



**Building an Effective Advocacy Movement for Sustainable and Equitable
Agricultural Development in Africa**

Agricultural Policy Making in Mali

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Introduction

Mali is divided into 8 regions, 1 District (capital city Bamako), 49 administrative units (“Cercles”) and 703 municipalities. It has a Saharan climate in the North, Sahelian in the centre and Sudanese in the South. Annual rainfall varies from less than 200mm in the North to more than 1,100mm in the South. According to the latest census which took place in 1997, it has a population of 12 million. Its neighbouring countries are Algeria to the North, Mauritania to the West, Senegal to the South-West, Niger to the East, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso to the South. The major rivers are the Niger and Senegal.

The economy of Mali is based mainly on agriculture and almost 75% of the working population is engaged in the sector. Agriculture contributes 40% to the GDP and provides nearly 30% of export revenues. However, due to its rainfall patterns, it is subject to climatic variations despite significant efforts to expand land under irrigation which has grown to 5,500ha over the last ten years.

In this sector, 95% (approximately 694,560 units) of the farms are run on the basis of smallholder family farming. The smallholders produce the majority of agricultural output in terms of both subsistence and exports. The main subsistence crops include millet, rice, sorghum and maize. Groundnuts, cotton and sugar cane are grown for export purposes. Apart from those in irrigated areas (mainly the Ségou area) and rice growing areas, most of the family farms are dependent on rainfall, which is very unpredictable. It is important to note that despite the efforts of the Malian State and some national and international organisations, smallholder farming remains weak and constrained in terms of cereal productivity in Mali. The smallholder sector cannot produce a cereal surplus in order to avert regular food shortages. There are various causes of this weakness. However, the main reason is the fact that the Government of Mali (GoMal) has in the past decades emphasised an export-led agricultural model which has prioritised cash crops such as cotton, with the objective of generating foreign currency at the expense of food crops for domestic consumption. This has resulted in a significant reduction of arable land devoted to cereal crops. As a result, most of the smallholder farms have been converted towards commercial crop production. Furthermore, the insertion of smallholder cash crop agriculture into

international trade, especially commodity markets mediated by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has served to further undermine the sustainability of the sector. In recent times cotton prices have declined due to an increase in supply from bigger producers such as India. These developments have constrained the expected economic take-off in the rural areas.

The introduction of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986 saw the state gradually withdraw from the agricultural sector, as it had in other African countries. These international and national level measures combined to weaken the agricultural production potential of family farms. Indeed, family farms have often been left to their own devices. A lack of technical assistance, of inputs and of potential markets has been noted. Nevertheless, the rural world in Mali has remained very dynamic since the national conference of smallholders and other major meetings in 1992. The different factors affecting the agricultural sector in general, and family farming in particular, require the development of a database that is adapted to the new needs for planning of their development.

Research Context and Methodology

After a number of decades of neglect, a strong political will is emerging on the part of government, to introduce reforms that will enable smallholder agriculture to be more efficient and eventually become the engine for the growth and sustainable development of the country. The smallholder sector has evolved from the use of basic tools such as hoes (“daba”). It is currently in a semi-modern phase where equipment such as the plough, seed drill, tractor, harrow and the hulling machine have been introduced. Despite the recent policy attention, agriculture remains weakly organised, especially when the conditions for the attainment of food security and sovereignty are considered (see the sub-sections that follow).

This study is based on participatory methods of research which included focus group discussions and key informant interviews. This allowed us to better target actors; to further expand exchanges and debates, and to better refine the results. The actual research work included (i) information gathering and production of a guide to collecting basic data, (ii) design of a directory including civil society organisations, state departments and other actors involved in promoting

agriculture in Mali¹, (iii) selection of areas for on-the-ground investigation. At regional level, we produced a typology of family farming areas depending on the most common agricultural practices. As a result, the focus was on 3 regions with agricultural potential, namely: (a) Ségou: Food crops (millet, rice, sorghum), (b) Sikasso: Cotton and food crops (millet, rice, sorghum, maize), (c) Koulikoro: Food crops (millet, rice, sorghum, maize) and cotton.

