

SAHEL WEATHER AND CROP SITUATION REPORT

Report No.5, 11 October 2000



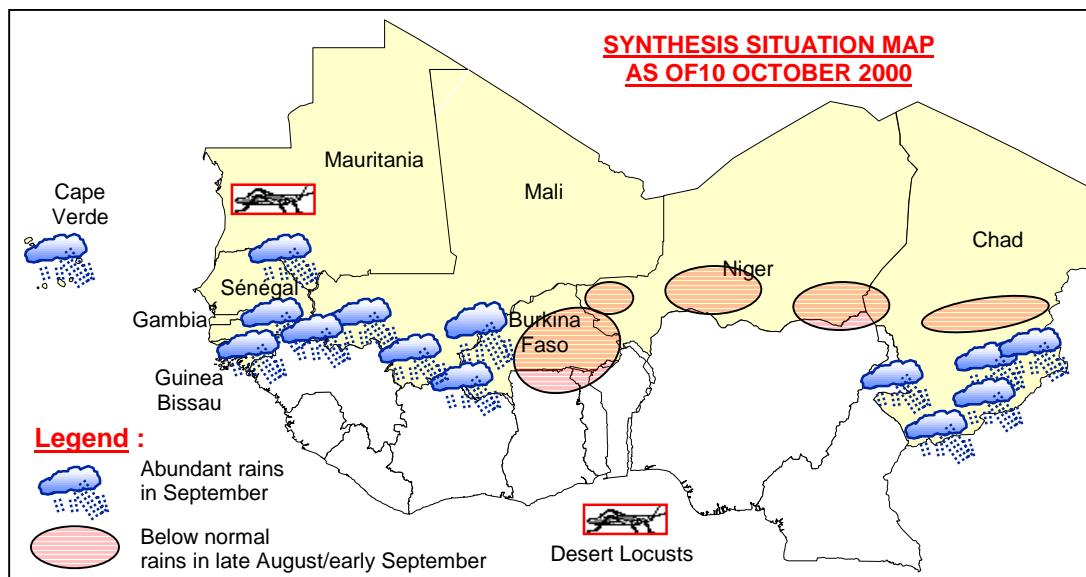
GOOD HARVEST PROSPECTS IN THE WEST OF THE SAHEL, MIXED OUTLOOK IN BURKINA FASO, NIGER AND CHAD

SUMMARY

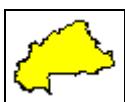
Precipitation was generally widespread and abundant over the main agricultural zones of the Sahel in July and early August, but decreased from late August to early September over the eastern half of the Sahel. It picked up in mid-September and remained generally normal to above normal until late September, except in Chad. Harvest prospects are favourable in the western countries of the Sahel and mixed in the eastern part. Above average or record crops are anticipated in **The Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania and Mali**. Production will increase in **Guinea Bissau**. Growing conditions improved in **Cape Verde** following recent heavy rains. In the centre of the Sahel, harvest prospects are favourable in the south and the south-west of **Burkina Faso** but unfavourable in the centre, the east and the north. In **Niger**, crops have been affected by reduced rains in late August/early September, but overall, an average harvest is anticipated. In **Chad**, harvest prospects are unfavourable in the Sahelian zone and mixed in the Sudanian zone. Satellite images for early October show that cloud coverage is moving southwards, which is normal. However, it is still raining in southern Senegal, southern Chad, central Niger and some areas of Mali and Burkina Faso

Harvesting of maize and early millet has started in some countries. Crops are generally developing satisfactorily in the western half of the Sahel region while improved rains in mid-September benefited crops affected by dry spells earlier in central and eastern Burkina Faso, most parts of Niger and the Sahelian zone of Chad.

Pastures are generally abundant throughout the pastoral zones of the Sahel. Grasshopper attacks have been reported in Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The Desert Locust situation remained calm during September with low numbers of solitary adults and small scale breeding reported in southern and central Mauritania. Once vegetation starts to dry out, adults are likely to move on a small scale towards northern Mauritania. Elsewhere, no significant pest developments are likely.



