

Multifactorial and recurrent food and nutrition crises in the Sahel and West Africa: "The Duty, Responsibility and Urgency to Act"

1. [RPCA](#) members note that food crises in the region are worsening. The number of people in need of emergency food and nutrition assistance has risen from around 11 million in 2018 to almost 28 million in 2021. About 38 million people could be affected by June-August 2022. An additional 83 million people, currently under food pressure, are at risk of falling into crisis if appropriate measures are not taken. In countries directly affected by conflict, 2.4 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition and require emergency care and treatment. Rooted in serious structural factors (climatic and environmental fragilities and uncertainties, poverty, erosion of household livelihoods, poor availability of and access to basic social services, weak social protection systems, etc.), these food crises are strongly exacerbated by security tensions and soaring food prices on international markets.

2. Other signals suggest that the food crisis is likely to continue to worsen in the coming years:

- The conflict in Ukraine is an additional risk factor and poses serious threats due to the sharp and rapid increase in the price of imported foodstuffs and agricultural inputs. Future food production is threatened, as well as access to food by the most vulnerable people;
- Agro-meteorological forecasts suggest a mixed rainy season, which, coupled with prohibitive input costs, will have a severe impact on the current cropping season.

3. Network members note that the region is facing a major stacking of crises (food and nutrition, security, health, climate, economic, price volatility, socio-political, etc.). These crises feed each other, aggravate the financial poverty of states and annihilate all progress in development. In this regard, they thank the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC/OECD), the European Union and the Global Network against Food Crisis for organising a high-level consultation on 6 April that mobilised additional financial resources and renewed political commitment on food and nutrition crises. The Network will follow up on these commitments through its political and technical leaders (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS).

4. This is why the members of the Network:

- Appeal to all stakeholders (governments, inter-governmental organisations, technical and financial partners, civil society, private sector etc.), signatories of the Charter for Food crisis Prevention and Management (PREGEC Charter), on the duty, responsibility and urgency to act in the face of the food and humanitarian drama that is looming in the months and years ahead. Collective action must go beyond the "duty to save lives at risk". It must be based on long-term political and financial commitments that address the underlying causes of the crises and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable populations and the region's agri-food systems;
- Recall that the priority is not to create new initiatives, but to support and strengthen existing institutions and mechanisms in the region; with greater alignment and co-ordination. Members call therefore for intelligent solidarity and for stakeholders to collectively examine the governance of food and nutrition security in the Sahel and West African countries, including the operationalisation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus;
- Reiterate the imperative need to respect international humanitarian rights and to facilitate the access of humanitarian organisations in order to provide the required emergency assistance to the affected people in the conflict and difficult to access areas.

5. Finally, the members alert policy makers at all levels to the exorbitant cost of inaction and the high risk to the future of millions of people if strong political and financial measures are not taken now in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.

Paris, 8 April 2022

Members of the RPCA