Food Security and Humanitarian Implications in West Africa and the Sahel

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KEY POINTS

- Alarming food situation among IDPs in Maiduguri in Borno State - Nigeria.
- Progressive and near-final installation of the 2016-2017 crop year.
- The FAO food price index continues to rise since five months.

Sections

Agriculture

Displacements

International Markets

West Africa Markets

Food Security

To go to

The 2016 crop year had a relatively early start, especially in the Sudano-Sahelian zone though with pockets of deficit in west-central Senegal, the coast of Liberia, the center of Ghana, southern Togo and south western Nigeria.

The updated seasonal forecast in July indicates that the probability of having higher than average rainfall over most of central and eastern Sahel and below average on the extreme western regions remains high.

The general average breeding conditions is beginning to improve with pasture regeneration following favorable rains.

The food and nutrition situation in the Lake Chad Basin continues to be precarious, especially among internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Maiduguri, in Borno State - Nigeria, 67.5 percent of IDPs are food insecure and 32 percent use emergency coping strategies (begging).

In early June 2016, a number of attacks were perpetrated by Boko Haram in the Bosso department in Diffa (Niger), triggering population movements. Faced with this crisis, 59 percent of households reported that they faced food shortages in the past seven days *(mVAM Bulletin / Niger - June 2016)*.

Recommendations for regional partners

→ Monitor the 2016-2017 agricultural campaign preparation;

→ Continue to monitor the food and nutritional security situation in the Lake Chad basin;

→ Continue to monitor the food and nutritional security situation in the countries with a substantial food deficit during the 2015-2016 crop year, including Chad;

→ Monitor the situation throughout Northern Nigeria (rising prices);

→ Raise awareness among partners to participate in the *Cadre Harmonisé* workshops in Northeast Nigeria (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States);

→ Advocate for funding for the food and nutrition security projects included in the 2016 HRP.

Objective: *Within the framework of the monthly meetings of the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group for West Africa, it has been agreed that, in a humanitarian perspective, FAO and WFP provide the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month.*

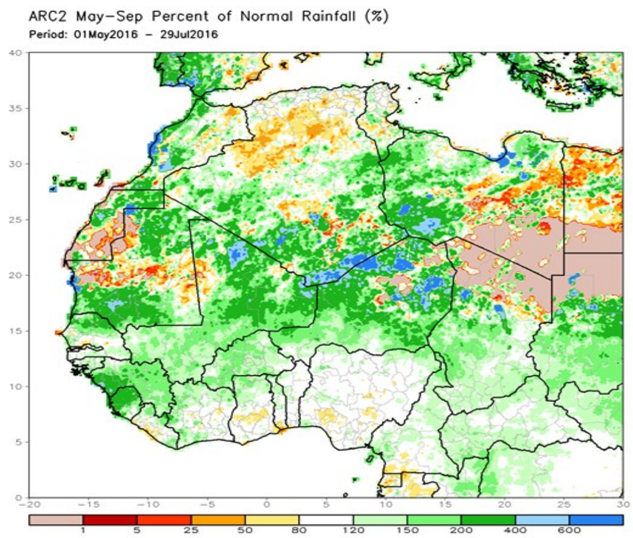
2016-2017 Agropastoral Campaign

Seasonal rainfall above the average over most of the region

The 2016 agropastoral campaign had a relatively early start, especially in the Sudano-Sahelian area (southern Chad, northern Guinea, northern Nigeria, northern Benin, southern Togo, southern Mali, southern Burkina Faso, south western Niger). Agricultural activities in June/July were mainly characterized by the progressive and near-final installation of the rainy season campaign. Agricultural activities preparation has been completed in most of the region.

The rainfall percentage analysis since the beginning of the rainy season, when compared to normal trends, shows several deficit areas in western-central Senegal, the coast of Liberia, the center of Ghana, southern Togo and in south-western Nigeria (Figure 1). The onset of rains in the agricultural areas of southern Senegal was characterized by delays from one to two weeks. The agricultural campaign benefited this year from substantial support from the government in agricultural inputs and equipment.

