FOOD SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS IN WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

N°63 - March 2015

KEYS POINTS

- Globally good agricultural production in the Sahel and West Africa 2014-2015 campaign.
- The regional analysis of the Cadre harmonisé in March showed that 4,749,000 persons will be in a situation of food security crisis and emergency in the region from March to May 2015.
- From June 2015, the nutritional situation in the Sahel may become worrying, as global acute malnutrition rates are expected to exceed the alert threshold (10 percent) in several areas, and may reach the emergency threshold (15 percent) in some places.
- The humanitarian situation in Northeast Nigeria and neighbouring countries continue to deteriorate.

Sections

The agricultural production in 2014-2015 is satisfactory for the Sahel and West Africa. The expected grain production is estimated at over 61.6 million tons. Cereal production is 7 percent higher than last year and up 10 percent compared to the last five years average. In the Sahel, cereal production is about 21 million tons, up 7.4 percent compared to the last five years average. However, a decrease in production was recorded in Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal.

The pastoralist situation is characterized by an average pasture and water availability and and consequently there are some difficulties on animal feeding in some areas of Chad, Mauritania, Senegal and to a lesser extent in Niger and Mali.

Markets are adequately supplied on cereals and prices of major food items are generally stable with a downward trend compared to last year and the last five years average. In countries affected by the Ebola virus disease, grain prices are also stable except in Sierra Leone where price increases are still observed following the disruption of production and marketing.

The Cadre harmonisé analysis shows that 4,749,000 people are expected to be in crisis and emergency in all countries between March and May 2015 and that number may reach 7,364,000 people during the lean season between June and August 2015.

Recommendations for regional partners

To go to section

→ Monitor population displacement due to conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR), Northeastern Nigeria and Northern Mali.

→ Advocacy for a timely funding of priority actions of the Sahel Humanitarian Appeal.

→ Strengthen the monitoring of Ebola virus disease impact on food security in the countries affected and at risk.

Objective : *Within the framework of the monthly meetings of the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group for West Africa, it has been agreed that, in a humanitarian perspective, WFP and FAO provide the group with highlights on the food security situation of the previous month*

2014-2015 Agro-pastoral campaign:

Globally good agricultural production in West Africa / Sahel

The results of the Regional Consultation on the food and nutrition situation in the Sahel and West Africa (PREGEC) held in Nouakchott (Mauritania) from 1 to 3 April 2015 indicate that the 2014-2015 cereal production in the Sahel and West Africa is 61.6 million tons. It is higher by 7 percent from last year and up 10 percent compared to the average of last five years. Except for millet, which is down by 12 percent, productions of the main crops are increasing compared to the average of the past five years (+3 percent for sorghum, +15 percent for maize and +25 percent for rice).

In the Sahel, cereal production (about 21 million tons) was up by 7.3 percent and 7.4 percent respectively compared to last year and the average of the last five years, however, production declines have been recorded in Senegal (-2 percent and -16 percent), The Gambia (-23 percent and -16 percent), Guinea Bissau (-38 percent and -33 percent) and Cape Verde (-82 percent and -83 percent) due to the rainfall deficit in these countries.

In the Gulf of Guinea countries, cereal production is estimated at 40.6 million tons, an increase by 6.8 percent compared to last year and 12 percent compared to the average of the last five years.

Other productions, namely tubers, groundnuts and cowpeas, have increased in the region by 18 percent, 15 percent and 4 percent compared to the average of the past five years.

Concerning pastoralism, the availability of pasture and water is average in the region. However, the livestock food situation is currently difficult because of the low availability of pasture and water in the Sahelian zone of Chad, in the southeast of Mauritania and in central and northern Senegal and in places in Niger and Mali. Transhumance is disturbed around Lake Chad and the north of Mali, due to the combined effect of the pasture deficit and civil insecurity. Conflicts between farmers and herders are perceptible in some host areas in northern Togo and Benin.

