafted legislation. In 1997, the Institute of Co-operatives (INC) submitted a project document to ROWA for the dissemination and popularisation of this new law, but ROWA is waiting for concrete proceedings before continuing its support.

The major constraints and difficulties hampering the creation of a favourable legal, administrative and political environment for co-operative may be summed up as follows :

- Despite the democratisation process and the liberty provided for in the constitution it is not easy to have the authorities accept the documents, outcomes and recommendations resulting from the participatory process during which co-operatives and NGOs have often been very critical.
- This results in the fact that, one may sometimes notice some reluctance or resistance to the questioning of some prerogatives which, hitherto, have been enjoyed by the state and its agents.
- The right understanding by co-operative members of the evidence that the autonomy and responsibility they have so much desired, require obligations and entail risk which they must accept to assume.
- The time, financial means and the availability of the various actors do not always match up to the importance given to policy and co-operative legislation issues.
- The definition or application of supporting measures required by the new laws and policies are not always undertaken.

Enhancement of the Participation of Women in Co-operative Development Process

ROWA has supported the integration and the participation of women through the financing of training sessions (on co-operative organisation and management) and the setting up of income generating activities (micro-investments, savings and credit funds).

In October 1994, ICA/ROWA in collaboration with the FAO organised a regional bilingual workshop on the integration of women in agricultural co-operatives.

Following this meeting, national surveys were carried out in 1995 and 1996 on member organisations in order to validate the conclusions and recommendations of this workshop and define strategies and specific action plans per union.

Fédération des Caisses d'Epargne et de Crédit Agricole Mutuel du Bénin (FECECAM)

(Federation of Agricultural and Mutual Savings and Credit Banks)

The Smallest Credit to Women (TPCF) is still going on...

The project of small credits for women supported by ROWA since September 1994 has evolved. An evaluation conducted in March 1996 gives the status of the situation: the total amount of credits allocated amounted to CFA 901,053,781 francs for 47,579 women members. The repayment rate was 95%. The progression was made as follows:



Sensitisation session for agricultural women who benefited the TPCF at CLCAM of Adjohoun - Dept of Oueme (ROWA Photo)

- September 1994: implementation of the TPCF with a CFA 2,000,000 francs subsidy from ROWA intended for 200 women (meaning 10,000 F per head);
- End of the 1993/1994 fiscal year: 902 beneficiaries for an accrued credit granted of CFA 15,870,000 F. The Board of CLCAM, under pressure, had to allocate 10% credit to TPCF;

- End of the 1994/1995 fiscal year: 28,070 beneficiaries for an accrued credit granted of CFA 505,808,730 francs.
- End of the 1995/1996 fiscal year: 18,607 beneficiaries for an accrued credit granted of CFA 379,375,051 francs.

The objective of TPCF was to increase women's membership in FECECAM. As of December 31, 1995, we could note the following rate increases according to the FECECAM report:

- individual members: +64%
- share capital: +58%
- depositors: +59%
- deposit amount: +39%

The evaluation also showed that TPCF was successful as a specific and attractive product to women.

Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal (UNCAS)
(National Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Senegal)

At the end of 1995, UNCAS presented ROWA with a training programme for 10 female monitoring field workers (« agents féminins de suivi - AFS ») to ensure permanent education, training, and information in women's village groups. This two-part programme of a two-year duration was composed of two phases:

- first phase: training of 10 female monitoring field workers; and
- second phase: management of a micro-enterprise identified and developed by each group.



Rural volunteers (1993), adult education teachers (1994), and ... (already!) several future monitoring field workers AFS to be pose with the evaluation mission team at the headquarters of URCAD in Diourbel - (UNCAS Photo)

Female monitoring field workers (AFS) were recruited by regional unions from among the community members in villages. The first phase was initiated in April 1996 for the training of 10 selected applicants in education and co-operative management as well as communication and technical training. The training was composed of three theoretical sessions of 21 days each followed by a two-month field practice. The midterm evaluation mentioned in the protocol of understanding took place in November 1997 before beginning the second phase, planned for 1998.

Poverty alleviation through grassroots co-operative organisations

This programme was implemented at UNCAS in Senegal and with Chamen Self-Development Centre : a Self-help NGO in Gambia. The final beneficiaries are the primary co-operatives, women groups and their individual members. The programme involves integrated income generating, training, credit and savings activities.

Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal (UNCAS) *(National Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Senegal)*

The Senegal Programme is specific because it was initiated and implemented by the women's committees of the UNCAS primary co-operatives. These committees benefit from the technical assistance of animators, rural volunteers and female monitoring field workers nominated by village communities and trained since 1995/96 thanks to the ROWA support.

