

C
PN-AAQ-332
ISAJ 115 231

REVIEW OF FOOD SUPPLY POSITION IN THE
SAHELIAN COUNTRIES OF WEST AFRICA
(excluding ~~CABO~~ VERDE)

Chad
The Gambia
Mali
Mauritania
Niger
Senegal
Upper Volta

22 September - 14 October 1978

by

R. Pollaris
Project Management Officer
Emergency Unit, Project Management Division

Remarks

Cabo Verde: was not included as harvest is two months
behind continental Sahel.

Chad: the review was carried out by Mr. J.P. Nastorg,
WPMA.

FP 5/3 SAHEL
20.10.78

Distribution: Messrs. Vogel
Ustlin
Cashin
Lühe
Dhital

cc: Mongia/Fraleigh
El Midani/Sintobin
Moscarella
Dawson
Cuomo/Nastorg
Zejjari
Frenay
Emergency Unit chrono
Registry (2)

Dull-copy

INTRODUCTION

To avoid any misunderstanding it was emphasized and made very clear to government officials and donor representatives that the joint FAO/WFP mission was in no way an attempt to make an assessment of the agro-pastoral and food supply situation as it was well understood that such an exercise could not validly take place before some time in November at the earliest.

As far as FAO/ESC was concerned the objective was broadly to verify the methodology of its monitoring and analysis of the rainfall and the latter's impact on crop development, study that of the countries concerned and investigate ways and means of refining it.

WFP was mainly interested in ascertaining the unfolding and impact of the 1977/78 emergency food relief operations, the state of the food supply position, and in getting a feeling of the outlook for the 1978/79 crop. The last two elements would allow the Programme to determine whether it would be necessary to preposition stocks already in December 1978 as was done in 1977.

In most countries Mr. La Stella and I called on government officials and donor representatives together; in some instances concerning technical matters, we made visits separately, later briefing each other on our findings.

In all cases exchanges took on an informal character and were held at a low key allowing for frank discussions stripped of pseudo-diplomatic overtones; this was made easier as practically all discussions were with individuals rather than mixed groups. The exception was in Mauritania where a meeting was held with all government officials and experts concerned with food production and distribution in their broadest sense.

CHAD

1. Food supply position

1.1 The prevailing opinion was that the harvest would be average. However no final estimates could be given as two factors of unknown magnitude had affected crops locally:

- ? a) ^{grasshopper?} a locust invasion, presumably from the Ogaden, which may reach a greater proportion before the crops are harvested;
- b) floods which have seriously affected limited areas in the South.

Although the importance of the losses is still unknown, no catastrophe situation is foreseen although the deficit might be higher than the 40,000 tons which the government states is the recurrent net food shortage in an average year.

The Minister of Agriculture confirmed that no final assessment could be made until some time in November.

1.2 The Multidonor Mission had recommended international assistance of 32,000 tons as emergency aid and 10,000 as buffer/contingency reserve. As emergency aid donors have pledged 25,706 tons; a further 3,078 tons were contributed by the EEC under its regular programme and 2,000 tons by France also under its indirect economic support programme and of which 1,000 tons was a replacement of the 1977 allocation which had been damaged and become unfit for human consumption. The representative in N'Djamena of both Agencies pointed this out in formal letters to the WFP Senior Adviser.

The supply position is as follows:

Pledges (total)	30,784
Delivered	<u>17,351</u>
In the pipeline	13,433 ✓ as of 20 Oct 78

Commodities in the pipeline are scheduled for delivery during the last quarter of 1978.

1.3 Of the 7,500 tons contributed by and through WFP, 7,172 tons had been distributed by 30 September 1978. The only other aid distributed is 6,102 tons of SFSG donated by USAID. If one deducts the 2,000 tons of wheat donated by France for conversion into flour and normal commercial sale, the Government will have on hand 16,510 tons of cereals to meet such shortages as may exist or occur after the 1st October 1978.

./...

2. Conclusions

Considering that the EEC shipment of 276 tons of rice is not expected until November and that of 2,800 of sorghum until December by arrangement between the government and the donor, one must conclude that the needs of the country were overestimated by all concerned. ▽

1. USG response keyed on actual delivery estimate price - serious reviewing; appropriate USG share; USG ability respond more quickly than other donors.

./...

THE GAMBIA

1. Food supply position

1.1 Officials of the Department of Agriculture, donor representatives as well as the FAO/SAA, the FAO economist, the UNDP Resident Representative and WFP officer are all agreed that the harvest will be good and that no international emergency food aid should be required in 1979. The director of Agriculture even estimated that there may be a surplus of 3,000 to 4,000 tons of maize.