SITUATION BY COUNTRY



BURKINA FASO: Harvest prospects are favourable in the south and the south-west and unfavourable in the centre, the east and the north. Below normal rainfall in August over the eastern half of the country affected crop development. Cumulative rainfall is below average except in the west and the south-west. Dry conditions significantly reduced yield potential. Therefore, below-average harvests are anticipated in the centre, the east and the north. However, with good crop prospects in the south and the south-east where growing conditions were favourable, average output is anticipated at national level.

Pastures remain generally adequate countrywide. No significant pest activity is reported.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 9 to 14 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



CAPE VERDE: Crop conditions improved following heavy rains from mid-September on most islands. Maize planting in August in the agricultural islands followed the arrival of the rains in late July. However, with generally below-average rains in August, crop prospects became unfavourable but heavy rains associated with strong winds were received on most islands during the third dekad of September, benefiting crops and pastures.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 23 to 28 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



CHAD: Harvest prospects are mixed in the Sudanian zone but unfavourable in the Sahelian zone. Following generally above average rains in July, precipitation decreased significantly in the Sahelian zone in August. It improved in early September except in the east of the Sahelian zone and remained widespread but low during the second dekad, moving southwards during the third dekad and in early October. Coarse grain crops are generally growing satisfactorily in the Sudanian zone. By contrast, in the Sahelian zone, millet and sorghum suffered water stress and harvest prospects are not favourable.

Pastures are starting to dry up in the Sahelian zone. Grasshopper attacks have been reported in several regions. Grain eating birds caused some damage to millet and maize in Guéra prefecture. No Desert Locust activity is reported, while some Migratory Locusts have been reported in Ati area along the Batha river.

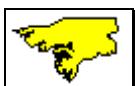
A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 19 to 27 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



THE GAMBIA: A good harvest is anticipated. Rains were widespread and above average from late June to early August, but decreased significantly in mid-August. They improved in late August and remained generally widespread and abundant in September. Coarse grains and upland rice crops are developing satisfactorily. Recently transplanted rice is tillering/elongating. Both area under cereals and yields are estimated to have increased over last year, and therefore a record crop is anticipated.

The pest situation remains mostly calm.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 9 to 14 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



GUINEA-BISSAU: **Growing conditions are favourable so far.** Rains were generally regular and well distributed up to the first dekad of August. They decreased significantly during the second dekad but became particularly abundant countrywide during the third dekad and remained so in September. Coarse grains are developing satisfactorily in the east and north and the rice crop is elongating in the swamp rice fields.

Pastures are abundant. The pest situation remains mostly calm, but some insect attacks have been reported in localized areas.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 16 to 20 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



MALI: **Reflecting favourable growing conditions, a good harvest is in prospect.** Rains were generally well distributed and regular in June, July, August and September over the main producing areas. Crops are generally growing satisfactorily except in some areas affected by flooding or dry spells in the north (estimated at 12 800 hectares in Gao, Bourem, Ansongo and Mopti areas). Millet, sorghum and rainfed rice are heading/maturing, while maize is being harvested. Irrigated rice is developing well. If rains continue in October, cereal production could be close to last year's record level.

Pastures are generally abundant. Grain-eating birds were reported in the rice producing areas along the Niger river and treatments have been undertaken on 5 100 hectares. Grasshopper attacks were also reported locally. Low numbers of Desert Locusts are likely to be present in parts of the Adrar des Iforas and breeding on a small scale is likely in some areas.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 23 to 28 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



MAURITANIA: **Growing conditions remain favourable.** Rains were generally widespread and above normal in July and August, but seasonably decreased in September, although remaining widespread over the main producing zones. Rainfed crops are developing satisfactorily. Prospects for off-season recession crops are less favourable than last year as dams are not filled and the Senegal river did not reach its maximum level. Irrigated rice has been planted with some delays in Brakna and Gorgol but production should recover from last year when large areas were flooded in the lower Senegal river valley.