Seasonal forecasts for the Gulf of Guinea (PRESAGG-02)

The probable evolutions in precipitation for the next main rainy season were analyzed during the Regional Forum of seasonal climate forecasts for the Gulf of Guinea (PRESAGG-02), held in Cotonou (Benin) from 9 to 13 March 2015. The results are:

- From March to June 2015, an average to deficient rainfall compared to the seasonal average is expected on most of the Gulf of Guinea region;
- An average to late start of the rainy season is expected in the South of Togo, in Benin and in parts of Southeastern Nigeria and Ghana. In other areas, the starting would be early to medium;
- Normal end date of the rainy season are expected along the entire coastline of the Gulf of Guinea, except in south-central Nigeria, where they would be rather late to normal;
- Intra-seasonal dry spells longer than those usually observed are expected particularly in coastal parts of Benin, Togo, Ghana, southwestern Nigeria and in the extreme south-western Côte d'Ivoire.

Displacement situation in the region

The humanitarian crisis in north-eastern Nigeria and neighboring countries worsens

Nigeria : In the three northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the fighting continues between the Nigerian armed forces and their allies, on one side and insurgents on the other. Other states such as Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba were affected by security incidents and population displacement. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria is 1,235,294. UNHCR

Niger : Since the declaration of a state of emergency in May 2013 in the three Northeastern states of Nigeria affected by the attacks of Boko Haram, thousands of Nigerian refugees and Nigerien returnees have sought refuge in the region of Diffa in southern Niger. The displaced are mainly from the regions of Diffa and Bosso, and since March 2015, a new movement of displaced people is noted from the islands of Lake Chad in Niger territory. Since January 2015, the Government of Niger has estimated at 100,000 the number of refugees and returnees while the displaced is estimated at around 50,000. UNHCR

Chad : A rapid food security assessment conducted by WFP in Western Sahel shows that the food security situation of the displaced populations is particularly difficult. The assessment indicates that nine out of ten refugees, about 17,300 refugees, are affected by food insecurity, of which 1,073 by severe food insecurity.

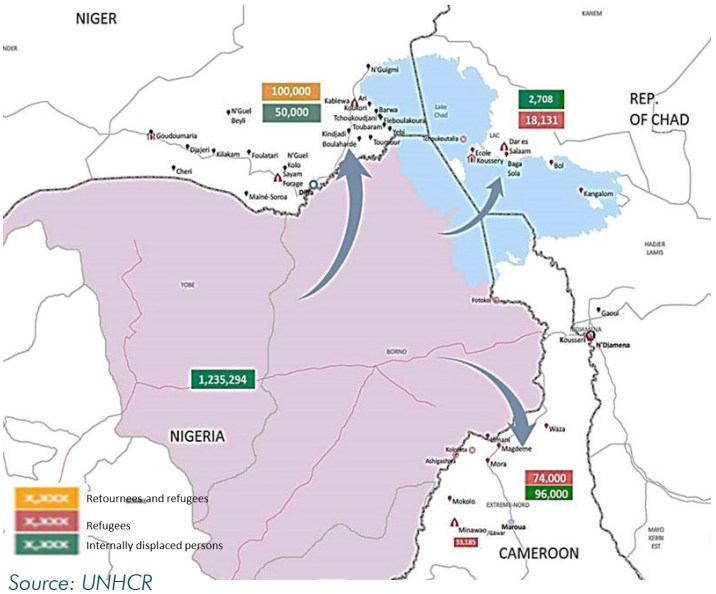
Displacement situation in the region (continued)

The humanitarian crisis in north-eastern Nigeria and neighboring countries worsens

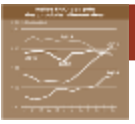
Chad : In addition, 14,300 internally displaced people 2,900 returnees are affected by food insecurity. The disaggregated analysis shows a particularly fragile food situation in North Kanem departments (70 percent), Kanem (51 percent), Bahr El Gazal North (49 percent), Bahr El Gazal South (49 percent) and Mandi (42 percent). In this department, the deterioration of the food situation is exacerbated by the influx of refugees, returnees and IDPs.

