Reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction in the Gourma region of Mali

Towards a process to identify & implement the measures required for societal and environmental resilience

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The Mali Elephant Project
a joint initiative of The WILD Foundation &
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Avant propos

"How can emergency humanitarian aid, indispensable in the post conflict phase, rapidly relieve present suffering, without exacerbating imbalances which are already threatening a viable future?"

Contents

Executive summary

The Gourma of Mali lies within the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao. Its recent history has been marked by several crises. This is a society which has been devastated by conflict (including a year of occupation at the hands of separatist and jihadist forces before the armed intervention). Gourma society was already complex, bearing the scars of past rebellions, procedures for resettling refugees, and other operations which have not always taken into account the area's socio-cultural situation (multiethnicity, strained social relations over natural resources and strategically situated wells, the movement of people and livestock).

Important strategic questions follow concerning how to manage reconciliation, reconstruction, the return of refugees, and development more generally, without reigniting tensions or sowing the seeds of future problems which would be difficult to control. Nonetheless, all those involved (donors, NGOs, and possibly some UN agencies) are currently working on projects for "reconciliation".

It is in this context that this workshop is being held to share observations on the complex and delicate nature of the social circumstances and to encourage all participants to take these into account when they act.

A workshop was held on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of May 2013 by the Ministry of Regional Administration, Decentralisation and Land Management and the Ministry for the Environment and Sanitation, with the methodological and financial support of the Mali Elephant Project[1]. The workshop was entitled, "*A national workshop for reflection and the sharing of information on post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction in the Gourma of Mali*".

The goal of this workshop was to examine the deterioration of social relations since the armed conflict which has shaken the north of Mali in general and the Gourma in particular; to analyse and identify the measures and actions required for post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction in the zone of the Gourma.

The participants focused on three main issues:

- the deterioration of the social fabric which underlies all the current problems and the difficulty of reconstruction, and which must be addressed if all future interventions are to succeed,
- the insecurity which stems from the absence of government structures,
- the lack of understanding of the complexity of the social context, which is reflected in a confused response.

To help to address this complexity, a classification of displaced persons according to the motive for their displacement has been developed and discussed in depth. The eight categories are as follows:

- People who have remained behind despite the violence and insecurity
- Those who flee due to fear of reprisals owing to skin colour or links with central power.
- Those managing risks through the opportunistic quest for refugee status.

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[1] With thanks to The WILD Foundation, the International Conservation Fund of Canada and the UK Government's Darwin Initiative

- Livestock herders who hope to come by land and natural resources and/or infrastructure for themselves after the conflict in the context of reconstruction (the return of refugees and displaced persons).
- Those undertaking commerce with armed groups and illegal trafficking.
- Those submitting to (e.g. employees), and collaborating with armed groups (combatants, guides, cooks,...).
- Those providing accommodation for armed groups and cooperating with the creation of the new order, particularly through the application of Sharia law.
- People who have specialised in forging civil documents (passports and cards).

Furthermore, the eight social categories can be regrouped into:

- those who were easy to integrate,
- refugees,
- displaced persons fleeing from the law.

Different considerations are needed in the case of each in order to achieve their effective reintegration and reconciliation. There can also be a spectrum within these groups -- and in particular the displaced persons -- meaning that integration can take many forms; in order to be effective, such integration should be adapted to people with due regard for the context. This means that local communities must be involved in reconciliation, and that their involvement must be a precondition for all interventions.

The process of defining a plan of action has shown that reconciliation, aid and reconstruction must involve local communities right from the beginning, and must take place at a local level to direct basic interventions accurately.

Moreover, this process of defining a plan of action has proved to be extremely valuable for helping participants to gain an insight into the situation and to identify how piecemeal interventions could support and reinforce each other.

In summary, the workshop recommended that:

1. Reconciliation, within and between communities, is a prerequisite for ensuring the social, economic and environmental sustainability of aid and reconstruction initiatives. We have used a study of the situation in Gourma to illustrate the fact that the reconstruction of local communities must be a principal aim for numerous reasons, notably:

   a. Local means of subsistence demand healthy ecosystems, and depend on the availability of natural resources. Community cohesion is necessary to avoid overexploiting resources and to protect/replenish resources. In addition, development which places an added burden on the environment -- and therefore on already fragile local means of subsistence -- must be avoided.

   b. To minimise the risk of aid falling into the wrong hands or creating/exacerbating social imbalance.

2. Reconstructing local communities will also help to improve local, national and international security by minimising the risk of repercussions beyond Mali's borders. Young men who are

unable to return to their communities and who have nowhere else to go risk becoming radicalised and/or engaging in criminal activity.

3. Local authorities must play an integral role in post-conflict reconciliation, aid and reconstruction, to ensure that these efforts are well targeted and to obtain the desired results. Their knowledge can aid the process of:

   a. Disarmament - they know who has weapons and can help in recovering them,

   b. Compensation - they are familiar with the pre-conflict situation, and can help to ensure that compensation is fair,

   c. Redress, reintegration and bringing to justice -- they know who has committed what crimes, and can therefore help to bring the guilty to justice. They can also help to determine the needs of displaced persons who wish to return to their communities.

4. Such a huge task requires a coordinated effort and therefore an additional aim of this workshop was to sketch out a plan to help coordinate the efforts made by many parties with different agendas. It was to help official programmes and individual actions to support each other. For example, regarding the priorities for integrated infrastructure, the plan of action emphasises the importance of reconstructing government buildings to allow for the return of government structures, rather than creating new settlements, which were deemed undesirable by the participants.

For the next steps, the workshop recommends:

- Passing the conclusions of the present workshop on to the Commission for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) for utilisation;

- Sharing the results of the present workshop at regional, local and communal levels across Gourma;

- Sharing information from the present workshop with the PTF and the ministries involved.

I. Context and justification

The Malian Gourma lies within the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao. Its recent history has been marked by several crises. This is a society which has been devastated by conflict (including a year of occupation at the hands of separatist and jihadist forces before the armed intervention). Gourma society was already complex, bearing the scars of past rebellions, procedures for resettling refugees, and other operations which have not always taken into account the area's socio-cultural situation (multiethnicity, strained social relations over natural resources and strategically situated wells, the movement of people and livestock).

Important strategic questions follow concerning how to manage reconciliation, reconstruction, the return of refugees, and development more generally, without reigniting tensions or sowing the seeds of future problems which would be difficult to control. Nonetheless, all those involved (donors, NGOs, and possibly some UN agencies) are currently working on projects for "reconciliation".

It is in this context that this workshop is being held to share observations on the complex and delicate nature of the social circumstances and to encourage all participants to take these into account when they act.

Gourma: balance disrupted in the management of natural resources and open wounds in society.

The armed conflict in north Mali has impacted heavily on the Gourma region. The following effects are notable:

- direct victims of the conflict, both combatants and civilians : deaths, disabling injuries, trauma...
- population displacement (refugees and displaced persons); with the resulting impact on the living conditions and health of these people wherever they find themselves, as well as on the areas of departure and arrival, and on the areas traversed;
- socio-ethnic tensions and conflicts reawakened or induced by the conflict itself -- these owing to the stances and strategies adopted by each side during the different stages of the conflict;
- banditry and residual insecurity;
- strain on and/or destruction of natural resources which are indispensable to the ways of life of the "local" populations (both resident and nomadic);
- the destruction of protected natural resources;

From what we have been able to observe while the armed groups were present and after they fled following the Franco-Malian intervention, it appears that population displacement is a key factor in destabilisation. According to the mayors of sixteen (16) of Gourma's communes: the *cercles* of Douentza and Rharous, the number of displaced persons and refugees borders on 100,000 out of a total population of 2,798,291.

As for those who have remained in the area, they are confronted with insecurity in a context of generalised uncertainty and instability. This has led them to develop short-term survival strategies, individual and collective, while they wait for the situation to improve and for the view ahead to become clearer.

