

Food Security Information Paper - NISA-37

The hunger period heralds a difficult start in the Sahel despite some good rainfall forecasts for the 2010/2011 cropping season

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1. Some good rainfall forecasts for the 2010/2011 cropping season

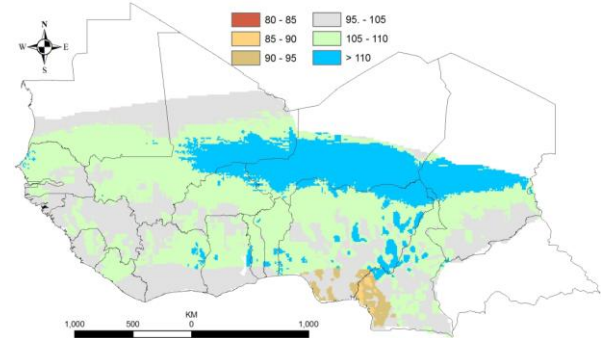
The seasonal forecasts established for the period from July to September 2010 in the Sahel and in West Africa by the Consortium constituted mainly of ACMAD and the CILSS AGRHYMET Regional Centre in collaboration with the national meteorological and water departments as well as other international institutions show:

- A high probability for a situation ranging from humid to normal in the extreme south-west of Mauritania, Senegal, in the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, in the northern half of Guinea Conakry and in the sahelian and northern sudanian regions of Chad;
- a probability of a normal situation with a humid tendency in the extreme south-east of Mauritania, in Mali, in Burkina Faso, in Niger, in the southern half of Guinea Conakry, in Sierra Leone, in the northern and central regions of the Ivory Coast, of Ghana, of Togo, of Benin and Nigeria;
- the dominance of a normal situation with a dry tendency in the coastal zones of Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Benin;
- the probability of a situation ranging from dry to normal in the coastal regions of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Map n° 1 on the anomalies in relation to the average between 1971-2000 for the period July, August and September indicates a high rainfall pattern for the sahelian zones of Mali, Burkina, Niger, Chad and in some cases in Senegal and in

Mauritania, and a rainfall pattern equivalent to the normal in the rest of the Sahel.

Map n° 1: Forecast anomaly in % to the normal rainfall over the period July-August-September 2010

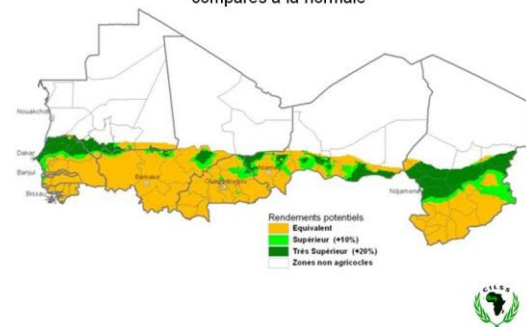


Source : AGRHYMET/CILSS/FEWS NET/USGS

Likewise, map n° 2 shows that the regions which have been the most affected by the food and pastoral crisis in 2009 are going to witness a good season this year with some good yields for millet above 10% to 20% for the average of the past thirty years 1971-2000.

Map n° 2:

Rendements prévisionnels 2010 suivant les résultats du PRESAO comparés à la normale



Source : AGRHYMET/CILSS

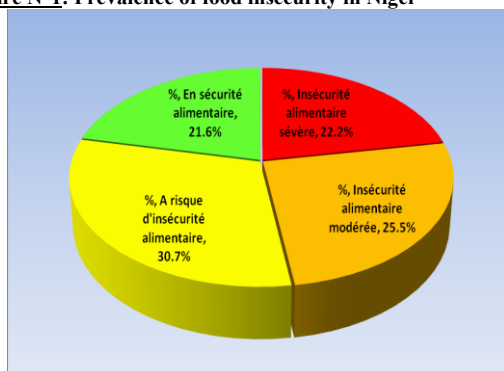
Conclusion: We are now witnessing a start of the rains ranging from normal to precocious. The 2010 seasonal rainfall and water forecasts show

some water conditions that are favorable to a good development of crops and grazing lands. If these forecasts are confirmed and if there is a good temporal distribution of the rains, the agricultural and pastoral productions could be equivalent to or above average in the CILSS countries. However, there is a high risk of heavy rains that can cause floods leading to major damages including losses of rice field surface areas.

