



PRESS RELEASE 2023-2024 Agricultural and Food Outlook in the Sahel and West Africa

Regional technical consultation

REGIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FOOD CRISES (PREGEC)

“Lower overall production prospects for food crops and fodder biomass.”

Participants at the meeting of the food crisis prevention and management mechanism (PREGEC) in the Sahel and West Africa, held from 13 to 15 September 2023 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, assessed the progress of the 2023-2024 agropastoral campaign, market dynamics, and the agricultural, pastoral, hydrological and food prospects, and came to the following conclusions:

Preparations for the agropastoral campaign

Governments have initiated accompanying measures to support the 2023-24 agropastoral campaign. These measures mainly concern the provision of inputs (fertilisers, seeds, pesticides and livestock feed, etc.) and other production factors to support producers in all countries. Despite the efforts of governments and their partners, the campaign was characterised by limited access to inputs, particularly fertilisers, for which prices remained high.

Rainfall situation

In generally, the 2023 rainy season had an early onset, particularly in the countries of the Gulf of Guinea, the Sudanian band and certain areas of the Central and Western Sahel. Rainfall totals were generally average in the Sudano-Sahelian band, with deficits recorded in the border areas of Senegal, Mali and Guinea, as well as in eastern Nigeria. The season was also marked by long dry spells, particularly in Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

Weather conditions are favourable for the continuation of rainstorm activity in September and October in the Sahelian and Sudanian zones.

In the bimodal zone of the Gulf of Guinea countries, the onset of the second rainy season is already effective in the first decade of September.

Hydrological situation

The hydrological situation in the region's main river basins is characterised by flows that are generally normal or higher than the reference average (1991-2020). They remained below the average flows for the last five years, particularly in the River Niger and Chad Lake basins. Water levels continue to increase in most basins.

The hydrological situation in the region's main river basins is characterised by flows that are generally normal to above the reference average (1991-2020). They remained below the average run-off for the last five years, particularly in the Niger River and Lake Chad basins. Water levels continue to rise in most river basins.

The 2023 season was relatively calm in terms of overflow flooding. However, cases of overflow were observed in Nigeria, Benin and Senegal.

The September PREGEC meeting conducted a half-term assessment of the 2021-2022 agricultural campaign and monitored actions conducted since March. The meeting was organised by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and its partners.

Progress of the 2023-2024 Campaign

Cereal sowing was generally effective before the end of July throughout the region. However, quite persistent water deficits were observed in May, June and July and even in early August. This led to re-sowing in some areas of the Central and Eastern Sahel, particularly in Niger, Mali and Chad.

The phytosanitary situation

The phytosanitary situation is relatively calm in the region, although pest attacks have been recorded in some places. The desert locust situation remained calm in the region despite the favourable ecological conditions throughout the season. Only isolated solitary adults and a few larvae were observed in the northern Sahel in Mauritania and a few adults in the pastoral zone of central Niger.

The pastoral situation

The pastoral situation in the region is generally characterised by good fodder availability. However, there are deficits in certain regions of Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad. At the end of August, estimated biomass production was lower than the average for the last five years and the last year in the deficit areas of these countries. On the other hand, it was higher in Burkina Faso and along the Atlantic coast.

Overall, the availability of water for livestock watering is satisfactory and the animal health situation is relatively calm.

Agricultural production prospects and market situation

Given the progress of the 2023-2024 agro-pastoral campaign and the various forms of support for the agricultural sector, expected cereal production is likely to be between 73 and 80 million tonnes, a decrease of 5% compared to last year on the low assumption and an increase of 4% on the high assumption, depending on rainfall conditions at the end of the season (September and October). Decreases in production are mainly expected in Guinea Bissau, Niger, Nigeria and Chad.

Root and tuber production could range between 201 and 211 million tonnes, given a decrease of 5% compared to last year on the low assumption, and equivalent on the high assumption. Production of other crops, such as groundnuts and sesame, is expected to be slightly below last year's levels, while production increases are expected for cotton, soya beans and cowpeas.

Market functioning

Food availability is generally stable, and is gradually improving in the region as new harvests reach the market. The functioning of markets is generally satisfactory, except in insecure areas where supplies remain very poor and irregular.

However, the prices of the main local and imported foodstuffs still remain very high, with an increase of around 40% compared to the average for the last five years in the region. The highest price increases were observed in Nigeria (156%), Ghana (146%) and Sierra Leone (118%) compared with the average of the last 5 years.

However, decreasing trends are observed in some countries, such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania, due to the marketing of residual stocks and new harvests. The underlying causes of this price increase are essentially: the depreciation of local currencies against the US dollar, inflation on energy, and various restrictions on cross-border flows, including ECOWAS sanctions against Niger.

For livestock markets, prices are generally higher than the five-year average, except in areas affected by civil insecurity. The terms of trade between livestock and cereals are generally unfavourable to livestock owners because of the high level of cereal prices.

In the light of the above, and at the end of the discussions, the participants made the following recommendations:

To governments:

- To lift restrictions on cross-border flows of agro-pastoral products and foodstuffs at national and regional level;
- Strengthen pest surveillance and control in crop-production areas;
- Anticipate preparations for the upcoming irrigated crop campaign of the 2024 dry season, including support for producers in accessing agricultural inputs and equipment;
- Anticipating the preparation of national response plans to address the food and nutrition crisis.

To CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA:

- Support the forthcoming assessments of agrosylvo-pastoral and fisheries production and food security in order to better prepare the 2024 intervention planning in the region;
- Carry out a rapid assessment of the impact of sanctions on market functioning and food and nutritional security in Niger, Nigeria and Benin.

To ECOWAS and UEMOA:

- Implement exemption measures (in accordance with international rules) from the sanctions imposed on Niger in order to facilitate the flow of foodstuffs and pharmaceutical products and avoid the risks of worsening the food and nutritional crisis;
- Take political action to ensure the immediate lifting of all restrictions and obstacles to the free movement of basic cereals imposed by certain countries in order to control price increases, in compliance with Community rules on regional integration and solidarity.
- Accelerate the operationalization of the livestock feed component of the Regional Food Security Reserve in order to address the fodder deficits observed in the region.

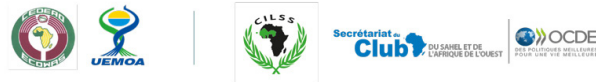
To Partners:

- Continue and strengthen support for efforts of improving national and regional food and nutrition security information systems.
- Support the next assessments of the 2023-2024 agropastoral campaign and the food and nutritional situation;
- Support countries in implementing preventive responses to food crises, addressing chronic food insecurity and building resilience.

Done in Ouagadougou, on 15 september 2023

The Meeting

LEADERS POLITIQUES ET ANIMATEURS TECHNIQUES DU RPCA



PARTENAIRES TECHNIQUES



PARTENAIRES FINANCIERS