More specifically, strategies developed by certain communities and ethnic groups are threatening historically established relations of coexistence. And the abuses committed by some representatives of communities and socio-ethnic groups are having destructive effects on how collectives are perceived, and are steadily poisoning relations between the socio-ethnic groups. This harmful dynamic of weakening social bonds, besides threatening the coexistence of current populations, also poses a threat to future generations: Gourma's scarce and fragile natural resources depend on their careful management which can only be implemented whilst peaceful social relations exist between different communities whose interests, especially their short-term ones, diverge. Failing that, and bearing in mind the natural environment's lack of resilience, a serious and lasting deterioration of the area's productive potential is looming. The survival and future of thousands of Gourma's children, obliged to succeed the present generation, depends on it. For if they are malnourished today, these children will be of no "use" tomorrow.

As is often the case, when an armed conflict erupts, environmental concerns are left behind: completely ignored while the conflict is going on, they are often hardly a priority in the post-conflict phase. So it is that in the wake of Gourma's huge population displacement towards areas considered to be more peaceful, thousands of hectares of pasture left behind have fallen prey to brush fires. The wildlife, including that of Gourma's partially protected elephant reserve, has not been spared.

The challenge is to work simultaneously towards healing the wounds of past conflict -- with the necessary urgency -- and towards preventing further conflicts by demonstrating the requisite prudence. We should acquaint ourselves with the worst -- which has already come to pass -- so that we can remedy its destructive effects. It is equally indispensable, given the signs of tensions already present, that we should use foresight to avoid further social conflicts being triggered in this area of Gourma, whose resources are vital to the poor populations who live there.

The situation is described in more detail in The WILD Foundation report, "Social bonds and peace in Gourma: a priority shared by emergency workers" which can be found in Appendix I.

II. Objectives, methodology and programme of the workshop

The specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- Mobilise those involved to promote reconciliation and the rebuilding of peace in Malian Gourma as a matter of urgency;
- Share available information and identify the threats to peace within communities and between ethnic groups which formerly lived in harmony;
- Reach a consensus on the immediate measures to be taken alongside the emergency aid being mobilised;
- Define the arrangements for post-conflict reconstruction in the Gourma area, and how they fit in with the broader process of reconciliation led by the national reconciliation commission;
- Map out the process for re-establishing peace between social groups;
- Work out a strategic intervention plan.

65 (sixty-five) people took part in this workshop. They represented different administrative, political and technical levels:

- The national level: the government members of nine (9) ministerial departments, the national directors of eleven (11) ministerial departments, the representatives of five (5) large civil society federations (The National Council of Civil Society, The National Forum of Civil Society Organisations (FOSC), The Coordinated Associations of Civil Society (CAFO), and The National Youth Council and North Malian Group (COREN).
- The regional level: the representatives of the supervisory authority for Gourma's regions, the regional directors of planning, statistics, ICT, and land and population management.
- Various other levels: individuals with a high profile owing to their identity, resources or opinions: ex-prime ministers, governors, teachers and business leaders; all of these come from north Mali and have in-depth knowledge of the past and present rebellions there.

To all the above must be added men and women representing the state, private and international press and broadcast media. *(See the list of participants in the Appendix)*.

The workshop ran for three days in plenary and parallel sessions; during these, the participants considered the following subject areas:

- Sharing, organising ideas, and learning on the basis of available information.
- Means of reconciliation.
- Planning the way forward / developing the road map.

2.1 Preparation

A preliminary analysis of the socio-environmental situation in Gourma by the Mali Elephant Project team concluded that a wider debate including everyone involved at all levels was vital.

When this national workshop for reflection and information sharing on post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction in the Malian Gourma area was first being thought out, a team was put together by the two departments responsible for the institutional supervision of the workshop. The team, that of environment and sanitation, comprised six (6) officials appointed by the Ministries of Decentralisation and of Regional Development (see the list in the Appendix). The objectives set by this team were to:

- Encourage more in-depth thinking about how Mali's highest authorities could be involved in the post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction process;
- Complete and improve the workshop's terms of reference;
- Define an action plan allowing for the fulfilment of the workshop's objectives;
- Report to the relevant departments on the social, environmental and economic challenges posed to communities in post-conflict conditions;
- Contribute, during and after the workshop, to decompartmentalising, and ensuring consistency and coordination between, the different parties involved in the post-conflict situation.

The team's working meetings have provided us with the workshop's list of participants, the programme, and the presentations and contributions.

2.2 The running of the workshop

The workshop was held in the Bamako International Conference Centre (CICB) from the 22nd to the 23rd May 2013. The workshop was facilitated by the national team responsible for technical preparation as well as the consultant.

The adopted working methodology saw the alternation of plenary and parallel sessions, during which brainstorming and discussions enabled the available information to be shared. For this purpose, a board was set up to chair the debate. The official panel comprised:

- M. Bakary BAGAYOGO, Jurist and Technical Adviser at the MDCDA, president ;
- M. Baikoro FOFANA, Water Resources and Forestry Engineer at the MEA, vice president ;
- Dr Badra MACALOU, Political Scientist and Higher Education Professor, general *rapporteur*/facilitator.

2.3 The format of the workshop

The methodological guidelines for the workshop were drawn up and validated by The WILD Foundation team. They were created to manage the debates for a mutual understanding of the workshop's objectives and outcomes and to give the participants a clear idea of the scope and orientation of the work to be carried out during the workshop. They also focussed on restoring community links in accordance with the traditional social organisation of Gourma's ethnicities and communities.

The first day was reserved for opening ceremonies, general presentations, participant reactions and the formation of working groups. The second and third days were dedicated to the parallel

and plenary sessions. The thinking proper took place within a combination of presentations, group sessions and plenary discussions.

2.4 The opening ceremony

Two speeches marked the opening of the workshop. The sitting was chaired by Mr Abdourahamane Oumar TOURE, Deputy to the Minister for Regional Administration, Decentralisation and Land Management, responsible for Decentralisation and Land Management, the Minister for the Environment and Sanitation and two other government members.

The first speech: given by Dr Susan CANNEY, representative of The WILD Foundation, who came from England to support the running of the workshop.

Dr Susan Canney is head of The Mali Elephant Project, a joint initiative between The WILD Foundation and The International Conservation Fund of Canada. She has known the Sahel region for more than 25 years, and the Gourma region since 2003, which is home to West Africa's most endangered elephant population. Dr Canney introduced the workshop, explaining its aims and how the challenge of post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction has been a concern for all Malians, all friends of Mali, and all environmentalists familiar with the areas affected *(see the full speech in the Appendix).*

The second speech: the opening speech of the Deputy to the Minister for Regional Administration, Decentralisation and Land Management, responsible for Decentralisation and Land Management *(see the full speech in the Appendix).*

In view of the mandates assigned to members of government and of the government project[2] in support of securing a lasting peace in the areas affected by the conflict (cf. the TDR in the Appendix), the Deputy responsible for Decentralisation and Land Management is the most suitable person to ensure the institutional supervision of the workshop.

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[2] It must be noted that the Ministry responsible for Decentralisation and Land Management and the Supreme Council of Communities have already jointly developed the terms of reference for a project which involves holding major events at national, regional and local levels in the aim of reconciling the sons and daughters of the land. This project has been submitted to the Malian State but has not yet received funding.

III The presentations

There were three presentations which are summarised as follows:

3.1 Social bonds and peace in Gourma by the WILD Foundation's representative in Mali, Mr Nomba Ganamé.

This talk presented a list of factors liable to cause conflicts in Africa. Analysis of these factors reveals that the difficulty in putting an end to them is becoming increasingly extreme. More difficult still was the return to a prosperous peace. Mr Ganamé presented the results of the study given in The WILD Foundation report (Appendix I), and used the social categories set out there to structure his discussion. The main question suggested by the reflection and analysis of those involved was: how can emergency humanitarian aid -- indispensable in the post conflict phase -- rapidly relieve present suffering, without exacerbating imbalances which are already threatening a viable future? Such is the question which will be asked -- which has already been asked -- in Malian Gourma **(***see the presentation in the Appendix)*.

3.2 Land Management: a Contribution to post-conflict reconstruction by Sambèle B Diallo, National Director of Land Management

This contribution strengthened the previous presentation in discussing the factors liable to cause armed conflicts in Africa. Despite not explicitly broaching the subject of the major post-conflict challenge, the presentation repeated most of the destabilising factors liable to cause conflicts in the case of Mali. "Our country is generally underequipped. Instead of destructive contention for resources and land, we must organise competition for space by defining the rules of the game, by emphasising solidarity and the sharing of risks, and by establishing mechanisms which enable compensation for regional difficulties linked to geographical situation and natural conditions" (measures which favour disadvantaged areas).

