



## THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK

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# FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA

## COMMUNIQUÉ

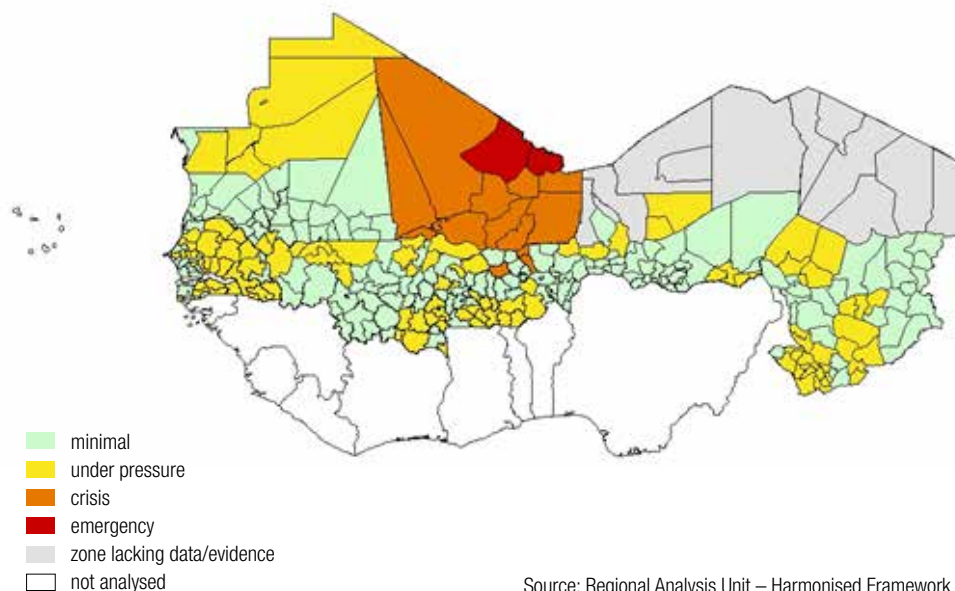
RESTRICTED RPCA MEETING, PARIS, 8-9 APRIL 2013

**Despite an overall good harvest in the Sahel and West Africa,  
the food and nutritional situation remains uncertain in some areas.**

According to March 2013 estimates, **CROSS CEREAL PRODUCTION** for the 2012-13 crop season in the Sahel and West Africa was about 54.6 million tonnes. This corresponds to an increase of 10% compared to 2011-12 and 15% compared to the average of the last five years (2007-12). Production has increased in all countries compared to the five-year average, except in Nigeria (-8%) and in The Gambia (-17%).

In the Sahelian countries, cereal production is estimated at 22.5 million tonnes, constituting a 37% increase compared to 2011-12 and 34% compared to the five-year average. Production in Chad and Mauritania has increased by more than 50% compared to last year.

Classification of food insecurity, March 2013



Source: Regional Analysis Unit – Harmonised Framework

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### ABOUT THE RPCA

The Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) is an international consultation and co-ordination platform, drawing on the political leadership of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions.

Its technical management is co-ordinated by CILSS, with the support of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat. Created in 1984, the work of the RPCA is based on consultation, dialogue, and analysis.

It reinforces the coherence and effectiveness of interventions through the implementation of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management. The Network brings together the three West African regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS), regional and international information systems, bi- and multilateral co-operation agencies, humanitarian organisations and international NGOs, as well as agricultural professional associations, the private sector and civil society.

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The regional production of cassava and yam, estimated at 122 million tonnes, is close to the five-year average. The production of legumes (groundnuts and cowpeas) has increased. The availability of fodder and non-timber forest products has improved.

Since the end of the harvest, better **MARKET SUPPLY** led to a significant price drop between September 2012 and January 2013. However, overall prices remain higher than the five-year average, particularly for millet, whose price exceeds the average by 30% to 45% in Niger (Maradi et Zinder) and Nigeria (Kano). In the structurally deficit-prone areas of Northern Mali and Niger and in the Sahelian region of Burkina Faso, prices are 20% to 55% higher than the five-year average. Terms of trade between cattle and cereals have generally improved, except in some areas of Mali and Niger and in western/central Chad. The terms of trade between cash crops and cereals are currently benefiting producers of cotton, cowpea, groundnuts and off-season crops.

**REGIONAL TRADE FLOWS** are generally smooth. The insecurity in northern Mali and in Nigeria, however, undermines cereal and cattle flows between production and consumption zones. The social and political unrest may exercise a strong pressure on the regional market and push prices up. Poor harvests in the North and Center of Nigeria equally result in an upward price trend; therefore, the monitoring of cross-border markets is necessary.

As the results of high prices, **ACCESS TO FOOD** by the most vulnerable households may worsen during the lean season. According to the information provided by countries, almost 1.6 million people face severe chronic food insecurity<sup>1</sup> and will need immediate assistance before the beginning of the lean season. Malnutrition levels are generally worrisome. The chronic malnutrition rate exceeds 40% in some areas, while the global acute malnutrition rate remains above the critical level of 15% in some areas of Chad, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

**THE VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS** conducted in six Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal) using the Harmonised Framework indicates that the region of Kidal in Mali reached the emergency phase due to the persistent conflict, impeding socio-economic activities and trade flows. The regions in northern Mali (Gao and Timbuktu), the Seno province in Burkina Faso and the departments of Tilabéri and Tera in Niger reached the crisis phase due to low food consumption, high malnutrition rates and the weakening livelihoods of local populations. For all these zones, immediate humanitarian action is needed. Other zones are 'under pressure' or under 'minimal' pressure. These populations require support for protecting and strengthening their livelihoods and for improving their access to food. The members of the RPCA wish to emphasize the gravity of the humanitarian situation and the alarming prospects in northern Mali and its neighbouring countries, equally affected by the consequences of the crisis. Resource mobilisation for economic recovery and reconstruction in Mali must not impede humanitarian emergency actions. Additionally, in coastal zones of West African countries, particularly in the border zone between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, and in the North and the Center of Nigeria, monitoring food and nutritional security remains necessary. In these zones, efforts should focus on strengthening the livelihoods of local populations.

<sup>1</sup> Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria have not provided data and are not included. Mali is not included either as the data does not differentiate between severe and moderate food insecurity.

Considering the situation described above, the **RPCA RECOMMENDS** to:

- Continue to carry out actions to assist and strengthen the livelihoods of poor and very poor households. This should include refugees, displaced persons and host populations affected by the 2012 food crisis, the insecurity in northern Mali and northern Nigeria, high food prices and the impacts of floods;
- Accelerate the replenishment of public and community stocks by the end of April 2013;
- Support malnutrition reduction plans and undertake a deep multisectoral analysis of the acute and chronic malnutrition situation in the region;
- Strengthen resilience initiatives for vulnerable populations. To this end, the members of the RPCA equally recommend to accelerate the establishment of a technical unit supporting the implementation of the Global Alliance for Resilience (ACT) and to initiate resilience-building actions in a few volunteering countries in the coming months;
- Mobilise the necessary funding to meet immediate and long-term needs identified in the Joint Sahel Strategy. Mobiliser les financements nécessaires pour répondre aux besoins immédiats et de long terme identifiés dans le plan stratégique conjoint Sahel.

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