« A trainee during a training session in the store of a woman who benefited from ICA/ROWA credit (UNCAS Photo)



Each committee has set up its own autonomous management body which determines priorities, strategies and criteria for participating in the programme.

For the 1997/98 year, the selected and ongoing activities are savings, training sessions for management committee members, loans for funding individual and collective income generating activities.

The Regions of Diourbel, Saint Louis and Thies are involved in this first phase, and the results obtained for the period under review are as follows :

- 129 female members of management bodies and of the local staff were trained on related topics to mobilisation of savings, to credit management (application, examination, granting, follow-up, reimbursement, accounting).
- 6 credit and savings co-operatives emerged and gathered about 800 members.

- Between July, 1997 and March 1998, an accrued savings of CFA 22,130,477 francs was collected.
- This savings enabled to grant a short term (4 months) accrued credit of CFA 46,988,780 francs. These credits were used by the women to promote individual income generating activities (petty trading, market-gardening, cattle fattening, fish processing, sewing, dyeing etc.).



A women 's group benefited a ROWA credit for fattening activity (UNCAS Photo)

- In addition to the obtained credits the beneficiaries have often self-funded individual activities up to an amount varying from 20 to 80 %.
- The impact and outcomes of the programme equally benefit men as heads of family and producers. For instance, the fishermen of Fass-Boye were able to obtain credits and repair their canoes. The fishermen of Saw were able to acquire their agricultural inputs, thanks to the credits awarded by the women's banks. This program is giving more confidence to the women, greater integration into the UNCAS decision-making bodies and a new pattern of solidarity

The major constraints and difficulties are related to poor training (management and control) and the gap between the banks financial capacity and the members' needs.

Chamen Self-Development & Training Centre

In 1997, the centre located in Farafeni (The Gambia) requested ROWA support for a poverty alleviation programme in nine outreach villages close to Farafeni. Women's groups are the beneficiaries of this two-year programme. Considering the conclusions of a feasibility study conducted in November 1997, ROWA accepted to support the programme in three villages for 90 women. The components of this programme are : income generating and training activities (functional literacy, agricultural techniques, handicraft, breeding, etc....)

The activities are planned for 1998.

Inter-Co-operative Exchanges

1. Study tours and experience exchanges.

ROWA organised study tours in order to establish and encourage relationships and exchanges of experiences between member organisations.

Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal (UNCAS) *(National Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Senegal)*

Four female co-operators of Groupements des Producteurs Maraîchers de Méouane - UGPM (Union of Gardening Producers of Méouane) and the Director of the Union visited FECECAM in Benin from 6 to 13 April 1996. The aims of the visit were to exchange information on:

- experiences and skills with the FECECAM members on agricultural techniques used in food crops,
- organisation and management of savings and credit co-operatives,
- organisation and management of women's grouping activities.

From 11 to 26 April 1996, ROWA financed a study tour for a UNCAS trainer to East Africa region. He visited savings and credit co-operatives in Kenya (7 organisations) and in Uganda (9 organisations). The aims of this study tour were to be familiarised:

- with the services of those organisations to their members,
 - with the relations with formal banks and similar organisations,
 - with the training sessions that members and employees benefited
- He had also working sessions with trainers in order to identify research programmes, experiences exchanges programmes in view to set-up a network for inter co-operation exchanges.

Société Coopérative Agricole d'Agboville (SCAGBO) et Union des GVC Djiboua de Divo (Côte d'Ivoire) *(Agricultural Co-operative Association of Agboville and GVC Union of Djiboua)*

Further to its request, the SCAGBO and Djiboua benefited also a one-week study tour (from 14 to 21 April) in Benin for ten co-operators (7 men and 3 women). The aims of the visit were to exchange information, experiences and skills on:

- the diversification of activities,
- the organisation and management of savings and credit co-operatives,
- the organisation and management of women's groups activities

Association Coopérative pour le Développement Rural (ACOODER) du Bénin - Union Régionale des Entreprises Coopératives des Savanes de Côte d'Ivoire (URECOS-CI) de Côte d'Ivoire et Union des Producteurs de Dédougou du Burkina Faso *(Co-operative Association for Rural Development in Benin - Union of Savannah Co-operative Enterprises in Côte d'Ivoire - Union of Producers of Dédougou in Burkina Faso.)*

Ten members of co-operatives affiliated to the « Association Coopératives pour le Développement Rural » (ACOODER) in Banikoara, Benin, spent 6 days (March 24 to 30, 1997) in Mali to exchange experiences with the cotton producers co-operative members.

