

Food and nutrition crises in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions: Time to act now and better mobilise in West Africa for the future

Paris, 6 April 2022

Final Communiqué

1. A high-level meeting was held on 6 April 2022, upon invitation of the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD), the European Union (EU) and the Global Network Against Food Crises (GN). The meeting was held virtually and in person at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris, France and focused the multifaceted and recurrent food and nutrition crises across the region. The meeting brought together policy-makers and other non-state actors from the Sahel and West and Central Africa, and their international partners. They set themselves two key objectives: i) mobilise more emergency food security and nutrition assistance for the most affected populations; ii) renew a strong and long-term political commitment to structural policies addressing the underlying causes of food and nutrition crises and integrate humanitarian, development and peace dimensions for a more holistic approach.
2. Over four hundred people participated in the meeting. Some thirty-two stakeholders (countries, institutions, financial pledges are listed in the annex) made political or financial announcements.
3. Alongside H.E. Mohamed BAZOUM, President of the Republic of Niger and Chairman of the High Level Committee on Food and Nutrition Security (HLC-FNS) of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the following personalities took part in the proceedings: *H.E. Mr. Mathias Cormann, OECD Secretary General; H.E. Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France, ; H.E. Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative/ Vice-President of the European Commission; H.E.Mr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Honorary President of the SWAC, H.E. Mr. Janez Lenarčič, European Commissioner for Crisis Management ; H.E. Mrs. Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships ; H.E Mrs. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission; H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Brou, President of the Commission, ECOWAS; H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, President of the Commission, UEMOA ; H.E. Mrs Adam Kamougué née Déné-Assoum, Minister Coordinator, CILSS; H.E Mr José Manuel Albares, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Spain; H.E Mr. Harjit Sajjan, Minister of International Development, Canada ; H.E. Mr. Tobias Lindner, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Germany ; H.E. Mrs Velislava Petrova, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria ; H.E. Mr. Francisco André, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Portugal ; H.E. Mr. Stanislav Raščan, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia ; H.E. Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director, WFP ; H.E. Mr. Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director General – FAO.*

Financial commitments to urgently respond to the current food and nutrition crisis

4. Policymakers in the region and their partners unanimously acknowledge the increase in the severity and magnitude of food and nutrition crises, particularly in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria). Between 2018 and 2022, the number of people in need of emergency food security and nutrition assistance in ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS countries and Cameroon increased from about 11 million to nearly 41 million.

5. They note that these food and nutrition crises, rooted in structural issues (climatic fragility and uncertainty, poverty, rural marginalization and limited investment in rural areas, poor availability and access to basic social services, etc.) lead to the erosion of livelihoods and resilience of the most vulnerable populations and communities and are exacerbated by a persistent and increasing security crisis and political instability. Conflict-affected countries in the central Sahel and the Lake Chad basin alone account for more than 90% of the hungry and malnourished. There are 6.7 million people internally displaced and 1.6 million refugees and asylum seekers. This is particularly worrying. The protracted nature of their displacement has humanitarian, developmental and security implications and requires specific attention. Beyond the human tragedies they could contribute to, security tensions disrupt agropastoral and food systems and jeopardise the prospects of future generations.

6. Policymakers and partners express concern about the acceleration of inflationary trends induced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, raising the spectre of hunger riots such as those that occurred in the region in 2008. In addition to the current surge in wheat prices, rising energy and transport costs also raises fears of further price increases for some strategic commodities, such as rice, which are largely imported into the region. This could further increase the price of fertilisers and other agricultural inputs, which have already been heavily affected by the anti-Covid-19 measures, and thus deal a heavy blow to the upcoming food production campaigns.

7. The combination of crises (food, security, health, climatic, economic, etc.), which feed on each other, could wipe out the progress made in recent decades and pose unprecedented humanitarian crisis threats. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the region's political leaders and their partners agree to respond in mutual support to the emergency. In support of the efforts already made by States and their regional organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS), financial pledges of an estimated 2.5 billion euros (list of contributors in annex) have been made to support the implementation of national plans to respond to food and nutrition crises, to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people and agri-food systems. The urgency of action imposes that the pledges made be effectively mobilised. To this end, the co-organisers will put in place a monitoring system. A first progress report will be prepared during a virtual consultation at the end of May 2022, at the beginning of the critical lean season. This meeting will allow all stakeholders to take stock of where they stand in terms of meeting their commitments.

8. As populations in fragile and hard-to-reach areas are usually the most severely affected by food and nutrition crises, the region's political leaders and their partners reiterate the imperative need to respect international humanitarian law and to facilitate access for humanitarian organisations to provide the required emergency assistance to the affected populations.

Long-term commitments to structural policies that address the root causes of the food and nutrition crisis

9. Policy makers in the region and their partners agree to work together to reverse the current negative food and nutrition trends in a sustainable manner. To this end, they recall that **the priority is not to launch new initiatives, but to support and strengthen existing institutions and mechanisms (national and regional)**. They also reaffirm the need to rethink policies and intervention approaches in order to be more proactive in preventing food and nutrition crises, rather than managing them.

