

# Sahel Markets Under Pressure



## Summary

Harvests in Africa's Sahel region from the 2011/12 season are down sharply compared with last year and have been later than usual, extending the previous 'hunger gap' period. A further aggravating factor for the people of the region is that local grain prices failed to drop as they generally do in the period after the harvest. In December 2011, prices reached levels that were 80% above their five-year averages and remained at high levels, compromising access to adequate food for vulnerable populations. Together with the main agencies involved in the crisis, Oxfam, ROPPA, RBM, APSS, POSCAO and WILDAF estimate that more than 18 million people are currently in a situation of food insecurity in the Sahel.

Sahelian countries have a structural grain deficit and are usually supplied by coastal countries, as local supplies dwindle and prices increase in the run up to the hunger gap. This year, the markets will not be able to supply the deficit areas with adequate quantities or at affordable prices. The unusual spread of the deficit areas across the Sahel, from Senegal to Chad, further complicates grain supplies.

Conflict in northern Mali and to a lesser degree in Nigeria adds to the complexity of the crisis and the problems of providing an effective response. Furthermore, trade restrictions imposed by Mali and Burkina Faso, the high price levels of maize and millet in several coastal countries and the increased fuel prices in part of the region tend to reduce the movement of grain to deficit areas of the Sahel and to push costs up. As the hunger gap period approaches, it is likely that grain prices will continue to rise from their already abnormally high levels, especially as some areas are running shortages and as conflicts intensify in the region.

Many households are facing the fact that their sources of income are being undermined. Terms of trade are deteriorating for pastoral populations, as their traditional transhumance corridors are disturbed by regional conflicts. Displaced populations are intensifying pressure on the scarce natural resources still available and place an extra burden on the host populations. The impact of migrants returning from Libya will also be felt for the first time in a hunger gap, reducing the incomes of 3 million people in the Sahel. Numerous households are also facing a slump in casual labour opportunities due to border conflicts and the crisis in some cash crop industries, such as the onion industry in northern Niger. These work opportunities offer crucial coping strategies for the most vulnerable fringes of the population.

Oxfam ROPPA, RBM, APSS, POSCAO and WILDAF believe that the situation could continue to deteriorate sharply in the coming months, and call for an urgent deployment of resources to support those already affected by problems accessing food. The member states, ECOWAS and the international community should:

- Over the short term, support people's purchasing power and the functioning of the regional market (by facilitating the movement of grain within the region), while anticipating risks of major disruption to the markets over the coming months;
- In the mid-term, member states and ECOWAS should build capacities to regulate markets (national and regional), in particular by implementing the ECOWAS food security storage strategy.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

A large swathe of the population of the Sahel is in a situation of chronic food and nutritional insecurity. Even during a good harvest year, malnutrition rates remain among the highest in the world. Sahelian households have undergone several major food crises in 2005, 2008 and 2010, and so have been unable to rebuild their livelihoods.

On average, the people of the Sahel only produce half of their food needs and are not strongly integrated into the markets on which they trade their produce or their labour. Consequently, their access to food is based on three intrinsically linked elements: the markets being supplied in adequate quantities; affordable prices being maintained for staple foods; and the ability of their households to generate revenue. However, for a major part of the Sahelian population one or all of these elements is challenged or is likely to be so in the short term. More than eighteen million people are already food insecure in the Sahel because of the abnormally high prices seen since the harvest.

Analysts<sup>2</sup> have long debated the role of markets in preventing the spread of a major food crisis over the whole of the Sahel due to a lack access and availability. Moreover, it seems that the markets are failing to respond effectively to the food security challenge that confronts the region. The most optimistic outlook for markets has been disrupted by recent socio-political turmoil and the worsening security situation in the Sahel. Trading of agricultural products is especially hampered by increased border controls and harassment on the road which makes it hard to send supplies to areas with a grain deficit. Moreover, as the region moves gradually into the hunger gap period, prices remain abnormally high with no prospect of change in the short term. This situation could lead to supply disruptions in the areas affected by regional conflicts, thus making it more difficult for the most vulnerable households to access staple foods.

### The abnormally high level of grain prices since the harvest compromises access to food for the people of the Sahel

Final production estimates for the 2011/2012 agricultural season were released in March 2012 during a regional dialogue meeting that brought together the main regional and international institutions involved in analysing the food situation in West Africa (CILSS<sup>3</sup>, FAO<sup>4</sup>, WFP<sup>5</sup> and FEWSNET<sup>6</sup>) in Abidjan.<sup>7</sup> Since then, these different agencies have gradually confirmed the severity of the agro-pastoral crisis in the region.<sup>8</sup> Even if the production levels for the 2011/2012 agricultural season are within the five-year averages (+5%) throughout the ECOWAS region, yields are sharply down on the previous year for Sahel countries (-26%).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, these global figures hide major disparities within countries: some areas are particularly affected by production deficits and these deficits areas are normally spread differently across the Sahel<sup>10</sup> (see Table 1).

