



PRESS RELEASE on the food and nutritional situation in the Sahel, West Africa, and Cameroon.

Regional technical consultation **REGIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FOOD CRISES (PREGEC)**

Held from March 25 to 27, 2026, in Lomé, Togo, the meeting of the Regional Mechanism for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) in the Sahel, West Africa, and Cameroon reviewed the final results of the 2025–2026 agro-pastoral season, the market situation, analyzed the outlook for food and nutrition security, made observations, and formulated the following recommendations:

1. The final results of the 2025–2026 agricultural season show an estimated cereal production of 80.4 million tons, representing a 4% increase compared to the previous season and a 7% increase compared to the five-year average. Average per capita cereal production remained virtually stable, with a slight 1% increase compared to last year and equivalent to the past five-years average. Cameroon's production is estimated at 4 million tons, representing a 3% increase compared to the previous year and a 9% increase compared to the past five-years average.

Regarding roots and tubers, regional production stands at 280 million tons, representing a 2% increase compared to last year and a 7% increase compared to the past five-year average. In Cameroon, production is estimated at 11 million tons, representing a 1% increase compared to last year and a 13% increase compared to the past five-years average.

Cash crop production is also up slightly, except for coffee, groundnuts, cotton, voandzou, and cocoa, which saw respective declines of approximately 13.5%, 11%, 10%, 2.5%, and 1.7% compared to last year.

The revised cereal balance for the region indicates a gross deficit of 13.3 million tons, slightly higher than the initially projected 11 million tons. Taking into account import intentions estimated at 21.8 million tons of cereals, a net surplus of approximately 8.5 million tons could be achieved, compared to 10.4 million tons in the initial forecast.

2. Regarding the locust situation in the western region, the major resurgence of the desert locust observed in Mauritania, with some swarm incursions into northeastern Senegal, subsided in February 2026, resulting in a generally calm situation in the Sahelian frontline countries. Adult groups and small swarms have indeed moved from Mauritania toward Western Sahara and southern Morocco. Groups of winged adults and small swarms may continue migrating northward into Morocco and Algeria and continue breeding, leading to new groups of hoppers and small bands.

Organized by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), with the support of its partners, the March PREGEC meeting provided an opportunity to review the final results of the 2025–2026 agropastoral season, assess market conditions, and analyze food and nutrition security outlooks.

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Measures should be taken to anticipate the migration of locust populations that may result from spring breeding in the Maghreb toward the Sahel at the beginning of the 2026–2027 rainy season.

3. With regard to the pastoral situation, it remains mixed. Pasture availability is generally average to insufficient, with significant deficits in the central and western Sahel, particularly in Mauritania and Senegal, where fodder balances are negative. Access to water is gradually declining in Sahelian areas of Niger, Mali, the Mali, Mauritania border, and Burkina Faso, where temporary ponds and overused wells are drying up rapidly.

These constraints are creating frequent tensions around water points, particularly in the regions of Dosso and Tillabéri (Niger), Seytenga and Dori (Burkina Faso), and Bounkani (Côte d'Ivoire). In addition, more than 1.26 million bushfires were detected between October 2025 and February 2026, burning nearly 17.8 million hectares. Transhumant herders are moving southward toward the Gulf of Guinea, with active corridors toward Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, despite mobility constraints caused by insecurity in the Liptako-Gourma area and movement restrictions in Guinea and Mali. The animal health situation remains generally stable, although a few outbreaks have been reported.

4. At the market level, prices of cereals, tubers, and vegetables are generally declining compared to last year and the five-year average across most markets in the region. This decrease is mainly due to good production during the 2025/2026 agricultural season, high carryover stocks, import facilitation measures, reduced demand in certain contexts, and export restrictions on some products. These restrictions are often detrimental to traders and sometimes contradict regional trade regulations. Livestock prices, on the other hand, remain generally above the five-year average, supported by strong demand and improved availability of pasture biomass, contributing to improved terms of trade.

However, price anomalies for both agricultural products and livestock persist in insecurity-affected areas, particularly in the Sahel. Similarly, in some coastal areas, prices remain above the five-year average due to strong demand and high transport costs. Prices are expected to follow seasonal increases as the lean season approaches, while remaining generally lower than those recorded during the same period last year. Nevertheless, risks of price increases persist in certain areas due to security concerns and the impact of conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine on petroleum products and supply chains.

