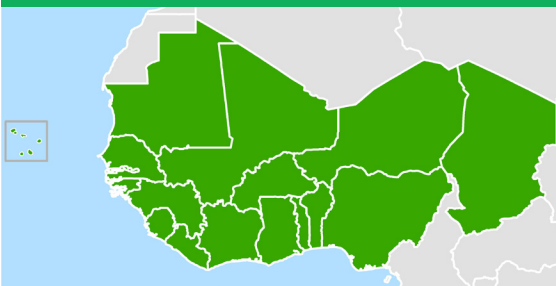




Information and Watch Newsletter

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Food and Nutrition Security in the Sahel and West Africa



Issue N°3: June 2020

Despite their relaxation, public health measures to address COVID-19 continue to exacerbate the ongoing Food and Nutrition Crisis

Background

The close monitoring system of the food and nutrition situation, launched in April 2020, was able to cover 14 countries by the end of June 2020 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Chad and Togo). At June, 30th, a total of 70 384 positive Covid-19 cases, 3,319 cases recovered and 1,432 death are recorded.

During the observation period, public health measures were lessened, thus improving a gradual return to the implementation of certain income-generating activities, access to inputs and agricultural manual labour. Despite this regional trend, some countries such as Chad, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali continue to face difficult situations in some areas. Markets are now functioning and operating at an acceptable level, with a good level of supplies, but with a generalised rising trend in the prices of basic consumer goods (Northern Nigeria, Benin, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Senegal and Sierra Leone).

The pastoral situation remains particularly difficult at this early stage of the rainy season in the Sahelian countries where the availability of natural feedstuff is critical. The burden on pastoral resources in border areas remains extremely high, particularly due to the continued closure of borders in the context of the management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The locust threat is under surveillance at the country and regional levels. This is why emergency plans are being implemented in the frontline countries with an intensification of surveillance on the ground and across satellite tracking.

Methodological approach : At the methodological level, the RPCA-mandated Cadre Harmonisé Technical Committee (CH-TC) has set up a what-keeping system covering the 17 countries of the region. This monitoring, which focuses on the Covid19 impacts, is regularly carried out with the Countries through a template of indicators with predefined thresholds designed for this purpose and summarised in Table 1 below.

Monitoring concerns five main areas: 1) health and nutrition; 2) market situation; 3) pastoral situation; 4) household living conditions; and 5) Desert Locust threat monitoring. Monitoring indicators have been validated by consensus with the countries. The Monitoring of the alert thresholds has triggered updates of CH analysis in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Togo.

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Table 1: Alert thresholds by domain

Alert level				
	Health-Nutrition Rate of closure of health facilities	Markets (Functioning and animation and price level)	Pastoral situation (Access to pastures)	Household living conditions (IGA access to agricultural inputs)
Normal	< 30%	Price variation	=>50% normal	Normal>=80%
Alert	>=30%	Variation > 50%	Between 50 and 75% difficult or inaccessible	Limited + Very limited > 50%
Alarm	ND		Between 75 and 90 % difficult or inaccessible	Very limited + No IGA > 20%
Emergency	ND		N/A Between 75 and 90% difficult and inaccessible and transhumance prohibited or restricted beyond 90%	No IGA >20%



Health and Nutrition Situation

Pandemic situation

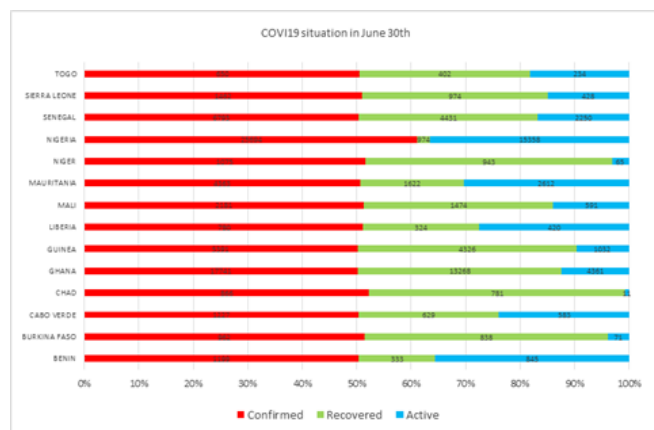


Figure 1 : situation de Covid-19 au 30 juin 2020, Source : https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19/blob/master/csse_covid_19_data/csse_covid_19_daily_reports/06-30-2020.csv