These areas were selected in order to have a better understanding of the challenges that smallholder systems have to contend with. Data on networks and the agricultural associations of civil society organisations was collected in and around Bamako, where most civil society organisations (CNOP, AOPP, IRPAD, APCAM) are based. Data was also collected from local CSOs such as Farafasisoo, Sexagone, regional AOPP in Sikasso, Ségou and Koulikoro, associations of seed and rice producers; and regional Chambers of Agriculture in Sikasso, Ségou and Koulikoro. This involved large scale work on the ground in the three agricultural regions targeted. Though most local CSOs have their apex bodies / head offices or networks in the Bamako, they have specific local missions and visions based on local conditions and grievances.

The Smallholder Sector in Mali

Smallholder family farms are characterised by the following:

Demographic Characteristics of Smallholder Farmers

In Mali, family farms are mostly headed by men (see table below) with low levels of literacy. The majority have not gone beyond primary school level. The lack of education is a real handicap to the development of agriculture, in terms of access and adaptation to new technologies. The table below also shows the difference between the number of male-headed and female-headed farms (780,559 versus 24,635) or 96.9% against 3.1%. It is the same in all regions in Mali.

¹ A separate database of organisations working on smallholder agriculture issues in Mali is available at www.trustafrica.org

Table 1: Geographic distribution of farms per region and according to gender

Regions	Male heads		Female heads		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Kayes	97,873	95.8	4,245	4.2	102,118
Koulikoro	122,495	97.9	2,678	2.1	125,173
Sikasso	96,750	99.0	975	1.0	97,725
Ségou	116,185	98.2	2,109	1.8	118,294
Mopti	153,424	95.8	6,645	4.2	160,069
Tombouctou	87,129	96.0	3,635	4.0	90,764
Gao	72,469	96.4	2,696	3.6	75,165
Kidal	26,647	97.4	699	2.6	27,346
Bamako	7,587	88.8	953	11.2	8,540
Total	780,559	96.9	24,635	3.1	805,194

Source: Agricultural General Census (RGA-2004-2005)

Social Organisation of Smallholder Systems

A close link exists between the structure of the household activities and the deployment of capital within smallholder systems. This is an important relationship that impacts how decisions are made regarding the choice of production types, the planning and distribution of resources such as labour, capital, land management and inheritance (Belière et al., 2002).

In terms of the social organisation of labor, unpaid family labor is usually used, although there is an increasing tendency to use hired non-family labor in the cash crop growing areas. In socio-economic terms, the emerging trend suggests that cash crops such as cotton and rice are being grown on larger farms which depend on non-family hired labour whilst the food-crop growing areas depend on un-paid family labour. Table 2 below provides a comparison between family farming and agri business; it analyses the role of social relations in production, type of access to land and also the relationship with the market.

Table 2 below shows the link between economic, social and cultural dimensions, and the many objectives pursued while striking a balance between individual and collective aspirations. This as well as risk management through the diversification of income sources, determines livelihood opportunities.

Table 2: Comparison between family farming and commercial agriculture

Characteristics	Family farming	Agri-business
Role of family-based labour	Important	Poor or nil
Intra-community- ties	Close: based on solidarity and mutual help between household and other members of community	Weak: often lack of ties between entrepreneur and local community
Objectives	Consumption, storage and sale	Sale, purchase and consumption
Diversification	High : to minimise risks	Low : for certain crops or activities only
Flexibility	High	High
Size	Small : 5 – 10 ha	High : can be more than 100ha
Degree of connection to market	Low : but becoming important	High
Access to land	Inherited and through other mechanisms	Bought

Source: Toulmin & Guèye, 2003

Diversified Income Activities

This research indicates that diversification into non-farm activities leads to unfair marginalisation of agricultural activities. For instance, the region of Sikasso which is known as the breadbasket of Mali is highly auriferous. To date mining activities have been prioritised at the expense of smallholder agriculture despite the potential for very high levels of agricultural production. In fact, agricultural production has been seriously compromised in the last two years. Increasing levels of labour previously engaged on the smallholder farms have been recruited into the more lucrative mining sector.

