



**COUNTRY FACT SHEET ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE POLICY TRENDS**

**Socio-economic context and role of agriculture**

The Republic of Mali is a low-income, food-deficit country in the Sahel region of West Africa with a population growth rate of 3.6 percent.<sup>1</sup> The country experienced a slow-down in economic activity in 2015, with real gross domestic product (GDP) increasing an estimated 5.2 percent (compared with 5.8 percent in 2014) due to poor agricultural sector performance (growth of only 3.9 percent, down from 14.8 percent in 2014). Agriculture accounts for more than 35 percent of GDP and 80 percent of livelihoods.

Mali's economy is primarily based on agriculture and agropastoralism. The country's adverse climatic conditions, along with its political and institutional instability, threaten key sectors of agriculture and health. Mali consists of two main regions (North and South), each with different conditions for agricultural production. The North is the region most challenged by drought, desertification and population migration.

Selected indicators		2007	2011	2015	
SOCIO-ECONOMIC	GDP (current billion US\$) *	8.1	12.9	13.1	
	GDP per capita (current US\$) *	592.0	829.8	744.3	
	Agricultural value added (% of GDP) *	34.4	37.6	40.3 (2014)	
	Agricultural value added (annual % growth)*	(average 2007-2015)		11.5	
		(2015)		8.6	
	Total population (thousand)	13 759	15 639	17 599	
	Rural population (% of total)	61.3	58.2	55.5	
	Agricultural labour force (% of total labour force)	76.8	74.3	73	
Human Development Index **	(2015)		0.419 (ranking 179)		
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION & TRADE	Per capita cultivated land (ha)	0.43	0.44 (2012)	0.38 (2014)	
	Area equipped for irrigation (ha)	380 000 (2013)			
	Value of total agriculture (current million US\$)	3 052.1	6 430.7	6 386.1 (2013)	
	Value of cereals production (current million US\$)	759.6	2 408.6	2 113.3 (2013)	
	Yield for cereals (hg/ha)	11 012	9 962	15 507 (2014)	
	Cereal import dependency ratio (%)	(2007-2009)	6		
		(2009-2011)	4.7		
	Top 3 commodities	Production quantity (2012)	Rice, paddy; millet; maize		
		Production value (2012)	Rice, paddy; meat indigenous, cattle; millet		
		Import quantity (2011)	Wheat; sugar refined; palm oil		
		Import value (2011)	Food prep nes; palm oil; milk whole dried		
		Export quantity (2011)	Cotton lint; sesame seed; groundnuts shelled		
	Top 3 partners ^^	Export value (2011)	Cotton lint; sesame seed; groundnut oil		
Import value		Senegal; France; China			
	Export value	South Africa; China; Switzerland			
Top 3 commodities available for consumption (2011)	Rice (milled equivalent); millet; sorghum				
Per capita food supply variability (kcal/capita/day)	23	34	NA		
General (g) and Food (f) CPI (2000=100)	115.7 (g), 117.3 (f)	134.6 (g), 112.8 (f)	142.3 (g), 117.5 (f)		
People undernourished (million)	(2008-2010)	0.7			
	(2013-2015)	NA			
Prevalence of undernourishment (%)	(2008-2010)	5.3			
	(2013-2015)	< 5.0			
Global Hunger Index ^	(2016)	28.1 (serious)			
Access to improved water sources (% of population)*	61	69	77		

Sources: FAOSTAT; \*World Bank; \*\*UNDP; ^IFPRI; ^^OECD - Observatory of Economic Complexity (accessed on December, 2016)

1 Centre de développement de l'OCDE. 2016. *Perspectives économiques en Afrique 2016: Villes Durables et Transformation Structurelle*. Banque africaine de développement (BAfD), Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement (PNUD), Éditions de l'OCDE, Paris.

Mali's population sustains itself on small-scale, rainfed subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. The agricultural sector is characterized by a predominance of cotton as a cash crop, while rice and coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) constitute the main food crops. Cereals represent more than two-thirds of the country's dietary energy supply. Mali is a net exporter of cotton and livestock and a net importer of rice. The main constraints in the agriculture sector are the lack of innovative technologies, irrigation, and private storage and infrastructure, combined with food price volatility.