The regional assessment (14 countries) of the COVID-19 pandemic as of 30th June, 2020 shows a total of 70 384 people tested positive, including 31,319 recovered, i.e. an overall recovered rate of 44%. The highest recovered rate is noted down in Chad with 90%, followed by Niger (88%) and Burkina Faso (87%) and the lowest rate is recorded in Nigeria with 4%. Nigeria is also the most affected country in the region in terms of the number of confirmed positive cases with 25,694 cases, followed by Ghana (17,741), Senegal (6,793) and Guinea (5,391). Compared to the previous month, the number of positive cases has almost doubled in these countries.

Overall, the case-fatality rate is 2%. However, case-fatality rates 3 to 4 times higher than the overall average rate of 2% are observed in some countries of the region, notably Chad (8.5%), and Niger (6.2%), although in these countries case-fatality rates are slightly lower than in May.

Table 2 : Covid-19 pandemic case fatality rate

COUNTRY	DEATHS	CASE-FATALITY RATE
Benin	21	1,8%
Burkina Faso	53	5,5%
Cabo Verde	15	1,2%
Chad	74	8,5%
Ghana	112	0,6%
Guinea	33	0,6%
Liberia	36	4,6%
Mali	116	5,3%
Mauritania	129	3,0%
Niger	67	6,2%
Nigeria	590	2,3%
Senegal	112	1,6%
Sierra Leone	60	4,1%
Togo	14	2,2%
Total	1432	2,0%

Source : https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19/blob/master/csse_covid_19_data/csse_covid_19_daily_reports/06-30-2020.csv

Restrictive measures : they have led a reduction in the movement of people. The state of emergency is still in vigour, particularly in Guinea, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Chad, Togo and some Nigerian States. The relaxation of these measures has begun in several countries (Benin, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) with the partial or total suspension of the lockdown and also the extension of curfew hours (Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Sierra Leone, some Nigerian States and Togo).

Functioning of health facilities : the functioning of health centres remains disrupted in several areas of some countries, particularly in Nigeria in some States (Kano, Borne; Yobe, Adamaoua, Zangara), some LGAs in those states have recorded disruption rates between 20% and 30%. Also in Niger, in the regions of Tillabery and Diffa, more precisely in the départements of Ayerou and N'guigmi, 30 to 40% of health centres are closed mainly for security reasons. In Nigeria, about 60% of health centres are operating at idle or minimal capacity, as well as in some cercles in Mali (varying from 2% to 40%).

Nutrition situation

The number of people who received training on care for children under 2 and on early childhood nutrition in the context of Covid-19 has increased compared to May, particularly in Togo and some States of Nigeria. A hand-washing facility has been set up in the majority of health centres in all the countries. Training of community health workers on nutrition in the Covid-19 context has been carried out in Nigeria with a different number of workers from one district to another. These figures range from 19 in North Zamfara to 1,349 in Central Kano.

Situation of the management of acute malnutrition (AM) : In general, the management of acute malnutrition cases continued at the health centre level with standard protocols, while applying protective /preventive social distancing measures during SAM management activities.

Tableau 3 : Admissions des enfants malnutris modérés et sévères (Source : Monitoring matrix completed by countries)

Country	SAM Admissions	MAM Admissions in June
Cabo Verde	NA	NA
Benin	28	NA
Burkina Faso	6,787	6,157
Guinea	NR	NR
Ghana	271	NA
Liberia	NR	NR
Mali	29,803	NR
Mauritania	7,200	NR
Niger	7,879	18,031
Nigeria	37,036	37,491
Senegal	NR	NR
Sierra Leone	88,449	NA
Chad	101,135	119,565
Togo	453	NA
Total	278,486	181,931

Morbidity and admissions of malnourished children

As for admissions of malnourished children, recent data available show that 278,486 children were admitted for severe acute malnutrition and 181,931 cases admitted for moderate malnutrition for the month of June.

