



ECOWAS Commission
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources
Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development

ECOWAP/CAADP Process 2025

**Regional Consultation of Ministers in charge of Agriculture
and Food of ECOWAS, Mauritania and Chad on the
impacts of COVID-19 and crop pests on Food and
Nutrition Security in West Africa**

Video Conference, March 31 2019

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

1. At the initiative of the ECOWAS Commission and in consultation with UEMOA and CILSS, an emergency ministerial Video Conference was held on the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on food and nutrition security in West Africa. The objective was to initiate exchanges between IGOs and Ministers in charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, to collect their analyses and orientations in the face of the health crisis caused by COVID-19 as well as other scourges such as armyworms, the announced locust invasion and transboundary animal diseases affecting the Region. The aim was to initiate the preparation of a regional action plan to curb the impact of COVID-19 on Food Security while strengthening the resilience of the populations and to continue the progress made in recent years to achieve Global Food and Nutritional Security for the Region by 2025. In this regard, all Ministers of ECOWAS/UEMOA Member States were invited to take part in the meeting as well as those of Mauritania and Chad.
2. The following actually took part in the meeting:
 - i. Mr. Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Benin, His Excellency Mr **Gaston Cossi DOSSOUHOUI**;
 - ii. Mr Minister of Agriculture and Hydro-Agricultural Development of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr **Salifou OUEDRAOGO**;
 - iii. Mr. Minister of Agriculture and Environment of Cape Verde, His Excellency **Gilberto SILVA**;
 - iv. Mr Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr **Kouassi Adjoumani KOBENAN**;
 - v. Madam Minister of Agriculture of The Gambia, Her Excellency Mrs **Amie FABUREH**;
 - vi. Mr Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment of Senegal, His Excellency Professor **Moussa Balde**;
 - vii. Mr. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Mr **Dennis K VANDI**;
 - viii. Mr. Minister of Agriculture, Animal Production and Fisheries of Togo, His Excellency Mr **Koutéra Noël BATAKA**.

The Video Conference was also attended by the following participants

- i. The ECOWAS Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, Mr **Sékou SANGARE**;
 - ii. The Deputy Executive Secretary of CILSS, Mr. **Ibrahim Lumumba IDI-ISSA**, representing the Executive Secretary of CILSS;
 - iii. The UEMOA Director of Agriculture, Mr. **Seyni HAMADOU**, representing the UEMOA Commissioner of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment;
 - iv. The Director of Agriculture and Rural Development of ECOWAS, Mr **Alain Sy TRAORE**;
 - v. The Director of Environment and Natural Resources of ECOWAS, Mr **Johnson BOANUH**;
 - vi. The Executive Director of the ARAA, Mr **Ousseini SALIFOU**;
 - vii. The Director of the ECOWAS Water Resources Coordination Centre, Mr **Ibrahim Babatunde WILSON**;
 - viii. The technical teams of the ECOWAS Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources (DAERE), as well as those of the Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) in Bamako and the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (ARAA).
3. The Ministers of Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania and Chad who were invited were unable to attend.
 4. The video conferencing has benefited greatly from the technical support of the ICT Department of the ECOWAS Commission.

5. The ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources (CAEWR) recalled the crisis context in which the region found itself before the start of the pandemic (security crisis, legionnaire caterpillars, locusts, etc.). He noted that the first case of COVID-19 was detected in West Africa on 27 February 2020 in Lagos to reach 4812 confirmed cases including 152 deaths as of the evening of 30 March 2020. He recalled the words of the WHO Director General confirmed by the data on the spread of the pandemic and who also stressed the urgent need to mobilize for further action in Africa. He mentioned the responsiveness of the governments of the Region, all of which have already adopted measures to curb the spread of COVID-19, to detect and care for the sick and to follow up on contacts. Awareness campaigns are being conducted everywhere to ensure that health barriers are respected.