Fifteen members of « Union Régionale des Entreprises Coopératives des Savannes (URECOS-CI) » of Côte d'Ivoire and five members of « Union des Producteurs » of Dédougou region in Burkina visited the cotton producers of the Malian « cotton belt » from 21 to 27 April 1997. Mali was selected due to the positive results obtained by cotton producers there, by dint of their maturity, organisation and management.



Souvenir photo of URECOS-CI leaders (Côte d'Ivoire) and those of Rice Planters Trade Union of the Saw region (ROWA Photo)

The co-operatives selected in Benin, Burkina and Côte d'Ivoire were considered on the basis of their high level of involvement in the production and sale of cotton, and on the basis of present stakes of this speculation for farmers in the sub-region.

Two impacts already stand out. The co-operatives in the cotton-growing areas have become the driving force of the farmer movement in Benin. These organisations have been able to negotiate and obtain concessions and privileges from the government and donors (supply and distribution of inputs, collection transportation and commercialisation of cotton). In Côte d'Ivoire, URECOS-CI is gradually becoming conscious of its strengths and recently participated in an international call to tenders for the privatisation of one of the cotton processing mills in the country.

2. Trade Exchanges

Trade exchanges were one of the priorities which were highlighted by the organisations during the last strategic planning held between the 13th and 14th of August, 1996 in Dakar, Senegal.

This priority is justified by the present economic context which is characterised by an outrageous liberalisation of markets and very keen competition, especially in the agriculture and food sector.

ROWA has a mission to support and to serve as a catalyst of development for the co-operatives in the region.

In this light, ROWA must serve, not only as a forum of exchange of experience and communication, but also as a non profit-making facilitator of inter-co-operative exchanges.

In order to fulfil the mission and given the priority assigned to it, ROWA commissioned a consultant to carry out a regional survey which took place from 14th November through 20th December, 1997. This survey involved co-operatives in Benin, Burkina, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal.

The main objective of the survey is to promote the sale of products between and by co-operatives affiliated to ROWA. The survey will be followed by a regional seminar which will bring together representatives of other non co-operative partners and institutions. This seminar should help the outcomes and recommendations of the survey to be reviewed and enriched with a view to defining the areas of collaboration, as well as the conditions and modalities for setting up a co-operative network of trade exchanges.

The main constraints of co-operative which were brought to light by the survey are :

- Insufficient information on the structure of regional markets (quality of products, prices, shortages and boom periods, competitors).
- Difficulty in identifying serious and solvent partners;
- Insufficient means and inadequacies of the funding systems;
- Poor storage and preservation facilities;
- Lack of a technical support structure;

The strengths of the co-operatives which were visited are:

- Broad membership at the local and regional levels which make them extended national networks ;
- a long experience in production and primary collection of varied agricultural produce (food crops, cotton, groundnuts, coffee/ cocoa, market garden produce...);
- A modernisation potential for increasing productivity and the quality of products given the long experience in production;
- An ongoing economic and monetary integration process in West Africa which will open doors to larger regional markets.

The principal outcome of the survey is the creation of an **Intercoop Stock Exchange** which should constitute a formal framework of commercial, financial and technical co-operation for farmer organisations and co-operatives in the sub-region. The practical and operational issues relating to its creation, funding and function are addressed in the survey report which will be discussed during the seminar.

Regional Co-operative Data Bank

The Regional Co-operative Data Bank

After the first phase of the collection in Burkina, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal which started in 1994 and finished in 1995, ROWA initiated the second phase with Benin and Mali. In June 1996, a synthesis of the first phase was published and available for organisations and development partners.

ROWA signed two protocols of understanding in October and November, 1996 for carrying out two surveys in Mali and Benin in order to collect data for building up a Regional Co-operative Data Bank (RCDB).

The exchanges of experiences and trading, as well as planning and negotiations in the area of the funding of support programmes for the development of co-operatives cannot be designed and implemented without updating data, hence the need for ROWA to have the RCDB.

The present activity in Benin and Mali constitutes Phase II of the building of a Regional Co-operative Data Bank in West Africa. Of the two countries, only Benin submitted a progress report in which highlighted difficulties to collect data in some of the southern regions. The final report will be submitted in 1998.

Phase one, which has ended, had to do with Burkina Faso; Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Cape Verde and Gambia. The reports of this phase are available since 1996. The Regional Data bank is accessible to any organisation and co-operative partners.