Table 4 : Morbidity

Country	Morbidity
Benin	10,036
Ghana	32,471
Nigeria	146,077
Sierra Leone	188,584
Togo	1,102
Total	378 270

Source: Monitoring matrix completed by countries

Recommendations

- Continue, and even increase, investments in strengthening the capacities of health systems in order to guarantee that the achievements of the past are protected and that the possibilities for progress, current and after the COVID-19 period, are guaranteed;
- Support state and operational nutrition stakeholders in order to ensure the programmatic adaptations necessary to maintain the supply of preventive and curative nutritional services while limiting the spread of the epidemic according to the measures taken by national governments;
- Ensure the continuity of essential health and nutrition services and ensure that health facilities are safe places for health care providers, patients and communities. To do this, it is essential to strengthen the infection prevention and control (PCI) equipment and measures at the level of health structures and at community level;
- Strengthen the activities of RCCE (Risk Communication and Community Engagement) in order to better inform communities on the availability of nutrition services (maternal nutrition, screening, treatment, IYCF, VAS, deworming, growth monitoring) and on the adaptations to programs in the context of COVID-19.



Markets situation

Market functioning and animation

Markets situation in June 2020

During the month of June, the number of markets closed due to COVID-19 decreased significantly in the countries compared to April and May. However, in some areas of Northern Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, there are still closed markets with closure rates ranging from 6% to 33% at the national level.

- In Nigeria, 15% of markets are closed and 23% are experiencing disruptions;
- In Senegal: 6% of markets closed and 9% experiencing disruptions;
- In Sierra Leone: 33% of the markets are closed.

In the other countries (Benin, Chad, Mali, Niger and Togo), although disruptions are observed in the animation of livestock and agricultural markets, they remain below 30% in June against more than 50% in May 2020. We are therefore witnessing a certain progressive normalization of market operations. The level of functioning of agricultural and livestock markets according to the countries is presented in the figures below

