

FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL



N° 60 - October/November 2014

KEY POINTS

Sections



Agriculture



Displacements



International
Markets



Markets in WA



Food Security

To go to



- ◆ The regional agricultural production estimates are higher in comparison to the five-year average. The level of production masks regional deficits.
- ◆ The coarse grain prices are higher in comparison to the five-year average in the agricultural deficits areas and conflict-affected areas.
- ◆ According to the Cadre Harmonisé, 14,530,000 are food insecure (October – December 2014).
- ◆ Despite the start of the harvests, households continue resorting to negative coping strategies in the areas highly affected by the Ebola virus disease (EVD).

In the Sahel and in West Africa, the 2014-2015 agricultural campaign was characterized by a late onset and significant rainfall deficits in the western part of the Sahel (Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal) and areas in Mali, Niger and Chad. Cereal production (excluding Niger and Mali) is likely experiencing an increase of 4 percent compared to last year and 8 percent compared to the five-year average. However, disparities exist between countries, particularly in western Sahel where a significant production decrease, of more than 32 percent in comparison to the five-year average, is expected.

Livestock body condition is generally satisfactory following the rangeland regeneration except for areas where rainfall deficits were recorded in western Mauritania, northern Senegal and areas around Lake Chad.

In the three West Africa trade basins, the harvests are supplying markets in cereals thus meeting current demand. In main agricultural production areas, prices are stable or declining compared to their five-year average. However, coarse grain prices are above their five-year averages in the areas affected by poor harvests in 2013/2014 and/or conflicts. In countries affected by the Ebola virus disease (EVD), grain prices are still high.

The household food situation is improving with the ongoing harvests, however a likely deterioration might be observed in areas that are experiencing production deficits. In countries affected by EVD (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone), households in the most affected areas resort to negative coping strategies indicating a precarious food situation which does not seem to be improving with the arrival of the new harvests.



2014-2015 Agropastoral campaign

Regional production higher than five-year average, with expected sub regional deficits

The regional consultation of the regional information system for Food Crisis Prevention and Management (PREGEC) held from 18 to 20 November 2014 in Dakar presented the preliminary results of the 2014-2015 cropping season.

The 2014-2015 agricultural campaign was characterized by a late onset. Despite better spatial and temporal rainfall distribution in August and September, significant deficits persisted in the western part of the Sahel (Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal) and in some areas in Chad, Mali and Niger. In those areas, a number of reseeding and plot abandon have been reported, especially in The Gambia and Guinea Bissau. On the hydrological field, the river flows were low in May and June, but normalized in July, August and September following the rainfall. However, flood levels are below average in the rice-growing areas on the Niger and Senegal rivers. This could have negative impacts on the dry season crops.

The forecast figures of the regional agricultural production (without Mali and Niger) indicate an increase in cereal production and other productions compared to the five-year average. The total forecasted cereal production is estimated at 48,510,000 tons. It is 4 percent higher compared to last year production and 8 percent higher compared to the average of the previous five years. This production level hides, however, disparities from one country to another. Significant decrease of more than 32 percent is recorded in the Western Sahel countries, and an increase of more than 9 percent in coastal countries.

Compared to the average of the last five years, rice production (14,809,000 tons), and maize (18,094,000 tons) increased by 25 percent and 12 percent respectively. On the other hand, millet production (3,891,806 tons) decreased by 29 percent. Further commodities, such as groundnut (5,818,620 tons), cassava (84,086,000 tons), yam (63,463,000 tons) and taro (4,840,000 tons) have seen their production increase by 5 percent, 7 percent, 20 percent and 92 percent respectively. Cowpea production (3,652,584 tons) remains stable (-1 percent). However, the main income of the poorest households (in terms of the Household Economic Approach [HEA]) does not come from their agro-pastoral productions and therefore, they do not entirely benefit from favorable agro-climatic conditions.

