COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

A Bilingual Regional Workshop

**Methodologies for Designing
and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies
and National Communication Policies
Niamey, Niger 1-5 April, 2002**

Final Report

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FOREWORD

FAO's Extension, Education and Communication Service (SDRE) organized a regional workshop in Niamey, Niger, on the methodologies of designing and implementing national policies and multimedia communication strategies. The workshop had two main objectives: to reinforce the impact of its fieldwork within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and to ensure the availability of field-tested and developed methodologies for communication policies and strategies.

Most of FAO's experiences in the region have been in the following ECOWAS member countries: Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso and Niger. In order to satisfy growing demand for assistance in formulating national communication policies, we decided to focus on awareness-raising in the other 15 countries in the region (a total population of 230 million) so that they could learn from the experiences of the first five. In this way, they can develop communication policies and strategies within the framework of development projects and programmes.

This workshop in West Africa illustrates a core function of FAO's Extension, Education and Communication Service (SDRE) – the strengthening of national technical capacity. Lessons learned and knowledge gained from ten years of support to member countries in French- and Portuguese-speaking Africa have proved invaluable.

Manuals and case studies developed during the Niamey workshop, and which reflect experiences in Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso and Niger, constitute FAO's modest contribution to regional resources for designing and implementing sector-based strategies for communication for development. They are written for executive officers of both governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the definition of national communication policies, and are designed to help improve the design and implementation of these policies and strategies, especially in the context of sustainable rural development and food security.

Ester Zulberti
Chief
Extension, Education and Communication Service

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

The first bilingual regional workshop, "The Elaboration and Implementation of Methodologies for Designing and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies and National Communication Policies", was held in Niamey, Niger, from 1-5 April, 2002. It was organized by the FAO Extension, Education and Communication Service (SDRE) in partnership with AIF, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and ECOWAS.

The workshop was attended by approximately 50 participants from 13 ECOWAS countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Its being held signals acknowledgement at the highest level of the fundamental role of communication in sustainable development.

Development itself can be defined as a process involving both quantitative and qualitative changes in political, economic, social, cultural and scientific arenas of society which can lead to individual and collective well-being.

The goals of development can only be defined in the context of the needs and expectations of local communities. No policy change or action can be effective without their support, and this is where communication comes into its own. Communication is a dynamic, participatory process involving the exchange and sharing of information. Once a policy has been communicated, it can be shared, discussed and modified as appropriate, and this gives rise to a sense of ownership of that policy by those affected by it.

A communication for development strategy calls for the full participation of all those involved in development activities. It should aim to influence the opinions and behaviour of communities to resolve problems that have been identified by those communities in accordance with a schedule also worked out in a fully participatory manner and taking into account available resources. Such a strategy would also constitute both a commitment and guidelines for mobilizing different partners in the development process.

A national communication policy constitutes the basic conceptual and institutional framework for the coordination of effective development activities. At the workshop, countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau and Niger, that had already implemented a national communication for development policy, presented the results of their work to neighbouring countries.

The principal objective of the meeting was to provide a forum for the exchange of views on and discussions of specific needs and expectations of different national communities.

Three documents, as well as this final report, were published as a result of the workshop:

- A methodological guide to creating a multimedia communication strategy;

- A guide to creating and implementing national policies on information and communication for sustainable development in Africa;

- A report on the definition and implementation of national communication for development policies, with case studies from Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Guinea-Bissau.

We hope that workshop participants were inspired and enabled to develop and implement sectoral strategies for multimedia communication and national communication for development policies in their countries. The FAO Extension, Education and Communication Service (SDRE) is ready and willing to provide technical support to their activities.

WORKSHOP REPORT

1. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Exchange and share FAO's experience, as well as lessons learned in French- and Portuguese-speaking Africa, of drafting national communication policies for development;

- Train participants to design methodologies for sectoral strategies and national communication for development policies;

- Plan activities at the level of ECOWAS and on a national level for countries that do not have a national communication policy.

2. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The following outcomes were expected from the workshop:

- A report of the four countries that have developed and implemented a national communication for development policy (Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau and Niger);

- A summary of the lessons learned by FAO from ten years of experience that can be used as a basis for discussion on how to define and implement national communication for development policies;

- Journalists and communicators involved in training or policy in the 13 ECOWAS countries trained in methodologies for designing and implementing multimedia strategies and national communication for development policies, so that they can carry out similar activities in their own countries;

- A list of and plans of action for countries interested in defining a national communication policy.

3. PARTICIPANTS

The 50 participants came from 13 ECOWAS countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. There were also representatives from FAO Rome, UNDP Niger, UNICEF Niger, the World Bank Niger, ECOWAS Nigeria, and national bodies.

Participants were mainly journalists and/or communicators with specific governmental or professional responsibilities in research, planning, training or media regulation. They were, for example, members of an information regulatory body, communication authority or national communication institute.

4. METHODOLOGY

The workshop included plenary sessions to present papers and case studies and to share experiences. Working group sessions focused on the methodological stages of defining a multimedia communication strategy and a national communication for development policy.

The workshop presented:

- An introductory presentation on communication policies in Africa and on challenges in the design and implementation of national information and communication policies for sustainable development in Africa;

- A paper, based on FAO's experience, on the different steps in the process of defining national communication for development policies;

- The current status of the communication situation in the 13 countries represented at the workshop;

- A report on communication policy and experiences in Mali (1993), Guinea-Bissau (1995), Burkina Faso (2000) and Niger (2001), describing the difficulties encountered and the lessons learned.

The two working groups concentrated on:
-   The methodological steps in the policy definition process;
-   Policy implementation.

Finally, the workshop dedicated one day to a training session on the development of communication for development sector strategies and policy.

5. FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ

The Regional Workshop on the Elaboration and Implementation of Methodologies for Designing and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies and National Communication Policies started at 10:00 am on Monday, 1 April, 2002 at the Palais des Congrès, in Niamey, Republic of the Niger.

The workshop was jointly organized by FAO and ECOWAS, assisted by UNDP, AIF and UNICEF. It was attended by approximately 50 representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- Exchanging and sharing FAO's experience, as well as lessons learned, in designing national communication policies in French- and Portuguese-speaking countries;

- Training participants in methodologies for designing sectoral strategies and national communication for development policies;

- Planning activities at the level of ECOWAS and on a national level for countries that still have no national communication policy.

The following results were expected:

- Discussions on the current status of four countries that have formulated and implemented a national communication for development policy: namely Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau and Niger;

- A summary of lessons learned by FAO in designing and implementing national communication for development policies;

- Journalists and communicators from ECOWAS countries trained in formulating multimedia sectoral strategies, designing and implementing national communication policies for development and able to conduct a similar project in their own countries;

- A list of and plans of action for countries interested in defining a national communication policy.

The official opening ceremony of the workshop was chaired by His Excellency Matty Elhadj Moussa, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, who acted on behalf of Her Excellency Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration. Other members of the Government of the Republic of the Niger and the representatives of diplomatic missions and international organizations were also in attendance.

Three short speeches were given during the opening ceremony.

- The first was given by Ms Mary Roodkowsky, UNICEF Representative in Niger. After outlining the support of UNICEF to the regional workshop, Ms Roodkowsky recalled the achievements of UNICEF within the framework of the Niger Cooperation Programme in communication.

- Mr Gérard Bernard, FAO Representative in Niger, explained why FAO is involved in communication for development. He noted that the workshop would help to meet the challenges of sustainable development, share knowledge and experiences of human progress, and help develop a partnership with ECOWAS through its contribution to the design of national

communication for development policies. Mr Bernard also invited participants to consider the development of new information and communication, technologies such as the RURANET initiative and the information centres for development in Niger.

- In his opening speech, given on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights underlined the interest of the Niger Government in communication for development which, he said, should become a "powerful development tool and an effective medium of access to a world which is increasingly becoming a global village".

After the official opening ceremony, Professor Alfred Opubor, a consultant for FAO, spoke of the challenges of designing and implementing national information and communication policies for sustainable development in Africa. Analysing the evolution of the concept of information, development and communication, Professor Opubor pointed out the close correlation that exists between communication and development. He invited participants to discuss the contribution of communication to country development, the links between language and integration and marginalization, and the appropriate technology for broadcasting information in our socio-economic and cultural contexts.

After lunch, Mr Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, a specialist in Communication for Development with FAO, gave a presentation on the methodological steps required to design a National Communication for Development Policy (NCDP). Mr Ilboudo identified eight steps and gave examples of lessons learned from FAO's experience in Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, and Niger. He also emphasized the importance of an institutional framework and of a multimedia approach to implementing this type of communication strategy.

Ms Balsama Robetokotany from the African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), then gave a presentation on the experience of ACMAD's RANET project, which began in 1999. One important objective of this project is to make meteorological information and data more accessible to rural communities. She noted that radio and internet can help bridge the communication gap between societies with easy access to modern communication technology and those without.

The Tuesday, 2 April session opened with a brief review of Mr Ilboudo's presentation on communication for development. This was followed by presentations on the current status of NCDPs in Mali by Mr Cheickna Diarra, in Guinea-Bissau by Mr Francisco Barreto de Carvalho, in Burkina Faso by Mr Serge Theophile Balima and in Niger by Mr Daouda Diallo. The ensuing discussions presented opportunities to share different national experiences and point out difficulties encountered during formulation and implementation.