International Workshop

An international workshop on Data Banks within ICA was held from 20th to 25th January, 1997 in New Delhi, India. The workshop brought together staff members who are responsible of the setting up and management of Data banks from ICA Head Office, ROWA and from other regional offices. The objectives of the workshop were:

- Examining and adopting a compatible system for future data collection, as well as compiling and diffusing information.
- Analysing the feasibility and strategies of networking ICA member organisations.
- Analysing the ways and means of improving information dissemination through the Internet network.
- Defining strategies for setting up a network.

Inter-institutional Co-operation

ROWA- DSE/ZEL

ROWA and German Foundation for International Development (DSE/ZEL) organised jointly two seminars:

- « Co-operative Development and Structural Adjustment in English-speaking Africa » in Diessen - Germany - from 24 to 28 June 1996. Thirty (30) participants from West and East African regions attended the seminar.
- « Training, Education, Information and Communication within Co-operatives » from 8 to 12 August 1996 in Dakar - Senegal - *(see Regional Meetings*

FAO

ROWA was commissioned as a consultant to help an FAO-funded project in Togo to map out a strategy, the resources and an action plan for organising breeders of small ruminants. ROWA carried out:

- a three-month diagnosis study on self-help rural organisations,
- a training session for the project staff,
- two follow-up missions.

ANADER/GTZ

Since 1996, ROWA has participated as a consultant to the ANADER/GTZ program for the emergence of rice producer co-operatives in the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire. After executing the feasibility study, ROWA:

- jointly with GTZ, organised a regional seminar on the management of irrigated lands by peasant farmer's organisations,
- organised sensitisation campaigns for producers,
- elaborated draft projects of the statutes and accounting documents for co-operatives,
- organised and facilitated training sessions for leaders and employees of future co-operatives,
- organised general assemblies for constituted co-operatives.

ILO/COOPNET

The ILO (ACOPAM and COOPNET programmes) invited ROWA to contribute in the organisation of a regional workshop on «the Integration of the Gender and Development Approach in the Co-operative and Partnership Action » The workshop, which was held from the 22nd to 26th June, 1997 in Nouakchott Mauritania enabled the 34 participants from 11 countries to share their experiences analyse difficulties and propose solutions.

ROWA nominated representatives to participate in this workshop and to present a paper on the constraints, potential and outcomes of the Gender and Development approach to development and to the consolidation of its member co-operative organisations.

Other activities

Evaluation of ROWA's activities

From 22 January to 21 February 1996, two consultants were appointed to carry out an evaluation mission of activities financed during the five-year plan 1992-1996.

Working session with the co-operators of a village sector in the M'Boro region - UNCAS - Senegal (ROWA Photo)



The aims of carrying out the evaluation was, based on a sampling of national projects, to make an assessment of the impact of activities supported by ROWA, draw lessons from this, as well as gather and process information needed to help plan a new regional programme.



Consumer co-operative shop - Santo Antao - FENACCOOP - Cape Verde (ROWA Photo)

The mission visited members organisations in Benin (FECECAM - ACOODER - Cliniques Coopératives - ISPEC), in Cape Verde (FENACOOOP & INC), in Côte d'Ivoire (DJIBOUA - SGAGBO & URECOS-CI) and in Senegal (UNCAS & FONGS).

The conclusions of this evaluation contributed also to facilitate the strategic planning session (13 & 14 August in Dakar) in order to draft a new regional plan.

Conferences and missions

ROWA participated to Conference of Ministers in Charge of Co-operatives in East and Southern Africa organised from 22 to 24 May 1996 in Mauritius.

The Regional Director and the Human Resource Development/Gender Officer undertook several missions of support, monitoring, evaluation and consultation to following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

ROWA also received several missions of support, monitoring and contacts from ICA Headquarters, NRD-NORCOOP, SOCODEVI, ILO (ACOPAM, COOPNET, COOPREFORM), BOAD in Lome (Togo) and several other institutional partners of co-operatives.

Publications

ROWA published and disseminated:

- Info-Coop N°8 (1995 Annual Report) - French/English.
- Info-Coop N°9 (Special Member Organisations) - French/ English.
- Co-operative Principles - in French/English/Portuguese.
- Regional Co-operative Data Bank - Synthesis of 1st phase - (French)
- Diagnosis Analysis of Co-operative Movement in Mali - (French)

All publications are available to co-operators, partners and large public.

General Conclusion

West Africa and particularly countries of the sahel region are once again experiencing food shortages this year, due to poor climatic conditions and also to agricultural policies which continue to prioritise export cash crops to the detriment of food crops.

And yet so much has been said and commitments have been made at national, regional and international levels on food security, sustainable human development and on the alleviation of poverty.