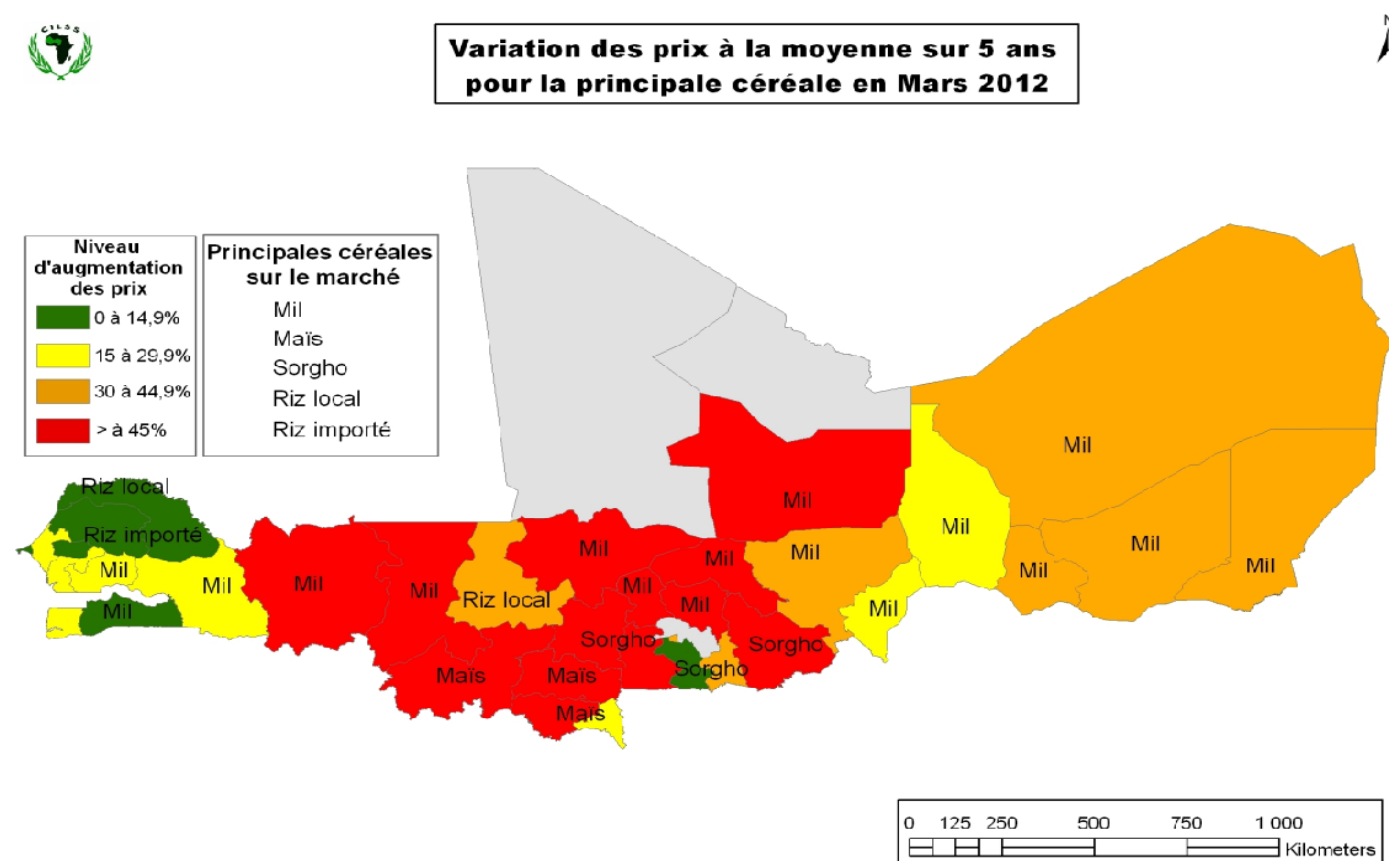
**Table 1: Overview of production estimates for the 2011/12 season and changes compared to previous years (based on various sources<sup>11</sup>)**

Zones/countries	Estimates for 2011/12 in tonnes	Gross deficit/excess for 11/12	Comparison with 2010/11 in %	Five year average in %
<b>West Africa</b>	54 780 000 (1)		-9% (1)	+5% (1)
<b>Sahel (CILSS)</b>	16 424 000 (1)		-26% (1)	-3% (1)
<b>Chad</b>	1 600 000 (3)	-595 091 (3)	-49% (1)	-23% (4)
<b>Niger</b>	3 628 000 (3)	-624 959 (2)	-31% (1)	-14% (2)
<b>Mauritania</b>	124 000 (3)	-465 000 (3)	-34% (1)	-38% (4)
<b>Mali</b>	5 138 000 (3)	+555 631 (2)	-20% (3)	+13% (2)
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	3 666 405 (3)	-154 462 (3)	-19.61% (1)	-5.09% (2)

In terms of the pastoral situation, the Sahel belt has a significant fodder deficit, exacerbated by poor water availability.<sup>12</sup> The situation seems especially difficult for the third year running in Niger, northern Mali and Burkina Faso.<sup>13</sup> According to some estimates, the pastoral hunger gap has already begun and some areas are badly affected such as in Niger.<sup>14</sup> This is made worse by the crisis in northern Mali which is disrupting traditional transhumance corridors: close to 100,000 heads of livestock from Mali are on their way to Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, far exceeding these countries capacities.<sup>15</sup> This situation increases the risk of conflict over the use of scarce pasture, and the current weak state of some herds diminishes the animals' market value and thus pastoralists' purchasing power.