1.2 As in Senegal, the position of the political wing was more cautious and made reservations! Both the Secretary-General of the Presidency and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government went to great pains to stress that the effects of the droughts of the preceding years could not be wiped out by one good harvest and that international aid would be needed so that farmers could reconstitute their security stocks.

I suggested that such aid need not be sought under "emergency aid" but rather through short- or medium-term arrangements with donors such as CIDA and EEC who did provide indirect economic aid in the form of food. It was also pointed out to the Secretary-General of the Presidency, who was until five or six months ago Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, that it was unfortunate that the government had not followed up on the MDM recommendation that FSAS or bilateral agencies be approached with a view towards the establishment of a food security stock and the implementation of a realistic grain supply position. However, the Secretary-General insisted that WFP should in due course consider providing some assistance if requested to do so at a later date.

1.3 Total pledges in cereals amount to 18,764 tons of which 15,607 tons have been delivered and 7,867 tons distributed leaving 7,740 tons on stock on 30 September 1978 in Banjul (3,740) and the Divisions (4,000).

The 3,157 tons in the pipeline include the French pledge of 1,900 tons of flour but is doubtful that it will be fulfilled as the government of The Gambia is required to pay the ocean freight and is not prepared to do so.

1.4 During the last few months the Government made cash loans totalling \$2.5 million to the rural populations; already 50% has been written off and the authorities expect to have to write off a further 20%.

2. Security stocks

In the light of the possible surplus in maize production, while in Bamako I discussed the question of security stocks with Mr. Pagès of FSAS; unfortunately it would not be possible to start a scheme in The Gambia this year as no approach whatever had yet been made by the Government in spite of the MDM recommendation.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

The fact that only 7,867 tons of the 15,607 tons of 1977/78 food aid received had been distributed by 30 September 1978 confirms the validity of the HDM assessment of the emergency food which would be required to meet the needs for the period 1 November 1977 to 30 October 1978 and which had been estimated at 9,000 tons. WFP was later misled by the Government of The Gambia into recommending that the needs for emergency food aid should be raised by 10,000 tons.

Considering the 7,740 tons on stock plus the 1,154 tons scheduled for delivery during the last quarter of 1978, the government will have at its disposal some 8,900 tons and this should enable it to meet any unforeseeable crisis during the next six or seven months.

Should there in fact be a surplus of 3,000 or 4,000 tons of maize, WFP might in due course consider purchasing the stock for Cabo Verde for instance as it is the most acceptable variety (yellow No. 1 hard).

MALI

1. Food supply position

1.1 The millet/sorghum rainfed harvests are expected to range between average and good except in some marginal producing areas; final yields will depend on last precipitations during October and there may be some losses due to crop pests although these attacks appear to be under control. Flooding by the river Niger having been good, flood recession maize, rice and sorghum crops should be at least average.

1.2 A joint Government/USAID survey by six teams will tour the country during the last two weeks of October to assess the food and agro-pastoral situation. Preliminary projections forecast a production of 1,116,000 tons of cereals; this compares with 1,056,000 in 1977/78 and 1,191,000 in 1976/77.

1.3 During exchanges with government officials there was no reference to a potential shortage which might require international aid even though all statements were cautious. However, among donors the feeling is that if the next harvest required for human consumption - i.e. 90% of total production - is below the estimated minimum requirements of 1,103,600 tons and that neighbouring countries request international aid, the Government of Mali may follow suite.

1.4 The Cereals Board (OPAM), which executes the emergency food relief operations, claimed that stocks were low in the Gao/Timbuctu region but this was doubted by WFP officer who will check; any shortage is due to the late arrival of the Dutch and UK contributions of 4,000 tons and 2,500 tons respectively.

1.5 Pledges total 56,468 of cereals against which 48,216 tons had been unloaded in West African ports by 30 September 1978. The supply position in the country on 19 September 1978 was:-

Received	32,687	
Distributed/sold	24,869	
	<hr/>	
Stocks	7,818	
Overland pipeline	15,529	} 23,881
Ocean pipeline	8,252	
Total available for last quarter of 1978	31,599	

The Government purchased and distributed 10,000 tons of rice and thus in eight months 35,000 tons will have been distributed or an average of 4,375 tons per month; on those bases the government still has seven months supplies on hand and thus should any outside assistance be required it need not reach the country before March/April 1979.

