

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small plant with green leaves and a brown root. The person is wearing a striped shirt and a light-colored, worn garment. The background is a blurred green field under a bright sky.

ON THE  
**BORDER LINE**

A REPORT FOR FOOD SECURITY  
ON THE LIBERIAN-IVORIAN BORDER



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is based on research done by a UNDP-financed cross-border assessment between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire on security, stabilisation and food security, as well as research done by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). This report also benefitted from a post-harvest crop assessment led by the Ivorian Ministry of Agriculture, and a food security assessment led by the Liberian Ministry of Agriculture which involved representatives from WFP and FAO.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CFA Franc</b>	Franc of French Colonies in Africa
<b>DDRR</b>	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion, and Reintegration
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugees Council
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FRCI</b>	Republican Forces of Côte D'Ivoire
<b>GoL</b>	Government of Liberia
<b>IDP</b>	Internal Displaced Population
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugees Council
<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNMIL</b>	UN Mission in Liberia
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

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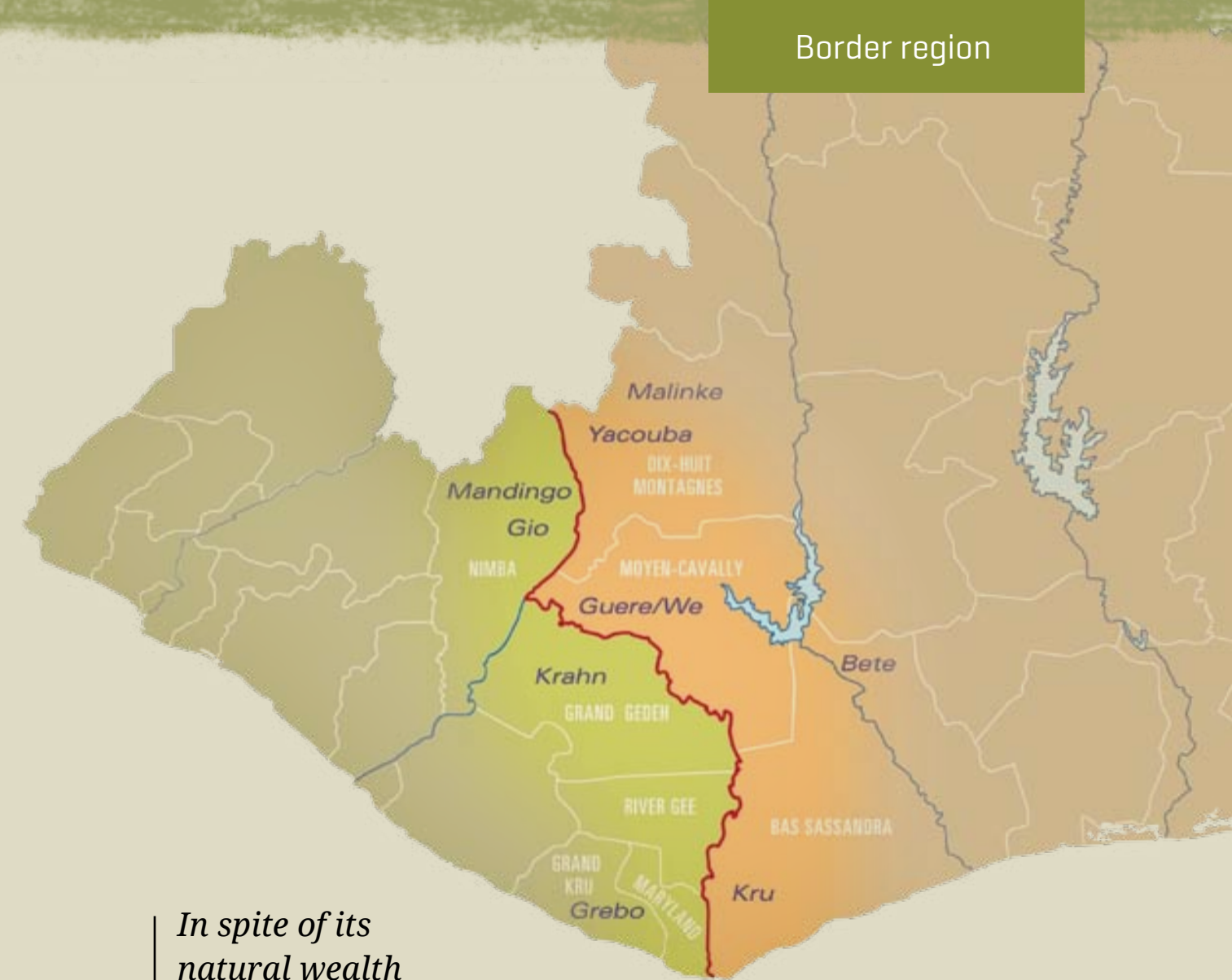


# BORDER REGION

*Straddling the banks of the Cavalla River, the border region of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire is rich in natural resources such as gold, diamonds, and timber. Due to the numerous water points across the region, and direct access to the ocean, the soil is extremely fertile and fish thrive in its rivers and lakes.*

Yet in spite of its natural wealth and fertile lands, food security is a major concern within the region. A long standing problem, food insecurity has been exacerbated by many years of conflict on both sides of the Ivorian-Liberian border. Consequently, a perception of instability seems to prevail in people's minds, discouraging farmers from investing in agricultural production. This is demonstrated by the widespread use of broadcast seeding.

In both countries, food insecurity is highest in the Ivorian-Liberian border region. In Liberia, food insecurity ranges from 32.4% to 82.5% (Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey 2010). In Côte d'Ivoire, food insecurity can be as high as 40% as for instance in the Moyen Cavally region.