The 'average' levels of the harvest over the whole region should not obscure the chronic food and nutritional insecurity that stalks the people of the Sahel populations as well as the growing problems they encounter in rebuilding their livelihoods following recurring crises in the Sahel. It is estimated that it takes a minimum of 3 years to rebuild a herd of goats or sheep and 5 to 8 years for a herd of cattle; but pastoralists in the Sahel are already seriously affected by the past crises of 2005, 2008 and 2010, and so are especially vulnerable to new shocks.

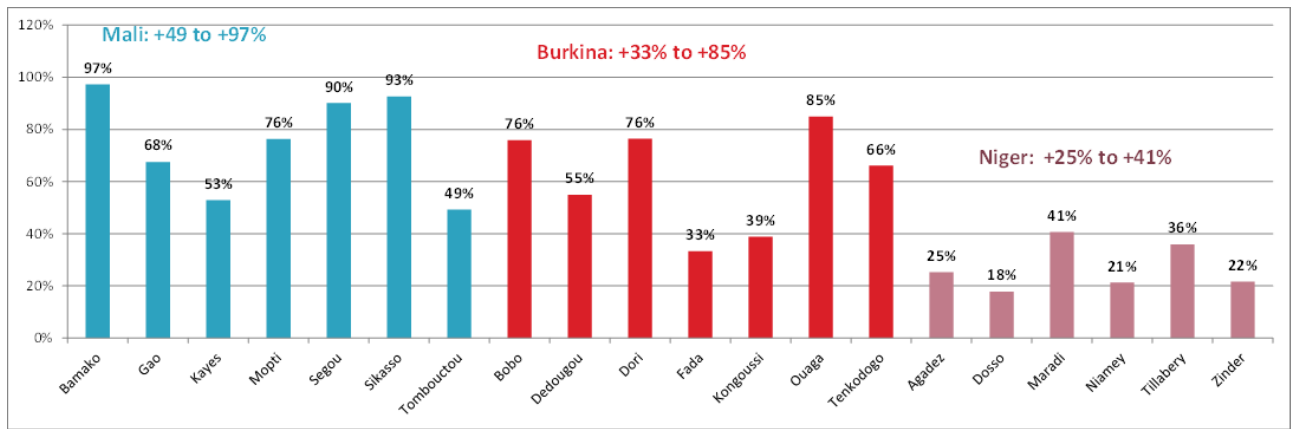
**Figure 1: Price increase for staple cereals in comparison to 5 year average, March 2012**



Source : CSA Sénégal, OMA Mali, SONAGESS Burkina, SIMA Niger, Afrique verte (for Kayes, Mali)

Furthermore, as can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, and in contrast to the usual cycle, the price of local grains has not declined in the period following the harvest. Instead, they have undergone sharp rises in Burkina Faso and Mali: the price of millet has nearly doubled in Bamako, Ségou and Sikasso compared with the average for the last five years. The price rises for local grains are also significant in Niger and Chad<sup>16</sup> compared with last year's level for the same period (March–April 2011).

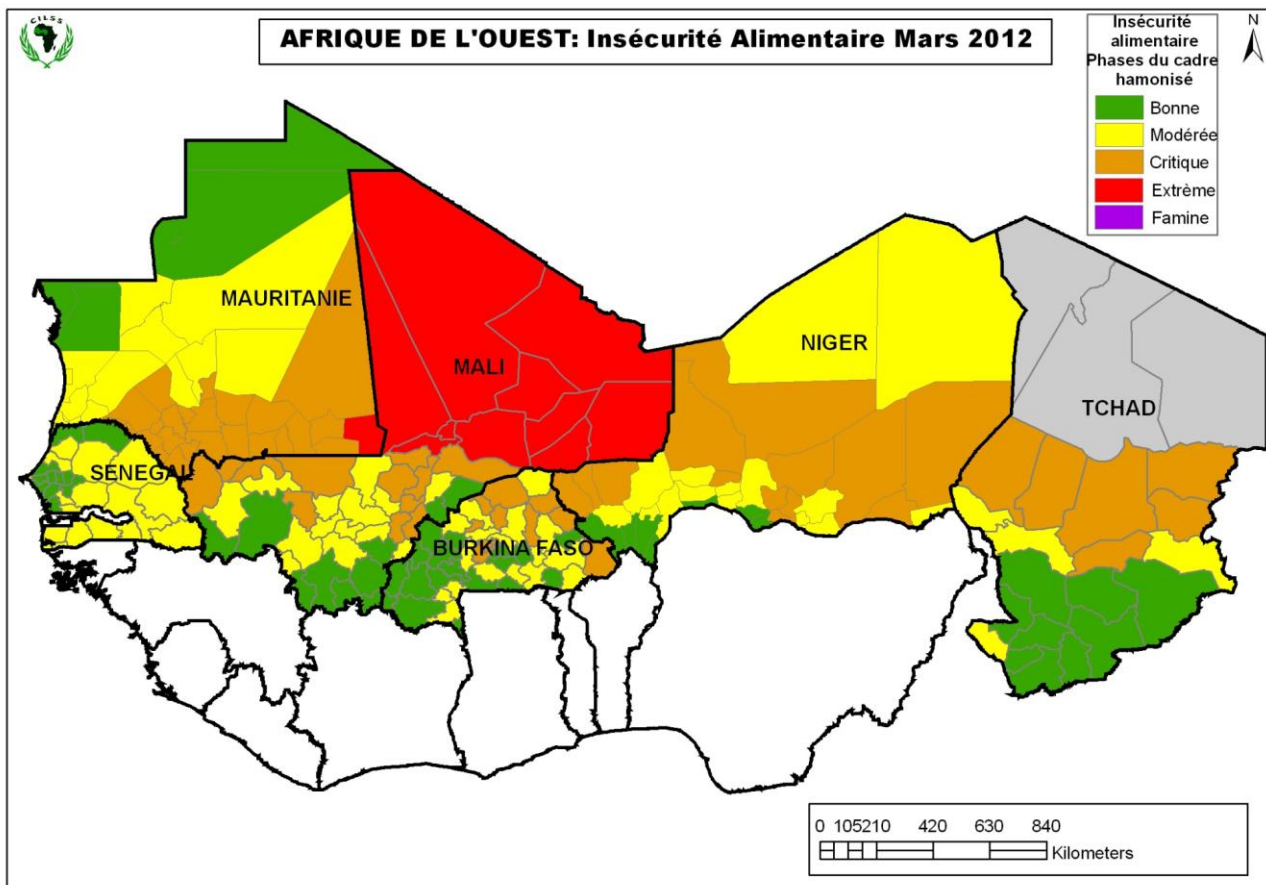
**Figure 2: Price levels for a sack of millet in April 2012 in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger compared with the average for 2008 –2011.**