The presentation placed emphasis on the commune as a structure established by communities at grassroots level. It was therefore the commune's job to respond to the critical needs of communities in its role of conceiving, scheduling and acting for economic, social and cultural development. The commune must act, on all issues forming part of the communal interest and therefore the interest of communities, and primarily on its responsibility to develop the land use and communal space management plans in compliance with the *cercle* [the second level administrative unit in Mali] (*see the presentation in the Appendix)*.

3.3 Implementing Decentralisation: the consolidation of social relations by Bakary Bakayoko, technical adviser on decentralisation at MATDAT

As in the second presentation, Mr Bakayoko did not explicitly broach the subject of the major post-conflict challenge. However, it complements the second presentation. Here, particular emphasis is placed on the role of local authorities in managing the crisis and reconciliation.

It stresses, however, communities' participation in acting to raise awareness about those placed in or taking refuge in neighbouring countries. And it encourages elected officials to engage social dialogue between neighbours, communities, and social groups at the heart of local authorities.

In the areas directly affected, the presentation advocates relaunching consultations and intercommunal meetings, strengthening and drawing benefit from the culture of peace, including through the establishment of a peace week.

For a more lasting reinforcement of peace, it advocates reemphasising the importance of and implementing endogenous (traditional) measures for prevention, reconciliation and the management of conflicts and security issues (*see the presentation in the Appendix)*.

All these presentations aimed to facilitate reflection on the challenges of and "local capacity" for post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. In turn, the parallel and plenary sessions have deepened this reflection by identifying the major bases for solution. Throughout the workshop's formal and informal exchanges, the focus was on the links and dynamic interactions between these different factors as well as on strategies for putting an end to destructive dynamics and promoting a lasting peace.

3.4 Reactions, significant contributions

Following the presentations, reactions and significant contributions were recorded. We include three:

Ahmed Ag Hamani, ex-Prime Minister, of the Touareg ethnic group, a national of north Mali whose in-depth knowledge of Gourma's human and physical environment is a result of his having spent his entire childhood there.

According to Mr Ag Hamani:

(1) "Aspects of the post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction have already been poorly managed, with everyone anxiously wanting to do something in the name of emergency. This does not work. Look at the categories of persons described; none have ever dreamed of carrying out such a task. For me, this work is crucial for all the occupied territories."

(2) Young people who have been seen bearing arms and who have harmed their own family members must be brought to justice.

(3) Those people who seek to profit from the benefits of refugee status and those farmers who hope to come by land and natural resources and/or infrastructure for themselves after the conflict in the context of reconstruction: there is no question of creating new infrastructure for

them. The spread of water points in Gourma is going to destroy the few pastoral resources which govern the survival of the farmers in this area

(4) All the displaced persons and refugees must return home,.

(5) "We absolutely must break with small-scale nomadism and work towards achieving a lasting fixed state for farming populations because while they are scattered about the wilderness no socio-economic investment can be made on their behalf. Moreover, being so dispersed gives them an opportunity to hide weapons; in the context of reconciliation and reconstruction we must avoid laying down infrastructure in the form of wells, cereal stores, schools, health clinics and others without having a guarantee that the recipients will ensure the sustained maintenance of this infrastructure."

Mahamadou Maiga, air force general of the Songhaï ethnic group, originally from Gao and a former governor of Timbuktu with in-depth knowledge of past rebellions and different armed conflicts, past and present.

For him, "we absolutely must take into account those people who have stayed put despite insecurity and violence. These people deserve particular attention in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction. If today, the state, the project teams and the security forces have information on the areas of conflict, it is thanks to the people who have stayed where they were despite insecurity and violence".

Mrs Cisse Fady Toure, an influential member of the CAFAO

Mrs Toure stressed that as well as people who abused their own family members there are also dealers in false civil documents. The latter include passports and identity cards. According to Mrs Cisse Fady Toure, "since rebellion began in the north, groups of young people have formed to facilitate the entry and exit of certain people into and out of the country by equipping them with false papers. And this is why we are seeing a surprising increase in the number of jihadists".

IV. The outputs of the workshop

4.1 Sharing, organizing ideas and learning on the basis of available information.

The objectives of this area of focus were to:

- Ensure that the participants develop a common understanding of the expected objectives, process and outcomes of the workshop, and to recognise that no-one has all the answers to the problems, and that they must work together to find appropriate solutions.
- Involve the participants in a systematic examination of what is known about the current situation, particularly the social impact of the conflict, of aid and of reconstruction. The aim is for the participants to gain a common base of information and a realisation of the areas where information is lacking.
- To examine the information gathered, draw conclusions and establish criteria for evaluating and regulating future interventions.

The diversity of the participants means that the discussions covered many subjects prompted by local observations and geopolitical considerations. Nevertheless, they centre around three main issues:

- the deterioration of the social fabric which underpins all the problems and which must be addressed for all future interventions to succeed;
- the insecurity which results from the absence of government structures;
- the confusion and lack of understanding regarding the complexity of the social context, which is reflected in a confused response.

The above have been organised into categories in the table below; these categories reflect issues which recurred throughout the discussions.

Issue	Observations	Lessons learned
Social impact/ linked to physical and psychological violence	Deterioration of the social fabric: - A climate of distrust and general suspicion; - A vengeful spirit; - A crisis of confidence, tension, and the weakening of intra and intercommunal bonds; - A breakdown in religious tolerance. Insecurity: - Insecurity owing to the existence of weapons caches; - The dispersion of populations and the displacement of people towards safer areas; - The closing of schools and	Survival strategies developed which harm social relations; The vulnerability of young people which could degenerate into violence; The after-effects of frustration and affronts to human dignity; The physical and psychological aftermath of rape and other forms of violence; A coordinated approach needs to be taken by the different people involved, and there needs to be a high level of communication.

	health centres and difficulties in accessing basic social services (education, health etc.). A lack of coherence in humanitarian interventions.	
Economic impacts	Increased impoverishment: - A slowdown in economic activity (traffic problems, the closure of some weekly fairs); - Insecurity and therefore a higher cost of living; - A halt in development activities in Gourma; - The looting of shops and motor vehicles.	Poverty (especially that of young people) has been one of the most important factors in enabling jihadists and other drug traffickers to put down roots in different areas.
Environmental impact	- A surge in the number of brush fires; - An increase in poaching; - Disruption to elephant range.	The devastated landscape confirms the basic premise that the natural environment suffers some of the worst consequences of armed conflicts; it receives no attention, neither during the conflict nor during the process of post-conflict reconstruction. Gourma should remain vigilant in this matter.
Participator (State administration)	- State absence - defence and security forces, police forces, forestry officers.	People's security is intrinsically linked to the presence of the State (defence and security forces). Consequently, the return of displaced persons and refugees depends on it for a large part.
Participators (local authorities)	- The absence of elected officials; - Increasingly dysfunctional local authorities.	The absence of elected officials indicates to people that the crisis is continuing and does not encourage them to return. Moreover people's fear increases when they feel themselves abandoned.
Confusions/portrayals which prejudice understanding of the crisis	- The complex nature of the reading/understanding of the crisis by those involved at local, regional and international level; - Confusion and mix-up, where Touaregs and whites are considered to be rebels; - Warmongering propaganda by some foreign media.	This confusion provides the best opportunity for the conflict to persist and become entrenched. In particular it has the effect of discouraging and weakening those who identify with and defend their country, and even leading to their vilification by those who have taken up arms against it. No effort of communication should be spared to rectify this situation.
The geopolitical dimension	- Problems monitoring cross-border movements in Gourma; - Residual insecurity in the area.	Malian Gourma is known for being a place, a crossroads for seasonal migration, which is indispensable to the economic life of surrounding regions; yet it has emerged as an area of insecurity where organised banditry is on the rise.
Lessons learned from the management of past conflicts in the Gourma area	- The weakness of State authority (impunity, undue lenience, injustice); - The non-participation of the people in the management of past conflicts; - The insufficiency of security forces in the area.	Draw all available lessons from the management of past conflicts.