In addition to a serious drought in 2011, Mali experienced a security and political crisis in 2012 that led to deteriorating social

indicators, including those for poverty and education. However, Mali has achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the proportion of hungry people by 2015: the prevalence of undernourishment has decreased from 12.6 percent in 2000/02 to less than five percent in 2012/14.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, according to the 2016 Nutritional and Mortality Survey Retrospective, the percentage of acute malnutrition has also decreased to 2.3 percent.<sup>3</sup>

In 2015, the government signed a peace agreement that restored political stability, but the security situation remains fragile. An important part of the peace deal is the decentralization of powers to regional councils, enabling them to meet their citizens' needs.

## 1. Government objectives in agriculture and food and nutrition security

Mali's main objectives of fostering socio-economic development and improving food security are expressed in four main documents: the **Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework 2012–2017 (CSCR)**, the **Agricultural Orientation Law (LOA)**, the **National Food Security Strategy (SNSA)** and the **Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development in Mali 2016–2018 (CREDD)**.

- The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework 2012–2017 (CSCR III – *Cadre Stratégique pour la Croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté*) builds on CSCR 2007–2011 and aims at transforming Mali into an emerging economy. The CSCR-III relies on five axes: (i) strengthening peace and security; (ii) strengthening macroeconomic stability; (iii) promoting accelerated, sustainable and pro-poor growth; (iv) strengthening the foundations of long-term development and equitable access to quality social services; and (v) improving institutional development and governance.<sup>4</sup>
- The Agricultural Orientation Law (LOA – *Loi d'Orientation Agricole*), adopted in 2006, constitutes the broad framework and long-term vision for the agricultural sector. It aims at promoting sustainable, modern and competitive agriculture based on family farming.<sup>5</sup>
- The National Food Security Strategy (SNSA – *Stratégie Nationale de Sécurité Alimentaire*), adopted in 2002, aims to shift the focus from managing short-term food crises to sustainable food security, based on agriculture-led economic growth and the creation of market-compatible social safety nets. In 2005, the government launched the **National Programme**

**for Food Security** (PNSA – *Programme National de Sécurité Alimentaire, 2006–2015*) whose overall objective is to eradicate hunger and food insecurity at national and household levels. Then in 2017 the government developed the new **National Food and Nutrition Security Policy** (*Politique nationale de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle*), which aims at improving sectoral policy coordination, enhancing food security and nutrition governance, and fostering regional and subregional integration processes.

- The Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development in Mali 2016–2018 (CREDD – *Cadre Stratégique pour la Relance Economique et le Développement Durable du Mali*), formulated in 2016, aims at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 through the promotion of intensive, diversified and sustainable agriculture.<sup>6</sup>

The country recently adopted the **Agricultural Development Policy** (PDA – *Politique de Développement Agricole, 2011–2020*), moving from a project-oriented to a sector-wide approach for agricultural development.<sup>7</sup> In 2015, Mali validated its Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) ten-year investment plan, the **National Programme for Investment in the Agriculture Sector** (PNISA – *Programme National d'Investissement dans le Secteur Agricole*), which identifies strategic investments in five value chains: rice, maize, millet and sorghum, inland fisheries, and livestock products (both meat and dairy).

2 FAO/IFAD/WFP. 2014. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014. Strengthening the enabling environment for food security and nutrition*. Rome (available at [www.fao.org/3/a-i4030e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4030e.pdf)).

3 UNICEF/WFP/WHO/FAO. 2016. *Enquête Nutritionnelle Anthropométrique et de Mortalité rétrospective* (available at [www.maliapd.org/Fatou/RAPPORT%20FINAL\\_SMART-Mali-juillet%202016.pdf](http://www.maliapd.org/Fatou/RAPPORT%20FINAL_SMART-Mali-juillet%202016.pdf)).

4 République du Mali. 2011. *Cadre Stratégique pour la Croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté CSCR 2012–2017* (available at [http://www.maliapd.org/IMG/file/pdf/DOCUMENTS\\_CLES/1\\_CSCR/2012\\_MALI\\_CSCR\\_2012\\_2017\\_VF.pdf](http://www.maliapd.org/IMG/file/pdf/DOCUMENTS_CLES/1_CSCR/2012_MALI_CSCR_2012_2017_VF.pdf)).

5 The LOA provides a broad definition of agriculture including crop and livestock production, fisheries and fish farming, honey production, forestry, hunting and gathering, processing, transport, trade and agricultural services, including social and environmental as well as economic functions.

6 République du Mali. 2016. *Analyse Diagnostique de la situation alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Mali*.