The requirements of globalisation and the debt burden, just to mention these, have forced African Governments to base national and international resources (land, manpower, money, technology and strategies on cash crops. This is not a new development, but it is rather strange when one looks back on past developmental experiences of the continent. One tends to ask if the experiences of the past have been of any use.

The third commitment of the World Food Summit which was organised by the FAO from November 13 through 17, 1996 in Rome, states that "...sustainable and participatory policies and methods of food; agricultural; fishery, forestry and rural development will be pursued to ensure reliable and adequate food supply..."

Participation, supply and food security depends, in the main part, on the organisation of men and women who are the actors and beneficiaries of these policies and strategies.

Implementing this commitment means defining national policies and strategies which take into account the building up of the civil society of which co-operatives and self-help groups constitute a major component.

Though the role of co-operatives and other groups in the agricultural sector is well recognised, their importance and impact on food security needs some analysis and assessment. Analysing the importance and impact of these organisations is of a two-fold interest. It would enable, on the one hand, a better quantitative and qualitative assessment of their role in the area of food security, and on the other hand, help make recommendations and proposals for directing African governments in making their policies and defining their roles.

Such an evaluative analysis needs to be undertaken with the help and participation of the various partners to the issue of food security and self-promotion.

For some years now, international institutions have been developing, diffusing and applying a new concept known as "sustainable human development" which has as its basis, Man as the actor and beneficiary of development actions.

The concept of Sustainable Human Development is part of the creation, at the national level, of an environment which enables the individual to progress, take advantage of his/her universal right to Life and Security.

The right to life and security implies the search for ways and means of acquiring food, employment, education, medicare, civil and political rights. Arriving at or safeguarding all these rights involves organising the population in a conscientious and independent manner.

The notions of self-help, self-organisation, autonomy and independence are underlying principles of co-operatives. Implementing this concept implies, inter alia, the definition of policies and national strategies which trigger off and enhance the promotion of co-operatives and autonomous and varied groups which are capable of contributing to achieving food security, sustainable human development and poverty alleviation.

Despite the commitments made at the various summits of Copenhagen, Rio, Rome, Beijing, and the acceptance of the new concept of sustainable human development notwithstanding, governments and development partners do not implement or do not sufficiently concretise their support to resultant action plans and to self-help organisations, including the co-operatives, which could ensure their implementation.

Today, everybody is talking about and prioritising the private sector, human rights protection and the promotion of democracy. Co-operatives are private enterprises which undertake grassroots development actions on their own initiative, something the State is no longer able to do well. Co-operatives are private enterprises which contribute to mobilising national savings (Coopec), an indispensable factor of development which cannot and must not be conceived in terms of subsidies and external loans only. Given the values and principles which they embody and practice, co-operatives are real institutions for learning human rights and practising democracy. For these varied reasons, they need to be granted much more attention, support and consideration.

Co-operatives and globalisation of the economy are the focus of ICA message on this august occasion of the 76th International Co-operatives Day. Assuming that nobody could avoid or stay out of the globalisation process, it would equally be a certainty that this is not a universal panacea because it comes with prerequisites. Globalisation is like a train in motion. Those who get on board late will remain on the platform, but like all travel, this one entails unknowns, requirements and risks. And as the saying goes, he who rides far secures his saddle.

The State, co-operatives and the other components of the African society must consult each other, get prepared, define objectives and strategies, as well as policies to enable them get on board and benefit, to the full, from the globalisation process.

It will be a failure for co-operatives to get on board the globalisation train in isolation or as separate entities. They must form economic-oriented alliances, groups, unions or federations. The alliance strategies must not favour co-operatives only, but must also take into account movements and organisations which don't call themselves co-operatives but which share with the latter principles, identical features, objectives and common interests.

The ideological oneness underlying the various forms of organisations must be the driving force behind their strategic alliances. The political or economic nature of these alliances will depend on the individual problems and national contexts.

Co-operatives being entities of a whole or a given space, their future well-being in the globalisation process will depend on the capacity and constraints of their environment, in the face of the challenges and requirements of globalisation.

There are however, questions which are difficult to answer or whose responses are not obvious.

First of all, who gains or will gain in the globalisation process? Then comes the question as to whether all individuals, nations and enterprises have actually the same chances, capacities or skills in the globalisation process? And lastly, doesn't globalisation entail the risk of further deepening the ever-widening gap between the peoples of the continents of our planet?



*The new ICA/ROWA offices in Ouagadougou - Dr. Kwame N'Krumah Avenue
(second floor, on the left)*

REGIONAL MEETINGS

ICA Regional Assembly for Africa

The second ICA Regional Assembly for Africa took place on August 16, 1996 in the main conference room of the Novotel Hotel in Dakar, Senegal.

