

FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

December 2012-
January 2013

Key points

- ▽ The resumption of hostilities in northern Mali leads to an influx of displaced people in an ever more difficult context for affected populations
- ▽ Prices of millet are still high in the Sahel despite a good harvest
- ▽ Food insecurity still persists because of the 2011-2012 crises which resulted from natural disasters, high malnutrition rates and prices still high for the poorest Sahelian households
- ▽ Locust invasions are decreasing

Agropastoral Campaign 2012-2013 : confirmation of Good Prospects

The Network for the Prevention of Food Crises in the Sahel and West Africa (RPCA) meeting which was organized by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club (CSAO/OCDE) in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 2012 confirmed a projected cereal production in the Sahel and West Africa that amounted to 57.3 million tons (with the exception of Burkina Faso), with a 18% increase compared to the last 5 years' average and 13% compared to last year. For CILSS member countries, with the exception of Burkina Faso, the production was confirmed at 17.5 million tons, up 35% compared to the average of the last 5 years and 37% compared to last year. However, the effects of the recent food and nutritional crisis have not gone yet and rural households exploiting very small plots, as well as exclusive part-time laborers did not benefit from the good rainfall and still depend on markets for food.

According to Afrique Verte, the off-season campaign has started; sowing has begun with the gradual withdrawal of water in places ideal for market-gardening activities including the planting out and maintenance of plants.

As far as animal farming conditions are concerned, pastures are still grassy enough, but with a lower fodder value due to wood formation and withering herbs. Watering conditions are good enough and the health status of overweight animals is good overall (Afrique Verte).

As part of the RPCA meeting in Ouagadougou, food security and nutrition stakeholders came together in order to finalize the Global Alliance for the Resilience Initiative (AGIR - Sahel and West Africa). AGIR's overall goal is to "reduce structurally and sustainably food and nutrition vulnerability by supporting the implementation of Sahelian and West African policies." Based on the priorities of the regional agenda on food security and nutrition, the Alliance focused around the four following strategic pillars: Pillar¹: Restoration, Enhancement of Livelihoods and Social Protection of the Most Vulnerable, Pillar 2: Strengthening of Health and Nutrition, Pillar 3: Increasing the Sustainability of Food Production, the Income of Vulnerable Households and their Access to Food, and Pillar 4: Strengthening of the Governance of Food and Nutrition Security.

Within the next 20 years, the aim of the Alliance is to reach the "Zero Hunger" objective, namely the eradication of hunger and malnutrition. For the next RPCA meeting, a regional roadmap based on the Ouagadougou Declaration, adopted by stakeholders, will help specify objectives and evaluation criteria. In the short term, the process of implementation of the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises will continue. In this context, the consensus building mechanism on the analysis of food and nutritional vulnerability (Harmonized Framework) will be operationalized. Meanwhile, the implementation of the regional strategy for food storage will be accelerated.

¹ http://www.cilss.bf/IMG/pdf/FR_Declaration_Ouagadougou_CD.pdf

Locust situation as of January 4, 2013 : reduction of locust invasions

The migratory locust situation is currently calm in the region. In **Niger**, residual populations of immature solitary locust are present in Tamesna and Air, while small-scale breeding is in progress in a few places in the Air Mountains. In the South of **Algeria**, some small groups have emerged and laid eggs. Limited operations are underway in coastal areas next to the North-West of **Mauritania** and still others are present in the North and North-West. Low temperatures will delay locust maturation and limit locust movements in the region.

Figure 1 : Locust situation (December 21)



Source: FAO

By February 2013, a small-scale breeding will result in a slight increase in locust numbers in the Sahara in Algeria but low

Floods

According to OCHA, in **Niger**, the relocation of the populations of Niamey who live along the river and were at risk of being affected by flooding ended officially on Friday, December 21, 2012. In Diffa, a 70 cm drop in the river Komadougou was recorded on December 21, in comparison to 23 November 2012. The floods have affected both fields and houses as well.

In **Nigeria**, according to OCHA, with floods declining, many

temperatures will delay the maturation of adults. All efforts are required to monitor the situation and undertake the necessary control operations.