Source: FAO, GIEWS

The population’s overall nutritional status is therefore deteriorating rapidly, despite the food distributions undertaken by governments and non-government organisations. According to the briefing note on food security from the Crisis Prevention Network in April 2012, the nutritional situation for children under 5 is a cause for concern and could worsen, especially in the Sahelian area of Chad, Timbuktu in Mali, the northern regions of Senegal, Benin, Nigeria and southern Mauritania. According to the United Nations, more than eighteen million people are currently food insecure in the Sahel.<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 3: Severity of food insecurity in Sahel in March 2012 (Cellule d’analyse du Cadre Harmonisé, Niamey 2–6 April 2012; CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET, WFP, GSU, ACF, OXFAM, Save the Children)**



Although grain prices stabilised in December 2011 in some areas, the respite was short lived and prices have continued their upward trend since March 2012 and have reached levels that make them hard to access for the poorest households. In contrast to the most optimistic projections, it seems that the regional market is unable to meet the challenges of food security in the region.

## **Market supply problems alongside increased budget constraints for vulnerable households**

Major uncertainties currently impinge on the capacity of markets in the Sahel to be supplied continuously and in adequate quantities to attenuate price rises in the run up to the hunger gap. Doubts on the actual availability of grains on the market add to the risk of major trade dysfunctions. Moreover, many households, especially in pastoral communities, are faced with shrinking sources of revenue or a decrease in their casual work opportunities, a crucial coping strategy for the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

### **Doubts persist on the supply capacities of Sahelian markets**

Although trade does not currently appear to be experiencing any major disruptions across the region, it is suffering significant shortcomings, especially in the central basin,<sup>18</sup> affected by insecurity and conflicts in northern Mali and Nigeria. Consequently, transfers between surplus and deficit areas are highly complicated.

While the remaining stocks held by producers and the reserves put aside by households will soon be exhausted in many areas;<sup>19</sup> stocks accumulated by traders do not significantly reduce grain prices on Sahel markets. Various studies have reported early purchasing after the harvest,<sup>20</sup> suggesting that as traders place stocks on the market this will release the pressure on the Sahel markets. Whether due to speculative behaviour or an over-estimation of availability, the most vulnerable households are currently being forced to get their supplies from the markets at particularly high prices. Moreover, institutional stocks do not anticipate a substantial supply to markets since, as of last February, they ranged between 25% and 50% below conventional levels in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.<sup>21</sup>

As for regional availability, the CILSS reported at the end of last year that one million tonnes of maize were available for purchase in Benin, Ghana, Guinea and Togo, regions that generally supply deficit areas of the Sahel.<sup>22</sup> However, price increases seen since September in coastal countries<sup>23</sup> may limit the scale of transactions in the coming months. In Ghana, the price of maize in January 2012 was double its average for the last four years in central and southern areas (+141% in Kumasi, +106% in Accra), i.e. a price level that is higher than in parts of the Sahel.<sup>24</sup> When they do go ahead, however, all too often these grain transfers are done at a high price, which limits the purchasing power of poor households.<sup>25</sup> In the face of such a situation, the ability of northern Côte d'Ivoire to continue with its exports will certainly be key to supplying deficit areas of the central Sahel basin in the coming months.<sup>26</sup>

Insecurity and conflict in northern Mali is causing major displacements of people within the country and into neighbouring countries,<sup>27</sup> disrupting the functioning of markets. The insecurity complicates access to information and prevents regular monitoring of prices and of market function. Affected by major production declines (50 to 80% down on the average<sup>28</sup>), the Sahel areas of Mali are poorly supplied and face major price increases in the areas under the control of armed groups. Routes to market and transhumance corridors are greatly affected and refugee or displaced livestock farmers face uncertain futures (see Box 1 below).