Altogether, 114 people coming from 23 African and European countries participated in this important forum. The 39 co-operative organisation delegates came from 17 African countries and were joined by a large delegation from Senegalese co-operative organisations. Several high level officials from Senegal were present: the opening ceremony was chaired by Mr. Robert Sagna, Senegal's Minister of State and Minister of Agriculture. The presence of His Excellence the Ambassador of Egypt to the Republic of Senegal was also noted and representatives of government structures and other development partners, including those represented in Senegal, attended as well.



From left to right : Mrs Sarr (Chairwoman of FONGS- Senegal) - Mr. Idriss (Chairman of CACU - Egypt) - Mr. Thordarson (ICA Director General) - Mrs Melmoth (spouse of ICA President) - Mr. Melmoth (ICA President) - M. Wolimbua (ICA Vice-President) - M. Lubashi (Director Regional of ICA/ROESCA) - M. Kibora (Director Regional of ICA/ROWA) - M. Dieng (President of ROWA Regional Council)

After the welcoming address given by the President of the Senegal National Union of Co-operatives, the President of the ICA Regional Council for Africa, the ICA Vice-President for Africa, and the ICA President, Mr. Graham Melmoth, who was visiting Africa for the first time since his election in 1995, reaffirmed ICA support to the co-operative movement in Africa. Following him, Mr. Robert Sagna, Senegal's Minister of State and Minister of Agriculture recalled that it was the second time that Senegal was hosting an ICA regional assembly and he stressed the role and the

importance of ICA and Senegal's adhesion to co-operative principles. He declared the opening of the session.

The ICA President informed the Assembly of the constitution of the ICA Development Fund, the possibility of introducing a special form of membership for young co-operative organisations, especially from Africa, and the future opening of a liaison office in Cairo so that both regional offices can extend their services to countries in Northern Africa.

The reports of the ICA Vice-President for Africa, the two regional directors, and the specialised committees took stock of the current status of the co-operative movement on the continent and activities which were executed since the last regional assembly, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on September 9, 1994. Various recommendations were read, debated, and adopted.

Before the closing of the session, the Zambian delegate asked on behalf of the Zambian co-operative movement to host the next Assembly in 1998. This was agreed upon.



Mr Robert Sagna, Minister of State, Minister of Agriculture is welcomed by the ICA President when he arrived at Novotel Hotel to chair the opening ceremony of the Regional Assembly.



Group picture of the participants to the 2nd Regional Assembly for Africa

In addition to the Second ICA Regional Assembly for Africa, several other sessions were also held at the Novotel Hotel in Dakar:

- August 8-12, 1996: regional bilingual workshop;
- August 13-14, 1996: strategic planning session for the West Africa Regional Office;
- August 15, 1996: joint meeting of the Regional Council and the Executive Committee for the West Africa region;

REGIONAL BILINGUAL WORKSHOP

The workshop took place August 8-12, 1996. The selected topic was «*Training, Education, Communication, and Information in Co-operatives.*»

The workshop, organised jointly by the Regional Office of the International Co-operative Alliance for West Africa (ICA/ROWA) in collaboration with the German Development Foundation (DSE/ZEL), who ensured the funding, the Senegal National Union of Co-operatives (UNCAS) and the Senegal Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations (FONGS), had the following objectives:

- exchange of experiences and analysis of the current status of training, education, and information in co-operatives
- definition of ways, means, and the orientation framework for the creation and operation of a training and information unit in primary, secondary, or tertiary co-operatives;
- analysis and definition of a national or regional inter-institutional collaboration in order to achieve the preceding objective (training unit).



*Anglophone
commission*

More than forty people coming from 18 African and European countries attended this workshop.

After identifying the commonalties and the fruitful debates in the plenary session, the following areas were highlighted for further discussion and work in commissions:

- funding for training, education, communication, and information;
- adaptation of training, communication, and education programs to environmental changes and the objectives of co-operatives;
- support of training institutions for co-operative and other self-promotion organisations.

The results of these works allowed the elaboration of action strategies which figure in the workshop conclusions and recommendations.



*Francophone
commission*



*Result restitution
session*

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

The session lasted 2 days(13 & 14 August) and gathered 48 participants including:

- representatives of ROWA's member organisations,
- development partners,
- staff of ICA Regional Office for East, South and Central Africa (ROESCA),
- representatives of ROESCA's member organisations,
- officials of governmental agencies,
- staff of ICA Head Quarters in Geneva,
- observers,
- resource persons,
- staff of Regional Office for West Africa (ROWA).

