

*Continuing the Commitment: Agricultural
Development in the Sahel*

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**Continuing the Commitment:
Agricultural Development
in the Sahel**



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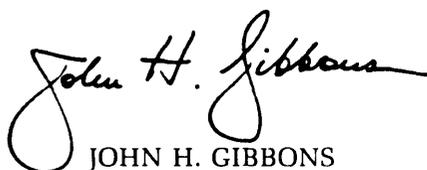
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Foreword

In 1985, rain came to the Sahel and provided partial relief from its latest drought. For the moment, hunger in West Africa is largely forgotten. However, many questions remain unanswered regarding why this area remains so poor and so vulnerable after nearly a decade of development assistance.

In June 1985, the Technology Assessment Board approved the requests of three congressional committees and five Board members that OTA address some of these questions as part of our study of low-resource agriculture in Africa. Although OTA's full study will not be completed until late 1987, we agreed to provide an earlier report focused on development in the Sahel. This special report examines the record of assistance to nine nations of the Sahel in West Africa, explores the lessons learned in a decade of efforts, and suggests policy implications for more effective U.S. assistance there and elsewhere in Africa. The report emphasizes the technical and institutional factors that constrain development in one of the poorest regions in the world. The committees that requested the study are: the House Select Committee on Hunger, the House Science and Technology Committee (the Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research, and Environment), and the House Agriculture Committee. Of OTA's Technology Assessment Board, Senators Hatch, Kennedy, and Pen and Representatives Evans and Udall requested this study. Also, the House Foreign Affairs Committee supported this work.

This report draws on the expertise of a large number of people. In particular, we appreciate the assistance provided by approximately 100 Sahelian scientists, decisionmakers, and farmers and herders with whom we spoke. Also, we are grateful to workshop participants, the advisory panel, and additional reviewers who helped us determine the scope of the work and reviewed it to ensure its accuracy. Of course, OTA remains responsible for the analysis and the report does not necessarily represent the views of individual members of the advisory panel.



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