Measures have also been taken in all countries and they include: partial or total containment of populations, limiting the mobility of people, closing borders, closing urban, peri-urban and rural markets that structure the relationship between supply and demand. The CAEWR, while acknowledging the positive effects of these measures on slowing the spread of COVID-19, nevertheless mentioned the initial negative impacts on food and nutritional security, both at the consumer level (price increases for basic necessities, poor access to food for vulnerable people), agricultural producers (drastic drop in the marketing of perishable market garden and fruit products, higher transport costs, difficult access to seeds, fertilizers, plant protection products and rarefaction and high cost of agricultural labor), and all the players in the food supply chains within and between countries. He recalled the damage already caused by the armyworm and the predicted invasion of locusts. He stressed the importance of the early warning system to anticipate all developments in the field concerning both crop pests and transboundary animal diseases, all of which, like COVID-19, dangerously affect production capacities and people's livelihoods. He recalled the results of the analyses of the Harmonized Framework (CH 2019/2020). More than 15 million people were already affected by difficult food situations falling within scales 3 to 5 of the Harmonized Framework. This figure could, in a context without COVID-19, exceed 17 million people in our Region during the period June-August 2020. Taking into account the negative impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis, it is in fact at best more than 50 million people who would fall into a food and nutrition crisis situation (phases 3 and above of the Harmonized Framework) between June and August 2020 and affecting all the countries of the Region, if vigorous, pragmatic and coordinated measures are not implemented in the Region.

The Commissioner expressed the wish that, without wasting time on the basis of what the countries and the region have as tools, mechanisms and resources of their own, a coordinated emergency action plan should be prepared and implemented before calling on the assistance of our international partners.

6. The Video Conference made it possible to collect the analyses and orientations given by the States and their expectations vis-à-vis ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS. The main elements presented by the Ministers are as follows:
7. **Benin.** The Minister introduced his remarks by noting the limitations of contingency plans in the face of the spread of the pandemic. He called for turning the crisis into an opportunity and focusing on concrete decisions. He confirmed the diagnosis and highly appreciated the economic analysis made by the Commissioner and then stressed the impact on household purchasing power. He highlighted the problem of producers' ability to supply the markets. In taking up this major challenge of the agricultural sector to be able to play its role in production and supplying markets, the Minister called for the pooling of regional capacities to cope with the new situation and the pest threats. Markets are no longer frequented by traders in the confined areas, and food scarcity and speculative behavior can be observed. He mentioned the difficulty of complying with the necessary measures to deal with COVID-

19 while at the same time providing technical advice to producers, marketing of agricultural products, continuation of development, etc. He also mentioned the difficulty of ensuring that the necessary measures are taken to deal with COVID-19. The closure of borders accentuates these difficulties in supplying markets. He pointed out that there are substantial surpluses in production that can feed food security stocks (maize, cassava, yams) and mentioned Benin's priorities in terms of both conventional and high value-added sectors (cashew nuts, fish, etc.). The Minister recalled the importance of information on production, threats and markets. It is necessary to work and give precise information to the populations. He mentioned the duties of coastal countries to supply landlocked countries, especially with inputs and the risk of stopping hydro-agricultural development work.

The Minister called for the mobilization of technical and financial partners to implement contingency plans, with substantial social safety net programmes. With regard to the mobilization of food for vulnerable populations, he called for the pooling of national food security stocks. He showed the link between health, food and energy crises, called for the activation of monitoring systems to know the food situation of countries and recommended that efforts be made for the movement of goods between States with strict measures to be respected by drivers of vehicles transporting these goods. Finally, he called for the setting up of a high level task force to deal with emergencies and ensure coordination, because to govern it is to foresee.

8. **Burkina Faso.** The Minister recalled the consequences of climatic hazards combined with civil insecurity that have led to the displacement of more than 779,741 people within the country (estimated in February 2020). An analysis of the food situation shows that currently, about 1,500,000 people are in a situation of food vulnerability. This number could reach 2,038,000 people according to CH analysis, in crisis and food emergency during the lean season. Together with the COVID-19 situation, the closure of the borders will result in a supply deficit of 702 337 tonnes of rice and wheat and 1 500 000 tonnes of cereals overall. The closure of borders will make it difficult to obtain supplies from the rest of the world by about. Total potential demand for cereals, estimated at 1 552 000 tonnes, will be difficult to meet with reduced transport and closed markets. This has led the country to take three steps:
 - i. Food aid: opening of 150 sales outlets at subsidized prices for some 25 000 tonnes of cereals and the sale of 4 796 tonnes of cereals at social prices. Over the lean season, needs are estimated at more than 121 000 tonnes of cereals, i.e. CFAF 21 billion;
 - ii. Adaptation measures: development of a strategy to ensure the continuity of accompanying measures for producers in the light of the likely dynamics of the disease and its impact on the different areas. A locust response plan, a programme to acquire tractors to facilitate ploughing operations, and an irrigation system using solar-powered boreholes on the outskirts of towns are designed;
 - iii. Development of innovative methods based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to support agro-sylvo-pastoral activities: (i) Scaling up of e-voucher for the distribution of inputs; (ii) Promotion of e-vulgarization through the provision of extension micro-videos to agents, the design of a call center; (iii) Setting up a remote sensing surveillance system for all locust threats; (iv) Revitalizing the phytosanitary monitoring units by strengthening material and financial resources; (v) Drawing up a locust control response plan at a cost of CFAF 3,206,000,000.