2. Donors

The position is similar to that found in other countries. In Mali also USAID is considering possibilities of substituting emergency aid under title one by medium term assistance under title III of P.L. 480.

3. Sales

Whereas WFP authorized the sale of 2,000 tons of sorghum to cover the inland transport of the 9,240 tons of food aid contributed by the programme, it would seem that 7,200 tons of maize and sorghum will have been sold.

OPAM agreed that although instructions in line with the letter of understanding had been issued sales in excess of the 2,000 tons authorized had taken place; in fact 3,775 tons of sorghum and maize out of the 6,966 tons received had already been sold by 19 September 1978 for Malian Francs 201,958,647 equal to roughly US\$470,000. Funds generated by the sales are deposited in a special account and, after deduction of distribution costs, their utilization will be discussed with the donors concerned. Whereas the probable sale of 7,200 tons of maize and sorghum is expected to generate US\$896,000 the distribution costs will amount to approximately \$415,000 according to detailed OPAM budget received through the WFP adviser last May. This would leave a balance of \$481,000 which could be used in support development projects.

4. Conclusions

The original MDM assessment of 55,000 tons of emergency food to assist the populations affected by the drought was substantially correct even though, considering that only 25,000 tons were distributed or sold between the 15 January 1978 and 15 September 1978 out of 33,000 received, one would think that actual needs were lower. On another hand it could

./...

be assumed that had more food been available in the country, more would have been distributed.

As in the case of The Gambia, WFP was misled by the Government of Mali into accepting its contention that the country needed emergency food aid amounting to 112,000 tons of cereals.

During the CILSS meeting held in July in Bamako, what had often been suspected became evident: most governments claim as emergency aid the gross cereals deficit based on the theoretical consumption, irrespective of whether or not it is attributable to the natural disaster against which the emergency aid is given.

The harvest outlook is favourable and should any localized shortages develop during the coming months they can easily be met with the balance of the 1977/78 pledges.

Any claim of food shortage which the government might make would have to be scrutinized very thoroughly.

Recommendation

As reported following the visit to Bamako last July, the question of training in warehouse management at the UK- (TSPC) sponsored centre was broached. The possibility was discussed in more details with the Centre's Director, Mr. G. Gilman, and OPAM; with the agreement of the latter, Mr. Gilman is prepared to organize a 3-week special course, tailored to deal with all commodities handled by WFP, for up to 12 trainees; the centre is fully equipped with lecture room, audio-visual equipment and a laboratory. WPMA may wish to follow up on this offer.

./...

MAURITANIA

1. Food supply position

1.1 The representatives of FAC, EDF/EEC, the FRG and USAID as well as the UNDP Resident Representative and the WFP Adviser were all agreed that international food aid would again be required in 1979 and that it would probably be in the region of 20,000 to 30,000 tons of cereals. No valid assessment could of course be made until the beginning of November.

1.2 These views were confirmed at a meeting with government officials which was called by the Head of the "Emergency Relief Operations" and which included the directors of the Cereals Board, Agriculture, Livestock and Crop Protection and officers of the departments of Hydraulics and Environment and the WHO expert.

1.3 All participants were cautious but clearly worried even though their interventions were generally restrained and on a low key, the exception being the head of the Crop Protection Services who feared heavy damage by grasshoppers and particularly granivorous birds against which most protective measures available were proving relatively ineffective.

1.4 The ESCF assessment of rainfall deficiency was confirmed but the consequences were further aggravated by a number of factors:

- erosion of highlands and, as a corollary, sanding up of interspersed lowlands (bottom land);
- shortage of seed which prevented second or third sowings;
- reluctance of populations which had settled around the towns during the drought-stricken years to return to the land;
- too early rainfalls (compared with other years) in May and June were followed by a sudden 30 days interruption from 15 August to 15 September and this called for resowings but these were rendered generally impossible due to the shortage of seeds, in spite of the 1977 MDM recommendations that 2,600 of cereal seeds would be needed;

./...

- overall precipitations were higher than last year but their shortness and spacing offset the effects of their volume;
- drought conditions are increasing the risk of bush fires and of course shortage of water will handicap fire fighting actions;
- attacks by grasshoppers and granivorous birds.

