



RPCA MEETING OF THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK



Organised by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD), under the auspices of the Commissions of ECOWAS and UEMOA

SUMMARY RECORD

The purpose of this meeting was to assess the current food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa and to propose measures to be taken. The food and nutritional situation is particularly worrying in the Sahel this year due to the poor 2011-2012 agricultural campaign in certain localities. Significant production cuts have resulted in higher food prices and increased vulnerability of many households. The massive influx of displaced persons and refugees into vulnerable areas due to the conflict in northern Mali, affecting about 206 000 people (OCHA, 22 March 2012), has exacerbated food insecurity in Mali but also in neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. Adequate measures must be quickly taken as the food crisis is gradually spreading to other countries such as The Gambia and is likely to deteriorate further during the lean season.

■ EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Examine the final results of the 2011/2012 agricultural campaign and discuss the current and future food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa;
- Propose emergency measures and recommendations to better respond to the food crisis in the Sahel;
- Adopt a set of instruments for the implementation of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management.

■ PARTICIPANTS

The meeting brought together the Commissioners for Rural Development, Environment and Water Resources of ECOWAS and UEMOA, the Executive Secretary of CILSS and CILSS experts, the Director of the Sahel and the West Africa Secretariat, technical and financial partners (EU, USAID FEWSNET, WFP), diplomatic representatives based in Paris from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal as well as civil society representatives (ROPPA) and NGOs (OXFAM).



1 OPENING SESSION

The opening ceremony was marked by speeches by CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA and SWAC, and a keynote address by Mr. Rintaro Tamaki, OECD Deputy Secretary-General.

- **Mr. Laurent Bossard**, SWAC Secretariat Director, introduced the meeting by drawing attention to the worrying situation in northern Mali and its impact on the humanitarian and food situation and by mentioning the important role of regional organisations, ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS, the only mandate bearers in terms of regional food safety policy, security and development that are capable of bringing a vision of an integrated and sustainable future to the region ;
- **Professor Alhousseini Bretaudeau**, Executive Secretary of CILSS, then referred to the decline in cereal production in some Sahelian countries and rising food prices. In this context, he mentioned the need to strengthen food security analysis tools, to establish sustainable mechanisms for financing and supplying crop input, and to strengthen information and monitoring systems and further extend their coverage to the whole ECOWAS area. Countries of the sub-region must maintain and facilitate cross-border trade in order to facilitate supplies to deficit areas. Prof. Bretaudeau called on member countries of CILSS, UEMOA and ECOWAS to strictly enforce regulations governing the free movement of goods and people in order to improve market integration;
- **Mr. Ibrahima Diémé**, UEMOA Commissioner for Rural Development, Natural Resources and the Environment stressed that the current UEMOA Chairman of the Heads of State and Government Conference had established a High-Level Committee for Food Security. The first meeting of this Committee was held 14 February 2012 in Niamey and resulted in proposals for emergency measures and actions for the medium- and long term, which were endorsed by the UEMOA Council of Ministers on 20 February 2012 in Ouagadougou. The provision of emergency financial assistance to Member States by the Union for the purchase of food for vulnerable populations as well as cattle feed is one of the emergency measures that has been taken by the Committee. Mr. Diémé welcomed the G20 initiative and its choice to support the West Africa region in the establishment of a regional food security reserve. He called upon all technical and financial partners to strengthen their support for this initiative;
- **Dr. Lapodini Marc Atouga**, ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, also stressed the critical role of regional organisations in addressing the current food crisis. He reiterated the ECOWAS commitment to take necessary measures for the proper management of the crisis;
- **Mr. Rintaro Tamaki**, OECD Deputy Secretary-General, referred to the G20 initiative of establishing a regional food reserve in West Africa and stressed the importance of the RPCA to prevent and manage food crises and support regional and international initiatives.

Following the opening ceremony, participants approved the meeting agenda and the proposed chairs and facilitators. Drawing on presentations by experts from CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET, OXFAM and SWAC, two thematic sessions addressed: (1) The food and nutrition situation and urgent measures, and (2) the development of the set of instruments as part of the implementation of the Charter.