Figure 1: Percentage of rainfall compared to the average between May 1 and July 29, 2016

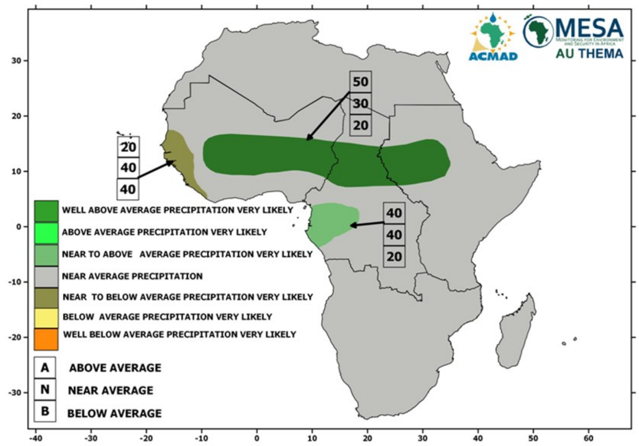


Source: NOAA

Updated seasonal climate forecasts for Sahel countries and West Africa (ACMAD, July 2016);

- The probability of higher than average rainfall over most of central and eastern Sahel, and below average on the extreme western regions, remains high. The onset dates of the 2016 rainy season, with some exceptions, are in line with seasonal forecasts presented during the forum held in May 2016;
- The forecasted dry spell durations after the onset of the season (crop growing phase) were also confirmed;
- Normal to longer than average dry spells are expected after the crops flowering on the extreme western part of the Sahel. They should range from shorter to normal on almost all parts of central and eastern Sahel;
- Late to normal end dates for the rainy season are expected over most of the Sahel and the north of the Gulf of Guinea countries, with the exception of the western regions of the Sahel. (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Seasonal precipitation forecast for July-August-September 2016 issued on June 2016

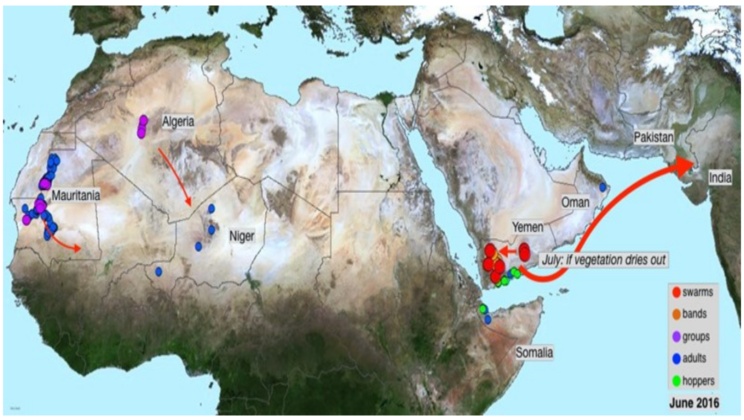


Source: Agrhymet

The pastoral situation: Livestock breeding conditions are beginning to improve following the regeneration of pastures and the refill of water points. However, the physical conditions of herds remains average.

The desert locust situation (05 July 2016): In June, locust infestation declined in the southern part of the Western Sahara, in Morocco and in northern Mauritania due to drying conditions and control operations. Adults and a few small groups that escaped detection or control moved towards the summer breeding areas of southern and south-eastern Mauritania (Figure 3). Isolated adults were present in northern and western Niger. As seasonal rains started in the northern Sahel of West Africa in mid-June, small-scale breeding is expected to occur during the forecast period, causing locust numbers to increase primarily in Mauritania and, to a lesser extent in Mali, Niger and Chad.

Figure 3: Locust occurrence map



Source: FAO

2016-2017 Agropastoral Campaign (continued)

Seasonal rainfall above the average over most of the region

H5N1 avian influenza outbreak situation: For the first time since 2006, the H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza has been detected in Central Africa. The latest H5N1 outbreaks were recently confirmed on chicken farms in Cameroon, putting the poultry production in the country and its neighbours at high risk. This brings the total number of countries that have battled bird flu in West and Central Africa to six, including Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. Nigeria continues to be the most affected with the total number of outbreaks exceeding 750 with nearly 3.5 million birds dead or culled. To date, no cases of human contamination has been identified. FAO

