

# FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL



N°55 - April 2014

## KEY POINTS

- ◆ The PRESAO forum results indicate a high probability that expected rainfall in 2014 will be inferior than in 2013 in the region, notably in Western Sahel
- ◆ The FAO food prices index records a strong increase for the second consecutive month
- ◆ Coarse grain prices (millet, sorghum) are still high and above the five-year average
- ◆ Significant increase in food insecurity rates are noted in deficit-producing areas in Chad and Mauritania

### Sections



Agriculture



Locusts



Displacements



International  
Markets



Markets in WA



Food Security  
alim

To go to



The PRESAO 17 climatic forecasts indicate the expected rainfall in 2014 will likely be inferior than in 2013. Lower than average rainfalls are forecasted in most parts of Guinea, Senegal, the Gambia and in some areas of Mali and Mauritania. The rains' start and end dates are expected to be late to normal on almost all parts of West Africa. An update of this data is expected by end of May – early June.

Ongoing conflicts in the Central African Republic and in Nigeria are maintaining the influx of refugees in Sahelian countries, notably in Niger and in Chad. Emergency humanitarian assistance is needed for most of the refugees and affected host population.

The FAO global food price index is at its highest level since May 2013 due to price increases in all commodities, excluding milk. This situation can be explained by the poor crops forecasts in the US and in Brazil as well as the geopolitics turmoil in the Black Sea area. The impact in West Africa of this global prices increase needs to be monitored closely.

Coarse grains prices (millet, sorghum) on West African markets are still high and above the five-year average, affecting purchasing power on market-dependent households.

In the Sahel, areas which are recording production deficits, such as Southern and Central Mauritania, Wadi Fira and Barh El-Ghazel regions in Chad, Kanel and Ranerou departments in Senegal, are recording high levels of food insecurity. In Côte d'Ivoire, the food situation in the North and the West has significantly improved in part to the agricultural development projects and humanitarian assistance in these areas.

## Recommendations for regional partners

- Increase food security monitoring activities in countries which suffer an early lean season, particularly in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.
- Advocate for the timely funding of priority activities 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 C.A.R. and Nigeria
- Monitor the update of climatic seasonal forecasts

**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, in 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 and preparation for the 2014-2015 campaign:

### Rainfall expected to be lower than 2013

The restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network for the Sahel and West Africa (RPCA) held in Paris (France) from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014 confirmed the cereal production for the 2013/2014 agricultural campaign in the Sahel and West Africa. The aggregate cereal production is estimated at 57 million tons, an increase of 11 percent compared to the average of the past five years and equivalent to that of 2012. For the CILSS member countries, cereal production is estimated at 19.5 million tons, equivalent to the five-year average and 12 percent below last year production.

In the Sahel, the lean season continues in areas of Chad, Niger and Senegal that have suffered a rainfall deficit during the 2013/2014 campaign. Concerning agriculture, only irrigated crops continue. In Niger, for example, rice production for the 2013/2014 dry season campaign continues and paddy harvests have already begun on the irrigated areas along the Niger River.

With regard to pastoralism, livestock are beginning to concentrate around main water points because of pasture scarcity. This is observable in Niger where livestock body condition begins to deteriorate. In Mali, the pasture deficit recorded in the northern part of the country is accentuating movement of livestock to the richer pastures of the center and southern regions. [AfriqueVerte](#)

The PRESAO 17 forum held from April 28<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 in Bamako (Mali) has developed seasonal forecasts for rainfall, agro-climatological and hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season 2014. Overall, there is a high probability for rainfall to be deficient to normal over most of the western Sahel during the periods from June to August and from July to September. For countries of the central and the eastern part of the Sahel, and the north of the Gulf of Guinea, the trend shows that normal to below normal rainfall is expected. However, all these areas could experience disruptions in the distribution of rainfall events during the season.

