

# Which Plan Should We Adopt In The Fight Against Poverty?

By Fr. Maurice Oudet W.F.

The European Forum on Cooperation and Development took place in Montpellier between the 4th. to the 6th. September, 2002. It was organised by the European Commission. Inter-Réseaux invited us to share our experience and in response we have prepared the following document.

## INTRODUCTION

I will only speak about rural poverty. My reflection is based on my experience of over almost thirty years living among the rural population of Burkina Faso. For fifteen years I lived in the North West of the country, in Kiembara, among farmers who had almost nothing. I also lived in Boni, near Houndé, for four years, in cotton-growing country. At present I am in Koudougou, no longer living in the countryside. However, I continue to work with the same people through SEDELAN. [01]

## SOME EXPERIENCES

✿ I arrived at Kiembara in May, 1974. At that time, sesame was the main crop of the region.

FootNote 01: the following article 'SEDELAN' by Fr. Maurice Oudet W.F., gives an idea of SEDELAN and is reproduced from the 'Petit Echo' 2001/10 N. 926

Over the years in a rural milieu I have come to realize the importance of literacy in building living communities, both Christian and simply in ordinary society. At the same time I was very conscious that the shortage of literature in the national languages is a serious handicap.

Sixty languages are spoken in Burkina Faso and serious efforts are being made to spread adult literacy. Unfortunately, only too often, the effort stops at the literacy campaigns. The student may follow a couple of intensive courses, but he then returns to his daily routine where there is no suitable material written in his own language. Inevitably, most of those who have made the effort to read and write, and count in their language become again functionally illiterate. This is a loss for themselves, but also for the community, which, in spite of all their efforts, they are unable to encourage and lead. SEDELAN (Le Service d'Édition en Langues Nationales [Publication Service in National Languages]) was created in response to this situation. It seeks to offer practical and educational material to subsistence farmers. To begin with, all we had to get the project off the ground was a computer, a scanner and a photocopier. Our first project was a three-monthly magazine, with a version in Mooré (Têngembiiga) and another in Djula (Dugulen). Later we added a French version, entitled 'Friends of the Earth'.

We also publish various brochures in Mooré and Djula, as well as in Lyele and Dagara. One of our principal aims is to support the publications of subsistence farmer organizations. So we publish the bulletin of the 'National Federation of Peasant Organizations'. It appears in four languages: French, Mooré, Djula and Fulfulde. For the last two languages we rely on collaborators who live several hundred kilometres away, but now that we have access to electronic mail this is not an insurmountable difficulty.



It was marketed by the ORD (a government organisation for rural development). Along with stockbreeding it was the main source of income for the farmers. However, in two years (1976 - 1978) I witnessed the purchase price of the grain fall to one-third of its original level. The price for a tin of sesame (about 20 litres) fell from 1,800 FCFA to 600 FCFA (£1.80 to 60p.). The consequences were sharp and fast. The farmers stopped growing sesame, except for their own needs, and emigration to the Ivory Coast increased. I inquired as far as Brussels to find out the reason for this brutal fall in prices. It seems that it was not a problem of world markets, but was probably due to a local exporter who deserted the area. [02]

A few years later, at the time of President Sankara, the farmers were told to grow sesame. I went to Ouagadougou and visited the Bank For The Stabilisation of Prices to ask: "What price will the farmers receive for their sesame?" No one could give me a price. So I told them: "In which case, I for one, will not encourage

them to grow sesame." And the farmers did not take up sesame production again.

It needed the devaluation of 1994 for the cultivation of sesame to really take off as before in Burkina Faso. The best season for the farmers was 1998-1999, when some were able to sell their sesame for more than 5,000 FCFA (£5.00) a tin. The following year there was no need to organise workshops to discuss ways of fighting poverty. Sesame farming had become a craze. However, Burkinabè exporters used the occasion to form a cartel. They held a meeting at Nouna, in the north west of the country, and fixed the maximum price they would pay at 3,500 FCFA (£3.50) a tin. Given the profit made by the middlemen, the price paid to the producers fell to 2,500 or as low as 2,000 FCFA (£2.50 to £2.00) a tin, the farmers' enthusiasm for sesame growing disappeared.

Today the SOPROFA (Society for the Promotion of Agricultural Networks; a co-operative, which has 25% capital support from the State) has begun again to encourage the cultivation of sesame but without a guaranteed price.

✿ A few years later, still in Kiembara, we experienced a year of drought followed by a year of famine. In September, at the most difficult time of the year, in a village close to Kiembara, a farmer went to the market in a neighbouring village to try to sell his goat so that he could buy some millet with the money he gained from the sale. However, everyone in the vicinity was



in the same situation as him, and there were many animals for sale at the market. At the end of the day, not only had he not sold his goat, but no one had even asked the price. He returned home, where he killed the goat and cooked the meat for his family's evening meal. At the end of the meal he asked his wife and children if they had eaten well that evening. They all replied "yes". Then he disappeared. In the middle of the night his wife became worried and

We also publish a modest magazine on spirituality for the leaders of the Christian community, called 'The Leader's Companion'. It appears five times a year, in French, Mooré and Djula.