The evolution of the locust situation in 2013 is difficult to predict because it depends on the following: 1) the period, the amount and spatial distribution of rainfall in the coming months in the North-West of Mauritania and Western Sahara, 2) the period in which temperatures rise in late winter and early spring, South of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and Algeria, 3) springtime rains (March-May) in these regions, 4) the effectiveness of reproductions and 5) the effectiveness of surveys and control operations. Therefore, these factors depend largely on the rainfall patterns which cannot be predicted with any certainty in December 2012. However, there will be even more locusts in the region in late December 2012 compared to December 2011, so that if the rains were favourable in spring and/or if there are unusual rains (rains over large areas, short-duration torrential rains), then the number of locusts would increase at the end of spring 2013, swarms could form and migrate in time towards the summer breeding areas in the summer in Northern Sahel. However, for the moment, it is not possible to predict whether these factors will materialize. In any case, the current situation does not match at all the severity of the situation in 2003 – 2005.

displaced people have started to return to their communities. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has announced that the number of displaced persons has reached 387,153, as of November 15. National authorities still provide humanitarian response at all levels. The Minister of Agriculture has announced that the Federal Government has promised to distribute 4,800 tons of seeds to people affected by floods in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Katsina and Yobe.

Resumption of hostilities in Mali and population movements

It is feared that the resumption of hostilities in Northern Mali on January 9 may create new population movements within Mali and towards neighbouring countries. Prior to the start of the hostilities, the number of internally displaced people (IDP) was estimated at around 198,500. These figures should be revised following the resumption of hostilities that led to new population movements: as of 22 January, OCHA's report on Mali indicated that, according to the information provided by partners operating in affected areas, at least 3,600 people have been internally displaced to Mopti, Segou and Bamako since January 10. On January 16, the total number of IDP in Mali was estimated at 228,920 (IOM, OCHA). The total number of Malian refugees in neighbouring countries was 144,400 at the end of December (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, UNHCR). Since the resumption of the fighting, several hundred refugees moved to neighbouring countries, 80% of whom are women and children.

The closure of borders by some countries bordering Mali will not be without consequences for the livelihoods of people still living in the North of the country because it will make it more difficult to move herd and as well as cross-border trade. The effects of the increases in prices of certain commodities in the markets of the North have started to be felt and will certainly have a significant impact on households' access to basic foodstuffs.

The situation remains highly volatile, with humanitarian consequences, including in terms of access for humanitarian organizations and for the markets to operate, must be specified. The Food Security Cluster of Mali closely follows the possible consequences of this intervention on population movements.

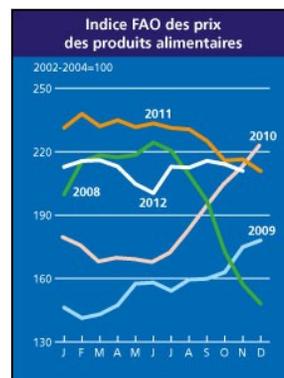
Trends on the international markets

The **FAO index of food prices** averaged 209 in December 2012 or 2 points (1.1 percent) less than in November. This is the lowest level since June 2012 (it was then 200 points). The decline observed in December was due to the fall in international prices of major cereals and oils / fats. The Index averaged 212 in 2012 or an annual value down by 7.0 per cent compared to 2011. The sharpest declines affect sugar (17.1 percent), dairy products (14.5 percent) and fats (10.7 percent). They are much less concerning cereals and meat (2.4 and 1.1 percent, respectively).

The **FAO index for cereal prices**, down by 6 points (2.3 percent) compared to the previous month was 250 on average in December. It stood at 241 on average for the full year of 2012, or 2.4 percent below its 2011 level. After the jump observed between July and September 2012, in the light of uncertainties over production and the contraction of supply, export prices fell because of a sagging cereals demand for fodder and industrial production. In December, maize prices plummeted, due to a significant offer from South America, which had the effect of relaxing prices by reducing liquid assets in the United States.

