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Regarding the pastoral situation, the government announced that the fodder production would be lower than last year. Substantial variation in biomass is observed within and between zones. Unusual patterns in livestock motion and concentration is also observed.

In **Mali**, except in Kayes and Yelimane, cumulative rainfall is normal to above average but below the 2010 average. Irregular rainfall has resulted in biomass deficits. Vegetation in the Delta area has decreased by 50% compared to October 2010. The pastoral situation is good in Gourma providing enough food to herds from Mali and Niger. However, a fodder deficit has been observed in some important areas (such as the riverine bourgou pastures). In the Sahel, hardship livestock sales are observed. Agro-pastoral conditions are not satisfactory in the Western and Central Sahel or in the Delta area. According to the Early Warning System, the situation is of concern in more than 100 villages (1.5 million people).

Some areas of the Sahel are affected by a decline in crop and fodder production

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**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. This document describes key elements developed during this meeting.
In **Mauritania**, this season’s substantial rainfall deficit caused an important decrease of biomass and rainfed crop yield. The pastoral situation is of concern in this country of more than 1.5 million cattle and 16 million goats. The seasonal migration of livestock occurred to a smaller scale than in most years at this time and much of the cattle herd is concentrated at the Malian border.

In **Burkina Faso**, the late onset of the rainy season has reduced the cultivated areas for cereals and income generated from agricultural activities. Substantial deficit production will be observed in the Sahel and in northern areas. The surpluses from production areas may not be adequate to supply deficit areas and could put pressure on food prices. The pasture production will be lower than average and could jeopardize livestock feeding.

In **Chad**, in the Sahel central areas, the vegetation onset was normal between May and June and very similar to the 1998-2010 average. From July, vegetation growth slowed. The observed trend remains below average. Due to water stress during the vegetative phase, last rainfall will not improve crop yields which have been affected by dry spells.

In **Ghana**, though yields of most harvested crops are deemed satisfactory, groundnuts crops have failed across the three northern regions which could pose serious strains to income sources of poor households. In **the Gambia**, a rainfall deficit has also been observed, delaying cereal and groundnuts productions.

**Upward pressure on coarse grain market and elevated price levels for imported staples**

In some markets of the Sahel, the coarse grain prices have risen, whereas they should be decreasing at this time of year. According to *Afrique Verte*, the millet price increased from September to October in Niamey by 6%, in Bamako by 11% and in Ouagadougou by 6%.

In the central Basin, maize prices are on the rise. SONAGESS reported that at the beginning of October maize price increased on average by 35% year-on-year at the national level in Burkina Faso. The same trend is being observed in northern Benin, Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire.

In the eastern Basin, SIMA in Niger reports that millet and maize prices increased by 12% and 16% respectively year-on-year while sorghum is decreasing. The upward trend is most evident in the West. According to SIMA, the millet prices in northern Nigeria on the Jibiya-Maradi axis are higher than the ones in Niger since the 2010 harvest. This suggests there is no immediate incentive for millet exports to Niger in that area. The millet trade with Nigeria will determine the prices in Niger in a decreasing cereal production context. When trade to Niger still occurs, prices are high. Maize prices picked up noticeably in Malanville market where a 100 kg bag is sold at 14,000 FCFA, a level that is 27% higher than the five-year average. In Chad, the cross border trade between east and neighboring Sudan—where concerns grow about the 2012 harvest—will heavily influence market performance during the coming year.

Coarse grain prices are firm on wholesalers market in Dawanau. The onset of the 2010 market launch shows high prices. However, according to FEWS NET, prices on other Niger cross border markets are not showing unusual increases.

Regarding the **desert locust situation**, due to poor rains in most of the summer breeding areas in the northern Sahel of West Africa, small-scale breeding occurred in most places. Seasonal rains were poor and lower than normal in the northern Sahel, Mauritania, Mali and Niger during September. Consequently breeding occurred on a much smaller scale and only low numbers of solitarious adults were present. On the other hand, good rains fell in the summer breeding areas in Chad where small-scale breeding was probably underway. As vegetation dries out, adults are likely to move from south-eastern Mauritania to west and northern-west (Trarza and Inchiri). In Mali and Niger, adults are likely to concentrate in few areas that remain green.

**Map 1: Food security in West Africa and zones at risk (provisional)**
In the western Basin, which is well integrated with the international market, the upward price trend continues. On the Kaolack market, main market for the coarse grain price in this area, the millet price increased by 42% compared to September 2010. This rise in coarse grain prices is occurring as imported staples remain expensive, limiting substitution possibilities for consumers. On the international market, the food prices remain high. For instance, the rice Thai A1 Super was at 509 $ US/ton FOB Bangkok at the end of October 2011, an 18% increase compared to October 2010. This is a key consideration for the western Basin which relies heavily on the international market. High staple food prices could worsen food access conditions for households affected by the drought in Mauritania. Wheat and rice prices remain above average in Mauritania while livestock prices are expected to decrease. In some markets in southern Mauritania (Tintane and Kankossa), a decrease in small ruminants prices is reported in September 2011. By contrast, neutered male sheep prices remain high on Boghe, Maghta Lahjar Adel Bagrou markets, probably due to Senegalese and Malian demand for Tabaski. After Tabaski it is expected that small ruminant prices would decrease.