In doing so, they agree to:

1. Revitalise their commitment, sealed in 2012, to long-term structural investments in the resilience of the region's most vulnerable populations and communities and agri-food systems based on durable agriculture. They thus commit to putting the resilience of populations and food systems, as well as management of malnutrition, at the top of their respective agendas for eradicating hunger and malnutrition in the region. They commit to prioritise the employment challenges of the youth, by relying in particular on the opportunities offered by the agro-pastoral economy and other segments of the informal economy;

2. Collectively invest in the operationalisation of the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus in conflict countries, building on lessons learned from past and ongoing initiatives. Specifically:
 - The co-ordination of the Global Network Against Food Crises is committed to intensifying advocacy with financial partners, including the opportunity to establish adapted financial instruments enabling the implementation of the HDP approach, and to support ongoing crisis assessment and monitoring efforts in close collaboration with CILSS and other regional partners;
 - The intergovernmental organisations (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS), with the support of the SWAC/OECD, of which they are members, are committed to raising awareness among States in favour of a strong political commitment and to accompany them in the operationalisation of the HDP nexus to support resilience to food and nutrition crises, including through the implementation of dedicated governance mechanisms. This includes, in particular, programmatic frameworks and financial instruments, enabling actors (humanitarian, development and peace) to provide multiple, coherent responses that address the immediate, recovery and resilience needs of affected populations in these conflict areas, in particular women and children.
 - Co-organizers commit to mobilise by mid May 2022, appropriate regional and national institutions to organize the work on the operationalization of the HDP nexus roadmap (share of tasks and calendar). This work will start by the consultation of intergovernmental organisations (in particular ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS) to establish a framework for the work to be done. It will feed the progress report foreseen by the end of May 2022.

Next steps

10. In order to maintain and strengthen the political momentum, the political leaders of the region and their partners agree on the following actions

1. Strengthen regional political and financial mobilisation in response to the food and nutrition crisis, in particular :
 - Activate regional solidarity mechanisms: the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR), the financial mechanism of the UEMOA High Level Committee on Food and Nutrition Security (HLC-FNS), etc. ;
 - Establish appropriate policy and financial instruments to anticipate and mitigate the consequences of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on food prices and agri-food systems in the region.
2. A consultation on the assessment of food crisis management. financial mobilisation, results achieved and lessons learned will be organised on the margins of the 38th annual meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) on 6-8 December 2022 on i) the assessment of the management of the food crisis: (financial mobilisation, results achieved, lessons learned) and; ii) progress on the operationalisation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
3. In the framework of the RPCA, facilitate an inclusive dialogue with high representatives from countries, regional organizations and civil society, to follow up on the operationalization of the HDP nexus during the restricted RPCA meeting of April 2023.

ANNEX / ANNEXE: PLEDGES / ANNONCES

	EU/nonEU	Donor	Emergency funding (original currency)	Emergency funding (EUR)	Development funding (original currency)	Development funding (EUR)	TOTAL (in original currency)	TOTAL in EUR	TOTAL in USD	Comments
1	EU	ECHO		240,000,000.00 €				€240,000,000.00	\$261,600,000	
2	EU	INTPA				€ 314,000,000.00		€314,000,000.00	\$342,260,000	
3	EU	Germany		€ 50,000,000.00		€ 50,000,000.00		€100,000,000.00	\$109,000,000	
4	EU	France		€ 26,000,000.00		€ 140,000,000.00		€166,000,000.00	\$180,940,000	
5	EU	Spain		€ 6,400,000.00				€6,400,000.00	\$6,976,000	
6	EU	Finland		€ 3,000,000.00				€3,000,000.00	\$3,270,000	
7	EU	Slovenia		€ 50,000.00				€50,000.00	\$54,500	
8	EU	Denmark	90 000 000 DKK	€ 12,000,000.00	274 000 000 DKK	€ 37,000,000.00	364 000 000 DKK	€49,000,000.00	\$53,410,000	
9	EU	Luxembourg		€ 10,000,000.00				€10,000,000.00	\$10,900,000	
10	EU	Sweden	489 000 000 SEK	€ 47,433,000.00			489 000 000 SEK	€47,433,000.00	\$51,701,970	<i>awaiting final confirmation</i>
11	EU	Belgium		€ 17,000,000.00		€ 95,100,000.00		€112,100,000.00	\$122,189,000	
12	EU	Austria		€ 5,000,000.00				€5,000,000.00	\$5,450,000	
13	EU	Netherlands		€ 6,000,000.00				€6,000,000.00	\$6,540,000	
14	EU	Czech Republic	30 000 000 CZK	€ 1,200,000.00			30 000 000 CZK	€1,200,000.00	\$1,308,000	
15	EU	Portugal		€ 20,000.00				€20,000.00	\$21,800	
16	nonEU	World Bank	315 000 000 USD	€ 288,792,000.00	700 000 000 USD	€ 641,760,000.00	288 792 000 USD	€930,552,000.00	\$1,015,000	
17	nonEU	Canada	26 650 000 CAD	€ 19,382,545.00	56 000 000 CAD	€ 40,728,800.00	82 650 000 CAD	€60,111,345.00	\$65,521,366	
18	nonEU	USA	311 000 000 USD	€ 285,192,827.00			311 000 000 USD	€285,192,827.00	\$311,000,000	
19	nonEU	Norway	100 000 000 NOK	€ 10,447,439.00			100 000 000 NOK	€10,447,439.00	\$11,387,709	<i>awaiting final confirmation</i>
20	nonEU	Japan	49 000 000 USD	€ 44,923,200.00			49 000 000 USD	€44,923,200.00	\$49,000,000	
21	nonEU	Switzerland	123 500 000 CHF	€ 121,042,350.00			123 500 000 CHF	€121,042,350.00	\$131,936,162	<i>additional amount to be communicated</i>
			TOTAL	€1,193,883,361.00		€1,318,588,800.00		€2,512,472,161.00	\$2,738,594,655.49	