Table 1 : Information available on the current situation

4.2 Steps towards reconciliation

The objectives of this focus were:

- For the participants to explore the idea of community reconciliation and what this demands, in order for them to be aware of different communities and of the consequences of divisions, and to have an overview of the remedial measures which might be necessary.
- To involve the participants in a detailed discussion to make them aware of how the "reconciliation" would play out on the ground, for the different communities and the different groups and categories of people. At the same time they are to develop a systematic understanding of the considered roles and responsibilities of central government, local authorities, and individuals.
- To examine how communities are constructed, and what must be done to avoid divisions and future conflicts.

Different categories of people were studied so that participants could reflect on what would be necessary for the peaceful return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons.

- Everyone agreed that these categories formed a suitable and useful classification, but the analysis allowed for the addition of two other groups of people to the typology of displaced persons, according to the motive for their displacement, as defined in the WILD Foundation's preliminary study (Appendix I). These groups are as follows:
- People who have remained behind despite the violence and insecurity. These are families belonging to certain social groups who claim to be the area's legitimate "founders". Despite the conflict and its accompanying violence, this group of people has remained calm. They ask themselves "flee to go where?", and commit to staying. "It is impossible for us to leave our homeland in the hands of strangers and our doomed children. Those people, they stay if things go well and leave if they don't. In all circumstances, we are condemned to remain here". They represent the remainder of the population after others have left.
- Young people who have left their home to relocate to neighbouring countries and who have specialised in forging civil documents such as passports and identity cards. They work not only with young people wishing to migrate but also with Islamists from neighbouring states who want to come to support their Islamist brothers.

The main conclusions were as follows:

- The eight social categories could be regrouped into:
  o those who are relatively easy to integrate,
  o refugees,
  o displaced persons fleeing from the law.

- The eight social categories could be regrouped into:
- Different considerations are needed in the case of each in order to achieve their effective reintegration and reconciliation.
- There can also be a spectrum within these groups -- and in particular the displaced persons -- meaning that integration can take many forms; in order to be effective, such integration should be adapted to people with due regard for the context.

- This means that local communities must be involved in reconciliation, and that their involvement must be a precondition for all interventions.

The classification of displaced persons according to the motive for their displacement and the categorial analysis of each group is summarised in the following table:

Group in question	Categories	Analysis
I – easy to integrate	1. People who have remained behind despite the violence and insecurity (new category). 2. People who preferred to take safety precautions by leaving the area of conflict.	After the conflict, coexistence between these two groups of people is easier. There is very little risk in a reckoning between these two categories of people. However, the first group may lay more claim to benefits of the reconstruction than the second. **Strategy** - A prudent strategy would be desirable for choosing the interlocutors involved in implementing the reconstruction. For this, it is a prerequisite that inter-community meetings be held so that everyone is given the opportunity to express themselves more freely about post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. The initiators can be those in dialogue with the partners (State officials, project teams, NGOs etc.) for reconciliation and reconstruction. However, it would be wise to be careful and avoid creating pockets of power. Those running such meetings will be sure to highlight the obligation to live together to reinforce solidarity and peace in a territory whose fragile shared resources govern the survival of all.
II – Refugees	3. People who seek to profit from the benefits of refugee status. 4. Farmers who hope to come by land and natural resources and/or infrastructure for themselves after the conflict in the context of reconstruction. 5. Young people who have left their home to relocate to neighbouring countries and who have specialised in forging civil documents - passports and cards.	In view of their motives, these three groups of people have similar interests, and can sometimes exaggerate their claims. Both the first and second groups hope to come by land especially if they manage to acquire the means to do so as a result of their refugee status. In the reconciliation and reconstruction process they must be viewed and treated in the same fashion. **Strategy** - The approach must put the necessity of respecting the territorial settlement first. The impossibility of creating new infrastructure in an area whose fragile natural resources govern the survival of all. Local communities must be involved in the compensation process, because only they are familiar with the pre-conflict situation: who had what, who lost what and how it was lost. Otherwise there would be a risk of inflated claims.

III – Displaced persons who fear the law	6. People who, once the conflict had begun, reverted to selling trafficked or stolen produce (vehicles, arms, drugs) and who have collaborated closely with armed groups and bandits. 7. People who have committed or been involved in all sorts of wrongdoing. 8. People who have converted to the cause of the Islamists.	The reconciliation of these people with the other members of society after the conflict is a very complex matter insofar as they are still living in hiding and could continue to do so for a long time. Thus as far as their whereabouts are unknown, their capacity to cause social and economic trouble is strong and includes risks of radicalisation. They are the seeds for future atrocities and for: • organised banditry, • networks for the sale and circulation of weapons and drugs, • poachers/accomplices, • coordinators of Islamist or drug-trafficking networks. **Strategy** - The strategy would be to work together with all the localities both in Gourma and in the neighbouring villages of bordering countries in order to identify and locate them as far as possible. Finding a viable way to recover arms is a priority; we must learn from past experience in this matter.

Table 2 - The classification of displaced persons and observations on what is needed for their integration.

4.3 Planning the way forward/Developing the road map

The objectives of this area of focus were:

- To go beyond the immediate problems and reflect on what must be done to rebuild Gourma/Mali in accordance with the participants' wishes for the future;
- To work together and generate concrete ideas for dealing with specific issues;
- To consider how the process begun at this workshop should move forward: coming up with concrete conclusions, actions and ways to get involved so that it retains its momentum, and generates real commitment among the participants.

The results of these discussions are summarised in the two tables below. The first (table 3) summarises the concrete measures needing to be taken for each of the social categories previously defined. The second (table 4) details the courses of action necessary to achieve the desired goals, and whether the latter are short-term, mid-term or long-term needs. One of the general recommendations arising from the workshop was that the process of reconciliation, aid and reconstruction must involve local communities right from the beginning. And so, although these tables reflect the thinking of those participating in the workshop, the process can occur at other levels, in particular the local level, so that basic interventions might be coordinated and guided correctly.

Moreover, the process of defining a plan of action has proved to be extremely valuable for gaining an insight into the situation and identifying how piecemeal interventions could support and reinforce each other.

Categories and motives for displacement	Means of solution
People who have remained behind despite the violence and insecurity	- Identifying large areas of influence (traditional chiefdoms); - Obtaining advice from dignitaries for a more effective reconciliation and integration of people who have committed abuses; - Identifying training needs; - Identifying forms of attachment to the land and to resources; - Respecting the territorial settlement and social bonds.
Fear of reprisals owing to skin colour or links with central power. **Estimated number: 29,000**	- Winning trust through visits, organising community meetings, the return of administration, projects, NGOs; - Increasing communication (raising awareness among the target audience); - Organising cultural events.
Managing risks through the opportunistic quest for refugee status. **Estimated number: 58,000.**	- Raising awareness of and providing information on the potential risks and dangers of opportunism at a time of armed conflict; - Explaining the danger which their wishes imply for social relations, the environment and the local economy; - Reoccupying abandoned areas; - Avoiding creating any new refugees.
Livestock herders who hope to come by land and natural resources and/or infrastructure for themselves after the conflict in the context of reconstruction (the return of refugees and displaced persons). **Estimated number: 500**	- Escorting them to their original locations and resettling them there; - Avoiding creating any new refugees for any reason; - Organising farmers around existing water sources; - Restoring pastures; - Defining rural plots; allocating rural plots on a contractual basis; setting taxes for watering and pasturing; - Identifying training projects for getting young people into work, and financing these projects; Organising cultural events (e.g. the festival of cattle).
Commerce with armed groups and illegal trafficking. **Estimated number: 1500**	- Locating them by forging collaborative relationships with the local villagers; - Recovering weapons, if possible; failing that, reporting them to the authorities; - Establishing and applying popular psycho-social sanctions (banishment, banning them from participating in weddings and funerals if they reoffend); - Making the social commitment no longer to take part in such acts; - Identifying training needs in social integration; - Identifying projects for getting young people into work, and financing these projects.
Those submitting to (e.g. employees), and collaborating with armed groups (combatants, guides, cooks,…). **Estimated number: 7500**	- Locating them by forging collaborative relationships with the local villagers; - If possible, recovering stolen goods in general and weapons in particular. Failing that, reporting them to the authorities; - Establishing and applying popular psycho-social sanctions (banishment, banning them from participating in weddings and funerals if they reoffend); - Making the social commitment no longer to take part in such acts; - Identifying training needs in social integration; - Identifying projects for getting young people into work, and financing these projects.
Providing accommodation for armed groups and cooperating with the creation of the new order, particularly through the application of Sharia law. **Estimated number: 5000**	- Conducting a census of rural Islamic schools; - Organising character checks on the Islamic teachers; - Ensuring the survival of the Islamic method of teaching; - Organising and spreading the principles of the religion; - Raising awareness among the parents who send their children to Islamic schools; - Creating activity centres for the Islamic schools; - Identifying projects for training Islamic school students and getting them into work.

