FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

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WFP

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KEY POINTS

- **Continued rainfall in the west of the region with the risk of post-harvest losses due to decay of harvested crops**
- **More than 300,000 people affected by floods in the region.**
- **Slight increase in the index of the FAO food price index.**
- **Deterioration of food security in the northern regions of Mali.**

Sections


Agriculture


Displacements


International Markets


West African Markets


Food Security

October is marked by reduced rainfall in the region, indicating the end of the main rainy season throughout West Africa and the Sahel. Rainfall deficits are still observed in the southern parts of the Gulf of Guinea countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria) and in Chad. At the regional level, crops are generally at the maturation stage and the first harvests are ongoing. Livestock food situation is characterized by a good development and regeneration of the vegetation cover except in central Chad, Guinea Bissau, northern Senegal and southern Mauritania. The physical condition of the animals is generally good.

With a positive outlook for the harvest of coarse grain, prices remained stable in September in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali, after two consecutive months of decline.

In Guinea Bissau, more than half of households relying in cashew production who farm less than one hectare are food insecure

The food situation further deteriorated in the northern regions of Mali. In Mauritania, good rainfall and normal development of pastures will lead to an improvement in poor households' food availability compared to 2014, except for areas that have experienced a delay in the rainy season, as in southwestern regions of the country (Gorgol, Trarza and Brakna).

Recommendations for regional partners

To go to

→ Advocate for timely funding of priority actions of the Sahel Humanitarian Appeal .

→ Monitor the evolution of avian influenza in the region and its impact on the rural and urban markets, and actors of the value-chain and households.

→ Monitor the meteorological situation, *El Niño* phenomenon and the changes surfaces temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean.

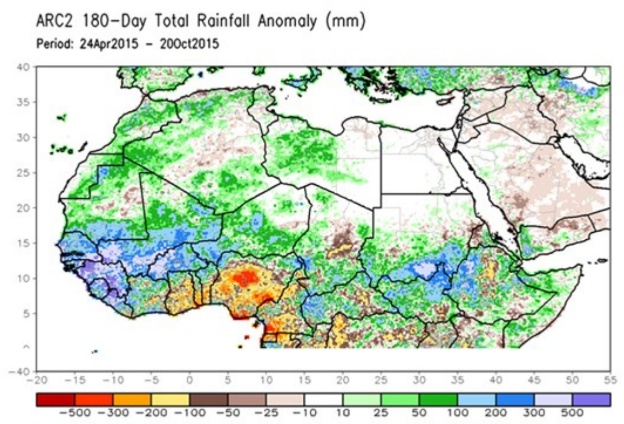
→ Monitor food and nutritional security of populations from Central African Republic (C.A.R), Nigeria and Northern Mali.

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, FAO and WFP provide the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month.*

Reduced rainfall indicates the end of the main agricultural season

October is marked by reduced rainfall in the region indicating the end of the main rainy season throughout West Africa and the Sahel and the persistence of below-average rainfall since August at several localities in the bimodal areas of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Chad strengthening deficits. Whereas, above normal rainfall is recorded in the western part of the region including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, southern Mali and coastal areas of Senegal (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Abnormal rainfall in West Africa from April 24 to October 20, 2015