Figure 1 : Rainfall seasonal climate forecast for June / July / August

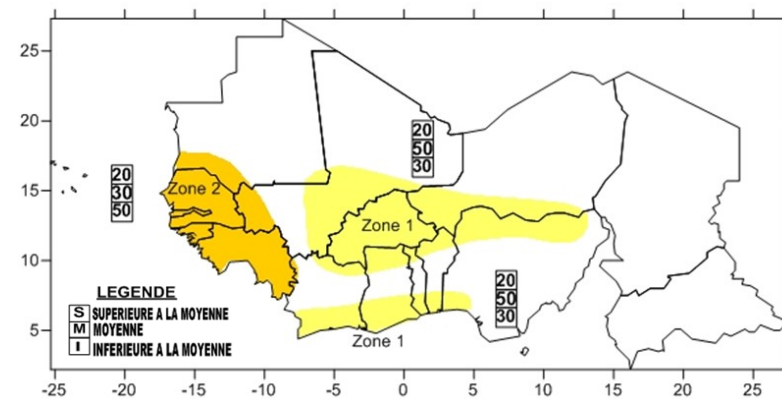
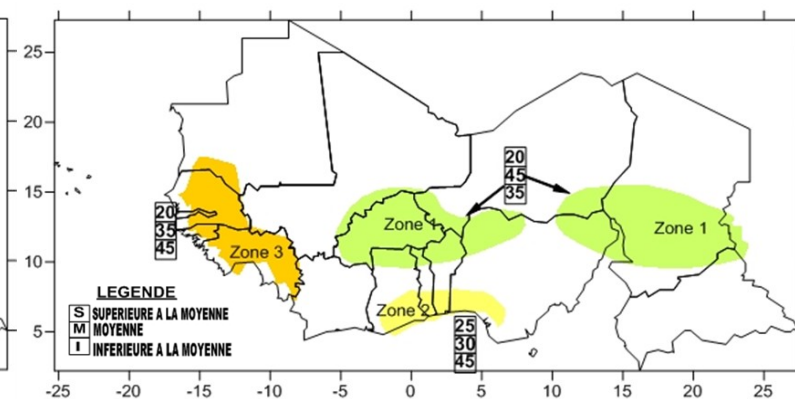


Figure 2 : Rainfall seasonal climate forecast for July / August / September



The rainy season is expected to start late to normal, especially on the western area and the sahelian band, over the entire northern part of the agricultural Sahel band expanded to the entire southern Chad. On the other side, they would be normal to early in Burkina Faso, the areas of Mali bordering with Burkina Faso, the extreme west of Niger, the west-central Nigeria and the northern parts of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin.

End dates of the season are expected to be late to normal over the entire area. However, some areas may experience normal to early end of season.

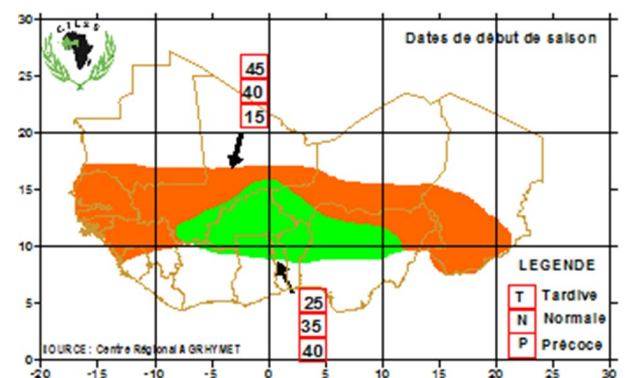
Regarding hydrology, average flows compared to the 1982-2012 reference are expected in most of the river basins in the region:

Average flow: Senegal river basin, the Gambia river, the Ouémé river (Benin), in the upper and lower part of the Niger river basin and in the Chari- Logone system of the Lake Chad basin

Average to slightly above average flow: Comoé river basin (Côte d'Ivoire), the middle part of the Niger river basin, the Benue sub-basin (Nigeria), the Komadougou Yobe sub-basin (Niger and Nigeria), the Volta upper basin (Burkina Faso)

Average to slightly below average flow: Bandama river basin (Côte d'Ivoire).

Figure 3 : Forecast start dates of the rainy season



These forecasts are subject to change during the rainy season. It is strongly recommended to follow the June, July and August updates by the Regional AGRHYMET Centre, ACMAD and national meteorological services. [CILSS](#)



## Desert locust situation as of April 3, 2014

Situation remained calm during March.

