

## Food Security Information Note - FOSIN

### Food Situation in the Sahel and West Africa: The Sahel and West Africa - Assessment Time

Note 15 – November 2007

#### 1. Agriculture and Food Situation in the Region

Based on available data provided at the 23rd meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (FCPN), held in Brussels from 27 to 30 November 2007, the food and agriculture situation is as follows:

##### *In the Sahel countries:*

Projected cereal production for 2007/2008 in CILSS countries was estimated at **15 million tonnes**, or the same as that of 2006/2007 with an increase of 17% compared to the average over the last five (5) years. Compared to last year, production has increased in Mauritania (26%), remained the same in Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali, Niger, and Senegal and decreased in Cape Verde (-31%) and Guinea Bissau (-9%). Compared to the average over the last five years, expected production for 2007/2008 is 46% less in Cape Verde and 11% less in Senegal.

##### *In West African Coastal Countries:*

Examination of the agriculture and food situation in West African coastal countries revealed that compared to 2006 projected production was greater in Guinea Conakry (1%), Togo (5%), and Benin (10%) and 7% lower in Ghana. As in Ghana, preliminary analyses indicate a drop in expected production in northern Nigeria. A definitive data assessment currently underway should enable a better quantification of total country production which, overall, should be higher.

On the basis of assessments carried out by all CILSS countries, available cereal production is expected to be **13 185 550 tonnes** in order to meet human consumption needs estimated to be **13 945 500 tonnes**, or approximately **95%**. This leaves a gross deficit of **760 000 tonnes**.

There has been a rather significant structural deficit in Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal. These

deficits will be compensated by anticipated imports.

Overall analysis indicates a satisfactory food situation in the Sahel and in some countries such as Nigeria.

However, markets' outlook indicates caution must be observed due to inadequate local production registered in some Sahelian countries and above all in northern Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Benin.

More precisely, these production deficits in northern Nigeria and Ghana with regard to sorghum and maize raise concerns of market tensions in view of strong domestic demand as well as that of brewing industries and poultry farming.

These tensions will be particularly heightened by the demand of vulnerable households (in particular in Nigeria and in the Sahel). Difficulties in accessing cereals could lead to localised food problems. The situation will become more complex with the continued rise in food input prices (notably for rice, wheat and milk) on the international market.

The nutritional situation remains precarious in most of the countries and requires supported government and partner efforts to reduce the increasingly sustained incidences of severe malnutrition in children of less than five years of age. **Close monitoring of at-risk production zones and food access difficulties** is required.

#### 2. Stakes and challenges in terms of food and nutritional security

Although at present the overall food situation appears satisfactory in particular due to the reconstitution of family stocks, **caution and vigilance is nevertheless required** for the following reasons:

- *The arrival of new harvests on the food product markets is insufficient and prices are stable indeed even*



with increases in some areas. This is a sign to proceed with caution and of potential market tension which could seriously affect accessibility.

- *Production decreases in northern Nigeria and Ghana* could exacerbate tension on the Sahelian markets due to high demand of poultry and brewing industries in Nigeria. Significant price increases in Nigeria due to inadequate supply could lead to massive cereal flows from the Sahel to Nigeria with obvious supply consequences in Sahelian zones as was the case in Niger in 2005.
- *The skyrocketing of international cereal prices (wheat and rice)* could also have harmful consequences on household accessibility in some countries structurally dependent on imports such as Cape Verde, Senegal, Mauritania as well as urban populations.
- *Severe flooding* during the rainy season also affected production levels in some areas of the Sahel. This situation could exacerbate the vulnerability of some populations.

### 3. What to do?

Despite this relatively satisfactory production, the analysed risk factors set out above indicate that ***the Sahel is not completely safe from localised food crises***. Thus, priority actions should aim to:

- a. ***Monitoring markets for more effective early warning***: Better analysis and increased monitoring of prices with a view to a greater understanding of market flows. This would enable the rapid identification and warning of pockets of food insecurity due to accessibility.

- b. ***Monitor the trade situation in northern Nigeria and Ghana***: Particular attention should be given to trade flows between Nigeria as well as Ghana and the Sahelian countries. Drawing lessons from the 2005 crisis, monitoring the markets in northern Nigeria should also help anticipate and take action in order to improve accessibility in some Sahelian zones.






- c. ***Envisage management tools or mechanisms to implement in potential food crises***, more particularly in countries with a decrease in food crop production notably Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Northern Nigeria. This could involve:

- Strengthening complementary production by capitalising on irrigation opportunities. Some zones which had experienced flooding could be used for recessional agriculture.
- Promoting mitigating actions: storage, complementary provisions through imports, facilitating the fluidity of market functioning, etc.
- Strengthening at-risk populations' accessibility to food, notably those having been severely affected by floods and an early end to the rains. The implementation of revenue-generating activities (market gardening production, small trade, animal fattening, small credit, etc.) could help increase revenues and access to food.

- d. ***Undertake concrete measures to effectively ensure the free movement of agricultural products between the countries of the region***. This would guarantee better market fluidity and also enable the region to rely less on extra-African imports within a context of rising world prices of main food products.

## 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.westafricclub.org">www.westafricclub.org</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>
✉: <a href="mailto:sibirjean.zoundi@oecd.org">sibirjean.zoundi@oecd.org</a> ☎: +33 1 45 24 19 82	✉: <a href="mailto:ssow@fews.net">ssow@fews.net</a> ☎: +226 50 37 47 06	✉: <a href="mailto:amadou.konate@cilss.bf">amadou.konate@cilss.bf</a> ☎: +226 50 37 41 25/33	✉: <a href="mailto:henri.iosserand@fao.org">henri.iosserand@fao.org</a> ☎: +39 06 57 05 30 99	✉: <a href="mailto:george.simon@wfp.org">george.simon@wfp.org</a> ☎: +39 06 65 13 27 96
✉: <a href="mailto:leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org">leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org</a> ☎: +33 1 45 24 17 98	✉: <a href="mailto:librahim@fews.net">librahim@fews.net</a> ☎: +227 96 97 70 11	✉: <a href="mailto:moussa.cisse@cilss.bf">moussa.cisse@cilss.bf</a> ☎: +226 50 37 41 25/33		
		✉: <a href="mailto:b.sidibe@aghrvmet.ne">b.sidibe@aghrvmet.ne</a> ☎: +227 20 31 53 16		

Afrique Verte: [www.afriqueverte.org](http://www.afriqueverte.org), Reliefweb: [www.reliefweb.int/](http://www.reliefweb.int/)  
 OCHA: [www.humanitarianinfo.org](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org) & <http://ochaonline.un.org/>; SISA/CNSA: [www.sisabf.net](http://www.sisabf.net)

## 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).

## Better Understanding of Nutritional Issues in the Sahel

FEWS NET Niger has carried out an analysis on the nutritional situation of children from 0 to 5 years of age in the Diffa, Zinder and Maradi regions bordering Nigeria. For more information visit the link: <http://www.fews.net/Special/index.aspx?pageID=specialDoc&g=1001447&f=ne>