



## Press Release



### **Actors of the region to link national response plans to the Regional Food Security Reserve**

**Dakar, May 14, 2018,** As part of the operationalization of the Regional Food Security Reserve in West Africa, the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) organizes a regional exchange workshop at Hôtel Le Ndiambour in Dakar, Senegal, from May 14 to 16, 2018. This workshop is part of the activities of the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa, which is funded by the European Union for an amount of 56 million euros.

Participants to this workshop will review and validate the deliverables of a study conducted by the Polytechnic University of Madrid and Oxfam under the supervision of RAAF and then propose a roadmap to support the region and countries in developing a framework linking national and regional response plans and access to the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR). This study focuses on good practices and lessons learned from the experiences of national food and nutrition crises prevention and management systems in six (06) West African countries (Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Mauritania, Niger and Sierra Leone) and on a methodological tool for developing a regional contingency plan and a guide for countries to link their response plans to the RFSR.

*"I highly welcome the involvement of countries that, through their national food security storage bodies, have already agreed to put their warehouses, storage expertise and competences at the disposal of our regional food and nutrition crises management tool, namely the Regional Food Security Reserve" Mr. Modou Mboup, Technical Adviser to the Senegalese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment rejoices at the opening of the workshop. "I also wish to reassure that, like many other ECOWAS countries, Senegal remains committed to supporting this regional initiative, as evidenced by the provision of storage warehouses by the Commissariat for Food Security in Senegal for reception and maintenance services of the Regional Food Security Reserve stocks ", he concludes.*

For Salifou Ousseini, Executive Director of RAAF, the Regional Food Security Reserve, whose creation decision was made in 2013 by the Heads of State and Government, has entered its active phase. The process of acquiring the first physical stocks is underway and two tenders for the purchase of the Regional Reserve products have already been launched and successfully completed.

Indeed, the Regional Reserve currently has products (cereals) stored in the national storage warehouses of Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana and Mali. Discussions are underway with the national storage bodies of Togo (ANSAT) and Senegal (CSA) for the storage of other products of the Regional Reserve.

These purchases and storage of foodstuff for the Regional Reserve come to reassure the ECOWAS Commission and the European Union, the main financial partner of this initiative, of the forthcoming capacity of the Regional Reserve to: (i) complement the efforts of Member States to provide food assistance; (ii) express regional solidarity to Member States and affected populations through transparent, equitable and predictable mechanisms, (iii) contribute to food sovereignty and political, economic and social integration of West Africa.

It is therefore important that mechanisms to enable countries to mobilize the RFSR when needed are clearly defined and that processes for developing national response plans are strengthened for greater efficiency and transparency in the mobilization of the RFSR products.

*"The Spanish Cooperation (AECID) positively appreciates the ongoing dynamics in West Africa to mitigate the effects of food and nutrition crises. We remain convinced that if the ECOWAS Commission finds ways to sustain the Regional Food Security Reserve, the adverse effects of the food and nutrition crises in the region will be subsequently reduced. The Spanish Cooperation accompanies and will continue to support the region by fully playing its role of technical and financial partner,"* Mr. Aja Andrés Juan, AECID technical assistant to RAAF, says.

As a reminder, the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy is based on three complementary lines of defense: (i) the first line concerns local stocks, generally set up and managed by local organizations or decentralized communities, (ii) the second one is based on national security stocks managed by the States or co-managed by the States and their financial partners, (iii) the third line is the Regional Food Security Reserve which is complementary to the first two.

The conclusions and recommendations that will emerge from the Dakar discussions will enable the ECOWAS Commission to move towards the establishment of a contingency plan at regional level on the one hand, but also to focus, on the other hand, on the appropriation of the Regional Reserve by all actors and the sustainability of this regional solidarity and integration system.

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