*In spite of its natural wealth and fertile lands, food security is a major concern within the region.*





# POLITICAL BACKGROUND

*The conflict border area between Côte D'Ivoire and Liberia has a long and multifaceted history of economic relationships, political alliances and intermarriage. It is also a story of dispute fuelled by ethnic tensions and a lack of social cohesion, that subsequently have played a role in destabilizing the region.*

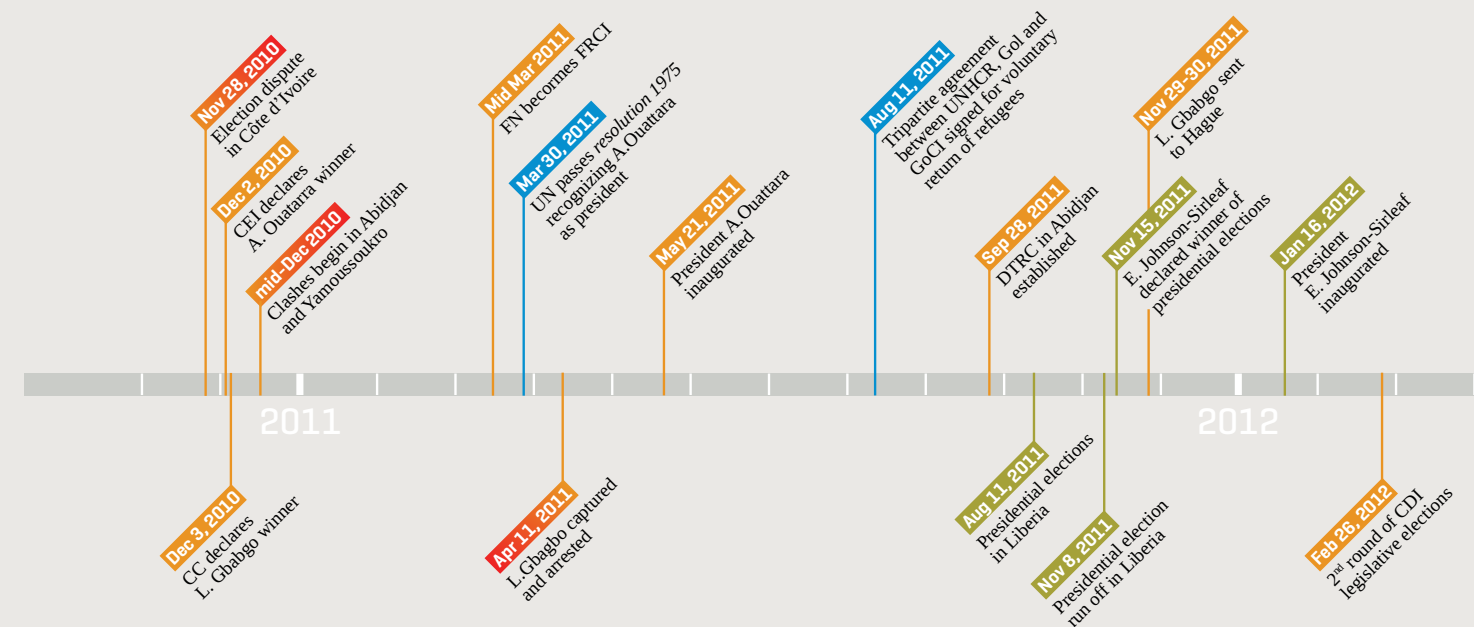
Security concerns and existing tensions are exacerbated by food insecurity, and vice-versa. Most of the agricultural economy collapsed during the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. Land was abandoned and needed serious rehabilitation. When the civil war ended, farmers went back to their fields and rehabilitated sufficient land for them to grow just enough food to survive.

To overcome the barriers to state capacity, social cohesion and justice, the underlying ethnic factors must be addressed, especially for Côte D'Ivoire. Poverty remains an underlying factor but ethnic discord, land tenure issues and lack of social cohesion will continue to fuel future wars and instability if not addressed.

Ivorian returnees and IDPs have a real and perceived threat of violence. In addition, there is a genuine fear of being targeted if they return. As such, agencies need to bear in mind that the population is traumatized, with a fear that feeds on both real and perceived insecurity.

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Timeline of 2010-2012 political events in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire





# BORDER PEOPLE

## 1 Women fundamental to achieving household food security

*The women of the border region play an important role within agriculture. They are repositories of knowledge regarding cultivation, processing and the preservation of nutritious and locally adapted crop varieties. In addition to farming, and working their family plots of land, they also carry chief responsibilities towards the community, their family and the care of their children.*

Their labor, burdened by water and fuel wood collection, has implications on food production and the threat of household malnutrition. In addition to working the land, many take on a supplementary income generating activity to ensure extra money for their household.

When situations of food insecurity occur, it is the women who usually find the coping mechanisms to provide food for their children and family. These 'mechanisms' are almost the same in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire<sup>1</sup>.

Women are also more likely to channel the income they can control into the nutrition, health and education of their children. Many have chosen to remain in Liberia to ensure their children have access to primary education and basic health services, both being free in Liberia.

To ensure the safety of their families and assess the security situation, it was female refugees who embarked on dangerous visits from Liberia, specifically Nimba and Maryland County, back to their villages in Côte d'Ivoire. Fearing that the FRCI would arbitrarily arrest their husbands upon return, these women risked not only drowning when crossing the river border, but becoming the victims of exploitation if they did not have the means for the journey, and in many cases risked sexual violence from armed elements.