Cameroon : With incursions of armed group Boko Haram on Cameroonian soil in late 2014 and early 2015 and the massive insecurity on the border between the region of the Far North of Cameroon and the states of Adamawa and Borno in Nigeria, the number of refugees registered by the Government of Cameroon amounts to the date of 25 March 2015 to 74,000 and 96,000 local residents in the Far North region have been displaced and are now housed by host communities. UNHCR

Figure 1 : Nigeria : displacement population situation (March 25, 2015)



Source: UNHCR



Trends on international markets

The FAO Food Price Index dips to its lowest level since July 2010

The **FAO Food Price Index** averaged 179.4 points in February 2015, down 1.8 points (1 percent) from its January value and 29 points (14 percent) below its level in February 2014. Prices of cereals, meat and, especially, sugar, dipped last month, while they remained steady in the case of oils and rebounded sharply in the case of dairy products. The index has been on a declining path since April 2014 and has now reached its lowest value since July 2010.

The **FAO Cereal Price Index** averaged 171.7 points in February, down 5.6 points (3.2 percent) from January. Prices of wheat, coarse grains and rice were all lower, but the decline was most pronounced for wheat, reflecting continued improvement in the 2015 wheat production prospects, amid already large world inventories. Prices of maize, which competes with lower quality wheat in feed rations, also declined. Rice prices were more stable, as marked increases in aromatic rice quotations partly compensated for falling prices in the other rice categories

Figure 2 : FAO Food Price Index

Source: FAO

In February, the rice world prices went down once again, returning to those levels prior to the 2008 crisis. It is very likely that this downward trend continues in the following months. The world exportable supply is still abundant and the import demand is stable, waiting for prices to decline again. InterRice

Market trends in West Africa

Relatively low prices with the exception of Ghana and surrounding areas of northern Nigeria

In March 2015, markets remain well supplied with cereal of all types, resulting in satisfying availability in the region. Off-season crops are also largely available. Prices for main commodities are typically stable or even trend downwards during this period thanks to good availability and a generally low demand.

In fact, along the Central Basin, prices in Mali remain stable while in Niger prices are relatively low compared to last year and their 5 year averages. In Burkina Faso, prices remain stable compared to previous years, some increase are noted in the South. The case of Ghana stands out as the exception. The hold of the subsidies on agricultural inputs and fuel in July 2014 has affected agricultural value chains. Further Ghana faces economic challenges such as high inflation and budget deficits.

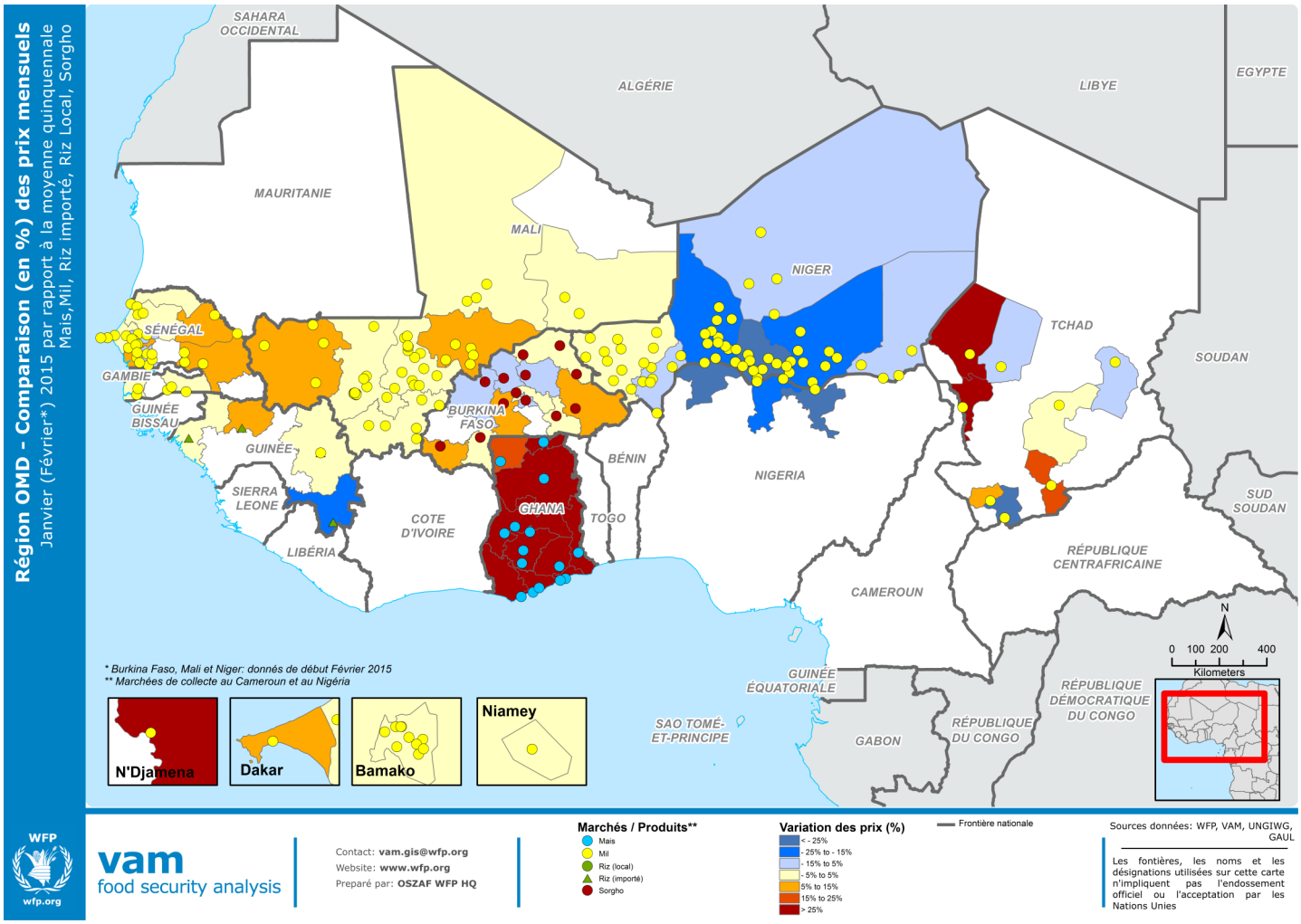
Market trends in West Africa (continued)

