1. The RPCA restricted meeting was held back-to-back with the high-level event on “Food and Agriculture in Times of Crisis” within the framework of the Global Network against Food Crises. The meeting served to examine the final results of the 2018-19 agro-pastoral campaign, the food market situation as well as the socio-economic context and their implications on the food and nutrition situation in the region. Commitments to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable populations were also monitored. On the sidelines of the meeting, the Steering Committee and a restricted group of RPCA members reviewed the implementation of various projects, including the Network’s reform plans.

2. The 2018-19 agro-pastoral campaign was good overall. Total cereal production reached 73.2 million tonnes, up from 17.7% compared to the five-year average, and up by 6.6% compared to the previous campaign. However, some countries recorded significant decreases compared to the previous campaign, in particular, Gambia (-24.3%) and Sierra Leone (-15.7%). Root and tuber production, estimated at 185 million tonnes, increased by 19.9% compared to the five-year average. Similarly, leguminous crops and oilseed production, estimated at 26.4 million tonnes, increased by 30% compared to the five-year average. Fodder supplies are relatively good; however, some pastures remain difficult to access in insecure areas of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. In the rare pastoral zones that are easily accessible, there is a risk of infectious animal diseases due to a high concentration of livestock. Food markets remain well supplied and the price of local cereals is decreasing overall, except in certain countries where inflation is high (Ghana, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). In the coming months, the increase in food prices will stay in the normal range, but will nevertheless be higher until the end of the lean season in insecure areas.

3. The Cadre harmonisé analysis confirmed persistent food and nutrition insecurity in south-eastern Mauritania as well as in insecure zones in northern and western Chad, eastern and western Niger, north-eastern Nigeria, eastern and northern Burkina Faso, and central and northern Mali. Throughout the region, 4.8 million people are in need of food and nutrition assistance, of which two million are in Nigeria. If appropriate measures are not taken, nearly 9.7 million people will be affected...
during the lean season from June to August 2019, of which 450,000 people will be in an emergency situation (308,000 in Nigeria; 41,000 in Mauritania; 30,000 in Niger; 26,000 in Burkina Faso; 24,000 in Mali and 22,000 in Chad). The nutrition situation remains concerning, with a prevalence of global acute malnutrition exceeding the emergency threshold of 15% in several zones in Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, north-eastern Nigeria and Senegal.

4 In light of the situation, members recommended that States and intergovernmental organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS) seek sustainable solutions (political, economic and social) that address root causes and put an end to conflict between communities. They urged States and their partners to mobilise the necessary resources to accelerate the scaling up of multisectoral approaches to nutrition, combining treatment, prevention and social protection measures.

5 Drawing on the key findings of the implementation of response plans, participants emphasised the need to harmonise targeting methods and strengthen monitoring-evaluation. They recommended that States conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of food and nutrition assistance in conflict-affected areas.

6 The Liptako-Gourma analysis conducted by the UN Working Group on Resilience and the OECD Crises and Fragility Unit, shows that food and nutrition insecurity is exacerbated by the security crisis as well as by underlying vulnerabilities (poverty, demographic growth, youth unemployment and insufficient basic social services). In addition to refugees and internally displaced persons, the security crisis led to the closure of 2,000 schools. RPCA members recommended that all stakeholders (humanitarian, development and peace) unite efforts to improve planning and co-ordinated actions in order to strengthen resilience. The SWAC/OECD study on women and trade networks confirms the need to unlock women’s economic potential by developing their social capital.

7 During the conference “Food and Agriculture in Times of Crisis”, members of the Global Network against Food Crises reaffirmed the need to: (i) prioritise approaches that address the root causes of food and nutrition crises and not only the symptoms; (ii) work together in a holistic and intersectoral manner around the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to effectively address the multifactorial challenges of food and nutrition crises. In their Joint Statement, they committed to continue strengthening their efforts in bringing stakeholders together around the production of consensual information, dialogue and co-ordination. However, they also recalled that “working together” requires many sacrifices from all stakeholders, especially from development partners who have to move beyond their differences and better align their interventions to improve the coherence and effectiveness of actions, and strengthen the leadership of local institutions and actors. Endorsing the recommendations of the Global Network, and keeping in mind the magnitude of the security implications for food and nutrition vulnerability in the region, the RPCA recommends that ECOWAS urgently organise a high-level dialogue on cross-border crisis-affected areas around the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This conference will aim to find appropriate solutions to put an end to the cycle of humanitarian, food and nutrition crises.

8 Members of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) discussed the Gambian government’s commitments to strengthening resilience. They also examined integrated approaches to strengthening resilience in insecure zones in Burkina Faso. On the basis of best practices in conflict-affected areas, stakeholders emphasised the need to strengthen the humanitarian-development-peace nexus by implementing multisectoral, participative and inclusive approaches, with a stronger role played by communities, local authorities and civil society organisations. They also underscored the need to work collectively to scale up best practices. They highlighted the key role of food stocks (in particular at the local level) in strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable, and urged States, regional organisations and partners to seek long-term solutions to challenges around sustainable financing and better quality of local food stocks.

9 The restricted group of RPCA members emphasised the need to strengthen the gender and vulnerable pastoralism dimensions in data collection tools required for the Cadre harmonisé analysis. They also emphasised the need to respect the PREGEC Charter principles and recommended that the study on the quality and reliability of information be accelerated and that the 3rd evaluation of the PREGEC Charter be postponed to 2021 in order to allow more time to implement the recommendations of the 2nd evaluation.

10 The theme of the 35th RPCA annual meeting, which will be held in Conakry, Guinea, on 2-4 December 2019, will focus on “Addressing food and nutrition challenges in crisis situations”. Brussels, 4 April 2019