Population movement's situation in the region

Food and nutrition insecurity situation are alarming in the newly accessible areas in Borno State

Nigerian crisis: The number of internally displaced people in the recently accessible areas remains unknown and requires a quick assess and registration. In July, the number of displaced people was equal to 2 066 783 persons (excluding newly liberated areas). 186 488 Nigerian refugees were recorded in the three neighboring countries of the Lake Chad basin (Niger, Chad and Cameroon) and Nigerian returnees were estimated at 67 666. The total number of IDPs in the three neighbouring countries of Nigeria is estimated at 392 600. UNHCR

Malian crisis: Despite some incidents between the factions in Mali, the overall observed trend is a gradual return of refugees in the last few months. The process was facilitated by the signature by all parties of the peace agreement in Alger, combined with the signature of the tripartite agreements (Mali-Niger-UNHCR, UNHCR-Burkina-Mali and Mali-Mauritania-UNHCR) for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. As of July 14, there were 37 801 internally displaced people (7 176 households); 468 467 returnees registered by the Direction Nationale du Développement Social (DNDS) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM); and 134 058 Malian refugees were identified by the UNHCR in neighbouring countries. Commission Mouvement de Populations (CMP)

Trends on international markets

The FAO food price index continues to rise since five months

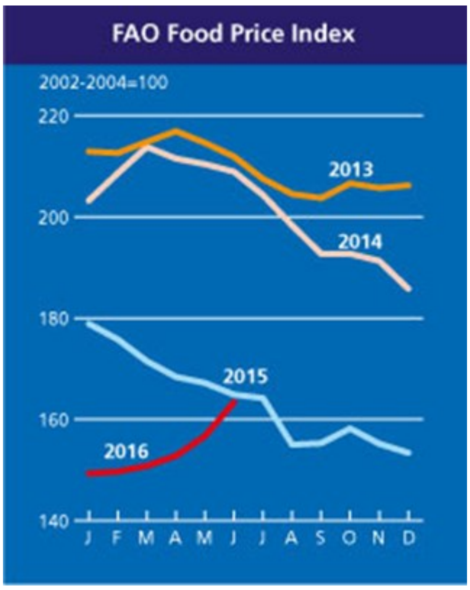
Food consumption in the majority of countries in West Africa and the Sahel depends in part on imports of commodities (especially rice and wheat) whose prices are traded on international markets.

The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) averaged 163.4 points in June 2016, 6.6 points (4.2 percent) higher than in May and one percent below the June 2015 level. Not only did the June increase mark the fifth consecutive monthly rise in the value of the FFPI, but it also represented the largest monthly increase witnessed over the past four years. Except for vegetable oils, the values of all the commodity sub-indices moved up in June, led by a surge in the price of sugar and more moderate increases for cereals, dairy and meat.

The FAO Cereal Price Index averaged 156.9 points in June, up 4.4 points (2.9 percent) from May, but still 3.9 percent below the June 2015 level. Nearly all of last month's increase was caused by a strengthening of maize prices; primarily because of tightening spot export supplies in Brazil. Wheat values rose during the first half of the month, before reversing course subsequently on reports of record yields in the United States and better than expected harvests in the Black Sea region. International rice prices varied little from May levels, as upward pressure exerted by generally tight export availabilities was countered. (Figure 4)

In June, world prices remained firm but they tend to stabilize after the sharp increases observed in the past three months. By the end of June, even the Asian prices marked a slight contraction due to the supply of significant quantities of Thai rice destined to the foreign market.

Figure 4: FAO Food Price Index



Source: FAO

Trends on international markets (continued)

The FAO food price index continues to rise since five months

However, export prices should remain firm because of a likely increase of import demand in Southeast Asia during the second half of the year. For its turn, export supply could decline due to the contraction of Indian and Vietnamese production. Mercosur production also fell in 2016 and it is estimated that supplies will be lessened at the end of the year. The world production increase will not be enough to meet the total needs, which will exceed production for the third consecutive year. Therefore, it will be again necessary to use the world's stocks to cover for global consumption. [InterRice]

