



Leveraging Satellite Imagery for Zero Hunger: Innovative Solutions to Needs-Assessments in Conflict-Affected Areas

Side event on the margins of the second regular session of the Executive Board
Thursday, 18 November 2021, **TBC**
Virtual event on Zoom

You are kindly invited to the Executive Board side event on Tuesday, 18 November 2021 focused on how a new and innovative satellite imagery analysis tool is overcoming issues of quality data in conflict-affected areas in West Africa.

The event will be moderated by Mr. Chris Nikoi, the Regional Director, WFP Regional Bureau for West Africa, and will have the following speakers:

- 1) **Mr David Beasley**, Executive Director, WFP
- 2) **Mr Abdoulaye Mohamadou**, Executive Secretary, Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)
- 3) **Ms Sally Haydock**, Country Director of Mali, WFP
- 4) **Mr Salifou Ouedraogo**, Minister of Agriculture, Burkina Faso
- 5) **Ms Laure Boudinaud**, Geospatial Analyst, WFP Regional Bureau for West Africa
- 6) **Ms Marianne Tinlot**, Regional Food Assistance Advisor for Central Africa, Technical Assistant Mauritania and Coastal Countries, ECHO

Context

Accurate, independent, and timely data is critical and allows the World Food Programme (WFP) to direct and target food assistance to the most vulnerable people. In conflict-affected areas, where physical access is often restricted, gathering reliable data has been one of the biggest challenges WFP and humanitarian partners have been working to overcome. This side event will focus on a solution to this challenge, using satellite-based imagery analysis which captures real-time data on multiple 'vulnerability' criterion in the world's most inaccessible areas.

West Africa is facing extraordinary challenges in achieving zero hunger. The region is battling multiple shocks from reoccurring extreme climatic events, such as droughts and floods, which are weakening agropastoral systems and soil conditions, as well as socioeconomic shocks such as the one brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The region experienced one of the worst recessions in 2020 leading to high inflation rates making access to food even more difficult. A recent study on the impact of COVID-19 shows that extreme poverty has increased by almost 3 percent in one year, with over one-third of households extremely vulnerable to food and economic insecurity in West Africa. Within this context, the region continues to experience acute and chronic conflicts fuelled by fighting between non-state armed groups and self-defence militias. West Africa currently hosts over 8 million refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) who have fled climatic events or conflict and remain entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs.

Currently over 31 million people are in need of food assistance in West Africa, millions of whom live in conflict-affected areas, where WFP has no physical access and thus cannot gather accurate data through traditional methods on where and who the most vulnerable are. Due to the travel restrictions implemented to stem the spread of COVID-19, even the traditional data collection processes in non-conflict-affected areas were made less feasible, thereby further highlighting the need for a tool that could gather reliable data in the absence of physical access.

Objectives

The satellite imagery analysis tool, piloted by WFP, aims to fulfil the critical data needs to effectively identify and reach the most vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas. The analysis tracks relevant macroregional and local developments, from large-scale weather patterns to the localized impacts of conflict on populations and livelihood resources. The tool monitors and creates complex connections across a range of spatial vulnerability scales – from changes in vegetation and rainfall leading to droughts and floods, long-term climate tendencies that can impact landcover, and changes within cropland surface areas driven by population dynamics or from sudden eruptions of conflict.

Fundamentally it provides a detailed picture of inaccessible areas on where IDPs are fleeing to and from, and what conditions (conflict or climate) are driving movements, allowing humanitarian agencies to accurately direct food to the most impacted areas and populations.

This side event will introduce Executive Board members and partners to the methodology of satellite imagery analysis developed by WFP West Africa, and the type of information produced. The session will begin with a short video followed by presentations from key contributors to the analysis and the users of the data, who will expand on how the data is used to make operational and policy decisions. The session will end with an overview of the vision for the analysis by the main donor of the pilot (ECHO).

Agenda

Moderator: Mr Chris Nikoi, Regional Director for West Africa, WFP

1. Welcome and opening comments:

- **Mr David Beasley**, Executive Director, WFP;
- **Mr Abdoulaye Mohamadou**, Executive Secretary, Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

2. WFP West Africa evidence generation plan and how Satellite Imagery Analysis provides data granularity to inform food needs - Ollo SIB (Senior Regional RAM Advisor).

- A 7-minute video covering the following theme: *Issues of lack of creditable information in some conflict-affected areas, and how WFP created an innovative and cost-effective solution to address these issues without putting people's lives in danger via satellite-based imagery analysis. The new tool works with and within government and the regional food security system and is leading the change in applying science to humanitarian assistance.*

3. The users of Satellite-Imagery Analysis:

- **Ms Sally Haydock**, Country Director of Mali, WFP;
- **Mr Salifou Ouedraogo**, Minister of Agriculture, Burkina Faso (TBC).

4. Wider applicability of Satellite Imagery Analysis:

- **Ms Laure Boudinaud**, Geospatial Analyst, WFP Regional Bureau for Western Africa.

5. Partners in Satellite Imagery Analysis

- **Ms Marianne Tinlot**, Regional Food Assistance Advisor for Central Africa, Technical Assistant Mauritania and Coastal Countries, ECHO

6. Q&A Session (moderator)

7. Closing comments:

- **Mr Abdoulaye Mohamadou**, Executive Secretary, Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS);
- **Mr Chris Nikoi**, Regional Director for Western Africa, WFP.