



Lomé, Togo, 12th May 2021

Communication Directorate

Page 1/2

#Press Release No9#

ECOWAS Ministers for Agriculture Adopt the Accra Declaration on the Operationalization of Food Security Reserves in West Africa

Following the International Conference on the West African Food Security Storage System which ended on 7th May 2021, the ECOWAS Ministers for Agriculture met online on 10th May 2021, under the chairmanship of the Republic of Ghana, current Chair of the Authority of the ECOWAS Heads of State. The aim of this ministerial session was to discuss the foundations to be laid for a renewed multilateral partnership in order to strengthen, in a sustainable manner, the resilience of the regional storage system and its capacity to effectively face the growing and complex food, nutrition and pastoral crises in West Africa.

The meeting, which was attended by the ECOWAS Ministers for Agriculture recorded the intervention of His Excellency Mr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana. He emphasized the importance of a strategic regional food storage system to ensure food security, peace, and accelerated development for the millions of West African populations. While countries are striving to ensure local food security, a concerted collective effort is needed, and synergies must be created in areas of common interest with a clear comparative advantage in addition to the need for stronger integration of national markets.

The meeting was also an opportunity for technical and financial partners to formulate their goodwill messages and make declarations of their intention to support the implementation of the regional food security storage strategy in West Africa.

To end of the discussions, the ministers adopted the Accra Declaration geared towards accelerating the operationalization of strategic food security reserves at the regional, national, and local levels. The Declaration highlights the need to ensure strong integration and coherence between the food security storage policy, the desire to secure basic food supplies for populations by promoting local products, nutrition and social protection policies for the most vulnerable households, and the strengthening of resilience.

The Accra Declaration is an individual and collective commitment by countries to mobilize and allocate significant resources to consolidate and perpetuate the regional food security storage system.

Through the Declaration, Member States renew their commitment to allocate 5% of their national stock through the Network of Companies or Offices in charge of managing national food security stocks in the Sahel and West Africa (RESOGEST), in compliance with the principle of solidarity with Member States affected by severe food crises, in accordance with the criteria of the "Harmonized Framework".



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Page 2/2

Ministers also urged the ECOWAS Commission to ensure effective implementation of the Supplementary Act establishing the Regional Food Security Reserve, and to allocate substantial budgets for its implementation. They called technical and financial partners for greater support to the region's efforts to achieve food sovereignty and encouraged, in particular, humanitarian agencies, United Nations agencies and development assistance NGOs to (i) give priority, in their support, to local purchase of basic foodstuffs with a view to strengthening the resilience of local agri-food systems (ii) support the efforts of local populations in their local resilience mechanisms, (iii) align their interventions with those of the Sahel and West African States and institutions responsible for food and nutrition security in the region, and (iv) integrate the development of the West African Food Security Storage System and the costs of its mobilization in response to crises into their financing plans.

Investment, development and commercial banks, private institutions and businessmen and women in the region are also invited to develop national, sub-regional and regional partnerships and to propose innovative financing mechanisms for physical and financial food reserves in favor of socio-professional agricultural organizations and private sector stakeholders.

For the follow up of the implementation of the Declaration, it is proposed that a Head of State be appointed as a "Champion" of ECOWAP and food security storage among his or her peers for a non-renewable three-year term, and a businessman or woman from the region appointed as a "Goodwill Ambassador" to promote food and nutrition security in the Sahel and West Africa.

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