In December, **world rice prices** remained on a downward trend under the influence of Vietnamese prices in sharp decline. While Thai and North America prices remained stable again. Asian crops look good and so are supply conditions. Many countries, including

Figure 2 : FAO Price Index



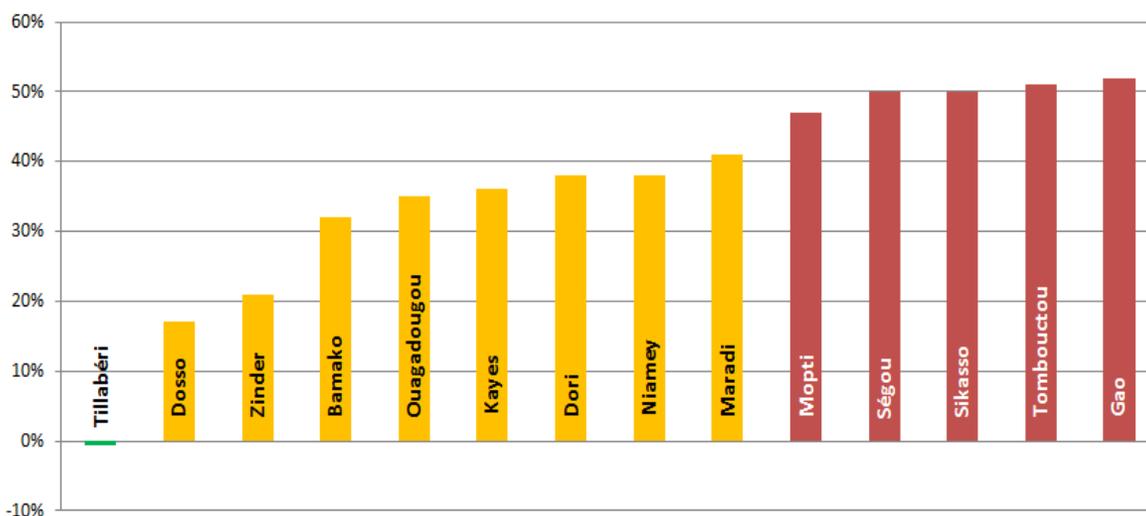
Source : FAO

the world's leading importers, display self-sufficiency goals. Also, even if these goals have little chance of success in the medium term, countries like Nigeria, Indonesia and the Philippines could register lower imports in 2013. However, people wonder if Thailand will pursue or not its policy in terms of domestic prices. A massive destocking of accrued Thai reserves could contribute to a collapse in world prices (Osiriz-bulletin No. 106).

Markets trends in West Africa

At the beginning of December 2012, the prices of dry cereals showed different trends according to markets. While some prices were within the seasonal norm, certain market prices remained well above seasonal norms or the five-year average.

Figure 3 : Trend of millet prices over the five-year average (December)



Source : SIM, FAO/GIEWS, WFP, Afrique Verte

In **Niger**, compared to the five-year average, the prices of dry cereals are rising on most markets: millet (17% to 41%), sorghum (5% to 39%), maize (2% to 21%). Compared to December 2011, millet prices range from -24% to 9%, the most significant are to be found in Niamey. In Burkina Faso, compared to the five-year average, dry cereals prices are also rising in all markets: millet (19% to 91%), sorghum (8% to 25%), maize (2% to 29%). Compared to December 2011, millet prices range from -5% to 44%, the most

significant occurred in Tenkodogo. In Mali, increases in dry cereals prices are also observed, especially on markets in the Central and Southern parts of the country compared to the five-year average: millet (32% to 51%), sorghum (7% to 37%), maize (4 % to 32%). Compared to December 2011, millet prices range from -5% to 44%, the most significant are to be found in Sikasso. In general, the prices of imported rice are declining or are stable, based on markets.

Markets trends in West Africa (continued)

The terms of trade Goat/Millet slightly improved in November 2012, compared to October, improving the accessibility of millet to farmers and pastoralists. However, they remain lower than in November 2010. Concerning local beans (niebe) and millet, a 14% drop was recorded on the Birni Gaouré (Dosso) market. Such levels are higher than those of November 2010 and lower than the average of the last five years (source: Albichir).

