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PRESS RELEASE

Regional Consultation of the
FOOD CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT MECHANISM IN THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA (PREGEC)

Meeting online from September 14 to 16, 2026, participants in the PREGEC regional consultation on the Prevention and Management of Food Crises in the Sahel, West Africa and Cameroon carried out a mid-term assessment of the 2026–2027 agropastoral season and reached the following conclusions:

Organized by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel with the support of its partners, the PREGEC meeting in September carried out a mid-term evaluation of the agricultural campaign and the agricultural and food perspectives.

1. Progress of the Agricultural Season

As part of preparations for the 2026–2027 agropastoral season, various Governments provided substantial support (input subsidies, mechanisation, development of lowland areas, etc.) to the rural sector to sustain agricultural and pastoral activities.

In terms of rainfall, the 2026–2027 agropastoral season was influenced by El Niño and by strong spatial and temporal variability in precipitation. In several countries across West Africa, the Sahel, and Cameroon, cumulative rainfall was generally close to normal to below normal. In places, this season was punctuated by relatively long dry spells. In Gulf of Guinea countries, the end of the main rainy season was normal to early, while the onset of the short rainy season remained sluggish as of August 31. Looking ahead, current weather conditions are favourable for continued rainfall through October in Sahelian and Sahelo-Sudanian zones, while coastal areas of Gulf of Guinea countries will continue to receive rainfall through November.

The hydrological situation in West Africa and the Sahel is characterised by flows that are generally average to slightly above the 1991–2020 hydrological normal. In several major basins, notably the Niger, Senegal, and Lake Chad basins, water levels remain lower than those observed in 2025, a year of surplus relative to the norm. Furthermore, the fill rates of monitored dams have improved but generally remain lower than those recorded in 2025 at the same period.

On the agricultural front, the season started generally normal to late, followed by long dry spells in several localities across the region. The 2026 agricultural campaign shows a mixed picture across West Africa and the Sahel, with particularly marked risks of yield shortfalls in the Sahelian belt, especially in Cabo Verde, Niger and Chad. However, continued favourable rains in September–October could improve production prospects in several areas. In addition, flooding, insecurity, pest attacks and post-harvest losses are major factors that could worsen the projected shortfall.

The rapid implementation of anticipatory measures is therefore necessary to prevent production deficits from leading to food crises.

The phytosanitary situation during the 2026 agricultural season was marked by relative calm, with nonetheless contained infestations in certain countries: attacks of fall armyworm (Spodoptera frugiperda) and other defoliating caterpillars in most countries; grasshoppers in Sahelian countries (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Chad) and in Benin; grain-eating birds (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal); cereal flower insects in Mali, Niger and Chad; fruit flies (Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal and Togo); and leafhoppers (Amrasca biguttula) on cotton and other horticultural crops (Benin, Mali and Togo). The spread of the Ugandan variant of East African Cassava Mosaic Virus (EACMV-Ug) was confirmed in Côte d'Ivoire following an epidemiological survey, after this highly aggressive strain had previously been reported in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Ginger rust was also reported in Togo this year. Regarding the Desert Locust, the situation is calm following the decline of the resurgence in Northwest Africa and the presence of low populations in the Sahelian frontline countries.

2. Production Outlook

Production assumptions for the 2026–2027 campaign point to generally favourable prospects, particularly for roots and tubers and for cereal production in coastal countries. Cereal production forecasts for the 2026–2027 agricultural season are estimated at between 62.8 (low scenario) and 71.1 million (high scenario) tonnes. These figures do not include production assumptions for Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger and Liberia. The low-end scenario indicates a decrease of about 3% compared to last year and an increase of 11% compared to the five-year average. Under a favourable end to the season (high-end scenario), production could increase by 2% compared to last year and by 31% compared to the five-year average. However, significant production declines are expected in Cabo Verde and Chad. Total root and tuber production is estimated at between 258 (low scenario) and 272 (high scenario) million tonnes, representing a 4% increase compared to the previous season under the low-end scenario and 11% under the high-end scenario. The other crops (groundnut, cowpea, sesame, cocoa, cotton) would overall register a 3% decrease compared to 2025 under the low-end scenario and a 5% increase under the high-end scenario.