From left to right: Mr. Atouga, Mr. Tamaki and Mr. Diémé

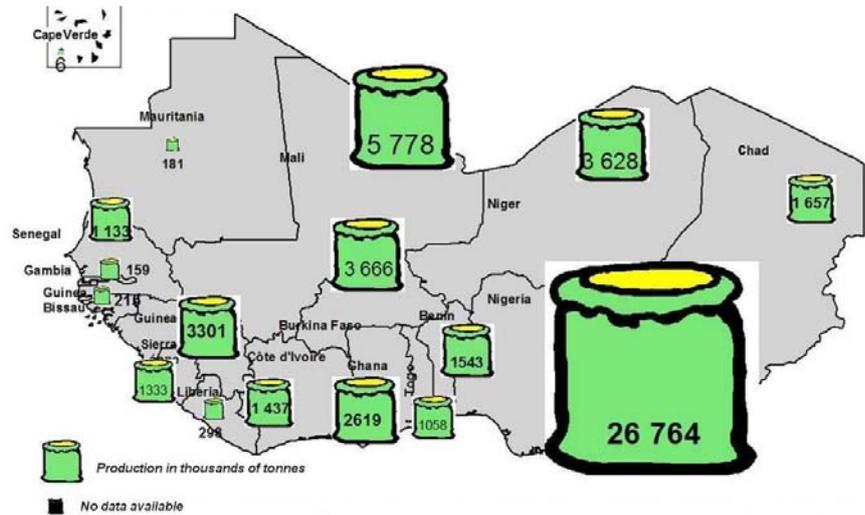
2 SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS AND DEBATES

Updated review and outlook of the food and agricultural situation

Ms. Maty Ba Diao, Head of Information and Research at CILSS/AGRHYMET and Mr. Amadou Konate Mactar, Food Security Expert at CILSS/SE, presented the final results of the 2011-2012 agricultural campaign and its implications for food security.

This year's cereal production in the Sahel and West Africa amounts to 54.78 million tonnes, which represents a 9% decrease compared to last year's production. Production in the Sahel accounts for 16 424 000 tonnes, representing a decrease of 26% compared to 2010/2011 and 3% compared to the average of the last five years. The largest decreases compared to 2010/2011 are for dry cereals: 12% for sorghum and 20% for millet. The pastoral situation is difficult because of low water availability for livestock, causing conflicts between herders and farmers, environmental degradation and loss of productive capital by farmers.

2011/2012 Cereal Production Campaign



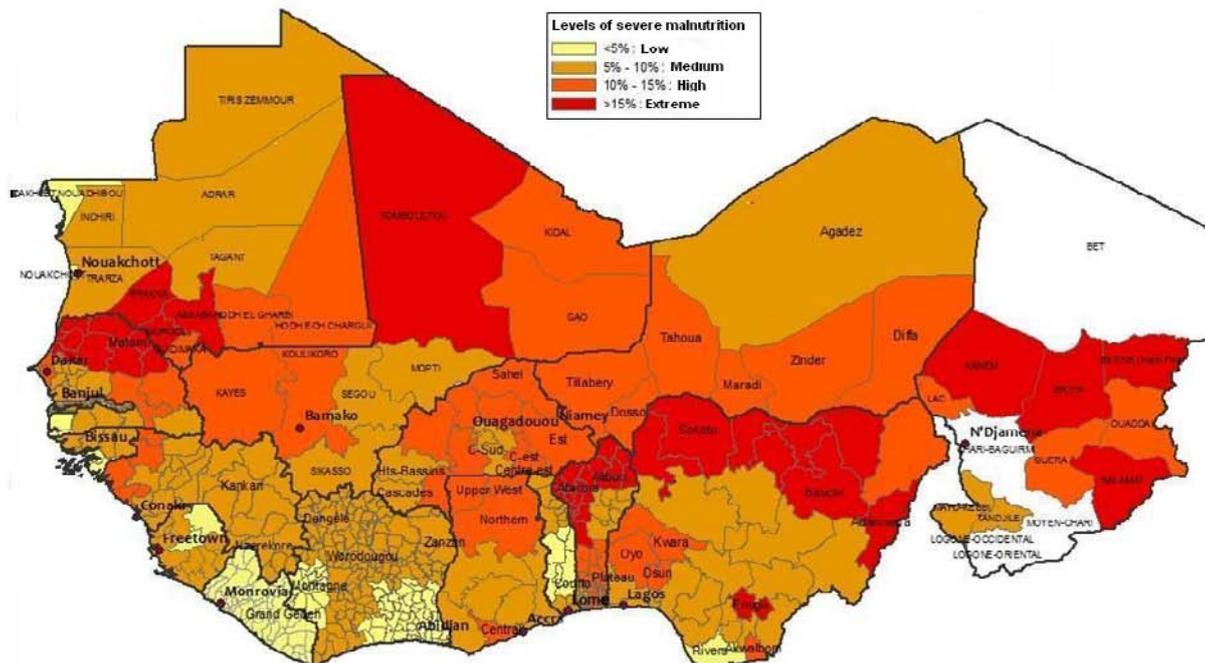
Source: Agrhymet, Regional consultation on the food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa, Abidjan, March 2012.