In **Senegal**, two months after the marketing of products, offers and stocks improved significantly on all markets of the country (rural / urban, consumer / group). The downward trend of the prices of local products continues: dry cereal prices have declined since Oc-

tober between 2 and 4%, and 32% for unshelled groundnuts while shelled groundnuts declined by 16% and local beans by 7%. However, cereal prices remain high from 4 to 11%, compared to the previous campaign, which was characterized by very high prices, but also by the five-year average (2007/08-2011/12): between 19 and 23% for cereals and between 17 and 35% for vegetables. However, the price of imported ordinary rice remained stable. After tension on the markets of small ruminants in October, the prices of sheep and goats came down for consumers. The terms of barter between cattle and imported rice improved in the last 12 months by 55%, 15% and 18% for cattle, sheep and goats (Source: Marsé).

Impact on food security

The Sahelian context remains marked by a "triple crises" to which Strategy Sahel 2013 developed by regional humanitarian agencies based in Dakar, and launched on December 17, tries to answer. It is about (1) the acute crisis of food and nutritional security in 2012, and still going on in 2013 for the most vulnerable households benefiting little from good harvests and who still need assistance, (2) the crisis related to the reduced resilience of the populations facing recurrent shocks, to food insecurity and chronic malnutrition, and (3) internal and cross-border displacement due to the conflict in Mali. In 2013, these triple crises could affect approximately 10.3 million people and more than 1.4 million children are threatened with severe and acute malnutrition in 2013. This strategy covers, the Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals (CAPs) of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger launched on December 14, 2012, and the needs identified in The Gambia and Senegal.

In **Ghana**, the food security monitoring system of the Government and WFP covering five regions in the north reported a general improvement of the food situation (November 2012). Good agricultural conditions led to a lesser reliance of households on local markets, a better access to basic self-produced food, and a substantial increase in stocks for households and on the markets. The prices of maize are at their lowest level since the beginning of 2012 in almost all regions. However, maize prices continue to be well above the average of the last five years (+30%), especially in the Upper West region (+92%). Food security remains difficult for households in the Volta region where more than half of them have access to only a maximum of two meals a day.

In **Mali**, in addition to the impact the conflict has on food security and nutrition, SAP said that the food crisis of 2011-2012 will have important consequences (loss of livestock, loss of employment, reduction of economic activities ...) on the livelihoods of a large part of the population, thus making rural populations vulnerable to potential shocks in 2013. SAP Mali concluded by saying that "a single good agricultural campaign in 2012-2013 could not possibly remove all these difficulties, especially when we know that malnutrition continues to persist in all its forms in the country."

A study of nutrition and retrospective mortality was conducted by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in the refugee camp in Mbera at the Southeast of **Mauritania**, from November 05 to 09 2012. A prevalence rate of acute malnutrition of 4.6% and of 17.0% for global malnutrition is alarming and demonstrates the extreme precariousness of the situation of refugees in the camp of Mbera. The gross mortality rate and the mortality rate among children under 5 years were 0.76 /10,000 and 1.46 10,000/day and / 10,000/day above emergency thresholds of 0.5 / 10,000/day and 1.0 / 10,000/day. The main recommendations for actors in the camp are to improve the quality of care under all nutritional and curative programs, to improve access to care through awareness-raising among the camp populations; to boost immunization for children aged 6 months to 15 years against measles; and to adapt the food distributed to refugees to make it more compatible with the eating habits of the latter.