The pastoral situation characterized by moderate to good availability of pasture and water points in major agro pastoral areas, enabled livestock to reach a satisfactory body condition as

Figure 1 : Percentage of rainfall compared to normal levels between 24th April and 20th October 2014

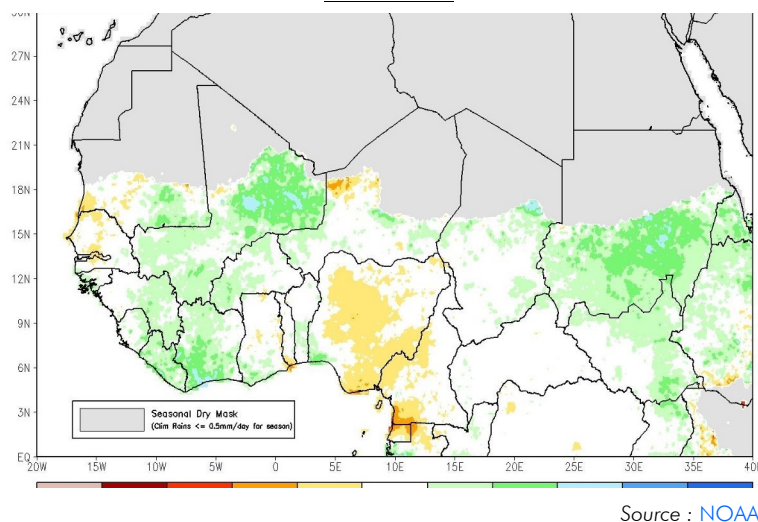
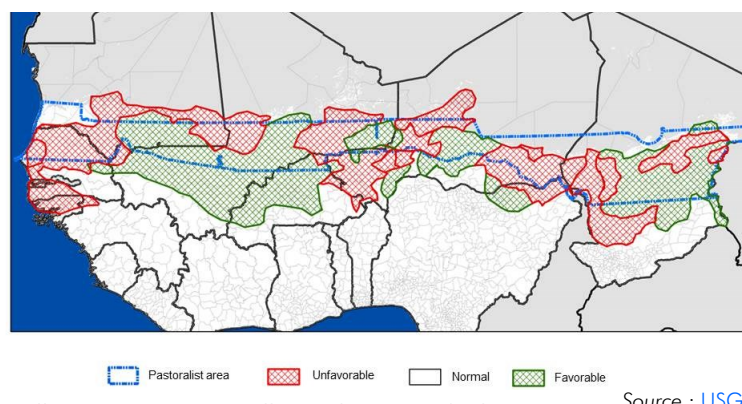


Figure 2 : Map of areas at risk of decline in biomass production of the agropastoral season (October 2014)



well as an average milk production, which is an important source of food and income. However, the pasture is far below the average in western Mauritania, northern Senegal and in areas around Lake Chad, leading to animal feeding difficulties with a likely negative impact on pastoralist's income in the first quarter of 2015.

An early transhumance was reported in Benin, Chad, Mauritania and Senegal. It will however remain disrupted in the eastern region due to persistent civil insecurity in northern Nigeria and instability still prevailing in CAR. Conflicts for the management of pastoral resources may arise in these areas.



Desert locust situation as of 4th November 2014

Calm situation in October

Despite small-scale breeding in western Mauritania, central Niger and Chad, locust numbers remained low except in the west of Mauritania, where they began to increase in late October. During the forecast period, locust numbers are moving to the west and

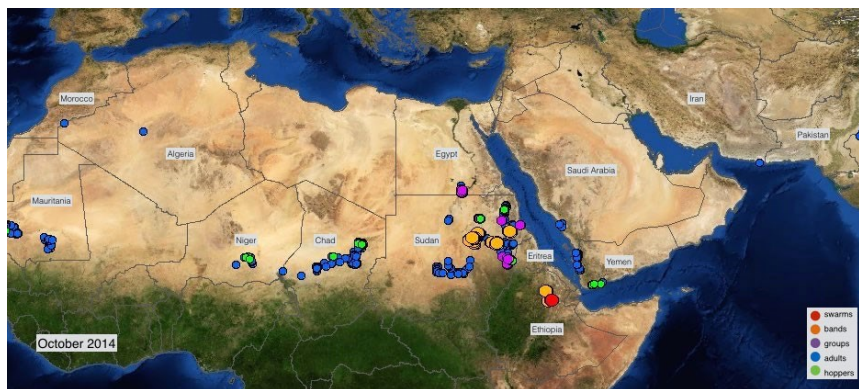
northwest of Mauritania following local breeding that could lead to formation of small groups of hoppers and adults. Low numbers of adults will persist in the northern parts of Mali and Niger and northeastern Chad.



