



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

**Strengthening the Climate–Ecosystem
Nexus for Food Sovereignty and
Sustainable Resilience in West Africa
and the Sahel**

June 16–18, 2026, in Niamey, Republic of Niger

CALL FOR PAPERS



World Food
Programme



1. BACKGROUND RECALL

In West Africa and the Sahel, different types of ecosystems (from the humid forests of the Gulf of Guinea to the Saharan areas) provide essential ecosystem goods and services such as water, food, grazing land and biodiversity. However, these resources are seriously threatened by pressure from human activities, the adverse effects of climate change and civil insecurity. This results in land and soil degradation, declining biodiversity, low agricultural productivity and growing food and nutritional insecurity, thereby compromising the protection and conservation of protected areas.

Faced with these challenges, various regional and international initiatives such as AFR100, the Great Green Wall, and the Climate Strategy of the Economic Community of West African States aim to restore land, protect biodiversity, and strengthen the resilience of food systems. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to implement structural transformation that integrates ecological land restoration (agroecology), sustainable food systems, better governance of innovative multisectoral agricultural policies for the rehabilitation of protected areas, agro-hydro-climatic forecasting, quality agricultural inputs and the strengthening of early warning systems such as the Harmonised Framework (CH). The increasing use of technology and digital tools is also crucial to building resilience.

In this context, the Climate–Ecosystems Nexus for Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Resilience in West Africa and the Sahel (N-CESAR) approach appears to be an essential lever to articulate climate, ecosystems, and food sovereignty while strengthening the region's contribution to international frameworks and conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), etc.

The Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), in partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) regional office for West Africa and the Sahel, the Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall (PAGGW), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Action Against Hunger (ACF), the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA), and the Billital Maroobé Network (RBM), is organizing an International Colloquium to bring together researchers, decision-makers, practitioners, and financial partners to demonstrate the importance of the Climate–Ecosystems Nexus in the quest for Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Resilience in West Africa and the Sahel.

2. OBJECTIVES

The colloquium aims to provide a scientific, technical, and political exchange framework around the Climate–Ecosystems Nexus concept, to identify innovative and integrated solutions that can strengthen food sovereignty and the sustainable resilience of populations in West Africa and the Sahel face to climate change challenges and natural resources degradation.

More specifically, it will involve:

1. Analyzing the impacts of climate change and ecosystem degradation on food security and sovereignty in the region;
2. Sharing experiences, innovations, and best practices in climate adaptation, sustainable management of natural resources, and ecosystem valorization;
3. Exploring integrated approaches of the climate–ecosystems nexus to guide public policies and regional strategies;
4. Strengthening synergies between actors (researchers, decision-makers, producers, technical and financial partners) for inclusive and effective governance;
5. Formulating recommendations and roadmaps to promote resilient, sustainable food systems adapted to the local realities of West Africa and the Sahel.

3. APPROACH

The Colloquium provides an opportunity for the partners involved, such as CILSS, UNCCD, CORAF, CEN-SAD, WFP, APGMV, IUCN, etc., each of which plays a key role in environmental monitoring and food security, agricultural innovation, economic integration, humanitarian assistance and resilience, to share their experiences. Its ambition is to achieve concrete commitments on ecosystem restoration and sustainable food sovereignty in the region. The approach is built around plenary sessions, panels, parallel workshops, exhibitions and poster sessions. The symposium will promote inclusive and interdisciplinary dialogue, but also involve policy makers. Participants will have the opportunity to co-develop recommendations and a regional roadmap to support policies and initiatives for food sovereignty and sustainable resilience in West Africa and the Sahel.

4. Thematic axes for the Call for Papers

Contributions should focus on Climate, Ecosystems, biodiversity, resilience, public policies for the governance of Food Systems, and innovations. The main topics to be addressed are structured around the following themes:

4.1. Axis 1: Climate and Food Security

- Impacts of climate variability and meteorological extremes on agricultural, pastoral, and fisheries production;
- Adaptation strategies and agroecological innovations face to climate change;

4.2. Axis 2: Ecosystems, Biodiversity, and Resilience

- Sustainable management of land, forests, water, and pastures;
- Role of ecosystems in climate regulation and food security;
- Biodiversity and sustainable food systems;
- Technological, agroecological, and digital innovations for resilience.

4.3. Axis 3: Public Policies and Regional Governance

- Integration of the Climate–Ecosystems Nexus into national and regional strategies;
- Role of institutions, local authorities, and community organizations;
- Climate fund and responsible investments in agriculture and resilience.

4.4. Axis 4: Valorization of Knowledge and Partnerships

- Valorization of local and indigenous knowledge;
- Scientific partnerships, South–South cooperation, and mobilization of youth and women.

4.5. Axis 5: Perspectives and Regional Roadmap

- Identification of strategic priorities for the Sahel and West Africa;
- Development of recommendations and monitoring mechanisms;
- Advocacy for collective and sustainable engagement.

Each thematic axis will be introduced by a preliminary presentation from a specialist in the field.

5. Expected Tangible Outcomes

- Mapping and updating of achievements, challenges, and major threats to land, ecosystems, and food systems in West Africa and the Sahel, particularly those related to deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, and biodiversity loss;
- Publication of the colloquium proceedings (conclusions and recommendations), a scientific synthesis, and a Policy Brief to guide decision-making (at the regional and national level);
- Development of training modules on the Climate–Ecosystems–Food Nexus;
- Strengthening of institutional and financial partnerships: mutual commitments between scientific actors, political decision-makers, and donors, and a common roadmap for the implementation of identified solutions;
- Creation of a network of champions (institutional, financial, community); Financial commitments explored for a regional multisectoral program;
- Validation of a concept note for the N-CESAR regional program.

6. Submission Procedures

Scientists, Practitioners, Development Actors, Financiers, Civil Society Actors, NGO Representatives, and Private Sector Actors are invited to submit a communication proposal (450-word abstract) including the following elements: Title of the Communication; Name(s) and Affiliation(s) of the Author or Authors; Abstract specifying the objective, methodology, and results; Format: Times New Roman, Size 12, single spacing. Proposals in the form of scientific posters are also accepted.

7. Key Deadlines

The main deadlines to remember are as follows:

- Launch of abstract submission: **January 20, 2026**
- Closing of abstract submission: **March 06, 2026**
- Notification of abstract acceptance: **March 20, 2026**
- Deadline for full paper submission: **April 22, 2026**
- Notification of paper acceptance: **May 06, 2026**
- Deadline for submission of corrected papers: **May 15, 2026**
- Start of the International Colloquium: **June 16, 2026**

Selected Communications will be presented (in French or English) in plenary, either in person or online at the Colloquium, and will be subject to a scientific publication.

8. Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee is composed of representatives from CILSS, the Public Universities of Niger (UPN), CORAF, WFP, CEN-SAD, PAGGW, IUCN, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Ministry of Environment, Hydraulics and Sanitation of Niger, and other partners.

9. Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee comprises renowned scientific personalities chosen for their expertise in the fields of Ecosystems, Climate, and Food Security. It is responsible for the quality assurance of scientific communications and the validation of the Colloquium's panel themes.

10. Contact

Proposals for papers should be sent to the following address: colloque.cesar@cilss.int with a copy to administration.agrhymet@cilss.int.