Relatively low prices with the exception of Ghana and surrounding areas of northern Nigeria

In the Western Basin, demand was lowest due to poor purchasing power, namely in the 3 Ebola countries, but also in Senegal and Mauritania. With lower availability overall the Basin, prices may increase earlier on in 2015 compared to previous years.

In the Eastern Basin, Chad sees price increases appear along its border with Nigeria as supply channels are affected through the Boko Haram conflict. The biggest spike has been reported in Sarh, where millet has increased by 20 percent and maize by 50 percent according to CILSS joint assessment. In the rest of the country, prices appear to be relatively stable.

Figure 3 : Comparison of monthly prices (in%) with the five years average—January 2015 (February 2015*)



Impact on Food Security

Increase in the number of people in crisis and emergency situation in the region

The Cadre harmonisé analysis indicates minimal food insecurity in several zones of the region. Nevertheless, between March and May 2015, 17 zones (in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sierra Leone and Chad) are signaled in crisis situation for a total of 4,749,000 people in need of assistance.

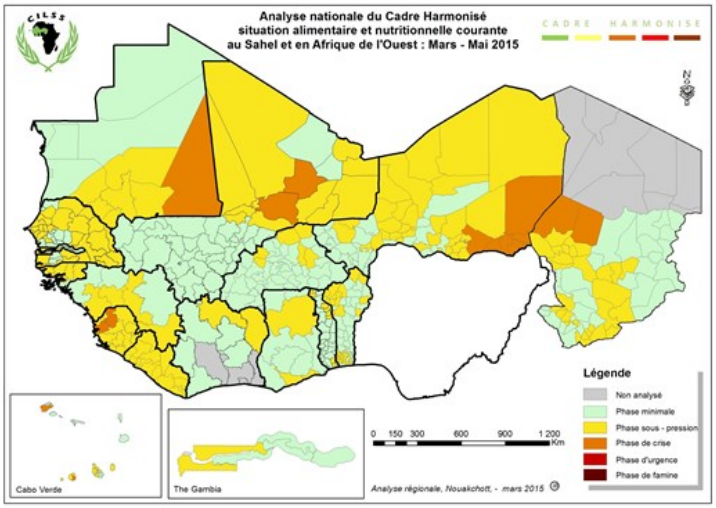
During the lean season (June-August 2015), this crisis situation will affect 48 zones in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Chad for a total of 7,364,000 people in need of assistance.