- Implementation of the NCDP in Mali has produced positive results, despite numerous problems;

- Implementation of the NCDP in Guinea-Bissau was suspended following the outbreak of war;

- In Burkina Faso the implementation process is at the stage of mobilizing financial resources for implementing actions, sub-programmes and communication sectoral strategies;

- The NCDP in Niger was only formulated in January 2002 so implementation has not begun.

At the end of the second day, participants drafted and approved the terms of reference of two working groups:

- The first worked on the methodological steps in designing a communication policy;

- The second focused on the methodological steps in and conditions for NCDP implementation.

Each group appointed a facilitator and rapporteurs and was assigned the following tasks:

1. Identify, from the four country presentations, the steps in the formulation and implementation of communication policies;

2. Identify the constraints and issues encountered at each step;

3. Make proposals and suggestions with regards to the constraints and problems above;

4. Provide recommendations for each step.

The first working group was chaired by Ms Rabetokotany and the reporters were Mr Guehoun Niakpa Augustin and Mr Roch Parfait Ouedraogo.

Having decided on the most appropriate working method to use, the group discussed the different stages mentioned in the basic documents produced by FAO. Group members took an active part in the discussions and finally agreed upon the following proposals identifying solutions:

Suggestions from the First Working Group

STAGES	IDENTIFIED CONSTRAINTS	SUGGESTIONS/SOLUTIONS
1. Commitment and affirmation of the political will of the Government or the State to design and implement the NCDP.	Political and institutional instability of leaders at the top of administrative and political bodies.	Adoption of the NCDP by Government, by the Parliament or any other appropriate body.
2. Establish a national steering committee in charge of strategic orientation to promote it at the national level.	Difficulty in identifying steering committee members and problem of representation.	Political designation of the members on the basis of competence and effective representation.
3. Identify the themes and communication sectors to be examined, according to the national context and the political, economic and socio-cultural options.	• Identification of the study theme which is less participatory in the countries having designed a NCDP. • Very general and less analytical studies. • Insufficient implementation delays mentioned by the consultants.	• More association with development actors. • Integrate a study on the situation of communication in the institutions, NGOs and associations involved in the development field. • Extend the duration of the studies.
4. Design a document of reference for the national consultants including the major political, economic and cultural options of the country.	• Diversity of the documents and reports on the strategic orientation of the country. • Lack of updated data on the national situation.	• Appoint a consultant to design a reference document containing the major aspects of economic and democratic governance, and social and cultural development.
5. Organize a training workshop for national consultants in order to design the concepts, components, principles, methods and applications of communication for development.	• Unequal knowledge of communication for development among consultants.	• Recruit consultants meeting the terms of reference. • Extend the number of participants to the delegates from provinces and representatives of bodies working in the field to facilitate awareness and information.
6. Launch thematic and sectoral studies for at least two months with the use of an active participatory research method (APRM).	• APRM insufficiently understood by some consultants.	• Enhance capacity of the consultants in participatory approaches. • Initiate monitored tasks in the training workshop.

STAGES	IDENTIFIED CONSTRAINTS	SUGGESTIONS/SOLUTIONS
8. Produce synthesis document on the studies carried out in the field and in the regional meetings to serve as reference for the national workshop. This document should foster exchanges between development partners in the field.	• Study implementation deadlines not observed by some consultants. • Difficult intellectual exercise requiring abilities and judgement. • Thematic reports, sectoral studies and regional workshops are poorly used by most participants who rely only on the final documents.	• Ask each consultant having carried out a thematic/sectorial study to produce a summary of work. • Find ways to disseminate the results of good work.
9. Organize a national workshop on designing national communication for development policy. This workshop brings together representatives of regions, provinces, NGOs, civil society, religious bodies, media and development partners. These representatives are involved in designing and implementing the NCDP and should validate the results of the regional meetings.	• Internal, logistical and financial issues. • Imbalance between representatives from public institutions and civil society organizations. • Weak participation by women. • Few members of rural communities. • Under-use of national languages.	• Give due consideration to the needs and expectations of rural communities by increasing the number of farmers participating in the national workshop and by using national languages. • Redefine representation modality by adopting quota for bodies, organizations, associations and regions. • Determine adequate number of skilled representatives.
10. Provide the national workshop results to civil society organisations and development partners in the provinces and regions.	• Financial constraints in organizing such meetings. • Limited feedback on the outcomes from the communities.	• Organize a working session in which the representatives who attended the national workshop provide feedback to their organizations.
11. Formulate a national communication for development programme with short-, medium- and long-term action plans, including budgets to be submitted to development partners.	• Lack of funds in the short term for implementing the programme. • Long and complicated organizational process. • Inadequate political will of some policy makers.	• Associate partners throughout the country at all stages in the process of designing the NCPD. • Set up a technical inter-departmental panel to prepare the financial partners' roundtable.
7. Organize regional meetings to identify the needs in information and communication of rural grassroots development actors.	• Material, logistic and financial issues in organizing those meetings. • Difficulties in selecting participants. • Poor representation of women. • Communication issues with some organizations or associations established in the inner country. • Insufficient duration of workshop.	• Define the number of workshops according to the national context. • Extend the duration of workshops to two days. • Avoid formal workshops but make them informal and participatory.

The second group was chaired by Mr Soumana Kambeidou, and Ms Mariama Kéïta and Mr Milton Waiswa were rapporteurs. The group listed the steps in the process of implementing the NCDP as follows:

1. Reaffirm national political will so that the NCDP reflects the concerns of everybody.

2. Establish a legal and institutional framework through the NCDP and sectoral communication sections. This implies setting-up a technical secretariat for the technical and operational aspects of the NCDP.

3. Identify human resources and mobilize financial resources for the functioning of the NCDP coordinating unit.

4. Promote the NCDP at the level of development partners and disseminate it at grassroots level.

5. Mobilize financial resources through meetings with development partners.

6. Monitor and evaluate the NCDP to build on achievements and ensure sustainability.

Before examining issues and constraints, and making recommendations, the group highlighted criteria for the functioning of the secretariat, its mission and choice of its staff. The identification of problems was based on the issues raised above:

Conclusion from the Second Working Group

1. Reaffirm the Political Will

CONSTRAINTS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
Political instability	Commit all stakeholders in the country to support the NCDP.
Lack of interest	Include the NCDP in the development programme.
Lukewarm interest	The national assembly should adopt the NCDP.
Clash of authority	Establish and help set up active pressure groups.

2. Establish a Legal and Institutional Framework

CONSTRAINTS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
Lack of representation	Involve main actors in the programme.
Cumbersome administrative structure	Simple operational structure.
Lack of consensus	Minimum operational agreement.

Institutional Framework
The NCDP coordination unit should be independent and established according to the political, economic and social context of the country. Unit staff should be competent and have skills in communication for development. This unit should be streamlined and efficient.

3 Identify Human Resources and Mobilize Financial Resources to Operate the NCDP Coordination Unit

CONSTRAINTS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
Unskilled staff	Train journalists and other stakeholders in the field in communication for development.
Lack of funding	Train journalists and development stakeholders to design adequate strategies to mobilize financial resources from the government and public media.

4. Promote and Disseminate the NCDP

CONSTRAINTS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
Lack of human resources competent in promoting the NCDP	Identify Gap, inform and train field journalists and communicators in the marketing of the NCDP.
Documents written in official languages, which are not used by the majority of the population	Translate the NCDP into national languages.
Lack of financial resources to carry out activities	Design better strategies for fundraising.

5. Mobilize Financial Resources from Development Partners

CONSTRAINTS/ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
Difficulty in securing funds from national Government	Develop good strategies to mobilize funds and include a communication component in each programme, project and policy.
No control over other funding sources	Enhance civil society's efforts to mobilize resources for NCDP.
Inadequate donor involvement in the process of designing the programme.	Involve all potential donors in the entire process of designing the NCDP in order to facilitate funding.
Lack of sectoral strategy for mobilizing financial resources	Link the NCDP programmes with other development programmes, such as on poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS or the environment.

6. Monitor and Evaluate to Build on Achievements and Improve Sustainability of the NCDP

This is a cross-cutting procedure for which a continuous, participatory evaluation process, with verifiable indicators within a specified time-frame, should be developed.

Plenary Session 4 April

Thursday, 4 April was spent introducing participants to the methodology for designing multimedia communication strategies. Professor Hugues Koné presented the methodological guide, which included planning models and standard planning processes. This was followed by a strategy design process including investigation fields, methods and techniques of investigation, strategy formulation and framework, operational aspects, strategy validation, and an explanation of the planning frameworks, monitoring and evaluation.

Participants then reviewed several models for planning communication strategies. The different stages of formulating a multimedia communication strategy were presented as follows:

* Analysis of the situation to ensure the effective study of development issues and the identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to be taken into consideration during the design and implementation of the strategy;

* The communication strategy sums up the main issues necessary to resolve a given development problem. It encompasses communication objectives, audiences, the messages/ideas and the channels;

* The operational aspect of the strategy - including its implementation - incorporates elements necessary for success: institutional framework, communication materials, training, institutional capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, budget and implementation timetable.