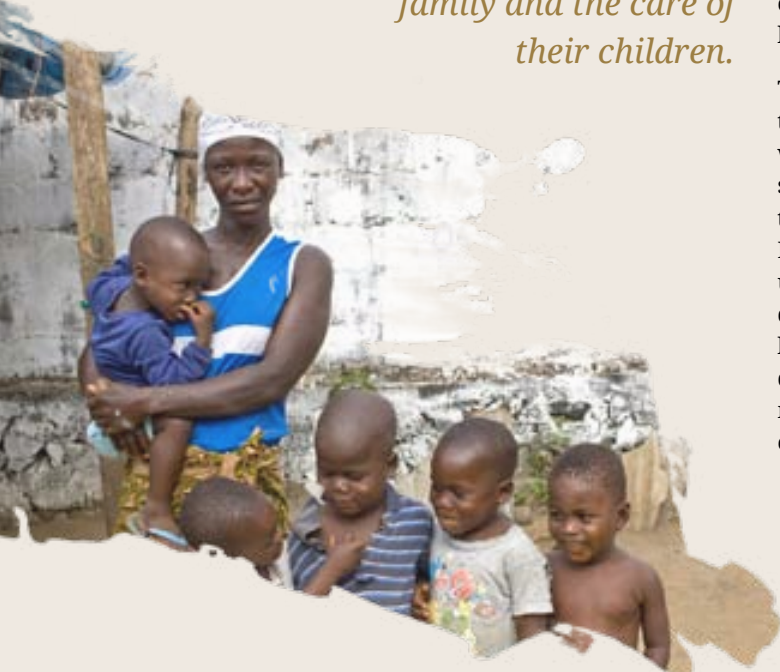
Due to its powerful social and economic impact, overcoming gender inequalities must be a deep concern for food security partners in the aftermath of the 2011 Ivorian political crisis. Improving the status of women delivers critical improvements to agricultural production, food security, child nutrition, health and education.

There has been a great push in Liberia to address violence against women since the end of the civil war there in 2003. Likewise, Côte d'Ivoire needs a push to address this issue in post conflict situations.

Women expressed that they feared their children getting hold of weapons used by the FRCI. They also expressed an inability to farm freely since armed elements were in the forest (from all ethnic groups). According to FAO, if women had equal rights to land and productive resources as men, they could increase their farm yields by 20-30 per cent.

*According to FAO, if women had equal rights to land and productive resources as men, they could increase their farm yields by 20-30 per cent.*

<sup>1</sup> - Eating less preferred foods, borrowing food from relatives, the use of wild food such as bush meat and leaves, reducing the number of daily meals, or limiting the size of the meal, engaging in petty trading; buying items in the nearest market and selling them at an inflated price in the villages





## 2 Youth The future of the border region

*“I don’t have anything to lose”*

*Militia, 12 years old, Côte d’Ivoire*



Due to their susceptibility to become engaged in illicit economic activities, be they mercenary or illegal mining and logging, poor young men and women are regarded as potential threats to political stability. During the last presidential elections in Liberia, both young men and women were easily mobilised for mass demonstrations in Monrovia.

Many of the Liberian mercenaries that were involved in the fighting during the post-election crisis in Côte d’Ivoire were recruited in illegal mining areas in Grand Gedeh (South-East Liberia). These are places of potential exploitation, trafficking, and mobilization of youth for participation in conflicts, whenever the opportunity arises. Other areas on both sides of the border show features and trends similar to those in Grand Gedeh.

Liberia has made great strides towards addressing it’s youth. When the conflict broke out in Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia did not plunge back into fighting despite the opportunity. Despite limited economic opportunities, children under 18 were not used en masse to fight in the conflict. Disaffected youth must however be addressed, and improvement is still necessary to ensure the long-term stability of Liberia.

*When questioned on how he interacted with pro-Ouatarra classmates, he expressed that in school, people lay aside differences.*

Mobilization amongst youth is made easy through the lack of economic opportunity available to them. As one suspected combatant explained, “No jobs for youth. Happy to go with if I got money.” The informal structure set up by suspected lead combatants provides youth in the informal mining areas with social protection, a perceived family unit, and money. There is great potential for exploitation and abuse here, which the GoL and UNMIL HR needs to monitor and GoL needs to prosecute as Rule of Law is strengthened.

A striking element that came out during recent interviews to youth in IDP camps and among returnees was the resolve to attend school and accept each other when learning. In Tai, a returnee expressed that he had returned at the insistence of his mother who remained in Liberia. She wanted him to return to receive a decent secondary education. When questioned on how he interacted with pro-Ouatarra classmates, he expressed that in school, people lay aside differences. There is some evidence that young people can be prevented from engaging in mercenary activities through agricultural training programmes



*2 - In the Grand Gedeh, Nimba and Maryland areas, there is a trend for youth not enrolled in school to work in the formal and informal mining areas.*



# INTRODUCTION

*The 2010 conflict and its resulting population movement had serious implications for food security, agriculture and other livelihood activities in the region. Informal reports, along with preliminary and rapid assessments, indicate that food security on both sides of the border was severely affected.*

In Côte d'Ivoire it is estimated that the 2011-2012 harvest will be reduced by 38.5 percent in areas directly affected by the conflict<sup>3</sup>. This reduction is primarily the result of population displacements, a lack of productive assets (looting of farms) and agricultural labor, and subsequent late planting.

These problems were compounded further by the issues of land tenure and access to land. Violence associated to land tenure is present along the whole border between the eastern side of Liberia and the western region of Côte d'Ivoire. Taking advantage of the instability, some elements utilized the post-electoral crisis of 2010-2011 as an opportunity to settle old land tenure scores.

In Liberia, the large influx of refugees put tremendous pressure on both the fragile border communities and what is already a volatile food security situation<sup>4</sup>.

The increased consumption of local food stocks led to a premature lean season, forcing some Liberian households to consume their rice seeds, as prices for rice and other key commodities soared. The price for local rice in refugee affected areas has doubled between October 2010 and April 2011<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> - This includes the South, South-West, West, and Centre-West regions - Mission conjointe (Gouvernement - CILSS - FAO - FEWS\_NET - PAM) d'évaluation préliminaire des récoltes, Septembre 2011.

