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**Position paper
Towards local-level food security in West Africa:
“Zero Hunger in West Africa”**

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1 A worrying food and nutrition situation

1. Despite significant agricultural rehabilitation programmes implemented by countries in the region in recent years, and their overall impacts on food and agricultural availability, West Africa, especially the Sahel, is faced with a succession of food and nutritional crises more and more closely over time and of increasing magnitudes.
2. Managing these crises mobilizes considerable resources, without necessarily giving a sustainable solution. Most instruments, mobilized in emergency situations, address the consequences of crises (disruption of access to food for households and child malnutrition) but do not meet the causes of these recurrent crises. This is not their purpose, anyway!
3. The repetition of crises reveals the following:
 - a. Increasing exposure of poor households to many risk factors, including climatic factors and market risks;
 - b. Continuing deterioration of living conditions of poor households. This degradation must be related to the population growth, pressure on land, degradation of natural resources, lack of access to production factors, credit and insurance mechanisms, etc. But it must also be linked with low access to basic services affecting more specifically the poorest people: low access to education (especially young girls), health, safe drinking water, and sanitation, etc.
 - c. Agricultural policies fail to provide structural responses to these fragile households. Most of the incentives these policies develop are intended for those production structures that can valorize them: land base, equipment, training, access to credit, inputs and markets, etc.
4. Faced with these repeated crises, vulnerable households witness an erosion of their production, social, family capital, etc. They are unable to rebuild such capital before the next crisis occurs. Therefore, they are more and more vulnerable and dependent on external assistance. The procedures for mobilizing such assistance lead them to intervene when the food and nutrition situation of the households is already severely degraded. Focusing efforts on responses to cyclical crises does not provide an effective solution to chronic food insecurity and malnutrition.
5. Based on the monitoring carried out by the Early Warning Systems (EWS) or ad-hoc surveys, the cyclical analyses of food and nutrition situation, which form the basis of crisis response plans, have difficulties in establishing a dynamic diagnosis of household vulnerability, their exposure to risks and their capacity to deal with them. They are more efficient to account for a crisis situation in vulnerable areas than to anticipate the deterioration of the livelihoods of the different categories of households. In these circumstances, the responses are dominated by the emergency and continue to focus on assistance in the form of food aid in kind, with geographic targeting or self-targeting methods. However, in recent years, NGOs and United Nations Agencies have been trying to implement more diverse forms of assistance incorporating social safety nets, particularly through cash transfer or food coupons systems.
6. In recent months, policy makers in the region and international partners have been debating on the issue of resilience. Such a discussion reflects the desire to better address the root causes of vulnerability that turn cyclical crises into chronic food and nutrition insecurity. Hunger and chronic malnutrition affecting poor households make them more vulnerable to shocks, and vice versa, successive natural, economic or “political” shocks faced by households erode their capital and capabilities, affect their resilience and put them, gradually or suddenly, in chronic food insecurity.
7. Yet, it is still necessary to clarify the visions of the root causes of household vulnerability and the concept of resilience of households as promoted by different stakeholders, in order to formulate a common and unifying agenda likely to drive a profound transformation of approaches, public policies and methods of international assistance. This position paper is based on the following

definition: resilience is the capacity of communities and households to anticipate and absorb the effects of a shock, then restore their productive/economic capacity promptly and effectively.

8. The increasing entanglement of structural and cyclical factors of food crises complicates the diagnosis on the forms of crisis, their causes, and how to address them. Similarly, if there is a consensus over the limitations of (i) “development responses” to reduce vulnerability, the paths to follow and instruments to implement to provide a solution to each household facing hunger and malnutrition are still to be traced.
9. The note quickly analyses how the ECOWAP addresses these issues and what should change; it also shows how the Brazilian “Zero Hunger” experience, could inspire the region in its fight against hunger and malnutrition and finally, it sketches guidelines for such an initiative in West Africa.

2 Food security and resilience in the ECOWAP

10. The general framework of the ECOWAS agricultural policy clearly posts food security as the ultimate goal, with a view to ensuring food sovereignty of the region, focused on the development of the region’s agricultural potential to reduce its dependence on food imports. This strong option must be seen in the context of global uncertainties about the world food outlook.
11. The 2008 food crisis has reinforced the relevance of the ECOWAP diagnosis which proposes to address regional issues (agriculture transformation/intensification/diversification, adaptation to climate change, market organization and regulation, development of services, prevention and management of food crises, development of emergency food reserves, etc.) and international issues affecting the food security of populations within the region (reduction of price volatility at the regional borders).
12. In a region where crises have long been treated as agricultural availability crises (impact of high vulnerability of agricultural systems to climate hazards and low agricultural intensification and productivity), the ECOWAP introduced an analysis and a vision that tackle the various dimensions of food security in a more balanced way.
13. The RAIP pursues three specific objectives: (i) promoting production of strategic commodities; (ii) improving the economic and institutional environment of the agricultural sector, with a view to (but not only) improving market functioning; and (iii) improving access to food for vulnerable populations.
14. The vision developed by ECOWAP prioritizes support for and modernization of family farming. This approach seeks to combine two main issues:
 - a. An efficient, productive and sustainable agriculture that is able to meet the growing food needs under economic and commercial conditions that help stabilize and lower consumer prices for households net buyers of food (urban households and rural households experiencing food deficit);
 - b. An agriculture providing incomes and resources to a large number of workers, insofar as the capacity of the other economic sectors to capture the surplus of labour force in the agricultural sector is low.
15. From this point of view, the ECOWAP vision is part and parcel of a long-term strategy aimed at achieving the overall food security of Nations and the West Africa region, and food security at the household level.
16. The third specific objective of the RAIP focuses more on issues related to food access. It addresses in particular:
 - a. Food situation and vulnerability information systems and support to countries in designing contingency plans to anticipate responses to food crises;