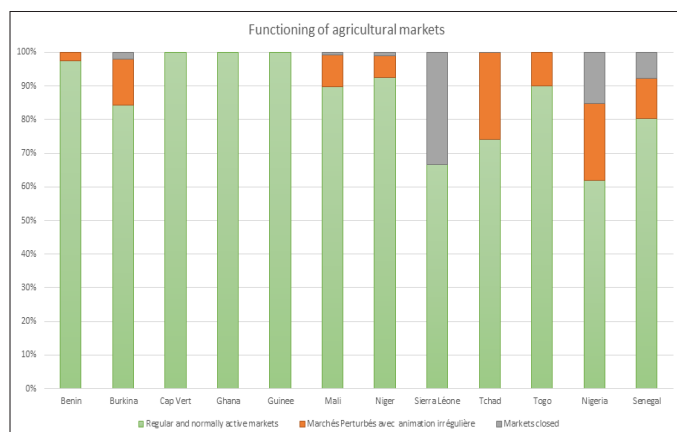


Figure 2 : functioning of agricultural markets

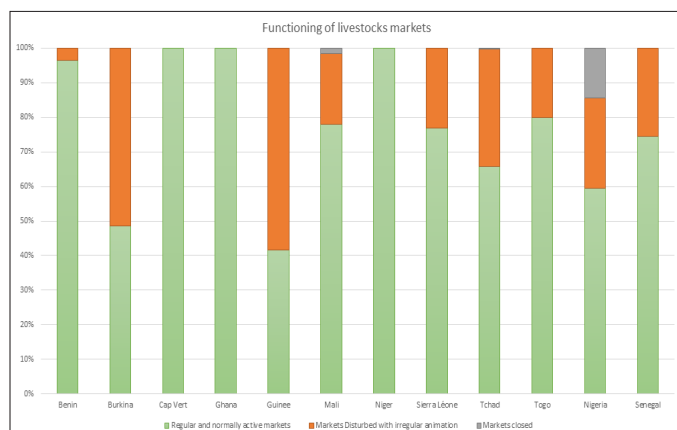


Figure 3 : functioning of livestock markets

Availability

Overall, availability is acceptable in almost all markets in the region, where more than 80% of the markets have normal to stable availability. There are a few markets where the availability of food products is beginning to weaken due to the onset of the lean season and the depletion of merchant stocks. These declines are particularly noticeable in some local markets in Nigeria (Ado, Ohimini, Okpoku, Ogbadibo, Obi, Konshisha, Vandeikya Ukum, Gboko, Southern Senatorial Zone, Northern Senatorial Zone...) and Chad (Djourouf Al Amar, Darh Tama, Kobé, Mègri, Ouara, Mamdi, Mangalmé, Mourtcha, Barh-El-Gazal Sud ...). It has been reported that there has been a drop in the availability of food products on local markets in Senegal, not only due to the early onset of the lean season, but most likely because of the difficulties in transferring foodstuffs from surplus to deficit areas.

Price levels

Compared to May 2020, major food commodity prices have been on an rising trend in almost all countries. Price increases of more than 50% compared to the five-year average have been observed in Liberia, Nigeria (Bauchi, Abuja (FCT), Gombe, Kano, Jigawa, Yobe and Kaduna States), Mali (Sikasso cercle), Mauritania (Willaya de Hodh El Gharbi, Nouakchott and Nouadhibou). A generalised price increase is observed throughout Northern Nigeria, Benin, the prefectures of the Lake zone in Chad and in some localities in Ghana, Guinea, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The following map illustrates the levels of variation in monthly prices of staple food for the month of June 2020 for each of the analysis zones compared to their five-year average.

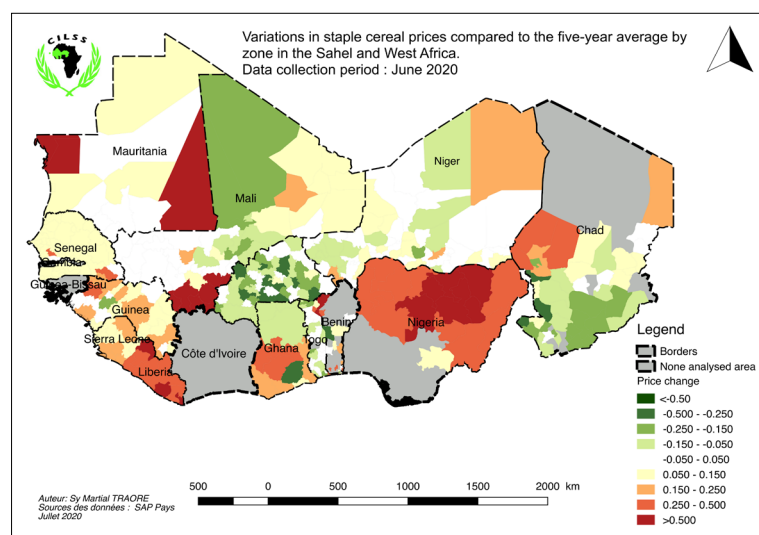


Figure 4 : Prices variations maps

Table 5 : Price variation levels, per country.