*In Liberia, the large influx of refugees put tremendous pressure on both the fragile border communities and what is already a volatile food security situation.*







### On the border Line

An assessment made by UNICEF in the areas of Grand Gedeh and Maryland last August, shows that malnutrition rates are lower within the refugees than they are for Liberians. This would also appear to be the case with regards to food security, and thus explains the presence of Liberians on the camps, taking advantage of the support given there to refugees.

As armed actors deny access to land, food insecurity becomes a greater risk, which in turn affects security, as people fight over scarce resources. These issues are only exacerbated by the problems surrounding land use and social cohesion.

The UN Country Teams of Liberia and in Côte d'Ivoire commissioned an independent cross border study of security threats and challenges, looking at food security and recovery needs emanating from conflict-related cross-border movements between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Through establishing key stabilization factors, this report is based on such recent cross border assessment results, and attempts to provide the evidence-basis for a comprehensive operational plan to further peace and stability within the region, and halt the cycle of food insecurity on the border. This paper concludes with a number of recommendations for policy makers on measures to help close the gap of instability and food insecurity in the region.

### Obstacles to recovery

Existing security concerns and tensions are intensified by the region's food insecurity.

The massive displacement of population during the conflict coincided with the period of farm preparation and planting, preventing many people from taking part in the 2011 rice crop season in Côte d'Ivoire. The long-term displacement of farmers has had a significant impact on cash crop production. Fields have become overgrown quickly and a lengthy rehabilitation of the farms must be undertaken, provided they can even access the land.

In the West of Côte d'Ivoire, confidence in the State is weak as the Government presence there remains to be seen as solely military, delegitimizing the administration.

Although recruitment for the militias is not continuous, mobilization in the border region remains extremely easy. Mining areas on the Liberian side continue to be unchecked and offer a source of income generation that could contribute to mobilization.

4 - 1) cross-border rice outflow from Liberia into Guinea due to price differential; 2) predicted poor performance of local production; and 3) continued high international rice prices.

5 - Impacts of Rising Food-Fuel Prices and Refugee Influx in Liberia, June 2011, Republic of Liberia.

*The massive displacement of population during the conflict coincided with the period of farm preparation and planting, preventing many people from taking part in the 2011 rice crop season in Côte d'Ivoire.*



## SECTION A

# LIVELIHOOD AND THE ECONOMY

## The Household Economy

Nearly all households in the border region spend most of their available money on food. Rice is the primary source of expenditure, followed by cassava, fish, and small vegetables, like okra. The second most important expense is health. Access to medication along the border is limited, with health equipment and adequate medical tools being difficult to obtain. A single consultation with a doctor requires payment in Côte d'Ivoire, however the main expenditure relating to health both here and in Liberia is for extra services such as the hospital. Transport also represents a big part of expenditure. A long walk is often required to go to bigger markets or to access any form of service.

There is a generalized lack of trust towards financial structures in the region, thus discouraging people to appeal to them in terms of credit options.

If agriculture occupies an important place in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, the people also use varied livelihoods to provide additional income, as is the case for the most vulnerable people who farm purely for their own consumption and need extra money, especially during the lean season.

The lean season (also called 'hunger gap') is the period of the year where household stocks of harvested rice are depleted. In this period, households look for income generating activities, or revert to coping mechanisms such as skipping meals, borrowing food or money to purchase food on markets, or eating cassava. Even in normal years, the lean season is already 3-4 months long.

It is often possible for these people to find additional work, assisting farmers on larger



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plantations<sup>6</sup>. Undertaking extra activities such as a tailor, shoemaker or shoe shiner are also not uncommon and provide income for expenses such as healthcare and children's schooling.

In both the forest and the river, nature provides access to additional resources for the household. Many animals are hunted here and then resold on the market to buy food, seed or non-food products. Fishing is mainly an occupation for women and children, with their catch either used for self-consumption or sold in the markets as caught or smoked.

In Liberia, mining is an activity of great importance. In Grand Gedeh there are over fifty formal and informal gold mines that have a direct impact on food security in the region. With less 'physical' work and easier access to money, many young people have been drawn to mining and have abandoned farming. Whereas young people working on the farm are bound to

support relatives, those working the mines share little of their profit with their family.

Informal mining areas in Grand Gedeh seem to be controlled by suspected former combatants. These mining areas are places of potential exploitation, trafficking, and mobilization centers for youth to participate in future conflicts if the opportunity arises.

6- In Côte d'Ivoire, the working day is paid between 500 and 1,000 CFA per day for men due to the physically demanding labor and CFA 350 for women who are usually allocated lighter seed work.

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SECTION B

# AGRICULTURE

The border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire has traditionally been very porous. There have always been exchanges between the two countries; the same ethnic groups are found on each side, the soil is the same and the border region shares a common agricultural calendar. What happens on one side of the border will have an effect on the other side.

