

It is also, and most importantly, an example of how a proven method can be used to solve a complex problem. Applying this method to a problem such as the demobilization of soldiers could yield a new crisis resolution and prevention instrument.

5.4.1 Mali's Grain Market Restructuring Program (PRMC): an experiment in co-ordination among donors

In 1980, after a period of price-setting policies, Mali found itself in a disastrous economic position. In an essentially agricultural country, production of cash crops (cotton and livestock) and staples (millet, sorghum, rice) was plummeting.

In 1981, the Malian government appealed to the main donors (Canada, USA, FRG, France, EU, WFP, the World Bank, FAO, the Netherlands and Belgium) and they proposed a grain market restructuring program. This program was based on a clear vision of the future of agricultural production, and included 250,000 tons of food aid over five years and a co-managed common fund to finance restructuring measures. Four bodies steered the project to restructure the entire grain production and distribution system:

- The technical committee: composed of the donors' technicians. Its function was to monitor everything related to the grain production and distribution system and brief the management committee.
- The management committee: composed of donors' aid mission heads. It maintained official contacts with the government, decided on the use of counterpart funds, and guided the work of the technical committee.
- The PRMC secretariat: headed by the WFP representative, who spoke on behalf of the donors and managed the common fund.
- The co-ordinating and steering committee (Comité d'orientation et de coordination / COC): a Malian body chaired by the Minister of Finance. All departments, agencies and institutions with an interest in the food system, as well as the private sector (merchants and producers) were represented on the COC.

Results

- The PRMC has helped dismantle SOMIEX (the Mali import, export and distribution company) and OPAM (Mali's agricultural products bureau) has been restructured.
- The grain production and distribution system has been fully liberalized, without a food crisis.