



## PRESS RELEASE on Food and Nutrition Situation in the Sahel and West Africa

Regional technical consultation

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

« Food and nutrition insecurity compounded by the security crisis and widespread price rises in the Sahel and West Africa ». »

Participants in the meeting of the Regional Food Crisis Prevention and Management (PREGEC) mechanism in the Sahel and West Africa, held on June 15 and 16, 2023 in Abuja, Nigeria, appraised the start of the 2023-2024 agropastoral season and come to the following conclusions:

**Market situation:** The availability of local and imported foodstuffs is overall satisfactory on markets in all countries.

However, availability remains low in areas affected by civil unrest. Despite the satisfactory level of availability, staple cereal prices are high (+30-40%) compared to the average of the last five years, with peaks in Ghana (160%), Sierra Leone (113%) and Nigeria (62%).

Overall, livestock prices are some 25% higher than the average for the last five years. As a result, the terms of trade between livestock and cereals are generally unfavourable to livestock farmers, except in areas facing major security challenges.

This situation, combined with other factors, limits the ability of vulnerable households to access food.

These include the depletion of peasant stockpiles during the lean season, civil insecurity, disruption of international markets, high fuel prices and weak local currencies.

Household access to food is likely to deteriorate sharply during the lean season, with a negative impact on food consumption and livelihoods in most Sahelian countries.

This is due in particular to households' heavy dependence on markets during the lean season in unimodal areas.

Internationally, prices of most foodstuffs, including cereals, remain high despite the downward trend observed.

**Food and nutrition situation:** during the lean season (June - August 2023), over 42.5 million people are affected by acute food and nutrition insecurity (Phases 3 to 5). Of this population, around 2.6 million are in emergency (Phase 4), while over 45,000 people are expected to face a Catastrophe situation (Phase 5) in Burkina Faso and Mali.

The countries affected by major crises are Nigeria (over 24.8 million people, or 13% of the population analysed), Burkina Faso (3.3 million people, or 15% of the population analysed), Niger, (1.9 million people, or 13% of the population analysed), Chad, (1.3 million people, or 11% of the population analysed), Ghana (1.2 million, or 4% of the population analysed), Mali (1.2 million, or 6% of the population analysed), Senegal (1.2 million, or 7% of the population analysed), Sierra Leone (1 million, or 16% of the population analysed) and Côte d'Ivoire (1 million, or 4.6% of the population analysed).

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The June PREGEC meeting, organised by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel with the support of its partners, launched the 2023-2024 agro-pastoral campaign. It also discussed the projected agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season and prepared the monitoring of its progress.

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In terms of nutrition, acute malnutrition management programs in the region are showing a marked increase in SAM and MAM admissions in 2023, compared with 2022 at the same time in certain Sahelian countries (Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali) and in northeastern Nigeria. The nutritional situation in Sahelian countries continues to be a source of concern. Surveys planned for this period could give the real picture.

**Mitigation measures:** National response plans still face the recurring problem of lack of funding in most Sahelian countries. At the start of the lean season, funding mobilisation is estimated at 59% for the six countries with NRPs and Mauritania. The financial mobilisation rate for each country is as follows: Burkina Faso 71%, Cabo Verde 77%, Mali 77%, Niger 39.18%, Senegal 22% and Chad 50.9%.

**Seasonal forecasts and situation for the 2023/2024 cropping season:** these suggest an average to surplus rainy season overall in the Sahel, with early to normal start dates, late to normal end dates and average dry spells in the west and longer spells in the east.

Runoff is expected to be surplus to average in the Sahel's main river basins.

The current situation of the cropping season shows that rainfed cereals have been sown since February-March-April in the coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea.

In the Sudanian zone, planting began in the first dekad of May, notably in Burkina Faso (except the north), northern Guinea and the southern parts of Mali and Chad. In the Sahelian strip, planting began in the second dekad of May and is still continuing in the northern parts.

On the phytosanitary front, the good rains recorded in the gregarious areas of Chad and Niger may create favorable ecological conditions for locust outbreaks and development over the coming weeks. Also, the southward movement of populations resulting from winter-spring breeding in the Maghreb region points to the risk of invasion in Sahelian countries.

To this end, countries need to monitor the ecological and meteorological conditions that could exacerbate the risk, activate annual monitoring plans and draw up contingency plans.

## Recommendations

In view of the above, the meeting recommends the following:

### To States:

- Mobilize funding to implement national response plans, particularly in areas affected by civil insecurity;
- Strengthen food and nutrition monitoring in connection with the security crisis, the conflict in Ukraine and the high cost of living;
- Maintain information monitoring on flood risks and the locust situation in outbreak areas;
- Take the necessary steps to ensure security and access to conflict zones for humanitarian actors;

### To CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA and G5 SAHEL:

- Further mobilise the response instruments set up by ECOWAS and UEMOA (the regional reserve) to support the implementation of NRPs;
- Strengthen regional coordination and the monitoring-evaluation system for National Response Plans;
- Continue capacity building for national systems in the use of tools for monitoring the agricultural season, analysing food and nutritional security, and implementing National Response Plans;
- Strengthen hydrometeorological watch-keeping and disseminate information from regional and national climate forecasting and warning systems;
- Operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in countries on the security front.

### To Partners:

- Support governments in implementing national response plans for vulnerable populations;
- Strengthen support for national information systems, surveys and data collection on food security, nutrition and household economics.

**Abuja, 16 June 2023**

**The Meeting**

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