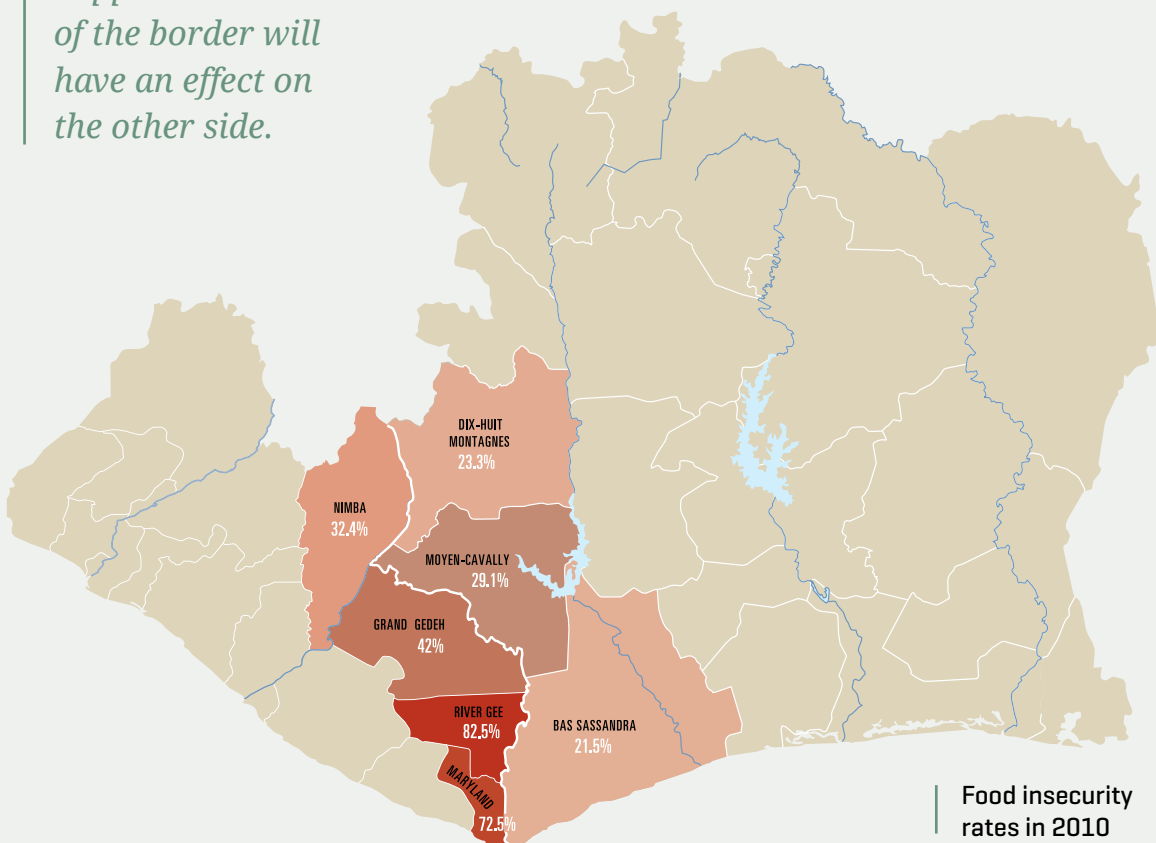
Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are both major producers in the world market of cash crops,

*The border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire has traditionally been very porous. [...] What happens on one side of the border will have an effect on the other side.*

including cocoa and rubber. Within the border region, cash crop production is primarily sold at the roadside.

### Cash Crops

Previously dependent on exports of coffee and cocoa, Côte d'Ivoire has since diversified. In the south-eastern regions, we now find new export crops such as rubber, timber, palm oil, banana, pineapple, mango and sugarcane. In addition to this, the presence of cotton can be seen in the northern regions of the country. With 1.5 million tons exported in 2011, Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest exporter of cocoa.



Despite the lack of rain and mass abandonment of fields, cash crop sales in the 2010-2011 agricultural season were better than those in 2009-2010, as farmers were able to sell their production.

When it comes to rubber production, Liberia is a world leader. Sale and export however, are only made with regards to the raw material. With no product transformation there is little added value, thus making it dependent on market prices. Beyond rubber, Liberia also produces quantities of coffee, cocoa, palm oil and coconut, however their relative scale means they have much less of an impact on the economy.

The Cash-crop export revenues of both countries are extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in market prices. In Côte d'Ivoire selling prices of production currently present a major obstacle to economic recovery<sup>7</sup>, as illegal roadblocks by RFCI (Republican Forces of Côte d'Ivoire) have impacted on the selling price per kilo of cocoa. The moment roadblocks are reduced prices will go up at farmgate.

Today, for a farmer to go harvest, he pays an average of 3,500 CFA per roadblock to go to the farm and 7,500 CFA per roadblock if he carries goods. The price of these roadblocks is charged directly to producers by bringing down the purchase price of "roadside" merchandise.

Moreover, the stability displayed after one year by the country and the ensuing economic recovery,

brought down the prices of these commodities on the world market.

The next cash crop harvest is expected to be worse than last year's, as plantations have suffered from a lack of water in early 2012. It is assumed that most farmers will not invest in cultivating land for this coming season, and will only be in a position to do so if food and seed distributions are provided on time.

### Food Crops

Both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are blessed with very fertile soil where everything grows, due to the suitable combination of humidity, water and temperature. Oddly this seems to have fostered a negative impact on farming attitudes, since in terms of technology farmers need only to seed and they are sure to always have something to harvest. The agriculture sector is central to Liberia's economy, which is paradox considering it is based on subsistence farming. Food production is limited to generate enough resources, at household level, to survive.

Both countries are dependent on food imports, especially rice, and struggle in an unfavorable international situation, with under-production

7- FAO food price index reached a record level in February 2011, surpassing the 2008 peak, driven by increases in the prices of wheat (75 %), maize (73 %), vegetable oil (50 %) and sugar (73 %) since June 2010.

*Both countries are dependent on food imports, especially rice, and struggle in an unfavorable international situation*





levels related to their needs, and increasingly dependent on price fluctuations for purchase.

On The Liberian border with Côte d'Ivoire subsistence agriculture is mainly directed towards rice. Indeed, 90% of Liberian households eat rice on at least 6 days out of 7. Most of the rice harvest is used for self-consumption; the rest is stored for the next season. If the harvest is good, a small quantity will be sold in local markets. Due to the low acreage in cultivated surfaces, and a lack

*90% of Liberian households eat rice on at least 6 days out of 7. [...] Liberia produces only 40% of its rice consumption.*

of technical knowledge, Liberia produces only 40% of its rice consumption, with the remainder coming from imports. As with Côte d'Ivoire, this makes both countries, and the isolated border region extremely economically vulnerable, and too dependent on world prices' fluctuations.

Despite the lack of rainfall in 2011 and a decrease in the farming area, the border counties of Liberia actually increased their rice production. The influx of refugees contributed to the expansion of cultivated areas, with those arriving in host communities at the latest in April taking part in both the 2011 sowing period and subsequent harvest season. The refugees in camps and those living in host communities continue to be a source of qualified and cheaper labor.