7 The Agricultural Development Policy aims to promote (i) the economic and social advancement of women, youth and men in rural and suburban areas; (ii) national sovereignty and food security; (iii) rural poverty reduction; (iv) the modernization of family farming and agro-industrial development; (v) environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources; (vi) an increase in the contribution of the rural sector to economic growth; (vii) balanced and coherent agricultural development; and (viii) proper treatment of the land question to secure producers on their land.

In 2014, the government adopted the **National Nutrition Policy** (PPN – *Politique Nationale de Nutrition*), whose goal is to halve malnutrition by 2021 through promotion of a multisectoral approach to nutrition. Then in 2016, the government developed the **National Social Protection Policy and Action Plan for**

**2016–2018**, whose main objectives are to strengthen financing mechanisms, restructure coordinating mechanisms, and implement social safety net programmes aimed at strengthening resilience, food security and nutrition.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Trends in key policy decisions (2007 to 2017)

### 2.1 Producer-oriented policy decisions

The government's main policies for the agricultural sector have focused on increasing domestic rice production, reforming the cotton sector, maintaining input subsidy programmes, and improving access to land. Furthermore, climate change mitigation actions are high on the government agenda.

#### *Improving access to land through new land policy*

In 2006, Mali began developing a new **Agriculture Land Policy** (*Politique Foncière Agricole*), according to the provisions of the LOA; the new policy was finally adopted in December 2014. Its objectives are to ensure equitable and secure access to land for all producers, but especially those in rural areas. The policy provides a coherent national framework of land management, taking decentralization into account and strengthening the capacity of public services, civil society and the private sector. In 2017, the government adopted a bill on agricultural land to secure farmers' lands, differentiate them from state properties, and promote women's access to agricultural land.<sup>9</sup> However, conflicts over land use persist around irrigated areas, and in areas where the interests of pastoralists and farmers conflict due to the coexistence of different land tenure systems. Additionally, despite the enactment of the new land policy, farmers do not adequately leverage land for rainfed farming, as only 3.2 million hectares are used out of 12 million with cultivation potential.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Increasing budget for input subsidies*

In response to the global food crisis, the government launched the **Rice Initiative** during the 2008/09 crop year. Its objective was to boost local rice production by providing farmers with subsidized seeds and fertilizers, as well as credit facilities for farm equipment and extension services. To further support the development of the sector, the government enacted the **National Development Strategy of Rice** (NRDS – *Stratégie nationale de développement*

*de la riziculture, 2009–2018*). In 2009, the government extended the Rice Initiative to maize, wheat, millet and sorghum, in order to increase production mainly through fertilizer subsidies. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the resources allocated to fertilizer subsidies did increase, and currently represent 18 percent of the national budget. However, even though the national fertilizer subsidy programme has increased agricultural production, analyses demonstrate that the programme is ill-targeted, targeting farmers who are well off instead of those who are poor.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Attempts to liberalize the cotton sector*

The cotton sector has driven economic development in Mali for decades. Through the state cotton company (CMDT – *Compagnie Malienne de Développement des Textiles*), the government controls all key phases of the cotton value chain. Since the early 2000s, the sector has been experiencing a crisis caused by a decrease in international cotton prices, lower yields, and difficulties in sector management. In 2001, the government expanded a reform programme (*Lettre de Politique de Développement du Secteur Coton*) to restructure the sector and privatize it by 2005.<sup>12</sup> However, the government suspended the privatization process as production resumed.<sup>13</sup> Some of the reforms put in place, such as increased producer prices, the payment of arrears to producers and subsidies for fertilizers, facilitated the increase in cotton production. Currently, the government is implementing a five-year strategic plan, **Programme de développement stratégique de la filière coton (2013–2018)**, to increase cotton production and establish new ginning factories. The government allocates significant budgetary resources to input subsidies for cotton, which is at odds with its objective of crop diversification.<sup>14</sup> According to the World Bank Country Diagnostic, additional reforms are necessary to increase resilience to world market prices and restore the developmental functions of CMDT.<sup>15</sup>

8 See <http://www.maliweb.net/politique/conseil-des-ministres/communiqu-conseil-ministres-mercredi-12-octobre-2016-1827502.html>.

9 See <http://www.hubrural.org/Mali-l-Assemblee-nationale-adopte.html?lang=fr>

10 World Bank. 2015. *Priorities for Ending Poverty and Boosting Shared Prosperity. Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD)* (available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/101991468188651405/pdf/94191-CAS-IDA-SecM2015-0144-IFC-SecM2015-0101-MIGA-SecM2015-0058-Bpx391497B-OUO-9.pdf>).