The global acute malnutrition (GAM) level is improving in Burkina Faso and Niger but degrading in Chad, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. Chad has a critical situation with a GAM rate above the emergency threshold of 15%. Regarding the Global chronic malnutrition (GCM) rate, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Mali and Niger recorded improvements but Chad,

Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania recorded deteriorations. There is a risk of worsening malnutrition in food insecure areas.

A regional dialogue meeting on the food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa, held in Abidjan in March 2012, established two vulnerability maps for March and June 2012 (see annex 1).

Location of GAM Rates for the 2011/2012 Agricultural Campaign



The evolution of food markets at the regional level was presented jointly by Mr. Moussa Cissé, Co-ordinator of the regional programme to support market access from CILSS/SE, Mr. Ibrahim Laouali, FEWS NET Regional Representative and Mr. Jean Senahoun, SMIAR/FAO. Transfers of grain from production to consumption areas continue albeit at quite low levels. This is a result from a combination of many factors: low supply, increasing producers' stocks, private stockpiling in anticipation and barriers at some borders. For example, in February 2012, grain prices were higher than the same period in 2011 in 92% of the areas monitored by the Early Warning Systems in Niger. Private operators have anticipated higher institutional purchases and short-term needs in deficit areas and have made local purchases (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger). They took advantage of the good supply of rice in the international market to import rice and wheat (Mauritania and Senegal). Consequently, the supply of local rice and imported rice is relatively good. However, civil insecurity affects market supplies in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger with the influx of refugees.

In this context, it is urgent to provide assistance to vulnerable populations, particularly by:

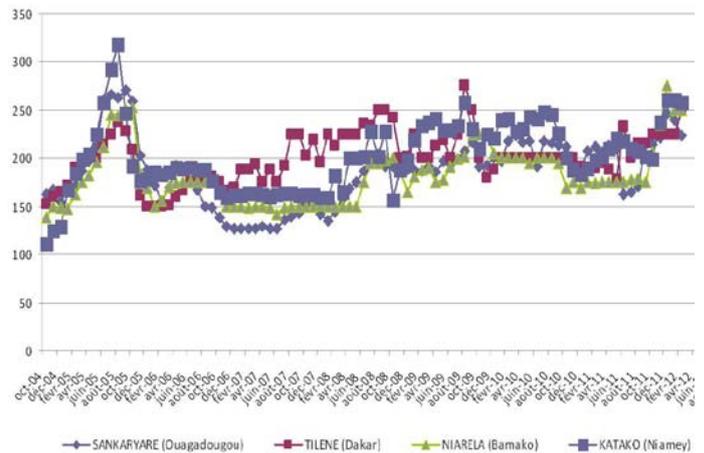
- Implementing rapid response plans and readjusting these plans to reflect the new socio-political situation in the region;
- Increasing production for the next planting season through seed provision;
- Strengthening and accelerating the implementation of nutrition programmes.

Major and urgent measures and actions taken by States and development partners

Mr. Amadou Mactar Konaté presented emergency programmes undertaken by the countries most affected by the cereal deficit:

- **In Burkina Faso**, from October 2011, the government spent 6 billion CFA francs for grain purchases for vulnerable populations. It also initiated an operation called «bondofa» to the tune of 2 billion CFA francs for the production of 50 000 tonnes of maize. An operational plan estimated at 70 billion CFA francs was adopted;
- **In Chad**, the government plans to make available to producers 912 tractors, fertilizers amounting to 3 billion CFA francs, seeds and pesticides for 1.7 billion CFA francs and to undertake construction of hydro-agricultural facilities;
- **In Mali**, the government planned to raise 77 billion CFA francs to subsidise the prices of certain commodities, carry out food and seeds distributions, and support food security in the most affected areas. These actions will be difficult to achieve given the security situation in the country;

