

## EB.3/2011: WEST AFRICA REGIONAL PRESENTATION

### 1. New trends:

#### Sahel:

- As I address you today, we are preparing to respond to a food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel region, while looking back at the post-electoral crisis in Cote d'Ivoire and surrounding countries where assistance continues to be provided as political consolidation is underway.

#### **Map 1: Cote d'Ivoire Population displacement**

This map shows the main population movement within Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, where the largest number of people sought shelter.

- Countries most affected by a production deficit in the Sahel following rainfall deficit coupled with other vulnerability factors are Niger, Mauritania, Chad and Mali. Concerns are also on countries like Gambia, Senegal and Burkina Faso where we are working with the government in further assessing the impact.

**SAHEL MAPS:** *These maps are based on short and medium term satellite derived vegetation indicator, the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), which mainly presents the intensity of the drought impact upon vegetation seasonal performance.*

#### **Map 2: Sahel Region Number of Season Affected by Poor Vegetation Growth between 2006 and 2010**

This Regional Sahel map shows the number of seasons with poor vegetation during a five years period (2006-2010), i.e. the recurrence of shocks. According to the map, consecutive poor vegetation growth seasons were registered in West Mauritania, across southern Niger and

in central Chad. These areas are consequently highly vulnerable to a 2011 low vegetation growth season.

### **Map 3 &4: Sahel Region Current Vegetation Growth Deviations for 2011 Season (pixel & districts)**

These two Regional Sahel maps show the vegetation growth deviation for the 2011 season from the average over the past 11 years (expressed in percentage), one displayed by pixels and one by districts. A negative deviation from the average below 20% is considered to be critical and pictured in Red. The maps show that areas along the Mali-southern Mauritania border appear to be in a critical situation (from -20 % to -60 % vegetation growth deviation) compared to the average over the past years. Other particularly affected areas are reported in eastern Burkina Faso and south-western Niger, as well as central Chad (from -20 % to -60 % vegetation growth deviation).

- Preliminary estimates show that per capita grain production is close to 2009 levels in both Niger and Chad. Although livestock price levels are currently above average, their trends indicate a poor season. Also, conditions on regional markets are currently less favorable than in 2009/2010. In 2012, food procurement might involve therefore a longer supply chain, implying longer lead time and higher costs.
- The situation is even more worrying since vulnerable households already affected by the 2010 food and nutrition crisis in Niger and Chad had little time to recover from that shock and today lack coping mechanisms to carry them through the 2012 lean season.
- In addition, malnutrition rates are already very high throughout the region, especially in the Sahel; an additional shock would further aggravate this situation. Experience from the Sahel shows that children under two are usually the most affected. In this

context, a major crisis in the Sahel could lead to peaks in malnutrition and mortality if correct and timely mitigation measures aren't taken.

- OVERALL, THE WEST AFRICA REGION IS HOST OF MORE THAN 10 MILLION STUNTED CHILDREN UNDER 5 AND UP TO 3 MILLION CHILDREN WITH ACUTE MANUTRITION.
- One priority therefore is to work with Governments to understand the real extent of the situation and the resulting needs through additional assessments. In Mauritania, WFP will be working with the Government in support of its plan in the coming months and additional assessments are being undertaken.
- In Niger, early measures are being taken in line with the Government's temporary response plan to avert a potential full-scale food and nutritional crisis during the 2012 lean season through a scale up of our current cash and food for work and nutrition activities. Results from a vulnerability survey expected by the end of the year will further determine the next phase of response and framework to be used. SEE NOTE ON NIGER
- WFP will be submitting for Board approval by correspondence, a Niger PRRO Budget Revision.
- In addition to the assessments that are needed, preparatory work in view of having sufficient funds and food stocks available once we are scaling up distributions in the coming months is key. Generally, increased needs in the Sahel will require WFP to rapidly procure and transport a bigger bulk of food commodities and nutrition products to affected countries, while there might be reduced possibility of regional procurement this year. We

therefore appeal for rapid contributions towards existing projects as well as a quick donor response once new operations will take effect.

## **2. Risks/Early warning**

- We are facing a series of risks (programmatic, institutional and contextual) affecting our activities in the region. Some apply to all countries, while others are country specific. The four major risks which I would like to highlight here are the security threats in the Sahel, the increasing insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea impacting on our port operations, the risk of having the political agenda influence the government position regarding the severity and scope of a food and nutrition crisis, as well as the repeated occurrence of weather related emergencies.

One of the mitigating actions for the security threats in the Sahel is the use of air transport for humanitarian staff movement. I would like to appeal for funding to UNHAS operations in Niger, Chad and CAR.

## **3. Achievements/Significant Set-Backs**

### **Food Reserves Points**

- At the request of ECOWAS, WFP will provide technical advice and support for the implementation and launch of a pilot emergency humanitarian food reserve system in West Africa through the Dakar Regional Bureau.
- As you know, G20 Leaders welcomed development of such a pilot system earlier this month, and ECOWAS has outlined a timetable

leading to formal endorsement by West African Ministers and Leaders early in the New Year.

- Successful implementation of a pilot food reserve system will require committed partnerships among a range of stakeholders. To that end, ECOWAS and WFP are pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding that we hope can be concluded before the end of the year.
- We expect the MOU to include a budget for the next 18 months – covering the implementation phase of the project. ECOWAS has already stated its commitment to provide financial support to this project, and also will be seeking investment from other interested partners.

### **Cash and Vouchers**

- **PICTURE OF CASH BENEFICIARY IN NIGER**
- Among the various achievements made during this year is the significant scale up of the use of cash and vouchers across the region in 2011, for example in Niger where we are further scaling up in response to the crisis (about 50% of the response), or in Cote d'Ivoire where voucher transfers in Abidjan are currently being implemented, in collaboration with ACF and MTN to support 10,000 households in two neighborhoods.
- Also, I am please to inform you about the resolutions of an outstanding issue WFP faced with the Government of Chad. You would remember that I reported to you at the last Board that the Chadian judicial authorities have authorized seizure of \$ 1.4 million on WFP's Bank Account. We have finally found a solution with the Government that has committed in writing that the entire sum

seized from WFP will be reimbursed.

- Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am confident that, as in the past and learning from previous experience, we can take up the challenge jointly and respond to the basic food and nutrition needs of vulnerable people in the Sahel together over the coming months.

**THANK YOU.**