The formulation of a multimedia strategy was then explained and 12 key points were made:

1. Start a communication process by fostering the participation of communities in planning development action before the draft rural development project is approved.

2. Define development activities with communities and then identify stakeholders within different target groups. These groups should each play a different role and should receive different messages through different channels.

3. Set objectives for each group. For example: a better understanding of the role of fertilizers by small farmers; greater participation of teachers in promoting vegetables and the use of fertilizers; more active promotion of fertilizers by the community leaders, etc.

4. Analyse audiences through techniques such as KAP and group interviews.

5. Establish a communication plan for each target group, including the different phases required for communication materials, who should produce them and when.

6. Design the message and decide on an appropriate medium based on the study of the target audience.

7. Produce and pilot communication materials. The communication materials should always be first produced in a "preliminary" form and tested on small representative groups from the target audiences. If tests reveal that the materials are not understood or appreciated, they should be modified accordingly.

8. Train field staff in the use of the communication materials and in the techniques of interpersonal communication.

9. Implement the communication plan by producing and using the materials.

10. Monitor and evaluate. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation can serve to underline when communication activities do not achieve the desired results and when misunderstandings hinder progress.

11. Information obtained through the monitoring process can be used as feedback for the implementation process. In other words, regularly review the type of message and materials to respond correctly to the needs identified in ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and until the communication work has been properly understood and appreciated.

12. In depth evaluation of impacts and problems should be conducted at the end of each communication activity, so that the lessons learned can be incorporated into ongoing activities.

At the end of the workshop the participants drew up a list of countries which have not yet formulated a national communication for development policy and which would like to start this exercise:

-   Ghana
-   Côte d'Ivoire
-   Nigeria
-   Mano River states (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone)
-   Benin
-   The Gambia
-   Senegal
-   Togo

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having discussed field experiences in communication for development in Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso and Niger, and the design and implementation of a National Communication for Development Policy (NCDP); and

Having analysed the problems encountered in the implementation of the NCDPs in the different countries.

The participants recommend that:

1. ECOWAS member countries include communication for development as a priority in government activities and as a factor in political, economic, social and cultural development. To this end, communication for development should be an integral part of all national programmes and policies.

2. Each states ensure articulation between the national Poverty Alleviation Strategy and the NCDP to increase the impact of development programmes and projects on grassroots communities.

3. The NCDP coordinating structure be housed within an autonomous and credible institution capable of guaranteeing efficiency and functionality.

4. All development projects and programmes include an adequately financed communication component (allocated about 8 - 12 percent of the overall cost of the project or programme).

5. The different development actors be trained in communication for development.

6. States wishing to implement a National Communication for Development Policy create, in all ministerial departments and public institutions, communication units mandated to prepare and implement sectoral communication strategies.

7. Special consideration be given to monitoring and evaluation throughout the NCDP implementation process.

8. ECOWAS urge the governments of member countries to design and implement NCDPs.

9. States which design NCDPs assign competent personnel and adequate financial and material resources to them to ensure sustainability.

10. A conference of ECOWAS ministers in charge of Information/Communication be convened to examine the results and recommendations of the Niamey workshop.

The workshop also came up with the following suggestions for countries interested in NCDP design and implementation:

- Present to development actors the experiences gained by other countries in order to arouse the interest of national authorities;

- Organize a seminar for the design of NCDPs for the leaders of the countries;

- Organize mini-workshops for partners, institutions and civil society organizations at each step of the preparation and implementation process.

Niamey, 5 April 2002
THE WORKSHOP

VOTE OF THANKS

Appreciative of the warm welcome extended to participants,

Appreciative furthermore of the quality of the facilities and working conditions placed at our disposal,

We, the participants of the Bilingual Regional Workshop on Methodologies for Designing and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies and National Communication for Development Policies, held in Niamey, 1 - 5 April 2002,

Hereby express sincere thanks to the People and Government of Niger and to FAO, ECOWAS, AIF and UNDP for their contributions to the success of our deliberations.

Niamey, 5 April 2002
The Participants

ANNEXES

I – Workshop Programme

II – Opening Addresses:
- Ms Mary Roodkowsky, UNICEF Representative in Niger
- Mr Gérard Bernard, FAO Representative in Niger
- Ms Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration, Niger

III – Evaluation of the Workshop by the Participants

IV – Daily Reports

V – *«National Communication for Development Policies through FAO's nine years experience in Francophone and Lusophone Africa: Methodology and lessons learnt»,* Mr Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, Specialist in Communication for Development, FAO, Rome, Italy

VI – Closing Addresses:
- Mr Gérard Bernard, FAO Representative in Niger
- Mr Mamane Sani Mallan Mahamane, Minister of Transport and Communication, Niger

VII – *"The Current Status of Information and Communication within ECOWAS",* Ms Adrienne Yande Diop,
Communication Director, ECOWAS

VIII – List and Details of the Workshop Participants

ANNEX I – PROGRAMME OF THE WORKSHOP

Monday 1 April, 2002

10:00   Official opening ceremony
                  Address by UNICEF Representative
                  Address by FAO Representative
                  Welcoming address by Her Excellency Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration

11:00   Coffee break

11:30   *"Challenges in the Design and the Implementation of National Information and Communication Policies for Sustainable Development in Africa",* by Professor Alfred Opubor

12:15   Discussion

13:00   End of morning session / Lunch break

15:30   *"The Methodological Steps for Elaborating a National Communication for Development Policy: FAO's Experience",* by Mr Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, Specialist in Communication for Development, FAO, Rome, Italy

16:15   Coffee break

16:30   Discussion

17:00   *"The RANET Project, African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD)",* by Ms Balsama Robetokotany

17:30   Discussion on the information and communication situation within ECOWAS

18:00   End of afternoon session

Tuesday 2 April, 2002

9:00   *"The Current Status of the Elaboration and Implementation of Mali's National Communication For Development Policy",* by Mr Cheick Omar Maiga, FAO Chief Technical Adviser, Former National Coordinator of Mali's National Communication for Development Policy project (1993), and Mr Cheickna Hamalla Diarra, Communication Adviser to the Prime Minister of Mali

9:45   *"The Current Status of the Elaboration and Implementation of Guinea-Bissau's National Communication for Development*

	Policy", by Mr Francesco Barreto de Carvalho, National Television Director, Former Coordinator of the NCDP project
10:30	Coffee break
10:45	*"The Current Status of the Elaboration and Implementation of Burkina Faso's National Communication for Development Policy",* by Mr Serge Theophile Balima, Communication for Development Specialist, Head of the Arts and Communications Department, University of Ouagadougou
11:30	*"The Current Status of the Elaboration and Implementation Niger's National Communication for Development Policy",* by Mr Daouda Diallo, National Coordinator of the NCDP project
12:15	*"National Communication for Development Policies",* by Professor Alfred Opubor Discussion on the terms of reference for the working groups and creation of the groups Group I: Elaboration of the NCDP Group II: Implementation of the NCDP
13:00	End of morning session / Lunch break
15:30	Working groups
18:00	End of afternoon session

Wednesday 3 April, 2002

09:00	Working groups
12:30	End of morning session
15:00	Report of the working groups in plenary session
16:30	Discussion on the outputs of the working groups
17:00	*"The Methodological Steps for the Elaboration of Multimedia Communication Strategies",* by Professor Hugues Koné
18:00	End of afternoon session

Thursday 4 April, 2002

09:00	Supplementary pedagogical training workshop on *The Methodologies and Elaboration Process of Multimedia Communication Strategies",* by Professor Hugues Koné

11:00	Continuation of supplementary pedagogical training work-shop
13:00	End of morning session
15:00	Continuation of supplementary pedagogical training work-shop
18:00	End of afternoon session

Friday 5 April, 2002

08:00	Plenary session
	Planning of NCDP training exercises
	Summary and evaluation of the workshop activities
10:15	Coffee break and end of morning session
11:00	Official closing ceremony
	- Presentation of workshop conclusions, recommendations and motions
	- Address by ECOWAS Representative
	- Address by FAO Representative
	- Closing address by His Excellency Mamane Sani Mallan Mahamane, Minister of Transport and Communication

ANNEX II – OPENING ADDRESS
By Ms Mary Rodkowsky, Representative of UNICEF to Niger

Niamey, 1 April 2002

Your Excellency, Madam Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration,
Your Excellency, Mr Minister of Transport and Communication,
Distinguished members of Government,
Members of the diplomatic corps and international organizations,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be able to address you today at the opening ceremony of this regional workshop, which over the next five days will enable you to discuss the experiences of different countries with the definition and implementation of national development communication policies. This workshop will also be an opportunity to train participants on the methodologies used for the definition of communication strategies.

Our support to this regional workshop stems from the firm belief that the programme you will be following will reinforce your technical skills. It will also create within your institutions and respective countries, a critical mass of expertise at the service of the development of communication to promote people's participation, education, health care, and children's and women's rights, in the framework of the fight against poverty.

Madam Minister,

In January 2002, a national workshop was held for the definition of the national development communication policy of Niger.

In formulating this national policy, the Government of Niger completed an important phase which has given communication a significant role in the sustainable development process.

Since the beginning, UNICEF has supported the Government's efforts to rally the necessary resources for the formulation and implementation of the national development communication policy.