- b. Establishment of a regional food security reserve, completing a local and national storage system;
 - c. Implementation of co-funding programmes of safety nets for the most vulnerable populations.
- 17. Under this third objective, countries have revised the Charter for Food Crisis Prevention and Management. The region has prepared the regional food reserve project, which is a framework integrating various initiatives, including the G20, and which will be submitted for adoption by the Ministerial Committee.
- 18. Two questions arise: (i) Seven years after its adoption, is the ECOWAP regional policy still basically appropriate for the challenges facing the region? (ii) Do the terms of its implementation allow addressing these challenges?
- 19. The responses are nuanced in both respects:
 - a. All stakeholders and observers believe that the regional policy addresses, in its objectives, deliverables and priorities, the challenges and issues facing the region in terms of overall food security and sovereignty. ECOWAP is considered, in absolute terms, as the reference frame, because it addresses the structural dimensions of food security, including aspects of availability and functioning of markets. It also deploys a coherent strategy in the field of food crisis prevention and management.
 - b. The memorandum on the assessment of the ECOWAP implementation, submitted to the Ministerial Committee in September 2012, shows the magnitude of the projects undertaken in many areas. It also reflects the difficulty to redirect, gradually, existing programmes along the lines of ECOWAP priorities, and to start, in a more balanced way, the implementation of activities around the three specific objectives of ECOWAP. Getting donors to align on national and regional policies remains a daily challenge. While most countries make significant efforts to meet the Maputo commitment (10% of the national budget allocated to the agricultural sector), public funding of agriculture remains very poor in terms of ambitions in agricultural policies, given the demographic and economic weight of agriculture in national economies. Two problems are added to this brief overview: (i) weak human and institutional capacities, from the local to the regional level and (ii) concrete articulation, complementarity and coordination of the different levels of governance.
 - c. A policy differs from a programme or project in a sense that it carries a long-term vision and seeks to introduce structural changes. It has a long “time step” and cannot induce lasting impacts and changes in structure, but on a scale of 10-15 years. Its effective implementation, beyond the hype, emergencies or fashion effects, is an absolutely crucial parameter. However, for various reasons, both the NAIPs and the RAIP are now only partially implemented.
 - d. ECOWAP (RAIP and NAIP) tends to ignore a key question, in relation to food security issues and resilience issues: is it possible, and under which conditions, to offer opportunities for all farming households to get rid of poverty and food insecurity? Associated with this question, can the agricultural policy approach, with the same instruments, all categories of farmers regardless of the agro-ecological zones considered, the economic size of the farm, the allocation of production factors, access to markets, etc, or should the instruments be better differentiated based on more detailed objectives targeted at different categories of producers? The underlying assumption is that the most marginalized producers and pastoralists are left out in the current approaches while they need specific instruments to help them better manage risks and initiate a process of accumulation. This is the real issue at stake in the discussion about resilience and establishment of social safety nets.
 - e. A more detailed analysis is necessary in view of the following three issues the coordination of which help structure the concept of resilience:
 - i. Does ECOWAP facilitate direct access by these categories of households to the capital they need?
 - ii. Does ECOWAP facilitate indirect access by these categories of households to the capital they need, through the operation of the credit and insurance market, commodity and service market?

- iii. Has ECOWAP helped to define an adequate and enabling legislative, normative and regulatory framework for these households?

3 How do we get to a “pro-resilience” ECOWAP?

- 20. Despite the conduct of many studies and surveys, we don't have a detailed baseline for all the countries to head towards a deeper understanding of household vulnerability, causes and manifestations of this vulnerability. This is the starting point and investment should be made towards disposing of this baseline situation, mapping of risks, degree of exposure of households and their capacity to cope.
- 21. Secondly, a specific operational thinking should be conducted on the issue of resilience, focusing on three key issues:
 - a. Clarifying the concept of resilience and attributes of a policy aimed at strengthening it;
 - b. Define how to improve inclusion of risks in the current portfolio of activities under the NAIPs and RAIP;
 - c. Determine how to target specific measures on vulnerable rural populations who are driven or are in the process of being driven into a spiral of decapitalization and consequently of chronic food and nutrition insecurity

