



## **PRESS RELEASE ON THE 2009/2010 REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PROSPECTS IN THE SAHEL AND IN WEST AFRICA**

**November 2009**

The technical consultative meeting on the ex-post 2008/2009 cereal and food balance sheets and provisional 2009/2010 in the CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA countries members took place from the 4th to 6th November 2009 in Accra, Ghana. The present press release is published:

- Rainfall in 2009 was highly heterogeneous. In the Central and Eastern Sahel, the rains were late with sporadic dry spells causing delays in crops establishment and development. In the Western Sahel the rains started relatively early without major interruptions. In the Gulf of Guinea countries, heavy rains relatively well distributed during the major season were recorded. However, rainfall was late during the minor season; but the consequences could be negligible if rainfall continues till end of November. Heavy rainfall was recorded in the Gulf of Guinea's countries in June and September in the Sahel countries. Important losses of crop fields, infrastructures and unfortunately lives have been recorded.
- Concerning the hydrological situation in the Sahel, water levels remain below the 2008 levels with the exception of zones which have recorded heavy rains in September (e.g., Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia and Sierra Leone). In the humid countries of West Africa, water situation is satisfying.
- With regards to crop protection, important damages on crops have been observed due to attacks of aphids, worms, birds, grasshoppers and millipedes. Low density populations of migrant locust under reproduction have been reported in Mauritania.
- The pastoral situation is critical in Niger, north-eastern Mali, the Sahel region in Burkina Faso, in Chad and the central-north of Mauritania. The water levels are still low and the herbaceous grass layer is poor. As a consequence, early transhumance movement have already been observed. This might be lead to recurrent conflicts with agricultural farmers. Livestock health situation is under control in general.
- The provisional cereal production for 2009/2010 for the Sahel and West Africa countries with the exception of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Mali, is estimated to 48 246 000 tons, corresponding to 4% decrease as compared to 2008/2009. Compared to last year season, decreases in cereal productions are expected in Chad (34%), Niger (26%), Mauritania (24%), Burkina Faso (10%) and Cape Verde (8%). Increased cereals productions are expected in Benin (45%), Ghana (44%), Gambia (18%) and Togo (13%). Rice production is estimated at 8 450 000 tons, which corresponds to 6% increase as compared to 2008/2009). Increases in rice production are expected in Benin, Burkina

Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo while decreases will be recorded in Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Maize production is estimated at 15 357 000 tons (approx. 11% increase as compared to 2008/2009). It has increased in most countries, except in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Chad where production has dropped. Estimates for other crops are 44 592 000 tons for yam, 53 815 000 ton for cassava, 2 176 000 tons for cowpea and 191 000 tons for sesame.

Household's food situation is improving progressively within the region due to the supply of food on the markets after early harvests. However, the situation remains insecure in the risk zones which already show production deficit. In certain markets, prices are steady while in other, they have relatively dropped. Despite this downward seasonal trend, cereal prices remain high than in 2008 and the average of the last five years. The local and sub-regional markets are well supplied and no major constraint has been reported on cross-borders food products flows. An increase of prices on the markets coupled with degrading structural conditions in food and fodder deficit zones might result in constraining situations during the next dry period in 2010.

Following the deliberations, the meeting recommends:

- The need to be alert and monitor regularly the locust situation in Mauritania and for other countries to undertake joint monitoring operations.
- To countries and IGOs such as ECOWAS and UEMOA to become more involved in market organization by further facilitating and encouraging intra and inter country easy food products movement.
- To countries to strengthen their supports to off-season activities
- To national early warning and prevention systems, to conduct rapid assessments on flooding and dry spells damages on crops, livestock, infrastructure and lives in order to provide appropriate information to stakeholders to support decision-making.
- That the regional information systems (CILSS, FAO, FEWS-NET), carry joint assessments of the food and nutritional situation and the monitoring of markets.
- That CILSS accelerates the setting up of the network of companies/offices in charge managing the national food security stocks.

Last, the meeting invites the different stakeholders to continue their support to the efforts undertaken by the countries and CILSS in food security related programmes.

## **The Meeting**

**Done in Accra, 6 November 2009**