

## Food Security Information Note - FOSIN

### Food Situation in the Sahel and West Africa: Coping with the consequences of flooding!

Note 12 – August 2007

#### 1. Satisfactory agricultural outlook with floods having affected several countries in the Sahel and West Africa

As indicated in the June 2007 Information Note ([http://www.food-security.net/medias/File/NISA\\_10\\_Juin\\_2007\\_Fin\\_ale.pdf](http://www.food-security.net/medias/File/NISA_10_Juin_2007_Fin_ale.pdf)), ACMAD's (African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development) seasonal forecasts seem to be confirmed in the Sahel and West Africa. Thus, the late and irregular rains in July were replaced by flooding affecting many of the Sahelian and West African countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, and Senegal. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, West Africa regional office) estimates that approximately 65 000 people were affected by flooding in July and August: 17 900 in Mali, 14 000 in Burkina Faso and Nigeria, 10 000 in Mauritania, 7886 in Niger, 2000 in Côte d'Ivoire and 298 in the Gambia.

ACMAD's most recent forecasts for July to September 2007 indicate that the Sahel and a large part of West Africa will experience a normal or slightly above normal production wintering season. Thus, despite the start of a difficult winter, satisfactory agro-pastoral production is still possible if the rains return to normal until end-October.

#### 2. What are the consequences for the agricultural and food situation?

In addition to the affected populations, the wave of flooding has caused agricultural damage. This situation could result in food security risks for the population.

- a. In some countries, **the flooding has affected at-risk zones**. This is the case, for example, in: (i) Burkina Faso in the provinces of Zandoma, Yatenga, Passoré, Lorum, Bam, Namentenga and Sanmatenga, (ii) Niger in the regions of Agadez, Zinder, Tahoua and Tillabéri. In some localised cases, these floods have even resulted in the loss of crop stocks.

In Burkina Faso's Lorum province for example, preliminary estimates indicate that 786 granaries have been destroyed.

- b. The floods arrive at a time when crop fields, destroyed or devastated by so much water, can no longer be seeded. This situation will affect agricultural production mostly in the at-risk zones such as in the north and Sahel of Burkina Faso. It could increasingly deteriorate food conditions for vulnerable populations in the zones affected by flooding.

#### 3. What stance and what actions?

With regard to food security, this flooding requires a combination of emergency actions aiming to seek solutions to securing food conditions of vulnerable populations affected by agricultural damage:

- a. **Intensifying emergency operations** in the affected zones. Several countries have already launched calls for humanitarian assistance by way of crops, healthcare, sanitation, etc., with some visible results as is the case in Mauritania. These pleas to the international community should be supported by national emergency mechanism action and humanitarian assistance, as is the case of NEMA (The National Emergency Management Agency) in Nigeria or CONASUR (*Comité National de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation* – National Committee for Emergency and Rehabilitation Assistance) in Burkina Faso; with the aim of a rapid and effective response on the ground.
- b. **Rapid assessment of the agricultural damage (crop and cattle loss) and establishing a plan to secure food conditions** for affected vulnerable populations. The results of this work should be presented at the next regional meeting on agricultural and food prospects in the Sahel and West Africa scheduled to take place from 17 to 20 September in Banjul, the Gambia. This work carried out by specialised teams monitoring the agricultural and food situation should provide an exhaustive analysis of the impacts of this damage on food and



nutritional security and determine actions geared towards:






- *Producing substitution commodities during the upcoming dry season*, such as market gardening activities, off season crops, small livestock breeding, etc. Flood-affected villages can develop recessional crops (sorghum and

maize). Other targeted actions could also be reconstituting herds for some community shepherds or agro-pastoralists greatly affected by the floods.

- *Income generating activities* with the aim of improving revenues and strengthening accessibility to crops by affected populations.

## Information Sources

This FCPN analytical note was produced on the basis of information or analyses provided by various specialised Network (non) member institutions. More information can be obtained from the respective websites.

				
<a href="http://www.oecd.org/sah">www.oecd.org/sah</a>	<a href="http://www.fews.net">www.fews.net</a>	<a href="http://www.cilss.bf">www.cilss.bf</a>	<a href="http://www.fao.org">www.fao.org</a>	<a href="http://www.wfp.org">www.wfp.org</a>
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OCHA: [www.humanitarianinfo.org](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org) & <http://ochaonline.un.org/>; SISA/CNSA: [www.sisabf.net](http://www.sisabf.net)

## For better access to information on the food and nutritional situation in the Sahel and West Africa

The FCPN has set up a website to encourage access to information on the food and nutritional situation in the region in view of decision-making for action.

For any information questions, and/or analytical document you may need with regard to the food and nutritional situation, please access the site at: [www.food-security.net](http://www.food-security.net)

## Providing food aid while strengthening local capacities in Africa: the “buying local” system

With the aim to buying local such mechanisms guaranteeing the relevance and effectiveness of food aid such as set out in the Food Aid Charter principles (see the Food Aid Charter document at: [http://www.food-security.net//medias/File/1990\\_Charte\\_aide\\_alimentaire.pdf](http://www.food-security.net//medias/File/1990_Charte_aide_alimentaire.pdf)), the International Trade Centre – ITC has set up an initiative called “Buying from Africa for Africa”. It aims to foster local and regional supplies of international aid agencies and contribute to developing the private sector as well local economic growth in Africa.

For more information on this initiative, see:

[http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/procumeeting\\_content/documents/events/wfp127068.pdf](http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/procumeeting_content/documents/events/wfp127068.pdf)