



ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE CURRENT FOOD SITUATION AND AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK 2012-2013 IN THE SAHEL AND IN WEST AFRICA

Persistence of critical and extreme food and nutritional insecurity, notwithstanding efforts to assist vulnerable populations.

The restricted meeting of the Regional Information Group on Food Crisis Prevention and Management in the Sahel and in West Africa (PREGEC) was held in Niamey (Niger), from 07 to 09 June 2012. The following conclusions emerged from the meeting:

Cereal prices remain abnormally high in most markets, particularly in Burkina Faso and Mali where prices are between 50 and 100% above the five-year average for millet and sorghum. In Niger and Chad, the price increases are less pronounced. In Senegal and Mauritania, the buffer effect of rice and wheat imports has been able to mitigate the rise in prices.

The terms of trade (livestock/cereals and cash crops/cereals) are deteriorating due to high cereal prices, except in Senegal.

According to the vulnerability assessment framework, which is based on the combination of twelve (12) groups of food security and nutrition indicators, the current situation (established in June 2012) is i) extreme phase in the Kanem, Barh el Gazal, Batha (Chad), in the region of Gao (Mali) and the Moughataa of Bassikounou (Mauritania); ii) critical to extreme phase in the regions of Timbuktu and Kidal (Mali) and iii) critical phase in the majority of agro-pastoral zones in Mauritania, Mali, Burkina, Niger and Chad. Elsewhere the situation is characterized by moderate food insecurity and there are also some places where the food situation is good.

The food situation projected for September 2012 takes into account improved conditions in the pastoral zones and appearance of the first crops in Sudanian areas. Extreme food insecurity situations will persist in the Moughataa of Mbout, Monguel, Kankossa and Bassikounou, in Mauritania. Food situation in the *cercle* of Youvarou in Mali will be critical to extremely critical. In the Sahelian region of Chad, the regions of Kayes and Mopti in Mali, the rest of south-eastern Mauritania, part of northern Burkina Faso and much of the agro-pastoral zone of Niger, the situation will remain critical. Northern Mali has not been classified because of uncertainty on future developments of the overall situation there.

In response to the food and nutrition insecurity, efforts have been made by States and partners, including USAID and the European Union to support vulnerable populations in the Sahel. However, to date, according to the High level Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, Finance and Commerce of Member countries of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS, held in Lome/Togo, on 5 June 2012, there is a need for 400 billion FCFA to finance the food, nutritional and agricultural components of the States' response plans for the third and fourth quarters of year 2012. Regarding the establishment of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers) in the countries, there is a delay and a lack of funding.

Seasonal climate and hydrological forecasts established in May 2012 are uncertain. They indicate a normal to small surplus rainfall in Chad, in eastern Niger and Burkina Faso as well as in the northern parts of Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. On the other hand, in the western Sahel (West of Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea) a normal trend to deficit is expected. On the hydrological level, normal flows are expected on the Senegal, Gambia and Comoe rivers; normal to surplus flows on the Volta and Oueme rivers and normal to deficit on the Niger River, in its upper part.

The locust situation is now marked by the presence of desert locust swarms in south-western Libya, groups of adult individuals in south-eastern Algeria and Arlit in Niger. The situation is serious and deserves special attention.

At the end of its deliberations, the meeting recommends:

To the countries and their Partners to:

- Maintain response efforts to the crisis, especially for nutrition, food assistance and support to livelihoods, while avoiding further disrupt the functioning of markets;
- Accelerate the establishment of agricultural and livestock inputs;
- Strengthen food security monitoring and surveillance in the region with the uncertainty over the 2012-2013 cropping season ;
- Strengthen surveillance and undertake locust control operations.

Done at Niamey, 09 June 2012

The Meeting