Population movements of refugees, internally displaced and returnees in the north of Mali and in the Lake Chad basin, the poor fodder production in the Sahelian strip, the increase of price and weakening purchasing power of poor and very poor households explains the probable deterioration of the food and nutrition situation during the upcoming lean season.

These populations will need immediate and appropriate food assistance as well as assistance in nutrition-health and livelihoods protection. In addition to these populations are refugees from Mali, Nigeria, Central Africa Republic, Soudan, as well as internally displaced from Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

Increase in the number of people in crisis and emergency situation in the region

Figure 4-5: Maps of the food security and nutritional : current situation March –May 2015) and project (Jun-August 2015)



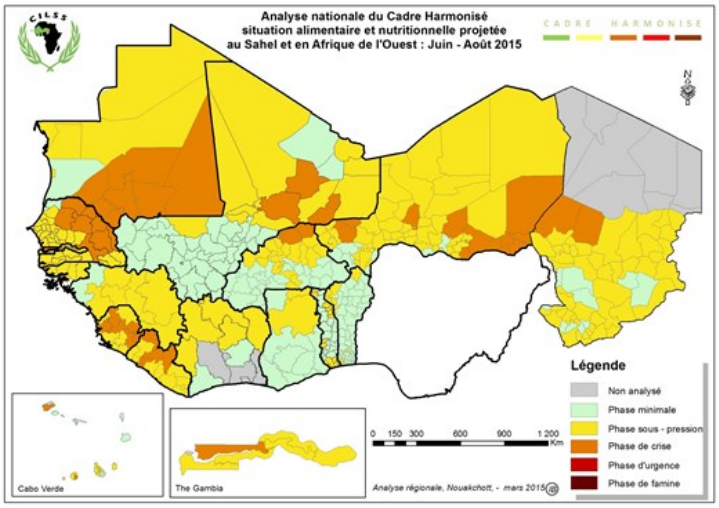


Tableau 1 : Estimated food insecure populations in West Africa / Sahel

Countries	Current situation		Projected situation	
	March - May 2015		June - August 2015	
	Phase 2	Total in Phase 3 to 5	Phase 2	Total in Phase 3 to 5
Burkina Faso	669 000	79 000	1 202 000	371 000
Cape Verde	77 000	32 000	79 000	28 000
The Gambia	412 000	101 000	522 000	178 000
Guinea Bissau	385 000	110 000	406 000	126 000
Mali	2 378 000	248 000	2 712 000	410 000
Mauritania	723 000	264 000	851 000	465 000
Niger	3 334 000	757 000	4 177 000	1 158 000
Senegal	2 371 000	640 000	3 147 000	1 040 000
Chad	2 061 000	403 000	2 768 000	660 000
Total countries Sahel	**12 410 000**	**2 634 000**	**15 864 000**	**4 436 000**
Benin	1 041 000	56 000	887 000	51 000
Côte d'Ivoire	1 700 000	77 000	1 820 000	117 000
Ghana	3 086 000	676 000	2 286 000	440 000
Togo	914 000	70 000	1 064 000	113 000
Sierra Leone	1 323 000	773 000	1 686 000	1 092 000
Liberia	1 231 000	189 000	1 467 000	722 000
Guinea	1 347 000	274 000	1 541 000	393 000
Total countries Gulf of Guinea	**10 642 000**	**2 115 000**	**10 751 000**	**2 928 000**
Total Region	**23 052 000**	**4 749 000**	**26 615 000**	**7 364 000**

Chad: A rapid food security assessment by WFP in the Sahel West indicates that 620,000 local populations are affected by food insecurity of which 140,000 are affected by severe food insecurity.