Changes in monthly average prices of millet
October 2005 - February 2012 in CFA Francs



- **In Mauritania**, the EMEL 2012 programme, that cost a total of 31.9 billion UM, is being implemented. It includes activities to fight against poverty through the rescue of livestock and to ensure the availability and accessibility of essential commodities for the most vulnerable households;
- **In Niger**, the government plans to raise 160 billion CFA francs for the emergency irrigated crops program, livestock security, income generating activities and to rebuild the national stock;

Mr. Thomas Yanga, Regional Director of the West Africa WFP Regional Office, presented the WFP response to the crisis. This includes: a framework for regional response to nutrition (BSPP, TFS and caretaker rations), food distribution, cash and coupons, cereal banks, school feeding, and the establishment of institutional stocks.

These different presentations were followed by discussions that led to the following conclusions:

- The region is experiencing an overall difficult food situation: sharp declines in cereal production compared to last year. Although production is slightly higher than the 5-year average, it conceals sharp declines in most of the Sahel countries;
- The region is also marked with weak supplies and high prices on grain markets;
- GAM trends have only improved in two countries in the Sahel (Burkina Faso and Niger);
- Some countries have experienced delays in the development of response plans;
- Vulnerable populations are not being adequately targeted;
- Countries need to comply with the requirements of the regional prevention and crisis management provisions;
- Insecurity in northern Mali is negatively impacting the food situation.

West African Futures Programme (WAF)

Léonidas Hitimana, SWAC Programme Officer, presented the SWAC programme “Settlements, markets and food security”, which aims to analyse the links between these three dimensions, to improve the coherence of regional data and standardise concepts and definitions. New regional indicators for monitoring changes (settlement patterns, economic and social capacities and infrastructure) are being developed. Across all sectors, the programme relies on an integrated vision of food security, infrastructure and market integration, etc. The presentation of this programme has been particularly appreciated and several participants are willing to make contributions in order to deepen this work.

Preparation of the 28th RPCA Meeting

Dr. Mahalmoudou Hamadoun, Co-ordinator of the Food Security Programme “Fight against Desertification, Population and Development” (PRA / SA-LCD-POP-Dev) CILSS, presented the potential thematic focus of the 28th RPCA Annual Meeting, to be held in Ouagadougou in December 2012: nutrition issues and challenges in the Sahel and West Africa; technological innovations and food security; population, demographic trends and food security; water management and food security. The theme of water management was selected. This theme may also address related issues such as population and demographic trends as well as technological innovations.

Implementation of the Charter

Mr. Al Hassan Cissé, regional food security co-ordinator of Oxfam International, presented an Oxfam initiative aimed at involving civil society in the implementation of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management. The objective is to strengthen the advocacy capacity of civil society organisations on food security and food crisis management issues by involving all major players in civil society. Two to three resource persons could be invited to participate in the three pillars: (1) information and analysis of the food and nutrition situation, (2) consultation and co-ordination, (3) consensual analysis of the instruments to be used to prevent and manage food and nutritional crises. Monitoring would be completed three times in April, June and September 2012. National assessments could feed into the development of the official monitoring indicators of the Charter. Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger would participate in this monitoring exercise. Forty-five potential criteria for monitoring were identified, but initially only 19 strategic interest criteria, for which an active search of information is necessary, could be taken into account.

Revitalisation of the RPCA

Mr. Sibiri Jean Zoundi from the SWAC Secretariat proposed recommendations to revitalise the RPCA. He emphasised in particular the importance of the political support of ECOWAS and UEMOA and the need to strengthen the contribution of the RPCA in decision-making processes and to rebuild the RPCA website (see annex 2). He also proposed a timetable for the “Sahel and West Africa Week” (see annex 3). It was decided to hold the RPCA meeting the first two days of this week.

Presentation of food crises management tools

Ms. Coralie David, Policy Analyst on food security at the SWAC Secretariat, presented a set of instruments on which the participants had already had the opportunity to make comments. Adopted on 17 November 2011 by Ministers in charge of Agriculture and Food of the ECOWAS member countries, Chad and Mauritania, the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management foresees the development and regular updating of a set of instruments in response to food and nutrition crises. The purpose of this set of instruments is to assist States and stakeholders in better implementing the Charter. The proposed draft document was approved under the condition that comments from participants would be incorporated into the document. Periodic assessments of the Charter implementation and the set of instruments will be conducted every 3 years or after a major crisis.