11 World Bank, 2015. (Op cit.)

12 Serra, R. 2012. *Cotton Sector Reform in Mali: Explaining the Puzzles*. Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP) Working Paper No. 20. London, Overseas Development Institute (available at <http://www.institutions-africa.org/filestream/20120105-appp-working-paper-20-cotton-sector-reform-in-mali-explaining-the-puzzles-renata-serra-jan-2012>).

13 According to the World Bank, the national production of cotton has increased from 190 000 tonnes in 2007/08 to 440 000 tonnes in 2013/14. Since 2009, the government has supported producers with input subsidies for an average of CFAF20 billion (US\$42 million) a year. See [http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/PDF/Regional\\_Edition/West\\_Africa\\_2013\\_fr.pdf](http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/fileadmin/uploads/aeo/PDF/Regional_Edition/West_Africa_2013_fr.pdf) (accessed on 19 May 2015).

14 MAFAP. 2013. *Revue des politiques agricoles et alimentaires au Mali. Série rapport pays SPAAA*. Rome, FAO (available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-at566e.pdf>).

15 World Bank, 2015. (Op cit.)

### Sustained emphasis on irrigation in response to climate change

In 2011, the government strengthened its climate change governance by adopting three main instruments: the **National Climate Change Policy** (*Politique Nationale sur les Changements Climatiques*), the **National Climate Change Strategy** (*Stratégie Nationale Changements Climatiques*) and its related **Action Plan** (*Plan d'Action National Climat*). These instruments seek to mitigate the challenges posed by climate change to socio-economic development by strengthening national monitoring, capacity building, research, information and awareness on climate change, in order to mainstream climate change into all of Mali's socio-economic development sectors. To finance the implementation of the national policy, in 2016 Mali was granted access to the UNFCCC Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.<sup>16</sup> To mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, in the same year the government decided to enhance water management to secure agricultural production. Also in 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture with the African Development Bank (ADB) initiated the implementation of two flagship projects: the **Project of Strengthening Food Security through the Development of Irrigated Cultures** and the **Project of Strengthening Food and Nutritional Security in the Region of Koulikoro**. Both projects aim to develop irrigated crops adapted to consumer needs on a sustainable basis through water management.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 Consumer-oriented policy decisions

Spending in the social sector currently represents 27 percent of the budget, an increase of 8 percent in 2015 compared to 2014. However, the poverty rate is still very high (47.2 percent in 2015) with over 78 percent of the population not covered by any social protection scheme.<sup>18</sup> As of 2016, chronic food insecurity affected 25 percent of the population, of which 4 percent was severely food-insecure.<sup>19</sup> The main forms of public assistance are food distribution, food sales at subsidized prices, and ad hoc trade measures to stabilize food prices. The government also implements cash transfers and public work programmes, but only on a limited scale or in response to crises.<sup>20</sup>

### Enhancing food security and nutrition

In 2013, the government and the World Bank implemented the unconditional cash transfer programme **Jigisemejiri – Tree of Hope**, targeting poor households chronically affected by food insecurity and providing them with health- and education-related informative practice sessions and a monthly transfer of CFAF10 000 (US\$20) per household. The government of Mali received a US\$70 million loan to implement the cash transfers;<sup>21</sup> as of 2015, 76.5 percent of the 57 000 beneficiaries had received them. Concerning malnutrition, actions currently focus on the prevention of moderate acute malnutrition through therapeutic treatment of severe acute malnutrition in health centres. Prevention of malnutrition is also addressed by the **Blanket-Feeding Programme**, which provides children aged 2 to 6 as well as pregnant women and nursing mothers with a monthly ration of enriched supplements, adapted specifically to their age group, during high-risk periods such as the lean season.<sup>22</sup> In 2017, the government developed the **National Food and Nutrition Policy (2017)**, which aims at enhancing food and nutrition security and social protection programmes. The purpose is to strengthen resilience and align its objectives to the SDGs by mainstreaming climate change into multisectoral policies.<sup>23</sup>