In 2004, the cultivable area in Côte d'Ivoire was around 21 million hectares, representing around 65% of the total area. The farming area, however, consisted of around 6.9 million hectares, thus representing only 33% of the cultivable area. Insecurity in rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire severely hampered the available farming area. The farming area per household is estimated at 3.69 hectares. However in 2011, most people were only able to farm between 0.5-1 hectares. At the same time, many seed reserves were either stolen or burned, leaving people to have to borrow seeds from relatives or buy low quality seeds on the local markets

Ivorian agriculture is characterized by a very traditional operating system with a very low level of modern technology. The 2002 crisis was a turning point and accentuated the food crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

The 2011 food crop harvest was low in comparison with that of 2010. Erratic distribution of rainfall resulted in dry periods during August and September, coinciding with cereal formation and flowering, and thus compromising the harvest.

Many years of political instability and civil war in Liberia, resulted in limited access to training for much of its population, particularly in rural areas. As a result very few farmers today have the necessary technical agricultural knowledge, instead using poor rice planting and cultivation methods, which translate into low agricultural productivity (measured as yield per hectare). Liberia continues to lack agricultural knowledge, and is missing training, extension and research capacities to enhance agricultural productivity in many parts of the country, namely on the refugee affected counties.

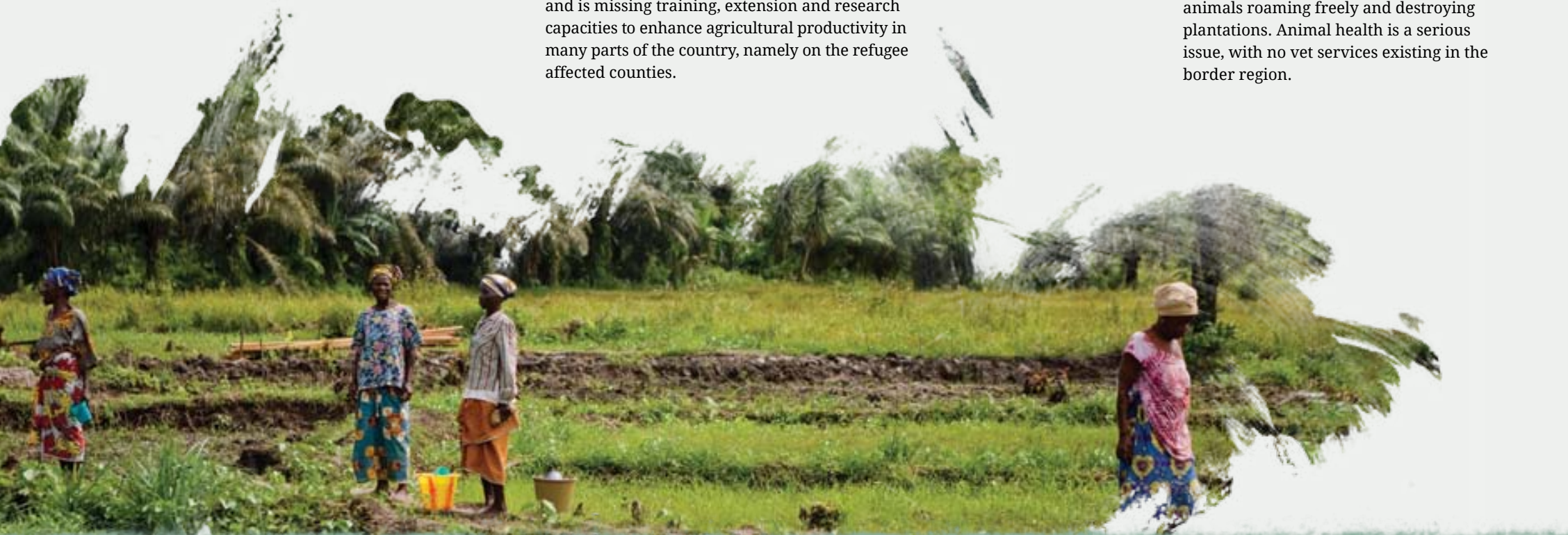
Keeping seeds for the next planting season seems to be the main concern of farmers. Even if their own production doesn't cover their food needs, farmers are well aware of the fact that if they eat their seeds now, they will face problems during the next planting season. Either they will have to buy new seeds at a potentially inflated price due to seasonal variation, or they will have to ask relatives for support.

Although both the Liberian and Ivorian economies are essentially based on agriculture, there is a significant difference between the two countries. Whilst Côte d'Ivoire has based its development on agricultural expansion to cover the needs of the population (albeit with the exception of rice), Liberia is based on subsistence agriculture, farming simply to survive, and sustain livelihoods.

### Livestock

Whilst most households in the border regions don't own any animals, it is quite frequent to see women keeping chicken or pigs. People tend to buy a chicken or a pig after a good harvest or business activity and will then keep them for a festival or to pay expenses. Most of the chicken production is used for personal consumption. There are usually no fences or enclosures to contain cattle and other animals, which often results in animals roaming freely and destroying plantations. Animal health is a serious issue, with no vet services existing in the border region.

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## SECTION C

## MARKETS

Whilst every major city or regional capital has functioning markets, the situation is very different for villages far from the main access roads. Market access remains limited for those living in remote areas, and is dependent on numerous factors including weather, transport (car or motorcycle) and prices.

Smaller local markets do exist, where local produce such as cassava (prepared in Attiéké), peppers, bitter-balls, okra and dried fish can be purchased. Non-food items, usually clothes or shoes, purchased at the main market are then sold here at higher prices. The further the sell point is from the major market, the higher the price of the products due to increased transportation costs.