The escalation in violence seen in northern Nigeria at the start of the year has disrupted supply to Sahelian countries (especially Niger and Chad) from this region. Restrictions of movement (of people and goods) have been reported at some border posts in Nigeria (leading to a 90% reduction in volume in some instances<sup>29</sup>), as well as rises in transport prices resulting from an escalation in harassment and

corruption. The resumption of violence that happened over the Easter period in northern Nigeria had major repercussions on supplies to neighbouring countries. The FEWSNET bulletin on food security in Chad from March 2012 details the country's problems in importing cereals at cheap prices, as well as in selling livestock to Nigerian markets due to border closures<sup>30</sup>. WFP and FAO have stressed the major constraints that the insecurity in the region is bringing to bear on humanitarian access in the affected areas with the presence of armed groups as well as cross-border military activities and the proliferation of weapons in the Sahel.<sup>31</sup>

### Box 1: Pastoralist livestock farmers are especially affected by the conflict in northern Mali

The pastoral areas of Sahel countries are confronted simultaneously with the impacts of the drought on fodder and with insecurity. These conditions are forcing livestock farmers to leave very early on their transhumance. The situation is particularly critical in Mali, due to the worsening security situation which affects first and foremost the pastoral areas.<sup>32</sup> This political/military crisis has dramatically worsened the social, security and humanitarian situation in the three regions of the north of the country (Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal), which have been under the control of the MNLA<sup>33</sup> and the Ansar Dine movement since the beginning of April 2012. The fighting has destroyed the supply structures and caused a trade stoppage.<sup>34</sup> The situation has caused a massive population exodus, particularly among pastoral communities, to the south of the country and to neighbouring countries (more than 315,000 people are displaced or refugees in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso). Recent analyses estimate that there could be pockets of famine in northern regions of Mali and raise the alarm on particularly high rates of malnutrition.

The host regions for displaced populations are also facing a deficit from the agro-pastoral season and risk shortages of supply in fodder, and animal mortality could increase substantially. The corridors unaffected by armed conflict have far exceeded their capacities and animals are suffering terribly from lack of water, pasture, food supplements and veterinary services.<sup>35</sup>

The situation is especially hard in Mauritania, which has to deal with returning livestock farmers who traditionally move through the transhumance corridors of northern Mali from January, as well as with an influx of Tuareg fleeing Mali since February. The Réseau Billital Maroobé estimates that Mauritania faces a fodder crisis that is even more severe than that induced by the drought in the 1970s, escalating the risk of conflicts between communities of livestock herders and farmers.<sup>36</sup>

To the problems brought on by conflicts can be added the trade restriction measures adopted by Mali and Burkina Faso to try and reduce the price hikes in their countries, which go against commitments made in November 2011 in the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises.<sup>37</sup> In Burkina Faso, a circular has prohibited the export of grains since December 2011. Contrary to the hoped for effect, this decision seems to have cut the availability of millet in the major markets in Burkina Faso, especially in Ouagadougou, as they are usually supplied by traders bringing in grain to export out of the country.

In Mali, grain exports are subject to a permit that is granted on a case-by-case basis, causing a proliferation of red tape and increasing the cost of transport to the deficit areas in neighbouring countries.<sup>38</sup> These restrictions have significantly reduced transfers of grain to the north-eastern part of Niger (Tillabéri), a structurally vulnerable area dependent on transfers from national surplus areas and the closest cross-border markets.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the low capacity of the trade systems (storage, transport, networks and connections with border authorities, etc.) in some countries affected by the crisis that are located in the central basin (generally less affected by high food deficits) may exacerbate problems with transporting grain to deficit areas. It is also likely that supplies to the Sahel belt of Chad will run up against weak equity capital being available to traders. Furthermore, the resulting increase in fuel prices at the pump in Nigeria (+50% between December 2011 and January 2012<sup>40</sup>) will have a lasting impact on the cost of food exports as well as on the cost of transport to Niger and Chad, which depend heavily on smuggled fuel.

While regional trade is usually subject to informal barriers such as harassment and corruption, the situation is currently aggravated by the context of insecurity and the administrative restrictions placed on cereal exports. At a time when regional trade is crucial to reducing pressure on Sahelian markets, the negative impacts could be significant for supplies to deficit areas and for price levels. Furthermore, people's problems in accessing food are compounded by tightening budget restrictions for many households and reduced opportunities for income generation.

### **Erosion of livelihoods and household coping strategies amplify problems accessing food**

Sahelian households on average only produce about half of their food needs. They are therefore highly dependent on markets to trade their produce or labour so as to have access to food; this might include agricultural employment, migration or various economic activities conducted locally (sale of work, labour on the market, etc.). These coping strategies help them to survive, but they are highly susceptible to changes in local economic and security contexts. Today, many Sahelian households are confronted by reduced opportunities for casual work and therefore a downturn in their incomes. For the pastoral communities, the declining terms of trade for livestock further worsen the food situation.

In response to higher grain prices since the harvest, a lack of pasturing and the drying up of watering points, many animals have been put on the market early, precipitating a fall in the price of small ruminants.<sup>41</sup> Declining terms of trade for livestock and grain have worsened and occurred earlier, especially in Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad. In December 2011, in Ndjamena, Chad, a livestock farmer could get 120kg of millet by selling one sheep, compared with 157kg in the previous season, 2010–2011.<sup>42</sup> The situation has probably worsened since, in light of the difficulty of selling livestock on the Nigerian market because of cross-border insecurity.