### Increasing country ownership over school feeding programmes

In November 2009, the government adopted the **National School Feeding Policy** (*Politique Nationale de l'Alimentation Scolaire*) with the aim to ensure the sustainable management of school feeding; it also launched a school feeding programme, the **National School Feeding Programme** (*Programme National d'Alimentation Scolaire*). By 2013, this programme targeted approximately 354 000 schoolchildren, who received a daily hot meal to increase enrolment rates and to improve their nutritional status.<sup>24</sup> In 2013, the government also adopted the **School Feeding Sustainability Strategy** (*Stratégie de Pérennisation de l'Alimentation Scolaire*) to increase Mali's ownership over school feeding programmes and reduce its dependency on external funding. Over the past three years (2014–2016), the government has allocated more than US\$18 million to school feeding.<sup>25</sup>

16 The Green Climate Fund is a financial mechanism of the United Nations, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It funds projects and programmes (developed by the public and private sectors) aimed at strengthening resilience to climate change through the achievement of sustainable national development objectives. Unlike traditional funds, it offers beneficiary countries the advantage of direct access through national entities implementation.

17 See <http://maliactu.net/mali-changement-climatique-et-renforcement-de-la-securite-alimentaire-le-succes-passe-par-la-maitrise-de-leau-et-le-developpement-des-cultures-irriguees>

18 See <http://news.abamako.com/h/143987.html>

19 See <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/384511468052440939/pdf/749540P1PROP120Official0Use0Only090.pdf>

20 Ibid.

21 See [http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/eng/Social\\_Protection\\_in\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/eng/Social_Protection_in_Africa.pdf)

22 The activities are carried out jointly by the Ministry of Health and its main partners, WFP and UNICEF. See [http://www.earlyrecovery.global/sites/default/files/plan\\_national\\_de\\_reponse\\_2016\\_csa\\_vf1-2.pdf](http://www.earlyrecovery.global/sites/default/files/plan_national_de_reponse_2016_csa_vf1-2.pdf)

23 See <http://maliactu.net/mali-politique-nationale-de-securite-alimentaire-et-nutritionnelle-les-acteurs-jouent-leur-partition>

24 WFP. 2013. *State of School Feeding Worldwide*. Rome.

25 Drake, L., Woolnough, A., Burbano, C. & Bundy, D. 2016. *Global School Feeding Sourcebook: Lessons from 14 countries*. London, Imperial College Press.



Zoumanabougou, Mali - Farmers working in a cotton field in Zoumanabougou. Approximately 40 percent of the rural population is dependent on cotton production as one of the country's leading exports.

While the National School Feeding Programme has increased the rates of enrolment, especially for girls, school feeding is still considered an assistance activity, rather than a community-owned and integrated programme. Local authority involvement should be strengthened, as it is currently encountering challenges such as illiteracy, low levels of education and lack of organization. Moreover, many canteens do not receive supplies on time or enough supplies during school periods. Linking school feeding programmes to local agricultural production, and lack of sufficient funding, also remain major challenges.<sup>26</sup>

### Restoring food stock systems

In 2016, the government adopted the **National Plan on Responses to Food Problems** (*Plan National de Réponses aux difficultés alimentaires*) to improve food and nutrition security through emergency response actions and building resilience.<sup>27</sup> The national plan mobilizes financial resources to restore the National Security Stock (SNS) and the Stock of State intervention (SIE) in order to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of

the food security system. Mali's public food stock comprises the National Food Security Stock (used for food distribution), the Intervention National Stock, and the community-based cereal banks (used for food sales). The SNS provides free food rations of millet and sorghum to households affected by shocks.<sup>28</sup> The SIE together with cereal banks (both established in 2005) operate through price stabilization, keeping producer prices high enough after the harvest and consumer prices low enough during the lean season.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.3 Trade-oriented and macroeconomic policy decisions

The increase in global prices in 2007–2008 led the government to adopt some measures to restrict exports (through the introduction of an export ban on cereals) and facilitate imports (through the suspension of import duties and taxes during the lean season).

### Export ban on cereals imposed in response to the 2007/08 food crisis

Among the measures taken to mitigate the effects of the food price crisis, between 2007 and 2008 the government temporarily banned export of cereals and selected food products. This measure did not affect groundnuts, livestock and cotton. Since 2004–2005, informal export restrictions of millet, maize and sorghum have been in place, being strategic for the country's food security. These restrictions take the form of administrative delays at Customs (the so-called "export red tape").<sup>30</sup>