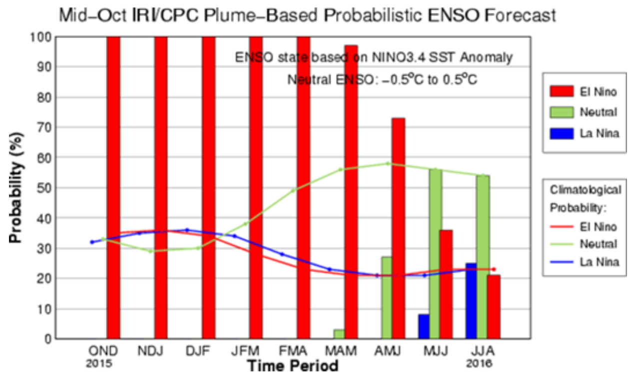
Source: NOAA

This rainfall is due to temperature anomalies at the surface of the Atlantic Ocean, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea (colder than average) and in the area of the Azores / Canary Islands (warmer than average) observed during the rainy season of 2015. This powerful dipole caused a significant monsoon in the Sahel. In response, the *El Niño* phenomenon has not had the expected impact in the agropastoral season 2015 (no drought in the Sahel). According to the forecast models, *El Niño* is expected to weaken in 2016 (April - May - June) for neutral or reverse climate conditions (*La Niña*). Climate models currently used do not help to make the Atlantic Ocean surface temperature forecasts for June-September 2016 and therefore do not predict rainfall patterns for the agropastoral season in 2016. (Figure 2)

In the Sahel, crops are generally at the stage of maturation and the first harvests are underway (Afrique Verte). For areas that continue to experience rainfall, it is necessary to take precautions to protect crops to avoid losses by decay.

The floods of September in several countries in the region, including Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone affected more than 300 000 people with nearly 40 loss of human life and damage to crops, about 700 hectares destroyed.

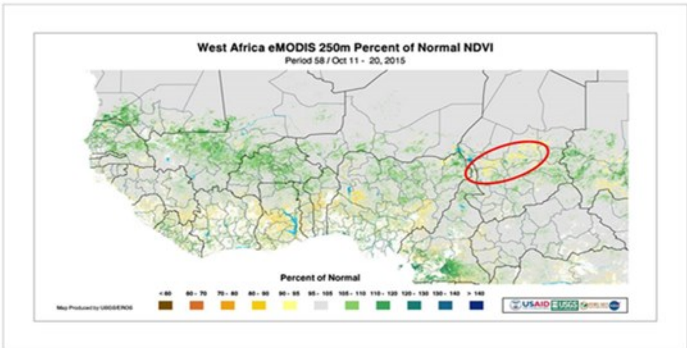
Figure 2: *El Niño* phenomenon evolution



Source: IRI

The pastoral situation which has improved with the rains of August and September is marked by a fairly good growth of vegetation in the northern part of the Sahel. However, growth abnormalities are observed especially in central Chad, Guinea Bissau, in northern Senegal, southern Mauritania and in the region of Diffa in the far east of Niger (Figure 3). In Burkina Faso and Mali, the pasture condition is good overall, as well as watering conditions due to the availability of many surface water points. The physical condition of the animals is generally good. (Afrique Verte)

Figure 3 : Abnormality vegetation index in West Africa from 11 to 20 October 2015



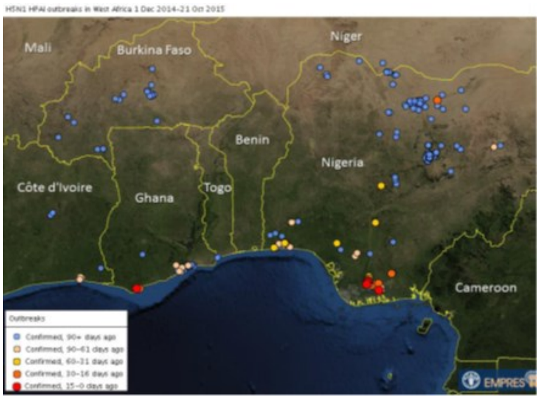
Source: USGS

The outbreak of avian influenza H5N1 continues to affect the region and the last data updated in October 20 indicates that new outbreaks have been identified in Nigeria and Ghana (Figure 4) and the Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger have not recorded cases. In Nigeria, the number of households increased from 490 to 512, while the number of at-risk birds is still 1.7 million. In Ghana, the number of households is 27 with two new contaminated regions, Western Region and Central Region. (FAO)

2015-2016 Agropastoral campaign (continued)