Erratic rainfall and low levels in the water points have also limited opportunities for market gardening and producing cash crops in parts of the Sahel, further reducing farmers' incomes. In central Chad, poor rains and losses due to bird attacks on the crops mean that household incomes derived from the sale of groundnuts, sesame, straw and vegetables are less than the average for March this year, forcing households to cut the number of their daily meals compared with seasonal norms.<sup>43</sup>

Niger, on the other hand, has an onion industry (the second highest export earner for the country after uranium) that has been hit by a crisis of over-production, which has direct consequences on people's incomes and on opportunities for agricultural labour (see Box 2).

#### **Box 2: The onion crisis impacts heavily on the incomes of producers and farm workers**

Due to a major increase in areas under cultivation, encouraged by remunerative prices after the previous harvest and the significant funding allocated by BAGRI (Agricultural Bank of Niger), the onion industry is faced with an over-production crisis. Sales prices collapsed in January by 60% to 80% compared with the average of the last three years.<sup>44</sup> Due to high grain prices, farmers' purchasing power has been significantly eroded: thus in February 2012, an onion grower could only purchase 79kg of millet by selling a 100kg sack of onions, compared with 282kg at the same time last year.<sup>45</sup>

Unable to sell their produce at prices above production costs, many growers have abandoned their plots in the region of Agadez and Tahoua. Not only has market access thus been limited, but also many of them find themselves unable to pay the casual workers that they had hired, as well as the debts that they had contracted to purchase fuel and essential household supplies during the growing season. The onion crisis could disrupt supplies to production areas, in that the trucks used to transport onions also brought supplies to the growers and these flows have slowed down considerably.

As a result of the problems encountered by several cash crop and farming industries, opportunities for casual or seasonal work have been undermined in many areas of the Sahel,<sup>46</sup> despite the fact that they

are often crucial resources for the most vulnerable households. Temporary migration in search of work is also greatly reduced in areas affected by conflict, for example in the border areas of Nigeria due to the reported violence against foreigners.

Finally the loss of income from remittances from migrants increases the strain on households, especially the poorest ones, for whom this manna from abroad can represent between one-third and a half of their total income.<sup>47</sup> The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that the remittances of each person returning from Libya used to support around 7 people in their home country. Consequently, around 3 million people in the Sahel will be affected by the Libyan crisis, the impacts of which will be felt for the first time during the hunger gap in the coming months.<sup>48</sup> This major loss of income comes on top of the additional cost burden for the home communities in the vulnerable areas.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, and as detailed in the food security briefing of April 2012 by the Food Crisis Prevention Network,

*'the accumulation of aggravating factors (drop in agricultural production, high grain prices, poor pastoral situation, drop in prices for certain off-season products such as onions, reduced resilience among vulnerable households, population movements, etc.) is not sufficiently compensated for by favourable factors (increased prices for some cash crops, coping mechanisms, etc).'*<sup>49</sup>

Sahelian populations are already especially vulnerable to shocks following crisis periods that are coming more closely together than ever, and which are slashing their incomes, undermining their livelihoods and reducing their borrowing capacity. A swathe of the population has seen their abilities to generate income further reduced, following low rainfall and heightened insecurity in part of the region, while they have to contend with abnormally high grain prices. Market failures are already being felt in many areas and there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding the ability of regional trade to supply markets with adequate quantities of food in the coming months, increasing the risk of a worsening food security situation. Analysis of the situation suggests that urgent action on a large scale needs to be rolled out to support the market and to allow the people of the Sahel access to food in adequate quantities and quality in the approach to and throughout the hunger gap.

### **Act before it is too late: recommendations to political decision makers and the international community**

Despite early warnings and actions undertaken by governments in several Sahelian countries, Oxfam ROPPA, RBM, APSS, POSCAO and WILDAF consider that the situation may continue to deteriorate sharply in the next few months. Based on the analysis developed in this note, Oxfam ROPPA, RBM, APSS, POSCAO and WILDAF call for urgent mobilisation of resources by the region's governments, ECOWAS and the international community to support those populations already affected by the problems of accessing food.

#### **In the short term, interventions by governments and the international community should:**

- Focus on transfers of income and supporting the population's capacity to generate income (loans, casual work opportunities) as long as markets are adequately supplied (both in terms of quantities and of affordable prices);
- Support the regional market in the short term by facilitating the movement of grain within the region. This could involve:



- Lifting administrative border closures and combating informal barriers to trade; eliminating taxes on animal feed (VAT); having tax-free grain imports or subsidising imports from the sub-region;
- Supporting small businesses to enable them to supply deficit areas (providing access to credit in the short term and supporting storage capacities in the medium term);
- Avoiding further weakening of the markets by making major humanitarian grain purchases locally;
- Supporting the purchase and distribution of animal fodder in zones affected by chronic pasture shortages.