5. On international markets, food prices are generally showing an upward trend after five consecutive months of decline. Global export prices for vegetable oils, cereals, and meat are increasing, while those for

dairy products and sugar are declining. This upward trend could lead to higher prices for imported food commodities in the region. Furthermore, disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz suggest potential negative impacts on both production and food imports in the region, which could sustain the upward price trend.

6. Regarding the fertilizer market, West Africa is facing significant tensions linked to persistent structural constraints and recent disruptions in international markets. The region, representing only 3–4% of global consumption, remains highly dependent on imports, making it particularly vulnerable to price volatility. This volatility has recently been exacerbated by geopolitical tensions, notably the crisis in Ukraine and uncertainties surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, as well as rising logistics costs, particularly maritime freight.

This situation coincides with the start of 2026-2027 agricultural season. It further exposes producers to risks related to both physical availability and economic accessibility of fertilizers, potentially undermining agricultural intensification, yields, and ultimately food security. In this context, stronger government mobilization is required to reinforce subsidy mechanisms, enhance regional coordination in supply, and support local production capacities.

7. Recent analyses of acute malnutrition using the IPC tool reveal a concerning situation in several Sahelian countries, with many areas classified as “serious and above” (IPC AMN Phase 3 and higher). The deterioration of nutritional status is particularly pronounced in conflict-affected areas, notably along the Chad–Sudan border, in northeastern Nigeria, and in northeastern Mali.

8. Food and nutrition insecurity assessed during the consumption year across 16 countries in the region remains alarming. Projections from the consolidated Cadre Harmonisé analysis (October–November 2025 cycle), including projections for The Gambia (March 2026 cycle), indicate that out of a total population of approximately 442 million people analyzed, nearly 52.9 million people (12.6%) are expected to face acute food and nutrition insecurity (Phase 3 and above) between June and August 2026, without appropriate measures. The largest numbers are recorded in Nigeria (over 34.7 million), followed by Chad (over 2.9 million), Cameroon (over 2.8 million), Niger (over 2.4 million), Guinea (over 1.6 million), Mali and Ghana (over 1.5 million each), and Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone (over 1.3 million each).

The situation is particularly critical for displaced populations. Between June and August 2026, among 1,421,172 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Nigerian states of Borno, Sokoto, and Zamfara, approximately 650,730 people are expected to be in crisis or worse, including 217,714 in emergency (Phase 4) and 8,282 in catastrophe (Phase 5).

In Mauritania, among Malian refugees in the Mberra camp and host communities, 112,306 people are projected to be in Phase 3 or worse, including 38,378 in emergency.

- 9. National Response Plans (NRPs) to food and nutrition insecurity for 2026 are being developed and implemented in most Sahel and West African countries. These plans combine measures such as production support, food assistance, anticipatory actions, livelihood protection, and nutrition interventions. Significant resources are being mobilized, although needs still largely exceed available budgets. Planned interventions include input subsidies, distribution of seeds and livestock feed, food assistance, cash transfers, and malnutrition care for vulnerable households. There is also strong mobilization of regional actors and technical and financial partners to support governments in implementing the NRPs.

Recommendations

To Member States

- Strengthen compliance with regional Cadre Harmonisé analysis calendars and properly implement the guidance provided in the rationalization note;
- Identify and implement anticipatory measures to ensure stakeholders' access to fertilizers for the 2026–2027 agricultural campaign;
- Maintain and strengthen locust surveillance in Sahelian frontline countries;
- Strengthen integrated bushfire prevention and livestock health surveillance;
- Increase budget allocations to NRPs and other emergency interventions.

To IGOs (CILSS, ECOWAS, AES, WAEMU)

- Accelerate the deployment of food and nutrition security governance instruments and strengthen regional coordination as well as countries' capacities in the design and implementation of NRPs;
- Mobilize existing tools, particularly the Cadre Harmonisé Technical Committee, to coordinate regional monitoring of the impacts of crises in the Middle East and Ukraine on agricultural inputs and food commodities;
- Continue supporting Member States in surveillance and control of transboundary and emerging crop pests;
- Strengthen the Regional Observatory of Agro-Pastoral Markets to improve market crisis anticipation capacities.

To Technical and Financial Partners

- Substantially contribute to the financing of humanitarian assistance programs targeting the most vulnerable populations;
- Strengthen support for key drivers of food production, particularly the seed sector, soil health and fertility, and plant health surveillance;
- Allocate resources to market monitoring at both national and regional levels.

Done in Lomé, on March 27, 2026

The Meeting