The Minister formulated the following expectations of the regional institutions:

- i. Identify decisions to be taken at the level of Heads of State given the multi-sectoral nature of the impact of the pandemic;
- ii. Coordinate or synergize the clinical research protocols initiated by certain countries such as Benin and Burkina Faso;
- iii. Provide leadership for the eventual adoption by Governments of the solutions arising from these protocols; the costly investments made by multinational laboratories in

- vaccine research and the economic stakes tend to under classify any solution that would come from simple, even effective protocols;
- iv. The maintenance and strengthening of trade within the ECOWAS area on agricultural products, inputs and agricultural equipment as well as the exemption of imports of these products (abolishing VAT or special derogation on imports of agricultural products);
- v. The reinforcement of the sub-regional food stock through specific trade agreements with countries (in Africa and foreign countries such as China) to accompany the Governments according to their food situation; a complete and dynamic evaluation of the food situation to be conducted by the States with the support of ECOWAS;
- vi. Advocating for the temporary suspension of debt payments and the use of resources for the fight against the pandemic;
- vii. Advocacy for directing resources from sub-regional projects towards urgent food assistance and agricultural production actions;
- viii. Assist countries and the different currency areas in reducing the mandatory capital reserve of banks to enable them to inject additional loans into the economy.
- ix. Decision on country borrowing from the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve and repayable "grain for grain" to manage the 2018 food situation.

9. **Cabo Verde.** The Minister recalled that his country is suffering from a third year of drought which requires measures to be taken to desalinate drinking and agricultural water. Agricultural production has also been affected by the armyworm and locusts. The contribution of agriculture to GDP increased from 8 to 3 per cent. He mentioned the creation of a public company for water management in the specific context of the country. The COVID-19 pandemic aggravates the crisis, given its impact on the economy, especially tourism, which contributes about 22% of the national GDP. In fact, 6 positive cases have been confirmed in Cape Verde, including one death. A state of emergency has been declared in the country. Passenger transport between the islands has been suspended and several health and social isolation measures are under way. Markets are severely affected. The Minister insisted on the climate of uncertainty with worrying budgetary problems (budgetary correction in preparation) due to the fall in economic activity (tourism, transport). Given that Cape Verde imports 80 per cent of basic foodstuffs (cereals, oils, milk, sugar), there is great concern about the increase in international prices, at a time when families' economic vulnerability is increasing sharply. In addition to this, the Minister noted other concerns which are (i) the uncertainty about the end of the pandemic and its effects on the economy, (ii) the State budget which will have to be rectified until June, given the sharp drop in income and therefore the lack of resources to support all the investments initially planned, and (iii) the weather and climate forecasts for the region for this year which are not yet available. In Cabo Verde, the rainy agricultural season will start in 3 to 4 months. The government has initiated a series of economic and social protection measures, covering businesses, the informal sector of the economy and the most vulnerable families. In the light of these facts, the Minister proposes the following:
- i. The creation of a working group to continue the reflection on the subject at the regional level;
 - ii. The prioritization of the agricultural sector at the regional level and at the country level, in the context of budgetary adjustments;
 - iii. Mobilization of additional resources to assist countries to complete their agricultural campaigns and to continue investments in the sector, including value chain structuring and water management;
 - iv. Food aid and the strengthening of financing mechanisms in the agricultural sector, including subsidized loans or debt relief;
 - v. A Desert Locust Contingency Plan and the strengthening of the early warning system.