Country	Changes in commodity prices	Changes in cash crop and livestock prices	Changes in terms of trade
Benin	22%	-6%	-6%
Burkina	ND	ND	ND
Cabo Verde	-6%		
Ghana	11%	14%	14%
Guinea	13%	0%	0%
Mali	11%	-1%	-1%
Niger	2%	6%	6%
Sierra Leone	16%	-2%	-2%
Chad	-4%	-4%	-4%
Togo	-6%		
Nigeria	64%	-17%	-17%
Senegal	15%	-12%	-12%
Mauritania	31%		
Liberia	44%		



Pastoral situation

Biomass availability, access to grazing, water points and transhumance

Pastoral situation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

The security context continues to exacerbate the difficulties faced by pastoralists. The month of June was marked by the progressive installation of rains over most of the Sahelian zone. This start of the rainy season explains the relative improvement in the pastoral situation. Restrictions on the movement of livestock farmers in connection with the health crisis were gradually lifted during the month of June, but cross-border movement remains prohibited. The data collected by the early warning systems of the CILSS countries highlight a situation that continues to be alarming in Senegal and Burkina Faso (Sahel and central north). The situation has deteriorated and is considered an emergency in several regions of Niger (Tillabéry, Tahoua, Diffa and Zinder).

Biomass availability

The availability of fodder biomass remains limited to very limited in most Sahelian countries despite the onset of rainfall. Deficits are exacerbated by pastoral pressures due to concentration of livestock in some accessible areas. Biomass availability remains very limited in Mauritania.

As in the past month, concentrations are abnormally high in many areas where the survival of many herds depends on access to feed in markets. This situation is particularly worrying in border areas.

In all Sahelian countries, alert thresholds on biomass availability have been reached with critical situations in southern Mauritania, northern Senegal and Chad, Niger (with emergency cases reported) and Senegal. Availability remains globally satisfactory for coastal countries and has improved along a South-North gradient.

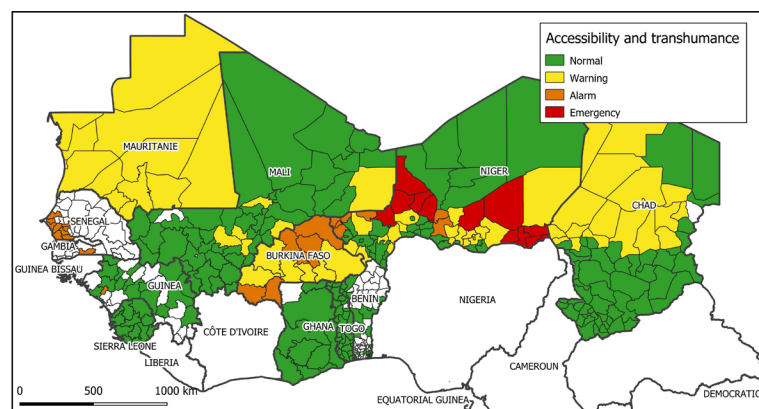


Figure 5 : pasture and transhumance access map

Access to pasture

Access to grazing in pastoral areas is difficult in the Benue, Niger and Yobe zones of Nigeria and in many parts of Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. Inaccessible areas above the 75% alarm threshold are observed in these three countries. In Chad, the situation has greatly improved since the last newsletter and no zone appears above the alarm threshold in this country.

Transhumance situation

Transhumance across borders remains severely disrupted. The lifting of movement restrictions concerns only movement within each country. This explains the phenomena of abnormally high animal concentrations in many border areas, such as southern Mauritania, northern Côte d'Ivoire and southern Niger, particularly along the border with Benin and Nigeria. Despite a relaxation of the measures relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, transhumance is prohibited over most of Niger's territory. Transhumance is largely disrupted in Nigeria (mainly in the States of Benue, Niger and Plateau), Ghana (most of the territory), Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Senegal. The ban on transhumance between the Wilayas in Mauritania has been lifted.

The alarm threshold (transhumance prohibited above 90%) has been reached in Niger, Nigeria and Ghana

Conclusion/recommendations:

The overall pastoral situation in the Sahel remains worrying at the end of the pastoral lean season and the beginning of the cropping season. The alert thresholds on the indicators monitored (access to pasture, biomass availability and transhumance) continue to be exceeded with emergencies identified mainly on the Nigerian territory. In Mauritania, the indicators are also alarming, but thanks to the support programmes for the pastoral sector, the country appears to be on the alert. It should be noted that the response in Senegal has also developed significantly over the past month.