Rice is the most consumed product ahead of cassava in the whole border region. However, production is far below consumption. Neither of the countries produces even half of their food needs, leaving both dependent on imports and international prices. Since 2007, rice prices have raised sharply and remain very high in the region. 2011 was marked by a general increase in prices on the market, followed by a slight downward trend since the beginning of 2012, particularly with regards to imported rice. This decrease is explained by the presence of rice distributed by World Food Program (WFP). It should be noted however that prices remain above average.

Cross-border trade links are very important, especially for rice, pulses, and palm oil. On the Liberian side of the border, the 2010 Ivorian crisis resulted in a decrease of food availability. Rice remains unavailable in the border markets there, and the prices of other items have increased. Traders have been forced to seek alternative sources, purchasing instead from Monrovia, which has increased transportation costs. The same situation can be noted in Côte d'Ivoire, where no rice is available in the border markets.

Despite the lack of food availability in markets on both sides of the border, the cash crops trade is still working. Ivorian rubber will be sold directly to traders at the border in Liberia where the selling price is more attractive. Liberian cacao or coffee production is sold in Côte d'Ivoire for exactly the same reason. There is a lack of information regarding cross-border trade, and a close monitoring of these markets must be implemented.

In regions where food security is already fragile, the massive influx of refugees has resulted in an increased demand in the market and thus increased prices of certain raw materials. In Nimba County those prices have increased from 50% to 180%. It is the same in other regions, including Grand Gedeh where the influx of refugees was very high (one refugee for every two Liberians).

Markets have generally resumed, however some are not yet operational in the region of Toulepleu, especially in the most remote areas. Recovery has not been uniform. It was from Duekoue, Bolequin, Toulepleu and Danané. that the highest number of refugees were recorded and the number of returnees is at the lowest (In late January there were some villages in the region of Toulepleu, where up to 60% of people have not yet returned).

*Market access remains limited for those living in remote areas, and is dependent on numerous factors including weather, transport (car or motorcycle) and prices.*

Although markets are once again operational, there is a lack of availability of most of foods, including local rice. This is primarily due to poor harvests in 2011 but there is also a real problem of seed availability throughout the whole southeastern region. In Toulepleu, Danané, Bin-Houyé, Bolequin or Duékoué, there are little to no seed markets, for the remaining regions the problem is the quality of the seed available. The seeds on offer do not meet quality criteria and the resulting production is much lower.





## SECTION D

## ACCESS TO LAND

Land access remains an issue of great contention. As social cohesion and Government capacity remain weak outside the capital cities and land tenure policies are not clear or are seen to favor one particular group, security issues will continue to exist in the border region. This section draws on research done by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

In Liberia land issues need to continue to be addressed to prevent small tensions from becoming large scale conflicts. Liberia does however have a more stable protection and land tenure conflict net than Côte d'Ivoire as a result of effective NGO presence and attempts by the Government of Liberia to address social issues.

A common theme in Côte d'Ivoire is inaccessibility to land as a result of armed groups. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire needs to step up efforts to disarm the population so weapons are not used to intimidate farmers.

Both Governments need to work on sustainable land use, and clear land policies that do not favor ethnic groups, and increase the use of titles and deeds to show who owns what land. The process

*Land is a chronic issue in the border region. As a result of people fleeing during political crisis, over time opportunists on both sides of the conflict seized land.*

will be arduous, tedious, and long, but is highly necessary. The Government of Liberia needs to work further on demarcating land.

Land is a chronic issue in the border region. As a result of people fleeing during political crisis, over time opportunists on both sides of the conflict seized land. Land owned by IDPs and refugees have been taken and as indicated by interviews, are a reason to not return. Partners found in field surveys that the land grabs led to a “weakening of the town chiefs, by-passing the de facto land allocation systems, and questioning contracts or agreements made in good faith.”

When land disputes arise, often there is associated violence from the affected party, which is being exacerbated by armed groups. According to a 2012 NRC survey, 50% of surveyed individuals with land disputes experienced associated violence. Armed groups provide an added element of insecurity.

As Rule of Law is established in the post conflict areas, partners must support sensitization of communities on land rights and how to access state authorities to map out who owns what land, and who can provide land documentation. Any interventions need to be carefully planned and ensure non-favoritism. This is backed by 2012 NRC surveys on Land Conflict.

Ivorian returnees from August 2011 in one area of Moyen-Cavally said they were able to work out an agreement with the Dozos to access land. They commented that as more people began returning later in the year, the issue of land became more critical as more became occupied. This goes to show the nuances in the region.





## SECTION E

SOCIAL  
COHESION

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has recently completed a cross border survey that reveals that women don't have equal access to education and that girls leave school earlier than boys<sup>8</sup>. This is independent from the different degrees of State authority in each country.

Communities in Côte d'Ivoire are more heterogeneous and are far more affected by social division than those in Liberia. Liberia is characterized by a high level of ethnic homogeneity, as the main tribes constitute the large majority of the population in each community. However, in both countries women have no influence in the decision-making. Whether it is in Côte d'Ivoire or in Liberia, the system remains patriarchal.

Border communities maintain traditional systems to resolve conflicts and tensions. In Liberia, a large majority of respondents (64%) trust the village chiefs to improve relations between the communities. Only 6% consider that the authorities would be able to solve tensions between communities. Four main ethnic groups can be found on both sides of the border region. It is important to understand the underlying issues of the population of the border region between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, not only their locations, but moreover the power share, and obvious political allegiances.

On both sides of the border the different ethnic groups have intra tensions. Tension between Gio and Krahn still persist in Liberia, but the tension in Liberia is more likely to result in small disturbances that can be easily overcome as the Rule of Law is strengthened.

After the village chiefs and elders, youth associations or groups are perceived as being



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influential in the decision-making processes. In the communities assessed by DRC this year, youth groups are not only comprised of individuals between 15 and 25 years. There are also older adults who are destined to occupy a position of power in the community but are too young to join the elder groups. In the communities in Liberia, the survey reveals tensions between youths and elders.