People who have specialised in forging civil documents (passports and cards).	- Developing security (a domain reserved for the police, the gendarmerie, the foresters and Customs); - Steps for social reintegration as identified above.

Table 3 - Provisional means of solution: completion of the table is to be carried out at the level of communities affected by the conflict

Goals	Actions to be taken	Execution period: short, mid, or long term		
		S	*M*	*L*
Goal 1 Coexistence within and between ethnic groups has improved and communities are rallying to ensure: the protection of natural resources, for example through installing fire walls and other defences. local surveillance patrols.	Organise various large public meetings: 1. at a regional level to raise awareness; and 2. at a local level to drive home the necessity of social reconciliation, which is an essential basis for the success of post-conflict reconstruction	X	X	
	Organise large public meetings, within and between communes and communities, to inform people of the necessity of social reconciliation, which is an essential basis for the success of post-conflict reconstruction	X		
	Select training modules on forms of attachment to land and resources, reinforcing social bonds, respecting the territorial settlement, and managing natural resources.	X	X	X
Goal 2 The safety of people and their private property is secured in the entire Gourma area (there are no weapons in circulation, and there is no organised banditry), and farmers (shepherds), itinerant traders and hauliers are getting back to their work.	Organise various large public meetings: 1. at a regional level to raise awareness; and 2. at a local level to drive home the necessity of social reconciliation, which is an essential basis for personal safety and the safety of personal property.	X	X	X
	Raise awareness among farmers in the aim of locating arms caches in forests and isolated camps in the wilderness.	X	X	
	Adopt measures which involve village chiefs, political leaders, opinion leaders and administration in the recovery of all illegal weapons.	X		
	Identify prominent figures who could prove influential in assisting in the recovery of arms.	X		
	Obtain advice from dignitaries for a more effective reconciliation and integration of people who have committed abuses. Profit from past experience of settling conflicts. Set up reconciliation commissions.	X		
Goal 3 Technical services, project teams and NGOs have resumed their support work in all areas.	Win trust through visits, organising community meetings, the return of administration, projects, NGOs.	X		
	Increase communication (raising awareness among the target audience).	X	X	

	Inform those involved of the need to resume their work.	X	X	
	Increase communication (raising awareness among the target audience).		X	X
	Organise cultural events.		X	X
Goal 4 Good relations of coexistence exist between communities and socio-ethnic groups.	Lead a campaign to raise awareness about and provide information on motives.	X		
	Organise meetings to explain the dangers of the proliferation of infrastructure for social relations, the environment and the local economy.	X	X	X
	Organise meetings to raise awareness about and provide information on the resettlement of abandoned areas.	X		
	Take steps to avoid creating any new refugees.	X	X	X
Goal 5 The deterioration of social bonds has been reversed; protection of natural resources is proceeding as normal; and the risk of social tensions linked to post-conflict reconstruction has been eliminated in Gourma.	Escort farmers to their original locations and resettle them there.	X	X	
	Define rural plots.	X	X	X
	Organise farmers around existing water sources.	X	X	X
	Restore pastures.	X	X	X
	Allocate rural perimeters on a contractual basis.		X	X
	Set taxes for watering and pasturing within the rural perimeters.		X	X
	Organise cultural events (e.g. the festival of cattle).		x	X
	Avoid creating any new refugees for any reason.	X	X	
	Identify projects for training young people and getting them into work.	X	X	
	Fund projects for training young people and getting them into work		X	X
Goal 6 Malian Gourma has a territorial cohesion plan, and a development and management plan which takes into account social and environmental factors.	Finalise the different management schemes for the three (3) regions of Gourma.		x	x
	Ensure their implementation and follow-up - evaluate the territorial cohesion plan.		X	X
	Secure funding for the territorial cohesion plan, and the development and management plan taking into account social and environmental factors.		X X	X X

Table 4: Provisional actions to consolidate reconciliation in Malian Gourma (completion of the table is to be carried out at the level of communities affected by the conflict)

Objectives	Activities	Implementation period			Total cost FCFA	Expected results	Actors responsible for implementation	
		1-2 years	*1-5 years*	*1-10 years*			*Local institutions*	*Partners*
Objective 1	1	x	x			All serious problems – social, economic and environmental – linked to the conflict are recorded	Chiefs of villages, fractions, local elected representatives, associations	The State, FTPs, private donors
	2	x	x	x		The young have employment, for example in natural resource management	Local elected representatives, projects, NGOs	The State, FTPs, private donors
	3	x	x	x				
Objective 2	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
Objective 3	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
Objective 4	1							
	2							
	3							
	4							

Table 5: Provisional plan of action (completion of the table is to be carried out at the level of communities affected by the conflict)

V. Conclusions and recommendations of the workshop

The evaluation of the current situation centres around three main issues:

- the deterioration of the social fabric which underlies all the current problems and the difficulty of reconstruction, and which must be addressed if all future interventions are to succeed,
- the insecurity which stems from the absence of government structures,
- the lack of understanding of the complexity of the social context, which is reflected in a confused response.

To help to address this complexity, a classification of displaced persons according to the motive for their displacement has been developed and discussed in depth. The eight categories are as follows:

- People who have remained behind despite the violence and insecurity
- Those who flee due to fear of reprisals owing to skin colour or links with central power.
- Those managing risks through the opportunistic quest for refugee status.
- Livestock herders who hope to come by land and natural resources and/or infrastructure for themselves after the conflict in the context of reconstruction (the return of refugees and displaced persons).
- Those undertaking commerce with armed groups and illegal trafficking.
- Those submitting to (e.g. employees), and collaborating with armed groups (combatants, guides, cooks,…).
- Those providing accommodation for armed groups and cooperating with the creation of the new order, particularly through the application of Sharia law.
- People who have specialised in forging civil documents (passports and cards).

Furthermore, the eight social categories can be regrouped into:

- those who were easy to integrate,
- refugees,
- displaced persons fleeing from the law.

Different considerations are needed in the case of each in order to achieve their effective reintegration and reconciliation. There can also be a spectrum within these groups -- and in particular the displaced persons -- meaning that integration can take many forms; in order to be effective, such integration should be adapted to people with due regard for the context. This means that local communities must be involved in reconciliation, and that their involvement must be a precondition for all interventions.

The process of defining a plan of action has shown that reconciliation, aid and reconstruction must involve local communities right from the beginning, and must take place at a local level to direct basic interventions accurately.

Moreover, this process of defining a plan of action has proved to be extremely valuable for helping participants to gain an insight into the situation and to identify how piecemeal interventions could support and reinforce each other.

In summary, the workshop recommended that:

1. Reconciliation, within and between communities, is a prerequisite for ensuring the social, economic and environmental sustainability of aid and reconstruction initiatives. We have used a study of the situation in Gourma to illustrate the fact that the reconstruction of local communities must be a principal aim for numerous reasons, notably:

    c. Local means of subsistence demand healthy ecosystems, and depend on the availability of natural resources. Community cohesion is necessary to avoid overexploiting resources and to protect/replenish resources. In addition, development which places an added burden on the environment -- and therefore on already fragile local means of subsistence -- must be avoided.

    d. To minimise the risk of aid falling into the wrong hands or creating/exacerbating social imbalance.

5. Reconstructing local communities will also help to improve local, national and international security by minimising the risk of repercussions beyond Mali's borders. Young men who are unable to return to their communities and who have nowhere else to go risk becoming radicalised and/or engaging in criminal activity.