**In the medium term, member states and ECOWAS should strengthen market regulatory capacities (national and region) by:**

- Developing and implementing the ECOWAS food security storage strategy<sup>50</sup> as quickly as possible, to support the (re)constitution of food stocks for the community, nationally and regionally, and ensure they are linked together to respond to the challenges of regulating prices and food security;
- Integrating into the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) safeguard measures to institute and dismantle tariffs in a concerted manner to combat price volatility, whether this is 'imported' or mainly due to internal causes.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> As defined by the ECOWAS Task Force meeting of 5–7 March 2012.
- <sup>2</sup> Market information systems, FEWSNET, CILSS, WFP, FAO, etc.
- <sup>3</sup> Comité permanent inter-États de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le sahel (permanent inter-state committee for drought control in the Sahel). For Burkina Faso, figures based on data published in February 2012. For Chad, based on definitive gross deficit figures published by CASAGC after agricultural survey, February 2012.
- <sup>4</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations).
- <sup>5</sup> World Food Programme (United Nations).
- <sup>6</sup> USAID Famine Early Warning System.
- <sup>7</sup> Regional consultation on the food and nutritional situation in the Sahel and West Africa, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) 13–15 March 2012.
- <sup>8</sup> Sécurité alimentaire et implications humanitaires en Afrique de l'Ouest et au Sahel –Joint Note FAO/WFP April 2012
- <sup>9</sup> Regional consultation on the food and nutritional situation in the Sahel and West Africa, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) 13–15 March 2012.
- <sup>10</sup> The pockets of poor agro-pastoral and fishing production lie particularly in the Sahelian areas of Chad, the agro-pastoral region of Mauritania, the northern regions of Kayes and Koulikoro and the Delta of the Niger River in Mali, the North, centre north and eastern regions of Burkina Faso, the regions of Niamey, Tillabéry, south east of Zinder in Niger and some localised parts of Senegal and the Gambia. (Source: Strategy Document 2012. The Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group .Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC), Dakar.)
- <sup>11</sup> Sources : (1) CILSS, FEWSNET, FAO,WFP: Regional consultation on the food and nutritional situation in the Sahel and West Africa, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) 13-15 March 2012; (2) CILSS : Presentation during the first meeting of the high level committee on food security in the WAEMU zone, 14 February 2012, Niger ; (3) CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET, WFP: joint note on market evaluation and the food situation in the Sahel; January 2012; (4) FAO: briefing note. Crisis in the Sahel 2012 : safeguarding food security and livelihoods (February 2012)
- <sup>12</sup> Idem.
- <sup>13</sup> Food security briefing note from the Food Crisis Prevention Network, n 46, March April 2012
- <sup>14</sup> FAO Report Niger March 2012
- <sup>15</sup> Food security briefing note from the Food Crisis Prevention Network, n 46, March April 2012
- <sup>16</sup> Sécurité alimentaire et implications humanitaires en Afrique de l'Ouest et au Sahel – Joint Note, FAO/WFP, April 2012
- <sup>17</sup> Announcement made by the United Nations Secretary General on 17 April 2012, <http://www.un.org/apps/newsFr/storyF.asp?NewsID=28012>
- <sup>18</sup> West Africa can be divided into several regional basins which represent the trading sub-spaces: the 'eastern basin' groups together Benin, Niger, Nigeria and Chad; the 'central basin' is made up of Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire; the 'western basin' is centred around Senegal and includes Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia and Cap Verde, southern Mauritania and western Mali.
- <sup>19</sup> This is true for example in Burkina Faso in the regions of Gourma, Central East and Central North according to Afrique Verte and in Mauritania. In Gambia, household food stocks have gone from 6 months on average to only 2–3 months (Sources : Afrique Verte ; Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group)
- <sup>20</sup> CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET, WFP (January 2012): Joint note on evaluating the markets and the food situation in the Sahel.
- <sup>21</sup> Presentation by CILSS at the first meeting of high level committee on food security in the WAEMU zone, 14 February 2012, Niger.
- <sup>22</sup> FAO, WFP (January 2012): Food security and humanitarian implications In West Africa and the Sahel
- <sup>23</sup> The price of maize was higher by 17% in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, 30% and 60% on the markets in Togo and Ghana in September/October 2011 compared with the average of the past 5 years. Source: WFP (Nov. 2011). Markets and food assistance in the Sahel. *Initial post-harvest review*.
- <sup>24</sup> WFP (January 2012). The Coarse Grain Market in the Sahel : implications for the response to the 2012 food crisis.
- <sup>25</sup> FAO, WFP (December 2011): Food security and humanitarian implications In West Africa and the Sahel
- <sup>26</sup> Idem.
- <sup>27</sup> Latest estimates from March 2012 put the number of refugees in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Algeria and Niger at close to 90 000 while around 70 000 are internally displaced in Mali. (Source : OCHA 6 March 2012. Mali : Armed conflict and population movement).
- <sup>28</sup> FEWSNET, Mali : Summary of the market and food security situational analysis, February 2012.
- <sup>29</sup> Border closures between Nigeria and neighbouring countries (Chad, Niger) have been reported by FEWSNET (February 2012) following violence perpetrated by Boko Haram in areas close to the border.