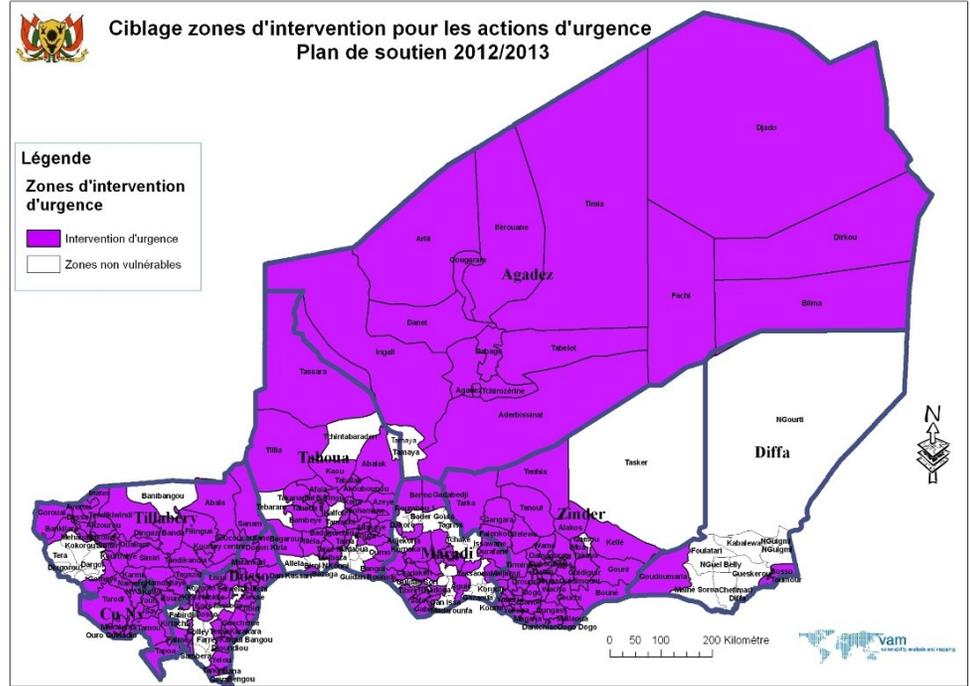
In **Chad**, in the region of Gera, Oxfam reported in early December that the results of the campaign go from good to very good overall, despite damage to crops by floods and pests. Lower prices of red sorghum and the increased purchasing power of farmers and good prospects for export crops allow a significant number of households to improve their access to food and to look forward to good income for the first months of 2013.

In **Niger**, during the wrap-up session of Early Warning System meetings, held in late November, the vulnerability analysis identified 185 vulnerable areas including 3,243 villages with a population estimated at 2,483,051 inhabitants. Eleven departments emerged as moderately vulnerable in the region of Zinder (Tesker and Kantche), one in the Diffa region (N'Gourti), two in the Tahoua region (Tahoua and Abalak), one in the Agadez region (Aderbissinat), four in the Tillabery region (Ayerou, Bankilare, Torodi Tillabery) and in the region of Niamey (district 3). The map below shows the distribution of priority target areas for 2013.

Impact on food security (continued)

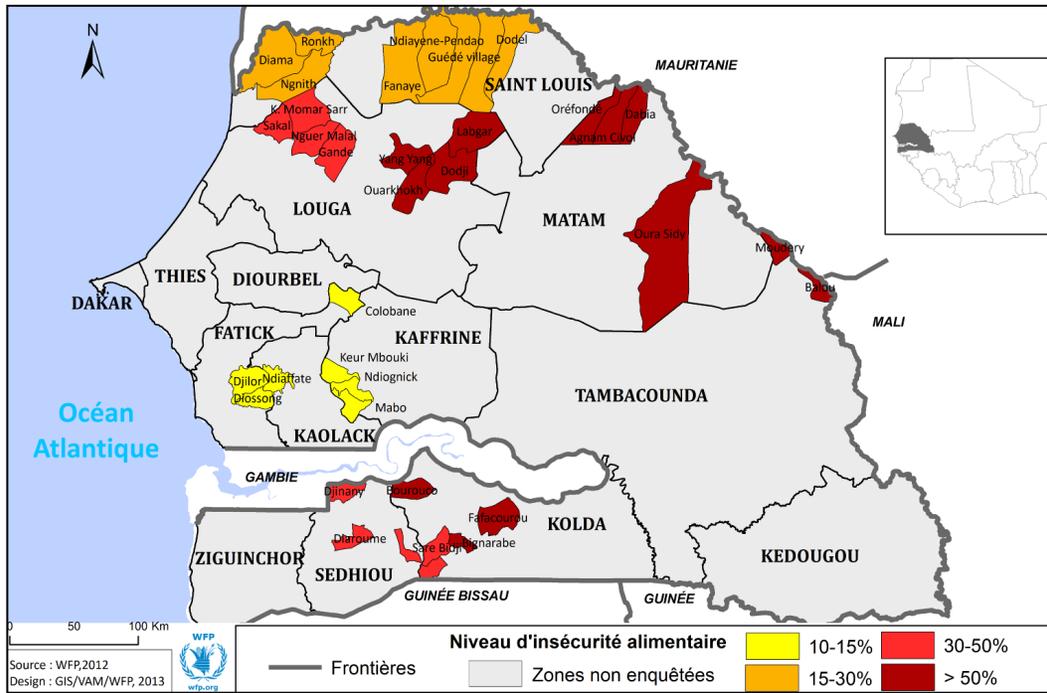
Still in Niger, in December 2012, Save the Children conducted an analysis of the impact of high prices currently observed, combined with the results of the 2012 agricultural campaign, on food security of households living in the whole areas located in the North and South of the district of Tessaoua. A scenario analysis shows the appearance of a lack of protection of livelihoods among very poor households in the two areas of the district during a lean period in 2013. From August 2013 onwards, poor and very poor households will have an income gap of 24 and 36%, in the South and North respectively. According to Save the Children, this worrying situation shows that the efforts of the humanitarian and development partners around the Resilience Initiative in Niger should be strengthened.