6. Local authorities must play an integral role in post-conflict reconciliation, aid and reconstruction, to ensure that these efforts are well targeted and to obtain the desired results. Their knowledge can aid the process of:

    a. Disarmament - they know who has weapons and can help in recovering them,

    b. Compensation - they are familiar with the pre-conflict situation, and can help to ensure that compensation is fair,

    c. Redress, reintegration and bringing to justice -- they know who has committed what crimes, and can therefore help to bring the guilty to justice. They can also help to determine the needs of displaced persons who wish to return to their communities.

7. Such a huge task requires a coordinated effort and therefore an additional aim of this workshop was to sketch out a plan to help coordinate the efforts made by many parties with different agendas. It was to help official programmes and individual actions to support each other. For example, regarding the priorities for integrated infrastructure, the plan of action emphasises the importance of reconstructing government buildings to allow for the return of government structures, rather than creating new settlements, which were deemed undesirable by the participants.

For the next steps, the workshop recommends:

- Passing the conclusions of the present workshop on to the Commission for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) for utilisation;

- Sharing the results of the present workshop at regional, local and communal levels across Gourma;

- Sharing information from the present workshop with the PTF and the ministries involved.

Annexes

Annexe I   **Social bonds and peace in Gourma: a priority shared by all those working in the current emergency?**

                A report prepared by Nomba Ganamé, Field Manager of the Mali Elephant Project & Representative of The WILD Foundation in Mali, April 2013

Annexe II   **Speech given by Dr Susan Canney, Director of the Mali Elephant Project**

Annexe III   **Speech given by the Minister for Regional Administration, Decentralisation and Land Management**

Annexe I - Social bonds and peace in Gourma: a priority shared by all those working in the current emergency?

Nomba Ganame, Field Manager of the Mali Elephant Project & Representative of The WILD Foundation in Mali, April 2013

I Introduction

State fragility, unchecked population growth, mass youth unemployment, enduring poverty, exposure to unbridled economic globalisation, urbanization and rural exodus, criminal economic networks, the geostrategic pursuit of neighbouring or powerful states, governments' ill use of scant resources and mineral profits, economic extroversion and abnormal borders inherited from colonisation, separatist claims, insufficient access to education, exposure to extremist ideologies and movements : factors liable to ignite armed conflicts are in no short supply in Africa. But once a conflict is in motion, it becomes extremely difficult to put a end to it. More difficult still is the return to a prosperous peace.

Not only do armed conflicts destroy the lives of those exposed to them, combatants and local civilians alike; they also disrupt the fragile balances which existed before. In many cases they devastate the economic environment, and the social and political balances of the areas affected. The insecurity created by residual banditry lastingly compromises the return of certain sensitive economic activities such as tourism. The displacement of persons and intercommunal tensions disrupt balances – and patiently developed rules - which enable rural people to make cautious use of fragile resources for their livelihoods. From now on, the exhaustion of resources and the instability of populations risk exacerbating one another in a vicious circle.

How can emergency humanitarian aid -- indispensable in the post conflict phase -- rapidly relieve present suffering, without exacerbating imbalances which are already threatening a viable future? Such is the question which is going to be asked -- which has already been asked -- in the Malian (and Burkinabé) Gourma.

II The Gourma : balance disrupted in the management of natural resources and open wounds in society

The Gourma region lies at the centre of the interlinking spaces which form the Sahel belt. It is an area – a crossroads, particularly for transhumance, which is vital for the economic life of the surrounding regions. It is a site which welcomes people already damaged by great poverty. Furthermore it is a protected space for Sahel flora and fauna, including the elephants of West Africa, whose conservation is itself a national issue.

The armed conflict in north Mali has impacted heavily on the Gourma region. The following effects are to be noted:

- direct victims of the conflict, both combatants and civilians : deaths, disabling injuries, trauma...

- population displacement (refugees and displaced persons); with the resulting impact on the living conditions and health of these people wherever they find themselves, as well as on the areas of departure and arrival, and on the areas traversed;
- socio-ethnic tensions and conflicts reawakened or induced by the conflict itself -- these owing to the stances and strategies adopted by each side during the different stages of the conflict;
- banditry and residual insecurity;
- strain on and/or destruction of natural resources which are indispensable to the ways of life of the "local" populations (both resident and nomadic);
- the destruction of protected natural resources;

From what we have been able to observe while the armed groups were present and after they fled following the Franco-Malian intervention, it appears that population displacement is a key factor in destabilisation. According to the mayors of sixteen (16) of Gourma's communes: the *cercles* of Douentza and Rharous, the number of displaced persons and refugees borders on 100,000 out of a total population of 2,798,291.

As for those who have remained in the area, they are confronted with insecurity in a context of generalised uncertainty and instability. This has led them to develop short-term survival strategies, individual and collective, while they wait for the situation to improve and for the view ahead to become clearer.

More specifically, strategies developed by certain communities and ethnic groups are threatening historically established relations of coexistence. And the abuses committed by some representatives of communities and socio-ethnic groups are having destructive effects on how collectives are perceived, and are steadily poisoning relations between the socio-ethnic groups. This harmful dynamic of weakening social bonds, besides threatening the coexistence of current populations, also poses a threat to future generations: Gourma's scarce and fragile natural resources depend on their careful management which can only be implemented whilst peaceful social relations exist between different communities whose interests, especially their short-term ones, diverge. Failing that, and bearing in mind the natural environment's lack of resilience, a serious and lasting deterioration of the area's productive potential is looming. The survival and future of thousands of Gourma's children, obliged to succeed the present generation, depends on it. For if they are malnourished today, these children will be of no "use" tomorrow.

As is often the case, when an armed conflict erupts, environmental concerns are left behind: completely ignored while the conflict is going on, they are often hardly a priority in the post-conflict phase. So it is that in the wake of Gourma's huge population displacement towards areas considered to be more peaceful, thousands of hectares of pasture left behind have fallen prey to brush fires. The wildlife, including that of Gourma's partially protected elephant reserve, has not been spared.

> *More than 245 km2 of pasture land has been burnt in the communes of Gossi and Mondoro, and 102 km2 in the commune of Haribomo.*

> *A significant portion of the wildlife, which was already damaged owing to climactic instabilities, has been slaughtered. This includes thousands of wild geese and hundreds of dorcas gazelles.*
>
> *Africa's most endangered elephant and hippopotamus populations have fallen victim to massacre by rebel groups (7 elephants out of 344, and 3 hippopotamuses). This figure, by itself, might appear relatively low, but it symbolises a dam having just given way: what will happen if local populations no longer respect the ban on slaughtering these animals?*

The challenge is to work simultaneously towards healing the wounds of past conflict -- with the necessary urgency -- and towards preventing further conflicts by demonstrating the requisite prudence. We should acquaint ourselves with the worst -- which has already come to pass -- so that we can remedy its destructive effects. It is equally indispensable, given the signs of tensions already present, that we should use foresight to avoid further social conflicts being triggered in this area of Gourma, whose resources are vital to the poor populations who live there.

III   The findings

The method for gathering information

The information presented below was gathered in the course of regular discussions between Gourma farming communities and ourselves; these communities are our partners in working out how to protect the elephants and natural resources. During individual and small group interviews, we sought information relating to different armed groups: who they are, their aims, their motivation, the messages which they are circulating at local community level, their interests, and their behaviour towards inhabitants. These interviews were completed by telephone conversations, with refugees and displaced persons, but also with people with whom we had been in contact previously and who, during the conflict, had become involved with armed groups.

In some villages, established sites of factions and nomadic camps accessible during the conflict in Gourma, we had conversations over tea with village chiefs, prominent figures, and young members of self-defence groups formed in villages in response to nocturnal banditry.

The numerical data was gathered over the telephone from mayors and communal counsellors who had either stayed put despite the conflict or who had left their communes for more peaceful towns, keeping themselves informed all the while. We must therefore approach these figures warily because those responsible for them are currently also focussing on emergency issues and reconstruction. The attention given to priority post-conflict issues remains insufficient.

General findings on the reasons for population displacements

When the conflict broke out, and during the military operations, there were huge community displacements in all the areas concerned. The effects of the conflict together with the extreme poverty of the affected populations and the displacements for diverse motives, have concerned

all ethnic groups. Below, we propose a classification of displaced persons according to the motive for their displacement.

