

FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL



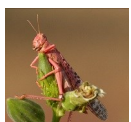
N°53 - February 2014

KEY POINTS

Sections



Agriculture



Locust



Displacement



International
markets



Markets in WA



Food Security

To go to



- ◆ The food security situation is deteriorating in certain regions of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad due to an early start of the lean season
- ◆ Results of the latest food security surveys in Senegal and Mauritania indicate a critical situation for poor households in the Zones-at-Risk
- ◆ Since December 2013, cereal prices are relatively stable throughout the region but remain above their five year averages

The pastoral lean season will start earlier than usual in some areas in the Sahel region, following pasture dryness and decreasing water levels of watering points. The most affected regions are the ones that experienced rainfall deficits in 2013, most notably in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

The food security situation is starting to deteriorate throughout the region, especially in countries like Senegal and Mauritania, where recent surveys confirm the risk of an early lean season and a difficult food security situation for poor households.

In West Africa, the three trade basins are currently well supplied with local cereals and prices remained stable or decreased in most markets compared to December 2013. This regional trend in the markets correspond to price decreases in the international markets, particularly for wheat and rice, which are the most imported cereals in the region.

In 2014, in line with the Strategic Response Plan for the Sahel region, the food security sector aims to support 11.8 million people out of the estimated 20.2 million food insecure people throughout the region. The mobilization of USD 838 million is required to improve the food security situation of the most vulnerable households in the Sahel. Early funding (before April 2014) is required for already food insecure households in order to implement projects that prepare for the main agricultural season as well as the pastoral lean season.

Recommendations for regional partners

- Increase food security monitoring activities in countries in risk of an early lean season, particularly in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad
- Advocate for the timely funding of priority activities as identified in the Strategic Response Plan for the Sahel region, in support of households' preparation for the main agricultural season and early lean period
- Monitor the situation of displaced populations from CAR and Nigeria
- Support the regional processes of food security and vulnerability analyses : Cadre Harmonisé, PREGEC and RPCA

Objective: Within the framework of the monthly meetings of the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group for West Africa, it has been agreed that, from a humanitarian perspective, WFP and FAO provide the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month.



2013-2014 Agro-pastoral campaign

Pastoralist lean season expected to start early in 2014

During the current dry season, rangelands have reduced their nutritive value due to pasture dryness, especially in the deficit areas of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad. In these areas, the lean season will start earlier than usual, according to the report of the Réseau Billital Maroobé (RMB) on the pastoral situation 2013/2014. The report states that in **Mali**, an important deficit is observed particularly in the region of Gao. Conversely, in the Ansongo cercle, pasture availability is higher, causing a huge influx of cattle from other areas, resulting in a possible risk of overgrazing and conflict between indigenous farmers and transhumant herders. In **Niger**, the same situation is forecasted in the north of Tillabéry, where pastoralists expect an early shortage of fodder. In the Sahel region of **Burkina Faso** the level of forage production is fairly satisfactory in some areas (communes of Markoye and Gorom) and low in others (communes of Tin Akof

and Deou). Northern **Senegal** is also characterized by widespread fodder shortage, forcing herders to start an early transhumance towards southern regions. In **Mauritania**, there are areas of relatively good forage production (Hodh El Charghi and Hodh El Gharbi) and others where the production is generally low to mediocre (south and southeast of the provinces of Kiffa and Guidimakha).

The agricultural activities of the off-season campaign are still ongoing in the region. A joint Red Cross-FAO-WFP-Government-UNDP mission in The Gambia reported that during the month of January, an invasion of granivorous birds *Quelea quelea* destroyed 600 hectares of rice crop, affecting about 5,000 households in the communities of Karantaba, Sikunda, Soma, Pakalinding, Jenoi and Sankuwia (District of Jarra West; Lower River region).



Locust situation as of 3rd February 2014

The situation remained calm during January

The situation remained calm during January. Limited control operations were carried out in northwest Mauritania against an immature swarm and an immature adult group in the Ténéré Desert in Niger. During the forecast period, low numbers of adults will persist and may breed on a small scale in northwest and northern Mauritania and in adjacent areas of Western Sahara [FAO](#)



[More information on ...](#)

Figure 1. Locust situation January 2014



Displacement situation in the region

Continuous influx of new arrivals

Mali: Evaluations conducted by the "Commission Mouvement de Populations" (CMP) continue to reveal a general decline in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). While the CMP report of November 2013 reported 254,822 IDPs throughout the country, the total number of IDPs in January 2014 is estimated at 217,811. The decrease in the number of IDPs confirms the return trends observed in the field. These trends are particularly observed in the southern regions, where nearly 57 percent of the IDP registered in June 2013 have returned to their regions of origin ([CMP](#)).

