

RISK DRIVER 1

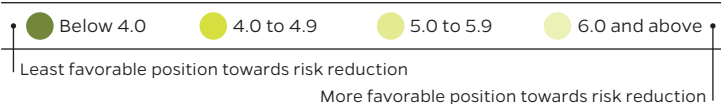
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

FACTORS

under Risk Driver 1 include environmental conditions such as air and water quality, forest areas, and conservation levels, as well as the country's natural resources and its capacities to sustainably manage its own ecosystems.

BECAUSE of the nature of the indicators selected under Risk Driver 1, these were more readily classified according to whether they represented capacities or conditions for risk reduction, as presented below. It should be noted, however, that due to the great variety of aspects quantified in the database, charting capacities versus conditions was not always the best way to assess the other three risk drivers. Instead, indicators are grouped according to relevant thematic issues and charted in a way that is relevant for that risk driver. For a more complete picture of indicators by risk driver, please refer back to the table of indicators in the Methodology chapter.

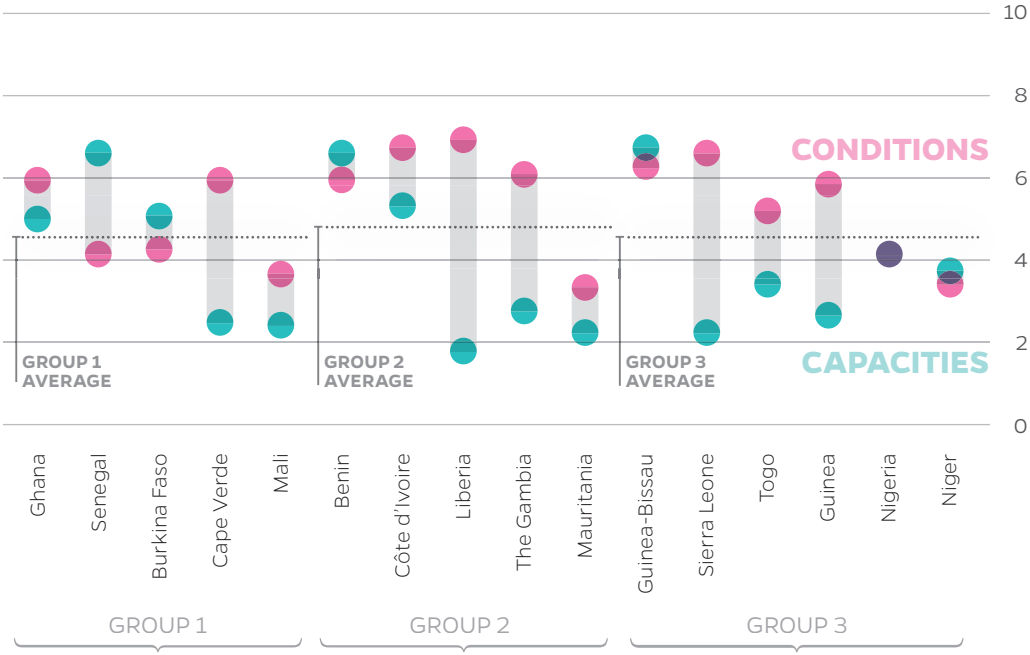
SCORES LEGEND



COUNTRIES

located in the northern portion of West Africa,

CONDITIONS AND CAPACITIES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES



namely Mauritania, Mali and Niger, present worse conditions in terms of their natural environment. This is due to the presence of the Sahara desert within their boundaries, which translates into higher levels of water scarcity and risk of desertification.

DATA from 2011 demonstrates a tendency towards a deterioration of natural resources in the West Africa region. Land erosion and silt formation, sand bank formation and water pollution all contribute to low soil fertility levels and loss of biomass.

RAPID population growth has a direct impact on environmental issues. The rapid population

growth that West Africa has experienced has caused a loss of habitat and has affected biodiversity. In 2000 West Africa's population stood at 234 million people. By 2010 the population had grown to 305 million. By 2020 it is estimated that the region's population will surpass 400 million, resulting in a 30% increase in ten years. Population growth has led to an increased demand for potable water. It has also implied an increased need for food production, leading to the expansion of cultivated land, including the use of marginal lands subject to erosion for agriculture. A consequence of this has been soil erosion and depletion of soil nutrients, leading to a decline in soil fertility.