



## **ECOWAS meets with RESOGEST Members to discuss Implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve**

*Accra, Ghana, 18th October 2017*, the Forty-Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held on February 27 and 28, 2013 in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, enacted a Supplementary Act establishing the Regional Food Security Reserve of ECOWAS. In support of this initiative, the European Union Commission has granted ECOWAS Commission € 56 million to implement the Project to Support the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy. In this vein, the Heads of State and Government adopted a set of rules and procedures allowing the region to have a common instrument to adequately respond to food and nutrition crises through a regional Reserve made up of a physical stock and a financial component.

“Today’s meeting of Member States, Members of the Network of National Food Security Storage Companies and Agencies (RESOGEST) and Actors aims at reporting on the implementation status of the Regional Food Security Reserve in general and, in particular, on the involvement of national food security storage companies in the activities of component 2 of the support project that focuses on the strengthening of the capacities of national stocks companies”, Prof. KOFFI-TESSIO, the Coordinator of the EU-funded project, says.

So far, significant achievements have been recorded on the ground in the process of the construction of the Regional Food Security Reserve, and ECOWAS wishes to express gratitude to the national storage companies who accepted to store, in their warehouses, the first products of the Regional Reserve. As a matter of fact, a first physical stock of 11 180 tons of millet, maize, sorghum and rice is currently stored in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria.

“In addition to this first physical stock, ECOWAS, with the support of the EU-funded project, was able to express regional solidarity to Nigeria by supporting the Federal Government efforts towards facing the food and nutrition crisis that prevails in the Northeast of the country, namely in Borno, Gombe, Adamawa and Yobe States with 1130 tons of cereals. ECOWAS is proud to be in the forefront of this fight”, Mr. Ousseini Salifou, Executive Director of the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF), announces on behalf of Mr. Tchambakou

Assayor, ECOWAS Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources.

“Ghana is committed to contribute to the implementation of the Regional Food Reserve which aims at (i) complementing the efforts of Member States to provide rapid and diversified food and nutrition assistance; (ii) expressing regional solidarity with Member States and affected populations through transparent, fair and predictable mechanisms; (iii) contributing to food sovereignty and to political, economic, and commercial integration in West Africa. Through NAFCO, Ghana has already provided some warehouses in Yendi for the storage of part of the products of the Regional Food Reserve. Ghana is ready to contribute more in this regional initiative”, Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture, Honorable Dr. Sagre Bambangi, says.

This second annual meeting of Member States, Network of National Food Security Storage Companies and Agencies (RESOGEST) and Actors in West Africa and the Sahel also provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between storage companies, ECOWAS, CILSS and producer organizations that play a key role in the implementation of the regional food security storage strategy for their involvement in the procurement of reserves but also for the deployment and management of proximity stocks.

“The commitment we made at our first annual meeting held last year in Lomé, Togo was not fully fulfilled because proper lobbying and follow-ups were not done in our various countries. With the increased knowledge we have on the support project and on our role in the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve, we wish to fully contribute in the development of the regional solidarity instrument towards managing food and nutrition crises in the region”, Mr. Youssouf Maïga, President of RESOGEST, says.

The involvement and active participation of all stakeholders is key to facilitating a smooth implementation of the EU-funded project to support Food Security Storage in West Africa.

“This annual meeting is another chance to RESOGEST Members, Member States and Stakeholders to recommit to speed up the contracting process between ECOWAS and Member States through the signing of MoUs for cooperation and the preparation of annual workplans and budgets to quickly benefit from the EU-funded project support to countries”, Ms Emmanuelle Maillot from Agence Française de Développement (AFD), insists. AFD is overseeing the implementation of components 1, 2 and 3 of the support project.

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The Coordination Unit of the Regional Food Security Reserve is located in the premises of the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) based in Lomé, Togo. Created in 2011, RAAF is responsible for coordinating and facilitating activities related to the implementation of the regional agricultural policy. It does not directly carry out activities in the field but contracts with technical institutions and other actors with proven expertise. RAAF role is mainly about coordinating, supervising, coaching and facilitating linkages and networking.

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