Please allow me to take this opportunity once again to thank the Minister of Communication, and thus the Government of Niger, for the quality of his cooperation, and for the engagement and determination which he has shown in the effort to develop communication in Niger.

UNICEF will continue to provide its support to the Government of Niger and its partners, so that our common objectives may be achieved.

Dear participants,

I wish to take this opportunity to report on some of the results we have obtained in the framework of the Niger/ UNICEF Cooperation Programme in communication.

Such results include the following:

- Advocacy, which led to an engagement in favour of children on the part of the highest authorities, especially within the framework of the world children's movement. Let me add in this respect that this is the region which received the highest number of votes in the "Say yes for children!" campaign;

- Social mobilization, which led a large number of stakeholders (NGOs, associations, communication experts, artists, etc.) to become involved in concrete initiatives for the defence and promotion of children's and women's rights;

- The reinforcement of the skills of communication experts and intermediaries within the framework of interpersonal communication;

- Support to national media to intensify information at a national level;

- The development of strategic communication plans in support of integrated basic services in 12 departments;

- Partnerships with the traditional leadership, which implied a change in people's behaviour in relation to issues related to immunization, visiting health care facilities, early marriage, the education of girls and the literacy of women.

It should be pointed out that Niger is a pioneer, for the experience of the alliance with traditional leaders set a trend, and the experience was replicated in several countries in the region.

These are some results which illustrate the importance of communication in development programmes in Africa.

Madam Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cannot end this address without thanking FAO, UNDP and the other partners that, like us, are here to support you in your endeavour to create a consistent framework for action in the field of communication in the 13 African countries.

I wish you the best of luck in your work and I thank you.

OPENING ADDRESS
By Mr Gérard Bernard, FAO Representative in Niger
Palais des Congrès, Niamey, 1 April 2002

Your Excellency Mr Minister of Justice and Human Rights, representing the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration,
Your Excellency Mr Minister for Transport and Communication,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps and representatives of international and inter-African organizations,
Madam Director of Communication for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),
Delegates of ECOWAS member countries,
Consultants and experts,

Please allow me first of all, on behalf of the Director General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, to extend our warmest welcome to this regional workshop on communication. The representative of UNDP in Niger, whom I am also representing at this ceremony, asked me to welcome all participants on his behalf as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Why is FAO concerned with communication?

The challenge facing agriculture is to guarantee peoples' rights to food security, and at the same time, to make sure that basic natural resources continue to be productive in the future.

In the face of a growing population and a decrease in resources on land and in the sea, the world must opt for sustainable agriculture and rural development. This approach requires that present and future generations have equal access to the entire capital of available natural and human resources.

It was to meet these challenges that in 1995, FAO created the Sustainable Development Department, which acts as a global point of reference in terms of know-how and advice on the biological, socio-economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. The aim of its creation was to respond to the need to implement a holistic and strategic approach in support of sustainable development and the fight against poverty.

The Sustainable Development Department, which promoted this meeting, focuses on four dimensions of sustainable development, namely research, extension, education and communication. The Department defines, develops and promotes sustainable concepts, strategies and methods, and helps to integrate them in the development programmes of both member countries and technical divisions of the Organization.

Sharing know-how thus remains at the base of human progress, and the fight against food insecurity relies on stronger national capacities in the area of communication for sustainable development, and the use of the most appropriate media and technologies fostering participation and training.

Your Excellencies, distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is precisely to exchange such strategies, concepts and methods, and to take concerted action to improve these approaches in the area of development communication, that FAO's Extension, Education and Communication Service (SDRE) has established a partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to transfer know-how specifically in sectoral multimedia communication strategies and national communication policies. The purpose is to create local expertise in terms of educators in each of the countries represented here.

The choice underlying our partnership with ECOWAS is two-fold:

First of all, FAO's experience in Africa in the definition of national development communication policies has concentrated in French-speaking and Western Portuguese-speaking Africa; we felt that it would be fair to extend it to the other countries in the same economic area.

Secondly, the bilingual nature of this geographic area, where English- and French-speaking countries live side by side, will enable us to produce documents in at least two of the main languages, and may be used in other parts of the continent or wherever it becomes necessary and useful to define national development communication policies.

Indeed, as I have just mentioned, FAO's experience concerned Mali in 1993, Guinea-Bissau in 1995, the Central Africa Republic in 1998, Cape Verde in 1999, Burkina Faso in 2000 and Niger in January 2002.

Alongside these exercises for the definition of national development communication policies, our Organization has also worked within the framework of in-the-field development projects and programmes, to provide them with multimedia communication strategies. The methodology we have developed has enabled us to define planning models, generic planning processes, and ways to monitor and evaluate a communication strategy. It was also possible to establish that communication is an essential factor in development processes, even if the best way to use it has not yet been mastered.

Today, thanks to the experience gained in the field in Africa, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere, including industrialized countries, we know a lot more about development communication strategies and the methodologies to follow for their definition.

Please allow me to recall here that development programmes should include, from the beginning, a part devoted to communication with well-defined objectives, for they are of support to such programmes. Communication objectives should be realistic, precise, and measurable and allow a certain time-frame for their accomplishment. Unfortunately, experience has shown us that the formulation of development projects and programmes hardly ever includes communication, whose strategy would be a key element. When communication is included, on the other hand, it is a mere appendix and is not allocated truly skilled staff or sufficient financial resources.

In the area of national development communication policies, a number of definition and implementation constraints have caused a setback in the progress achieved in six African countries over the past ten years:

- The planning and organization of regional meetings;
- The unavailability of short-term funds for the implementation of the national communication for development programme;
- The sometimes fearful political will of national decision-makers and their development partners, just to mention a few.

Distinguished Ministers,
Dear participants,

The Niamey workshop has the following goals:

- To exchange and share FAO's experience and the lessons learned in French- and Portuguese-speaking Africa in the definition of national development communication policies;
- To train participants in the methodologies used to define sectoral strategies and national communication for development policies;
- To plan a series of activities in this field within ECOWAS and in countries that do not yet have a national communication policy.

I would also like to recall here that national policies are part of the responsibility of corresponding Governments, and that the cooperation of development partners is absolutely necessary. To illustrate such cooperation, please allow me to take the example of Niger. The support of the United Nations System in the definition of a national communication for development policy was especially fruitful. Indeed, UNDP and FAO, among others, through a joint effort in the implementation of the National Poverty Eradication Programme, have recognized the great importance of including the most unprivileged populations in information and communication circuits. Together, we realized the importance of communication and the dissemination of information in all aspects of development at the level of rural communities, which are often too distant and even excluded from information and communication circuits (radio, press and television). This is the weak link of local development.

We also noted the importance of new information and communication technologies, such as digital broadcasting using solar energy. This is why FAO, UNDP and other partners of the United Nations System like ACMAD, UNICEF and UNESCO, or the *Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie* (AIF), follow with great interest the development of the RURANET initiative and of development information centres in Niger. We believe that new technologies can play an essential role in helping countries to better meet development challenges, which consist in enhancing social integration, enabling gender equality, fostering economic opportunities for the poor, lowering the costs of public and private services, and intensifying democratic governance at the rural level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear participants,
At the end of your work, you will have become familiar with the latest developments in terms of the definition and implementation of national communi-

cation for development policies in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau and Niger. You will have shared, discussed and capitalized on the ten-year experience of FAO and other partners, and the lessons learned in the definition and implementation of national communication for development policies. You will have been trained in the methodologies for the definition of sectoral multimedia strategies and the definition and implementation of national communication for development policies, and you will be capable of conducting a similar exercise in your own countries and institutions, according to a general agenda that you yourselves will establish.

Indeed, eminent experts in the definition of multimedia communication strategies and national communication for development policies have been invited to attend this workshop, to share with you their knowledge and know-how.

Distinguished Ministers,

Please convey the sincere thanks of UNDP and FAO to the Government of Niger for having facilitated the organization of this important educational meeting.

Our thanks also go out to our other partners, which have contributed in the financial and material organization of this bilingual regional workshop, namely AIF, UNICEF, and EKL.

I wish you the best of luck on your work.

Thank you.

Members of Government,
Representatives of the United Nations System,
Delegates of the member countries of ECOWAS,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear guests,

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the President of the Republic, the Head of State, His Excellency Mamadou Tandja, and of the Prime Minister, the Head of Government, Hama Amadou, to wish all the participants in this important regional workshop a warm welcome to our country.

Development communication, the issue that we are here to discuss, has always been at the centre of the concerns of the authorities of Niger since the country's independence. Indeed, it has been the object of different strategies and communication bodies like radio clubs, educational television, television reception community centres, and the rural press in national languages.

The most recent strategy has entailed, over the past two years, the definition of a National Communication for Development Policy (NCDP), which was approved in January during a national workshop here in Niamey. I feel it is my duty to thank FAO and UNICEF, for having supported Niger in this important enterprise.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The purpose of our meeting this morning is perfectly in line with our Government's general policy, which aims to turn communication into a powerful development tool and an effective medium of access to a world which is increasingly becoming a global village, thanks to the magic of communication techniques and new information and communication technologies.