As a result all crops, irrigated rice expected, will have suffered:

- (a) Only 43,000 ha out of a possible 109,000 ha of rainfed arable land were cultivated during 1978 and the millet crop is not expected to be higher than 11,000 tons which represents a shortfall of 20,000 tons. This estimate does not take into account potential losses due to damage by miscellaneous predators.
 - (b) Lowland and dam cultivations which normally cover 14,000 ha are down to 1,000 ha and it is estimated that the sorghum crop will be in the region of 7,000 tons.
 - (c) Flood recession crops which represent one third of the total harvest will suffer most because the level reached by the river Senegal has been 4 metres below normal and thus only 20 to 25% of the arable land were flooded; as recession starts on 20 October there is no hope for any improvement. This situation was confirmed by the Regional Inspector of Agriculture in St. Louis (Senegal). Flood recession crops being estimated at between 20,000 and 25,000 tons under normal flooding conditions, this year's harvest can be expected to be in the range of plus or minus 5,000 tons.
- Irrigated rice is the only bright spot; the crop is expected to reach 12,000 tons against 8,000 in 1978

13,000
5,000
12,000
37,000

- 1.5 The 1977 MDM estimated cereal requirements at 180,000 tons per annum and this appears very reasonable as it corresponds to a per capita consumption of 120 kgs.
- 1.6 As it is impossible to make a valid estimation of commercial imports or of traditional movements of commodities across the borders with Mali and Senegal, the MDM estimate of 10,000 tons must be accepted. However, bearing in mind an estimated 60 to 65% shortfall of the maize, millet and sorghum crops in Northern Senegal there will not be much movement on that border.
- 1.7 The government estimates total stocks, including those held by the Cereals Board as "Food Security Stocks" at 23,000 tons ; the WFP adviser puts the figure at 30,000 tons at least.

./...

1.8 The food supply position on 1 October 1978 can be summarized as follows:-

Estimated requirements	180,000 tons
Stocks	30,000 tons
Gross production (1)	37,000 tons
SOMINEX rice imports (planned) (2)	53,000 tons
Private commercial imports	10,000 tons
	<hr/>
Net deficit	<u>50,000 tons</u> <i>minimum</i>

(1) This does not take into consideration losses which for other countries are generally estimated at a conservative 10% and seed requirements at 4%, which would give a net production available for consumption of 45,000 tons thus bringing the net deficit to 57,000 tons.

(2) Whether SOMINEX will be in a position to import 45,000 tons of rice will depend on the government's credit and whether potential suppliers will ship on 90 days credit terms. At present this appears doubtful unless some guarantor appears on the scene in view of the serious treasury problems facing the country.

1.9 On the assumption that the crop production tentative estimates are substantiated, statistically the above take would indicate a more serious deficit than anticipated by the government and donor representatives. The actual position will only be known early November.

2. Pastures

2.1 The low per capita cereals consumption, 66% compared to the Sahel average, is due to the dietary habits of the nomadic populations which are based on meat and milk rather than on cereals.

Consequently the state of the pastures is important when considering the food supply position; the leguminous quality of pastures is claimed to be poor and contaminated and this results in a shortage of fodder (hay) and the presence of a certain toxicity which is causing a disquietening rate of mortality among the cattle.

3. Major trends and positions

3.1 From discussions with donor representatives in Nouakchott - later confirmed in all the countries - the trend appears to be in favour of providing food aid within the framework of regular medium/long-term projects rather than punctual repetitive emergency actions.

3.2 USAID. The DCO in Nouakchott has recommended to USAID/Washington that future emergency food aid assistance be provided mostly under P.L. 480 Title III which would eliminate all free distributions, with the bulk of the food being sold at the official price applied by the "Cereals Board", the proceeds of such sales being utilized as counterpart funds for development projects after deduction of ocean and inland transport costs.

3.3 FRG. The Ambassador of the FRG stipulated that his government's contribution of 8,000 tons under the 1976/77 programme and 5,000 tons under the 1977/78 one were specifically towards the establishment of a food security stock governed by a bilateral agreement. He was aware of the fact that these contributions had been distributed as emergency aid but that he expected - and informally advised the authorities concerned - that this tonnage would have to be refunded to the project. Therefore, the emergency aid reported by both the MDN and WFP is distorted. This will apply to other Sahelian countries.

3.4 EEC/EDF. The EEC input is within the framework of its indirect regular subsidies designed to alleviate the balance of payment constraints of the recipient countries. The CEE contributions come within the scope of their normal programming with slight variations on the basis of the economic balance of payment difficulties individual countries may have to face during any particular year. Overall EEC policy will be dealt with in a later chapter. Here again while being taken into consideration in assessing the food supply position EEC contributions should not have been included in the emergency aid component.