For more than a year now we have been producing a radio programme on a theme which will be taken up in our magazines. These programmes are recorded on cassettes and distributed through FM radio, which enables us to reach a larger public and to advertise our documents and magazines. Thanks to an organization for the spread of the French language, these radio programmes are re-broadcasted and can be downloaded from a web site.

Editor's Note 01: See 'Some Background Notes of Burkina Faso' for information on the people and languages of the country.

Editor's Note 02: FCFA (CFAf) = CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) franc is a common currency between Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. In November, 2002, there were 696.50 FCFA to US\$1. Since the 1st. January, 1999, the FCFA has been pegged to the Euro at a rate of 655.957 FCFA for 1 Euro. The Central Bank of the West African States is the responsible authority for the FCFA.

Picture above: young cotton plants



**EDITOR'S COTTON NOTES** - The cultivation of cotton in the CFA franc Zone countries of West and Central Africa (WCA) has helped in rural development and poverty reduction. It employs more than two million households and production has increased **fourfold** in the last twenty years. Now the WCA region grows 5% of the world's cotton and is the second largest exporter, with 15%. Cotton is a main source of export income and cash crop for the WCA. WCA countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, and Togo - non-CFA and smaller CFA zone countries (Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger and Nigeria) are not included. Most major producers non-WCA are subsidized. Over 40% of the support is from the U.S.A., and E.U. assistance is more than 100% of world prices. These subsidies lower the world price and effects poverty reduction in WCA countries where cotton is a key element. Despite the use of synthetic materials cotton is the world's most important fiber, with about 40% of the textile market, which is estimated to increase. Under the **Agreement on Textiles and Clothing**

### ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO MAJOR COTTON PRODUCERS, 1999-2000

Country	Production Thousand tons	Assistance	
		U.S.\$ per kilo	Million U.S.\$
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,942</b>	<b>* 0.57</b>	<b>4,764</b>
U.S.A.	3,694	0.56	2,056
China	3,829	0.34	1,534
E.U.	558	1.42	795
Greece	428	1.39	596
Spain	130	1.53	199
Turkey	791	0.36	287
Brazil	700	0.06	44
Mexico	135	0.21	28
Egypt	235	0.09	20

Notes: \* the average assistance; world cotton price was U.S.\$ 1.25 a kilo.

import quotas should be removed by 2005. This could lead to better access for WCA exports and the doubling of its share of the world market.

### WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES COTTON PRODUCTION AND NET EXPORTS

	1980/81	1985/86	1990/91	1993/94	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	* 2001/02
<b>PRODUCTION</b>									
Benin	4	32	59	116	152	142	150	131	136
Burkina Faso	23	46	77	51	138	120	110	114	164
Cameroon	32	46	44	51	76	78	75	94	95
C. Afr. Rep.	8	13	12	7	20	16	11	9	11
Chad	31	39	60	37	109	65	76	65	76
Ivory Coast	56	82	116	114	147	157	164	125	164
Mali	43	68	115	101	216	218	196	105	240
Senegal	7	11	12	15	17	5	9	9	14
Togo	9	27	41	33	65	76	57	49	60
<b>NET EXPORTS</b>									
Benin	6	27	50	105	141	131	142	136	125
Burkina Faso	21	44	69	44	120	114	113	113	147
Cameroon	27	38	34	37	63	65	65	81	82
C. Afr. Rep.	5	11	9	3	17	15	10	8	9
Chad	33	44	57	33	101	63	72	65	65
Ivory Coast	43	84	81	80	98	120	160	109	131
Mali	38	60	98	87	174	202	196	125	196
Senegal	4	7	7	11	11	2	3	4	8
Togo	7	22	36	35	57	65	55	47	55

Notes: figures in thousands of metric tons; \* projections.

went looking for him. When she found him, he had already hanged himself.

✿ A few years after this event, in the late 80's and early 90's, Europe (through the FED) financed a project to support the development of cattle breeding in Sourou and in the region of Ouhigouya. It was through this project that the village of Kiembara obtained a veterinary clinic equipped with a refrigerator. However, the vet was often away. We should say in his favour that this project held little interest for the local farmers and cattle breeders. In fact, at the same time as initiating this project, Europe was flooding the area with its surplus of meat products (known as CAPA) at ridiculously low prices, through the port of Abidjan. No one was buying cattle. It needed the 1994 devaluation for cattle rearing to begin again in Burkina Faso.