Discriminatory Land Acquisition and Allocation Methods

Currently, most of the land is held under customary tenure which only allocates land to lineage members. Although this practice ensures security of tenure for lineage members, it also excludes outsiders with a genuine need for land who may have the necessary skills to efficiently utilise the land.

Disengagement of the State from Agriculture

The introduction of the SAP led to the withdrawal of the state from development sectors such as agriculture. The programme was incoherent in its formulation and its implementation occurred in an unfavourable socio-political context, leading to significant economic and financial problems in the country. The economic performance of SAP has not been satisfactory. In fact, most indicators have been below the targeted goals and far removed from the expected development trends. Soon after the first phase of SAP, the GoMal introduced another program called the *consolidated adjustment program*. Its objectives were to enable Mali to attain a sustainable economic growth rate which is compatible with steady improvement of the financial situation and a viable position on the balance of payments. A series of measures were taken towards the achievement of these goals which have been repeated in the economic policy framework document for 1992-1995. The results that were achieved following the second programme did not match the initial objectives of the programme (Project performance appraisal report [REPP], August 24, 1998).

The consolidated adjustment programme has had a negative impact on the agricultural sector, especially the smallholder sector. This is due to the reduction of supervisory staff through voluntary retirement; privatisation of support structures such as extension services, state-owned banks, (BNDA), supervisory services (CMDT, ON, etc.), inputs supply services (ODR) and marketing services (OPAM, etc.).

The disengagement of the state is largely demonstrated by its abdication from agricultural financing and decentralisation of support functions without allocating sufficient resources to the decentralised institutions. Decentralised support functions include: training programmes, dissemination, research, loans and irrigation. In addition, although the design of agricultural policies remains an exclusive responsibility of the national level, most of the financing is being

done by foreign partners in partnership with the state. The central government has retained the responsibility of financing the procurement of some inputs (especially cash crops) and the determination of the overall agricultural policy, but this is highly inadequate given the challenges that the sector faces.

As already noted above, regarding the intervention of international financial institutions such as the IMF, combined with the emerging impacts and consequences of the privatisation policy, the smallholder is bound to be negatively affected under this policy trajectory. Besides input procurement, the state is currently limited to research and dissemination. Other partners include the private sector and NGOs in terms of training. What is even more striking is the fact that the public sector does not play any significant role in the supply of loans, inputs and irrigation. Loans are provided by the private sector and the association of producers, while irrigation is in the hands of the private sector, NGOs, producers and villages. The recently introduced decentralisation policy, supposedly the solution to development challenges, remains incoherently organised and inadequately supported to respond to the myriad of challenges confronting smallholder agriculture.

Limited access to agricultural innovations

Smallholders' access to agricultural innovations has been made particularly difficult, if not impossible, by the original version of structural adjustment policies. Firstly, the level of austerity required by the international financial institutions has led to the marginalization of state departments responsible for research and development (R & D). Smallholder systems have been unable to find the means to respond to the challenges associated with the removal of state support to research and development. The paradox is: at a time when the liberalisation of trade exchanges and globalisation in general are prevailing, and when producers have no access to new innovations such as low cost tools, they are required to increase levels of productivity and competitiveness and address sustainability challenges in order to develop.

Climate Variations

Agricultural output in Mali is affected by climatic variations and by the flooding of the Niger River and its tributaries. Only the Segou region has viable irrigation. The rest of the country depends upon rain fed agriculture. This presents a considerable challenge regarding forecasts in

terms of yield, production levels and, generally, the fight against household food shortages. In addition, deforestation is increasingly affecting the fertile lands in arid or semi-arid areas such as Mopti, Ségou, Koulikoro and Kayes.