Pastures are good to excellent countrywide but are starting to dry up. Grasshopper attacks have been reported but mainly on pastures. A total of 878 hectares have been treated against grain eating birds, notably in Trarza. Low numbers of Desert Locusts were reported during September in parts of Trarza, Brakna, Tagant, and the two Hodhs. Small scale breeding was reported north of Moudjeria. More breeding on a small scale is expected during October in areas which recently received good rainfall. As a result, locust numbers will increase slightly and new adults could start to appear from November onwards. Once the vegetation starts to dry out, adults are likely to move north towards Inchiri and Adrar.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 14 to 20 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



NIGER: Following reduced rains in late August/early September, harvest prospects have deteriorated. Widespread and regular rains during the first half of the rainy season were followed by significant decreases in late August and early September. However, precipitation improved in mid-September and remained normal to above normal in late September. The dry spell severely affected crops in Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabery departments. As these areas are not the main producing areas, the aggregate output of cereals is anticipated to be about average.

Infestations of grasshoppers have been reported in various areas, notably in Diffa, Dosso, Maradi and Tahoua departments. Treatments against grasshoppers and grain eating birds have been undertaken. No Desert Locusts were reported during September. Low numbers of adults may be present in parts of central Tamesna and on the western side of the Air but breeding is likely to be limited due to the prevailing dry and unfavourable conditions.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 16 to 21 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.



SENEGAL: Reflecting favourable growing conditions, a good harvest is anticipated. Following abundant rains in late July and early August which caused localized flooding, there was a significant decrease in mid-August. In late August rains picked up and remained widespread over the entire country in September. Cumulative rainfall is above normal except in the south. Maize, millet and sorghum are being harvested in the south and are flowering/maturing in the north. Rice is heading/flowering in the south and developing well in the centre and north. Crop conditions are satisfactory. With continuing rains in early October, early estimates point to another above average or record crop.

Pastures are abundant except in Tambacounda and Louga areas where they have been affected by reduced rains. Grasshopper attacks have been reported in the north and centre-north, and treatments have been undertaken.

A joint FAO/CILSS Crop Assessment Mission is scheduled from 9 to 13 October to estimate the 2000 cereal production.

This is the fifth GIEWS report of the 2000 season on weather and crop conditions in the Sahelian countries of western Africa. Geographical coverage of these reports include the nine CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel) member states: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. Reports will be issued each month from June to November. The final report for 2000 with the first production estimates will be issued in late-November

These reports are prepared with data from, and in close collaboration with, out-posted FAO Representatives, the Agro-Meteorology Group and the Environmental Monitoring Group (SDRN), the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLO), the Special Relief Operations Service (TCOR), the World Food Programme (WFP), as well as various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In this report, satellite imagery provided by FAO/ARTEMIS, field data on rainfall, FAO agro-meteorological crop monitoring field reports and information provided by FAO Representatives up to 30 September have been utilized. Satellite images of the first days of October have also been utilized for final updating.

*In these reports, reference will be made to four different **eco-climatic zones** based on the average annual precipitation and agricultural features, i.e. Sahelian zone, Sudano-Sahelian zone, Sudanian zone and Guinean zone. They are described below:*

Sahelian zone: Where average annual precipitation ranges between 250 and 500 mm. This zone is at the limit of perennial vegetation. In parts where precipitation is less than 350 mm, only pastures and occasional short-cycle drought-resistant cereal crops are grown; all cropping in this zone is subject to high risk.

Sudano-Sahelian zone: Where average annual precipitation ranges from 500 to 900 mm. In those parts of this zone where precipitation is less than 700 mm, mostly crops with a short growing cycle of 90 days are generally cultivated predominantly sorghum and millet.

Sudanian zone: Where average annual precipitation ranges from 900 to 1 100 mm. In this zone, most cereal crops have a growing cycle of 120 days or more. Most cereals, notably maize, root and cash crops are grown in this zone.

Guinean zone: Where average annual precipitation exceeds 1 100 mm. Guinea-Bissau and a small area of southern Burkina Faso belong to this zone, more suited to root crop cultivation.

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Fax No.: 0039-06-5705-4495, E-Mail address: GIEWS1@FAO.ORG
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