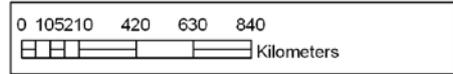
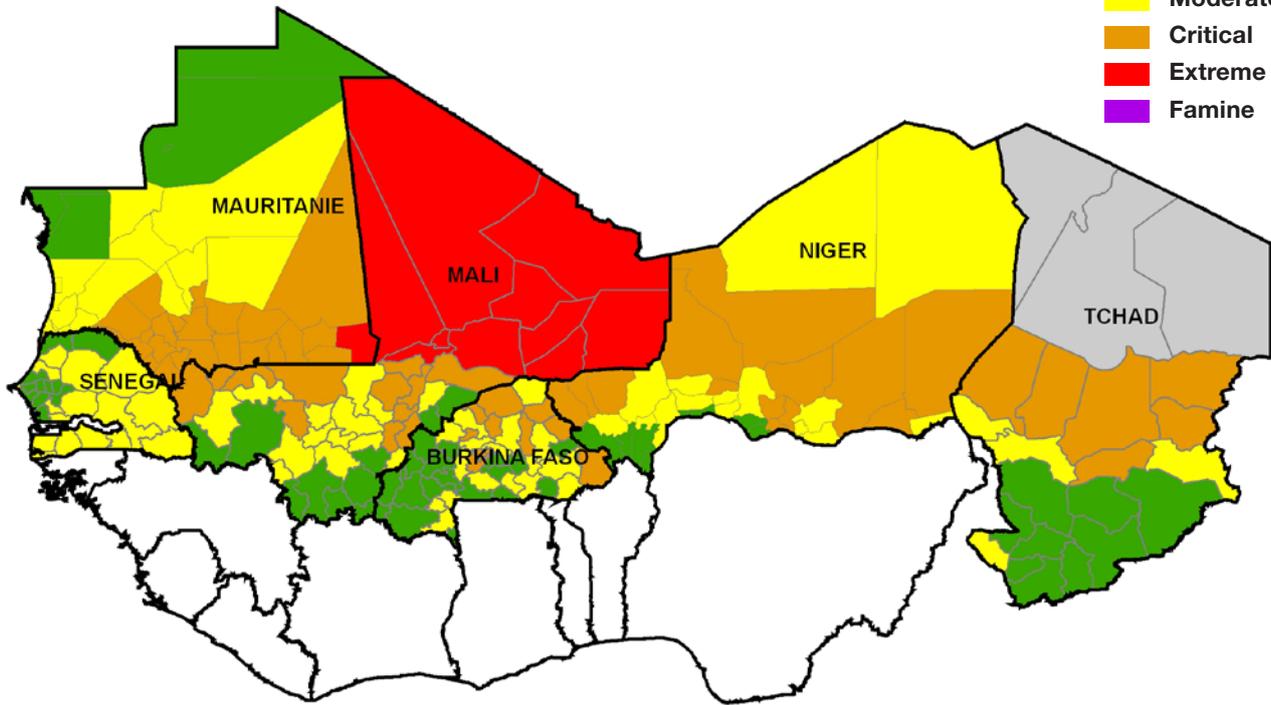
The meeting was closed by Mr. Laurent Bossard, Mr. Ibrahima Diémé, Dr. Marc Lapodini Atouga and Prof. Alhousseini Bretaudeau. A final communiqué was issued the same day.