3.5 FAC. The basic policy of FAC in respect of food aid is to make it available on FOB terms for coastal countries and CIF to the port of delivery for landlocked countries. France provides food aid reluctantly and only because she does not want to be considered "odd man out" within the international community.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Drought conditions have again seriously affected this year's harvest and unless outside assistance is made available to the Crop Protection Services, further losses will be sustained owing to damage by miscellaneous predators and particularly granivorous birds whose activities appear to become less and less restrained by the traditional methods of protection based on light and noise.

4.2 It can be conservatively estimated that at least 30,000 tons of cereals will have to be contributed in some form or the other by the international community. This does not take into account the balance of 6,000 tons of cereals owed by the "Emergency Programme" to the Cereals Office which the FRG will insist that the OMC recover to re-establish the 13,000 tons contributed to the Food Security Stocks and the needs may be as high as 50,000 tons.

4.3 It is recommended that WFP take the lead by pledging 10,000 tons of wheat, or wheat and sorghum, for delivery in January/February 1979. The populations having devised ways and means of using soft wheat as well as hard wheat in their traditional cooking, it is now preferred to sorghum.

4.4 Considering that the country is not expected to become self-sufficient in cereal production in any foreseeable future or least until the River Senegal Development Project starts to have an impact in 5 to 6 years' time at best, WPMG might devise a formula which would enable the Programme to contribute a certain tonnage - 5,000 to 10,000 tons for instance - towards meeting the food deficit during the next three or four years starting in 1980 with emergency food aid only being provided following a major catastrophe of the 1972/73 order of magnitude.

NIGER

1. Food supply position

1.1. Among donor representatives the consensus is that the harvest outlook is favourable even though, as applies to other countries no valid assessment would be possible until November at the earliest; final yields could still be influenced by the last rains in October and harvest could also suffer from pest infestations. AGROMET is also cautiously optimistic, whereas the Director of Agriculture was markedly reserved. This attitude was understandable because at the time the MDM visited Niger his Minister and he as well as other senior officials were attending the CILSS summit meeting in Banjul and thus information on the agro-pastoral collected by the mission was provided by relatively middle echelon officials of the Ministry of Rural Development, notwithstanding the impressive list of officials listed in the MDM report.

1.2. The formulation in the MDM report of the needs was unclear and contradictory in so far as in the summary it simply recommended contributions of 47,000 tons of cereals to replenish OPVN stocks, whereas under item 8 it recommended contributions of 46,500 tons to replenish the security stock from which 6,500 tons had already been utilized (presumably for distribution in areas of shortages), the OPVN commercial stock (24,000 tons) and to supply urban centres in regions affected by a shortage of marketable commodities. Even if one took the position that, without prior arrangements, borrowing could not be replaced out of emergency food aid, the point could possibly have been stretched in respect of the 16,500 tons which it was felt might have to be made available for urban populations.

As a result the officials who had provided the basic data upon which the MDM formulated its recommendations were severely reprimanded and therefore most reluctant to discuss the present position with any mission.

It took much persuasion to decide the Director of Agriculture to receive us (Mr. La Stella and self) accompanied by FAO Country Representative.

1.3. After listing 8 or 10 areas where he estimated the harvest would suffer deficits, the Director of Agriculture indicated that broadly speaking production would be satisfactory south of the "Route Nationale No. 1" but below average north of that line. He added that the reason

./...

for poor yields, in spite of the larger acreage cultivated, was soil impoverishment and particularly phosphorous deficiency; this affected particularly the south-east, considered as the country's granary. A large input of fertilizers was currently being negotiated with potential donor to rehabilitate these soils.

1.4. Commandant Ali Jeyba, Army Chief of Staff and head of the emergency operations, was less pessimistic and while naturally cautious gave the impression that he believed the food supply position in 1979 would be easier than this year.

1.5. All emergency food aid distributions were halted on 31.8.1978. Against pledges of 28,085 tons of cereals 25,800 had reached West African ports by 30.9.78 and 20,750 primary reception centres in Niger. By 31.8.1978 only 9,000 tons had been distributed leaving 11,550 tons in stock; a further 11,000 tons are in the pipeline and thus the Government will have on hand 22,550 tons of cereals to meet any localized shortages which might occur in 1979. On another hand in evaluating the overall performance of the authorities in dealing with the 1978 shortages one should take into account that they sold or distributed 11,212 tons drawn from their security stocks so that in fact at least 20,000 tons of food have been utilized to meet shortages.