Niger: Population movements towards the Diffa region (southeastern Niger) continue due to deteriorating security conditions along the border regions of Nigeria, and clashes between the Nigerian army and the Boko Haram movement. On 24 and 25 January, more than 1,500 people relocated around

Guésséré, adding to the 37,000 people who have already sought refuge in Niger since the May 2013. Transboundary movements from northern Niger to Libya continue, marking a reversal of the trend since the Libya crisis in 2011. The regional Police Directorate of Agadez estimates the number of people who migrated towards Libya in 2013 at 40,350, including 21,132 Nigerians and 19,218 foreigners. Those migrations, based on trade and employment, guarantee a certain fluidity of the Nigerien informal economy by importing cash and consumer goods. In February, 6,875 Nigeriens, including at least 300 women and 250 children under the age of 10, returned from the Central African Republic (CAR) due to the violence that affected the country ([OCHA](#)).

Displacement situation in the region (cont.)

Continuous influx of new arrivals

Chad: The hostilities in Central African Republic (CAR) between former Seleka and anti-Balaka forces that started in December 2013 have caused massive displacements of population. As of 18 February, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has registered 70,913 Chadian migrants, Central African refugees and third country nationals in N'Djamena and five transit sites in the south of the country since the beginning of 2014. The Office

of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has identified 7,685 CAR refugees among these individuals ([OCHA](#)). With the continuing influx of new arrivals, and thousands more expected in the South and in transit sites, living conditions of returnees are gradually deteriorating ([OCHA](#)).



Trends on international markets

FAO Food Price Index fell in January

The FAO Food Price Index averaged 203.4 points in January 2014, down 1.3 percent from December and 4.4 percent below January last year. Except for the FAO dairy price index which rose, the values of other indices that make up the FAO Food Price Index declined last month, in particular sugar and vegetable oils, which dropped by 5.6 percent and 3.8 percent respectively.

The FAO Cereal Price Index averaged 188.4 points in January, down 3 points, or 1.6 percent, from December and as much as 56 points, or 23 percent, below January 2013. Bumper crops in 2013 helped to boost inventories, which, along with large export supplies, have pushed down international prices of cereals to well below their high levels in 2012 and early months of 2013. With early prospects for 2014 crops also favorable, prices of most cereals declined further in recent weeks.

Rice world prices had a slight contraction in January, with sharper decreases in low quality rice. Vietnamese prices had to go down, since they were higher than Indian and Thai prices. In Thailand, the National Rice Committee announced the end of the rice mortgage program. Export surpluses of Asian exporters remain plentiful and it is unlikely that world prices will rise significantly, even with not optimistic prospects for world production and higher global import demand this year ([InterRice](#)).

Figure 2 : FAO Food price index



Source : [FAO](#)



Trends on West African markets

Monthly prices relatively stable throughout the region

In **West Africa**, markets of the three trade basins (East, Central and West) are generally well supplied with cereals. In January / February 2014, grain prices remained stable or fell in most markets in comparison with December 2013 / January 2014, with some localized exceptions in Burkina Faso, Chad and Benin. The prices of millet and sorghum remained above their five-year averages in most markets throughout the Sahel region, presenting a risk to the purchasing power of net buyers of these commodities.

In **Guinea Bissau and Guinea**, despite an overall price stability in the short term, the prices of rice (imported rice in Bissau and local rice in Labé) remain significantly higher than their respective five-year averages (Source: WFP, SIM).

In **Senegal**, local cereal prices declined by up to 17 percent in January 2014 in comparison with December 2013. The marketing of groundnuts has recovered in early February. However, average prices local markets are down by 12 percent compared with December 2013, raising concerns about increased selloffs with impacts on household income and food access, in case of stagnating purchases by licensed traders (Sources: WFP/SIM).

In **Mali**, a year to year comparison with the same period in 2013 shows that millet prices are up in Timbuktu (+21 percent), Kayes (+20 percent) and Ségou (+9 percent), while having decreased in Gao and Sikasso (-13 percent) (Source: [Afrique Verte](#), WFP).