Market trends in West Africa

Installation of the lean season in the region

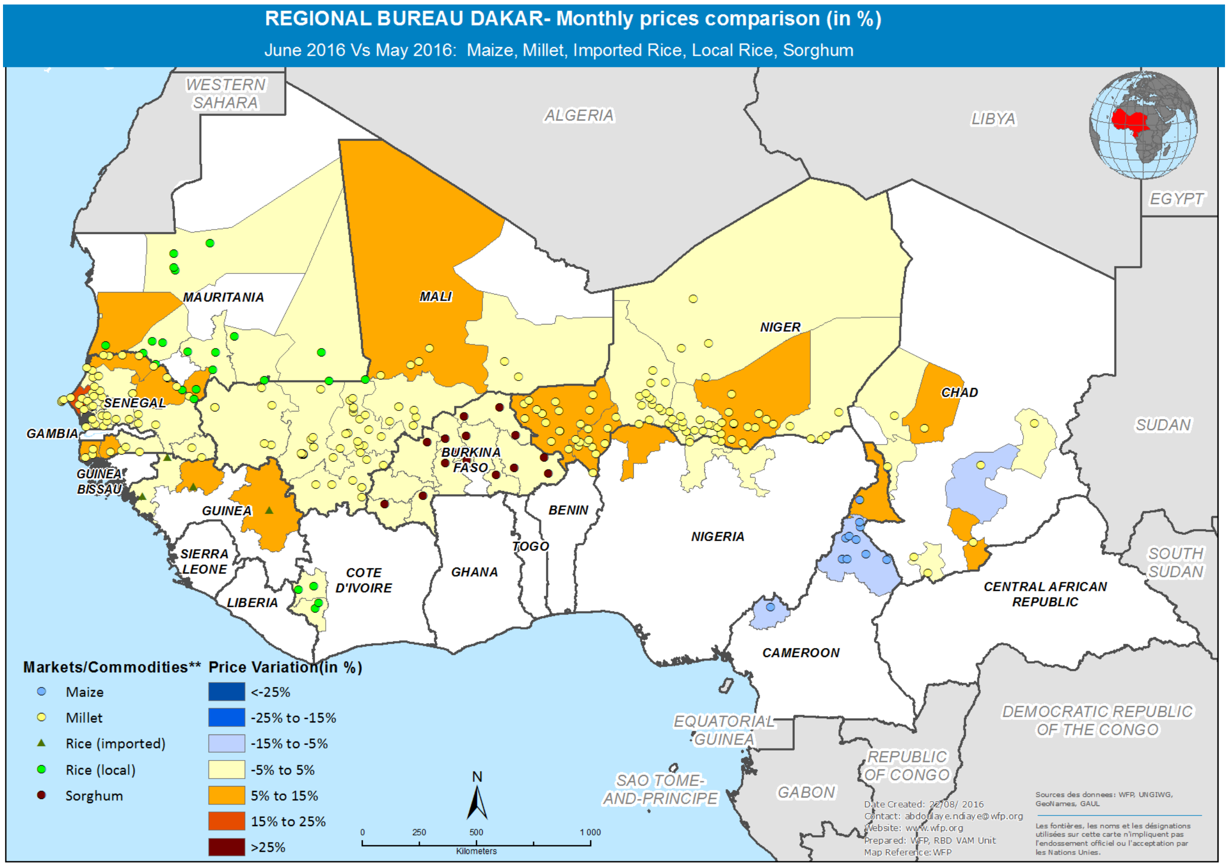
In Nigeria, the price developments continue to be alarming. In May 2016, inflation reached a rate of 15.6 percent, the highest rate in the last six years. In Kano market for example, in the northern part of the country, millet prices increased by around 80 percent, compared to the prices recorded in 2015 (FAO). The increase of food prices is going to aggravate the food security situation of the country (e.g. reducing household food access), in particular during the next lean period and in the northeast, where conflict continues to negatively impact agro-pastoral and commercial activities and causing massive populations displacement.

