



THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK

Food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa

POLICY BRIEF FOR DECISIONMAKERS

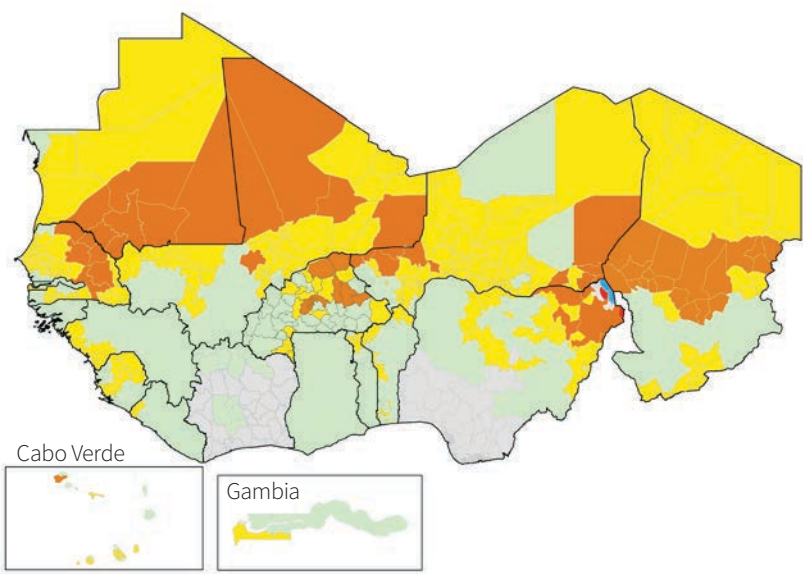
Created in 1984 and placed under the political leadership of ECOWAS and UEMOA, the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) promotes dialogue and co-ordination, and analyses the food and nutrition situation in order to build a coherent shared understanding for decisionmaking.

This policy brief was jointly prepared by the CILSS Executive Secretariat and the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD), the Network's co-facilitators, following the conclusions of the RPCA restricted meeting on 16-18 April 2018.

Food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa, projected situation: June-August 2018

OVERVIEW OF THE AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND NUTRITION SITUATION

1. Cereal production for the 2017-18 agricultural campaign is estimated at 67.7 million tonnes, up 2.5% from the 2016-17 campaign and up 11.7% compared to the five-year average. However, poor rainfall led to significant decreases in certain countries compared to last year: Gambia (-29%), Burkina Faso (-11%), Guinea-Bissau (-7%) and Chad (-5.5%). The situation is more serious in Cabo Verde where cereal production has been compromised by drought. The production of tubers and cash crops (groundnuts, cowpeas, soybeans, sesame) increased compared to last year and the five-year average. While markets are fairly well supplied, food prices remain higher compared to the five-year average. This is in part due to the depreciation of certain currencies and inflation.
2. The pastoral situation is critical in the Sahelian belt due to significant fodder and water shortages, particularly in Mauritania and Senegal, where fodder deficits of 95% and 80% have been recorded. This has led to an early departure of animals in the Sahel and a high risk of conflict. Sahelian and coastal countries have developed response plans, however, they all have financing gaps which need to be filled.
3. The Network estimates that 7.1 million people are in need of urgent food and nutrition assistance, of which 3.7 million are in north-eastern Nigeria. They are mostly pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, particularly women and children. In addition to worsening livelihoods and food prices, the situation is exacerbated by persistent insecurity in the Lake Chad basin, the Liptako-Gourma region and central Mali. If appropriate measures are not promptly taken, the number of people affected could reach 10.6 million by the lean season in June-August 2018 and the number of malnourished children could increase from 1.1 to 1.6 million.



Phases of food insecurity

■ Phase 1: Minimal
 ■ Phase 2: Stressed
 ■ Phase 3: Crisis
 ■ Phase 4: Emergency
 ■ Phase 5: Famine
 ■ not analysed

Source: Cadre harmonisé analysis, PREGEC regional technical consultation, Ouagadougou, March 2018.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

4. In light of the deteriorating food and nutrition situation, the Network recommends that States, intergovernmental organisations and partners accelerate the implementation of national response plans to address the food and nutrition emergency in the Sahelian belt and protect and strengthen the livelihoods of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities.

5. Given the critical pastoral situation, the Network sets out the following additional recommendations for ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS:

- Support States in mobilising funds to fill the financing gaps for the implementation of response plans, as well as in host countries;
- Operationalise the Regional Food Security Reserve for livestock feed;
- Invest in a favourable environment for safe, peaceful and mutually beneficial cross-border transhumance for both Sahelian and coastal countries. This includes implementing structural programmes to address the current and future challenges of pastoral livestock farming, particularly education and youth employment.

6. Regarding the security issues related to pastoralism, the Network urges political leaders, at national and regional levels (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS), to use their sound judgement and refrain from taking any measures that may undermine the cornerstone of regional integration - the free movement of people and their property.

7. In light of the precarious nature of food and nutrition security information systems, the Network recommends intergovernmental organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS) to organise, within the framework of the RPCA, a conference, including ministers for finance and parliamentarians, in order to agree on concrete commitments for the financing of national food and nutrition security information systems and making them sustainable.

8. The Network highlights the serious under-investment in food security and resilience programmes due to significant budget pressures on governments in the region as a result of the security crisis. This warning must be recognised by the international community in order to prevent hunger and malnutrition from undermining the long-term development and stability of the region:
Winning the battle against terrorism should not undermine the region's fight against hunger and malnutrition.

KEY IMPLICATIONS FOR ECOWAS, UEMOA AND PARTNERS

9. In light of the deteriorating food and nutrition situation:

- Financially support or ensure the regional reserve is operational for countries with the most critical food and nutrition situation;
- Ensure political and financial commitment to prevent rather than manage recurring food and nutrition crises:
 - Support States in sustainably investing in the implementation of structural development programmes (notably NAIP-FSN, NRP-AGIR) to better prevent and anticipate crises;
 - Appoint a political leader, a “Food and Nutrition Security Champion”, responsible for international lobbying and ensuring that food and nutrition issues remain high on development agendas;
 - Request the CILSS Executive Secretariat and the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD), co-facilitators of the RPCA, to prepare the technical aspects of the conference on the financing and sustainability of information systems on food and nutrition security.

10. In order to address the critical pastoral situation:

- Mobilise the financial component of the regional reserve for “Livestock feed” and test it along the most critical transhumance corridors;
- Support States in filling the financing gaps for the implementation of response plans, as well as in host countries;
- Support host countries (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo) in mobilising funding for the implementation of the national components of the Regional Investment Programme for Livestock and Pastoral Development in Coastal Countries (PRIDEC).