The situation remained calm in West Africa during March. Dry conditions prevailed in the northern part of west african Sahel. No surveys were carried out and no locusts were reported during March in Mauritania where no significant developments are likely to occur. In Mali, low number of locusts are likely to be present and will

persist in parts of the Adrar des Iforas. In Niger, scattered adults are likely to persist in a few places in the Air Mountains and the eastern Tamesna where small-scale breeding could occur in areas that receive rainfall or runoff. [FAO](#)



[More information on ...](#)



## Displacement situation in the region:

Refugees from the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) and Nigeria continue to arrive to the region

**Mali:** The assessment and verification operations conducted by IOM and its partners show a decline in the number of displaced people in Mali. The number of internally displaced people (IDP) in the country now stands at 137,096 which represents a decrease from the Displacement Tracking Matrix data (DTM) since October 2013 (283,726 IDP) and February 2014 (199,575 IDP). This decline can largely be attributed to an improvement of the security situation. Bamako hosts the largest number of displaced persons, followed by the northern regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. [IOM](#)

**Niger:** The continuing deterioration of the security situation in northeast Nigeria compels populations to seek refuge in border areas. A rapid assessment conducted in mid-March by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with the support and in coordination with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), revealed that 10,436 people, including Nigerien returnees (5,733) and Nigerian refugees (4,663), have sought refuge in 17 villages of Lake Chad area in the Diffa region. This region is home to 50,000 displaced people and receives 1,000 newcomers a day. [OCHA](#)

**Chad:** Chad has registered its highest figures of refugees and returnees from the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) with a total of more than 102,000 since December 2013; this figure includes 8,000 refugees and 94,441 third country nationals (TCNs) and Chadian returnees. Many returnees have lived in the C.A.R. for two or three generations and have no links with Chad. A joint UN/ NGO mission in one of the return areas showed that returnees are in need of emergency humanitarian assistance. [OCHA](#)

**Nigeria:** The security situation in the states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno continues to deteriorate. According to OCHA, as of February 25<sup>th</sup>, more than 520,000 people, mostly women, children and elderly people are internally displaced in Nigeria (471,000 people) and more than 57,000 have sought refuge in neighboring countries (Cameroon, Niger and Chad). According to NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency), Borno State hosts the largest number of displaced people (111,000 people). The vast majority of IDPs live with host communities, while 5,300 currently reside in temporary camps. The UNHCR and local authorities indicate Cameroon hosts 12,000 Nigerian refugees. [ACAPS](#).



## Trends on international markets

Sharp rise in FAO food price index for the second consecutive month

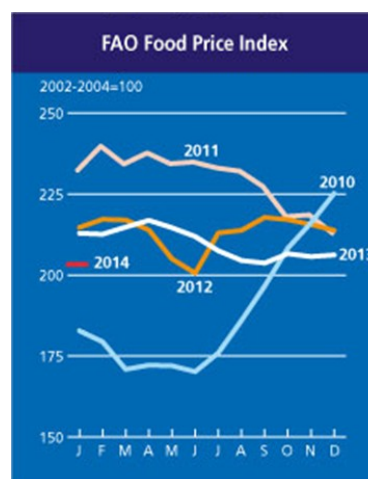
The FAO food price index averaged 212.8 points in March 2014, an increase of 4.8 points (or 2.3 percent) compared to February, and the highest level since May 2013. Last month increase was largely due to unfavorable weather conditions for some crops and geopolitical tensions in the region of the Black Sea. Overall, except for the FAO dairy products index, which fell for the first time in four months, all other basic commodities price index have increased, sugar and cereals experiencing the highest progression.

The FAO cereal price index averaged 205.8 points in March, 10 points (5.2 percent) more than in February, marking the second month of strong growth. In March, the index reached its highest level since August 2013, but remained well below (34.6 points or 14.4 percent) of its value in March 2013. Last month increase can be explained by a sharp increase in the prices of wheat and maize due to the rapid pace of cereal imports, the growing concerns about the effects of the drought that continues to affect the central and southern United States on winter wheat and the adverse weather conditions in some parts of Brazil. Geopolitical tensions in the region of the Black Sea, in particular uncertainties about shipments of grain from Ukraine, have also boosted prices.

In March, global rice prices are trending downward following the resurgence of Thailand on the world market. Since the beginning of the year, Thai exports grew by 40 per cent compared to 2013 at

the same time. However, India and Pakistan, prices remained relatively firm due to higher domestic prices and the firmness of the rupee against the dollar. The downward trend in world prices should continue, but it could be limited if the Asian production would be affected by the El Niño phenomenon in the coming months. [InterRice](#).

