

COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

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COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO

Département Agriculture, Environnement et Ressources en Eau

Emergency Meeting of Experts and the Specialized Technical Ministerial Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources of ECOWAS on the Review and adoption of the operating procedures and operationalization of the 'ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve' and on 'Food and Nutritional Crisis in the Sahel and West Africa'.

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), 6 June 2018

Final Communiqué

1. At the invitation of the ECOWAS Commission, the meeting of the Specialised Technical Ministerial Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources of ECOWAS was held on 6 June 2018 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso under the chairmanship of the Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Togo.
2. The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Agriculture, or their mandated representatives, of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo.
3. The objective of the meeting was to consider the report of the experts of the Specialised Technical Ministerial Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources (STMC-AEWR) of ECOWAS on procedures for operating and operationalizing the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR), and to propose emergency measures to respond to food and nutritional crises in the Sahel and West Africa.
4. The opening ceremony was marked by successive interventions by the Minister of Agriculture and Water Supply of Burkina Faso, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources of the ECOWAS Commission, and finally the Minister for Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries of the Togolese Republic who opened the meeting.
5. At the end of the opening ceremony, the Specialized Technical Ministerial Committee considered the report presented by the experts. This report revolves around five points: (i) the status of implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve, (ii) governance and operating procedures of the RFSR, (iii) the financial reserve, and funding mechanism, (iv) response to food, nutritional, and pastoral crises, and (v) the progress made in the development of the NAIP-FSN and the preparation of national and regional business meetings. The experts' report is attached to this report.
6. The ministers then had a lengthy sharing on the following issues:
 - Composition of the management committee and the Executive Bureau
 - The establishment of a transitional body for an effective management of the current crisis.
 - The scope of trade and stocks in the regulation of regional markets and food security and the importance of valuing food products in order to improve the added value;
 - RFSR sustainability against the background of agriculture transformation and the construction of the regional market
 - The role of market and stocks in the market regulation
 - Reliance on importations regarding some products due to inadequate integration of the regional market and the under valuation of complementarity among countries, the persistence of formal and informal hindrances to intra-community trades
 - The change in vulnerability and the forms of food crises as these relate to the issues of insecurity, climate change and variability, under employment and the increasing urban and peri urban poverty
 - Consideration of the peculiarity of pastoral crisis through "livestock feed" component, managed just like the food reserves and the development of fodder reserve in coastal countries
 - Impact of fodder crisis on animal movement and the conflicts between farmers and herders
 - The challenges relating to securing pastoralism, the review of regulations pertaining to transhumance, local governance of shared resources, pastoral investment, and mostly the development of various forms of animal rearing in the Sahel and coastal countries

- The funding of the interventions and replenishment of the stocks including the principle of "grain for grain" payment and the issue of resource mobilisation through community levy,
- Sponsoring of transport fare during destocking which involves transporting from one country to another
- The issue of structural funding by community levy
- Financing of the financial reserve in view of building synergy with ARC insurance scheme
- Coverage of peculiarities and diversity in national situations in the response provided by the RFSR.

7. At the end of the deliberations, the Ministers adopted the following positions, recommendations and decisions.
8. The Ministers recalled the political commitment of Heads of State as regards the food and nutritional security of the peoples of West Africa with the aim of eradicating hunger and malnutrition. The Ministers were of the view that the development of the security stocks at the three complementary levels, notably local stocks, national security stocks and finally regional stocks, to enable the region to build its risk management capacity and to boost its food sovereignty, is one of the main pillars of the ECOWAS of peoples. This high-level commitment, which was fulfilled through the Supplementary Act establishing the RFSR, adopted by ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in 2013, made the Regional Food Security Reserve one of the top priorities of ECOWAS.
9. The STMC recalled that with the adoption of this Supplementary Act, ECOWAS statutory bodies have endorsed the key governance and operation procedures of the RFSR during the STMC meeting held in Abidjan in October 2012. The Committee welcomed efforts by the ECOWAS Commission, Member States and their national storage institutions, producer and pastoral organizations and international partners in the region to implement the West African Regional Storage Strategy, and especially, the Supplementary Act establishing the RFSR.
10. The Ministers underscored the importance of the overall consistency in the implementation of the RFSR. In particular, they laid emphasis on the role that the RFSR and institutional stocks in general are to play in responding to crises, increasing opportunities for farmers and in contributing to the development of the regional food products market. The Ministers believe that food security stocks should enable the region to cope with shocks that primarily affect vulnerable populations but must also fit within a long-term vision to fight against hunger and malnutrition enshrined in the Zero Hunger Strategy implemented through ECOWAP / CAADP.
11. The STMC also welcomed the involvement of the international humanitarian community in the joint regional strategy of ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS and regional civil society and private sector stakeholders. Having in mind the suffering of affected populations, the Committee urged all stakeholders in the response to food and nutritional crises to step up efforts to better coordinate emergency response with a view to building the resilience of households and communities. The Committee also called upon the ECOWAS Commission to provide leadership in this coordination with support from regional partners and the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA).