3.1 The debate about resilience and its pitfalls

- 22. Several stumbling blocks should be avoided in the current debate on resilience:
 - a. The first pitfall would be to consider that all existing approaches and programmes contribute in one way or another to increase the resilience of farming households taken together. A simple, “resilience-oriented” reformulation would be enough to capture aid resources that would now fit this purpose.
 - b. The second stumbling block concerns the social safety nets, which are supposed to lead this effort in the sense of support for resilience. Social safety nets cover a wide range of tools, but their judicious selection should be done based on the objectives assigned to them: avoid decapitalization of assets, or combine “emergency response and activation of a virtuous process of strengthening the capacities of households”.
 - c. Safety nets can play a major role if they avoid decapitalization and adoption of recessive coping strategies. But, if they are judiciously chosen and negotiated with the beneficiaries, they can also help initiate this process of accumulation necessary to get out of the “poverty trap”. They can finally help to address the multidimensional nature of malnutrition, including by facilitating access to health services, schooling and school feeding, etc.
 - d. An ambitious policy of safety nets only makes sense if it is in the long term. It cannot be considered on the basis of mobilizing international support, for dependency reasons or for reasons of predictability or sustainability.
 - e. Associated with the previous point, the third pitfall (also a fairly standard stumbling block) would be to consider that development assistance, if it is re-deployed around the goal of achieving “resilience”, can solve the problem. In fact, it would find itself at the centre of the process (the current risk with the AGIR initiative), with the regional institutions, States and regional stakeholders relegated to playing a role of “false leadership” (i.e., endorsing options made in consultations amongst donors, but without any real ability to influence them). However, as in other areas, international assistance can be effective only if it positions itself to support a real dynamics and a regional process, not at the centre of this dynamics. The danger is that the pretext of emergency may dictate the agenda and schedule.

- f. The fourth stumbling block relates to the intersectoral carrying capacity of the agricultural policy. Issues related to food access in urban areas and issues related to malnutrition can hardly be addressed by an agricultural policy. The same holds true for the commercial dimensions. The multisectoral nature of agricultural policies makes it necessary to develop strong coordination mechanisms that are able to arbitrate and guide sectoral policies, particularly at national and regional levels.

3.2 Implementing a “pro-resilience” ECOWAP: some principles

23. From the ECOWAS standpoint, several principles should guide the design of a strategy for strengthening the resilience of agricultural or rural households :

- a. Relying on a solid and new diagnosis of:
 - i. Vulnerability of different zones and different categories of households and local institutions (savings, credit and micro-finance institutions, cereal or animal feed banks, input supply systems, etc.) to shocks. Many local institutions - pillars of development - are conceived in years of average production and no mechanism allows them to manage or share the risk.
 - ii. Mapping of risks faced or are likely to be faced by households;
- b. Relying on a prospective vision, based on the fate of the different types of family farms. Several studies (e.g., Ruralstruc) show the extreme diversity of family farms and call into question their future in the agricultural sector. These diagnoses are essential to guide, dynamically, the approaches to resilience and choosing appropriate safety nets. They allow considering differentiated trajectories according to the capacities of the farms and characteristics of household economies: diversification of income sources outside agriculture, intensification/diversification of agricultural productions, reducing the impact of hazards through control of risks (WSC/SDR, water control, land policy, etc.);
- c. Focusing on institutions and actors and rethinking the method of food security governance, from the local (territories) to the regional level. The “emergency community” is generally used to treating the person or the household alone. Very few approaches show interest in the socio-institutional environment of the populations, which is essential in an approach oriented by a development perspective. In this respect, the ECOWAS approach should focus on the following dimensions :
 - i. Which role should the local communities play in the design and management of social safety nets?
 - ii. What role should local actors (producer groups and grassroots POs, women's associations, etc.) play?
 - iii. What institutions to build in an organized framework for implementing risk management instruments?
 - iv. What risk sharing mechanisms to deploy, and what might be the appropriate role for the regional level to play?
 - v. What division of tasks and responsibilities in the various areas of intervention between the different levels (decentralized, State and Region) and between the different groups of actors?
 - vi. What efficient coordination mechanism to put in place to ensure consistency and effectiveness of action: (i) between the administrative/geographical scales; (ii) between/amongst the various sectoral interventions; (iii) between/amongst the various groups of players?
- d. Designing social safety nets that help support households to recover from the crisis on sustainable basis, and adapt such safety nets to this perspective (especially in terms of counterparts expected from recipient households);
- e. The ECOWAS initiative in favour of a new approach to local food security is part and parcel of this vision.

4 The Brazilian experience: lessons and limitations for West Africa

24. In 2003, President Lula launched the “Zero Hunger” strategy in a country where hunger involved approximately one third of the population, i.e., about 70 million people. It is now estimated that the programme has helped lift 20 million people out of poverty and has significantly reduced the incidence of hunger and malnutrition.
25. The “Zero Hunger” strategy is based on several key elements:
- a. *A legal basis* including (i) the national law on food and nutrition security; (ii) the inclusion of the right to food in the Constitution, (iii) a law on family farms;
 - b. *A reform of governance*, with the establishment of the National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN), based on two major principles (public participation and inter-sectorality) including:
 - i. A National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security, involving thousands of representatives of different categories of actors; it meets once every four years and sets guidelines for the Zero Hunger strategy;
 - ii. A dialogue and coordination body between the Government and civil society, at the various territorial levels. At the national level, the CONSEA, is an advisory body chaired by the civil society and two-thirds of its members come from that civil society;
 - iii. A planning, operational coordination (different scales and different instruments) and implementation body: The Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger and the Inter-ministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber (CAISAN). It brings together representatives of 19 ministries involved in the strategy.
 - iv. The decentralization of the system, from the federal level down to the local level
 - c. *A coherent and multidimensional approach* characterized by:
 - i. A combination of emergency measures and medium to long-term measures;
 - ii. Instruments focused on rural areas, and urban populations;
 - iii. Promoting linkages between urban and rural areas, especially around the food supply;
 - iv. Intervention on different dimensions of food security: support for family production; market operation by securing markets for small producers (purchase contracts); access to food for the poorest people, through transfers (cash and food allowances); nutrition via social conditionalities, school feeding programmes, food quality, etc..
 - d. *Funding on the State budget*, with a minor contribution of international partners.
26. The Zero Hunger strategy is based on the articulation of a set of programmes whose orientation is primarily focused on the fight against hunger and malnutrition, with four major objectives or pillars:
- a. Promote access to food;
 - b. Strengthen family farming ;
 - c. Promote income-generating activities ;
 - d. Promote partnership and social mobilization.
27. Four programmes are particularly relevant, in relation to the objectives of the strategy:
- a. The system of conditional family allowances;
 - b. The programme for strengthening family farming (PRONAF)
 - c. The Government Food Procurement Programme (FPP);
 - d. The School Feeding Programme (PNAE).