Reduced rainfall indicates the end of the main agricultural season

Figure 4 : Outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza in poultry from December 2014 to October 21, 2015



Source : FAO

The desert locust situation remains calm but caution and vigilance are needed in November. Despite good rains in the usual breeding areas (northern Sahel of Mauritania, Niger and Chad) and favorable ecological conditions, only a reproduction of very low magnitude was detected during September surveys in Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Nevertheless, locust numbers have increased gradually as there may be more locusts than those reported. Therefore, with the start of the vegetation dries out, in October there is a low to moderate risk of locusts to be concentrated and form small groups in parts of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan. A gradual displacement of locusts could occur from south to north-western Mauritania, northern Mali and Niger to the south of Algeria, as well as within Sudan to the winter breeding areas, along the coast of the Red Sea.

Population movement's situation in the region

Persistent insecurity continues to deteriorate the food and nutrition situation in the affected countries

Persistent security crises continue to worsen the food and nutrition insecurity in northern Mali and in the Lake Chad Basin (Borno and Adamawa States in Nigeria, the Diffa region of Niger, Lake Chad and north and extreme north regions of Cameroon). Nearly 3.6 million IDPs, refugees and returned are currently registered in the region. Population movements in the Lake Chad basin were increasingly complex, with multiple displacements and returns within countries. The number of IDPs in the country did not change significantly except Chad where following the arrival of new IDPs, the humanitarian situation in the Lake region still remains very worrying and the estimated number of IDPs internal since July 21 is 52,321 a decrease of approximately 9 percent compared to previous estimates *OCHA*

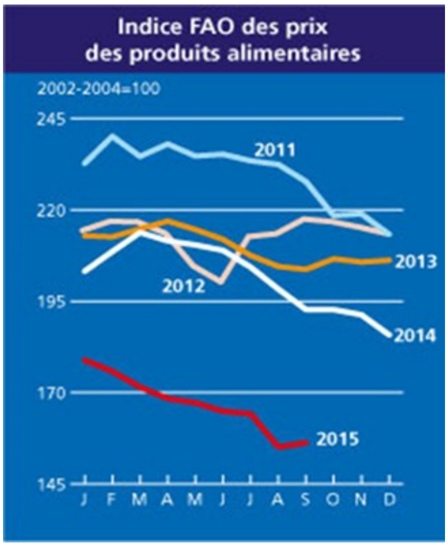
Trends on international markets

The FAO Food Price Index up in September, but just by one point

The **FAO Food Price Index** averaged 156.3 points in September 2015, up one point from its sharply reduced August value, but still 18.9 percent less than one year ago. The quotations of sugar and dairy products firmed last month, while those of the other commodities remained close to, or slightly below, their respective August levels.

The **FAO Cereal Price Index** averaged 154.8 points in September, nearly unchanged from August and 13.1 percent down year-on-year (Figure 5). International cereal prices have been under downward pressure since the beginning of 2015, amid large inventories and generally good crop prospects. Wheat is now over 20 percent cheaper than in September last year, following this season's record production. Influenced by an expected decline in world maize production, coarse grains quotations have been more resilient, subsiding only 1.4 percent compared to September 2014. Despite prospects of crop shortfalls, rice quotations have continued to slide, albeit by only 1.7 percent in September, extending the declining trend to a thirtieth consecutive month.

Figure 5 : FAO Food Price Index



Source : FAO

Trends on international markets (continued)

The FAO Food Price Index up in September, but just by one point

In September, rice world prices remained low. Apparently there has been no reaction to *El Niño*, climate phenomenon which affects major rice growing regions of Southeast Asia. Ordinarily, prices would increase as a result of the global production contraction expected for the first time since 2009. The world consumption may exceed production in 2015 and 2016, and the stocks of exporting countries may fall to the lowest level of the last 4 years. However, rice policies, strong competition between exporters and the appreciation of the dollar against Asian currencies continue to weigh on export prices. This trend should continue at least until the end of this year, when the main Asian harvest hits the market and exportable supplies will be more visible. *Osiriz.*