ANNEX 1 - MAPS FROM THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION, ABIDJAN, MARCH 2012

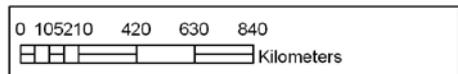
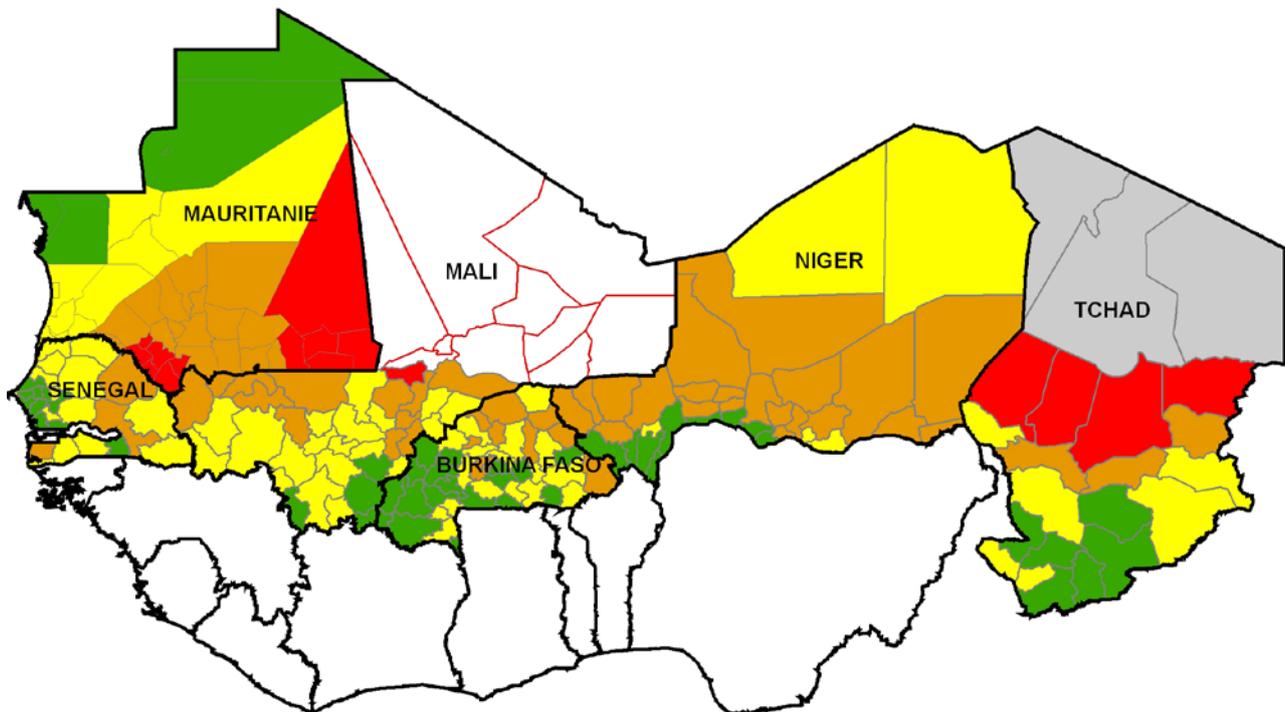
Food insecurity in West Africa, March 2012