5 Analysis of similarities and differences between the Brazilian and West African situation

28. The table in Annex 1 attempts to establish a form of inventory likely to stimulate discussion on the conditions for replicating the Brazilian initiative in West Africa, focusing particularly on the following points:
- a. The extent of hunger and malnutrition and its causes;
 - b. The legal foundations;
 - c. The administrative organization and governance;
 - d. The financing of agricultural and food security policies;
 - e. The organization and structuring of the civil society and the agricultural world;
29. The main lesson learnt from the Brazilian experience concerns the overall coherence: (i) a strong political will, supported by (ii) a social movement, well organized and committed, (iii) an organization that allows the State to operationalize the strategy, (iv) in a governance framework structured at different territorial levels, (v) with a strong participation of the civil society and responsibilities clearly determined vis-à-vis the government and finally, (vi) actions targeted on the various causes of hunger and malnutrition and hinged together, and (vii) consistency between the financial resources used and the target.
30. The convergence and articulation of a set of programmes towards achieving a goal clearly identified as a challenge shared by the society, non-governmental players and the Government, explain, to a large extent, the results obtained, although Brazil has not yet been able to completely eradicate hunger and malnutrition. By entrusting the task of coordination to a specific ministry that the mission of social development and fighting against hunger requires working on the multi-factorial nature of food and nutrition issues, the Government gives itself the means to act not only on the agricultural dimensions but also the overall dimensions of food security.
31. From the detailed analysis of lessons learnt follows the identification of opportunities to build on this experience and engage a resolute fight against hunger and malnutrition in West Africa. The dialogue between the region and Brazil, within the Centre of Excellence against Hunger (Brasilia) will allow to deepen lessons learnt from this experience and to refine the content of the Zero Hunger strategy in West Africa.

6 Many international initiatives, but the West African leadership is still to be built

32. The 2008 global food crisis marked the awakening of the International Community. The concerns were simultaneously on (i) the worsening of the food situation (with a sharp increase in the number of undernourished people, after several years of decline), especially in Africa, (ii) political risks, caused by hunger riots; and (iii) the global food outlook due to population growth, the slowdown in agricultural growth, the crisis of fossil fuels (rise of bio-fuels, potentially competing food uses), and climate change.
33. The G8 meeting under the Italian presidency at the L'Aquila made commitments for food security (\$ 22 billion over three years). The GAFSP (Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme) was created to harness these resources and many West African countries were able to finance some elements of their NAIPs through this channel. However, a significant proportion of the commitments (80%) has not yet been mobilized.
34. The Scaling Up Nutrition movement was established in 2010 under the aegis of the United Nations. It supports actions to strengthen nutrition in voluntary countries, by making existing programmes and initiatives more effective. Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, the Gambia, Mali, Senegal, and Sierra Leone are engaged in this movement. National plans for scaling

up nutrition reflect the commitments of parties to (i) take nutrition into account in programmes of any areas of government action; (ii) expand the coverage of interventions.

