



## Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum in West Africa

### SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

from 12 October to 2 November 2015

➤ <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/west-africa/zero-hunger>

This summary has been prepared by Leonidas Hitimana and Renata Mirulla (FAO).

## Policies, programmes and agricultural investments in West Africa: what analyses and perspectives are there?

Dear Members of the Forum FSN in West Africa,

We thank all those who took part and followed this online discussion on policies, programs and agricultural investments in West Africa.

This exchange of knowledge and opinions has led to an enrichment of the on-going debate on the implementation of regional agricultural policies, ECOWAP in particular, which after 10 years has been the subject of re-evaluation by all those involved in the preparation of the high level conference on ECOWAP+10 which took place from the 17th to 19th November in Dakar (Senegal).

More specifically, the role of the non-state actors in the implementation of national and regional food security and nutrition policies was one of the central themes of this online discussion, the results of which were presented during the non-state actors forum organized by the Project Zero Hunger for West Africa, in Lomé (Togo) from the 5th to 7th November. In the course of this forum, the non-state actors showed the importance of carrying out these online discussions, considering that these virtual fora are less expensive and easier to organize. They asked that the summary of the results should be available in both languages (French and English). It was also suggested that the possibility should be looked into of analyzing the contributions by category of actor.

Here is a brief summary of the key points raised by the participants in the online discussion. To read the complete contributions, you can download the official records of the discussion (available in English and French).

## What will be an effective and efficient regional governance for Food Security and Nutrition in West Africa?

The participants have a rather mixed view, even negative, of the coordination and commitment of the States, and highlighted:

- The existence of national agricultural policies that do not take into account ECOWAP;
- Poor support / political commitment by the states;
- Discrepancies and lack of continuity between the policies implemented by the different actors (ECOWAS, CILLS [Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel, Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel], NEPAD, CENSAD [Communauté des États Sahélo-sahariens, Community of Sahel-Saharan States], WAEMU);
- The disparity between the demands of agricultural policies and the agendas of financial backers and international partners.

Some participants remarked that the participation of actors in the work of coordination is not canalized, due to insufficient means: ECOWAS funds, «group of donors from ECOWAP» do not have a federating role, the resources of the RAAF [Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food] are limited.

Divergent points of view have been shared regarding the impact of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the European Union and West Africa. Some participants consider that this can play a determining role as long as the coherence of policies is guaranteed through a periodic assessment. Others think that the Partnership it is more orientated towards the interests of the EU and that it will not have positive consequences for trade and the economies of the West African countries.

Many propositions emerged from the online discussion, in particular:

- The Zero Hunger in West Africa should be based on securing cultivation by families and on agro-ecology;
- It is necessary to connect the role of ECOWAS with an active participation of all the actors, in particular, producers' organizations;
- ECOWAS should strengthen its role in the harmonization of agricultural policies;
- The whole group of regional actors should work towards:
  - The adoption of a single regional agricultural policy,
  - The rationalization of mandates and response capacity of regional institutions,
  - The reinforcement of the regional institutional arrangement adopted by ECOWAS in 2010,
  - The coordination of interventions by development partners.

- It is necessary to guarantee the mobility of production factors (regional markets and trade);
- It is necessary to monitor/ensure the follow-up of the implementation of agricultural policies.

### **What role and which place will have the non-state actors / civil society organizations (level or representation and participation in the decisions) in the institutional system of implementation of the ECOWAP and the agricultural policies and the NFS in general both at national and regional level?**

In relation to the non-state actors (civil society and agricultural professional organizations), the participants to the online discussion have highlighted that they often have a "residual" role and only passive involvement in the definition of regional agricultural policies as well as a deficit of sources of proposals.

However, care must be taken so that non-state actors may play a fundamental role: of appeal, lobbying and vigilance in the implementation of agricultural policies.

At the same time, the civil society and agricultural professional organizations must reinforce communication between the different actors and the grassroots that they represent, must equip themselves with better organization and reinforce their capabilities and competences in order that they can take decisive actions and have a voice in the regional and international negotiations which influence the NFS in West Africa.

### **Which multi-actors and multi-sector platform should be used to facilitate dialogue and negotiations on policies, programs and investments, accountability, etc.?**

The propositions suggested on this point are divided among those that aim at using existing mechanisms, for example ROPPA [Réseau de organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, Network of farmers and producers organizations of West Africa], the platform against hunger and malnutrition of West Africa, the SUN (Scaling up Nutrition) mechanism, and those which aim to define new platforms, such as for example the proposal for a framework agreement on the involvement of civil society organizations and non-state actors in the implementation of ECOWAP or the thematic platforms.

During the Forum, the representatives of non-state organizations have recommended to ECOWAS to: (i) make operative the consultative committee for agriculture, food and nutrition as a space for dialogue between the actors; (ii) reinforce consultation and dialogue with non-state actors and civil society organizations in the implementation and follow-up of the Zero Hunger initiative in West Africa; (iii) reinforce the capabilities of non-state actors and civil society organizations to enable them to participate fully in the achievement of zero hunger by 2025; (iv) set up a mechanism for informing periodically the non-state actors and civil society organizations about the progress made and the problems emerging which may limit the achievement of the objective Zero Hunger and Malnutrition in West Africa from now until 2025; (v) contribute to the coordination of the regional multisector platforms for food security and nutrition; and (vi) strengthen the capabilities of non-state actors and society in

general concerning the collection, treatment and dissemination of information and the arguments in favor of the zero hunger initiative and the development of family based agriculture.

As a conclusion, the FSN Forum has allowed us to exchange knowledge and to make more visible the present debate over the future of ECOWAP and how to work together to liberate West Africa from hunger and malnutrition.

Leonidas Hitimana and Renata Mirulla

#### **Disclaimer**

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. The views expressed in this information product are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAO. The word “countries” appearing in the text refers to countries, territories and areas without distinction.