Impact on food security

Food access is likely to deteriorate in areas affected by agriculture and fodder production declines due to the reduction of income through the next lean season. Access to production for self consumption is also likely to decline and will affect the diet households in quality and quantity. The fodder production decline will limit income for the poor people of the most affected areas in so far as there will be fewer opportunities for casual labor as herders, or the sale of small ruminants.

Terms of trade are uneven in the region. For instance, while a herder could obtain up to 250 kg of wheat by selling a sheep on Maghta Lahjar market in September 2010, he could only afford 200 kg in September 2011. This deterioration is mainly due to the increase of wheat price. The terms of trade will deteriorate with the cattle market slowdown after Tabaski at the beginning of November.
Impact on food security

The terms of trade will also deteriorate for herders buying sorghum with the expected rise in coarse grain prices on markets in southern and south-eastern Mauritania. In Niger however, according to SIMA, the terms of trade (goat/millet) remain higher than average in September 2011 due to price for small ruminants.

Due to the Libyan crisis, movement of population caused a massive return of migrants to Ghana, Mali, Niger and Chad. These migrants are no longer sending remittances home, limiting income. Moreover, migrants and their family rely now on their host communities for shelter, health care and school for children. The situation is more disconcerting in countries at risk like Mali, Niger and Chad.

Government response capacity

In Niger, the government and its partners are preparing a revision of the 2011-2012 support plan. In Burkina Faso, the government is working on plans to increase irrigated maize production and subsidized sales of cereals. In Mauritania, no official measures have been taken so far.

In October 2011, the national grain reserves levels are irregular. While security reserves in Burkina Faso and Chad are fairly well supplied (more than 80% of their target level), stocks in Mauritania and Niger are lower. Mauritania has a financial reserve that could buy up to equivalent to 5,000 tons (that is a quarter of the national recommended level). In Niger the national reserve is 22,000 tons (22% of the 100,000 tons recommended stock). In addition to the security national stock, Niger has also a strategic grain stock of around 24,000 tons. The process of replenishing security stock in November-December will increase pressure on coarse grain availability. In Mali, the national reserve is at 57% of the recommended stock; furthermore the country holds an intervention stock.

Figure 5: security stocks levels in the Sahel, October 2011

Source: PAM

Underfunded Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan in Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia

In Liberia, refugees continued to return in Côte d’Ivoire due to the fear of violence following elections in Liberia. As of October 10, 159,489 people have been registered by HCR. The reduction in the refugees’ number is due to an update of UNHCR database registration in Liberia and in Côte d’Ivoire.

In Liberia the price of rice remains high, hindering the household coping strategies. According to SIM Liberia, in September the price of rice was higher by 38% than a year ago in Saclepea (Nimba). As of October 24, the EHAP Liberia is funded at 50% (OCHA).

The current political situation in Côte d’Ivoire is relatively stable. This has encouraged a gradual return of hundreds of thousands of displaced people to their villages of origin. According to the humanitarian bulletin issued October 21 by OCHA, the number of internally displaced people living on sites is currently 18,455 people for 4,495 families and 169,486 people in host families and communities. The humanitarian situation remains disconcerting. Important needs persist in all sectors. The lack of resources has led to a reduction or cancellation of a number of assistance projects, especially in return areas in the west of the country. As of October 24, the EHAP Côte d’Ivoire is funded at 31% (OCHA).
Food security information in West Africa and the Sahel

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Conclusions

Some areas in the Sahel (Mauritania, northern Mali, western Niger and central Chad) are facing a decline in the cereal and fodder production during the 2011 campaign. Some pre-existing aggravating factors—livelihoods erosion following the 2009 crisis, high international food prices and the post crisis (Libya and Cote d’Ivoire) shrinking of migrant remittances—could worsen this crisis. The scale of this crisis and its impact on livelihoods, markets, food security and nutrition should be quickly assessed. However governments and humanitarian agencies should from now undertake preparatory activities of an appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given the production areas and the different scenario, market and food security and nutrition assessments should be quickly conducted.</td>
<td>Areas at risk are identified and responses are based on a relevant analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund the revised Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) Côte d’Ivoire + 4 and the Liberia EHAP and close the identified gaps</td>
<td>The needs of vulnerable households and people affected by post-election crisis are better covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carry out income-generating and livelihoods activities to ease the migrants’ return in their community of origin</td>
<td>Migrants’-and their community of origin- livelihoods and living conditions will improve</td>
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