However, Niger will be unable to participate in this globalization process unless its State affairs are in order, and it will not be able to achieve this goal without a communication programme which, justifiably, has now become a need for its development partners.

By the implementation of sectoral communication strategies and national communication in development policies, we aim to integrate all communication supports and tools, by appealing to the expertise of all stakeholders involved in development.

Dear participants,

In the course of this workshop, I urge you to share and exchange your experiences, so that each of you may draw the greatest benefit from the lessons learned regarding national communication for development policies, and methodologies used for the definition of sectoral strategies.

I am sure that following the different presentations by the representatives of experienced institutions and the papers by specialists in this subject, you will leave this workshop feeling that you have been exposed to sufficient training and methods for the definition of communication strategies.

In wishing you the best of luck in your work, I declare open the regional workshop on the methods for the definition and implementation of sectoral multi-media communication strategies and national development communication policies.

Thank you.

ANNEX III – EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Evaluation forms were completed 24 of the 50 participants on the last day of the meeting.

The participants were very happy with the workshop, both in terms of its contents (technical aspects) and organization (logistics).

Contents. When asked about the quality of presentations and contributions, 21 out of the 24 respondents rated it as excellent (8) or very good (13). Documentation distributed was judged excellent (15) or very interesting (5) by 20 out of 24 participants.

The same degree of satisfaction was expressed in terms of:
• The objectives of the meeting, which were considered as clear before the workshop, and which the participants felt had been achieved at the end;
• The workshop programme;
• The participants themselves.

«A workshop of this sort should be repeated as it encourages learning and changing mentalities towards a much more democratic approach»

Answers collected in terms of the contents of the workshop:

	AVERAGE* (OUT OF 5)
On the overall contents of the workshop (technical aspects)	**4.1**
Documentation	4.5
Quality of presentations	4.2
Quality of facilitators (consultants)	4.2
Audiovisual tools	4.2
Clarity of workshop objectives	4.2
Overall fulfillment of participants' expectations	4.1
Consistency of programme	4.1
Accomplishment of objectives established at the outset	4.0
Sharing FAO's experience in the definition of NCDPs	4.2
Determining the methods for the definition of a sectoral multimedia communication strategy	4.2
Planning NCDP definition activities at a national level and at the level of ECOWAS	4.0
Overall quality of participants	3.8

* **Rating**: *1= Poor   2 = Average   3 = Fair   4 = Very good   5 = Excellent*

The open question, "What are your suggestions to further improve this workshop in the future?" elicited 15 suggestions, of which 14 concerned contents.

Five suggestions concerned the programme of the workshop and the methodology employed:

- Such a workshop should begin with an explanation of the meaning of strategy, and continue with an assessment of the situation;

- Before discussing experiences, the organizers should ask the main speaker to illustrate the subject with an example based on their field experience;

- When discussing the implementation phase, consultants should first of all present the programme to be implemented and the execution of each sub-programme;

- Future workshops should provide a practical example to further enrich the contents, and to facilitate the assimilation of the methodology;

- The session on the definition of a sectoral strategy should be completed by a group exercise.

Three participants stated that they would like such a workshop to be longer to allow for training modules and to enable participants to reflect on the different presentations and discussions.

Two participants suggested that contributions be sent before a workshop to save time for those coming from further away and to allow people to read the documents before the beginning of the workshop.

Other suggestions collected:

- Prepare the documents carefully, to enable all participants to attend the workshop from the beginning;

- Invite the local press (private or public) to participate;

- Less protocol.

Participants felt that the organization of the workshop, in terms of logistics, was generally good (3.9 out of 5). Special mention was made of the interpretation service (4.6), the overall environment, and the venue of the workshop (4.3), while accommodation obtained a lower rating (2.9).

A single suggestion was made in terms of logistics:

- A permanent reception service at the airport.

	AVERAGE* (OUT OF 5)
Overall organization (logistics)	**3.9**
Interpretation (services)	4.6
General environment of the workshop	4.3
Workshop venue (Palais des Congrès)	4.3
Transportation during the workshop	4.1
Secretariat (services)	4.0
Conference officers (performance)	3.9
Reception at airport	3.8
Coffee break	3.6
Travel arrangements	3.4
Accommodation	2.9

* **Rating**: *1= Poor   2 = Average   3 = Fair   4 = Very good   5 = Excellent*

ANNEX IV – DAILY REPORT – 1 APRIL 2002

The Regional Workshop on Methodologies for Designing and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies and National Communication for Development Policies started at 10:00 am on Monday, 1 April 2002 at the Palais des Congrès in Niamey, Niger.

The opening ceremony was chaired by His Excellency the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, who was acting on behalf of Her Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration. This session was attended by the members of Niger Government and representatives of diplomatic missions, international and inter-African organizations, and delegates from Benin, Burkina-Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

Three short speeches were given during the opening ceremony.

The first one was by Ms Mary Roodkowsky, the Representative of UNICEF in Niger. After asserting the support of UNICEF to the regional workshop, Ms Roodkowsky highlighted the achievements of UNICEF within the framework of Niger Cooperation Programme in the field of communication: advocacy, support to national media, social mobilization, partnership with traditional leaders and capacity building in communication.

Mr Gérard Bernard, FAO Representative in Niger spoke after Ms Roodkowsky and explained why FAO is involved in communication for development: to meet the challenges of sustainable development, to share knowledge and experiences for human advancement and to develop partnerships with ECOWAS, which also contributes to the designing of the national communication for development policies. He reasserted the necessity for development projects and programmes to have a communication component with coherent objectives in order to promote the effective participation of target communities.

While highlighting the objectives of this workshop, which are to exchange and to share FAO experience and lessons learnt in French- and Portuguese-speaking Africa, Mr Bernard invited participants to consider the development of new information and communication technologies, such as the RURANET initiative and the information centres for development in Niger.

Finally, in a speech written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration, on whose behalf he was speaking, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Niger, underlined the interest of the Niger Government in communication for development. He then invited participants to learn as much as they could about designing of a national communication for development policy and methodologies for sectoral strategies.

After the official opening ceremony, Professor Alfred Opubor, a consultant for FAO, spoke about the challenges in the design and implementation of national information and communication policies for sustainable development in Africa.

He identified several challenges:
- How can information enhance the development of a country?
- How can we foster effective community participation in the institutional, economic and social development process?
- Is there the political will for NDCPs?
- Whose identity should we defend in the development and globalization processes?
- What is the role of religion?
- Is language a factor of integration or marginalization in Africa?
- How can we take into consideration freedom of speech?
- How can we reduce citizens' unequal access to information within the same country?
- What information dissemination technologies should we use?
- Who should initiate the preparation of a national communication for development policy?

These questions raised the following key issues:
- Are communities benefiting from the NCDPs?
- Is the unequal balance of power between civil society and authorities a source of concern?
- Do communities have the capacity to understand development messages?
- Can the NCDP be implemented in a non-democratic context?

After lunch Mr Jean-Pierre Ilboudo, a specialist in communication for development at FAO in Rome, made a presentation on NCDPs and emphasized the need for a definition of policies in national and sectoral communication strategies.

Mr Ilboudo listed eight steps in the process of designing NCDPs:

1. The identification of communication themes and sectors.

2. The preparation of a reference document comprising the major options for national economic, political, social and cultural development.

3. The organization of a training workshop for national consultants.

4. Thematic and sectoral studies.

5. The organization of regional meetings to identify the information and communication needs of rural communities.

6. The preparation of a document summarizing field studies.

7. The organization of a national workshop for the definition of the NCDP.

8. The preparation of a national communication for development action plan.

After that, Mr Ilboudo highlighted the lessons learned from FAO's experiences in Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso and Niger. He made general remarks on the interdependence of communication with other sectors and on the concepts of participation and democra-

cy. Finally, Mr Ilboudo insisted on the importance of the legal and institutional framework and on the necessity of a multimedia approach.

In the discussions that followed, participants focused on the management of communication in public administration and the need to mainstream the implementation of communication for development.

After this session, Ms Balsama Rabetokotany of ACMAD presented the RANET project which uses a combination of radio and internet to increase public access, especially in rural areas, to meteorological information and data.

During the discussion that followed, Mr Mohamed Sadeck Boulaya, ACMAD's managing director, gave technical answers to questions on meteorological applications. The participants showed a keen interest in the application of new technologies to rural development.

The session ended at 6:00 p.m.

DAILY REPORT – 2 APRIL 2002

The session of Tuesday, 2 April started at 9:00 a.m. The Chairman of the session, Mr Ibrahima Sané, announced the absence of Ms Adrienne Diop, ECOWAS Communication Director, presented the day's agenda and then gave the floor to Mr Ilboudo for a presentation on the NCDP that highlighted the importance of developing instruments for comprehensive action in the area of communication.

Mr Ilboudo noted that the NCDP is a reference framework for development partners and a guide for action for national development actors. It formulates general objectives which are related to the major thrust of economic, political, cultural and social development. According to Mr Ilboudo the NCDP is a process of exchange and dialogue intended to foster a change of behaviour. It is not a prerogative of journalists and communicators but should involve all development stakeholders.

After the presentation the meeting examined case studies:

1. Mali
Mr Cheickna Diarra first described the context in which the NCDP was established. It was initiated by the Government in 1991 after a period of political upheaval. In 1993 a workshop was held to design a strategy. Five working groups were set up, experts were recruited and a national workshop convened. This led to a final document outlining guidelines for the NCDP in Mali.