2. Evolution of the food situation to the East and Centre of the Sahel

On the whole the food situation in **Niger**, such as it is revealed by the survey carried out in April 2010, remains one of a concern. **22.2% of the households** are living in a **situation of severe food insecurity (3.3 million persons)** and **25.5% are living in a state of moderate food insecurity (3.8 million persons)**, being an estimated population of **7.1 inhabitants living in a state of food insecurity**. (Cf. Figure N°1).

Figure N°1: Prevalence of food insecurity in Niger



Source : EWS Niger

The rural populations living in a situation of severe food insecurity are mainly located in the districts of Ouallam (64.1% of the population of the district), Tessaoua (56.9%), Bouza (37.6%), Keita (37.1%), Aguié (34.1%), Tillabéri (32.8%), Tanout (29.3%), Tahoua (28.9%), Madaoua (28.7%), Mayahi (26.6%), Guidan Roundji (26%), Madarounfa (25.9%), Maine Soroa (23.3%). The agro-pastoral zone is the most affected with 26.1% of the population affected.

It emerged from this survey that the pastoral situation and that of the markets have largely a negative influence on the food situation of the households between December 2009 and May

2010. In relation to the situation established in February 2010, we observe that there is an increase of the vulnerable populations due mainly to the rise in price of cereal prices in the markets as well as the deterioration of the terms of trade cattle/cereals and the low adjustment level capacity of the herders subsequent to the fodder shortage. This situation caused entire households to go into migration as a result of the food insecurity situation.

Faced with this very difficult situation, the partners and the international organizations gave their support to the Government of Niger by funding its intervention plan for the crisis through the disbursement of an estimated 50 billion FCFA against the needs for 96 billion FCFA. There is thus a financial gap of 45 billion FCFA needed to cover the deficit in the course of this hunger period.

In Chad, the entire foodstuff available is estimated at 60 500 tonnes against 99 000 tonnes of the overall needs which reflects a rate of coverage of 61%. There is thus a gap of 38 500 tonnes and this figure has now been reduced through the ONASA donation of 8000 T of foodstuff. The gap is also evaluated at 1 670 tonnes for cereal seeds. For cattle feed, this shortage has not been estimated by the authorities however, it should be pointed out that the 6 000 T estimated only cover 30 % of the needs of the lactating cattle and the herders are going to leave the sudanian zone and come towards the Sahel.

In Burkina Faso, the food situation affected mainly the cattle particularly in the regions of the Sahel as well as the North, Centre-North and in the Northern part of the region of the East. However, the operation in respect of sale of cereals at social prices conducted in April 2010 and the marketing of farmer and trader stocks in the South-West zone have produced a positive impact on the food situation of the most vulnerable households especially among the herders that suffered from cattle losses.

In Mali, the free distributions of cereals (6790T) that were carried out in the regions most affected by the pastoral crisis mainly Kidal (11 commune) and Gao (12 communes) enabled the

herders to avoid making recourse to extreme strategies. Although the programs directed at the reduction of the cattle stocks and the subvention of cattle feed would have made it possible to assist the herders of these zones, it is necessary to point out their access capacities to cereals in the markets is low.

Despite these actions taken by the States and certain development partners in favor of the vulnerable populations (herders, agro-herders), they still turn out to be insufficient in covering the needs of the populace at the entry of the 2010 hunger period. This could have led to the fear of abandoning farm works by these populations in search of an alternative means of existence.

3. Dynamics and Evolution of the markets

We observe persistent tension on the markets. The cereal prices (rice, millet) are above the five (5) year average price and in some cases, above the 2005 prices particularly in Niger (Zinder) and in Chad (Ndjamena).

