



PRESS RELEASE Food situation and agricultural prospects 2025-2026 in the Sahel and West Africa

Restricted Meeting of the REGIONAL FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT MECHANISM (PREGEC)

Held online from June 10 to 11, 2025, the restricted meeting of the Regional Food Crisis Prevention and Management Mechanism (PREGEC) in the Sahel, West Africa, and Cameroon assessed the food and nutrition situation at the onset of the lean season, as well as the start of the 2025-2026 agro-pastoral campaign. The meeting issued the following conclusions:

1. Market situation

At the beginning of the lean season in most Sahelian and West African countries, agricultural markets are characterized by a seasonal decrease in the availability of local cereals and an increase in overall demand from rural households. Supplies remain relatively lower in areas plagued by civil insecurity (Liptako Gourma, Lake Chad basin, etc.), and establishing secured convoys often proves indispensable.

Prices of main staple cereals continue to rise compared to the average of the last five years in most countries in the region. This increase is estimated at approximately 21% for imported rice and 42% for maize. The increases are particularly marked in Nigeria (+200%), Ghana (+100%), and Sierra Leone (+62%), as well as in areas affected by civil insecurity, where supply is more difficult, notably in the Eastern region of Burkina Faso. Persistent inflationary pressures in Ghana, Nigeria, and to a lesser extent in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Gambia, are key factors explaining these sharp price variations.

Livestock prices remain slightly higher than the average. However, the terms of trade for livestock/cereals remain unfavorable for herders due to soaring cereal prices. On international markets, food prices are slightly down due to falling global export prices for all cereals (except rice), vegetable oils, and sugar. In contrast, export prices for milk and meat are on the rise. It should be noted that the rise in rice price, one of the most imported cereals in the region, puts more pressure on the already high prices of these imported products. Furthermore, it's important to highlight that a decrease in international food prices does not necessarily lead to a drop in imported food prices in the region, mainly due to logistical factors, handling costs, and other constraints specific to regional markets.

Organized by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel with the support of its partners, the June PREGEC meeting launched the 2025-2026 agro-pastoral campaign. It also examined the forecasts of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the rainy season and prepared the follow-up of its progress »

2. Food and nutrition situation: Cadre Harmonisé (CH) outcomes and mitigation measures

Persistent civil insecurity in Sudan, the Lake Chad basin, Liptako-Gourma, northwestern Nigeria, and the Anglophone regions of Cameroon continues to exacerbate the food and nutrition crisis.

Furthermore, according to the latest IPC analyses, the nutrition situation remains particularly worrying in the Sahel, notably in Chad, northern Nigeria, and Mali, where acute malnutrition has reached critical levels (IPC AMN Phase 4) in several areas. The food and nutrition situation remains concerning at the beginning of this lean season (June-August). According to the latest Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analyses, approximately 49.4 million people are in a food crisis or worse (Phase 3 or more) in 15 countries across the Sahel, West Africa, and Cameroon.

The situation of displaced persons also remains alarming, particularly in Chad, Nigeria, and Mauritania, where nearly 651,000 people face severe food insecurity (Phase 3 or more). Persistent civil insecurity in Sudan, the Lake Chad basin, Liptako-Gourma, northwestern Nigeria, and the Anglophone regions of Cameroon continues to exacerbate the food and nutrition crisis.

Moreover, according to the latest IPC analyses, the nutrition situation remains particularly worrying in the Sahel, notably in Chad, northern Nigeria, and Mali, where acute malnutrition has reached critical levels (IPC AMN Phase 4) in several areas. Regarding mitigation measures for food and nutrition crises, most countries have not yet presented budgeted national response plans. By the end of May, only two countries had announced their plans: Mali, with 134 billion FCFA planned and 1.6 billion already mobilized and executed, and Benin, with 213 million realized.

3. Start of the 2025/2026 agroforestry season

The 2025-2026 agro-sylvo-pastoral campaign is generally expected to be favorable. Seasonal forecasts indicate average to above-average rainfall from May to August in the Sahelian belt and the Liberian coast, while deficits are expected in Cabo Verde, southern Senegal, and along the Gulf of Guinea coasts. A wet season is forecast from July to September across most of the Sahelian agricultural and pastoral areas, extending into the northern parts of the Gulf of Guinea countries.

Season starts are expected to be early to normal in most areas of the Sahelian belt, but normal to late in certain areas such as southwestern Niger, Burkina Faso, and southern Mali and Guinea. Season

ends would generally be late to average. Short to medium dry spells are expected at the beginning of the season, except in Niger, the „three borders“ area, and the central-northern Gulf of Guinea countries where they would be long. At the end of the season, average to long dry sequences are probable, except on the Atlantic facade.

4. Phytosanitary Situation

From a phytosanitary perspective, the resurgence of the Desert Locust reported in late 2024 in the Western Region persists, with an increase in larval populations and the appearance of immature winged groups and some small swarms in Northwest Africa. By the end of May, groups of winged locusts were also noted in some front-line Sahelian countries (Mauritania, Niger, Chad).

Control efforts, which are continuing in the Maghreb, covered nearly 82,000 hectares by the end of April 2025. With the deterioration of ecological conditions in the Maghreb and the onset of the monsoon in the Sahel, immature winged locusts present in the central Sahara could gradually move southwest in search of favorable habitats to reproduce in the southern Sahara and northern Sahel.

Consequently, strengthening Sahelian surveillance requires mobilizing prospecting teams and reinforcing the operational capacities of National Anti-Locust Units (UNLAs) across the affected countries.

5. Pastoral situation

The availability of forage and watering points for livestock remains generally satisfactory, fostering relatively stable feeding conditions. However, despite protection measures implemented by states, bushfires remain a concern, with over 25 million hectares burned.

Furthermore, access to water is becoming increasingly limited in some highly concentrated areas, thus causing increased tensions among users. Conflicts and livestock theft persist and worsen insecurity for rural communities. It should be noted that, in light of optimistic seasonal forecasts, the prospects for fodder biomass production remain promising. However, these prospects remain highly dependent on the temporal distribution of rainfall and resource management practices.

6. Recommendations

To the States :

- Urgently allocate necessary resources for the implementation of national response plans.
- Strengthen the operational capacities of National Anti-Locust Units (UNLAs) and maintain heightened vigilance against the locust threat.
- Ease restrictions on the export of agricultural products and livestock.

To CILSS, ECOWAS, and UEMOA:

- Engage in high-level advocacy with states aimed at sustainable financing of the response.
- Conduct advocacy for funding the action plan established for the anticipatory management of the resurgence to prevent a locust invasion.

- Continue advocacy to ensure the free movement of people and agro-pastoral products in the Sahel and West African region.
- Establish an effective strategy against livestock theft by equipping each country with a monitoring and identification system.
- Increase inter-community and cross-border dialogue by organizing regional dialogues bringing together actors from different communities to mitigate conflicts related to access to natural resources.

To the Partners:

- Urgently support national response plans by strengthening food and humanitarian aid programs to meet the immediate needs of food-insecure populations.
- Support member states and regional IGUs in strengthening national surveillance and anti-locust control mechanisms.

PARTENAIRES TECHNIQUES



PARTENAIRES FINANCIERS

