

RESTRICTED MEETING

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Provide immediate assistance to the 42.5 million people at risk of food and nutrition crisis during the lean season (June-August 2023) and commit to structural responses to prevent food and nutrition crises.

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Held under the auspices of the Commissions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the RPCA restricted meeting connects the region's key food and nutrition security stakeholders (ministers and other government representatives, high-level officials of regional organisations, civil society and private sector representatives, technical and financial partners). The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD) organise the meeting.
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1. The restricted meeting of the RPCA was attended by approximately 160 participants in person at the OECD Conference Centre in Paris and by videoconference. It reviewed the food and nutrition situation analysis, the emergency and structural responses to food crises, and examined governance issues for food and nutrition security.
2. Cereal production for the 2022-2023 agropastoral season, estimated at more than 77 million tonnes, is 6% higher than the average for the past five years and 8% higher than last year. However, per capita production is 2% lower than the average for the last five years in the Sahel and Gulf of Guinea countries. Tuber and root crop production is estimated at 212 million tonnes, 10% above the five-year average and 3% above last year. Cash crop production is also up, except for cotton, which is down 12% on last year. Fodder availability and livestock watering conditions are relatively satisfactory. However, in some areas, access remains constrained by insecurity and the limitation or even prohibition of transhumance in some countries.
3. **The functioning and supply of markets is satisfactory** except in the insecure areas of Liptako-Gourma, the Lake Chad Basin and some localities in the northwestern states of Nigeria. Inflation remains a concern (18% on average in the region). It is fuelled by the persistence of regional trade barriers (illegal levies, taxes, and bans on cereal exports), higher transport costs, currency depreciation in Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, and the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Prices of the main staple cereals are up by 25-40% compared to the average of the last five years, with peaks in Ghana (+100%), Sierra Leone (+100%), Nigeria (+50%) and Burkina Faso (+50%), and particularly in insecure areas.
4. The Members of the Network draw the attention of policy makers to the persistence of factors that aggravate food and nutrition crises. These include:
 - » **Civil insecurity** has caused more than 7.5 million internally displaced persons to be deprived of their livelihoods (housing, productive capital, social networks) and access to education and health. It now extends to northern Togo and Benin.
 - » **Persistent inflation** limits the ability of households to access sufficient nutritious foods.
 - » The increasing **adverse effects of climate change** that are undermining food systems.
5. Approximately 29.5 million people are in need of emergency food and nutrition assistance. If appropriate measures are not taken, 42.5 million people could be affected by the lean season in June-August 2023. In addition, 107.5 million people, currently under food pressure, could fall into crisis if appropriate

measures are not taken, notably in Nigeria (64 million), Niger (7.3 million) and Burkina Faso (5.1 million). The nutrition crisis also persists in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, where nearly 16.5 million children under the age of five are acutely malnourished.

6. The responses to food and nutrition insecurity in 2022 implemented in 7 countries (Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Chad) have mobilised CFA francs 663 billion (USD 1.1 million), i.e. 66% of a total budget of CFA francs 1 004 billion (USD 1.64 million). The upward trend in needs and the scarcity of resources to finance them, are a further reminder of the urgent need for a paradigm shift in the management of food and nutrition issues.

7. Taking stock of the financial pledges of the April 2022 High Level Meeting on Food Crises, Network Members welcome the commitment of partners which has enabled the mobilisation of EUR 4.75 billion for emergency and development actions to date, 1.8 times the initial commitment.

8. Reviewing the various **structural response** initiatives to food crises, Network Members encourage ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS to strengthen the capacity of the reserve to play its role in stimulating the region's agri-food systems. The Members of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) Senior Expert Group (SEG) commend the efforts of the Government of Guinea-Bissau in implementing its country resilience plan. Similarly, in the face of environmental uncertainties affecting agri-food systems, the Members of the Network invite actors in the region to strengthen the development of innovative risk management tools. In particular, they encourage them to optimise and accelerate the scaling-up of adaptation strategies in the face of crises and multifaceted risks, including instruments dedicated to anticipation (observatories and other monitoring mechanisms) and prevention.

9. The Members of the Network welcome the efforts made by countries on the security front to operationalise the HDP Nexus process in the Sahel and West Africa region and in Cameroon. They encourage CILSS to strengthen its support to countries for inclusive diagnoses with a view to identifying and implementing national roadmaps.

10. Members congratulated Benin and Côte d'Ivoire for the progress made in the self-assessment exercises on their capacity to manage food issues. They encourage them in the national validation of their results, as well as in the implementation of plans to improve food and nutrition governance. They also congratulate and encourage civil society organisations in their initiatives to monitor and question the application of the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises and more generally on food and nutrition issues.

11. As a result of their work, the Members of the Network :

- » Reiterate their recommendations made at the 38th annual meeting of the Network **to States** on the urgency of: i) accelerating the mobilisation of resources for the financing of national response plans particularly in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone including facilitating access to insecure or hard-to-reach areas, ii) strengthening policy instruments and measures to support the population's purchasing power in the face of persistent inflation.
- » Recommend that **CILSS, ECOWAS, UEMOA** and the Member States (i) set up a sustainable financing system for national information systems on food and nutritional security, (ii) define and implement approaches and instruments dedicated to improving the effectiveness of the response to food crises.
- » Reiterate their recommendations to **ECOWAS and UEMOA** on the urgent need to i) strengthen dialogue with their Member States with a view to significantly reducing barriers to regional trade and cross-border transhumance and; ii) accelerate the strengthening of the intervention capacities of the Regional Food Security Reserve and national stocks, including its sovereign financing.
- » Reiterate the recommendation made to **States and their intergovernmental organisations** at the 38th Annual Meeting on the need to invest decisively in inclusive structural responses to reverse negative food and nutrition trends in the region, including the development of the fertiliser and irrigation.
- » Call on **partners** to mobilise and engage in a long-term partnership with governments to address the underlying causes of chronic food and nutrition crises.

12. Members agreed that the 39th annual meeting of the Network will take place from 5 to 8 December 2023 in Praia, Cabo Verde, with the theme of "**Transformation of Diets, Markets and Prices in the Sahel and West Africa: Implications for Agricultural and Food Security Policies**".

Paris, 14 April 2023