Figure 4 : FAO Food price index



Source : [FAO](#)

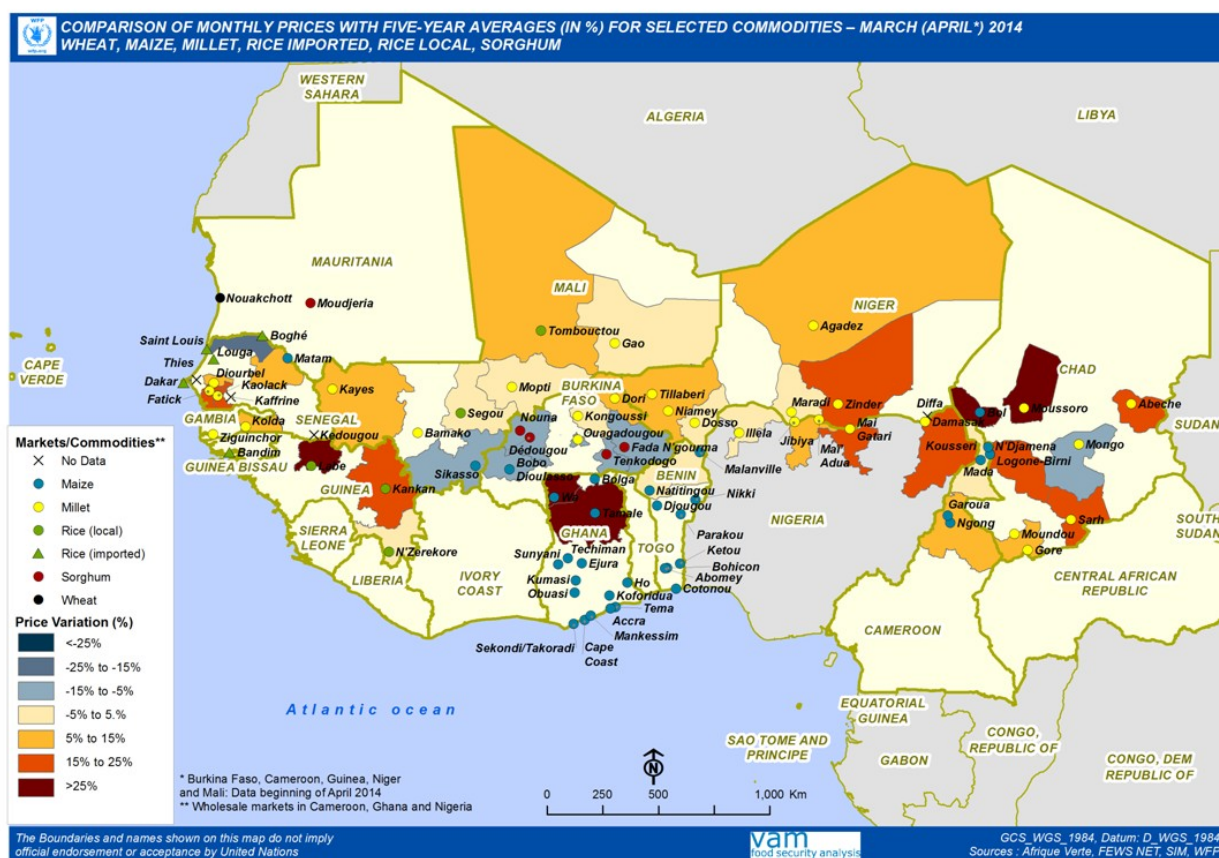




## Trends on West African markets

Coarse grain prices (millet, sorghum) are still high and above the five-year average

Figure 5 : Comparison of monthly prices with five-year averages (in %) for cereals —March/April 2014



**In Mauritania**, the prices of local cereals and cowpea remained stable or declined in April 2014, with the exception of millet, for which prices increased by 4 percent compared to the same period last year. However, prices of imported food commodities increased as follows: +15.6 percent for milk powder; +11.5 percent for wheat flour; +8 percent for cooking oil.