In the rest of the region, with the installation of the lean season, the price of local cereals, such as millet, sorghum and corn, which are the main staples in the region, has globally increased in June. This is the result of a normal seasonal increase. The supply of the market with basic food remained average in the region, mainly due to the increased sales by farmers and traders with the installation of the new season and the normal cross-border exchanges. (FEWS NET)

In the Sahelian zone, the prices of coarse grain recorded seasonal increases in June in most of the markets of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali, after several months of relative stability. The general trend of the price evolution of cereals is on the rise, especially in markets of capital cities. (Figure 5)

Similarly, in Chad, the prices of millet and sorghum increased in most markets in May. Despite the recent increases, the prices of coarse grains remained generally lower than their levels registered in the same period of the previous year.

Figure 5: Comparison (in %) of grain prices from June 2016 compared to May 2016 - Maize, Millet, Rice Imported, Local Rice and Sorghum



Source: WFP

Market trends in West Africa (continued)

Installation of the lean season in the region

In Senegal, according to the Commission of food security (CSA), the market activities have declined. This situation is attributable to low cereal availability. The price pressure was more accentuated in the markets neighbouring regions with The Gambia as a result of the closure of the borders, which lasted approximately three months. In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, commercial activities started again with markets sufficiently supplied with food. (FEWS NET)

However, in coastal countries, such as Togo and Benin, food prices are significantly higher in relation to prices registered in the same period last year in most of the markets. This is after a consecutive increase in the past months.

Impact on Food Security

Alarming food situation among IDPs in Maiduguri in Borno State - Nigeria

Civil insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin continues to negatively impact the food and nutrition situation of the population. **In Nigeria,** specifically in Maiduguri in Borno State, WFP, FEWS NET and NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency) carried out a food and nutrition security assessment. A total of 809 households with 373 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 436 host populations were covered by this assessment.

According to the results of this assessment:

- IDPs are the most affected by food and nutrition insecurity, 67.5 percent of IDPs are food insecure compared to 40.8 percent of host populations. Severe food insecurity was 6.2 percent and 4.8 percent respectively among IDPs and host populations.
- The prevalence of severe hunger index (during the last 30 days, the household spent at least 10 days without any food consumption) is 4.6 percent among IDPs and 1.8 percent among host populations. 32 percent of IDP households use emergency coping strategies (begging).
- The global acute malnutrition rate measured by MUAC is 8.3 percent (9.5 percent for IDPs and 7.5 percent for the host population). While this rate is below the alert threshold (10 percent), the percentage of children affected by severe acute malnutrition (high risk of mortality) is above the 2 percent emergency threshold for IDPs as well as host populations, which indicates the need for immediate access to therapeutic treatment and prevention (WFP, June 2016).

In early June 2016, the security situation has noticeably deteriorated in **Diffa (Niger),** especially in the Bosso department, as a result of Boko Haram attacks, causing population displacement. In the face of this new crisis, WFP has continued to use its mobile phone survey (mVAM) to better understand the food security situation of households.

The results of this assessment, conducted among 382 households in the municipalities of Bosso, Chétimari, Nguigmi, Gueskerou, Toumour, Kabaléwa and Diffa, show that 44 percent of households have a poor food consumption score and 82 percent have a low dietary diversity (for households having consumed at most 4 food groups during the past seven days). Overall, 59 percent of households have reported that they faced food shortages in the past seven days (WFP Niger, Diffa mVAM - June 2016).

In Ghana, WFP and the government carried out a food security and market assessment in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Volta regions. A total of 6 118 households and 526 traders were surveyed between February and March 2016. Assessment results indicate that 15.6 percent of households are food insecure, including 0.6 percent who are severely food insecure. The most affected regions are: Upper East (20.3 percent), Upper West (18.3 percent) and Brong Ahafo (15.5 percent).

The functioning of markets is characterized by volatile prices of some basic foodstuffs, such as maize, local rice and cassava. In Tamale, the price of maize, rice and cassava is higher (increases of 33.9 percent, 56.9 percent and 205.8 percent respectively) in May compared to the five-year average (WFP Ghana, EFSA - June 2016).

Calendars !

→ Training of trainers for the *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) and revision of CH tools in Cotonou (Benin), from 28 July to 02 August 2016;

→ Emergency food and nutrition assessment in the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states of Nigeria, from 5 to 12 August 2016;

→ Country training (Nigeria) on CH analysis tools, from 8 to 13 August 2016;

→ Analysis workshop on the CH in the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states of Nigeria, from 15 to 19 August 2016.

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