Market trends in West Africa

Arrival of harvest will improve cereal availability in the markets

In October, the harvest outlook is generally favorable despite the necessity of continued rains for crops to reach their full maturity. With this outlook, prices for coarse grains remained stable in September in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali after two consecutive months of price decreases. Some exceptions in the price of maize and local rice are noted in Mali, the latter especially preferred during the Tabaski celebrations. (FAO, Afrique Verte, WFP)

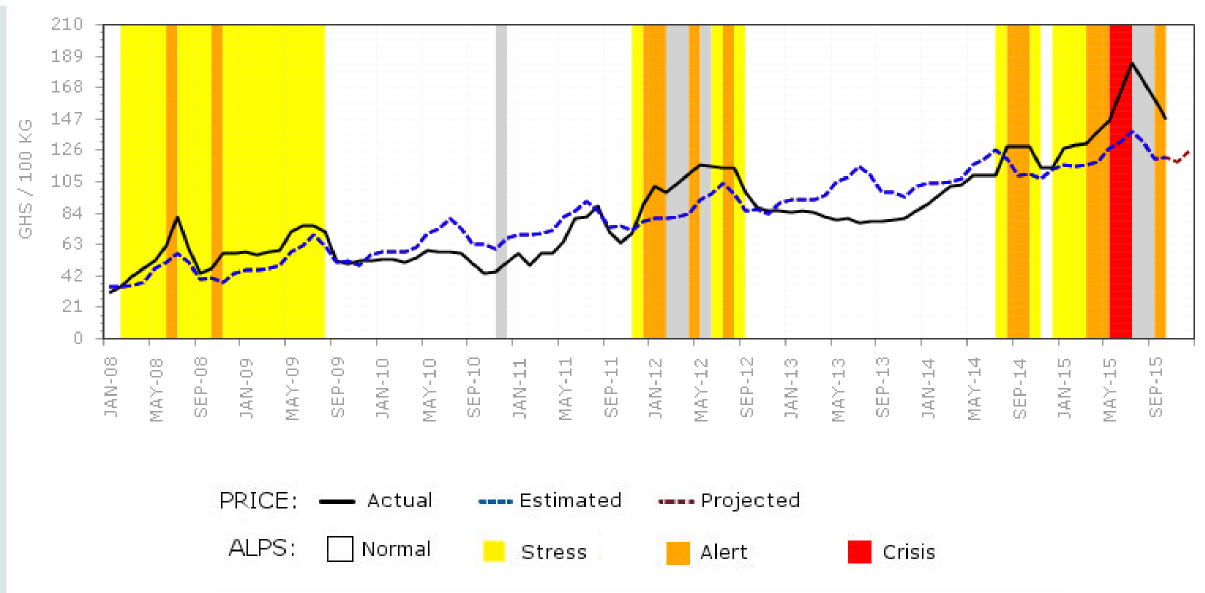
According to FAO, following the uncertain prospects for cereal production in 2015 in the Gulf of Guinea countries such as Benin and Togo, maize prices observed an upward trend in recent months on most markets and reached significantly higher values than observed in September 2014. The upward pressure on prices is mainly due to concerns about the crops in the southern parts of these countries. Here erratic rainfall can have a negative impact on the food supply during the campaign (FAO). In Ghana, prices of all cereals are still very high, such as maize in Accra (Figure 6).

In September, no statistically significant changes in national average prices were recorded in the three countries affected by Ebola. Domestic prices often mask regional variations, we observe little variation in the price of staple commodities at the sub-national levels. Some exceptions are noted for palm oil in the market of Foya in Liberia, and the price of imported rice in Forest Guinea. (WFP)

Prices remain very volatile in areas of tension such as areas around Lake Chad and the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) in Bol (Chad), the price of maize has risen by 59 percent in comparison to the five year average in September 2015. (WFP)

With the delay of the start of the campaign, the first harvests are expected in October, these will enhance the availability and reduce the pressure of demand on the markets.