Expansion of the Urban into the Rural Areas

The phenomenon of “rural compounds” is gaining ground in Mali, as in most countries of the sub-region. It relates to the acquisition of large tracts of mainly agricultural lands by the urban based elites for eventual conversion into luxury housing plots. The vicinity of all major cities and even medium-sized ones in Mali is undergoing large scale urbanisation. Small landholdings lying within 40 km up to 70 km from the big cities such as Bamako, Ségou, Sikasso, Koutiala face the threat of conversion into urban settlements. The local populations engaged in farming have been compelled to sell their farms cheaply, either due to pressures put on them or lack of money. This phenomenon has impacted negatively on food security in rural areas that border big cities.

Household Food Security in Relation To Family Farming

Approximately 11% of households in Mali show a low level of food consumption; 17% reveal a border line position, while 72% register an acceptable level. Most of the differences follow a regional pattern; the proportion of households with a low level of food consumption is higher in Kidal and Timbuktu (41% and 19% respectively) but lower in Sikasso (8%) and Koulikoro (7%). When examined according to people’s life-style, food insecurity affects 50% of households under the recession crops stratum, 32% under the agro-onion stratum, and 29% under the Pastoralist stratum or category.

A high level of food insecurity has been noticed among smallholders in cotton and fruit growing areas. This is probably due to financial problems that negatively affect households’ access to consumption of animal proteins and milk products.

Table 3: Classification of small farmers in terms of food insecurity

Production system	Type of consumption			
	Level of consumption	Threshold level	Acceptable level	Total
Cotton	18.3	23.3	58.3	100.0
Cotton and fruit	11.1	20.0	68.9	100.0
Livestock	3.8	21.7	74.5	100.0
Onions	0	26.7	73.3	100.0
Pastoralists	0	3.3	96.7	100.0
Agro-rente	9.2	9.2	81.6	100.0
Culture de décrue	0	6.7	93.3	100.0
Pastoralists	0	8.3	91.7	100.0
Irrigated rice	6.7	3.3	90.0	100.0
(Subsidized rice)	1.1	4.4	94.4	100.0

Source: Report on the survey of EWS (Early Warning System) post-crop trial sites for 2008-2009.

An Analysis of the Role of the Government in Promoting Smallholder Farming

The GoMal supports the smallholder sector at different levels. The sub-sections below briefly describe some of the measures recently undertaken by the GoMal to strengthen the smallholder sector.

Economic development driven by family farming

Over the last decades, the Malian government embarked on promoting rapid agricultural development with the aim of promoting sustainable, modern and competitive agriculture, resting mainly on identified family farms. Food security is sought by maximising the agro-ecological potential and local agricultural know-how and through the creation of an environment leading to the promotion of a structured agricultural sector.

Such a policy seeks to ensure food security and turn the agricultural sector into an engine for the national economy and a means of ensuring the population's well-being. The policy rests on a full commitment to the modernisation of the smallholder sector and agricultural entrepreneurship. It is expected that this will contribute to an agro-industrial sector which is structured, competitive and integrated into the sub-regional and international economy. The Agricultural Orientation Act

(LAO) aims at the promotion of women and men who depend on the agricultural sector, on an equitable footing, especially between the rural and urban areas.

Land policy

The current land policy aims to protect farms and farmers, promote public and private investment, promote equitable access to land-based resources, and facilitate sustainable management of such resources. As a result, the Malian government in cooperation with local authorities and the Chamber of Agriculture, has identified practices related to access to land, based on regions and agro-ecological or socio-cultural areas. Besides formally confirming the existence and scope of individual and collective rights on lands, the operation has been validated by the parties concerned. Traditional rights are acknowledged in terms defined under legal provisions. A committee made up of representatives of all the stakeholders has been set up. It has been provided with a roadmap for the elaboration of land laws in keeping with the LAO. The new laws will supersede all the previous provisions concerning land.

Improved Access to inputs and agricultural supplies

In January 2008, the Government initiated a program aimed at boosting the production of a variety called “**nerica rice**”, all over the country. The program relates mainly to small farmers. In this context, the Government has given smallholders grants to buy fertilisers and seeds. This was decided by virtue of an order of the Council of Ministers. Furthermore, the Government has decreed that, starting from the year 2010, the subsidy will be extended to maize and cotton. Under the subsidy, smallholders pay a third of the going price for various inputs, namely NPK, DAP and Urea.

