Press release

Preliminary results of the 2013-2014 agricultural campaign in the Sahel and West Africa

A good agro-pastoral production with localized risks of food and nutrition insecurity in the region

The 2013-2014 agro-pastoral campaign was marked by a late start in several localities in the region. But, due to the effective return of rains in mid-July, the rains were abundant and even exceptional in some places, with a good distribution in time and space. Seasonal rainfall totals were generally higher than those of the 1971-2000 inter-annual average. The hydrological regime of the main rivers has been satisfactory with flood and dams filling levels favorable for irrigated and recessional agriculture in dry season.

The installation of seedlings was effective in late July 2013 in the region, except in certain northern parts of the agricultural area of the Sahel, where delays of over 20 days were observed. The pest situation was generally calm. However, a locust outbreak was noted in northern Mauritania, which could pose a threat to the oasis crops and abundant pastures in the northern regions of Mauritania.

The pastoral situation is relatively good with satisfactory animal health, water points relatively well filled and pasture available. However, forage deficits are locally observed in Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Senegal and Mali. The food situation of the herd may deteriorate earlier in these areas before the usual pastoral lean period.

The projected cereal production in the Sahel and West Africa is 57,462,000 tons. It has increased of 16% compared to the last five-year average. The Sahel registers an average production of 19,541,000 tons (+1%) while the coastal zone records a more favorable situation with a total production of 37,921,000 tons, given an increase of 25% compared to the last 5-year average. Gross cereal production per capita is decreasing in the Sahel of about 13% compared to the average of the past five years, while it is increasing of 19% in the coastal zone.

Rice (16,181,000 tons) is the crop that experienced the largest increase with more than 31% compared to the average, followed by maize (19,239,000 tons and 19% increase). On the other hand, millet production experienced a decrease of 17%.

For other crops, compared to the last 5-year average, groundnut (5,801,000 tons) has an important increase of +25%, Cassava production is estimated at 82,243,000 tons (+24%), yam production amounts to 51,825,000 tons (+1%), cocoyam: 4,901,000 tons (-2%) and cowpea: 4,852,000 tons (+11%).

The market supply level is generally satisfactory. The introduction of new crops helped to initiate the seasonal price declines in September in the region. However, prices are still high compared to the last 5-year
average, particularly for millet and sorghum in the eastern and western basins. The prices of cash crops vary differently depending on the basin. Compared to the last 5-year average, the prices of groundnut are increasing and those of cowpea experience significant decrease in the west. In central and eastern basins, the trader’s interest for the cowpea contributes in maintaining prices above average. The terms of trade for livestock/cereal are favorable to breeders with livestock prices which are generally in increase in the region. Possible local degradations of terms of exchange are expected at the end of the first quarter of 2014, due to localized deficits of pastures.

Regarding the nutritional status, although declines in the prevalence of global acute malnutrition are observed in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad, the nutritional situation remains worrying in the Sahel and West Africa with pockets of nutritional emergencies identified following surveys conducted between June and August 2013. The moderate acute malnutrition affects 3.4 million children of under 5 years old and 1.1 million for the severe form. The nutritional situation could deteriorate as a result of the expected lower production in certain parts of Chad, Senegal, Mali and Niger combined with low purchasing power of households and social tensions in the region.

The analysis of food and nutritional security with the Harmonized Framework tool, conducted in October and November 2013 in ten (10) countries in the region shows that many areas are still facing food stress with localized peaks despite ongoing harvests. This is, in general, the result of the combined effects of low stocks in poor households, of their limited food access and the prevalence of high acute malnutrition.

The population estimates conducted in six (6) countries (Burkina Faso, Gambia, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania, Côte d’Ivoire), shows that 11, 300 million people are affected by food insecurity in all forms, among which 1,600 million are in need of immediate food assistance. To these will be added 1,725 million food insecure people in all its forms in Chad. In addition, the region has at November 12th, 2013, over 654,000 refugees and more than 373,000 internally displaced people.

Given the foregoing, the meeting recommends that the States and their partners should:

- Develop response plans to assist populations in food and nutrition insecurity;
- Continue assistance in stress areas to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations;
- Strengthen the monitoring of the nutritional status and the management of acute malnutrition;
- Strengthen the desert locusts monitoring in Mauritania and in Mali;
- Avoid any restriction on the functioning of markets to ensure adequate transfer of surpluses to deficit areas;
- Strengthen the pastoral situation monitoring, bushfires control and facilitate trans-boundary transhumance;
- Support dry season activities of irrigated and recessional agriculture for market gardening and food crops where possible;
- Start collecting data for the next cycle of the Harmonized Framework in March 2014 for an update of the current situation.

Dated at Lome, on 22 November 2013