✿ During these last few years much effort has been spent developing rice growing, with mixed results. The rice paddy is not very profitable! Because of this the farmers' cooperative in Bazon has lost 20% of its membership (down from 970 members to 750). Why is it so difficult to sell rice? For the answer, one needs to go to Thailand or to other rice-exporting countries: all the rice to be found on the international market is subsidized. Worse still, some American NGOs working in the country offload American subsidized surplus rice into the region: rice that is considered as aid from the USA to the least developed countries. A new word has even appeared describing this practice: (other American NGOs, and maybe some European ones too, employ the same method) they call it "to practice monetization". Up to now I have never heard a farmer say, "I am practising monetization", when he is selling his harvest!

✿ In March and April, 2001, I went to Boni, in cotton-producing country. I stopped to chat with



some farmers and I asked them how they saw the next growing season and more specifically if they intended growing cotton. They replied that this year even their wives were encouraging their husbands to grow cotton and they were ready to help them. One of the explanations was that the last harvest was good. As a result some people were able to build a new house with cement walls and others were able to buy a moped. All the wives wanted their husbands to do the same. As that year the price of cotton had been raised, Burkina Faso brought in a record harvest of 400,000 tonnes of cotton seed but the cotton had lost its price in the world market. The Burkina State had to borrow a supplement of 40bn. FCFA (£40m.) from the World Bank. SOFITEX downgraded the maximum amount of cotton and this year they have announced that the price of cotton will fall from 200 FCFA

## WORLD PRODUCTION, STOCKS AND TRADE IN COTTON (in thousands of tons)

	1970-71	1980-81	1990-91	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
<b>PRODUCTION</b>									
U.S.A.	2,219	2,422	3,376	4,803	4,092	3,030	3,669	3,747	4,374
China	1,995	2,707	4,508	4,100	4,600	4,501	3,837	4,425	5,123
India	909	1,322	1,989	2,351	2,450	2,710	2,655	2,376	2,572
Pakistan	543	714	1,638	1,800	1,530	1,480	1,875	1,788	1,744
Uzbekistan <sup>b</sup>	2,342	2,661	2,593	1,198	1,150	1,000	1,129	959	1,046
<b>WCA</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>959</b>
Turkey	400	500	655	792	795	871	<sup>c</sup> 850	<sup>d</sup> 816	...
Australia	19	99	433	552	681	726	<sup>c</sup> 700	<sup>d</sup> 650	...
Brazil	549	623	717	368	370	420	676	894	719
Greece	110	115	213	400	348	405	<sup>c</sup> 390	<sup>d</sup> 394	...
World	11,740	13,831	18,970	19,622	20,015	18,551	19,026	19,294	20,928
<b>ENDING STOCKS</b>									
China	412	299	1,550	4,438	4,198	4,124	<sup>c</sup> 3,339	<sup>d</sup> 2,289	...
India	376	59	539	760	811	1,011	<sup>c</sup> 1,217	<sup>d</sup> 1,217	...
U.S.A.	915	653	510	829	844	849	<sup>c</sup> 979	<sup>d</sup> 1,034	...
Pakistan	55	204	313	312	323	353	<sup>c</sup> 533	<sup>d</sup> 598	...
Turkey	24	129	256	123	100	269	<sup>c</sup> 437	<sup>d</sup> 413	...
Australia	13	61	150	310	326	424	<sup>c</sup> 432	<sup>d</sup> 382	...
World	4,605	5,152	6,653	9,419	9,825	9,699	<sup>c</sup> 9,702	<sup>d</sup> 8,696	...
<b>EXPORTS</b>									
U.S.A.	848	1,290	1,697	1,550	1,695	915	<sup>c</sup> 1,400	<sup>d</sup> 1,750	...
Uzbekistan <sup>b</sup>	553	616	397	1,050	950	900	<sup>c</sup> 950	<sup>d</sup> 1,009	...
<b>WCA</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>843</b>	<b><sup>c</sup> 866</b>	<b><sup>d</sup> 839</b>	...
Australia	4	53	329	467	625	650	<sup>c</sup> 640	<sup>d</sup> 678	...
China	22	1	202	2	40	147	<sup>c</sup> 300	<sup>d</sup> 300	...
Turkmenistan	...	...	...	115	58	210	<sup>c</sup> 230	<sup>d</sup> 298	...
Greece	0	13	86	251	200	230	<sup>c</sup> 222	<sup>d</sup> 274	...
World	3,875	4,414	5,081	6,076	5,982	5,274	<sup>c</sup> 5,972	<sup>d</sup> 6,193	...
<b>IMPORTS</b>									
Indonesia	36	106	324	475	425	500	<sup>c</sup> 555	<sup>d</sup> 542	...
Mexico	1	0	43	161	330	302	<sup>c</sup> 390	<sup>d</sup> 533	...
Italy	178	193	336	356	350	330	<sup>c</sup> 365	<sup>d</sup> 381	...
Turkey	1	0	46	243	280	250	<sup>c</sup> 376	<sup>d</sup> 371	...
Korea, Rep of.	121	332	447	284	265	330	<sup>c</sup> 360	<sup>d</sup> 370	...
Brazil	4	2	108	493	380	292	<sup>c</sup> 284	<sup>d</sup> 344	...
Taiwan, China	160	214	358	300	275	293	<sup>c</sup> 322	<sup>d</sup> 310	...
Thailand	46	86	354	298	285	271	<sup>c</sup> 295	<sup>d</sup> 307	...
Japan	796	697	634	270	285	270	<sup>c</sup> 230	<sup>d</sup> 270	...
World	4,086	4,555	5,222	6,160	5,725	5,429	<sup>c</sup> 5,972	<sup>d</sup> 6,193	...