The population across the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire continues to rely on traditional structures. Over a third of the population believes that an individual who holds a government job has a duty to help his family members by using his position<sup>9</sup>.

The level of collective action is low on both sides of the border. The population doesn't take active part in the management of the village resources. Therefore, the inhabitants' involvement in the public affairs remains weak.

Côte d'Ivoire is unstable and more vulnerable to the experience of skirmishes and fighting from both within and across its border. Any humanitarian interventions must account for social cohesion efforts, targeting ethnic differences and be mindful to not accidentally support one group over another.

Overall, Côte d'Ivoire is in need of a reconciliation process between people from the north and south and to ensure that armed groups are disarmed as part of the reconciliation process. If Liberians have been able to more or less resolve their differences, Côte d'Ivoire also has that potential.

<sup>8</sup> - In Bahn and Zia communities (local trading areas) children transport goods for businessmen between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. They have to drop out of school as soon as they are physically able to carry these goods for long distances.

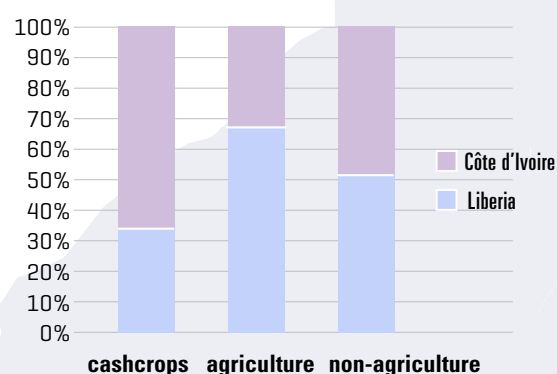
<sup>9</sup> - 54% of the respondents in Grand Gedeh, 38% in Nimba and 31% in River Gee (DRC)



# CONCLUSIONS

*Both governments face a long road ahead towards stabilization. To ensure existing tensions do not evolve into conflict and that governments are held accountable, effective cross border activities must commence.*

Land use of disuted area



Resources are available in both countries to increase food security, yet the critical situation in areas such as the south-western regions of Côte d'Ivoire persists. In the Moyen-Cavally region for example, issues surrounding social cohesion and access to land are preventing Ivorians from farming their plantations.

The problem of access to land is chronic in Côte d'Ivoire. If none of the allogenes has legal title to land, many have acquired land by purchase or donation. In Côte d'Ivoire, 98% of the rural land is linked to the customary law, while only 2% have a title deed.

The insecurity creates space for maneuver for occupation of land. In Côte d'Ivoire when autochtones (Ivorians) fled their villages to Liberia, the allogènes occupied abandoned land to grow their seeds.

Land issues in Liberia vary. The Liberian government has implemented laws that protect Liberians from land issues. Indeed, the laws introduced by the government to prevent this problem have been effective, but there are an increase of tensions, some related to humanitarian assistance to Ivorian refugees.

Successful return and reintegration of this population is vital to further stability in the region. In order for that to occur, effective SSR and DDR must be allowed alongside reconciliation and addressing the issue of land tenure

Côte d'Ivoire remains in a fragile state, and as Liberia struggles to build the rule of law, the border continues to be susceptible to its own fragility. Armed groups in the region do not respect boundaries and utilize the government's lack of capacity and the porous border to their advantage.

The conflict and subsequent influx of refugees into Liberia have led markets to dysfunction both there and in Côte d'Ivoire. Food insecurity is exacerbated by an absence of quality seed and lack agricultural techniques in both countries, with the latter being more prevalent in Liberia, where two civil wars have impeded education. The culmination of these factors has led to coping mechanisms being instituted by households to help them generate incomes during this period of food insecurity.

With the start of the new rice season, a significant number of refugees have access to land to

cultivate and intend to remain in Liberia until the next harvest. If available land is rehabilitated, their continued presence, should enable a suitable increase of both rice production and farming area. This process must be supported, namely through cash or food for assets.

As the flow of returnees continues, production and farming area should also increase in Côte d'Ivoire. However, due to the evident shift in the rainy season over the last few years, and since production is dependent on the distribution of rainfall, it is essential that farmers adapt to climate variability in the border region.

In terms of seed security, access to quality and improved varieties of seed must be facilitated throughout the region. In Côte d'Ivoire, the late return to plantations, the fall in human capital (refugees in Liberia), along with the low rainy season in 2011, and the destruction of barns, have prevented farmers from storing seeds for the 2012 season. If seeds are available in the markets, they will not be on time and of a sufficient quality to ensure a "good" production.

If commodities are available in Ivorian and Liberian markets, then the lack of cash presents

a major obstacle for the most vulnerable households, who are highly dependent on their own production and limit expenditure to the basic. Revenues collected by daily labor or informal work rarely meet the inflated prices of the market.

The rehabilitation of markets is essential to revitalizing the local economy and increasing supply. The construction of storage facilities should be considered especially in areas where the rainy season limits both supply and access to the market. This process of rehabilitation could be conducted through a joint program with WFP.

FAO has also good success rate on reduction of post-harvest losses on rice production through household metal silo technology<sup>10</sup>, instrumental at this stage to provide the double benefit of keeping up to 1 MT of grain (to sustain a family (5 persons) up to one year), while storing surplus for off-season sales during the lean season.

The creation, harmonization and dissemination of agricultural technologies must be implemented in Liberia. Specific technical crop management must be prepared for each type of agriculture. These can be made during a work group within the food security cluster and then used by partners in the field. The rice crop technical route should be introduced with seed distributions during the future.

A continuous market Monitoring System (EMMA) must be implemented in the region, in order to assess replenishment capabilities, stocking,

<sup>10</sup>- Distribution of metal rice silos to farmer groups or cooperatives in target communities can be sustained if partners provide beneficiaries with appropriate and locally adapted training in household metal silo management, construction, use and handling.