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- <sup>30</sup> FEWSNET (March 2012) : Chad Food Security Outlook Update.
- <sup>31</sup> FAO, WFP (December 2011): Food security and humanitarian implications In West Africa and the Sahel.
- <sup>32</sup> Special summary Bulletin , 'The food, pastoral and nutritional crisis in the Sahel in 2012', Special May 2012 edition.
- <sup>33</sup> Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA).
- <sup>34</sup> Sécurité alimentaire au Sahel Niveau de vulnérabilité au Mali, Niger, Tchad, Burkina Faso, Sénégal et Mauritanie en mars 2012. Rencontre de la Cellule Régionale d'analyse du Cadre Harmonisé, Niamey 2-6 avril 2012 (WFP, FAO, FEWSNET, Oxfam, Save The Children, ACF).
- <sup>35</sup> Réseau Billital Maroobé. Advocacy for pastoralism : « L'insécurité et la crise pastorale dans le Sahel : les éleveurs pasteurs appellent au secours »
- <sup>36</sup> Special summary Bulletin, 'The food, pastoral and nutritional crisis in the Sahel in 2012', Special May 2012 edition.
- <sup>37</sup> The 'Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises in West Africa' was adopted on 17 November 2011 in Conakry by the ECOWAS Ministers of Agriculture and from Mauritania and Chad. The signatory states undertook in particular to 'Refrain from any restriction of local or triangular trade between surplus and deficit areas and allow free regional food trade'.
- <sup>38</sup> FAO, WFP (January 2012): Food security and humanitarian implications In West Africa and the Sahel.
- <sup>39</sup> Albichir n°28, February 2012. In depth analysis of markets and food security in Niger. WFP, FEWSNET, SIMA : <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp246130.pdf>
- <sup>40</sup> FAO, WFP (January 2012): Food security and humanitarian implications In West Africa and the Sahel.
- <sup>41</sup> In Agadez, Niger, the prices applied in March 2012 were on average twice as low as usual levels (Oxfam internal mission to Agadez).
- <sup>42</sup> FAO, WFP (January 2012): Food security and humanitarian implications In West Africa and the Sahel.
- <sup>43</sup> FEWSNET (mars 2012) : Chad Food Security Outlook Update.
- <sup>44</sup> WFP Niger internal note, based on data from the Niger Chambers of Agriculture and SIMA.
- <sup>45</sup> Albichir n°28, February 2012. In depth analysis of markets and food security in Niger. WFP, FEWSNET, SIMA : <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp246130.pdf>
- <sup>46</sup> In Chad, conflicts in Nigeria and problems exporting ground nuts and sesame have seen their prices drastically drop in recent months (source : FEWS NET, CILSS, 19 March 2012. special joint report) ; the crisis in the onion industry in Niger affects many seasonal workers; the production of ground nuts and niebe have also suffered production losses of 15% to 20% across the Sahel (AGHYMET presentation to the RPCA Praia, 8 to 10 December 2011).
- <sup>47</sup> Save The Children (June 2010) : Fresh challenges to the food security in the Sahel, Briefing note.
- <sup>48</sup> CILSS, FAO, FEWS NET, WFP (January 2012): Joint note on evaluating the markets and the food situation in the Sahel.
- <sup>49</sup> Food security information update from the Food Crisis Prevention Network n 46, March April 2012.
- <sup>50</sup> As defined by the ECOWAS Task Force meeting of 5 –7 March 2012.

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail [ehazard@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:ehazard@oxfam.org.uk)

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## Oxfam

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations networked together in 92 countries as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty. Oxfam is active in all the most affected countries of the Sahel, launching or scaling up programmes focussed on food security, livelihoods and access to safe water and good hygiene practices, to meet immediate needs as well as strengthen resilience. Oxfam aims to reach 1.2 million people with humanitarian assistance programmes in 2012.

Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

## ROPPA

The network of Peasant Organizations and Producers in West Africa (ROPPA) was officially founded in July 2000 during a meeting in Cotonou. The network gathers 13 national farmer's organisations from West Africa and some associated members (Cap Verde and Nigeria). As a strategic actor on food sovereignty issues, ROPPA's attention was quickly raised by the first signs of a food crisis in West Africa. This commitment has been demonstrated by efforts done in monitoring the situation as well as interacting with key stakeholders and participating in forward thinking with regional partners on research tools for sustainable management of the structural causes of the crisis and its implications. [www.roppa.info](http://www.roppa.info)

## Réseau Billital Maroobé

Réseau Billital Maroobe (RBM) brings together associations of pastoralists and breeders from 7 West African countries, and plays a role in monitoring the situation of pastoralists in zones affected by the food crisis. In 2010, RBM conducted a study that highlighted the shortcomings of mechanisms to support strategies of pastoralist communities, while in October 2011 the network drew the attention of governments and donors to the impending food and pastoral crisis in the Sahel. RBM has been highlighting the impact of the current crisis on pastoralists and is currently engaged in action research on access to food and livestock in vulnerable pastoralist households. [www.maroobe.org](http://www.maroobe.org)

## APESS

Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage au Sahel et en Savane brings together livestock breeders from 9 countries in West Africa and 3 in Central Africa, including Chad. APESS works to modernise family farms to allow breeders to ensure their food security and increase their income. APESS was created in 1989 in Burkina Faso and reaches over 75,000 families across the countries it works in. APESS conducted a study in Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon on the strategies developed by livestock breeders to meet their family's food needs. This study showed that the integration between livestock and farming is better able to ensure food security. L'APESS will continue to encourage this strategy. [www.apessafrique.org](http://www.apessafrique.org)

## WiLDAF

WiLDAF West Africa (WiLDAF/FeDDAF-AO) was created in April 1997. It is part of WiLDAF's vast regional network created in 1990 with the goal of promoting and strengthening strategies which link the right to development with the emergence of a culture of the respect and realisation of the rights of women in West Africa. It is a network specialising in the promotion of women's rights as an integrated part of development. It covers 9 countries. Since January 2009 the network has committed to help rural women use the law as a tool to promote their autonomy and the development of the rural world. [www.wildaf-ao.org](http://www.wildaf-ao.org)