10. **Côte d'Ivoire.** The Minister briefly recalled the efforts undertaken by Côte d'Ivoire since 2010 and the results obtained in both food and cash crop production under PNIASAN. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic must be assessed from two angles: the maintenance of current measures and the containment of Abidjan. Food crop production will be considerably impacted with, in particular, the cessation of hydro-agricultural developments and the suspension of agricultural development project activities (supply of inputs, advisory support to producers). The consequences of continued containment would be the cessation of projects that could lead to a 15 to 20% drop in production. The closure of borders affects regional trade, which makes a major contribution to food security in Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring countries. Regarding the urgent measures to be taken, and whatever the scenario, the Minister mentioned the urgent launching of the process for the acquisition of agricultural input kits, the identification of production sites already developed (evaluation of losses, mitigation measures), the distribution of kits and the provision of technical support to producers, the supervision of the harvesting of agricultural products and their marketing, particularly for the supply of Abidjan. He called for swift action, opening corridors to supply markets and joining efforts at the regional level to combat food insecurity in order to avoid famine, as the consequences of COVID-19 in one country will have impacts on neighboring countries.
11. **The Gambia.** The Minister mentioned at the outset that the country faces several challenges simultaneously: drought and COVID-19, which have immediate consequences with 82,000 people in food crisis (March-May 2020). This number could rise to 137,000 during the lean season if adequate measures are not taken. She stressed that in order to combat food insecurity, producers need input support, access to extension assistance schemes. Immediately, the Government of The Gambia will focus on facilitating access to agricultural inputs, strengthening the mechanism for supplying markets with agricultural inputs and products, and developing the country's water potential through irrigation. Finally, it requested ECOWAS support to facilitate the implementation of these actions.
12. **Senegal.** The Minister indicated that partial or total containment measures to curb the pandemic are essential but have major consequences on the food and nutritional security of the population, especially for the most vulnerable. These measures combined with the risks of locust and armyworm invasion are a matter of great concern. Impacts must be anticipated and minimized. The Minister stressed that the food policies put in place by Member States over the past 60 years need to be rethought. There is a need to facilitate the acquisition of inputs, develop food and cereal crops such as millet, maize, rice and cowpea. The government anticipates uncertainties and considers that approaches need to be reviewed, particularly to drastically reduce dependence on imports. The Minister recalled the progress made in agricultural production (2.8 million tonnes of cereals). In the face of the tourism crisis, agriculture must be a bulwark to limit the extent of the economic crisis. He mentioned the 2020-2022 strategy deployed on locusts (surveillance, alert, etc.), as well as the actions undertaken on techniques to control the legionary caterpillar. Senegal has the ambition to increase cereal production to 4 million tonnes as of the next wintering, by supporting producers by making inputs available coupled with technical support (setting up school fields on alternative locust control methods).

The total cost of the food security strategy in the context of COVID-19 and the locust invasion is estimated at about 127.4 billion FCFA. The Minister agreed to the establishment of a regional task force (analysis, consultation, planning, action). The Minister called on ECOWAS to create marketing corridors between countries to connect surplus and deficit markets in the context of border controls. He distinguished between immediate measures to assist affected households and long-term measures. In this regard, he recalled that no economic space is viable without food security and called on ECOWAS to (1) advocate for an increase in agricultural sector budgets at both national and regional levels; and (2) rethink the regional food security strategy.