3. Pastoral Situation

The pastoral situation in the Sahel and West Africa remains a concern in September 2026, because of the combined effects of insecurity and delayed vegetation development linked to irregular rainfall in several Sahelian and Saharan zones. More than 60% of the Sahelian zone shows forage availability below the critical threshold of 100 kg of dry matter per hectare, resulting in heavy reliance on biomass residues and increased herd vulnerability. In contrast, Sudanian and Guinean zones still have abundant forage biomass, making them strategic reserves for livestock feeding and a draw for regional transhumance movements. However, declining water levels are already being observed at nearly 80% of Sahelian water points, with particularly worrying situations in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. Against this backdrop, the main risks concern the early depletion of pastoral resources, anticipated or unusual herd movements, and heightened agro-pastoral conflicts. Livestock health status remains generally stable. However, a few sporadic outbreaks of pasteurellosis, foot-and-mouth disease, lumpy skin disease, and peste des petits ruminants (PPR) have been observed. Although limited, these cases underline the need for heightened vigilance in areas of high pastoral density and along transhumance corridors.

4. Market Situation

Market supply remains generally satisfactory, supported by good production from the previous season, carryover stocks, and the arrival of the first 2026/2027 harvests. However, security constraints are disrupting market functioning and access, particularly in the Liptako-Gourma area, the Lake Chad basin, and parts of Nigeria and Cameroon. Rising fuel prices, along with continued trade and border restrictions, also continue to hinder cross-border flows and increase transaction costs. Local cereal prices remain generally favorable in most markets compared to the five-year average (around -10 to -30%). Nevertheless, imported rice prices remain high in several markets due to elevated transport and logistics costs (up to 25%, even more). Except in areas affected by insecurity and livestock theft, livestock prices have continued to rise amid sustained demand and high transaction costs. Looking ahead, local commodity prices are expected to fall seasonally from September/October onward with the arrival of harvests. This decline could, however, be less pronounced in Sahelian zones where prospects are less promising. Insecurity, the impacts of El Niño, and geopolitical tensions around the Black Sea and the Middle East remain persistent risks affecting regional markets and prices.

In August 2026, the FAO Food Price Index stood at 133.3 points, up 1.9% from July 2026 and 2.5% year-over-year. In particular, the Cereal Price Index rose by 2.2%, reaching its highest level since May 2024, driven mainly by increases in sorghum, wheat, barley, and corn. International rice prices also rose, albeit more moderately, with a 0.5% increase in August 2026. Overall, the rise in international price indices, particularly the cereal price index, warrants close monitoring given its potential impact on regional markets in West Africa and the Sahel.

5. Recommendations

To States

- Strengthen the monitoring system for basic food commodity prices to anticipate potential impacts on food security.
- Strengthen the operational capacities of national plant protection services for phytosanitary surveillance and control.
- Anticipate and strengthen prevention efforts in at-risk areas by ensuring timely stockpiling of food and feed and by strengthening social safety nets for vulnerable households.

To Intergovernmental Organisations (ECOWAS, CILSS, UEMOA, AES/ALG)

- Strengthen coordination and support for regional plant health monitoring and early warning systems to anticipate emerging plant health risks, particularly viral diseases of cassava;
- Strengthen regional coordination and the mobilisation of preparedness and response mechanisms to prevent food, pastoral, and plant health risks in vulnerable areas;
- Strengthen coordination between the Regional Climate Centre and the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to monitor El Niño's influence on weather conditions and its potential impacts on food security;
- Strengthen cross-border dialogue and mechanisms to facilitate mobility, and continue dialogue with countries imposing restrictions

To Technical and Financial Partners

- Strengthen technical and financial support for anticipatory actions targeting areas at food, pastoral and phytosanitary risk, prioritising the prepositioning of stocks and inputs as well as the protection of livelihoods.

Done online, September 16, 2026

PARTENAIRES TECHNIQUES

PARTENAIRES FINANCIERS