



THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

31ST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK (RPCA) - SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA

DAKAR, SENEGAL, 14-15 DECEMBER 2015

1 Some 200 participants attended the 31st Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) on 14 and 15 December 2015. Participants included representatives of West African and Sahelian governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and private sector organisations, technical and financial partners as well as regional and international banks. The meeting provided an opportunity to take stock of the agro-sylvo-pastoral campaign, analyse the food and nutrition situation and make recommendations to address any crises. The meeting also provided a platform for sharing the main recommendations from the first external evaluation of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management (PREGEC Charter) and to take stock of the lessons learned from the Ebola epidemic and the steps taken to limit the impact on food security and resilience among the most vulnerable populations.

2 Despite a difficult and late start for the 2015-16 agro-sylvo-pastoral campaign, the Network confirmed that the overall food and nutrition situation is satisfactory. Cereal production in the Sahel and West Africa is estimated at 63,6 million tons, representing an increase of 5% over the previous year and a 12% increase over the average for the past five years. The figure for tuber production is approximately 158.6 million tons, or increases of 8% and 18% over the previous year and the average for the past five years, respectively. Peanut production is estimated at more than 7.6 million tons, or an increase of 10% over the previous year and a 20% increase over the past five-year average. However, it is necessary to monitor the situation in countries that recorded a significant food deficit.

3 Market supply is generally good and with the arrival of new harvest, the availability of food products is relatively good. With the exception of some price increases in countries such as Benin, Chad, Ghana, The Gambia and Togo, grain prices were generally stable. This situation indicates that availability is satisfactory and that households have good access to food supplies. However, markets in countries that were most affected by the Ebola epidemic have not yet returned to normal functioning and thus require special monitoring.



ABOUT THE RPCA

The Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) is an international consultation and co-ordination platform, drawing on the political leadership of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions. Its technical management is co-ordinated by CILSS, with the support of the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat. Created in 1984, the work of the RPCA is based on consultation, dialogue, and analysis.

It reinforces the coherence and effectiveness of interventions through the implementation of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management. The Network brings together the three West African regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS), regional and international information systems, bi- and multilateral co-operation agencies, humanitarian organisations and international NGOs, as well as agricultural professional associations, the private sector and civil society.

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4 ■ Despite the efforts made by States and their partners, the nutrition situation still leaves cause for concern. The analyses done during the 2015 lean season show that the situation has deteriorated in some countries (Chad, Mali and Mauritania), with an increase in the number of areas that exceed the urgent threshold, as compared with 2014. Between January and October 2015, more than 910 000 children were severely malnourished and received the appropriate treatment in Sahel countries.

5 ■ In terms of food and nutrition vulnerability, the *Cadre harmonisé* analysis reveals that some 7.9 million people in the 17 Sahel and West African countries were in a crisis situation during the period from October to December 2015, including 5.2 million in northern Nigeria due to the security situation in that area. If strong action is not taken, the food and nutrition crisis could impact, by June-August 2016, some 10.5 million people in the region. This situation can be explained by livelihood losses experienced by vulnerable populations, the depletion of their stocks, local increases in the price of food and deterioration in the terms governing the trade in livestock/grain for pastoralists as a result of significant decreases in livestock prices. In addition, there were thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons due to the security situation in the Lake Chad area, the Central African Republic and Sudan. Particular attention should be paid to the consequences of this security situation. The participants recommended to i) strengthen malnutrition monitoring and treatment, as well as to develop structural solutions to the root causes of this problem; ii) support off-season staple food production in deficit areas and countries; iii) implement national response plans to protect food and nutrition insecure populations, in particular in Chad which records a food deficit of 12% on top of the security situation in the Lake Chad area; iv) facilitate cross-border transhumance and regional trade of food products; and v) strengthen humanitarian and food assistance measures to refugees and internally displaced populations in response to security crises, especially in the Lake Chad area.

6 ■ In response to the recommendations of the RPCA meeting in Lomé in March 2015, participants reviewed lessons learned from the Ebola epidemic, its impact on food security and the resilience of the most vulnerable populations. They welcomed the involvement of intergovernmental organisations, ECOWAS, UEMOA, the Mano River Union, professional agricultural producers' and civil society organisations, and technical and financial partners in mitigating the long-term impacts of the disease. Given the high risk of the disease negatively influencing the resilience of the populations and the economies of the affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), the Network recommended accelerating fund-raising to ensure the implementation of economic and social rehabilitation programmes.

7 ■ The main conclusions and recommendations of the first external evaluation of the PREGEC Charter, adopted in 2011, were reviewed by the stakeholders, governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and private sector organisations, as well as technical and financial partners. The Network emphasised the need to focus on the evaluation's key messages, including the urgent need to i) strengthen the regional governance of food and nutrition security under the leadership of States and their regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS) through avoiding multiple frameworks and decision-making centres, as well as the full adherence to the RPCA as a consensus-building platform; ii) ensure a political, technical and financial commitment from States to implement sustainable and effective information systems to be considered as national and regional public assets, urging ECOWAS to accelerate the process of institutionalisation with the goal of making the *Cadre harmonisé* a community tool; and iii) strengthen the consistency and co-ordination of sector-based policies that contribute to food and nutrition security.

8 ■ Recalling the fact that the Charter is the back bone of the regional food and nutrition security governance mechanism, participants urged all signatories to respect the terms of the Charter, to implement a communications plan to improve knowledge about the Charter, and to fully implement the evaluation's recommendations. They recommended further accelerating the institutionalisation of the Charter's monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at country- and regional level.

9 ■ Reaffirming the need to pursue the strengthening of the Network, participants recommended accelerating the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism of food/nutrition crisis prevention and responses as well as dedicated activities, and asked the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD) to co-ordinate, monitor and report on progress made in the implementation.

10 ■ The next RPCA annual meeting will take place from 12-14 December 2016 in Abuja (Nigeria); the central theme will focus on "Nutrition and Social Protection".

Dakar, 15 December 2015

The Participants