High concentrations of herds in certain areas still represent a strong zoo-sanitary risk. They also represent a risk of conflict between farmers and herders at the beginning of the cropping season. The livestock body condition is considered fair to critical in most Sahelian countries, which makes the animals vulnerable at the beginning of the rainy season.

The early onset of the rainy season has resulted in a slight improvement in the situation, mainly in the agro-pastoral zone and linked to an improvement in water availability. It is still necessary to create conditions to facilitate cross-border transhumant movements to allow access to pasture, but also to avoid tensions on land management between farmers and herders. These risks of tension are now palpable in certain regions.

A targeted response to pastoralism (veterinary care and monitoring) must continue to improve livestock security. The lifting of movement restrictions must be continued and accelerated to safeguard herds and preserve the livelihoods of agro-pastoral and pastoral households.



Household living conditions in the Covid-19 context

Income-generating activities, access to the means of production (agricultural inputs and labour)



Benin : the situation remains normal and similar to that of May 2020, or even slightly improved. At the national level, about 90% of households are conducting their income-generating activities normally, while 9% have limited IGAs and 1% have very limited IGAs. There are slight variations between zones with the percentage of households with limited IGAs ranging from 5% to 15% in most zones except in Glazoue which reaches 20%. As for agricultural activities, they normally take place at 85% throughout the country.



Burkina Faso : Income-generating activities and agricultural activities normally take place in 9 of the 13 regions monitored in Burkina Faso. However, 2 regions (East and Sahel) have reached the alarm threshold and 2 others (Centre-North and North) are on alert with regard to income-generating activities. Agricultural activities and access to means of production (inputs and labour) are practiced in normal conditions in all provinces. In June 2020, a general trend towards normalization of access to land and inputs was observed.



Ghana : In all regions, IGAs are preserved. There was an improved trend in IGA access conditions compared to May 2020 even though 6% of households continue to experience difficulties. As reported in May, conditions of access to productive assets are usual in all regions.



Guinea : 80% of income-generating activities (IGAs) are conducted normally in all areas. The same applies to agricultural activities, 90% of which are carried out under good conditions similar to the usual conditions. The majority of households depend mainly on IGAs, including petty trade and the sale of labour to meet their food needs.



Liberia : Overall, agricultural activities are taking place in very good conditions with a very satisfactory level of almost 100% in all the 7 regions of the country, particularly Lofa, Margibi, Grand Gedah, Cape Mount, and Nimba.





Mali : Only about 60% of income-generating activities are taking place in normal conditions, which shows a rather worrying situation regarding the living conditions of households. Nine (9) cercles have been identified in an alarming situation (Bandiagara, Bankass, Douentza, Koro, Tenenkou, Youwurou, Gao, Ansongo, Ménaka). More than 92% of agricultural activities are normally carried out at the national level. However, due mainly to civil insecurity, three cercles, namely Bandiagara, Douentza and Koro, are experiencing difficulties in accessing inputs and agricultural labour.




Niger : Income-generating activities are taking place under normal conditions in 80% of the 76 départements and communes monitored in support of the measures taken by the government to ease the restrictions imposed as part of the fight against the spread of the pandemic. However, 14 areas are at an alarming level, namely the limited-access zones (in the Tillabéry region) and the urban communes of Niamey. For agricultural activities, they are in normal conditions at about 90% throughout the country. However, agricultural activities are disrupted in 6 départements located in the limited-access zones of the Tillabéry region and Tahoua in the limited-access zones (Ayorou, Banibangou, Bankilare, Nguiguimi, Torodi) and the urban communes of Zinder and Niamey. For agricultural activities, 80% of them are in normal conditions. However, 3%, 18% and 1% of the zones are in alert, alarm and emergency situations respectively. These zones are located mainly in the region of Tahoua.

A convergence of income-generating activities and agricultural activities shows that 71% of the zones are in normal conditions, 11% in alert, 17% in alarm and 1% in emergency situations.