Desert locust situation as of 4th November 2014 (continued)

Calm situation in October

Figure 3 : Desert locust situation as of 2nd October 2014



Source : [FAO](#)



Displacement situation in the region

The influx of displaced persons to Diffa continues

Mali : The report of the Commission on Population Movement (CMP) shows that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continues to decrease. On 3rd October 2014, the CMP partners have recorded 86,026 IDPs, which is a decrease compared to September 2014 (99,816 IDPs) and August 2014 (101,279 IDPs).

[CMP](#)

Niger : Insecurity in northern Nigeria continues to cause displacement of people to Niger. Approximately 10,000 people have arrived in Niger following the Damasack attacks on 24 November 2014. The NGO IRC estimated that more than 50,000 people have arrived to Diffa between August 1st and October 16th, 2014. The total number of displaced persons is estimated at

115 000. The preliminary results of the profiling exercise launched by IOM in Diffa since August 2014 indicate that Nigerien returnees account for 78 percent and Nigerian refugees for 18 percent. A minority of nationals from Mali and Chad was also observed. [OCHA](#)

Chad : New arrivals of Chadians fleeing violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) are only sporadic since late August. The relocation from transit sites in the south of the country to temporary camps have slowed down due to delays in camp development and to insufficient space for the construction of new shelters. It is important to note that apart from the transit sites; more than 18,000 people are living in host families or in makeshift shelters in areas of Mandoul and Logone Oriental. [OCHA](#)



Trends on international markets

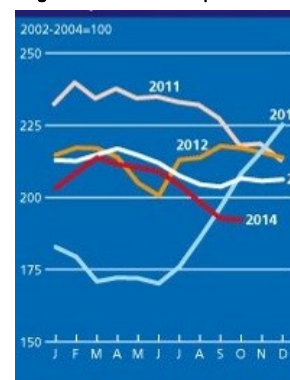
The FAO Food Price Index stabilizes in October

The **FAO Food Price Index** averaged 192.3 points in October 2014, marginally (0.2 percent) below the revised September figure but 14.3 points (6.9 percent) short of its corresponding level one year ago. A firming of international prices of oils and, especially of sugar, compensated for a retreat of dairy and meat, while cereal prices remained stable around their relatively low September value.

The **FAO Cereal Price Index** averaged 178.4 points in October, virtually unchanged from September, but 18.2 points (9.3 percent) lower year-on-year. After five months of steep falls, international prices of wheat and coarse grains firmed slightly in October, supported by harvest delays in the United States (maize) and deteriorating prospects in Australia (wheat). On the other hand, rice prices tended to soften on newly harvested supplies and a slowing pace of sales.

In October, the **world rice prices** continued to fall in all of the international markets. Even so, prices slightly increased by the end of the month, due to a slowdown in rice shipping activities in some Asian ports.

Figure 4: FAO food price index



Source : [FAO](#)

The exportable availabilities are still plenty despite the slight increase of 2014 world production. In West Africa, the Ebola crisis does not seem to deeply affect imported rice supplies. However, imports of key African countries are currently slow because in-country stocks are sufficient, at least until the end of the year.

[InterRice](#)