According to the results of the HEA analysis from February/ March, poor households and very poor households in the pastoral region will encounter difficulties to satisfy their food needs and to protect their livelihoods. This is primarily due to the significant decrease in price of large ruminants following the border closure with Nigeria and Libya, principal destination countries of livestock. The decrease in agricultural production following to the late arrival of rains coupled with the decrease in revenues from the exodus will create difficulties for households to protect their livelihoods. This situation will be exacerbated by a significant increase of at least 30 percent in the price of staple foods. HEA

In **Burkina Faso**, poor households and very poor households in the grazing pastoral and millet production areas will be severely affected by the significant decrease in cereal production which will lead to difficulties to ensure their food needs. The relative stability in their revenues will not suffice to counter-balance the effects of the significant increase in staple food prices, as these households are largely dependent on markets (more than 50 percent for poor households). HEA

In **Mauritania**, poor and very poor households spread out in the agro-pastoral livelihood zones, the Senegal River Valley and the rain-fed crop zone will face difficulties to ensure their food needs in the coming months. The failures of the rain-fed cultures, the low flood recession production combined with the high increase of staple foods are the main causes. HEA

Impact on Food Security (continued)

Increase in the number of people in crisis and emergency situation in the region

In **North Nigeria**, the agricultural production deemed good compared to a normal year will allow households in the region to have sufficient food and revenue to cover their food needs and protect their livelihoods. On the other hand, insecurity prevailing in North-East Nigeria is heavily impacting households' food security located in the Diffa zone in Niger, particularly along the Komandougou. The pepper nurseries which constitute the principal source of revenue have been abandoned due to insecurity. Thus, the reduced employment opportunities in the zone negatively impacts on the purchasing power of the poor and the very poor. In the Agadez department, poor and very poor households will encounter difficulties to protect their livelihoods in the coming months. HEA

Household Economy Approach

The Household Economy Approach (HEA) is a livelihoods-based framework for analyzing households food and revenue sources in a livelihood zone and predicting the impact of a choc on the household's economy. The HEA two types of threshold: a threshold on coping and a threshold on livelihoods. A coping deficit indicates that households will not have sufficient revenues and food to satisfy their food needs. A deficit in livelihoods indicates that household will not have sufficient revenues and food to protect their livelihoods. (*Source: Save the Children*)

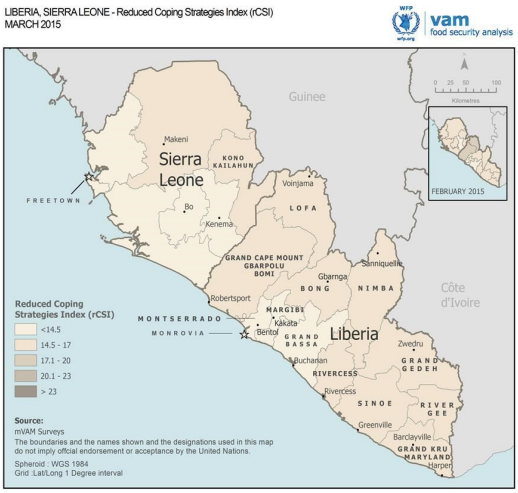
Ebola Virus Disease (EVD):

The mVAM results (data collected via mobile phone) of March 2015 indicate that fewer households in Lofa County (Liberia) are using negative coping strategies compared to February 2015. The households who are dependent the most on negative coping strategies are in the counties of Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, and Gbarpolu.

In Sierra Leone, negative coping is highest in the districts of Kailahun, Kono, Bombali, Tonkolili and Koinadugu.

Generally speaking, negative coping strategies are most frequently used by the poorest households, by those living in Ebola-affected rural areas and by households headed by women. As the land preparation season advances, wage rates are improving in both Liberia (+3 percent) and Sierra Leone (+7 percent).

Figure 6 : Reduced Coping Strategies Index



Mark your calendars !

- → IPC Nutrition Workshop 4 to 8 May 2015 in Niamey (Niger);
- → Cadre harmonisé analysis in Nigeria 8 to17 June 2015 ;
- → Revision of Cadre harmonisé Manual in June 2015 Niamey : CILSS has planned to organize a large workshop with all actors and countries;
- → Training on various indicators of the Cadre harmonisé 7 to 11 September 2015 in Niamey (Niger);
- → Seasonal forecasts (PRESAO): 4 to 8 May 2015 in Dakar (Senegal);
- → PREGEC Meeting: 22 to 26 June 2015 in Bamako (Mali).

@ Information on food security in West Africa

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