These price increases may affect the purchasing power of the poorest households, with negative impacts on their food security. The prices of small livestock (sheep, goats) decreased compared to last year, while those of larger livestock (camels, cattle) rose between 2 percent and 11 percent. (Source: WFP)

**In Senegal**, markets are well supplied with local produce (cereals, groundnuts, onions). This is partially explained by the end of the millet threshing season in rural areas as well as the return of private actors providing storage facilities in rural assembly markets for groundnuts.

Prices of locally produced dry cereals slightly varied in fluctuation across different markets, with the national price average slightly rising in March 2014. Compared with March 2013, national average prices for millet (-3 percent) and sorghum (+1 percent) remained relatively stable, while that of maize has decreased by 12 percent. Prices of millet and sorghum remain above their five year averages, while prices for imported rice continues a downward trend compared with all reference periods. (Source: SIM WFP)

**In Guinea-Bissau**, the monthly prices of local and imported rice and maize were stable in the market of Bissau in March, but remained above their five-year averages (+30 percent and +41 percent, respectively). (Source: SIM, WFP)

**In The Gambia**, monthly prices in February 2014 remained generally stable for local cereals and increased moderately for imported rice. Compared with the same period last year, prices are slightly lower for local rice (-3 percent) and sorghum (-2 percent). Annual prices of imported rice, millet and groundnuts have slightly increased by 2 percent, 8 percent and 9 percent respectively during the same reference period. (Source: SIM, WFP)

**In Burkina Faso**, in early April, the general availability of local cereals on the markets explains stable and declining prices for millet and sorghum. The most significant decreases were recorded for millet (-13 percent in Bobo and -10 percent in Dori) and sorghum (-13 percent in Dori). However, price increases were observed for maize (+9 percent in Bobo, +3 percent in Nouna), sorghum (+4 percent in Fada, +3 percent in Ouagadougou) and millet (+3 percent in Dédougou). (Source: Afrique Verte WFP)

**In Mali**, in early April, monthly prices for local cereals remained generally stable or decreased slightly. Only the price of millet in the market of Timbuktu noted a minor increase (+2 percent). The most notable monthly price drops were registered for maize in Bamako (-8 percent) and Gao (+6 percent), for imported rice in Timbuktu (-7 percent) as well as for sorghum in Kayes (-6 percent). (Source: Afrique Verte, WFP)



## Trends on West African markets (cont.)

Coarse grain prices (millet, sorghum) are still high and above the five-year average

**In Niger**, monthly prices remained generally stable in early April, although some price increases were observed for millet (+ 9 percent in Zinder, +7 percent in Tillabery, +5 percent in Maradi) and sorghum (+5 percent in Niamey, +3 percent in Maradi). The relatively stable price levels are explained by an ample supply and a nearly unchanged demand over the last three months.

(Source: Afrique Verte, WFP)

**In Northern Nigeria**, the situation is similar to that in Niger. With the exception of millet in Jibia, supply has reached record levels, according to enumerators of the Agricultural Market Information System. Imports from Niger, Cameroon and Chad continue at a regular pace but are less frequent than last year during the same reference period.

**In Ghana**, prices of basic grains in the northern region are up compared with the same period last year (30 percent on average) and the five-year average (43 percent on average). Livestock prices have also increased due to strong demand. For example, the price of an average ram in the Tamale market is 280 GHS, up from 250 GHS during the same period in 2013. The price of an average goat is 150 GHS, up from 100 GHS in 2013.

**In Chad**, the prices of millet, sorghum, rice and maize in March 2014 are still high and above the average of the past five years. Monthly millet price increases were observed in Ndjama (+10 percent), Sarh (+19 percent) and Moussoro (+6 percent), whereas they decreased in Mongo (-7.7 percent). For maize, the monthly prices decreased in the Lac region (-8 percent)

(Source: FEWS NET, WFP)



## Impact on Food Security

Deterioration of Food Security in areas of Chad and Mauritania

**In Burkina Faso**, the Government Early Warning System (SAP) in collaboration with its partners (WFP, FAO, CILSS, ACF, FEWS NET) conducted a food vulnerability survey, from 14 to 28 February 2014 in urban areas of Ouagadougou, based on a sample of 1,000 households and 372 children under the age of five. The preliminary results based on the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) show that 58 percent of households are food insecure, out of which 30 percent are severely food insecure.