Figure 4 : Intervention areas for emergency operations in Niger in 2013



Source : SAP Niger, WFP

Figure 5 : Food Insecurity Prevalence in areas with low production (2012/13) in comparison to the average of the last five years



Source : WFP, December 2012

In Senegal, a joint mission (Government / Action Aid / Senegalese Red Cross / FAO / WFP) was organized in late December 2012 in the rural communities where grain production declined, compared to the average of the last five years (2007 / 08 - 2011/12) due to irregularities in rainfall and / or to floods.²

Preliminary results indicate that food insecurity currently affects more than 230,000 people in some villages and rural communities in St. Louis, Louga, Matam, Kolda and Sedhiou, and in the regions of Fatick, Kaolack and Kaffrine. Thus, the prevalence of food insecurity is critical in the areas of Bakel (65% of households), Matam (64%), Medina Yoro Foula (63%) and Linguere (55%). The prevalence of food insecurity is, however, low in all areas of the regions of Fatick and Kaffrine where it is less than 15%, while it is moderate in the departments of Dagana and Podor (Figure 5).

² During the rainy season, two joint national missions and two other joint departmental missions assessed the 2012-2013 agricultural campaign. Based on the latter, areas where cereal production has declined compared to the average of the last five years were determined. It is within these areas that the joint mission studied, from a household questionnaire, the level of food insecurity.

Recommendations for the regional food security and nutrition working group

To keep on monitoring food and nutrition security in the Sahel, especially in Mali and neighboring countries which are being affected by the Malian crisis	Food and nutrition response scenarios have been designed for better preparedness.
To continue monitoring the behavior of prices, including in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Nigeria	Monitoring of access to food for the poorest households.
To support the advocacy for an adequate response to Consolidated Appeals (CAPs) launched in 2013	Humanitarian needs resulting from the crisis in the Sahel in 2012 and reported in the CAPs have been covered.

Conclusions

Agricultural and pastoral prospects are generally good in West Africa and in the Sahel. However, malnutrition rates are generally high, the prices of cereals, despite drops, remain high and food accessibility problems afflicting poor and very poor rural households who have little or no access at all to agriculture, suggest that food insecurity will persist in 2013. The deterioration of the security situation in Mali may exacerbate the food situation of vulnerable households, including internal refugees, refugees, host populations and the populations who stayed on the spot in Northern Mali.



Informations sur la sécurité alimentaire en Afrique de l'Ouest

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Mark your calendars !

- > Technical Committee meeting of Cadre Harmonisé : from 7 to 11 January, Dakar
- > Markets assessment CILSS : from 4 to 16 February 2013
- > Analysis of Cadre Harmonisé : Mauritania 20-28 February 2013, Chad et Burkina Faso 21 February—1 March 2013
- > Publication of the EWS's vulnerability maps (available for Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali), ongoing
- > Sub-regional workshop on the assessment and improvement strategy and the pastoralists' access to animal feed : from 22 to 24 January in Niamey