Trends on West African markets (cont.)

Monthly prices relatively stable throughout the region

In **Burkina Faso**, increased demand in early February has led to monthly price increases for millet (+11 percent), sorghum (+11 percent) and maize (+8 percent) in the market of Bobo (Source: [Afrique Verte](#), WFP).

In **Niger**, monthly retail price trends of major cereals remained stable or seasonally declined between January and early February 2014. However there are a few exceptions for maize prices in the markets of Maradi (+21 percent) and Zinder (+9 percent) (Source: [Afrique Verte](#), WFP).

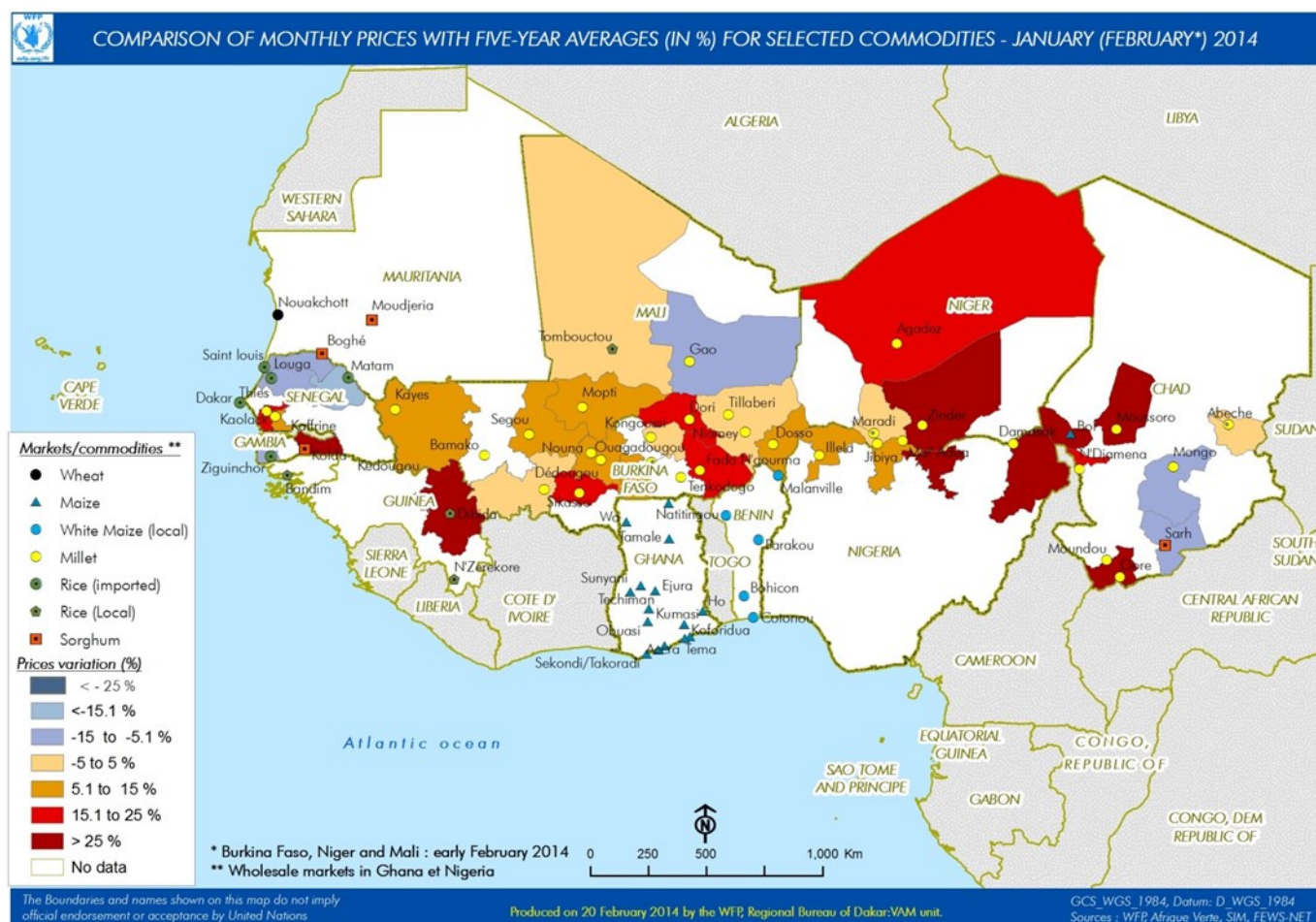
In **Chad**, the price of maize increased between December 2013 and January 2014 by 36 percent in the market of Bol (Lac region). At a price of 300 FCFA/kg, this represents a 131 percent increase compared with the same period last year (Source: SIM, FEWSNet, WFP).