1996 was a turning year: the previous planning covered the period from 1991 to 1995 and the new one is planned for 1997 to 2000.



*Opening ceremony of the ROWA Strategic Planning Session
chaired by Mr. Melmoth, ICA President*

*From left to right : Mrs Sarr N'Deye (Chairwoman of FONGS) - M. Wolimba (ICA Vice-President) -
Mr. Dieng (President of ROWA Regional Council) - Mr. Melmoth (ICA President) - Mr. Thordarson
(ICA Director General) - M. Kibora (Regional Director of ROWA) - M. Lubashi (Regional Director of
ROESCA)*

During the Dakar session, ROWA's members organisations put in common the various strategic planning they defined with their own affiliated members. There were two commissions : the Francophone one and a mixed one.

Finally, they defined the basis of the 1997-2000 Strategic Planning in 9 priorities objectives with evaluation indicators as follows:
(see enclosed).

The commissions debated also on strategies, activities and financial resources. So, to achieve these objectives, the Dakar seminar proposed:

- the updating of ROWA members' contributions,
- provision of services by ROWA for which it will be paid,
- contribution of 10 to 25% by beneficiaries towards the cost of activities,
- activities to promote new ROWA memberships (at least 1 per year between 1997 and 2000),
- the mobilisation of financial resources from donors,
- the deduction of a percentage of the savings and credit of co-operators at national level,
- contribution up to 30% towards the amount for setting up the Regional Co-operative Development Fund,
- freezing of earnings from surplus production,
- loans
- issuing of bonds,
- involvement and assistance of national federations of savings and credit co-operatives in the financing of co-operative activities,
- increase of profit through the reduction of post-harvest losses, and
- judicious utilisation of resources.

STRATEGIC PLAN 1997-2000	
1.	<i>Emergence of autonomous and viable apex. organisations.</i>
2.	<i>Consolidation of organisations and their affiliated members through:</i> <i>a) human resource development,</i> <i>b) internal financial resource mobilisation</i> <i>c) enhancement of institutional capacity</i>
3.	<i>Improvement of the image of co-operatives and their environment.</i>
4.	<i>Enhancement of the participation and integration of women and the youth in co-operative organisations.</i>
5.	<i>Support to poverty alleviation through grassroots co-operative organisations.</i>
6.	<i>Establishment of a Regional Co-operative development Fund (RDCF).</i>
7.	<i>Development of a communication and information system.</i>
8.	<i>Development of inter-co-operation</i>
9.	<i>Support to co-operative research and Regional Co-operative data Bank.</i>

JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

The joint meeting (XXIst Session) of the Executive Committee and the Regional Council for the West Africa region was held on Thursday, August 15, 1996, with 33 participants. Among these were 21 delegates from unions and federations of the region's co-operative organisations (members and observers combined).

After debating the seven points contained in the agenda, participants made recommendations following the different points, the main ones, being:

Regarding ROWA activities:

1. Marketing among member organisations must be established because the potentials are great. The creation of an information bank at ROWA and an observation post for the market were suggested because revenue may contribute to the self-funding of ROWA.
2. Member organisations must diversify their activities and not stand surety for traditional products.
3. ROWA must publicise the results of co-operative data banks, which must be reliable to be useful to the movement.
4. Since with the passing of the new PARMEC law, Savings and Credit co-operatives now fall into the informal sector, ROWA must facilitate the establishment of a harmonisation framework in order to make recommendations to governments because this regulation was made to the detriment of the poor.

President	UNCAS (Senegal)
Vice-presidents	- FECECAM (Benin) - URECOS-CI (Côte d'Ivoire)
Members	- ACOODER (Benin) - FONGS (Senegal) - SCAGBO (Côte d'Ivoire) - UCOBAM (Burkina Faso)
Substitute Members	- FENACOOOP (Cape Verde) - GCU (The Gambia)

*The composition of the new
Executive Committee
(1996-1998)*

Regarding the state of finances:

Each member organisation must update its contribution as soon as possible.

Regarding the issues of statutes:

A new Executive Committee was elected (*see enclosed*)

The following was also mentioned:

- the resolution project for the creation of a Regional Committee for women of ICA;
- the presentation of two new ROWA members by the Regional Director. They were the Collective of Health Clinic Co-operatives of Benin and the Djiboua GVC Union of Divo in Côte d'Ivoire
- the relocation of the regional office to Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and the opening of a liaison office in Cairo, Egypt.

Under miscellaneous issues, Benin's candidature has been held over for the Third ICA Regional Assembly for Africa in the year 2000. This proposition will be submitted to vote at the Third ICA Regional Assembly for Africa which will be held in Zambia in 1998.



