



PRESS RELEASE on the food and nutrition situation during the lean season (June - August) and the prospects for the 2019-2020 agro-pastoral season in the Sahel and West Africa

Technical consultation of the **REGIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FOOD CRISES (PREGEC)**

“Food and nutrition insecurity exacerbated by persistent security crisis and inter-community conflicts in the North and in the Lake Chad region, in eastern and western Niger, in northern and eastern Burkina Faso, northern and central Mali”

Organized by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel with the support of its partners, the June PREGEC meeting launched the 2019-2020 agro-pastoral campaign. It also examined the forecasts of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season and prepared the follow-up of its progress »

Participants in the Restricted Meeting of the Regional Food Crisis Prevention and Management Mechanism (PREGEC) in the Sahel and West Africa, held June 27-28, 2019 in Bamako, Mali, in the conference room of the Radisson Blu Hotel, have made the following observations:

- 1.** Commodity prices are generally stable at the beginning of the lean season, with a downward trend compared to the five-year average in the Eastern and Central Basin countries, thanks to the good agricultural production of the 2018/2019 season and the availability of food products in the markets. However, markets remain severely disrupted in areas affected by civil insecurity and the restrictive measures taken. Similarly, staple food prices are up sharply compared to the five-year average in most Western Basin countries, particularly those countries affected by inflation, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. This situation negatively affects the livelihoods and access of poor households to staple foods. Prices for livestock and livestock products are generally stable compared to last year. This helps improve the purchasing power of producers and pastoralists.
- 2.** The food and nutrition situation is still very worrying in conflict-affected areas in the north and in the Lake Chad region, in eastern and western Niger, in northern and eastern Burkina Faso and in northern and central Mali. The update of the Cadre Harmonisé analysis in the three north-eastern States of Nigeria (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe) confirms the persistence of food and nutrition insecurity in these three States together totalling 2.9 million people in a crisis phase with food and nutritional emergency. In terms of the Sahel region and West Africa, about 9.7 million people who are in crisis or emergency phase, mainly in Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad, Mali, Senegal, Guinea and Sierra Leone. This figure may increase as a result of the growing numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees affected by the deteriorating security situation in conflict zones and its impact on the living conditions of vulnerable households, markets and cash transfers from migration.
- 3.** The nutritional situation remains worrying in West Africa, although admissions trends are stable compared to previous years. More than 2 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition in the conflict areas of the Lake Chad Basin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where the conditions for access to basic social services (water, sanitation, education and health) are very limited. The nutritional surveys planned in the next 3 months in the Sahel countries will update the prevalence rates of malnutrition in each country.
- 4.** To address the deteriorating food and nutrition situation, States continue to implement, with the support of their partners, response plans for food assistance, livelihood protection and combating malnutrition. However, resources are inadequate to meet needs, a situation aggravated by the upsurge of conflicts limiting the implementation of food and nutrition assistance on the ground.

5. The 2019-2020 agro-pastoral campaign is marked by an early start of planting and also by heavy downpours that caused flooding. Significant damage to property and loss of life were recorded, particularly in Mali (15) and Niger (45). In perspective, the rainy season could experience relatively long dry spells in most of the area except in the western Atlantic coast, from Mauritania to Liberia. In addition, the displacement of populations due to the deterioration of the security situation could lead to a decrease in the area planted in conflict zones.

6. Locust situation is relatively calm, at the phyto-sanitary level; but small-scale breeding (earlier than normal in Niger, Chad, Mauritania and Mali) could lead to a slight increase in locust numbers in the coming months. In addition, eastern Chad could receive locust swarms from the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover, the presence of fall armyworms remains a threat to maize production in all Sahelian and West African countries.

7. At the pastoral level, mobility restrictions cause abnormally high concentrations of animals. This increases pressure on shared resources and their degradation. The grass cover is still insignificant at the beginning of the season; but it could improve as the rainy season sets on.

8. With regard to the revision of the technical consultations of the PREGEC mechanism, the participants noted that the results of the study on the restructuring of the PREGEC's precepts carried out in 2014 with the support of FAO, could be a basis for discussions that must continue during the September 2019 meeting.

In view of the above, the meeting made the following recommendations to:

The States:

- Take the necessary steps to facilitate access to conflict zones
- Accelerate the implementation of national response plans to save lives and protect their livelihoods;
- Continue to coordinate multi-sectoral nutrition responses that combine prevention and treatment with at-risk populations and support child-friendly food systems.
- Strengthen the monitoring mechanisms of information on the growing season and markets, especially dry spells, floods and crop pests including the fall armyworm.

CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA:

- Continue technical consultations for the rapid implementation of joint and coordinated actions in support of countries in fighting against the fall armyworm;
- Accelerate the implementation of the recommendation of the RPCA meeting of April 2019 in Brussels on the urgent need to organise, under the auspices of the three IGOs (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS), a consultation with the countries (including central and local governments, civil society, customary and religious authorities, etc.) concerned by the cross-border spiral of inter-community conflicts with a view to finding inclusive and sustainable solutions;
- Continue the discussions on the revision of the PREGEC System technical consultations whose proposals will be included in the overall Food Crisis Prevention Network reform process.

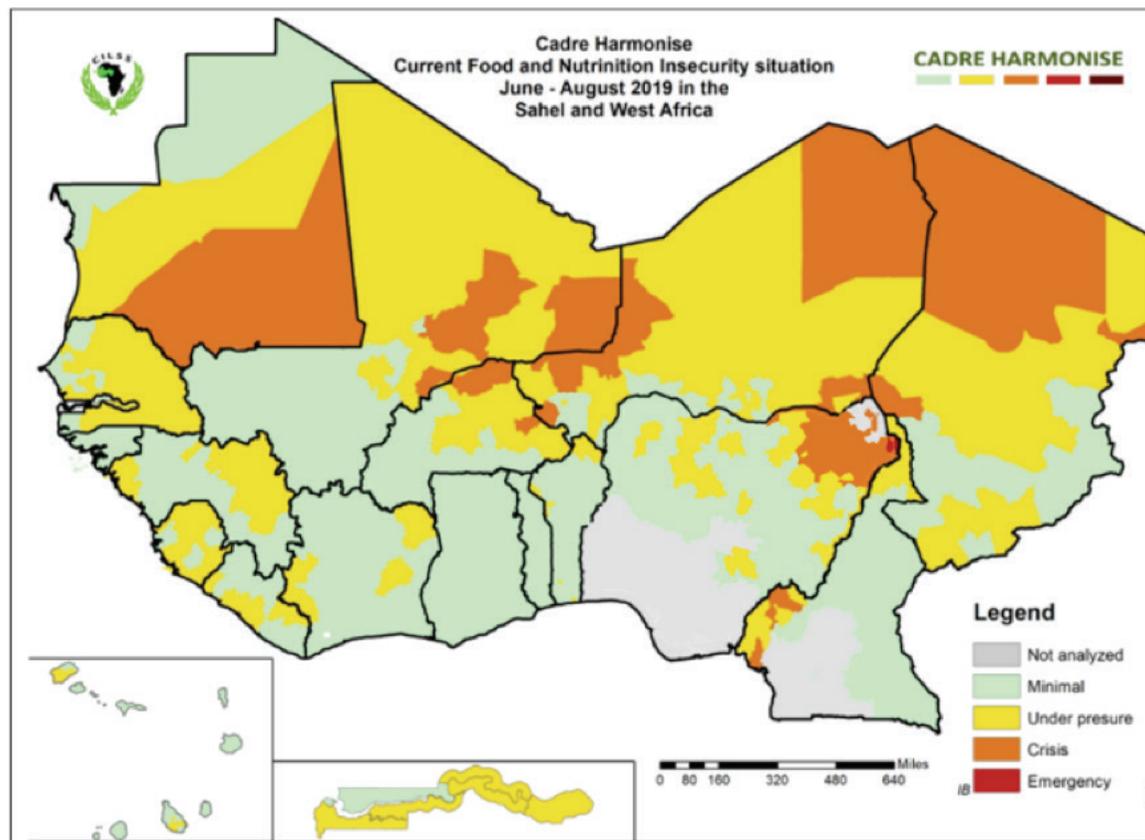
The Partners:

- Support the States' efforts in the rapid implementation of responses for vulnerable populations, particularly in conflict zones;
- Support countries in capacity building of their information systems on food and nutrition security.

Done at Bamako on 28 June 2019

The Meeting





Phase 1 Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Famine
<p>At least four in five households are able to meet their food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical coping strategies or relying on humanitarian assistance.</p>	<p>Even with humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households in the area have the following or worse: reduced and minimally adequate food consumption but unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies.</p>	<p>Even with humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households in the area experiences the following or worse: large food shortages and acute malnutrition at high or higher-than-normal rates;</p>	<p>Even with humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households in the area experiences the following or worse: extreme food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition or excess mortality; OR extreme loss of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps in the short term.</p>	<p>Even with humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households in the area experiences total lack of food and/or other basic needs and are clearly exposed to starvation, death and deprivation. Note: Evidence for all three criteria of food consumption, wasting and crude death rate (CDR) are required to classify famine.</p>