35. In the wake of the L'Aquila Summit, President Obama launched, at the G8 meeting in Camp David (May 2012), the *"New Global Alliance for Food and Nutrition Security"*. It aims at lifting 50 million Africans out of poverty in the next ten years through public-private partnerships, including through mobilization of 45 local or multinational companies that have pledged to contribute \$ 3 billion. This alliance should be implemented within the framework of CAADP.
36. Under the French Presidency, the G20 focused on responses to the volatility of international prices, with two main impacts: the establishment of a global information system (AMIS) and the support for the creation of regional food reserve systems. The West Africa region has been chosen as a test area to develop a reserve system supplementing national stocks and so, because of the fulcrum made up of the ECOWAP and because of the regional leadership exercised by ECOWAS (in cooperation with UEMOA, CILSS and networks of socio-professional stakeholders).
37. Given the magnitude and succession of food and nutrition crises in the Sahel, the European Commission took the initiative, in June 2012, to promote a *"Global Alliance for the Initiative on Resilience in the Sahel – AGIR"*. To that end, it mobilizes regional organizations and governments, international organizations and donors, with the hope that regional institutions take the lead in coordinating the initiative. It envisages a high-level meeting on December 6, in Ouagadougou.
38. On the occasion of the Rio+20, the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon proposed to the International Community the *"Zero Hunger Challenge"*, focused on five objectives: (i) allow access to enough food for all throughout the year, (ii) terminate malnutrition during pregnancy and early childhood, (iii) develop sustainable food systems, (iv) doubling the productivity and incomes of small farmers, especially women and (v) eliminate waste food. This initiative is a coherent framework for the United Nations System's approach to food and nutrition security. It is part of the Secretary General's initiative in 2008, with the creation of the High-level Task Force on Food Security (HLTF Food Security), providing the UNS with a comprehensive framework for action, updated in September 2010.
39. Most of these initiatives mobilize the same international partners, namely: the major donors, the UN General Secretariat and Specialized Agencies (UNDP, WFP, FAO, UNICEF, etc.). IFAD, the international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank, etc. large international NGOs, some research institutions, or companies or foundations (Gates, AGRA, etc.) are regularly involved. Regional banks, including ADB and IDB, are also strongly committed alongside countries and regional institutions.
40. The peculiarity of international initiatives is that they all tend to put forward the leadership of countries or regional institutions. They say they want to align on local policies and come to support these in developing partnerships. The proliferation of initiatives highlights the low visibility of West African initiatives and the difficulty for leaders in the region to crystallize international partnerships around their main concerns and priorities. The operationalization of these international initiatives in the countries and the region makes agriculture and food security governance even more complex every day. By designating themselves the national or regional institutions on which they rely to deploy their initiatives, international organizations and partners do not always facilitate initiatives aimed at streamlining approaches and clarifying the mandates and prerogatives, however essential for meaningful progress to be achieved in the governance area.

7 "Zero Hunger in West Africa", a more ambitious initiative

41. Twelve years after the adoption of the Food Security Strategic Framework in the CILSS Sahelian countries, 10 years after the adoption of UEMOA's PAU (Agricultural Policy of the Union) and seven years after the adoption of the ECOWAP in the ECOWAS region, the results achieved are very mixed. They do not allow considering secure food access for all West African people in the short or medium term. We should therefore question the relevance of the policies implemented to

combat hunger and malnutrition and/or the strategy used to implement such policies. This diagnosis is also valid for the MDG-focused poverty reduction strategies which should have helped to address issues related to poverty/access to social services/reduction of hunger and malnutrition.

42. Section 2 explains how the ECOWAP tackles the structural dimensions of chronic food insecurity and the prevention and management of cyclical food crises, in a holistic approach.

43. Section 2 also highlights the limitations of the ECOWAP current approach on several points:

- a. *Governance*, which can be improved by working on the following aspects:
 - i. Involvement and participation of local communities in the definition and implementation of strategies focused on the construction of food security for all and resilience. This aspect raises again the question of subsidiarity within the framework of the decentralization process, and the role of local governments (territorial communities) ;
 - ii. Articulation between the various dimensions, which helps to make significant progress by working on inter-relations between (i) access to productive resources, (ii) diversification of activities and access to incomes, (iii) access to basic services, including in essential areas in terms of nutrition, drinking water, education, and primary health care;
 - iii. Articulation, at the national and regional level, between social development initiatives, agricultural policies and economic and trade development initiatives;
- b. *The implementation capacity*, which questions:
 - i. The institutional capacity at local, national and regional levels;
 - ii. The quality of planning, coordination, execution and evaluation mechanisms;
 - iii. Availability and predictability of financial resources ;
 - iv. The human resources;
- c. *Targeting measures* and priority given to vulnerable populations, with the need to:
 - i. Innovate and differentiate programmes and agricultural policy instruments in terms of ability to meet the specific needs of certain categories of producers excluded under traditional economic incentives;
 - ii. Develop resilience of agricultural and food systems and make connections between chronic food insecurity and cyclical crises;
 - iii. Deploy specific approaches focused on access to food for vulnerable urban populations, given the current urbanization dynamics.

7.1 The aim: to eradicate hunger and malnutrition

44. The ECOWAS initiative seeks to bring together Governments, Parliaments, civil society players and producer organizations around a key challenge: **eradicating hunger by the year 2020, and achieving significant progress by 2015.**

45. Achieving this goal requires that the Heads of State and Government, the Presidents of Parliaments, regional integration institutions, civil society actors and professional organizations really make it a priority and shared objective to guide government reforms (reform of public action) and design innovative mechanisms between public, private and nongovernmental sectors. The first step consists of affirming this goal at the highest level.