Notes: a = projection; b = figures for the U.S.S.R. up to 1990-91 and Uzbekistan after; c = estimates; d = forecasts.



**Editor's Note 03:** The OECD is made up of the following 'high-income' countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom,



(£2.00) to 175 FCFA (£1.75) the kilo. The other day the farmers at Boni told me that they are still growing cotton, but less (much less?) than last year.

### A STRATEGY: OFFER FINANCIALLY REWARDING PRICES TO THE PRODUCERS

All the rest makes sense only when this condition is fulfilled.

This means that one must stop supporting one group of farmers (those of the North, of the OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development] especially in Europe and America!) to the detriment of farmers in the rest of the world. Even a farmer in Boni realised the situation of the world market in cotton and the small farmer. [03]

So, the subsidies for exports should be stopped.

One should guarantee a certain income to producers by ceasing to allow the importation of all the basic commodities (rice, wheat, and sugar) at artificial prices (due to subsidies). As long as these products remain subsidised (agricultural subsidies being considered as a weapon of the rich) it is imperative for the poor countries to protect their agriculture by taxing the importation (the only weapon that the poor coun-

tries possess) of the basic products which enter into competition with local products (we can include wheat here because it is more and more in competition with local cereals). Agriculture cannot be considered as a simple commercial activity: on looking closer, it becomes apparent that protection at the level of imports is the least protectionist help for agriculture.

### CONCLUSION

Let us stop investing, as we have been doing these last few years, in the embellishment and the promotion of new instruments in the fight against poverty and let us accept this evidence: farmers in the South are not that different from those of the North: they are ready to redouble their efforts and thus to push back poverty if the products of their labours offer them a real reward.

The politicians in the South should take this into account and develop, at last, a real agricultural policy that goes in this direction.

The Countries of the North should accept also that they must consider the needs of the Countries of the South when they draw up the ongoing reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

and the United States. See the words of Nicodème Biwando in the next article 'Globalisation as seen by Africa's Cotton Farmers' ('La mondialisation vue du côté des producteurs de coton africains').

Picture above: bringing in the cotton is a family effort



# Globalisation as Seen by Africa's Cotton Farmers

By Fr. Maurice Oudet W.F.

A PERSONAL WITNESS <sup>[01]</sup>

Burkina Faso finds itself in a paradoxical situation. As it prepares to harvest a record amount of cotton (400,000 tons), the world price of cotton has collapsed. One kilogram of cotton fibre (that is, as it comes out of the ginning process) is only worth 50p. or 50p. on the world market. As recent as January 2001 it was worth £1.00.

The problem is that the manufacturing cost of a kilogram of Burkinabè cotton fibre is around 72p.. For the government of Burkina Faso this represents a loss of more than 40 billion FCFA (£40m.). To make things worse, in order to continue to be able to pay its civil servants, Burkina Faso has asked the World Bank for a loan of 40 billion FCFA (£40m.), at the risk of digging itself deeper in debt.

At present the cotton industry is the lifeblood of nearly ten million farmers in West Africa. What will happen to these farmers if they have to give up cotton farming as soon as next season?

One might ask, what is the cause of such a situation? Obviously it's a problem of over-production on a worldwide scale, but that's not all. All the analysts agree that this overproduction is artificial, brought about essentially by the subsidies paid by the European Union and the United States to their cotton producers.

Let's give a few examples: thanks to the subsidies, a Spanish or Greek cotton farmer is sure of selling his harvest of raw cotton at (at least) 700 FCFA (70p) a kilogram (the same kilogram produced by Burkinabè farmers is sold for only 200 FCFA [20p.]), they spent US\$4.2bn. (£2.76bn.)

in the year 2000 to support their cotton production. In so doing, they have been able to flood the world market with their production (about 30% of all cotton exports in the world).

That is why the cotton producers of Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali, through their various organizations, have issued a solemn appeal to the USA and to the European Union: <sup>[02]</sup>

At a time of much discussion over fighting poverty, Burkina's cotton producers realised at once that poverty can be ended only by their own efforts. They started working towards this goal, but now that they have achieved unprecedented production levels, cotton prices have suddenly plummeted. We are beginning to question wealthy countries' desire to reduce poverty in poor countries.

