

Echoes from Food Stocks

Quarterly Newsletter of the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve

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E d i t o

Dear Partners,

The repetitive call upon the physical stocks of the Regional Food Security Reserve in 2017 and 2018 by several member States in difficult food situation for assistance reflects the ownership of this Reserve by the region on the one hand, and the importance of the role of this regional solidarity mechanism on the other hand.



Mr. **Ousseini Salifou**,
Executive Director of RAAF

As a matter of fact, the interventions of the Food Reserve, respectively in Niger on August 7, 2018 with 6,528 tons of cereals and in Burkina Faso on August 9, 2018 with 4,303 tons of cereals constitute the second and the third interventions after that of 1,130 tons of cereals by ECOWAS on August 8, 2017 in Maiduguri, North-East Nigeria. They also illustrate the relevance of a rapid regional intervention tool allowing to strengthen

national response capacities. By doing so, the Regional Food Security Reserve enters a memorable phase of its operationalization.

So far, the supports have been made up of local products, produced in West Africa by West African producers and bought from them or from traders, in accordance with the will and determination of the Community leaders to promote local agricultural production and processing. These supports fully comply with ECOWAS main objectives (i) to quickly express regional solidarity to member States in difficult food situation following poor agricultural campaigns or natural disasters and (ii) to gradually build a regional incentive market supplied by small-scale producers in the region, producers that ECOWAS wishes to see well-structured into groups and cooperatives in the rural areas and become real wealth-creating rural enterprises.

In addition, the legal institutionalization of RESOGEST on August 13, 2018 gives hope to ECOWAS and other stakeholders to see this Network quickly deploy its Cooperation Framework. This framework formalizes the adhesion of national companies in charge of the management of food security stocks to a regional solidarity mechanism aimed at strengthening the region's capacity in managing food crises and actively contributing to the operationalization of the Regional Food Security Reserve.

In this context, the ability of ECOAGRIS to timely provide reliable and up-to-date information through the Harmonized Framework tool has been instrumental. Though the issue of its sustainability is yet to be solved, all national, regional and international stakeholders must fully be aware of the progress made in making the Harmonized Framework a regional instrument for preventing and managing food and nutrition crises, a tool that helps to calibrate interventions and transparently make informed-decisions.

Once again, it is my singular pleasure to wish you all a happy reading of the following pages to learn a bit about the main achievements of the quarter.

ECOWAS Heads of State and Government take Ownership of the Regional Food Security Reserve

To date, the Regional Food Security Reserve as a major regional concern, is part of the agricultural, social and political agendas of all ECOWAS member States. The Heads of State are well aware of the need to quickly contribute in the Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food, in order to allow this regional solidarity mechanism to fully play its role by adequately taking care of the development of the agricultural sector and food security on the basis of regional priorities.



Partial view of the Head of State and Government Summit of July 2018 in Lomé

At their Forty-Second Ordinary Session held in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, on February 28, 2013, the Heads of State and Government of West Africa established the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) through Additional Act to the ECOWAS Revised Treaty as the third line of defense for preventing and managing food crises. It is designed to (i) complement efforts of member States to provide rapid and diversified food and nutrition assistance, (ii) express regional solidarity with member States and populations affected by a food crisis through transparent, fair and predictable mechanisms and (iii) contribute to food sovereignty and political, economic and commercial integration of West Africa. The operationalization of this Reserve began at the end of 2015 with the implementation of the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa funded by the European Union amounting to € 56 million.

Since then, the Heads of State and Government have been following with special interest the on-site deployment of the activities and achievements of this support project through regular update reports made to them via the mechanism and the project communication and visibility channels at both

national and regional level. The political communication of the project is done through the National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans Focal Points, Heads of National ECOWAS Offices, National Storage Companies, Ministers for Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, ECOWAS Commission Authorities, Prime Ministers, Heads of State and Government Summits and other stakeholders and development partners platforms.

During their fifty-third Summit in Lomé, Togo, on July 31, 2018, for example, the Heads of State and Government refocused on the severe deterioration of food situation in the region and encouraged measures for urgent mobilization of the Regional Food Security Reserve which gives flesh to the call they made at their Extraordinary Summit held on April 14, 2018. On the basis of their good command of the operationalization status of the Regional Food Reserve, they instructed the ECOWAS Commission to take necessary affirmative actions to avail, as soon as possible, part of the food products of the Reserve to member States undergoing a difficult food situation.