Moreover, the price differentials for maize are stable between the surplus zones (Bobo, Kano) and showing a deficit for maize coming from Benin. The flows are drying up nevertheless little by little. Finally, it should be noted that in Chad the surpluses from the zone of the lake go towards Niger.

In conclusion: On the whole, the food situation appears to be under control in Burkina Faso given the measures so far taken. However, it is still giving cause for concern in Niger and in Chad. Even if the forecasts for the rains happen to be promising, the small scale farmers will still need a sustained assistance – and this raises the need for the States to remain vigilant. Added to this are the risks of flooding which could still weaken the food situation of the vulnerable populace.

4. Nutritional Situation

The present hunger period that also generally corresponds to a much higher occurrence of morbidity (diarrhoea and fever), could aggravate the already precarious nutritional situation in the Sahel, particularly in **Niger** and in **Chad as well as**

the North of Nigeria if the current interventions on health and nutrition are not strengthened.

In **Niger**, the results of the recent nutritional sample survey (Government and partners, May - June 2010), show a high increase in the prevalence of global acute malnutrition for children aged from 6 to 59 months when compared to June 2009, with a rate of 16.7% at the national level which exceeds the WHO emergency threshold by 15%. The most affected regions are Diffa, Maradi, Zinder and Tahoua, followed by Agadez, Tillabéry, Dosso and Niamey. Children less than 36 months of age are the most affected. This degradation of the nutritional situation could be linked to the recent food crisis.

5. Act!

Given the aggravation of the food crisis and its consequences to the East of the Sahel, the regional system on the prevention and management of food crises and other natural disasters in the Sahel and in West Africa that met in Accra/Ghana from 21 to 23 June 2010 drew the attention of the governments and the international community to the lack of adequate responses to the food and nutritional crisis in the East of the Sahel and in order to act effectively, the following recommendations will have to be applied:

- ✚ Put in place some cattle feed banks as a result of the return of the transhumants;
- ✚ Increase the support of the severe and moderate cases of malnutrition particularly in Niger and in Chad. Moreover, actions of targeted food distributions or « blanket feeding » for children aged from 6 to 36 months as well as for pregnant and breastfeeding women are essential in order to avoid a further deterioration of the nutritional situation;
- ✚ Take the necessary preventive measures in order to face the outbreak of possible floods (activation of the contingency plans)
- ✚ Intensify advocacy for the mobilization of financial resources concerning the gaps of the contingency plans;
- ✚ Guarantee the free circulation of foodstuffs at the regional level.

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

With the aim of encouraging access to information on the food and nutritional situation in the region and for purposes of decision making for action, the FCPN now has a Web Site. For your questions relating to the food and nutritional situation and particularly your needs for analytical documents on the question, this site is henceforth at your disposal: www.food-security.net.

This analytical paper of the FCPN was produced on the basis of information or analyses provided by different specialized institutions whether or not members of the Network. Further information can be obtained on their respective Web sites.

CSAO/SWAC
www.westafricaclub.org
sibirijean.zoundi@oecd.org
+33-1-45-24-19-82
leonidas.hitimana@oecd.org
+33-1-45-24-17-98

CILSS
www.cilss.bf
abdou.keita@cilss.bf
konate.amadou@cilss.bf
moussa.cisse@cilss.bf
+226-50-37-41-25/33

FEWS NET
www.fews.net
ssow@fews.net
+226-70204979
librahim@fews.net
+227-96-97-70-11

FAO
www.fao.org
jean.senahoun@fao.org
SMIAR/FAO- ROME
+39-06-57-05-30-99
joseluis.fernandez@fao.org
FAO-DAKAR

WFP
www.wfp.org
Naouar.Labidi@wfp.org
Jean-Martin.Bauer@wfp.org

AFRIQUE VERT
www.afriqueverte.org

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www.ec.europa.eu/echo

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