The subsidies that the European Union (E.U.) and United States (U.S.A.) grant their farmers allow them to endure such price drops better. But that is not all. These subsidies have a perverse effect on poor countries' economies, as they artificially boost production, leading to over-production and consequently a drop in world market prices.

By subsidising their cotton producers, the U.S.A. and E.U. seriously threaten African cotton and thereby the future of millions of producers, in addition to the economies of many countries like Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali.

We therefore solemnly request that the U.S.A. and E.U. stop subsidising cotton producers.

We ask everyone who wants to build a fairer and more fraternal world to join us in bringing pressure to bear upon the United States and the European Union so that they stop these subsidies.

To me this cotton issue seems to be an interesting case to help us understand globalisation, as it is being imposed on others by the industrialized world. We discover that these countries don't hesitate to get around the famous economic liberalism that they want to impose on the rest of the planet. In fact, as they demand that poor countries eliminate all tariffs (keeping them from protecting

their produce), they reserve for themselves the right to subsidize their own production. In the end the industrialized countries spend some 359bn. euros (£236bn.) a year to support their agriculture. That is six times the amount of aid that they give those countries for development! Thus, customs taxes (the arm of the poor) are forbidden. Only subsidies (the arm of the rich) are permitted. Who could be satisfied with this type of globalisation?

As a White Father (Missionary of Africa) responsible for providing documentation for the subsistence farmers of Burkina Faso, I spent Christmas at Boni, a village in which all the inhabitants are engaged in cotton production. I was surprised to find how ill informed they were about the situation, partly no doubt because earlier economies had enabled them to be paid last year. After the Christmas Mass the congregation was invited to sit and I gave what amounted to a veritable course on rural and world economy to a most attentive audience.



After that I was able to continue our reflections with the heads of families. They were all surprised but they all recognized the gravity of the situation. They had thought that the countries of the North were helping them to progress, but now they realized that the reality was very different.

Nicodème Biwando, the head of a family, explained that if he had to stop growing cotton then he could no longer pay the college fees of his two sons. Even buying medicine for his family would become a problem. He concluded: "The Americans and Europeans must be told that we are all living in the same world, that we are all brothers, and that we all need each other. They have no right to organize their work (he was referring to subsidies to cotton producers) as if they lived in a separate world of their own. What they are doing is wrong, and it is preventing us from progressing. They must find a solution which will enable all of us, we and they alike, to advance."

FootNote 02: signed at Bobo-Dioulasso, 21st November, 2001, by the François Traoré (President of the U.N.P.C.B.), Issa Ibrahima (President of the FUFRO [Benin]), Ampha Coulibaly (President of the SYCOV [Mali]) and La Maison des Paysans de la région du Sud-Ouest de Madagascar, et son représentant Monsieur Risoja Filiha.

Picture above: taking the picked cotton to be sold

In those few simple words, he outlined a whole programme for our politicians. **Globalisation** as practised at present is wrong because it excludes from the world millions of producers whose only fault is that they have been born in a poor country. They were wise words which challenge the industrialised countries on the eve of new negotiations within the **World Trade**

**Organization (WTO)**. There are forms of agricultural aid which stifle production in countries of the **South**, and these must be suppressed. Aid to cotton producers in the United States and Europe come into this category. Are we ready to listen to the voice of **Nicodème Biwando** as he speaks on behalf of the millions of cotton growers in West Africa?

## Some Background Notes of Burkina Faso

Compiled by Fr. Bill Turnbull WF.

### GEOGRAPHY

**Official Name:** Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta).

**Independence:** 5 August 1960

**National Holiday:** Republic Day the 11 December (1958)

**Capital:** Ouagadougou

**Main Towns:** Banfora, Bobo-Dioulasso, Kaya, Koudougou, Ouagadougou, Ouahigouya.

**Subdivisions:** Burkina Faso is divided into 45 **provinces**, named to reflect the historical background or a geographical fact, each administered by a High Commissioner. The provinces are divided into 382 **departments**, including 33 communes, and over 8,000 villages. - [see the table and map below.](#)

### The Land

Area: total: 105,869 sq. mls. (274,200 sq. kms.).

land: 105,714 sq. mls. (273,800 sq. kms.).

water: 155 sq. mls. (400 sq. kms.).

lowest point: Pendjari River 443 ft. (135 m.).

highest point: Mount Tenakourou 2,451 ft. (747 m.).

land boundaries total: 1,984 mi. (3,193 km.) -

Benin (S) 190 mi. (306 km.), Ghana (S) 342

mi. (549 km.), Ivory Coast (S) 363 mi. (584

km.), Mali (N&W) 621 mi. (1,000 km.), Niger

(E) 390 mi. (628 km.), Togo (S) 78 mi. (126

km.).