FORMULATION OF THE NCDP IN MALI

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
- Genuine political will	- Many participants
- Readiness of partners	not ready for NCDP formulation
- Existence of support structures	- Lack of involvement
(CESPA , CNIES, Rural Radio)	of rural communities

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NCDP IN MALI

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
- Reference document for the the government and for international and external development partners - NCDP legal framework	- Lack of funds - Loss of institutional memory - Document largely disseminated not well defined.

2. Guinea-Bissau

Mr Francisco Barreto de Carvalho first described the historical context of the NCDP, which was disrupted by the war which began in 1998. The NCDP was re-launched when the situation returned to normal.

FORMULATION OF THE NCDP IN GUINEA-BISSAU

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
- Document available for the authorities and development actors - First substantive work on communication for development - Inadequate involvement of decision makers	- Very limited time for designing the strategy - Difficulties in recruiting consultants - Difficulties in selecting partners - Aim of strategy not explicit.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NCDP IN GUINEA-BISSAU

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
- Documents with a national scope for development - Dissemination of the document	- Funding partners not identified, - The document is not used by authorities

3. The case of Burkina Faso

According to Mr Serge Theophile Balima, Burkina Faso was able to benefit from the experiences of other countries which had already launched their NCDPs. The consultation process was participatory and a national workshop was convened.

FORMULATION OF THE NCDP IN BURKINA FASO

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
- Participatory approach involving all development actors - Support from authorities and development partners	- Non respect of deadlines by the consultants - Transportation difficulties - Lack of time.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NCDP IN BURKINA FASO

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
Not yet started	

4. The case of Niger

According to Mr Daouda Diallo, Niger benefited from the experience of Mali and Guinea-Bissau in the formulation of its NCDP. A national survey was conducted and followed by a national workshop.

FORMULATION OF THE NCDP IN THE NIGER

ADVANTAGES	CONSTRAINTS
- Political will - Readiness of development partners - Participatory approach involving all development actors	

The presentations were followed by interesting discussions. A participant from Ghana described his experience, indicating that Ghana was very interested in drafting its own NCDP. A suggestion was made to set up a committee to discuss possible next steps.

After this session, working groups were set up and the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

ANNEX V – NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT: FAO'S NINE-YEAR EXPERIENCE IN FRANCOPHONE AND LUSOPHONE AFRICA: METHODOLOGY AND LESSONS LEARNED

Formulation of National Policies, Strategies and Sectoral Communication Strategies for Development

By Jean-Pierre Ilboudo
Specialist in Communication for Development, FAO, ROME

Definitions
A communication for development policy is a coherent structure for global action in the communication sector.

National communication policy is both a reference framework for bilateral and multilateral cooperation partners and an action guide for national development actors.

It defines general and specific objectives which should be closely linked to the major economic, political, cultural and social development options and orientations of the country.

It gives the current status of each tool or medium within the general context of the state of communication of the country and in relation to how it can support progress in all development sectors. This gives an overview of the assets of the information and communication systems and media and indicates the constraints of such systems. This allows for qualitative analyses and short-, medium- and long-term action plans.

A multimedia communication strategy supports the implementation of development projects and programmes. It is sectoral and is a vital part of any development project or programme. It should be prepared during the formulation phase of projects or programmes and should promote consultation and dialogue among all the partners and actors of the programme or project.

It should be based on participatory methodologies at all stages and should also indicate the most appropriate communication tools for implementation.

General Considerations on the Formulation of Communication Policies
Interdependence between Communication and the Other Development Sectors and Fields.

The basic issue is the integration of structured development communication to overall development programmes and objectives. Communication does not constitute a separate, independent sector but is integral to all aspects of development. It is therefore important to formulate communication policies that are not limited to mass media or information dissemination activities but which interact with all the media used by any given society.

It is important to acknowledge that communication policies go hand-in-hand with those formulated in other sectors - education, agriculture, livestock, culture and water resources - and that they should be designed to complement and engage with these sectors to promote social, agricultural, educational and other services.

For a New Approach to Communication Development
Communication policies should not be applied to issues relating to structures and material nor should they dictate the contents of communication media nor restrain freedom of expression.

Instead the focus should be on the consequences and role of the new paradigm in development. Communication was deployed in the former development model to disseminate information about the "benefits" of development and the "sacrifices" it entails, and to foster a desire to follow the leaders in the process.

It is now recognized that such a model benefits the privileged of any given community and that the gap between rich and poor is widening.

The new development model implies participation of people in national affairs and permits each citizen to affirm his or her personal or cultural identity. With this in mind, it is clear that an effective communication policy should provide each country with infrastructure, particularly telecommunications, media and communication tools, most adapted to its needs. This is especially true in developing countries.

Economic, industrial and technological development certainly plays an important role in raising living standards and should, therefore, be pursued and strengthened. But communication is a fundamental condition for qualitative development of any society and its democratization is essential to the new development being sought and to a quality of life based on more than the variety and quantity of goods produced.

Towards Human-Centred Communication
While it is true that communication alone does not generate development, it is also true that inadequate communication hinders development and popular participation. Most governments of developing countries are aware of that and people themselves are becoming more aware of the need for change.

This awareness is itself a powerful factor permitting them to organize and prepare themselves for change. This means that communication should not be

monopolized by professional media workers, but should be deployed by teachers and extension workers in agriculture and health who have a role to play in creating a climate of transparency and to remove fears sometimes aroused by the process of change.

A communication for development policy should mobilize national resources, strengthen infrastructural coordination, promote rational resource management (notably, technical and technological), help to satisfy the demands of the poor and redress the most obvious imbalances between rural and urban/rich and poor communities.

The Legal and Institutional Framework
The choice of institutional framework is central to the design and implementation of national communication policies for development. In fact a national law, usually of a constitutional nature, often governs the formulation of a policy. It is important to study these laws carefully during their formulation to ensure that they are pertinent and comprehensive.

It is also necessary to consider the institutional framework through which the policy is to be implemented. The factor that should govern the choice of a framework is inter-sectorality from a technical point of view, and commitment from a political point of view.

A Multimedia Approach Is Necessary
Regardless of the political systems and level of development, mass media institutions and technologies usually dominate communication structures. But it is important not to forget community media, both traditional and using modern technology, that provide opportunities for local expression at a human scale and often represent wider audiences than the more privileged and professional media.

This varied and widely accessible media, which includes community radio and the rural press, can promote participation in daily and local life by going beyond centralized communication. This does not mean that only non-professionals can contribute to the development of human-centred communication. The establishment of a core group of well-trained communicators that complements a creative community is as important as the mechanical aspects of the system.

Participation and Democracy
Communication policies are prerequisites in a process to reduce the numerous disparities that exist, such as global discrimination against women.

Communication policies and development strategies, as instruments to resolve the great problems of our time, should, first of all, permit the media of "information" to become media of "communication". As communication implies access, participation and exchange, several different media should find their place in the communication and democratization process.

It is at this level that the links between democracy and development are most apparent.

One way of ensuring that communities participate actively in a two-way communication process is to include them in programming and decision-making

processes - provided of course that the political will exists to achieve such participation in the first place.

Communication policies across the world can only be defined and prepared with the participation of all relevant national authorities. Any country wishing to implement such a policy should rely on its own resources. External support, although important, is an addition to rather than integral to self-development and internal resource mobilization.

Finally, national communication for development policies implemented by developing countries should take into consideration specific national realities.

Methodology for the Preparation of a National Communication for Development Policy (NCDP)

After these general points, it is necessary to consider methodology. The design of a national communication policy for development shall be preceded by the following methodological stages:

1. Identification of communication themes and sectors.

2. Preparation of a reference document for the national consultants mandated to conduct thematic and sectoral studies. This document should highlight the economic, political, social and cultural development options of the country.

3. Organization of a pedagogical training workshop for the national consultants to discuss objectives, concepts, components, methods, applications and, of course, the implementation of the policy. The bases for discussions are the sectoral studies of major development options, technical documents and the terms of reference of each consultant concerning quantitative and qualitative tools to be used in the field.

4. Thematic and sectoral studies, lasting at least two months and using participatory reseach methods.

5. Organization of regional meetings to identify rural information and communication needs. These meetings should involve local communities in the policy design by soliciting proposals. These meetings also elect regional or provincial representatives to participate in the national workshop.

6. Production of a summary document of the field studies conducted and the results of the regional meetings. This will be the core document for discussion at the national workshop and should highlight problems and issues concerning communication that are common to different development partners.

7. A national workshop to define the NCDP should be attended by representatives of: regional and provincial government, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs, CSOs, religious bodies, the media and bilateral and multilateral cooperation institutions. These should be involved at the start of the project to arouse their interest in the definition and implementation of such a policy and should be kept informed througout the project process. The workshop should combine plenary and group sessions, all of which should be carefully prepared.

8. A national communication for development action plan including budgeted sub-programmes to be submitted to cooperation partners for professional advice.