### Import duties and taxes suspended during the lean season

The government implemented certain measures in response to the food crisis in order to curb the pressure on domestic prices and make products more accessible to the population. During the lean months (from April to December) of 2008, the government exempted rice, powdered milk and edible oil from import duties and taxes on the condition that operators agree to sell these products at or below a certain ceiling price.<sup>31</sup> In 2012, the harvest shortage due to the 2011 drought led the government to exempt rice and maize from import duties and taxes in order to prevent food insecurity in the country from March to May. In July 2015, the government announced that duties on imported rice would be assessed against a lower value of CFAF130 000 (US\$225) per tonne. Then the government suspended import duties and charges for a three-month period (until September 2015) on 120 000 tonnes of rice, with the aim of ensuring a stable supply of rice during the traditional lean season.<sup>32</sup>

26 Ibid.

27 République du Mali. 2016. *Plan National de Réponses* (available at [http://www.earlyrecovery.global/sites/default/files/plan\\_national\\_de\\_reponse\\_2016\\_csa\\_vf1-2.pdf](http://www.earlyrecovery.global/sites/default/files/plan_national_de_reponse_2016_csa_vf1-2.pdf)).

28 République du Mali. 2016. *Code de Gestion du stock national de sécurité (SNS)*.

29 République du Mali. 2016. *Code de Gestion du stock d'intervention de l'Etat (SIE)*.

30 MAFAP, 2013. (Op cit.)

31 République du Mali. 2008. *Note sur l'évaluation de l'exécution des cahiers de charges relatifs aux exonérations de droits et taxes à l'importation du riz, du lait en poudre et de l'huile alimentaire*. Ministère de l'économie, de l'industrie et du commerce.

32 FAO. 2015. *Food Outlook (Biannual Report on Global Food Markets)*. Rome (available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5003e.pdf>).

### 3. Emerging issues

#### *Weak policy coherence*

According to a review of food and agricultural policies (2005–2011) conducted by MAFAP, Mali's policies present inconsistencies between overall policy objectives, measures adopted to pursue these objectives, and the effects they generate.<sup>33</sup> For example, despite the government objective to increase exports, tariffs on imported rice were lifted and exports of staples restricted. In addition, while the government seeks to increase rice production through input subsidies, it maintains prices low for rice producers. Furthermore, while the government pursues a crop diversification policy, it allocates significant budgetary resources to input subsidies for cotton.<sup>34</sup> This is partially due to inefficiencies in value chains (i.e. poor infrastructure, illicit taxes and a lack of market information) and the implementation of consumer-oriented policies; therefore, a targeted integration into regional and global value chains by investing in output diversification would contribute to the structural transformation process.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Need for a comprehensive social safety net*

The current existing social protection programmes are not designed to tackle consistently either chronic poverty or vulnerable groups, as they only provide ad hoc emergency assistance in the form of food support. According to the World Bank Social Safety Nets (SSN) review, the objective and coverage of the existing social protection system is too limited: most programmes do not target the poorest, and are designed as only temporary interventions. Moreover, the evidence confirms that the lack of a comprehensive SSN strategy underpinned by an appropriate institutional framework negatively affects interministerial coordination mechanisms.<sup>36</sup> The recent review of social protection in Mali also suggests that coordinated (and not fragmented) implementation of targeted cash transfers can be extremely effective in reducing food insecurity and chronic poverty by 2030.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Enhancing small-scale farmers' access to credit and microinsurance*

Although the government has made efforts to enhance small-scale farmers' access to finance, the financial sector does not have adequate credit to meet the needs of smallholders, who are left to rely on their own limited savings to manage crops and harvests and enrol their children in schools. The insufficiency of financial services also affects smallholders' ability to generate incomes. Given the lack of access to credit or any form of agricultural insurance, farmers are forced to grow low-risk, low-return crops (like sorghum and millet). Additionally, the lack of a warehouse receipt system forces farmers to sell at low prices, and the lack of leasing services hinders access to ploughing services. Enhancing access to credit and microinsurance would increase consumption and productive investments, and mitigate the effects inflicted by shocks on farmers' assets.<sup>38</sup>



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*Livestock are almost all in the hands of small livestock keepers, who raise mainly goats, cattle, and sheep.*

33 MAFAP, 2013. (Op cit.)

34 Ibid.

35 World Bank, 2015. (Op cit.)

36 World Bank. 2011. Mali Social Safety Nets (available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/900571468049210279/pdf/532220ESW0Gray0OFFICIAL0USE0ONLY090.pdf>).

37 Ibid.

38 World Bank, 2015. (Op cit.)



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[www.fao.org/in-action/fapda](http://www.fao.org/in-action/fapda)  
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