ECOWAS donates Food Products to Niger and Burkina Faso to express Regional Solidarity

As part of the operationalization of the Regional Food Reserve, the interventions in Niger and Burkina Faso are respectively the second and the third operations after the one of 1,130 tons of cereals donated by ECOWAS on August 8, 2017, in Maiduguri, in solidarity with the populations of the North-East of Nigeria. The Governments of Niger and Burkina Faso are committed at the highest level to pay back, starting from January 2019, grain-for-grain, of the entire stock made available to them to sustain the Regional Food Reserve system. ECOWAS will continue to promote the expansion and diversification of the offers of the Regional Food Reserve on the one hand by strengthening the resilience of the affected populations and on the other hand, by strengthening the resilience of the ECOWAS response capacities in any situation of food and nutrition crisis for both humans and livestock.



Commissioner Sékou Sangaré, handing the Food Reserve products over to the Government of Niger on behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission

Following the requests of countries for humanitarian assistance in food and in accordance with the instructions of the Heads of State and Government of the region, the Adhoc Committee in charge of the management of the interventions of the ECOWAS Regional Food Reserve decided at its meeting of July 3, 2018 held in Lomé, Togo, to express regional solidarity to the requesting countries through the mobilization of the stocks of the Reserve. The deliberation resulting from the analysis of the applications allowed the Committee to retain Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Cape Verde as eligible for the support of the Reserve. Nigeria and Mali were recently added to this list.

To implement the instructions by the Heads of State and Government and the decision of the Adhoc Committee for the management of the interventions of the Reserve, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, His Excellency Dr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, mandated Mr. Sékou Sangaré, ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, to proceed without delay and in his name, to the donation of part of the products of the Reserve to Niger and Burkina Faso.

The donation of food products to the Republic of Niger was done on Tuesday, August 7, 2018 under the patronage of Mr. Adamou Souley Hamadou, Chief of Staff, representing the Prime Minister. The event took place in Dosso, a city located at 135 km from Niamey, the capital city of Niger where ECOWAS donated to the authorities of Niger 6,528 tons of cereals intended for people in food difficulties. The products are made up of 3,028 tons of maize, 3,000 tons of millet and 500 tons of sorghum. ECOWAS also expressed the solidarity of the other 14 member States to Burkina Faso on August 9, 2018 through the donation of 4,303 tons of cereals to the Burkinabè authorities under the patronage of Mr. Jacob Ouédraogo, Minister for Agriculture and Hydraulic Facilities representing the Prime Minister. The products are made up of 2,053 tons of maize, 1,000 tons of sorghum, 1,000 tons of millet and 250 tons of local rice stored in the warehouses of SONAGESS, the National Food Security Stock Management Company in Dédougou, a city located at about 200 km from Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso.



Commissioner Sékou Sangaré, handing the Food Reserve products over to the Government of Burkina Faso on behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission

ECOWAS trains Senior Technicians in Instruments and Microcomputing

This pool of qualified human resources contributes to the sustainability of the ECOAGRIS scheme, its capitalization and use in member States. As a result, the issue of sustainability of this system for member States and partner regional organizations is becoming a major challenge as it is meant to help complete its full internalization and ownership in West Africa.



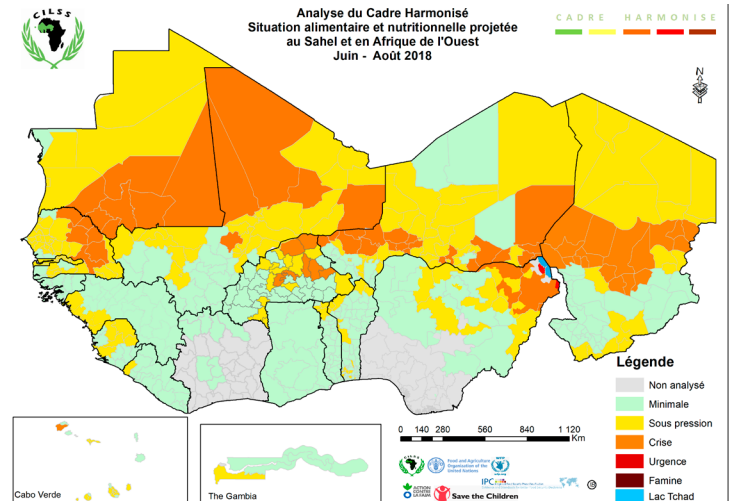
Partial view of the trainees exercising in a laboratory of AGRHYMET

As part of the deployment of the component “ECOWAS Integrated Regional Agricultural Information System (ECOAGRIS)” of the Food Security Storage Support Project, ECOWAS jointly organizes with the AGRHYMET Regional Center, a training of senior technicians in instruments and microcomputing, with majors in networking and databases, for students from the seventeen (17) countries of the CILSS/ECOWAS region.