46. Such an initiative, at the regional level, is justified having regard to:

- a. The problem of hunger and malnutrition, which is common to all West African countries;
- b. The interdependence between countries and the regional risks resulting from persistent hunger and malnutrition: conflicts, migration, etc.;
- c. The importance of regional political, economic and commercial integration processes;
- d. The potential of such integration in helping to solve problems, because of the complementarities between countries, agro-ecological zones, production and consumption basins;

- e. The potential of cooperation and sharing between and amongst countries, institutions and actors to jointly tackle common problems (research capacities, information systems, capitalization of experiences, etc.);

7.2 The approach: relying on what is already in place, reform it around the “fight against hunger” focus, reform governance, and increase public participation

47. Recognizing the multisectoral nature of food insecurity and the inability of isolated, sectoral policies to address it. This explains why it is important to base the initiative on a very strong commitment by the highest authorities as it should then be reflected in many sectors of government action.
48. Given the extent of hunger in rural areas, it is clear that institutions and agricultural policies have a particular responsibility. But they cannot, alone, meet the challenge of eradicating hunger and malnutrition. The ECOWAS Presidency, the Board of Commissioners, all governments should be mobilized around this central target.
49. Without calling into question all current policies and strategies, the initiative will seek to (i) rely on what already exists and avoid making a new programme, and (ii) reform what is already in place by questioning how it contributes to the fight against hunger and malnutrition, and (iii) deploy additional initiatives based on identified gaps. In that vein, the initiative will combine two complementary approaches:
 - a. Social mobilization at the territorial level;
 - b. Reforming and focusing national and regional policies.
50. **At the territorial level**, the challenge is twofold: first, to rely on the local stakeholders’ potential to *define appropriate strategies (or local plans) to fight against hunger and malnutrition* which take into account the local specificities based on a differentiated analysis of household food economies, achievements and lessons learnt, skills, local opportunities and assets, constraints and needs, etc. Secondly, to recognize that the challenge of food for all cannot be met without a strong mobilization and unwavering commitment of the populations, their organizations and local communities. Some elements of these local strategies will be financed by a fund to support local initiatives (see below). This approach allows integrating the diversity of food situations, but also the diversity of forms of social and administrative organizations in different countries.
51. **At the national and regional level**, the approach will seek to :
 - a. *Design an incentive and binding legal basis:*
 - i. *By gradually and systematically incorporating the principle of the right to food in all national constitutions and revise the ECOWAS Treaty to introduce that same right;*
 - ii. *By providing a legal basis for family farm;*
 - b. *Place women and marginalized groups at the centre of the initiative*, not only as potential beneficiaries, but also as agents for change;
 - i. Importance of planning effort at the basis;
 - ii. Supporting systematically gender equity at all levels;
 - c. *Refocus and really select strategies, policies and programmes in terms of their capacity to contribute to the “Zero Hunger” objective, and re-deploy human and financial resources on that basis:*
 - i. *Revisit strategies and policies that have direct impact on hunger and malnutrition* (poverty reduction and growth strategy, food security and FCPM strategy, agricultural policy, trade policy, decentralization policy, etc), by asking three questions:
 1. Have they helped to reduce hunger and malnutrition?
 2. How to improve significantly their impacts, on the basis of experience sharing?

3. Is the governance of these strategies and policies appropriate for the objective of eradicating hunger and malnutrition? How to improve it?
- ii. *Revise the NAIPs and the RAIP with the same perspective:*
1. Do they address, in a balanced way, the various dimensions of food insecurity of rural households?
 2. Do they specifically target vulnerable households and how?
 3. Do they include the development of the resilience of food and agricultural systems of households and communities? How to do it: strengthening local stocks, mitigation and management of risks, safety nets, etc.
 4. How do they articulate the various levels of intervention (local, national and regional)?
 5. What roles and responsibilities do they entrust to local governments, communities and actors?
 6. How are they related with other sectoral strategies: agricultural and food trade policy, banking policy, infrastructure development, social development, etc.?
- iii. *Focus on policy instruments targeted at populations suffering from hunger and malnutrition, especially small family farmers. At the regional level, four instruments are planned: (i) support intensification of production, (ii) market regulation and reduction of volatility of strategic food prices, (iii) food safety nets for vulnerable populations, (iv) and food security reserves.*
1. “Supporting intensification”: this instrument should be directed towards two priorities:
 - a. Target, primarily, small producers who do not use inputs and equipment;
 - b. Target different production systems in fragile agro-ecological zones (agricultural, pastoral, agro-pastoral), the most affected by climate change and variability, by targeting incentives favouring sustainable farming systems (agro-ecology, water management).
 2. “Market regulation”: this instrument, which is complex to implement, given the current low level of organization of value chains at the regional level, should be designed:
 - a. By focusing on the local rice (and maize) market, which plays an increasingly important role in the food systems, and whose price changes play a leading role on other cereals (link with the “rice” initiative);
 - b. By combining the government procurement policy for market regulation with the strategy to improve marketing by small producers: supporting storage and warrantage, management of price risks, etc.;
 - c. By supplying and replenishing the food security reserve, through purchase contracts to producers;
 3. “Safety net” instrument:
 - a. Favour co-funding of social safety net programmes focused on the protection of household livelihoods, access to social services, the fight against malnutrition and capital accumulation (in agricultural activities or through diversification into other sources of income);
 - b. The question of how to target and eligibility of beneficiaries should be examined very carefully;
 - c. Modalities of intervention in urban areas should be specified;