12. The STMC thanked international partners, especially the European Union, the French Development Agency, the AECID and USAID, for helping to lay the foundations of the RFSR and to make it a reality. The Ministers also resolved to renew the region's commitment to becoming a sovereign regional reserve. In this respect, they encouraged the Commission to continue investigations in order to come up with a proposed operational and equitable mechanism for pooling 5% of national stocks to secure solidarity among countries in responding to regional crises. They also renewed the commitment made in 2012 to contribute to supplying the regional physical stock. In this regard, the Committee urged the Commission to propose concrete and fair modalities as well as a reasonable timeline for these national contributions.

13. Finally, the Ministers resolved to sensitize the Heads of State and Finance Ministers to set up a sustainable, predictable and renewable funding mechanism for the RFSR. In this perspective, and in accordance with the Supplementary Act, the Committee called upon relevant ECOWAS bodies to allocate a significant proportion of Community Levy resources to the financial reserve of the RFSR. They strongly called on member States to pay up their outstanding community levy to ECOWAS, and on ECOWAS Commission to allocate adequate resources for the consolidation of the RFSR.

14. Still regarding the sustainability of the RFSR, Ministers invite the ECOWAS Commission to pursue consultations with African Risk Capacity so as to consider operational synergies with regard to risk management and assess the possible contribution of insurance mechanisms to the financing of RFSR interventions. Similarly, they ask the ECOWAS Commission to develop operational partnerships between the RFSR, WFP, UNICEF and FAO, making use of their respective competences.

15. The Ministers reviewed the proposals of the Experts' meeting held in Ouagadougou on 4 and 5 June 2018 on the governance of the RFSR and analyzed their compliance with the objectives and principles already adopted.

16. After discussing the Experts' recommendations, the Ministers amended the composition of the Management Committee and the Executive Board.

17. Concerning the Management Committee, the Ministers agreed on the following composition:

- a. The Minister who is the President of the STMC chairs the Management Committee ;
- b. The Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, representing the President of the ECOWAS Commission ;
- c. The Commissioner in charge of the Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment of the UEMOA/WAEMU Commission, representing the President of the UEMOA/ECOWAS Commission ;
- d. The Executive Secretary of CILSS or his representative ;
- e. A representative from each Member State of ECOWAS, Chad and Mauritania ;
- f. The RESOGEST Office through its President or representative ;
- g. A representative of the agricultural producers' organizations ;
- h. A representative of the breeder organizations ;
- i. A representative of the Civil Society ;
- j. A representative of the Private Sector.

18. With regard to the Executive Bureau of the Management Committee, the Ministers agreed on the following composition:

- The Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, representing the President of the ECOWAS Commission. He is the President of the Executive Board;
- The Commissioner in charge of the Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment of the UEMOA/WAEMU Commission or his representative;
- The Executive Secretary of CILSS or his representative;
- The representative of the Member State chairing the Presidency-in-Office of ECOWAS
- Two representatives of the RESOGEST Office;
- A representative of farmers, breeders' organizations, civil society and the private sector.

The Commissioner in charge of Environment and Water Resources chairs the Executive Board.

19. The STMC decides to validate the constituent elements of the governance bodies of the RFSR (composition, powers and operating procedures of the Management Committee and its Executive Board) and recommends their adoption by the Council of Ministers.