### Land use:

arable land: 13%

permanent crops: 0%

other: 87%

irrigated land: 96 sq. mi. (250 sq km.) (1998 est.)

**Climate:** Tropical with two seasons - the dry season November to May (cool and dry from November to February, hot from March to May); rainy season from June to October. The average temperature is 60°F (15°C) at night, and varies from 85°F (30°C) to over 100°F (38°C) during the day. Average rainfall is approx. 40 in. (1,016 mm.) in the south, and less than 10 in. (254 mm.) in north and northeast.

**Terrain:** Mostly high undulating plains from about 1,000 to 1300 ft. (305 to 396 m.). The north is arid Sahelian; the centre savanna; the south and southwest are wooded savanna.

**Natural resources:** antimony, bauxite, copper, gold, lead, limestone, manganese, marble, nickel, phosphates, silver, zinc.

### PEOPLE

**Population:** see opposite.

**Net Migration Rate:** -0.84 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2002 est.). Each year several hundred thousand farm workers migrate to Ghana and the Ivory Coast for seasonal employment.

### Age structure:

0-14 years: 47.3%

(male 3,007,675;  
female 2,960,697)

15-64 years: 49.8%

(male 3,000,411;  
female 3,271,594)

65 years and over:

2.9% (male 151,976;  
female 210,832)

(2002 est.).

### Infant mortality rate:

105.3 deaths/1,000

live births (2002 est.)

### Mortality Rates

	1960	1999
Infant Mortality Rate	181	105
Under-Five Mortality Rate	315	210
Life Expectancy	37	45

### Medical Personnel

	1965	1993	People per.
Doctors	3,219	2,658	...
Beds	69	153	57,213
Nurses	1,231	5,214	1,679

**HIV/AIDS** adult prevalence rate: 6.44%

people living with **HIV/AIDS**: 350,000

**HIV/AIDS** deaths: 43,000 (1999 est.)

### Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 46.11 years

male: 45.45 years

female: 46.78 years (2002 est.)

Information / Year	1998	1999	2000	2001
Population, total	10,730,330	10,995,700	11,274,000	11,552,570
Rural population	9,024,937	9,214,111	9,411,761	9,603,813
as % of total population	84	84	83	83

Access to Health Services		Access to Safe Water		Access to Sanitation			
	1980-85	1985-95	1970	1995	1988-91	1990-95	
Urban	51	100	Urban	35	Urban	35	42
Rural	48	89	Rural	10	Rural	5	11
Total	49	90	Total	23	Total	10	18



**Ethnic groups:** There are more than 60 ethnic groups. The main ones are: Bissa-Samo (6.5%), Bobo (6.8%), Bwa (Bwamu, 3%), Dagari-Lobi (4.3%), Fulani (Peul, 7.8%), Gourmantché (7%), Gourounsi (6%), Mossi (48.6%), Senufo-Marka-Dioula (2.2%). The Mossi, Bissa, Gourounsi and Gourmantché live in the centre; the Fulani in the north and northeast; and the Dioula in the west.

**Languages:** French (official language), Fulfuldé, Jula and Mooré (main national languages). There are three linguistic groups: the **Voltaïc** (incl. the Mossi, Dagari, Lobi, Gourmantché, Gourounsi, and Senufo); the **Mandé** (incl. the Dioula, Marka, Samo, Bobo, and Boussancé); the **Western Atlantic** with the Fulani. Some of the 66 languages are known under different names and spellings. They include: Bambara,

Picture above: some of the cotton being transported by lorry

Bella, Biali, Birifor, Bissa, Blé, Bobo, Bolon, Bomu, Bwamu, Cerma, Dagaari, Dioula, Dagara, Dogon, Dogosé, Dyan, Dzùùngoo, Frafra, Fulani, Fulfuldé, Gourmancéma, Gurunsi, Hausa, Kaansa, Kalamsé, Karaboro, Kasem, Khe, Khisa, Koromfé, Kusaal, Lobi, Lubi, Lyele, Mandé, Marka, Moba, Mooré, Natioro, Nuni, Ouara, Pana, Samo, Seeku, Sénoufo, Siamou, Sininkere, Sissala, Songhay, Téén, Tiéfo, Toussian, Tuareg, Turka, Viemo, Winyé, Zarma.

#### Literacy:

total population: 19.2%

male: 29.5%

female: 9.2% (1998).

**Religions:** Muslim 55%, Christian (Catholic [13%], Protestants [2%]) 18%, Traditional Religion (Animist) 26% - [see below for details on the Catholic Church](#).