- d. Safety nets should be included in a more comprehensive approach aimed at strengthening the resilience of households;
- 4. The security storage policy:
 - a. The feasibility study submitted to the Ministerial Committee promotes an approach that relies on the complementarity between local storage, national storage and the regional reserve. It is a privileged means to (i) strengthen the instruments for fighting against hunger, controlled by local actors; (ii) develop solidarity between the different territorial scales and governance, (iii) construct concrete cooperation frameworks between these different scales.
 - b. The same study shows the articulations and synergies with the other elements of the agricultural policy; supply strategy (see above), management of technical rotations in relation to the food safety net programmes, etc.
- d. *Ensure consistency of major programmes focused on hunger and malnutrition*, on the basis of their steering and arbitration by the highest authorities of the State and the region, particularly in the following areas :
 - i. Develop a structured relationship between targeted actions on access to food for the poor and those targeted on access to markets for small producers: linkages between urban and rural areas, procurement programmes, supply of school canteens and food assistance programmes, etc.
 - ii. Encourage diversification of household economic activities, in the context of local development or food security plans;
 - iii. Encourage small producers to improve storage and group marketing of commodities (local storage facilities, training, credit policy), and relate this with measures for market regulation;
 - iv. Align trade policy at the ECOWAS borders with the objectives of security of small farmers and food sovereignty in the region, and focus on differentiated measures for access to food for the poorest households (family allowances, food coupons) rather than tax exemption for imported products competing with local productions, in order to secure producers in the long term;
 - v. Integrate food safety nets in a comprehensive approach to social protection of vulnerable households to effectively combat malnutrition amongst breastfeeding and pregnant women, and infants: linking food, health and education.
- e. *Develop predictable and secure financial mechanisms equal to the “Zero Hunger” ambition*
 - i. Establish a support fund complementing local initiatives and strategies to finance (in the manner of competitive funds) actions identified but not financed elsewhere and which may help achieve the “Zero Hunger” initiative;
 - ii. Engaging the region in this challenge requires national and regional authorities to include critical financial needs in the State budgets and, if necessary, to design new internal financial resources. This is the guarantor of predictability and regularity of resources essential for an action that must necessarily take place over time. It also guarantees commitment at the highest level. Indeed, although they are yet to be assessed, the financial resources needed to achieve the “Zero Hunger” goal are much higher than the capacity of the international aid.
 - iii. The feasibility of the regional food security reserve proposes that funding for the overall storage policy be based on a specific community levy on imports. The proposal can be considered and enlarged in the context of this initiative.
 - iv. Other avenues exist and should be explored:
 - 1. Contribution by extractive industries;
 - 2. Contribution by telephone operators;
 - 3. Contribution by the banking sector;
 - 4. Etc.
 - v. The contribution of international institutions and partners is needed but its effectiveness and relevance will depend on the capacity of external assistance to

support funding mechanisms that the region and countries will determine, according to commitments made under the Regional Partners' Compact for the ECOWAP/CAADP implementation. In return, it is incumbent upon the highest authorities of the region to secure the use of resources, develop mechanisms and procedures to fight against corruption, ensure complete transparency in the use of resources vis-à-vis the West African populations and the International Community.

f. Streamline institutions, clarify their mandates and responsibilities, and promote responsible governance :

- i. It is difficult to achieve, in the current institutional context, consistency of interventions in the context of the "Zero Hunger" objective;
- ii. The framework for coordination between ECOWAS and UEMOA should take up this issue and propose an operational architecture associating various skills within the region, particularly CILSS (see below). A high-level Committee comprising the Heads of institutions could be set up, at the initiative of the President of the Republic of the country holding the Presidency of ECOWAS;
- iii. The institutional mechanism set up at the regional level for ECOWAP can carry such an ambition, if the political commitment is real, with:
 1. The Food and Agriculture Advisory Committee involving the major categories of actors would play a function of orientation;
 2. The Inter-Departments Committee for Food and Agriculture would treat issues of coherence amongst sectoral policies, under the authority of the President of the Commission (macro-economics, agriculture, infrastructure, trade and customs, humanitarian affairs, etc.);
 3. The DAEWR would ensure operational coordination of the initiative;
 4. The Regional Food and Agriculture Agency would ensure implementation of delegated specific actions;
 5. The regional ECOWADF Fund would deploy financial mechanisms, in collaboration with the ReFAA, Member States, and banks.

g. Build and assert regional leadership:

- i. To provide that leadership, Zero Hunger in West Africa should be based on a strategy formulated and affirmed in the region (ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government);
- ii. Based on observations on the governance, the Summit will be made to indicate the type of institutional arrangements that will:
 1. Ensure that all human and institutional resources are mobilized around the objective of eradicating hunger and malnutrition;
 2. Clarify the responsibilities and duties assigned to each institution of integration and cooperation, and show the consistency of the overall architecture;
 3. Each institution shall be accountable for the performance of its duties and responsibilities.
- iii. International partners should be invited to explicitly subscribe to this priority objective as well as the approach, and act in three directions to make it possible;
 1. Recognize the primacy and legitimacy of national and regional processes, and position aid to support these processes;
 2. Pool their resources to simplify governance and place national and regional actors at the centre of management and implementation of interventions (policies, instruments, programmes);
 3. Adapt international initiatives to West African contexts and align intervention strategies on national and regional policies.
- iv. The highest authorities of the region will establish an organ specifically dedicated to piloting the initiative. To ensure general mobilization of the various sectoral policies, the Summit of Heads of State may entrust the Presidency of this organ to the President of the ECOWAS Commission. The latter can rely on the

- Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources to provide operational coordination.
- v. Each year, the Summit of Heads of State and Government would host a special session to assess progress and gaps and would play its leadership and decision-making role.