Civil Society Organisations and the Smallholder Sector

In Mali, the major civil society organisations involved in the promotion of the smallholder sector are in general apex organisations or networks. The sub-sections that follow use case study analysis to examine the manner in which civil society organisations represent the interests of smallholder organisations. Two organisations, the Assembly of Mali’s chamber of Agriculture (APCAM) and the National Coordination of Farmers’ Organisations are discussed in more detail below.

The Assembly of Mali's Chambers of Agriculture (APCAM)

APCAM was established in 1987 after the President of Mali called for a forum to discuss issues related to agriculture through a 'State of the Nation Address'. It was constituted under the Law N°88-56/AN-RM of 05 April 1988 and under order N°133 of 19 May 1988. It is represented at local, regional, and national level. APCAM is an apex organisation that includes professionals from the cattle-breeding, fishing and forestry sub-sectors. Each structure has legal status and financial autonomy.

APCAM contributes to the formulation of rural development policies and programs suitable for the rural populations. It works closely with the public authorities (national and local levels) and all other partners involved in rural development, to solve problems related to agriculture in general and the smallholder sector in particular. One of its objectives is to give farmers and their professional organisations the support and capacities necessary to ensure their own development.

To achieve its goals, APCAM redesigned its structures on the basis of the recommendations of the "EtatsGénéraux" held in December 1991 in response to the political changes that had occurred in Mali in March 1991. These changes entailed the introduction of a multi-party democracy, decentralisation, state withdrawal and empowerment of the civil society.

The new context allowed APCAM to adopt a strategy of intervention based on its decentralized structures and also to take advantage of a series of changes, in particular:

- (i) the new responsibility for capacity building and support/counseling in favor of agricultural producers,
- (ii) the introduction of an electoral assembly representing the Agricultural Professional Organisations (APO);
- (iii) the introduction of a sustainable resources allocation mechanism in order to allow autonomy and ensure effectiveness of the official government agency tasked with interfacing with the non-state chambers of different sectors;
- (iv) enhancing the public character of the institution.

Since its creation, APCAM and its subordinate structures have undertaken research projects and studies on how to optimise utilisation of the income of the producers of cotton, rice and other cash crops, through productive value addition investments. Currently, it is focused on identifying

strategies for increasing production and productivity of crops and is in the process of ensuring sustainable preservation of the environment.

In the meantime, APCAM has joined several sub-regional and international organisations where it is represented by its President. These are: (i) the West African Network of Chambers of Agriculture (RECAO), (ii) the Managing Committee of the Regional Interface Project between West African States Chambers of Agriculture (PRIECA AO), (iii) the African Farmers Committee affiliated to the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (FIPA), (iv) the Managing Committee of the Platform for Rural Development and Food Security in Central and West Africa (HUB), (v) the Association of African Cotton Producers (APROCA), (vi) the Standing Committee for Agriculture for Developing Countries within FIPA and, finally, (vii) the Management Committee of MITSOWA (Agricultural Market Information System including ECOWAS countries) that is currently being funded by USAID.

APCAM has, through a combination of advocacy and networking, positioned itself as an important partner for the GoMal and donors. It is consulted on most of the national and regional agricultural policy issues and processes, ranging from farming lease reforms to the elaboration of rules and regulation for cooperatives. Its nine regional chambers also act as mediator of disputes between private operators (Bingen, 2003). Moreover, APCAM acts as an interface between the donors, the government and the private stakeholders, playing the role of a planning and implementation agency for projects financed by international funding agencies.

The organisation has established a hierarchy of structures, from the village to the national level. These structures enable it to get closer to the rural stakeholders and also to have representation in policy platforms. However, elected bodies exist only at regional and national levels. These bodies act as the regional consular assembly and the office for the RCA (Regional Chambers of Agriculture), as well as the national consular assembly and the APCAM office.