Methodological Lessons Learned

a) It is useful to organize regional meetings to identify and analyse community information and communication needs. The outcomes of these meetings will be validated at the national workshop to define the national communication for development policy.

b) It is necessary to rely on the basic documents relating to the political, economic, social and cultural options of the country as a national communication policy for development refers to the overall development framework.

c) Apart from brainstorming to formulate national communication for development policy, the workshop is also an information and training forum. A session on communication for development theory and practice helps to ensure that everyone is up-to-date with the latest developments.

d) The summary document should describe in detail the methodology and role of communication for development.

e) The sectoral study on the legal and statutory framework of communication for development should provide a detailed description of a range of institutional frameworks.

f) The composition of the working groups depends on how each country team has organized and the overall national development priorities.

In Mali participants organized themselves into five working groups:

Group I: Definition of NCDP objectives and missions
Group II: Definition of NCDP legal-administrative framework
Group III: Media and technological choices
Group IV: Training and communication for development
Group V: Guidelines for action and strategies

In Guinea-Bissau participants organized themselves into five working groups:

Group I: Mission, objectives and legal aspects of the national communication for development strategy
Group II: Needs and strategies of communication for development
Group III: Role and place of the media and educational communication aids
Group IV: Training in communication for development
Group V: Institutional framework for implementation

In the Central African Republic three commissions were set up:

Commission I: Legal and institutional framework of communication
Commission II: Public and private media in the development process
Commission III: Production of tools and training in communication for development

The national workshop in the CAR did not set up commission on needs and action plans as it felt that such issues could not be discussed outside those three commissions. It therefore recommended that needs and action plans be discussed and prepared in each commission. Such an approach proved beneficial to the participants as all of them had the opportunity to discuss the programming of the activities to be carried out.

In Cape Verde five working commissions were set up.

Commission I: The media and development
Commission II: The technical and technological aspect of communication
                  (telecoms and ICTs)
Commission III: Education and proximity communication tools
Commission IV: Training in communication for development
Commission V: Legal and institutional aspects of communication

In Burkina Faso three working commissions were set up.

Commission I: Training in communication for development and information needs
Commission II: The media, social communication and the ICTs
Commission III: Legal and institutional reform

The themes common to these working groups were:
• The media;
• Training;
• Legal and institutional framework for implementation.

The last point illustrates the need for policital will and commitment to implement a NCDP; it is not enough simply to formulate projects and prepare development strategies. Only then can communication resources be exploited for the development of the country.

Each country prepared short-, medium- and long-term plans.

Comparative approach of the national communication policies for development

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	COUNTRIES				
	Mali	Guinea Bissau	Central Africa Republic	Cape-Verde	Burkina Faso
To promote participation of communitiesamd dialogue.	X	X	X	X	X
To support initiatives of grassroot communities.	X	X	X	X	X
Exchange of information, know-how and technologies among the communities.	X	X	X	X	X
To disseminate information or introduce innovations/provision of social communication instruments.	X	X	X	X	X
To promote horizontal extension, supervision, training and communication systems.	X	X	X	X	X
To support national poverty reduction process and promotion of community development.	X	X	X	X	X
To support the decentralization process.	X	X	X		
To meet the information needs of different categories of people.	X				
To democratize access to major information channels through coordinated decentralized development of production and dissemination infrastructures.	X				
To establish feedback channels between communities and central decision makers.					
To favour the free expression of rural populations with regard to the questions that concern them (health education, FGM, the role of women, education and religion).	X				
To provide public authorities and executives with the means to further public information with regard to the right and duties of citizens.	X				

ANNEX VI – CLOSING ADDRESS
Mr Gérard Bernard, FAO Representative in Niger
Palais des Congrès, Niamey, 5th of April 2002

Your Excellency, the Minister for Transport and Communication,
Members of Government,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps and representatives of international and inter-African organizations,
Delegates of ECOWAS member countries,
Consultants and experts,

We have come to the end of the proceedings of this Regional Bilingual Workshop. I am pleased to observe that after five days of exchange, discussion and dialogue, you have come to the conclusions and recommendations, which the rapporteur of your workshop has just presented to us.

Please allow me to thank you for the work and to make the following comments and observations on the results of that work.

These results have enriched the methodological approach employed to date, for the definition and implementation of national communication for development policies.

You have been able to propose a certain number of steps: 11 specifically concern the definition of national communication policies and seven their implementation.

You have thus contributed to improving and establishing a model for the definition and implementation of communication policies based on eighteen methodological steps. The advantage of this model lies in the fact that it breaks down into a number of specific and detailed areas, the elements to be taken into account for the planning of such a policy and the implementation of action plans and sectoral communication strategies.

In the policy definition area, you deemed it useful to add the following new steps:

• The assertion of the political will of the government or state to develop and implement a national communication policy, as a prerequisite.

• The setting up of a national steering committee with the task of providing a strategic guidance and impulse at a national level.

• The drafting of a reference document to guide consultants when considering the major economic, social and cultural development options of a given environment.

• The giving of feedback on the results of the national workshop to the region and provinces, and to the structures and organizations representing civil society and development partners.

Three of the six steps concerning policy implementation are truly innovative:
- The reaffirmation of political will;
- The identification of human resources and the mobilization of financial resources for the operation of the coordination unit;
- The monitoring and evaluation of the national communication for development policy.

Indeed, it is still useful and urgent for development communication activities to be carried out and evaluated periodically.

I am glad to know that you have mastered the process for the definition of a multimedia communication strategy. It is now up to you to make sure that in-the-field programmes and projects benefit from such a process.

We must make sure that national communication policies translate into short, medium and long-term action plans, based on the strategic planning methodologies you have reviewed, discussed and internalized.

You may be sure that FAO will devote special attention to the recommendations you formulated and specifically addressed to it in the course of your workshop.

We will see to it that all your recommendations are forwarded to and approved by our partners, so that they may be implemented.

We shall continue to maintain a close contact with ECOWAS, so that together we may take into account the concerns and expectations you have expressed in your recommendations.

Your Excellency, Mr Minister,

FAO would like an ad hoc Commission to be set up within the United Nations System, charged with the task of supporting the efforts of the different national stakeholders for the implementation of operational plans, communication strategies, and action plans deriving from national communication for development policies.

CLOSING ADDRESS
Mr Mamane Sani Mallan Mahamane, Minister for Transport and Communication

Presidents of the Institutions of the Republic,
Distinguished Ministers,
National Members of Parliament,
Ambassadors,
Representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations,
General and Central Directors,
Mr Prefect, the President of the Urban Community of Niamey,
Mr Prefect of Diffa,
Secretaries General,
Honourable guests,
Dear participants,

After five days of intense work we have come to the end of this national workshop for the definition of the National Communication for Development Policy (NCDP).

Dear participants,

The lively and sometimes heated discussions, both in plenary and in the commissions, the mutually enriching and fruitful exchanges resulting from the contributions by the structures and institutions invited to this forum, the review of sectoral and thematic studies as well as the conclusions of regional workshops, have enabled you to better tackle the issue of communication for development. They have also allowed you to define the guidelines for a relevant policy and especially, to recommend short-, medium- and long-term actions for its implementation.

You have indeed conducted a realistic analysis of the state of the art of communication in our country. After having reviewed the strengths, constraints and weaknesses of the present system, your analysis pointed to the need for a new approach, more dynamic and especially more in line with the current political and technological, social, cultural and ethical plans.

Dear participants,

Your reflections on the progressive development of information and communication technologies, the promotion of a true development communication training, the redefinition of the contents of public and private media and finally, the enhancement of traditional communications tools and media, have resolutely and constantly aimed at meeting peoples' needs and expectations, and will effectively contribute to our country's fight against poverty.

Also, the pertinence of your conclusions and recommendations has confirmed the urgent need to put in place a national communication for development policy, such as that wished for by the Government and expected by the people of Niger.

Dear participants,

Allow me on behalf of his Excellency the Prime Minister, Head of the Government, to thank and congratulate all of the participants at this forum. Your availability and personal commitment have resulted in the drafting of a high quality document, which we can all be legitimately proud of, and which I am sure will enable us to better organize such a strategic sector as communication at the service of development.

I would like to make special mention here of our brothers and sisters from Burkina Faso and Mali, who have come to Niamey and have enriched our workshop with their experiences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our country has developed a framework of reference for the harmonious and rational definition of initiatives and communication actions aimed at supporting development and promoting the well being of the people of Niger.

The goal of this communication policy is to make our actions efficient, by limiting waste and duplication of development efforts, and avoiding distortions and other frequently observed inconsistencies.

Distinguished development partners,

Niger's option in the field of communication aims at promoting a sustainable community development, for and with the people.

Indeed, the national communication for development policy calls for a permanent social dialogue and the setting up of a system for the transfer and fruitful exchange of information. It intends to mobilize people to encourage their conscious participation in the improvement of their environment and living conditions.

However, a National Communication for Development Policy (NCDP) also requires operational technical material, appropriate performing and sufficient communication tools, and media that are accessible to the most backward and often isolated populations. In other words, access to information and communication media must be made more democratic, for a harmonious and decentralized development of production and broadcasting infrastructures, and the promotion of urban and rural telephony.

Finally, a NCDP requires agents who are familiar with and have been trained in the field of information and communication, and who are sufficiently familiar with new development communication trends.