This «Bac+2» diploma course complements the other training programs offered by the AGRHYMET Regional Center. Students are trained in equipment maintenance, information collection, their analysis / processing until dissemination. It helps to build the capacities of countries with senior technicians for the maintenance of equipment, systems and computer networks for a better management of ECOAGRIS and affiliated related systems. These technicians will also ensure the maintenance of agro-hydro-meteorological instruments for information collection. The beneficiaries are also skilled in maintaining telecommunications and other electronic equipment. The first batch (2016-2018) of seventeen students graduated in January 2018. The second one (2017-2019) of sixteen trainees, is still been trained and graduation scheduled for May 2019.

The Harmonized Framework, a Decision Support Tool to be Sustained

Pending further reflection on how best to diversify the sources of funding for this decision support system, the Harmonized Framework remains an instrument to be sustained for prevention and management of food and nutrition crises in order to strengthen the capacities for better management of crises at national, regional and international levels.



Analysis of the Harmonized Framework June – August 2018

In the context of early warning on food and nutrition crises in the Sahel and West Africa, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), in collaboration with ECOWAS and others regional and international partners, developed the Harmonized Framework Tool. It helps to classify the nature and severity of the causes of current and projected food and nutrition insecurity.

The Harmonized Framework uses five (5) classification phases of the severity of food and nutrition insecurity (Phase 1: minimal, Phase 2: under pressure, Phase 3: crisis, Phase 4: emergency and Phase 5: starvation). It has been developed upon the request of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS member States. It provides reliable and relevant information on affected areas and populations in order to organize responses to food and nutrition crises as part of the national response plans.

The resulting interventions are either (i) immediate and unconditional for all populations classified into crisis, emergency or starvation phases, or (ii) conditional to strengthen the resilience of populations under pressure.

This is the case, for example, of the alerts that were made in 2017 and 2018 and that guided the Regional Reserve interventions in Nigeria, Niger and Burkina Faso through food products donation to people affected by hunger and malnutrition. Globally, the results of the Harmonized Framework are exploited by the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA).

ECOWAS Strengthens the Capacity of Producers' Organizations to contribute in supplying Products to the Regional Food Security Reserve

In its effort to structure the demand for cereals and increase the incomes of local producers, ECOWAS clearly indicates that the supply of products for the Regional Reserve must be made primarily through the associations of producers and processors of the region. In addition, by gradually positioning themselves through sustained advocacy and lobbying efforts, POs are more and more at the forefront of the battle for greater access to institutional markets and thus, remind ECOWAS that it must further promote a friendly-environment for investment to drive improvements in local production and processing practices.



Partial view of the Kaduna trainees exercising in quality control (impurity) on a maize sample

To stimulate the participation of POs in the tenders of the Regional Reserve, an information campaign is being conducted by the consortium "Oxfam-Afrique Verte-Jade Productions-Inter-Réseaux on behalf of ECOWAS. It aims to inform, advise and train the various organizations of cereals producers and processors in West Africa and the Sahel on the supply and reconstitution of the Regional Reserve. The approach consists in developing a database of targeted POs, setting up an interactive information and communication system and strengthening and transferring skills for ownership of the scheme.

Since the launch of this campaign in July 2017, the consortium has worked on many issues and has achieved significant results, namely the production of an action plan, the production of a communication strategy, the launch of a quarterly newsletter, the development of a website (<https://stock-ecowas.info>), the joint publication – consortium/ECOWAS – of articles on POs and institutional markets and the ongoing preparation of other tools.

In addition, pending the launch of new calls for tenders by ECOWAS and in order to meet the information and training needs of POs on tender documents, the consortium is currently focusing its efforts on the strengthening of POs capacities. To this end, a first series of trainings is scheduled in several French and English-speaking countries of the region on various themes identified from the self-evaluation of POs. A training was conducted in Kaduna, Nigeria, last August, which helped build the capacity of two Nigerian federations of producers' organizations (Jussaf and Rice and Wheat Farmers' Association) on the conduct of cereals quality analysis. The same support was given to three federations of POs (Mooriben, SAA and Fucap) in Niger and a training on accounting, administrative and financial management provided to two Burkinabe POs (UPPRS and Fepab) in September. Discussions are in progress to define the type of support to be provided to Mali (AOPP), to Guinea (Cnop) and Senegal (Asprodeb).