#### THE GOVERNMENT

**President:** Captain Blaise Compaoré ([CDP] since 15 Oct. 1987, re-elected 15 Nov. 1998).

**Prime Minister:** Ernest Paramanga Yonli ([CDP] since 6 Nov. 2000)

**Constitution:** approved by referendum on 2 June 1991 and formally adopted 11 June 1991.

**Political Parties:** There are about 60 parties the main ones are: African Independence Party (Parti Africain de l'Indépendance [PAI]); Alliance for Democracy and Federation-African Democratic Rally (Alliance pour la démocratie et la fédération-Rassemblement démocratique africain [ADF-RDA]); Coalition of Democratic Forces (Coalition des Forces Démocratiques [CFD]); Congress for Democracy and Progress (Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès [CDP formerly the ODP-MT]); Party for Democracy and Progress/Socialist Party (Parti pour la Démocratie et le Progrès/Parti Socialiste [PDP/PS]).

**The Government:** The Government is a coalition of the CDP, ADF/RDA, the African Convention

for Democracy (CAD), the CPS, the Movement for Tolerance and Progress (MPT), the PAI, the Liberal Union for Democracy (ULD) and the Greens (PVB).

**Latest Election Results:** The National Assembly elections, for the 111 seats, were last held on 5 May 2002. The party results, by seats and party (number (%)) were as follows: CDP 57 (49.5), ADF-RDA 17 (12.7), PDP/PS 10 (7.5), CFD 5 (4.4), PAI 5 (3.6), Paren 4 (2.7), CPS 3 (2.6), UNIR/MS 3 (2.4), CNDP 2 (2.0), PDS 2 (1.7), APL 1 (0.7), FPC 1 (0.5) and UDPI 1 (0.4).

**UN Membership:** 20 September 1960

**OAU Membership:** 25 May 1963

**Other Organisations:** ACCT, ACP, AfDB, CCC, ECA, ECOWAS, Entente, FAO, FZ, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, ILO, IMF, Intelsat, Interpol, IOC, IOM, ISO (subscriber), ITU, MONUC, NAM, OAU, OIC, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WADB (regional), WAEMU, WCL, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, WTrO.

#### THE ECONOMY

**Population below poverty line:** 45% (2001 est.)

#### Distribution of working population

	1970	1990
Agriculture	3,088,719	4,507,990
Industry/Services	268,752	371,706
Total Labour	3,357,471	4,879,696

**Inflation rate** (consumer prices): 3.5% (2001 est.)

**GNP:** US\$310 (1992), US\$320 (1994), US\$230 (1995).

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** US\$294 (1992), US\$290 (1995), US\$2,325m (1995).

**GDP:** purchasing power parity - \$12.8 billion (2001 est.)

**GDP - per capita:** purchasing power parity - \$1,040 (2001 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:** 4.7% (2001 est.)

#### GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 31%

industry: 28%

services: 41% (2000)

**Labor force:** 5 million (1999)

**Industries:** cotton lint, beverages, agricultural processing, soap, cigarettes, textiles, gold.

**Industrial production growth rate:** 14% (2001 est.)

**Agriculture products:** peanuts, shea nuts, sesame, cotton, sorghum, millet, corn, rice, livestock.

**Exports:** US\$265 million (2001 est.)

**Major Exports:** Cotton (23.8%), Gold (13.3%), live animals, hides and skins (9.5%).

**Exports - partners:** Benelux (12.2%), China, France (7.0%), Ghana, Italy (9.6%), Ivory Coast, Japan, UK, Venezuela (14.7%) (2000).

**Imports:** US\$580 million (2001 est.)

**Major Imports :** Transport equipment, petroleum products, cereals, machinery, capital goods.

**Imports - partners:** France (17.0%), Ghana, Italy, Ivory Coast (25.1%), Netherlands, USA, Venezuela (23.4%) (2000).

**Debt:** US\$1,267m (1995), US\$1.3 billion (1997), US\$1.5 billion (1999)

**Economic aid - recipient:** US\$484.1 million (1995)

**Currency:** Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) Franc (100 centimes)



Sources for the Editor's Notes and tables for the three articles: thanks to Fr. Maurice Oudet, ([Missionnaires d'Afrique \[Missionaries of Africa\], BP 332, Koudougou, Burkina Faso, oudet.maurice@fasonet.bf](#)) and for the work done on the [ABC Burkina](#) web site at [www.abcburkina.net](#); various World Bank data & the 'Cotton Policy Policy Brief', March & June 2000; the 'International Cotton Advisory Committee'; 'Cotton Sector Strategies in West and Central Africa' by Ousmane Badiane, Dhaneshwar Ghura, Louis Goreux and Paul Masson (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2867, July 2002); The World Factbook 2002: Burkina Faso at [http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/uv.html](#); MBendi Profile of Burkina Faso [http://www.mbendi.co.za/land/af/bf/p0005.htm](#) and currency rates [http://www.mbendi.co.za/cyexch.htm](#); the Catholic Missionary Union of England and Wales ([www.cmu.org.uk](#)) Burkina Faso Profile at [http://www.cmu.org.uk/stats/aff\\_buk.htm](#); the White Fathers ([www.thewhitefathers.org.uk](#)) SuttonLink Burkina Faso Fact Sheet at [http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/bf\\_fct.html](#); Elections in Burkina Faso from Elections Around the World ([Electionworld.org](#)) at [http://www.electionworld.org/election/burkinafaso.htm](#); Embassy of Burkina Faso in the U.S.A. at [http://burkinaembassy-usa.org](#); the Catholic Hierarchy at [http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/bf.html](#).