Polygamous households (37 percent) and female headed households (39 percent) are more affected by food insecurity than others. Results also showed that a larger percentage of households consider themselves food insecure when their food stocks are depleted and they depend entirely on markets for their daily food needs (52 percent).

Food insecurity is also more likely to affect households which rely on food crops sale, on unskilled jobs or which are unemployed. The poorest households allocate 62 percent of their expenditure to food purchases. The GAM rate is 6.5 percent, the underweight rate 9.4 percent and chronic malnutrition 14.8 percent.

**In Chad**, agricultural production deficits in Wadi Fira and Barh El-Ghazel regions, the depletion of food stocks, the decrease in agricultural income and the unusual increase of food prices are contributing to a significant increase in food insecurity rates in Wadi Fira and Barh El-Ghazel regions. (Source : [FEWS NET](#))

**In Côte d'Ivoire**, according to the Cadre Harmonisé food insecurity classification analysis that was conducted from 3 to 7 March 2014 in Abidjan, 384,000 people, who represent less than 2 percent of the total population, are classified as being phase 3 "crisis". The areas that have significant number of its population in "crisis" phase are the areas in the north central (9 percent), the north (5 percent), the west (5 percent) and the south-west (5 percent) regions. These populations are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The food insecure households classified as "stressed" are estimated at

3,209,000 in March 2014 and this figure is expected to increase to 4,118,000 during the lean season.

Currently, the overall food consumption situation is not adequate with a decline in consumed meals and poor dietary diversity. The livelihoods of these households are under pressure, diminishing their resilience. In some areas in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the country, food stocks are limited or exhausted resulting in an early lean season (April to August). For other areas in the central region, food is generally available due to an increase in rice, maize and vegetable production.

The food situation in the north and the west is improving, partially due to agriculture development projects and humanitarian actions in these areas

**In the Sahel**, Save the Children, OXFAM, HEA Sahel, Action against Hunger, WFP, USAID and ECHO conducted various Household Economic Approach (HEA) analyses in March 2014, covering areas in Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania.

In Senegal, livelihoods protection deficits affect very poor households in Tambacounda (4 percent) and Matam (6 percent) from August to September as well as in Kanel (13 percent) and Ranerou (20 percent) from June to September. These deficits are explained by the decrease in food production and a probable increase of 9 to 12 percent in food prices.

In Niger, the districts of Mayahi, Tessaoua sud, Agadez and Magaria Central registered deficits on the 16 baseline assessments. This affects the poor and the very poor groups from April, June or July to September. "Survival Deficits" were identified in Tessaoua Sud (6 percent) and Magaria Central (17 percent). The policy of promoting certain cash crops, such as sesame and vegetable production, has reinforced the purchasing power of the overall population, but especially those in irrigated areas.

In Burkina Faso, weakened livelihoods protection and coping mechanisms will affect very poor households in Komondjari, Seno, Soum and Oudalan provinces for the period of May/June to September. (Source : [Save the Children](#))



## Impact on Food Security (cont.)

### Deterioration of Food Security in areas of Chad and Mauritania

In **Mauritania**, the lean season is early in several districts in the southern and eastern parts of the country. The situation is deteriorating quickly due to various reasons: decrease in household food production that was intended for domestic consumption, pasture deficits, decrease in income as well as high food prices. In response to this, the government proceeded with food distribution to

300,000 beneficiaries in April and continued its programme of selling food at subsidized prices. These ongoing actions, if continued, should prevent a further deterioration of the food insecurity that tends to remain elevated.



### Mark your calendars !

→ Restricted meeting of the Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC—June) in Ndjamena 16 to 19 June 2014



### Information on Food Security in West Africa

[www.wfp.org/food-security](http://www.wfp.org/food-security)

Mme. Anne-Claire Mouilliez

[Anne-Claire.Mouilliez@wfp.org](mailto:Anne-Claire.Mouilliez@wfp.org)

M. Malick Ndiaye

[malick.ndiaye@wfp.org](mailto:malick.ndiaye@wfp.org)

[www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/fr/](http://www.fao.org/crisis/sahel/fr/)

M. Jose Luis Fernandez

[Joseluis.Fernandez@fao.org](mailto:Joseluis.Fernandez@fao.org)

M. Patrick David

[Patrick.David@fao.org](mailto:Patrick.David@fao.org)