8 The next steps

- 52. Discussion of the initiative by the Ministerial Committee, collection of comments and amendments made by experts and Ministers of Agriculture;
- 53. If the principle of the initiative is approved:
 - a. Develop a comprehensive strategy with a view to the Summit of Heads of State and Government;
 - b. Drafting a guidance note for decision-makers at the highest level.
- 54. Preparation of a contribution to the high-level meeting of the AGIR Initiative (6 December 2012).
- 55. Organization of a high-level policy dialogue with partners of the international community, with support from the Brazilian cooperation.
- 56. Launching the initiative within the context of a West African Convention preceded by 15 national preparatory Conventions, to ensure a high-level involvement of actors, up to the decentralized level.

9 Annex 1: The Brazilian experience of Zero Hunger

1. Brought to power by a strong social movement in a country where social inequalities are amongst the highest in the world, President Lula had to meet one of the greatest expectations of the civil society: poverty reduction, access to land and the fight against hunger.
2. The agricultural sector is based on a dual model in which family farming and agribusiness coexist, the latter making Brazil one of the world leading exporters of agricultural products (meat, soybeans, coffee ...). For its part, family production, which involves three quarters of agricultural workforce, provides 70% of domestic food consumption. Competition over land and access to means of production is the backdrop of the competition between the two types of agriculture. The promise of major land reform meets the expectations of smallholders' movements, including the Landless Movement (MST).
3. The following table attempts to compare the situations between Brazil and West Africa to feed the debate about the replicability of the Brazilian initiative and conditions to do so.

| | Brazil | West Africa |
|---|--|--|
| General data Population GDP (in US\$ billions) GDP/Capita (US \$ /capita) Population growth rate (%) Trade balance of agricultural and food products World rank Indebtedness | 192 million 2440 12 688 1.16 Net exporter 8th economic power High, when the strategy was adopted in 2003 | 300 million 305 1013 2 to 3.5 Net importer 25th economic power Relatively low in the majority of countries |
| 1. Magnitude of the problem of hunger | One third of the population (2003) Essentially chronic hunger and malnutrition | 34 million in chronic AI according to FAO data (12%) – Higher according to analyses of poverty and access to food Very high peaks related to cyclical crises |
| 2. Causes of hunger and malnutrition | Strongly connected with poverty Urban areas: underemployment, “ <i>bidonvillisation</i> ” (development of shanty towns), social exclusion Rural areas: limited access to land, production means and markets | Urban areas: underemployment or low-paying informal sector Rural areas: Low access to production factors ; reduction in the size of useful area per worker/population growth Production risks Dysfunctional markets and commodity prices (level and |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | Low access to basic services for the poor | instability) Low access to basic services Conflicts and displacement of populations |
| 3. Legal foundations | Right to food enshrined in the Constitution Act on family farming, with identification/registration and status of farmers Act on food and nutrition security | Heterogeneous situation by country/ constitutionality of the Right to Food (Niger) Few countries have an Agricultural Orientation Act (dominant approach: agricultural development programmes and food security or FCPM programmes) Heterogeneous situation / status of farmers, registration, etc. (important for targeting measures) |
| 4. Administrative organization and governance | A single federal agricultural policy with two ministries, one for Agribusiness, one for family farming Formal banking system to deploy some tools targeting households (financing of family farms, family allowance system) Zero Hunger initiative entrusted to a Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger providing inter-ministerial coordination | A 15 Member State Economic Community including another 8 Member State Community Policy convergence rather low in sectoral areas, higher in areas of regional sovereignty (trade) Different administrative organization and decentralization processes according to countries 15 national agricultural policies 2 regional agricultural policies (PAU, ECOWAP) Many sub-sectoral strategies and programmes/projects Multiple sub-regional cooperation organizations Strong growth in territorial coverage by the banking sector (DFS or conventional banks) Strong growth of territorial coverage by mobile telephone networks and development of applications (money transfer, etc.) |
| 5. Financing of agricultural and FS programmes | Public budget; fiscal resources Very low external contributions | Low public budget Financing emergency programmes and interventions with a strong component of international assistance |
| 6. Civil society and POs | Highly structured POs structured according to the operating model High degree of self-financing | Structuring in progress Weak national NGOs POs: degree of structure and independence varies widely between countries Heavy reliance on external financing Regional networks under construction |

4. In addition to the elements mentioned in the text (Section 4), continuity of action is a key factor of results achieved in the country. Brazil has been engaged in this fight with great determination for nearly 10 years, with structured policies, predictable, evaluated and reformed according to results, a Parliament which plays an important role in the formulation of the legal basis of public intervention. If tangible results can be achieved in the short term, the magnitude of the problems to be solved justifies a long-term commitment and substantial and predictable resources.
5. The question of how to finance the strategy is obviously another central aspect. Brazil relies on its fiscal policy and includes financing in the State budget since the fight against hunger is recognized as a major objective of the mandate of the new President. This option helps him ensure his sovereignty at a time when the public instruments he had mobilized violated the doctrine of international financing institutions. This enabled to maintain the financial commitments, so long as this issue was at the centre of the agenda of the Government, the Parliament and the civil society. This is still the case now. Therefore, and unlike West Africa, internal governance issues have not been amplified by multiple visions, approaches and modalities of international aid.