Picture above: this shows the tremendous amount of work that goes into getting a lorry load

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS IN BURKINA FASO

Provinces	Capital	No. of Depts.	Population
Balé	Boromo	10	169,543
Bam	Kongoussi	9	212,295
Banwa	Solenzo	6	214,234
Bazéga	Kombissiri	7	214,450
Bougouriba	Diébougou	5	76,444
Boulgou	Tenkodogo	13	415,414
Boulkiemde	Koudougou	15	421,083
Comoé	Banfora	9	240,942
Ganzourgou	Zorgho	8	257,707
Gnagna	Bogandé	7	307,386
Gourma	Fada N° Gourma	6	221,956
Houet	Bobo-Dioulasso	13	674,916
Ioba	Dano	8	159,422
Kadiogo	Ouagadougou	6	976,513
Kénédougou	Orodara	13	198,936
Komandjari	Gayéri	3	49,389
Kompienga	Pama	3	73,949
Kossi	Nouna	10	217,866
Koupélogo	Ouargaye	8	188,760
Kouritenga	Koupéla	9	250,699
Kourwéogo	Boussé	5	117,370
Léraba	Sindou	8	93,351
Loroum	Titao	4	111,707
Mouhoun	Dédougou	7	237,048
Nahouri	Pô	5	121,314
Namentenga	Boulsa	8	251,909
Nayala	Toma	6	136,273
Noumbiel	Batié	5	51,449
Oubritenga	Ziniaré	7	198,130
Oudalan	Gorom-Gorom	5	136,583
Passoré	Yako	9	271,216
Poni	Gaoua	10	196,568
Sanguié	Réo	10	249,169
Sanmentenga	Kaya	11	460,684
Séno	Dori	6	202,972
Sissili	Léo	7	153,560
Soum	Djibo	9	253,867
Sourou	Tougan	8	189,726
Tapoa	Diapaga	8	235,288
Tuy	Houndé	7	160,249
Yagha	Sebba	6	116,985
Yatenga	Ouahigouya	13	443,967
Ziro	Sapouy	6	117,774
Zonoma	Gourcy	5	127,580
Zoundwéogo	Manga	7	196,698



# BURKINA FASO



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BURKINA FASO	Total Population	Catholics		Area		Parishes	Priests			Catholics per Priest	Religious	
		Total	% of pop	sq.mi.	sq.km.		Diocesan	Religious	Total		Male	Female
Bobo-Dioulasso Archdiocese	920,152	82,434	8.96	9,430	24,415	10	48	24	72	1,144	76	174
Banfora Diocese *	320,000	15,000	4.69	7,105	18,395	4	9	6	15	1,000	6	24
Dédougou Diocese	893,548	74,382	8.32	10,428	27,000	10	33	5	38	1,957	14	75
Diébougou Diocese	731,761	100,892	13.79	7,086	18,348	17	81	-	81	1,245	5	65
Nouna Diocese	414,336	53,804	12.99	5,793	15,000	5	14	5	19	2,831	10	6
Koupéla Archdiocese	1,173,869	200,674	17.10	5,696	14,747	14	68	4	72	2,787	4	54
Fada N° Gourma Diocese	1,516,000	48,710	3.21	27,670	71,640	13	19	15	34	1,432	27	92
Kaya Diocese	836,020	56,543	6.76	6,952	18,000	6	24	10	34	1,663	10	31
Ouagadougou Archdiocese	1,649,820	357,832	21.69	3,708	9,601	15	88	54	142	2,519	198	383
Koudougou Diocese	1,388,102	172,464	12.42	10,042	26,000	14	56	9	65	2,653	29	100
Manga Diocese	487,181	68,328	14.03	3,812	9,870	5	14	2	16	4,270	3	15
Ouahigouya Diocese	1,250,000	93,263	7.46	12,360	32,000	10	27	9	36	2,590	13	59

Information from the Embassy of Burkina Faso, Washington DC, USA at <http://burkinaembassy-usa.org/indepth.html>

Notes: All data is for 2001 except for \* which is for 1998 (ap2002). Archdioceses are Metropolitan Sees and the Dioceses listed beneath them are their Suffragans.

Source: Compiled from information on the Catholic Hierarchy web site at <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/bf.html>