 **Nigeria** : Despite the easing of some measures, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to negatively impact income-generating activities in all 16 States and FCTs monitored. Households are still critically experiencing the direct effects of the pandemic on their daily activities that enable them to generate income for access to food. 26% of households are with limited IGAs, about 10% with very limited IGAs and 5% with interrupted IGAs. The situation appears more difficult in Borno, Yobe, Zamafara, Katsina and Sokoto States, which are also affected by the security crisis, and in Kano State. In terms of agriculture, more than two thirds of households are carrying out their activities normally in all the States monitored. Moreover, it emerges that 22% of households encounter difficulties in accessing the means of production (agricultural inputs and local labour) and nearly 5% have no access at all to the means of production.

 **Sierra Leone** : about 86% of the districts conduct their income-generating activities in a limited or very limited manner and 14% of the districts normally carry out their IGAs. The vast majority (about 80%) of agricultural activities take place with limited access throughout the country and with little or no access to the means of production, particularly in Bombali, Bonthe and Koinadugu.

 **Chad** : three (3) zones are in emergency situation, 11 in alarm situation, 42 in alert situation and 14 zones in normal situation. An improvement was noted in the conditions of access to IGAs compared to May. However, 14 zones (emergency and alarm) show difficult access to IGAs despite the easing of restrictive measures. In terms of agricultural activities, 58 zones are in alarm situation (i.e. 82% of the zones monitored) and 12 zones are in normal conditions in terms of access to means of production. This requires special attention in a seasonal context of the start of the cropping season, especially in the agricultural part of the country.


 **Togo** : In June, the situation has improved compared to May 2020 in terms of income-generating activities (IGAs) with, however, 15% of households still having very limited or no IGAs (compared to 40% in May). However, the country remains in an alert situation overall, with a total of 60% of households still having limited, very limited or no IGAs. In addition, 10% of households have very limited or no access to the means of agricultural production.

Table 6 : Summary of the observed trend in income-generating and agricultural activities

Country	Income-generating Activities				Agricultural Input and Labour Activities		
	Normal	Limited	Very Limited	None	Normal	Limited access to inputs	Very limited or no access to inputs
Benin	90%	9%	1%	0%	85%	14%	1%
Burkina Faso	69%	15%	15%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Cabo Verde	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Ghana	94%	5%	1%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Guinea	80%	15%	5%	0%	90%	10%	0
Liberia	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Mali	57%	31%	9%	3%	92%	6%	2%
Mauritania	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Niger	80%	14%	4%	2%	88%	11%	1%
Nigeria	60%	26%	9%	5%	72%	22%	6%
Senegal	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Sierra Leone	14%	86%	0%	0%	0%	79%	21%
Tchad	63%	22%	12%	3%	72%	20%	8%
Togo	40%	45%	10%	5%	90%	10%	0%

ND Not determined



Desert Locust Monitoring

The Desert Locust situation remains calm in the Sahel and West Africa, but is still of concern in East Africa where an increasing number of swarms is observed in eastern Ethiopia and persistent hopper bands in several areas. Weather conditions are more favourable for swarms to move northeast, sparing Sudan and the West African Sahel for the moment. However, the presence of a few isolated solitary adults is reported in Niger (Agadez region and Tchinta-Baraden and Tillia départements in Tahoua region) and Chad (Borkou, Borkou Yala, Am-Djaras and Wadi Hawar areas).

Low to moderate rains were recorded on the Desert Locust breeding areas in Nord Air and Tamesna in Niger, Adrar des Iforas and Taoudéni in Mali and in Tiris Zemmour, El Hank and Hodh in Mauritania. The preparation of the response continues in the countries and at the regional level through the mobilisation of resources, the setting up of intervention means, the training and mobilisation of surveillance and control teams to cope with a possible incursion of locust swarms coming from the Sahel and West Africa.