Figure 6 : Evolution of the price of corn in Accra, (Ghana) (GHC/100Kg)



Source : PAM

Impact on food security

Deterioration of food security in the northern regions of Mali

In **Mali**, the preliminary results of the National Survey on Food Security and Nutrition (ENSAN) of September 2015 show that nearly a quarter (24 percent) of households are food insecure including 4 percent severe food insecurity. These results compared to those of last year in the same period, show a slight improvement in the food situation. However, compared to February 2015, a slight deterioration is noted for households in severe food insecurity from 3.1 percent to 4 percent of households. This deterioration may be related to seasonality.

The food situation further deteriorated in the northern regions including Kidal (34 percent), Timbuktu (34 percent) and Gao (29 percent). In the most affected areas, food insecurity is due mainly to the effects of poor agropastoral season, insecurity and population movements. (WFP Mali, ENSAN September 2015)

In **Guinea Bissau**, according to the results of FSNMS (Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System), 10.5 percent of households are food insecure, and 1 percent are severely food insecure. The most affected regions are Tombali (17 percent), Oio (16 percent), Gaby (13 percent) and Bolama (12 percent). Food insecurity is mainly due to a decline in agricultural production. Indeed according to the FAO, cereal production in the 2014-2015 campaign declined by 34 percent compared to the five year average. (FAO, Crop Prospects and Food Situation, No. 4 December 2014)

The use of strategies like borrowing, reducing non-food expenditures and spending of savings is very common in food insecure households. In cashew producing households, more than half of those who farm less than one hectare are food insecure. (WFP Guinea Bissau, FSNMS October 2015)

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, WFP organized in September 2015 a rapid assessment mission on the situation of returnees in areas of Tonkpi and Cavally. According the results of this mission, a good progression of the growing season with an evolution of cultivated areas including the lowland rice and cassava was noted. The intensification of agricultural support programs implemented by different actors have contributed to the rising level of sowing compared to 2014. Households returned, due to a lack of funding, encounter difficulties to resume income-generating activities practiced before their displacement, especially small business. (WFP Côte d'Ivoire, September 2015)

In **Mauritania**, good rainfall and normal development of pastures and rain-fed will offer better food availability to poor households compared to 2014, except for areas that have experienced delays in the rains as in southwestern regions of the country (Gorgol, Brakna and Trarza). Livestock prices show significant increases over the previous year at the same period. It follows that the terms of trade will gradually in favor of pastoralists. This increase in animal prices in most livelihood zones offers the food access capacity (especially in affluent households that still have an unassigned sales potential by recurrent crises in the country these last years).

Food insecurity for poor households still dependent on food aid (General Distribution Vivres "DGV", Emel shops etc.) could experience a slight improvement between September and December 2015. (WFP & FEWS NET, September 2015)

Calendars!

→ Joint CILSS / FAO / FEW NET / WFP / Government Crop Assessment:

- ◊ Sahel countries: November 2 to 6

→ Analysis Workshops on the Cadre Harmonisé (CH):

- ◊ Nigeria: October 20 to 30 , consolidation at the federal level: November 2 to 6;
- ◊ Sahel countries: November 9 to 14;
- ◊ Guinea and et Niger: November 16 to 20;

→ Regional synthesis of CH in Niamey, Niger: November 16 to 20;

→ PREGEC meeting, Niamey, Niger: November 23 to 25;

→ RPCA meeting, Dakar, Senegal: December 14 to 15;

→ Regional Learning Workshop on Preparedness cash in Dakar, Senegal: November 30 to December 2 organized by the CaLP;

→ Training on market analysis tools in Dakar, Senegal: December 7 to 11 organized by the CaLP.

@ Food Security Information in West Africa

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