Group picture of participants from West Africa (ICA ROWA)

E C H O E S

The meeting of the ICA for Africa was not overlooked in Dakar. The Senegalese press covered the event. Senegalese newspapers celebrated the ICA meetings in Dakar and the presence of the ICA President, Mr. Graham Melmoth, accompanied by his wife and the ICA General Director, Mr. Bruce Thordarson, at these sessions. The audience included several Senegalese authorities. Representatives of the Senegalese press followed the various meetings. Visits of the co-operatives were arranged as well as a visit to Gorea..

Participants in the various meetings agreed to give their opinions about their stay. You will find below some of their comments. Due to space constraints, we sincerely apologise to those who could not be cited here.

Question : *What are your feelings on the Dakar meetings?*



« Thanks for the question. My feelings can be summed up in a single word: satisfaction! » - Koukponou Charles - FECECAM (Benin)

« I would like to congratulate ICA/ROWA for the perfect organisation of meetings characterised by high quality debates. » - Amadou Coulibaly - Djiboua -Divo (Côte d'Ivoire).





« The Dakar meetings, for me, have been a structure for enrichment and reflection. »- Nikiema Anatole - UCOBAM (Burkina Faso), on the right. On the left: Mr. Ibrahima Dem (UNCAS - Senegal)

The workshop on «Training, Education, Communication, and Information in Co-operatives» began well. In general, participants were satisfied. Here are a few reflections:

Question : *What are your feelings on this seminar?*



« A high-level and very instructive seminar » - M. Degbelo (Cliniques Coop - Benin) & «First of all, I am satisfied with the relevance of the themes addressed, and secondly, with the richness of the exchanges that this seminar made possible »- Dosso Mamadou - URECOS-CI (Côte d'Ivoire).

« I am very impressed. It was an enriching experience ».- James Olesite - Botswana Agricultural marketing Co-operative Union - Botswana. Here in the middle Mr. Imbsen -ICA Geneve (on the right) and Mr. Ndaningina -Namibie (on the left) - Mr. Falay Saidi (The Gambia) is on the right - first row.



Question : What kind of concrete applications of the recommendations would you make for your organisation/institution ?



« I am very happy to have been invited to this seminar. I hope I do the following: i) decide on what information to disseminate to co-operators in the country; ii) organise funds to be able to pass the information; iii) decide on what facilitators » - Gakure GK. - - Kenya National Federation of Cooperatives - (on the left with Mr Hoseta Kiplagat - Kenya)



From left to right : Mr. M'BO Achi Bernard (SCAGBO - Mr. Banhoro Douama (SOCODEVI - Côte d'Ivoire) - Mr. Sawadogo M. (CESAO - Burkina)

« As soon as I return...I will begin implementing an efficient policy for self-funding and a training unit, which I have always advocated.»

« . » - M'Bo Achi Bernard - SCAGBO - Agboville (Côte d'Ivoire)

« We will try to consider this more in our training programs » - Sawadogo M. - CESAO - Burkina Faso

« The workshop was very successful and brought up a new dimension to management training in co-operatives. My organisation will endeavour to integrate these new dimensions in the curriculum. This will mean retraining of the trainers to facilitate development of the new curriculum. » - Ester Gicheru - College Cooperative - Kenya



and many other images.....

First, the Senegalese Government support to the Co-operative Movement was illustrated by the numerous audiences accorded to the ICA President....



By Mr. Ousmane
N'Diaye, General
Secretary of
Government

by Mr. Famara
Sagna, President of
Economic and
Social Council



By Mr Robert Sagna,
Minister of State,
Minister of Agriculture

by also Mr Abdoulaye Bathily, Minister of Environment



and Mr. Landing Sané, Minister of Transports

Then the presence of our development partners,

M.M Dahl et Nordlie
(NRD/NORCOOP)
*On their right, M.
Sebisogo (ISPEC -
Benin) & Mrs Ba
(UNCAS - Senegal)*





M. Sackniess Lutz
(DSE/ZEL) far end on
the right

Opening ceremony of
the Regional Seminar
From left to right :
Mrs. Lebender,
Representative of
Embassy of Germany in
Senegal-M. Bara
Mbengue, Director of
Cabinet - State Ministry,
Ministry of Agriculture e

- Mr. Kibora, Regional Director of ICA ROWA

and leisure time, too



«The « Pilgrimage » to
Gorea, at the House of
Slaves

... and finally, an organisation appreciated by all!



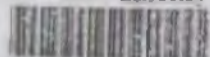
... thanks to a very dynamic
team of hostesses who largely
contributed to the success of the
stay of all visitors

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