



**#Press Release#**

## **ECOWAS, CILSS and CORAF and Jointly Launch the West Africa Food Systems Resilience Program (FSRP)**

***On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022, ECOWAS, CILSS and CORAF will jointly launch, at Hotel Sarakawa in Lomé, the Food Systems Resilience Programme which aims to sustainably reduce food insecurity in West Africa with the financial support of the World Bank and other development partners, including the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Global Agriculture & Food Security Programme (GAFSP) and the Global Risk Financing Facility (GRiF).***

Led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research (CORAF), FSRP aims to increase regional preparedness against food insecurity by pursuing a systemic regional-level approach. The innovative program will simultaneously increase agricultural productivity through climate-smart agriculture, promote intraregional value chains and trade, and build regional capacity to manage agricultural risk. The first phase of the program (2022-2026), which will be implemented by the three regional organizations and Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Togo, amounts to more than USD\$400 million. A second phase including Chad, Ghana and Sierra Leone amounting to USD\$315 million is scheduled to be approved by the World Bank Board of Directors in July 2022 and a third phase is already being envisioned. Throughout the implementation of the first phases, the program will also benefit other countries in the region through spill-over effects. Ultimately, the program aims to achieve full regional coverage.

Bringing together stakeholders from within and beyond the region, the launch event will provide a forum for discussing West Africa's food security challenges and the solutions brought forward by FSRP. In addition to the launching ceremony with high-level decision-makers and a panel discussion, the event will feature three Lightening Learning Sessions. These sessions will unpack findings from analytical work of the West Africa Food System Resilience Facility (FSRF), supported by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and that feeds into the implementation of FSRP.

« Tackling West Africa's food security challenges requires the contributions, alignment, and support of all partners as Agriculture is the key driver of West Africa's development. As such, the ECOWAS Commission is committed to increasing its support to its Member States in this dubious battle, and to particularly building the capacities of the Regional Food Security Reserve towards alleviating the sufferings of the needy populations », says Dr Jean Claude Kassi Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission.

In addition to upgrading regional food crisis prevention and management systems, FSRP countries and regional institutions will work together to strengthen shared agricultural and hydrometeorological information services, so they are more accessible and useful to decision-makers, farmers, pastoralists, and other actors in the food systems in the sub-region. They will also collaborate on strengthening national and regional agricultural research and the policy environment for landscape governance to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation. Moreover, FSRP will facilitate increased trade across key corridors and will support the development of strategic value chains within and among participating countries as identified by them.



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Some 4.35 million people across West Africa stand to benefit from FSRP (Phase I and Phase II) that will complement and enhance ongoing efforts to reduce food insecurity and improve the resilience of food systems.

To recall, the food and nutrition situation of this year is exceptional. Prices of agricultural produce increased from 33 to 37% averagely, compared to quinquennial average with increases reaching up to 50% and more in some places. The already alarming situation is worsened by the effects of recent international geopolitical tensions, particularly the war in Ukraine. Consequences include: (i) direct impact on global prices of wheat, maize and fertilisers, of which Ukraine and Russia are major producers and (ii) increase in oil prices inducing direct impact on international, regional and national transport costs for all goods and services. This is expected to cause a generalised inflation.

Participants expected in joining the launch event include stakeholders from regional organizations, Member States, development partners, academia and civil society.

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