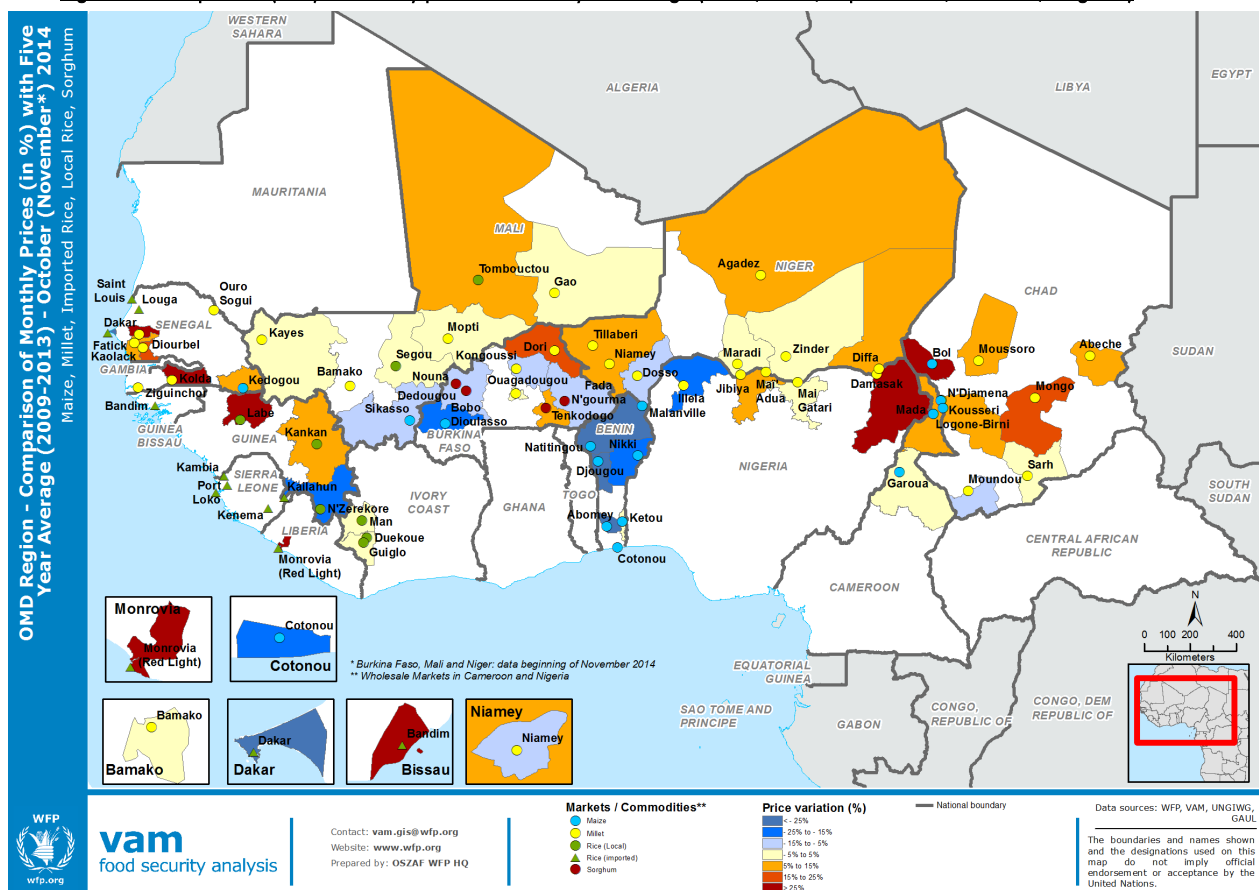
Trends on West African markets

Grain markets are adequately supplied

In all three trade basins of West Africa, new grain harvests supply markets and help to meet the current cereal demand. Hence, the offer is considered adequate in most markets in the region. However, scarcity of certain products is observed in the markets of Mauritania and in areas affected by insecurity such as in northern

Mali, northeastern Nigeria and the C.A.R. In Mali, the level of commercial stocks at the farmers follows a seasonal decline, but overall amounts of dry cereals sold by producers during the month of September 2014 exceeded those sold during the same period in 2013.

Figure 5 : Comparison (in %) of monthly prices to the five year average (maize, millet, imported rice, local rice, sorghum)



The coarse grain prices are above their five-year averages in the areas affected by poor harvests in 2013/2014 and/or conflict, such as northern Mali, Niger, Senegal and Chad. The prices are also high in countries affected by the EVD epidemic. In key areas for agricultural production (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, southern Mali), dry cereal prices are stable or declining compared to their five-year averages.

Compared to the same period in 2013, the trend in grain prices is down in the basin center, but is stable or increasing in the western basin. Between October and November 2014, the fluctuation of monthly local cereal prices remained limited throughout the region.

In Senegal and Mauritania, local products such as millet and sorghum have seen their prices rise locally as producers and traders hold stocks in view of the expected decline in agricultural production in 2014/15.

This was reflected in the prices of imported commodities that also

increased over this period. In Mali, the monthly prices of maize and local rice are increasing in most markets, but a certain stability is observed for the price of millet, sorghum and imported rice.

In Burkina Faso, Niger and border markets in northern Nigeria, the monthly prices of all cereals remained generally stable or were declining, with some localized increases in the Sahelian zone. In Chad, there is a marked volatility of monthly prices of all cereals across the country. This heterogeneous situation encountered throughout the Sahel region can be explained in part by the appearance of new crops in some markets and partly by the decline in demand in the production areas.