Partial view of the Niamey trainees doing sampling exercises in an OPVN warehouse in Niger

The Network of National Companies in charge of the Management of National Food Security Stocks (RESOGEST) formally established

With this legal recognition of the Network, ECOWAS and other stakeholders expect RESOGEST to quickly deploy its Cooperation Framework which formalizes the adhesion of national companies in charge of the management of food security stocks to a regional solidarity mechanism which will help strengthen the capacity of the region to manage food crises and thus, actively contribute to the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve.

As part of the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve, ECOWAS, through the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa funded by the European Union, supports the Network of national companies in charge of the management of national food security stocks in the Sahel and West Africa (RESOGEST) with a view of its effective operationalization. As an international, apolitical, non-denominational and non-ethnic and non-profit association, RESOGEST is made up of both ECOWAS and CILSS member countries.

Following the constituent meeting of RESOGEST and the adoption of the Co-operation Framework in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in 2012 and the Banjul Restricted Meeting in The Gambia, held in July 2017, the General Assembly held in Accra, Ghana in October 2017 allowed the members of the Network to unanimously adopt the Statutes and Rules of procedure of their organization. A new board was set up for a one-year term, renewable once, and Burkina Faso selected to host the headquarters and secretariat of the Network.

In accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the Accra General Assembly, the new board members of the Network finalized the organizational documents of the institution and conducted the required administrative actions before the Burkinabè Administration for an official recognition. On August 13 of this year, the Network was officially institutionalized through the granting of the Declaration of existence of association under N: N00000448601 by the Minister for Territory Administration and Decentralization of Burkina Faso with the main mission of promoting solidarity in food and nutrition security in the CILSS/ECOWAS region.

The Regional Food Security Reserve in a Nutshell!



Mr. Amadou Hebié (wearing glasses) from the EU Delegation in Burkina Faso expressing satisfaction for the physical stock of the Food Reserve

- The Forty-Second Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS Member Countries, created the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) on February 28, 2013 by Additional Act N°AS /2 /02/13 to the ECOWAS Revised Treaty.
- It is the third line of defense to prevent and manage food crises. It is complementary to local stocks (the first line of defense at the village and community level) and national food security stocks (second line of defense) owned by the States.
- It (i) complements the efforts of the member States to provide rapid and diversified food and nutrition assistance, (ii), it expresses regional solidarity with member States and affected populations through transparent, equitable and predictable mechanisms, (iii), it contributes to food sovereignty and to the political, economic and trade integration of West Africa.
- It intervenes mainly in the form of loans or disposals for free of food or financial resources decided by the Management Committee. These interventions express regional solidarity and the region's contribution to response or contingency plans designed by countries in response to food crises.
- It consists of a physical reserve (1/3) and a financial reserve (2/3).
- It only covers emergency food crises.
- ECOWAS has planned a first four-year phase with a permanent annual reserve of 176,000 tons before raising it up to 411,554 tons from the 8th year,
- The Support Project will provide a contribution of 31,500 tons to the physical component of the Regional Food Security Reserve.



- The creation of a Regional Food Security Reserve falls within the ECOWAP guidelines adopted by Heads of State and Government in 2005 and aims to prevent and manage cyclical food crises in the region,
 - The Regional Food Storage Strategy is based on four complementary lines of defense mobilized according to the level and severity of crises: (i) local stocks; (ii) national security stocks; (iii) the Regional Food Reserve and (iv) call for international aid,
 - the stocks of the Regional Food Security Reserve available and mobilizable by ECOWAS for emergency interventions in the event of food crisis in a member State are stored in the warehouses of various countries' national food storage facilities,
 - The modalities for mobilizing the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve are based on three principles: equity, efficiency, transparency and must follow the following procedure:
 - a. A request by the member State, justified by:
 - i. The vulnerability analysis and the food situation: starting from level 3 of the Harmonized Vulnerability Analysis Framework (CH),
 - ii. The National Response Plan, identifying the gap between the mobilized resources and the needs.
 - b. A technical investigation by the Stocks Info Unit leading to a technical advice (assistance towards decision-making) to the Reserve Management Committee.
 - c. A decision taken by the Reserve Management Committee for the granting/destocking of food products of the Reserve to the population of the Member State facing severe food crises with guarantees for rebuilding the stock (by the country, the ECOWAS Commission, a third party, etc.).
- It is important to formalize and consolidate the legal framework that governs the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve through the Regulation establishing the Management Committee and the Implementing Regulation of the President of the ECOWAS Commission.
 - It is necessary to mobilize the ECOWAS Commission's own financial resources for strategic purchasing of the Reserve's physical stock and its operationalization, and to implement sustainability mechanisms of the Regional Reserve by ensuring its sovereignty.

With the financial support of the European Union



And technical support from implementing partners



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