This new communication approach applied to development is a challenge for us all; alas, meeting such a challenge will requires huge resources. The Government of Niger also hopes that all its bilateral and multilateral partners, institutions and NGOs will become involved in the actual implementation of the NDCP action plan by providing technical, financial and/or material support.

I would like to once again thank FAO and UNICEF for the valuable support that they have given to this project so far, and for the commitment they have taken here to support the implementation of the NCDP.

Dear participants in the workshop for the definition of the NCDP,

In providing our country with a document providing guidelines and serving as a reference in development communication, you have accomplished a historic goal of a national interest.

Let each one of us, in our respective areas of responsibility, be opinion leaders and agents committed to the actual implementation of the NCDP.

Thank you once again, and may I wish you all a safe journey back to your homes and countries. I hereby declare this national workshop for the definition of the National Communication for Development Policy closed.

Thank you for your attention.

ANNEX VII – THE CURRENT STATUS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION IN ECOWAS

**Adrienne Yande Diop,
Communication Director, ECOWAS**

Madam Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration,
The Minister for Transport and Communication,
The FAO Representative,
The UNDP Representative,
The UNICEF Representative,
The Representatives of international organizations,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish firstly to express my deepest thanks to FAO and UNDP for having organized this workshop on "The Methodologies for Designing and Implementing Multimedia Communication Strategies and National Communication for Development Policies". I sincerely hope that this first workshop will prove to be the beginning of a sustainable and beneficial collaboration between our organizations.

I am also extremely grateful to the Government of Niger for hosting this meeting, which is of great importance to ECOWAS. The Government of Niger's positive reaction to this endeavour is further proof of its commitment to the achievement of ECOWAS's objectives, and the economic integration of our sub-region.

The Executive Secretary's office is very pleased that this meeting is being held because it will undoubtedly complete and reinforce all that we are attempting to achieve at the community level. In fact, the subject that brings us together here constitutes one of our organization's principle concerns.

A brief summary of ECOWAS's objectives, mechanisms and activities will help to shed light on the situation, should this be necessary.

The Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 with the objective of promoting cooperation and integration for the creation of a West African economic union. The integration would ensure an improvement in the standard of living of the populations concerned, guarantee their economic growth, promote relations between the Member States and contribute to the progress and overall development of the African continent.

ECOWAS bases its activities upon the following fundamental principles:

- The equality and interdependence of Member States
- Solidarity and collective autonomy
- Inter-state cooperation
- Harmonizing policies and integrating programmes
- Transparency, economic and social justice
- Non-aggression among Member States
- Maintaining peace, stability and security
- Peaceful settlement of disputes
- The respect, promotion and protection of individual rights
- Promotion and consolidation of democracy

ECOWAS has created the following institutions to assist with its development:

- The Conference representing Heads of State and Government
- The Council of Ministers
- The Executive Secretariat
- The Community Parliament
- The Community Court of Justice
- The Economic and Social Council (to be created)
- The ECOWAS Investment and Development Bank (BIDC)
- The ECOWAS Regional Development Fund (FRDC)
- The ECOWAS Regional Investment Bank (BIDC)
- The West African Monetary Agency (AMAO)
- The West African Monetary Institute (IMAO)
- The West African Health Organization (OOAS)
- The Special Committees.

ECOWAS has attained achievements in the following areas:

- Immigration, commerce and customs
- Transport and telecommunications
- Monetary and financial affairs
- Agriculture and the environment
- Industry and energy
- Social and cultural affairs
- Information and communication
- Maintaining peace and security

As you can see, development in its widest sense is at the very centre of our activities. All the sectors that contribute to the development of a country are the object of the ECOWAS's programmes and specific projects and an effective communication policy should be established to assist in development and consolidate what has already been attained.

There is clearly no need to further justify the vital role played by communication in all development activities.

Creation of the Information Department
In 1990, due to inadequate information concerning ECOWAS, and the Member States' limited knowledge of its organization, the ECOWAS Information Division was transformed into the Information Department. In 2000 the Secretariat was restructured and became the Communication Department; it was given a broader mission to include major developments in the area of new technologies in Information and Communication.

The mission of the Information Department is to promote ECOWAS as an organization and to highlight its activities and Programmes. An important part of this mission is to make the organization known to West African citizens, regional and international organizations, our partners, economic operators and the public in general.

In order to achieve these goals, the Information Department makes use of the classical means of communication and public relations, namely, the media, press conferences, information and awareness-raising seminars, publications,

documentaries, audiovisual productions, publicity, websites, and any other suitable activities.

Texts

In 1990, ECOWAS formulated an Information Policy and Programme and four years later, in 1994, the sub-regional organization created a Priority Action Programme with regard to information. The objective of this Programme was to eliminate the obstacles that were hindering integration efforts by creating instruments for wider participation and the appropriation of integration projects by the populations of the Member States. In view of the inherent difficulties encountered in implementing this programme and the modest results achieved, a new ECOWAS Information and Communication Policy was adopted in December 2000 by the Information and Communication Ministers of our Member States.

This policy reaffirms that the lack of knowledge of ECOWAS's objectives, programmes and activities on the part of the populations concerned constitutes one of the major obstacles hindering ECOWAS's integration efforts. The goal of the new policy therefore is to increase the dissemination of information with regard to the ECOWAS's objectives and achievements and to make West African citizens more aware of what their organization is achieving, in order to reinforce their feeling of belonging to the community and encourage them to participate more actively in the integration process. The projects undertaken would therefore be more likely to succeed.

The principle elements of the New Information and Communication Policy are:

* The creation of Information and Documentation Centres
* The training of journalists
* Publications
* The creation of an ECOWAS radio and television station
* Cooperation with other national, regional or continental information agencies
* The creation of a press fund
* The creation of an ECOWAS prize in journalism
* The participation of young people, women and other members of society

In order to reaffirm their support of freedom of the press and pluralism with regard to information, in December 2000 the ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments adopted a Declaration of Principles concerning the practice of journalism, the protection of the profession and the role played by media specialists in the West African integration process.

Activities

The Communication Department undertook a number of activities within the framework of its mission, including:

* Information and awareness-raising seminars for journalists in the sub-region on the importance of economic integration
* The organization of a forum on the role of the media in the prevention and management of conflicts

- Publications (the West Africa Bulletin, ECOWAS in brief, an information brochure)
- Documentaries on ECOWAS, its achievements and perspectives
- Publicity documents (audiovisual) in order to promote ECOWAS activities, particularly the free circulation of persons and goods.

The West African media context

The 1980s was marked by an unprecedented development of information means. The consolidation of democratic values in West Africa and political pluralism contributed to a great increase in books published and the accelerated creation of new radio and television stations. Political pluralism was followed by media pluralism, in particular by the growth of private institutions.

Although this boom was characterized by media and information diversification and was more balanced at the national level, it had very little impact with regard to covering news at the regional level. Coverage of the events in the countries of the sub-region is still dominated by the international media and then taken up at the national level. Generally speaking, news occurring in neighbouring countries, even that of a most immediate nature, is always presented from an outside point of view. The result is that the same uniform news reports are produced by the "large networks" and then broadcast in all the countries in the region. The financial means available to local organs of information do not allow them to employ their own correspondents in all the countries in the sub-region, nor are they able to send special correspondents when important events take place. The time has come for African journalists to begin producing information regarding West Africa.

Projects and Perspectives

In order to compensate for these inadequacies ECOWAS would like to collaborate with certain institutions, including FAO, in organizing training and specific seminars on a regular basis for West African journalists on subjects of common interest. The creation of a network of journalists who are specialised in covering agricultural questions would be extremely useful for the sub-region, given what is at stake in areas such as agricultural development, self-sufficiency and food security. This initiative would be supported by the creation of a data bank on agriculture and agricultural information in ECOWAS countries.

ECOWAS will also support and participate in the implementation of certain projects including:

- Creating a network of journalists who have special expertise in economic integration issues
- The organization of training seminars dealing with certain specific subjects for journalists
- The opening of information and documentation centres in each Member State
- The creation of an audiovisual production studio at ECOWAS headquarters
- The creation of an ECOWAS/West African radio station
- The creation of an ECOWAS/West African television station
- The launching of a magazine dealing with economic, political and social information intended for a sub-regional and continental reading audience.

Conclusion

Although the West African media landscape has undergone a metamorphosis over the past ten years, there are still a number of important obstacles to be overcome. The sector's juridical framework and institutions need to be reorganized in most ECOWAS countries. It is clear that the many West African journalists have not been able to improve their professional skills because of their limited working environment - their salaries, working conditions and national political and economic contexts.

ECOWAS's objectives remain to integrate the populations and economies of its members, harmonizing their policies and organizational structures and promoting cooperation to guarantee economic growth. This is an ambitious programme, in which communication has a fundamental role. Communicators and journalists are those best placed to help close the gaps between wealthy populations and those without resources because mass media is ideal for transmitting messages and reports from one country to another. The media are also indispensable for communicating information about activities and projects and the realities of their countries, peoples or institutions.

The media is realigning social links. New forms of solidarity have appeared since the emergence of the global village. The people of West Africa should not miss out on this opportunity to rewrite their histories and to work together for a common good.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

ANNEX VIII – LIST AND DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE WORKSHOP

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