13. **Sierra Leone.** The Minister noted that Sierra Leone had recorded a deficit of more than 500,000 tons of rice at the end of the crop year. In addition to this, there has been a dramatic increase in food prices in recent times. This situation has worsened with the COVID-19 situation for which the country has just recorded its first case as at 31 March 2020. A rate of 4.6% of the population is food insecure. To meet this challenge, it is necessary to acquire machinery and equipment for soil preparation work for the agricultural season. Thus, the Minister welcomed the ECOWAS initiative of this meeting and pleaded for actions to support his country to be undertaken by ECOWAS including support through the regional food security reserve because the major partner countries including China as a supplier of imported food is also affected. He concluded his remarks by recommending that ECOWAS should activate its existing agricultural sector support mechanisms such as the Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food, the Country Resilience Priorities (CRP) and also supported the proposals mentioned by his colleagues, including the ECOWAS-led pooled orders for tractors, inputs, etc., which are being implemented in the region.
14. **Togo.** The Minister stressed the convergence of the Ministers' interventions. He called for the activation of existing Community mechanisms, in particular the regional storage strategy with the three lines of defense. He wished for a rapid assessment of the capacities of local, national and RRSA stocks. The Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food should be mobilized to provide responses. He called on ECOWAS to increase its concrete interventions, particularly to facilitate access to production kits. He stressed the importance of establishing trade corridors between countries. He mentioned the dependence of small producers on remittances from the diaspora, which are currently difficult following COVID-19 and called on countries and the region to provide them with the means to increase their production. He mentioned the need to make direct transfers to communities through the mobilization of community levies. He stressed the need to build a flow and supply chain mechanism with the private sector. He raised the issue of livestock farming, which makes a major contribution to food balance (securing livestock farming systems, securing the movement of pastoralists, pastoral management, improving productivity, epidemio-surveillance). The Minister thus called for the development of the "One Health" approach combining human and animal health. As regards the Task Force, the Minister expressed the wish that it should be set up on an interdisciplinary basis, and with the inclusion of farmers' organizations. He noted that a combination of immediate activities was needed to ensure food security by implementing the necessary measures Country Resilience Plans (CRPs) developed under the AGIR Initiative - Plans for Immediate Responses to Vulnerable Populations:
- i. Production in the coming months (support in drip irrigation kits with inputs, fertilizers and seeds, small mechanization for 1 ha, breeding kits with feed for breeding nuclei etc.), for producers in irrigated basins and with market gardeners who can produce fruit and vegetables). Capitalize on the experiences of the WAPAPP and the management of the Ebola crisis;
 - ii. The need to have sub-regional stocks in synergy with national and Community stocks for social nets;
 - iii. Plans to supply nutritional products to local processing companies with firm contracts allowing them to initiate supplies with local producers;
 - iv. Development of logistics chains for the transport of agricultural products along corridors between surplus and deficit countries with the private sector.
15. Following these ministerial interventions, which were essentially convergent, the regional institutions were called upon to express their views on the situation and the measures envisaged.

16. The ASP of CILSS reaffirmed its readiness to be part of the Regional Task Force and to call on the operational programmes in the field to better respond to this new crisis situation. In this regard, it mentioned the importance of adjusting programmes in consultation with the TFPs to meet urgent needs, particularly in terms of the supply of production and irrigation development kits. With regard to weather forecasts, he indicated the availability of CILSS to refine the advice to be given to agricultural services and producers.
17. The UEMOA Director of Agriculture recalled that at the level of UEMOA organs and institutions, far-reaching measures have been taken. These are mainly the granting to UEMOA Member States of CFAF 120 billion in concessional loans through the WADB (CFAF 15 billion per State) with immediate availability, subsidized by the subsidy mechanism abounded by BCEAO for an amount of CFAF 25 billion and the UEMOA Commission for an amount of CFAF 15 billion. In addition to this, he mentioned the suspension of reimbursements due by the States for the rest of 2020, in order to support their responses to the pandemic of the new Coronavirus. To assess the economic impacts of COVID-19 in order to address adequate and coherent measures in the short, medium and long term, the President of the UEMOA Commission has set up a multidisciplinary action group. It is in this sense that UEMOA has stressed the importance of the multidisciplinary nature of the ECOWAS Task Force and indicated its readiness to contribute to it.

18. Summary of recommendations

19. At the end of the interventions of the Ministers and regional institutions, the ECOWAS Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources made a synthesis structured around the following main concerns:
 - Safeguard and secure livelihoods and production capacity and food supply chains in markets
 - Ensuring access to affordable food for all, especially vulnerable people during the COVID-19
 - Increase investment in the rural sector for the development of value chains from production to consumption.
 - Strengthening the coherence of the macroeconomic framework in the agricultural sector
 - Ensure coordination and monitoring of the regional action plan
20. In the area of **safeguarding livelihood security and production capacity and market food supply chains**, these include:
 - The good preparation of the agricultural campaign 2020/2021 to supply all producers with agricultural input kits (seeds, fertilizers, phytosanitary products), ensure agricultural advice by using technological innovations, continue research, all while ensuring the application of sanitary barrier measures recommended by the WHO;
 - The identification of production sites, stakeholders and their Professional Organizations as well as their needs in agricultural inputs for the agricultural season 2020/2021;
 - The maintenance and strengthening of crop grouping measures during primary marketing and the maintenance of transport services for agricultural products;
 - Development of storage and preservation capacities for fresh produce around the major markets;
 - To develop the processing capacities of agricultural products, in particular milk, fruit and market garden products;