Impact on food security

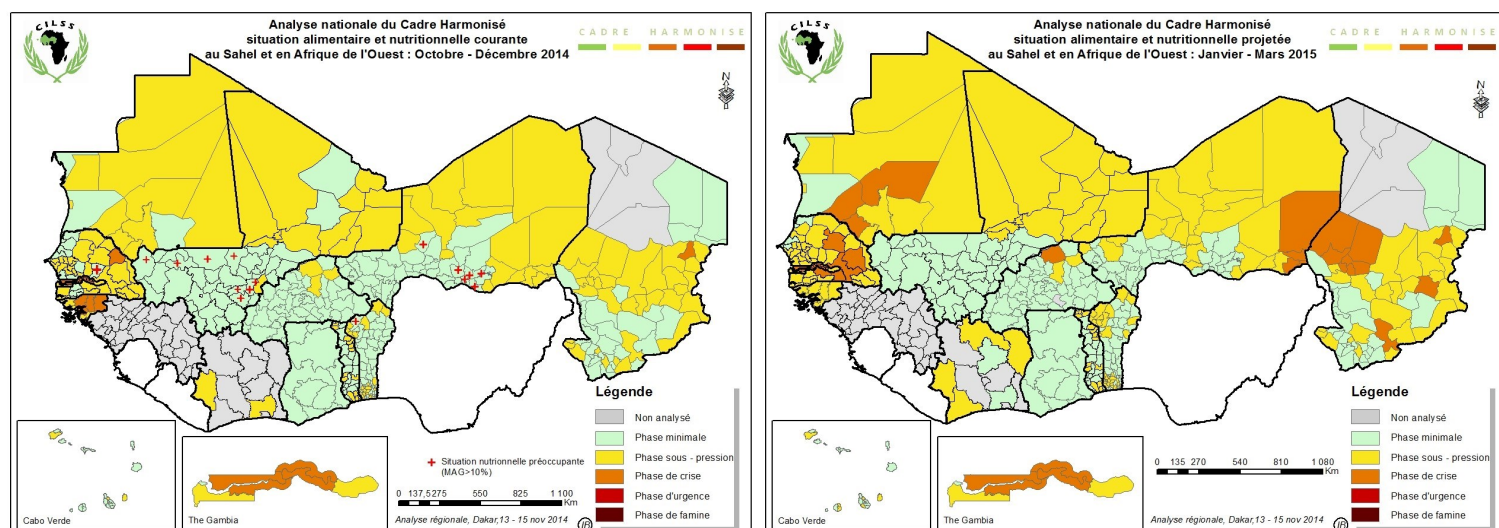
According to the Cadre Harmonisé, 14,530,000 people are food insecure (under pressure [2] and in crisis [3] phases)

In West Africa, the analysis of the food and nutrition situation according to the classification of the “Cadre Harmonisé”, was conducted between October and November 2014 in 12 countries in the region. The analysis shows that for the current situation (October – December 2014), a total of **153** zones involving **14,530,000** people are under pressure (phase 2), 10 zones are in a situation of food and nutritional crisis (phase 3) with **2,986,000** people and no zones under an emergency. However, **40,300** people are in an emergency situation in The Gambia, in Guinea Bissau, in Senegal and in Chad.

In the forecast for January to March 2015, the number of zones under pressure will increase to **172** with **15,900,000** people being concerned. A total of **27** zones will risk being in a food and nutrition crisis (phase 3), that is to say that **4,114,000** people and nearly **93,000** people could be in an emergency situation. These people are located in Burkina Faso, in The Gambia, in Mauritania, in Niger, in Senegal and in Chad.

The food insecurity that affects the poorest households is the result of the impact of climatic shocks, poor localized harvests, price volatility, malnutrition, insecurity (in Mali, Nigeria and C.A.R.), the EVD outbreak, and the cumulated effects of previous crisis.

Figure 6-7 : Food and nutrition security: current situation (October – December 2014) and projected (January – March 2015)



In Guinea Bissau, despite a good cashew nut commercialization campaign, the food situation remains difficult in all regions of the country due to current prices of staple food. Cereal production is expected to decrease with a likely deterioration of the household food security, according to the PREGEC.

In Mali, the preliminary results of the September-October 2014 national food security and nutrition assessment (ENSAN) show that 1 out of 4 households is food insecure. Compared to the results of the July August 2013 EFSA, the household food security has improved significantly - mainly in the northern areas of the country where significant and supported actions were implemented by different actors. More than one in two households are food insecure in the districts of Bandiagara Abeibara, Kolokani and Tominian. These circles are priority intervention areas.