20. To address the food and nutritional crisis, and in response to the urgent appeal from the Heads of State, the Ministers adopted the experts' proposals, detailed in their report. They consider it of utmost importance to mobilize as soon as possible the Regional Food Security Reserve in solidarity with vulnerable populations located in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal (zones in phase 3 and more of the Harmonized Framework).

21. They emphasize the need to move quickly while respecting the RFSR triggering modalities in order to ensure its sustainability and credibility. Accordingly, the ministers propose to mobilize all or part of the available physical stock and to secure the conditions for replenishing this stock, for the benefit of eligible countries.

22. To this end, they expressly recommend to the Member States concerned to submit comprehensive and compliant requests to ECOWAS, allowing the assessment of precise needs and expectations of ECOWAS, before 20 June 2018. This request shall be examined by the Reserve Management Technical Unit on the basis of all available information sources, before 25 June 2018.

23. Pending the institutionalization of the governing bodies by submitting the regulations to the Council of Ministers, the ministers decided to set up an ad'hoc committee for the management of the emergency. It shall be chaired by the Minister of agriculture, livestock and fisheries of Togo in his capacity of incumbent chairman of the STMC and will be comprised of the Commissioner, agriculture, environment and Water resources of ECOWAS, the Commissioner, agriculture, water resources and environment of UEMOA Commission and the Executive Secretary, CILSS.

24. This transitional body shall meet before 30 June 2018 to decide on national requests. This meeting would in particular:
 - a. Determine allocations to the various eligible;
 - b. Define the specific and secure modalities for recovering stocks through (i) the grain-for-grain replenishment procedure by the beneficiary country, (ii) the procedure for taking over by a third-party payer (TFP, WFP, ECOWAS Commission, UEMOA Commission, etc.) and (iii) replenishment of the RFSR from the Community levy.
25. The Specialized Ministerial Technical Committee invites the ECOWAS Commission to engage in consultations with the European Commission and AFD in order to contribute in securing destocking procedures.
26. The Specialized Ministerial Technical Committee asks the ECOWAS Commission to enter into close consultation with WFP and the main donors involved in supporting national food crisis prevention and management systems in the six countries, in order to coordinate support and increase synergies.
27. Ministers invite Member States that have not yet done so, to sign memorandums of understanding with ECOWAS, so as to implement the support to countries provided for in the stockpile strategy to strengthen national security stocks and the States' capacities.
28. Ministers took note of the progress of the processes for the development of NAIP-FSN and the preparation of the national business meetings and the regional business meeting. They welcomed the progress made and noted with satisfaction that most countries are nearing completion of their process for defining and validating their NAIP-FSN.
29. They invited the Member States to expedite national processes for the formulation of NAIP - FSN, including the formulation of mobilizing programs, by next October. The Ministers adopted the principle of a regional meeting on this date to prepare the planned regional business meeting early 2019.
30. To this end, they reiterate their commitment to mobilizing the necessary resources and invite the technical and financial partners to step up their efforts to support them.
31. The Ministers commended the experts for the quality of their reflection, their report and their proposals.
32. At the end of their deliberations, they expressed their deepest gratitude to the Head of State, the Government and the people of Burkina Faso for the facilities offered them to ensure a successful meeting.
33. This report was adopted after amendments.
34. In his closing remarks, the President of the meeting, Colonel Ouro-Koura Agadazi, expressed his sincere thanks to His Excellency Rock Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Burkina Faso and the Burkinabe people for the hospitality and facilities that made the session a success. He also thanked his fellow ministers for their valuable contributions to the debates and for the spirit of fraternity that prevailed during the session, without failing to express their gratitude to the Technical and Financial Partners for their various support. He finally declared the work of the ministerial session closed and wished all the participants a safe journey back to their respective destination.

Done in Ouagadougou on June 6, 2018

For the Specialized Ministerial Technical Committee on Agriculture,
Environment and Water Resources of ECOWAS

The Chairman,



Colonel Ouro-Koura Agadazi,
Minister of Agriculture, Livestock
and Fisheries of Togo,

Vote of thanks

At the end of the deliberations, the members of the AERE Specialized Ministerial Committee express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, President of Burkina Faso, to the members of the Government and to the people of Burkina Faso for the warm, brotherly welcome, as well as for the facilities offered to ensure a successful meeting.

Done in Ouagadougou, this 6th day of June, 2018.

The Ministers

