



RESTRICTED MEETING OF THE FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION NETWORK (RPCA) IN THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA

2–4 MARCH 2015, LOME (TOGO)

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- 1.** From 2 to 4 March 2015, some 200 stakeholders took part in the restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA), including representatives of Sahelian and West African governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and private sector organisations, technical and financial partners, regional and international development banks, etc.
- 2.** After having examined the functioning of regional markets, the Network confirmed the adequate supply of food products, with prices generally stable or down slightly for dry cereals – which nevertheless exceed the five-year average levels in the western and eastern Sahel. Global trends also indicate falling food prices, with growing supply and good food stock replenishment. Except for areas affected by civil insecurity in Mali, Niger and north-eastern Nigeria, food supply prospects for the region are good overall, ensuring a regular supply of markets until the lean season (July-August).
- 3.** As regards livestock, their food situation will remain difficult until June due to poor pasture and water availability, in particular in the Lake Chad area, western Mauritania and central and northern Senegal. Transhumance might be disrupted in the Lake Chad area as a result of the combined effects of fodder deficit and civil insecurity.
- 4.** Despite the good supply of markets, the declining purchasing power of the most vulnerable households in the Ebola-affected countries and the influx of refugees and returnees from Mali and in neighbouring areas of Niger and Chad due to the civil insecurity in north-eastern Nigeria, represent risk factors that could undermine food and nutrition security. This situation calls for increased monitoring as well as mitigation measures. More specifically, the analysis of the *Cadre Harmonisé* (Harmonised Framework) which was conducted in February 2015 in the three Ebola-affected countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) revealed that about 2.2 million people will find themselves in a food and nutrition emergency situation by June-August 2015, if appropriate mitigation measures are not implemented.
- 5.** As regards the medium and long-term impact of the Ebola virus epidemic, the Network draws attention to the negative consequences on food security and resilience of populations. More particularly, these include: i) reluctance of farmers to return to their abandoned fields in the affected areas, as well as the loss of their production means; ii) the time required for rebuilding livelihoods; iii) difficulties in implementing assistance programmes due to people's lack of confidence in the use of health and educational centres. Similarly, the movement restrictions associated with the general psychosis have made it difficult to collect data, ensure quality control and, above all, prepare rapid analysis for decision-making. This situation calls on the Network to invest more in the elaboration of innovative tools to develop capacity to deal with similar crises while capitalising on existing best practices.
- 6.** As a result of the foregoing, the Network recommends: i) the implementation of appropriate measures to maintain and facilitate food trade flows, especially during the lean season; ii) support for countries in building sustainable and properly resourced information systems, with the capacity to adequately provide information and analysis for the region's *Cadre Harmonisé* tool; iii) the formulation and implementation of structural rehabilitation and resilience (re-)building programmes for countries most affected by Ebola and their immediate neighbours; iv) support for pastoralists to advance the strategic de-stocking of animals while preserving their reproductive capacity, and facilitation of access to animal feed at affordable prices. In addition, the Network welcomes the actions already undertaken and urges

the States and their inter-governmental organisations to pursue and step up efforts to totally eradicate the Ebola epidemic in the region. To that end, participants particularly welcomed the creation of the Ebola Regional Solidarity Fund by ECOWAS, UEMOA and their partners, as well as the implementation of a regional post-Ebola plan. The Network calls on the international community to support the region's post-Ebola efforts.

7. Similarly, to prevent the collapse of incomes and livelihoods of agro-pastoralists in light of the downward trend in agricultural prices, the Network recommends to the States and their partners i) to implement "institutional purchase" operations directly from agricultural professional organisations and, ii) more generally, to take appropriate measures to strengthen the food processing capacity in agricultural value chains.

8. The participants welcomed the efforts made towards operationalising the Regional Food Security Reserve, particularly the establishment of governance tools and the Technical Management Unit. While welcoming the European Union's support for the implementation of the Reserve, the participants urged ECOWAS and UEMOA to take appropriate steps to mobilise their own resources for the implementation of the Reserve.

9. Reviewing progress made in the external evaluation of the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management (PREGEC Charter), the Network Members welcomed the provisional results and validated a revised timeline for the completion of the work. Under this new roadmap, the interim evaluation report will be validated by the Steering Committee on the sidelines of the June 2015 meeting of the food crisis prevention and management system.

10. The Senior Experts Group (SEG) of the Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) - Sahel and West Africa commended the important progress made in the conduct of inclusive national dialogues. Thirteen out of 17 countries are involved in the process of formulating their national resilience priorities (AGIR-NRP). One country, namely Togo, has already validated its NRP. Six countries are in the process of adopting their resilience priorities and six other countries should be at this phase by August. Based on these achievements, the SEG Members adopted a roadmap for the organisation of a high-level conference at the invitation of sub-regional organisations on the financing of the 2016-20 national resilience priorities, to be held in October-November. While fostering the involvement of all AGIR stakeholders in the funding of AGIR-NRP, this Conference will help prepare national fundraising dialogues, and provide an opportunity to further promote coherence and develop more effective partner support for resilience initiatives in the region.

11. The RPCA Members confirmed that the 31st RPCA annual meeting will be held from 14 to 18 December in Madrid. This will be preceded by a meeting dedicated to advocacy and lobbying for the Network, which will be held within the Universal Exposition from 27 to 31 October in Milan (Expo Milano 2015).

Done at Lomé on 4 March 2015

Participants of the restricted RPCA meeting