	Categories and motives for displacement	Categories of people concerned	Thousands of people
1	Fear of reprisals owing to skin colour or links with central power. **Estimated number: 29,000**	Unaware of the outcome of the conflict, these people preferred to take safety precautions. In particular these are people who have links with or who work with central power. This group includes prominent figures, elected officials, local project officers and NGO personnel, tourist guides and members of self-defence teams created when the conflict broke out and after the Gourma area and its major centres (communes, *cercles* and region) were abandoned by the administration and security services. These people hurriedly fled their homes without any belongings or material assets. Their goods, left behind, were often stolen by incoming armed groups as well as by young people from the local area.	29
2	Managing risks and the opportunistic quest for refugee status. **Estimated number: 58,000.**	These families have experience of conflict and post-conflict situations (the rebellion of the 1980s and 1990s) : they know that in leaving the area under the pretext of the war, they have a chance of benefitting from the advantages of refugee status (donations from NGOs, UN agencies and States). The strategy involves the majority of the family going to a refugee centre, leaving behind the able-bodied young. These young people keep the family goods safe, pursue economic activities if possible, and, in certain cases, become involved in organised banditry. "We don't put all our eggs in one basket," we were told by one family head who had fled Gourma when the conflict broke out.	58
3	Those who hope to come by land and natural resources and/or infrastructure for themselves after the conflict in the context of reconstruction (the return of refugees and displaced persons). **Estimated number: 500**	These families left their livestock in the care of shepherds from Bella and Rhymaibé for the most part. Animals are stolen, sometimes by those who are supposed to be looking after them, sometimes by rebel groups. After the conflict the livestock owners will profit from the support of the reconstruction to claim their animals which were stolen or lost following military operations. The claims will be made in several forms : 1. to the State, they will declare that they have lost everything during the conflict and will claim subsidies to replenish their livestock. In the Gossi commune some large livestock owners have already spread the word that they have lost a significant number of animals.	0.5

		2. to the Cooperation and Development partners they will maintain that the soldiers killed everything during the military operations and will request that there be projects for replenishing livestock. 3. from the NGOs who will be involved in the reconstruction, they will claim support under the pretext that they have lost everything in their absence. 4. they will also claim from the farmers who were responsible for looking after the animals, because (they will say) the former were complicit in the animals' theft.	
4	Commerce with armed groups and illegal trafficking. **Estimated number: 1500**	Chiefly young people who – once the conflict had begun – reverted to selling trafficked or stolen produce (vehicles, weapons, drugs) and, in particular, goods freely distributed by humanitarian workers. These young people collaborate closely with armed groups and bandits.	1.5
5	Submitting to (employees) and compromising with armed groups (combatants, guides, chefs,…). **Estimated number: 7500**	These people have committed or been involved in all manner of misdeeds such as : 1. armed robbery 2. the theft of 4X4 vehicles 3. the theft of animals 4. the theft of goods from traders and hauliers 5. the rape of women Young workers from the majority of communities fall into this category	7.5
6	Providing accommodation for armed groups and cooperating with the creation of the new order, particularly through the application of Sharia law. **Estimated number: 5000**	Often teachers, Koranic pupils and imams. Some have publicly whipped and amputated the arms or legs of victims who like themselves, belong to the local population. Others have made themselves enforcers of the new order: the obligation to wear the Islamic veil for women, the prohibition of music and cigarettes, forced marriages,... They are teachers and prominent figures from diverse communities.	5 ?
		Total estimated	100.5

Reversals of allegiance, opportunism, the renewal of survival strategies

On the 17th January 2012, the MNLA begin military operations in the Kidal area. Mali's armed forces focus on the areas of Gao and Timbuktu. On the 1st March 2012 the MNLA have possession of the town of Gao. On the 4th March, the leaders of the MNLA enter the Gourma region along the Gao – Gossi axis with the support of its members[3] residing there. Very quickly, young people and some of Gourma's community leaders, through ethnic solidarity, join with the MNLA. Certain young people of the area are entrusted with positions of responsibility. And so, from March to June 2012, or six (6) months, the MNLA group reigns supreme over the Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu regions, including the whole of Malian Gourma.

At the end of June 2012, the MUJAO Islamists and Ansar Dine hunt down the MNLA combatants. The MNLA leaders abandon the areas they hitherto controlled and leave behind them their young contingent who, disorientated, are faced with the local people whose relationships with them have drastically deteriorated. From now on they must hide in the most thickly wooded areas around ponds and the relics of Gourma's forests. They then give themselves over to pillaging the belongings of farmers, shepherds and traders. Seeing that circumstances are not evolving in the MNLA's favour, most of them decide to join the MUJAO Islamist groups and Ansar Dine.

These Islamists, who are apparently better organised and have greater financial means than the MNLA separatists, decide to motivate the local youths by providing them with greater means. Thus all able-bodied young people who join forces with them are equipped with a weapon. In addition, a salary is offered to every young person who agrees to join the Islamist group (15,000 FCFA/day for a single man ; 25,000 FCFA/day for a married man).

Moreover, in all the occupied territories, a bonus of 50,000 FCFA is granted to every person who provides information which is useful for the operations of the Islamist group. The most sought-after information includes:

- places where cigarettes and alcohol are sold ;
- people who smoke and consume alcohol ;
- people who have links to Mali's armed forced or to the authorities ;
- people who work or have links with whites ;
- places where the belongings of civil servants, project officers and NGO personnel, and Catholics have been stowed ;
- all locations of sacred sites.

It is in this context that, from the 1st July to the 25th December 2012, nearly all the large villages, factions and established sites, camps and significant settlements of Gourma are occupied by armed Islamists. In each principal town of the commune or *cercle*, an Islamist post is created. Each post is manned by an Islamist assisted by several deputies. In certain settlements sheltering Koranic teachers, the latter play the role of deputy. In other villages it is

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[3] Some Touaregs and Tamasheqs who share distant origins with the people of Kidal.

the Koranic pupils who assume this duty. Recruited local youths oversee the movement of people, carrying out patrols to monitor the coming and going of vehicles.

It now appears that all the means which Islamist groups have placed at the disposal of their local collaborators are contributing towards controlling and oppressing the local people. The situation is becoming almost unbearable and many of those who did not want to leave their homes previously now decide to do so.

On the 7th January 2013, prompted by certain Koranic teachers, the Islamists decide to march on Mopti. The Ngymignama village, a crossroads between Douentza and Boré, is used as a stop-off place en route to capturing Mopti. Some Koranic teachers decide to provide combatants composed solely of young Koranic pupils.

On the 8th January 2013 there is a bloody clash between the Islamists and the Malian army. Late afternoon on the 9th January the Islamists occupy the town of Kona situated 55km from Mopti, the principal town of the 5th region. On the 10th January 2013, French military aircrafts intervene and block the progression of the Islamist groups. Then begins the reconquest of territory by Malian troops and their allies.

IV   The problem posed

Regular expeditions to the principal towns of communes and certain large villages and established sites of Gourma factions (notably the communes of Bambara-Maoudé, Korarou, Inadiatafane, Gossi, Hombori, Boni, Diaptodji and the villages and established sites of Karwassa, Banzena, Kazey-Kazey, Dimamou, Sartatane, Tinhabou, N'Daki, Ebanguilmalène, Serma, Dalla and Lenga) have allowed for an appreciation of just how discontented they are with one another after the way each of them behaved from the beginning of the conflict onwards.

Discussions with certain local figures of responsibility have highlighted the breakdown in relations between socio-ethnic groups and the consequences of these for the future : **currently everything is moving towards a severe crisis of coexistence between communities and ethnic groups in Gourma.**

Today, with military operations being carried out in the areas affected by the conflict, those directly or indirectly involved with the rebel groups find themselves in an untenable social and economic position. With the gradual return of the administration they are, on the one hand, rejected by civilian populations and, on the other, sought after by soldiers and security forces since some of them are still in possession of arms. Where will they go, how will they behave, what use will they make of their weapons?

Young adults who have been seen carrying weapons by local people, and who are afraid of having to answer for their deeds, have no other alternative but to flee inhabited areas. Some have been able to escape from the region; others are condemned to wander about the bush. Since the 10th January 2013 they have been engaging in thievery and banditry on the different main roads, robbing travellers and itinerant traders in order to survive, and going as far as using their weapons in the process. Local shepherds and transhumants, who must regularly visit the perennial waterholes surrounded by pasture land, are exposed to threat by these armed youths. What will become of these youths after the conflict?