Due to the improvement of favourable ecological conditions linked to the gradual onset of the rainy season in the outbreak areas of the frontline countries (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad), the rapid funding of locust contingency plans is strongly recommended to the States and their regional and international partners

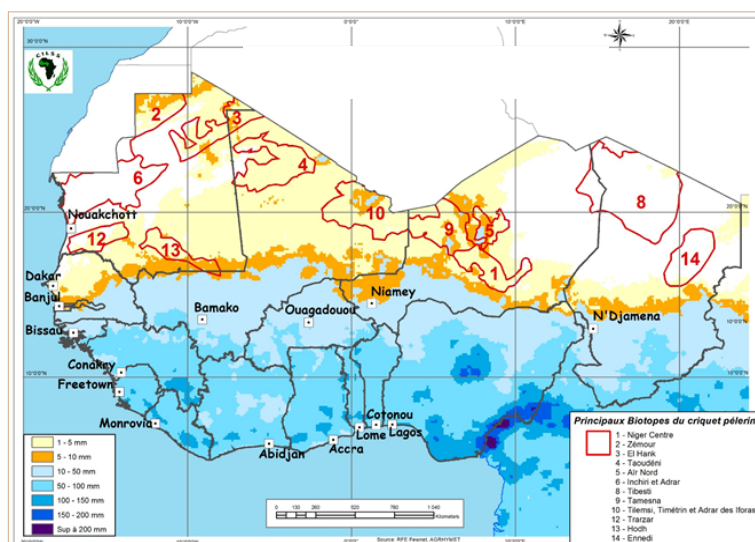


Figure 6 : Cumulative rainfall in the gregarious areas of the Desert Locust - June 2020

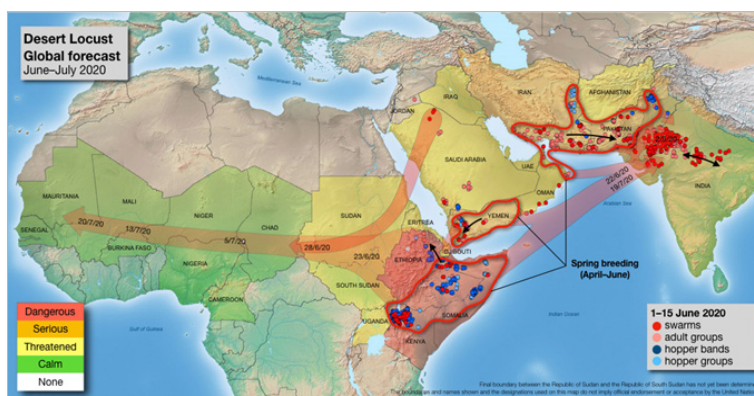


Figure 7: occurrence of desert locust

Recommendations

In view of the magnitude of the locust threat in the region, it is necessary:

- Continue strengthening surveillance in the frontline countries;
- Accelerate capacity building of national and regional surveillance and response mechanisms and their deployment on the ground;
- Increase advocacy and mobilisation of all stakeholders to raise the necessary funds for prevention.
- Strengthen regional coordination of Desert Locust control.



The food and nutrition situation remains critical in all 14 countries monitored, notwithstanding the restriction relief measures applied in the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although progress is being made on normalization of health infrastructure activities, some areas in Nigeria,

Mali and Niger continue to experience disruptions mainly due to civil insecurity. This may explain the upward trend in admissions of children under five years of age to nutritional recovery centers.

In terms of food, markets generally remain well supplied with basic consumer foodstuffs. However, there is an upward trend in the prices of major cereals in almost all countries. This explains the allure of a more difficult world than usual especially in the Sahelian countries. The pastoral situation is favorable in the southern bands of the region but remain overly critical in the Sahelian parts due to the timid installation of the rainfall season.

The easing of restraint measures contributes to the resumption of economic activity in most areas except those affected by insecurity. Agricultural activities normally continue with a good level of access to inputs and agricultural labor in all countries.

Locust threat monitoring is required in front countries with a mobilization of the permanent monitoring system to ensure an early alert and response.

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