In **Benin**, monthly prices of local cereals (sorghum and maize) remained stable or followed a seasonal decline in January, with the exception of northern markets (Malanville and Natitingou), where maize prices increased by 7 percent since December 2013. Maize prices are lower in comparison with January 2013, with the exception of the market in Malanville (+7 percent) (Source: WFP, SIM).

In **Mauritania**, in spite of soaring prices of animal feed (rice straw : +111 percent; wild straw +96 percent) due to decreased pasture levels in several areas of the country, livestock prices have declined between December 2013 and in January 2014. However, prices for livestock remain generally higher than in January 2013 (Source: WFP/SIM).

In **Ghana**, oil prices have increased significantly in 2013, following the elimination of state subsidies. The inflation rate in January 2014 (13.8 percent) is at its highest level since January 2010, while the Ghanaian cedi depreciated by more than 15 percent against the U.S. dollar throughout 2013. In response to this situation, the government has announced to increase control mechanisms for foreign exchange transactions, in order to strengthen the national currency. A high demand for foreign currency for the importation of key staple food commodities such as rice, vegetable oil and sugar, raises concerns about the repercussions of these macroeconomic developments on domestic food markets. These may include scarcity of imported food items on local markets and subsequent price increases, with detrimental consequences especially for the most vulnerable households (Source: [Ghana Statistical Service](#), [Ghana Central Bank](#)).

Figure 3 : Comparison of monthly prices with five-year averages (in %) for selected commodities—January 2014





Impact on Food Security

Worrisome food security situation in the Zones-at-Risk (ZAR) in Senegal and Mauritania

Mauritania: elevated post-harvest food insecurity as rates are increasing in urban areas

The results of the December 2013 post-harvest food security monitoring survey conducted by the CSA and the WFP in Mauritania show that 18.5 percent of households are food insecure across the country (urban and rural areas). This rate is higher than the ones observed in December 2012 or December 2011, where they amounted to 16.5 percent and 18 percent, respectively. During the past five years, a similar food insecurity rate was only observed in December 2008 – a situation that was marked by a year with exceptionally high food prices.

Rural areas are more affected by food insecurity (22 percent) than urban areas (14.3 percent). The causes of food insecurity, however, appear to be different in urban and rural areas. Food insecurity in rural areas is directly related to rainfall rates, the agricultural and pastoral campaign as well as food price fluctuations. In urban zones, however, a steady increase of food insecurity has been observed since July 2010. During the past four years, food insecurity rates in urban areas have increased from 5.1 percent in December 2010 to 14.3 percent in December 2013.

Figure 4 : Evolution of post-harvest food insecurity rates (%)

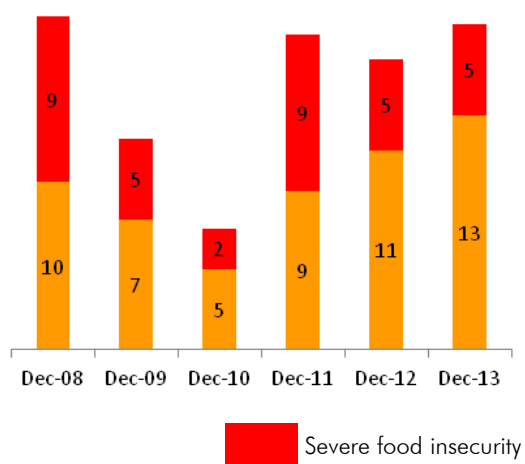
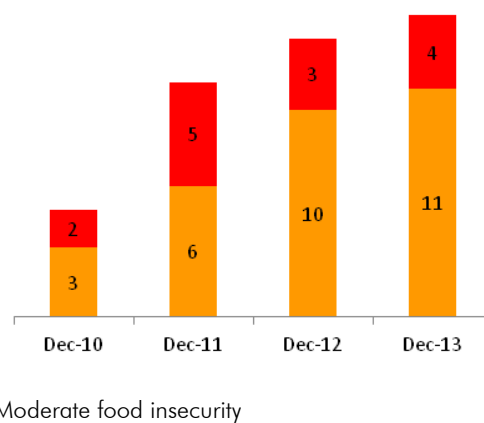