In certain communes of Gourma, there are social groups who lay claim to being the first people to have developed common paths; these are notably the founders of villages, the traditional Songhaï chiefdoms of Gossi, Hombori and Gandamia; and the traditional Fula chiefdoms around Boni and Kanioumé,... Despite the conflict and its accompanying violence, this group has remained calm. However, they now consider the displaced persons (who have fled Gourma) to be foreigners who do not care about the future of the region. Will the return of displaced persons in this context not create an explosive situation?

Examples of testimonies which we have gathered:

A traditional chief, from a founding lineage, on the return of displaced persons: « Flee to go where? It is impossible for us to leave our homeland in the hands of strangers and our doomed children. Those people, they stay if things go well and leave if they don't. In all circumstances, we are condemned to remain here. The people and families who have decided to leave have done so because they have something to be guilty about or because they have hidden intentions. History will be the judge. What is certain is that we will never let them have what they want in this region, not after the misfortune with which we have been afflicted. »

A traditional authority: « those who have committed dishonourable acts and their families are well known to all of us. We shall see what happens once this hot wind which has smitten us all has passed. »

A project leader: « I know perfectly well who was behind my vehicle being taken by rebel groups; his family are also well-known. If the army does nothing I will never forgive it. If I die before him, my children know him, and they will never let it go; this was decided at a family meeting. »

A soldier who was present in Aguelhok in January 2012 : « I was an eyewitness when my comrades, all 135 young soldiers, with their arms tied behind their backs, were disembowelled and had their throats cut where they stood. My father was burned alive during the events of 1991. This means that I no longer fear anything in this life. Those people and their accomplices will pay for what they have done. »

To facilitate a social and economic development process incorporating the management of land and natural resources in the regions affected by the conflict, it is urgent that a dialogue should be held within - and between - the different communities and ethnic groups in the aim of reconciling them and strengthening their social bonds.

Annexe II – Speech given by the Minister for Regional Administration, Decentralisation and Land Management

Firstly allow me to join the Mayor of Commune III of the Bamako district in welcoming you and expressing the full gratitude of both my department and that of the Ministry for the Environment and Sanitation.

I would also like to thank you for having enhanced the current ceremony by your attendance.

As you know, the meeting for which we are gathered today is being held in the context of armed conflict which has weakened the social fabric, exacerbated intercommunal tensions, and disrupted socio-political balances in Gourma.

The conflict has also led to huge displacements of people within our borders and of numerous refugees to neighbouring countries.

It is, moreover, threatening the survival of a particular species in Gourma, the elephant, whose protection is itself a national and international issue.

Now that we are this close to the end of the war against traffickers, terrorists and armed bandits of all kinds who occupy the northern regions of Mali, we must do everything in our power to repair the social fabric and reconcile communities in order to bring about peaceful coexistence in Gourma.

The task of reconstructing everything which has been destroyed by the conflict is certainly not an easy one, but it is nevertheless invigorating.

Reconciliation and reconstruction are vital conditions for planning the future.

The future cannot be planned for without methodical, patient, thorough and well thought out work to restore peace between communities and social groups which formerly lived in kinship and harmony.

The present workshop aims to enable us to address the ways and means to re-establish social peace, rebuild infrastructure in the medium and long terms, repair the economic fabric, and plan a shared future with all the people of Mali in general and of Gourma in particular.

It is therefore vital that each one of us should commit steadfastly to the quest for peace, the reestablishment of security for all, and forgiveness.

There is no question of our settling for easy and instant solutions to the problems facing us; rather the idea is to reflect carefully and propose the best solutions which can be applied in the short, medium and long terms.

For the three days during which the present workshop will run, I encourage you to be highly assiduous and to actively participate in the direct and frank exchanges so that we can propose appropriate measures for managing the aftermath of the conflict.

I am confident that you will take care to emphasize the important place of local communities in dealing with and emerging from the crisis which we are experiencing.

As you know, the management of emergency aid, of humanitarian aid, and the return of displaced persons and refugees will require cooperation between all those involved and greater accountability of Malian communities in general and of Gourma in particular.

Over the course of the workshop you will encounter areas of focus such as:

- sharing, structuring and learning on the basis of available information.
- means of reconciliation
- planning the way forward: who must do what/devising a road map.

These are neither exhaustive nor exclusive; they constitute three areas of focus among so many others.

I could not finish without thanking The WILD Foundation, whose technical and financial support has facilitated the organization of the present workshop. I here take the opportunity to assure The WILD Foundation of the full support of my department and of the involvement of territorial communities in fulfilling the objectives of protecting and safeguarding migratory species in general and Gourma's elephants in particular.

I hope that the trio which we form (MATDAT, MEA and The WILD Foundation) will work together to bring about reconciliation and reconstruction for lasting peace between the communities of Mali in general and those of Gourma in particular.

It is my wish that the present meeting should form the beginning of a long-term process of reconciliation which the Malian government means to establish together with its partners.

With this, I declare open the workshop for reflecting on reconstruction, reconciliation and the establishment of peace in Malian Gourma.

Annexe III – Speech given by Dr Susan Canney, Director of the Mali Elephant Project

On behalf of the international foundations, The WILD Foundation and The International Conservation Fund of Canada, and as Head of the Mali Elephant Project, I want to thank you for your participation in this first high-level meeting on a sensitive subject in this period of Mali's history. This is a subject that concerns all Malians, all friends of Mali, and environmentalists familiar with the affected areas. I speak of the armed conflict that has shaken the northern parts of Malian territory for over a year.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know better than I, this conflict has destabilized the social equilibrium, and upset the economic environment and the socio-political balance of the affected areas. The resulting displacement of people and tensions between and within communities has disrupted the equilibrium that allowed rural populations to use, with caution, the Gourma's fragile natural resources for their livelihoods.

How can urgent humanitarian assistance -- essential in this post-conflict phase - - be quickly deployed to alleviate the sufferings of the present, without aggravating the current tensions that

are already threatening a peaceful and sustainable future? This is the question we need to ask - which we are already asking - in the Malian Gourma?

Minister responsible for Decentralization, reconciling the communities immersed in a conflict that has been imposed upon them, requires encouraging them, and motivating them to develop and implement natural resource management plans as a means to bring together the multitude of users, occupations and ethnic groups and unify them in a common cause of benefit to all. It also requires being a true promoter of strengthened local governance systems to create a new sense of citizenship through empowering the populations in improving their living conditions. It is in fact to ensure that local authorities, communities, and technical and financial partners play their role in promoting economic and social development.

Minister for the Environment and Sanitation, working for social cohesion within communities and between victims of inter-ethnic conflict requires engaging in the short, medium and long term, in the capacity building of stakeholders. This is in order that they conduct participatory processes of consultation, negotiation and consensus decision-making based on local management agreements, defining the rules of access and use of resources, and specifying the methods of control and sanction.

Sirs, the representatives of regional councils, advocating reconciliation between and within your populations requires encouraging the emergence of inter-community fora to support the role of local authorities as regulatory bodies capable of legitimate arbitration.

Dear participants, distinguished personalities, for the areas afflicted by conflict, it is your commitment, your determination to take the lead in social reconciliation, that is a pre-requisite for the success of physical reconstruction. And which is also the first requirement for the survival of a national and international heritage that will benefit current and future generations: I speak of the elephants of the Gourma.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Minister for Decentralisation and Spatial Planning and the Minister of Environment and Sanitation, as well as the teams from their national directorates, for their commitment and support throughout the process of planning this workshop.

Ministers, distinguished participants, allow me to extend my sincere greetings and thanks to everyone present, for their support in the process of reconciliation. I would like to add that, given that this workshop is the first step in a process, it is essential that your participation is as interactive as possible, our goal being that the process be an alert, thought through by you and for you. I count on you to make this a very productive meeting, and we will endeavour as much as possible to include all of your contributions in the resulting workshop report.

But before I conclude, I want to wish from my heart that peace and tranquillity return definitively to Malian territory in general, and to the regions directly concerned in particular, so that the victim populations may forget everything that has happened and return to working together in peace.

Thank you.

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