At national level, there is a coordinating body called the Permanent Assembly of Chambers of Agriculture of Mali (APCAM) hosting an office chaired by a president. At regional level, the Regional Chamber of Agriculture is chaired by a president and run by a general secretariat. There is also a regional consular assembly composed of 17 to 29 elected members, among whom

there are five (5) representatives of agriculture professional organisations of regional level, plus an office and working commissions.

At local level, the network of Chambers of Agriculture comprises three elected members per Administrative Unit or “Cercle” and includes farmers, herdsmen, fishermen and foresters. APCAM has produced a number of reports and studies based on field studies. It recently developed reports on activities implemented by certain organisations, especially on trade in cereals. It plans to produce a number of reports assessing the agricultural situation and also an analysis of the overall contribution of the smallholder sector to the national economy.

National Coordination of Farmers’ Organisations (NCFO)

The head office of NCFO is in Bamako but it is represented at local and regional levels by its various member organisations. It is a network of nine, mostly smallholder organisations. It was created in the aftermath of the ground-breaking meeting of Farmers’ Organisations (FOs) of Mali known as “large FOs”, held in Ségou in 1996. The meeting acknowledged the need to create a framework for the integration of the FOs’ concerns into a unified strategy and the need to create a common platform for effective representation. Such a platform would contribute towards reinforcing lobbying and advocacy actions undertaken by single FOs.

Further discussions took place between the “large FOs’ of Mali soon after the creation of the Network of the West African Farmers and Producers Organisations in Cotonou in July 2000. These discussions resulted in the organisation of a workshop in January 2002, during which the successes, failures, potential hindrances and prospects of FOs were discussed. The platform was also used to develop common strategies (institutional, organisational, communicational) and also to agree on priority actions towards the establishment of an aggregating superstructure.

The NCFO was eventually created during a workshop held on the 20th and 21st of December 2002. The meeting agreed on the structure of the operational bodies, resources, objectives and action plan. The process of registration was completed in 2003. The members of NCFO are the Association of Farmers Professional Organisations (AFPO), the Association of Fishermen Residing in Mali (AFRIM), the Platform for Farmers in the Sahel, the Federation of the Organisations of Banana Producers (FOBP), the National Committee of Users of Research Outcomes (CNU), the National Federation of Cattle and Meat industries (FEBEV), the National

Union of the Cooperatives of Planters and Market gardeners (UNCPM), the Assembly of Farmers' Trade Unions, the Federation of Rural Women (FFR) and the National Federation of Rural Young people (FENAJER).

The NCFO demands the inclusion of the member Farmers' Organisations in policy processes and platforms focused on national development. It claims that smallholders deserve to be engaged in the formulation of national development policies. It has in the past years been engaged in the creation of 'a credible national movement 'which should contribute towards a more sustainable smallholder sector that is adequately integrated within local regional, national and international development processes'. In order to advance its material requirements and interests, NCFO utilises diverse meetings and dialogues between farmers; studies and consults on major issues; provides capacity building sessions for leaders; organizes workshops and forums and participates in lobbying.

Some of the NCFO's activities include the following:

- Settling leadership disputes and reducing possibilities of duplication of representation of smallholder communities by farmers' organisations (FOs) and encouraging farmer organisations to act as a single legitimate interlocutor in dealing with the Government and other development stakeholders,
- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and missions of the different types of structures acting in the circles of the FOs, in particular the Chamber of Agriculture,
- Make the FOs indispensable, based on their strong capacity of anticipation and contribution to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of agriculture policies, of development projects and programs,
- Create a reliable channel of information between the grassroots and the top and
- Set up a strong farmers' advocacy hub in Mali and in the sub region.

As already mentioned, the NCFO includes FOs with national and/or regional powers. In order to improve effectiveness, it is structured as follows: a General Assembly, a Board of Directors, a National Executive committee of 15 members, an Inspection committee of 3 members, 3

working commissions and a technical support cell. A Coordinating committee ensures continuity of action and is composed of 10 representatives from each large FO. It is envisaged that regional coordination structures will be gradually installed.