Figure 5 : Evolution of food insecurity rates in urban areas (%)

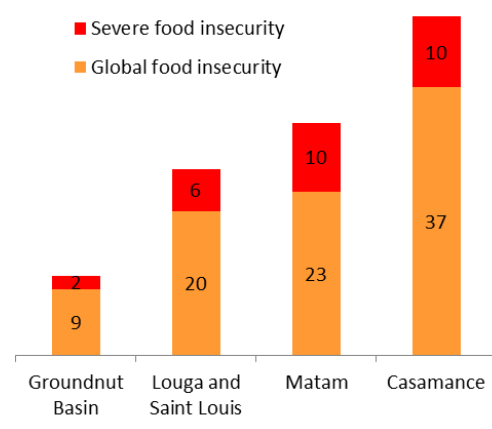


Senegal: critical food security situation in the groundnut basin, Louga, Saint-Louis, Matam and the Casamance

Following the 2013/2014 agricultural campaign, during which cereal production decreased by 12 percent compared with 2012/2013 levels and by 17 percent compared with the five-year average, the WFP, in collaboration with the government and other partner organizations, conducted a post-harvest assessment in December 2013, aiming to assess household food security in the Zones-at-Risk (ZAR) in Senegal. The ZAR, where the highest decreases of cereal production compared to five-year average were registered, are located in the groundnut basin (Kaoloack, Fatick, Diourbel, Kaffrine and the department of Bakel) as well as in Louga, Saint-Louis, Matam, the Casamance and Kedougou.

percent of Senegalese households were severely food insecure (675 000 people), while 13.8 percent were moderately food insecure (1 863 000). The government and its partners estimated that at least 675 000 people would be in urgent need of assistance during the 2014 lean season.

Figure 6: Food insecurity in the ZAR (%)



The results of the assessment indicate a food insecurity rate of 20.3 percent, i.e. 344,400 people, out of which 6.1 percent are severely food insecure (i.e. 133,300 persons). The ZAR located in the Casamance have the highest rates, while the average duration of cereal stocks is 3 months all ZAR. The early lean season is expected to start as early as March/April 2014. Consequently, food access will be increasingly difficult for poor and very poor households.

In June 2013, despite a globally satisfactory 2012/2013 agricultural campaign, the results of the national food security and nutrition survey (ENSAN) conducted by the government in partnership with WFP, FAO, UNICEF and WHO indicated that 5

The Food Security sector in the humanitarian Inter-Agency Strategic Response Plan 2014-2016:

The Strategic Response Plan (SRP) for the Sahel is a 3-year plan (2014-2016) reflecting a new approach to humanitarian response in the Sahel, which is adapted to the challenge of building the resilience of the most vulnerable population to recurrent crises. It covers the nine following countries: Burkina Faso, Northern Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, The Niger, Northern Nigeria and Senegal. It includes Country Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO) and Strategic Response Plans (SRP) with related funding needs, jointly developed by key humanitarian partners through regional and national clusters/working groups.

Under the 2014-2016 Strategic Response Plan for the Sahel, the Food Security sector will provide support to 11.8 million people in food insecurity from the estimated 20.2 million food insecure in the region. The proposed actions are organized around three common strategic objectives: (i) enhancement of the food security analysis systems, (ii) strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations and (iii) lifesaving interventions. The total amount required to ensure the implementation of the food security sector response plan in 2014 is USD 838 million.



[For further information on HNO and SRP](#)



Mark your calendars !

→ Cadre Harmonisé national analysis :

- ◆ Mauritania : 23 – 27 February
- ◆ Cabo Verde, Ghana and Togo : 24 – 28 February
- ◆ Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Guinée : 03 – 07 March
- ◆ Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal: 10 – 14 March

→ Meeting of the Cadre Harmonisé Regional Analysis Group in Bamako from 20 to 22 March 2014

→ Meeting of the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) in Bamako from 25 to 27 March 2014



Information on Food Security in West Africa

www.wfp.org/food-security

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