Food insecurity phase, harmonised framework

- Good
- Moderate
- Critical
- Extreme
- Famine

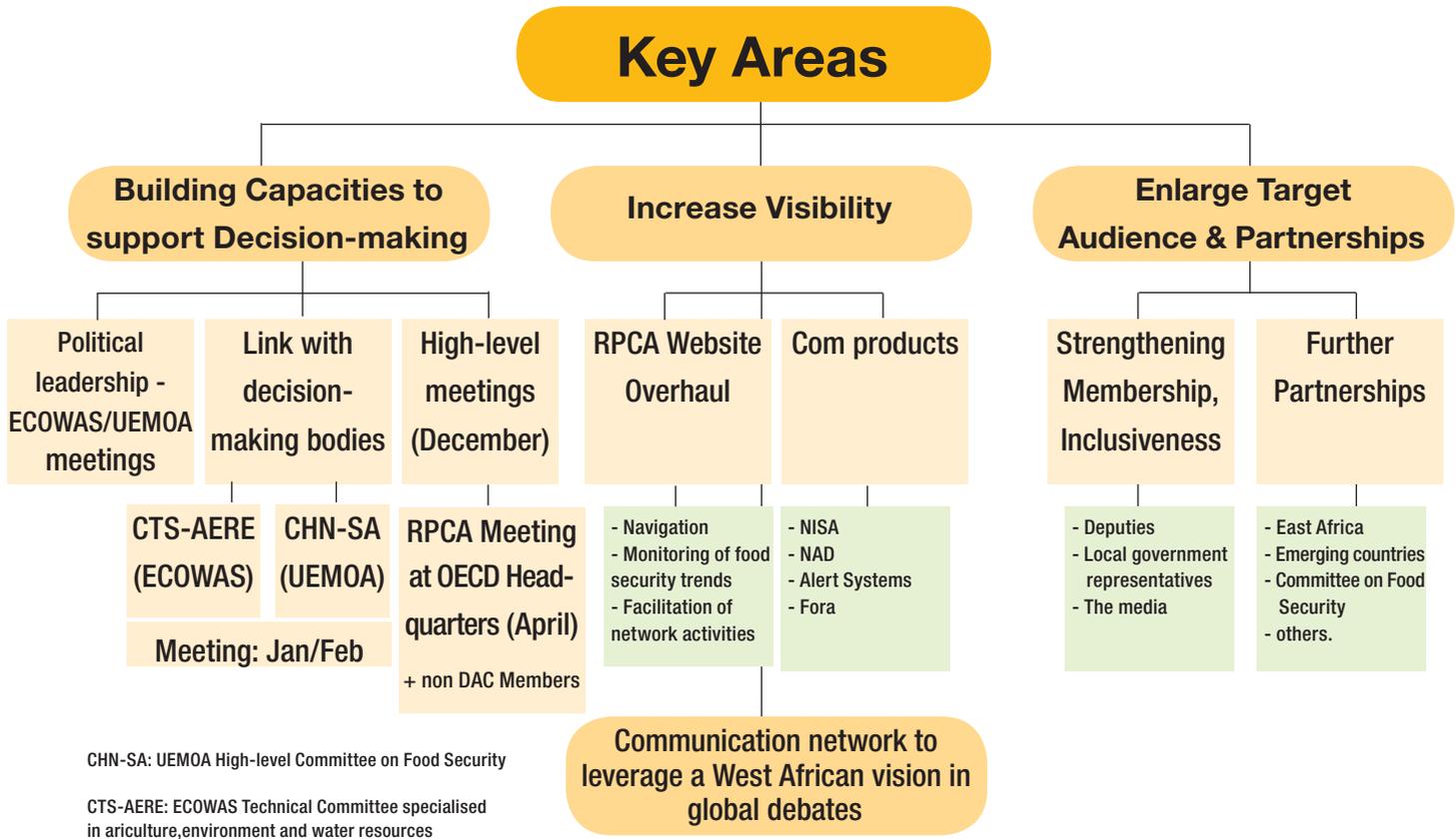


Food insecurity in West Africa, Outlook June 2012



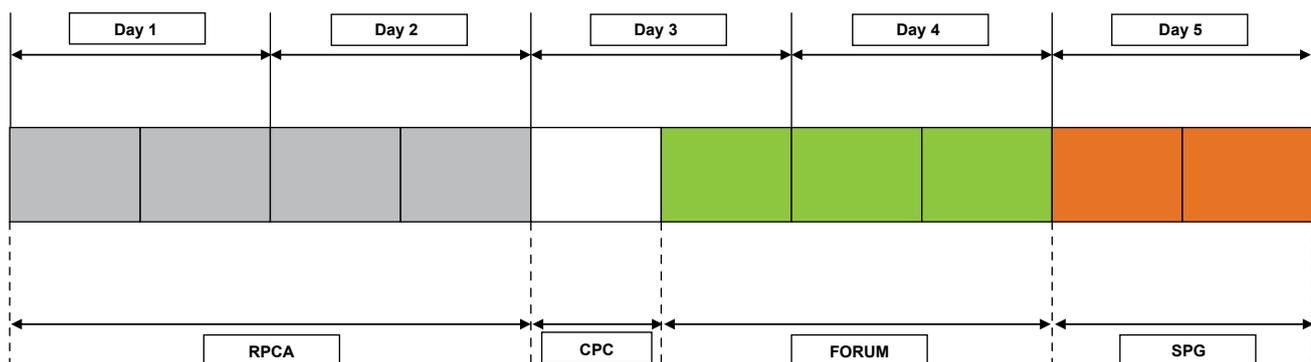
ANNEX 2 - REVITALISATION OF THE RPCA

Objective: A more visible RPCA and its effective contribution to decision-making processes



ANNEX 3 - PLANNING OF THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA WEEK

First week of December



CPC : CILSS Partners' Co-ordination Meeting

SPG : SWAC Strategy and Policy Group



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