To date, the organisation has been consulted and participated actively in the development of the Agriculture Orientation Act (LOA). It also independently developed strategy papers on (i) the implementation of the agricultural orientation act, (ii) smallholder food security and (iii) women's access to land. It also made inputs into the Mali National Agriculture Sector Investment Program (PNSIAA). Some of its achievements include the mobilisation against the introduction of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), crops and food in Mali, and participation in the Global Forum on Food Sovereignty. Social mobilisation around the GMOs issue (Genetically Modified Organisms) and request for a moratorium on participation in the Global forum on food sovereignty and the African forum on food security.

Conclusion

The discussion above has shown that the disengagement of the state from the agricultural sector through “the imposition” of international financial institutions has negatively impacted the development of family farms. Other factors constraining the development of the smallholder sector include low literacy levels among the heads of the family farms, diversification into farm based income generating projects, an increase in the acquisition of land neighbouring smallholder areas and difficult access to agricultural technological innovations. More recently, an increase in climate variability has worsened the already precarious situation of family farms. Furthermore, there are challenges in the implementation of agricultural policies and it is imperative that the GoMal improves the institutional arrangements behind its decentralisation programme, to address the constraints regarding access to inputs, extension services and markets.

Although the Agriculture Orientation Act will potentially bring about positive changes there is need to consider other paths for the development of smallholder farms so that they can fit in the framework of the CAADP objectives. This is especially true of the goal to achieve a growth rate of 6%. Despite the mushrooming of different civil society-based networks and organisations, their impact on smallholder agriculture has been very limited. Most of these organisations depend on unreliable external financing whilst some also receive small grants from the state.

Such dependency affects their programming autonomy and the nature of their relationship with the state. Furthermore, this study found that although many of the organisations that were analysed state their main objective as the defense of the interests of smallholder agriculture, they do not have funds budgeted towards the actual advocacy/lobbying. This partially explains why they have mostly focused on producing reference documents to be used as advocacy/lobbying handbooks. These organisations also face a capacity constraint, most of the staff are often unaware of new technologies and techniques used for advocacy/lobbying.

It is important to note that the CAADP in Mali is being introduced in a context where economic liberalisation has been under way since 1982. As such, government on its own does not have the capacity to coordinate policy planning to achieve 6% growth, without the input of the private sector and other non-state actors. Indeed, as of 2002, the GoMal had expressed its political will regarding withdrawal from interventionist policy and programme implementation. The aim then was to transfer a certain number of powers to private partners who showed a higher level of organisation. Except for smallholder farms around the cotton zones commonly called CMDT zones (Malian Company for the Development of Textiles), the Malian State stopped regulating the prices and the marketing of cereals, fertilisers and machinery (Noray et al., 2007). As a result, private investment has been stimulated where there is potential for an increase in agricultural trade. (Bingen, 2003).

The introduction of the CAADP framework has influenced the GoMal to consider diversification of agriculture beyond concentration with the cotton sub-sector. Already there have been positive developments from this policy shift. From 2005 to 2006, the Malian State allocated about 12% of the national budget to agriculture. Apart from the cotton and the rice sub-sectors, other agricultural sub-sectors such as dry cereals (millet, maize, sorghum, etc.) remain highly underdeveloped and far below the envisaged 6% growth rate. Other factors limiting the realisation of the 6% growth rate include climate variations, liberalisation of the input sector and the lack of organisation of local and sub-regional markets.

It is critical for the GoMal to develop a more coherent approach regarding agricultural diversification and the existing constraints faced by the smallholders. The Government and all the other partners to agricultural development should consider the actual needs of farmers and set up a less constraining framework for the sector. For instance, most of the interviewed

smallholders interviewed during the course of this study did not know about the CAADP, despite the fact that it has already been integrated into the Program for Agricultural Competitiveness and Diversification (PCDA). This suggests lack of consultation on the part of government.

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