- The preservation of the freedom of movement of trucks transporting agricultural products to the country's consumer markets;
- The lifting of all restrictions at the countries' land borders and ports on the free movement of agricultural inputs (in particular seeds, fertilizers and plant health products) and agricultural products;
- Strengthening the epidemiological surveillance of transboundary animal diseases (CBPP, PPR, avian influenza, swine influenza, etc.) in member countries and developing information sharing between countries and with the Bamako AHC;
- The strengthening of animal vaccination operations against transboundary animal diseases
- The continuation of hydro-agricultural development and soil protection and restoration work in progress;
- To continue water supply projects for vulnerable and displaced populations;
- Support to the informal sector and SMEs involved in production systems and food chains in the countries;
- Review of the PTBAs of national and regional projects and their alignment to cover the priority needs of producers and vulnerable people in the context of the fight against COVID-19.

21. In the area of access to **affordable food for all, especially vulnerable people during the lean season and the health crisis**, the focus is on:

- The promotion of social food and nutritional safety net projects and, in particular, productive net actions strengthening the economic and social integration of vulnerable populations in peri-urban and rural areas;
- The mobilization of water and the development of its multiple uses, particularly for human needs and agriculture;
- Mobilization and expansion of the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) stocks at its three levels (local, national and regional);
- To carry out grouped negotiations of supply contracts between the Region and countries supplying equipment and agricultural inputs;
- To develop contractual storage with the private sector in the countries and to support intra-regional trade in local agricultural products from surplus production basins to deficit areas both within the countries and between the countries of the Region.

22. In the area of **increasing investments in the agro-sylvo-pastoral sector**, this will involve:

- Maintaining the agriculture sector in the priorities of the budgetary and financial allocations of national budgets, despite the enormous constraints imposed by health and safety expenditure;
- The operationalization of the Regional Food and Agriculture Fund, the holding of the 1st session of the Supervisory Board and the implementation of assistance operations in the field;
- Compliance by the ECOWAS Commission with the commitments made to replenish the RAAF with resources at the minimum and timely allocation of US\$ 2 million per annum;
- Sensitization of TFPs for the replenishment of the ARAF in accordance with the commitments made;
- Animation of information systems (production, markets, stocks, etc.) and strengthening them so that they can continue to provide a basis for analysis and decision support;
- Relief, or even the cancellation of countries' external debt service and the allocation of the resources released to finance priority expenditure, including that of the agricultural sector as a whole;

- The preparation of structuring investment projects in the mobilization of water resources and the development of multiple uses of water, with priority being given to emergency projects in response to the situation in Mali, Niger Burkina Faso, Northern Nigeria and Cape Verde will have to be prepared rapidly;
- The preparation of new investment projects to develop cereals (rice, maize, millet, sorghum, fonio), tubers (manioc, yam, taro, etc.), cowpeas, soya, livestock (poultry, aquaculture, pig farming, small ruminants, cattle, camel, etc.) and livestock (poultry, aquaculture, pig farming, small ruminants, cattle, camel, etc.), milk, fruit and vegetables and the processing of agricultural products;
- Repairing new projects on pastoralism and trans-border transhumance with positive impacts on livestock development and the reduction of conflicts between farmers and herders.

23. In the field of **coordination and monitoring/evaluation of the regional action plan**, the following are involved:

- The establishment of a high-level multidisciplinary regional task force, led by ECOWAS in synergy with UEMOA and CILSS. It will be placed under the political authority of the Ministerial Technical Council specialized in Agriculture, and open to professional organizations and the private sector of the Region as well as to the leaders of the Technical and Financial Partners Groups of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS.
- The elaboration of a regional action plan by countries and IGOs which will be adopted by the Ministers in charge of the sector; the plan should make it possible to:
 - a. Define and clarify the role of countries and individual IGOs in its implementation;
 - b. Prepare a coordination, reporting and monitoring mechanism with the mobilization of the necessary resources at the international level from technical and financial partners.

24. At the end of this summary, the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Benin gave a closing speech. He welcomed the quality of the discussions and indicated that the region has already begun to transform this new crisis into an opportunity by developing new working methods. He stressed the guiding theme of the meeting: "strengthening the resilience of producers, populations and the region". He stressed two factors that are crucial to the success of the action plan against the pandemic, namely organization and methodology. He advocated the rehabilitation and deployment of community tools to deal with the crisis. He thanked all the Ministers and regional organizations for the quality of their contribution and the ECOWAS Commission for this initiative.

For the meeting

Done at Abuja on March 31, 2020

Commissionner Sékou SANGARE