In Mauritania, according to the “Cadre Harmonisé”, food stocks are currently low. Following the rainfall deficit, a pasture deficit and a significant drop in cereal production are expected particularly in the wilayas of Gorgol, Trarza, Tagant, Brakna, Inchiri and Adrar. This might lead to an early reliance to the market and deterioration in the household food security.

In Chad, according to preliminary results of the joint assessment of agricultural production and food and nutrition situation, food security remains satisfactory as a result of availability of food in markets and farmers stocks. However, the food security situation remains a concern in one part of the Western Sahel, particularly in Kanem and Bahr-El-Gazal, but also in the departments of Melfi (Guera), East Batha (Batha), Jourf al-Amarh (region Sila), which are structurally deficit areas. In addition, cross-border flows and livestock trade with Nigeria and the Central African Republic are disrupted because of civil conflicts in these countries. Food security for returnees from CAR also remains a concern due to their below average sources of income and food.



Impact on food security (continued)

According to the Cadre Harmonisé, 14,530,000 people are food insecure (under pressure [2] and in crisis [3] phases)

Central African Republic, Evaluation of food security in an emergency situation: Exhaustion of coping strategies

In the Central African Republic, WFP with FAO, ACTED, ACF, IEDA Relief, Triangle and ICASEES, conducted a national emergency food security assessment (EFSA) in September 2014, based on a sample of 2,166 households. The assessment finds that nearly 30 percent of surveyed households are food insecure, that is to say 1.4 million people of which more than 160,000 are in a situation of severe food insecurity. Food insecurity at the national level has not undergone substantial changes since the 2013 EFSA.

The geographical distribution of food insecurity is disparate. Mambéré Kadéï and Ouham Pende have the highest prevalence of food insecurity. These prefectures experience large movements of populations due to recurrent and recent violence. The most food insecure households are the displaced living with host families, the poor who depend on unstable and casual activities and the agricultural households with small areas.

Due to recurrent shocks and displacements, household livelihoods are completely eroded. In fact, households increasingly resort to negative coping strategies such as the sale of assets and the practice of illegal or risky activities. This undermines the long-term ability of households to access adequate food. The crisis has compromised the household purchasing power and markets are failing and barely functional to properly ensure their role in household food access. Agricultural production this year is weak. According to the crop and food security assessment mission (CFSAM) conducted in October 2014 by WFP and FAO, 2014 food production is down by 58 percent compared to the average production before the crisis, but up by 11 percent compared to 2013.

The prevention measures to control the spread of the EVD continues to affect the flow and food prices in the affected countries

As of November 26, 2014, 15,901 cases and 5,674 deaths were reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as 8 confirmed cases and 6 deaths in Mali. The transmission remains intense in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. [WHO](#)

According to the [mVAM](#) survey results conducted by WFP in October and November 2014, the start of the main harvest has little-to-no effect on household food security in high EVD-affected zones such as Forest Guinea (Guinea), Lofa County (Liberia) and Kailahun District (Sierra Leone), where people are continuing to implement severe coping strategies. The impact of the EVD outbreak on food security is less severe in the urban areas than in the rural areas. The marketing of the harvest and trends of casual labor wage rates should be monitored in the coming weeks. Anomalies in prices and/or trade flows for local commodities, especially local rice, would indicate more limited food markets over the next consumption year. Continued dysfunction in the labour market would indicate higher food security risks in the coming months, especially in areas that become subject to quarantine measures.

Recommendations for regional partners

- Advocate for timely funding of the Sahel Humanitarian Appeal for the preparation of the agricultural off-season (November 2014-April 2015).
- Monitor population displacements arriving from Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria and northern Mali.
- Strengthen the monitoring of EVD impact on food security in the concerned countries (affected and neighboring countries)



Mark your calendars !

- Preparation of the 2015 humanitarian appeals for the Sahelian countries (November 2014 – February 2015)
- Preparation and validation of the humanitarian needs overview (HNO): November –December 2014
- Elaboration and validation of the strategic response plan (SRP): December 2014 – January 2015
- Food crisis prevention network (RPCA) : 17 -18 December 2014 in Brussels



Information on food security in West Africa

www.wfp.org/food-security

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