Total stocks held by OPVN are currently 42,240 tons of miscellaneous cereals, including 4,788 tons belonging to the Food Security Stocks established with the assistance of the FRG.

1.6. The position of the WFP contribution of 5,405 of cereals is as follows:

1,300 tons distributed
434 tons received after 31.8.78 in stock and frozen
3,671 tons in the pipeline.

Considering the various interpretations which could have been given to the MDM conclusions and recommendations and the fact that the Government distributed 11,212 tons of cereals out of the OPVN security stocks with the tacit agreement of the FRG but on condition, like in respect of Mauritania, that the Cereals Board (OPVN) refund the loan in due course to the security stock, WFP may wish to consider allowing, post factum, OPVN to recover part of this loan out of the undistributed balance of the Programme's contribution, eventually after deduction of such quantities

./...

which could be utilized within the operational development projects. This would appear to be the best solution to the dilemma and a gesture of good will and understanding which would most certainly be appreciated by the Government. The alternative is that this undistributed balance, most of which is still in the pipeline, would in any case be stocked. It must be considered that had a request for emergency aid be submitted earlier WFP could have allowed the government to borrow from its own stocks pending the arrival of the aid.

This situation also applies to the US AID second instalment of 5,000 tons and the EEC balance of 2,674 tons still in Cotonou (since June).

2. Transport

Again because of indirect pressures the Programme decided to supply three vehicles with funds made available by the Norwegian and Swiss governments as their contribution towards the emergency food relief operations. Two of the vehicles were purchased locally and delivery of a third should take place this month. However by decision of Ct. Ali Seybou all three lorries are being assigned to the WFP development projects and, although this had been envisaged as their ultimate destination, they will not have transported a single grain of emergency food aid. The ethics of this development are questionable even though WFP may not be directly responsible. On the other hand it indicates that the need did not in fact exist and that the vehicles should not have been supplied in the first place.

3. Donors

3.1. The EEC is unhappy that in spite of numerous intervention, the authorities do not appear to have made any serious effort to accelerate the delivery of its contribution of 4,000 tons of sorghum which arrived in Cotonou and of which 2,674 tons are still in stock in the port: a costly situation.

3.2 USAID is also concerned about the disposal of its second instalment of 5,000 tons of sorghum which will have to be stocked as distributions were halted on 31.8.1978. As in other countries, USAID in Niamey is studying the possibility and opportunity of providing food aid on a longer term under the provisions of Title III rather than in the form of sporadic emergency assistance.

./...

4. Food requirements

4.1 Since 1973 there has been a basic disagreement between the government on the one hand and FAO and the donors on the other concerning the per capita food consumption, i.e. 220/250 kgs versus 185/192.

4.2 Because it still remains a bone of contention the matter was discussed at length with the Director of Agriculture. He explained that the high consumption of cereals in Niger - in comparison with other Sahelian countries, was due to the marked shortage of other food commodities. A detailed study conducted several years ago by CEDES established that per capita consumption was 306 kgs p.a. On the basis of the FAO nutritional chart, always taking into consideration the types of food commodities available and consumed, cereal requirements are 280 kgs; because of progressive changes in eating habits the government has adjusted this figure to between 220 and 250 kgs.

4.3 It would be useful if FAO/ESN undertook a study in depth of the current consumption and diet not only in Niger but in other countries as well.

4.4. Such inquiries would provide the programme with more reliable bases upon which it could assess the minimum ration which should be provided as emergency food aid.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The unfortunate wording of the MDM report misled some donors, particularly those who, as CIDA and WFP cannot contribute towards the establishment or replenishment of food security or reserve stocks under the heading of emergency aid.

5.2 The failure of the authorities to take action to ensure the timely onforwarding from Cotonou of the EEC contribution and the long delay in calling forward the Belgian contribution of 1,000 tons of wheat would appear to indicate that needs were not acute; on another hand, OPVN having earlier released 11,212 tons of millet out of its security stocks, the government may have considered this as a loan which would be replaced in due course out of international aid.

5.3 Barring some unforeseeable disaster, the crop outlook is such that it is unlikely that the country will need emergency food aid during 1979.

./...

SENEGAL

1. Overall food supply position

1.1 It is clear that the MDM substantially overestimated the emergency food aid requirements and the donors represented in Dakar even more so when they reviewed the situation at the end of December 1977.

Of the 128,279 tons delivered, 76,179 tons have been onforwarded to the interior for distribution and the balance of 53,100 tons has been sold: 5,000 tons to the USAID/OSRO livestock feeding programme, 4,000 tons to the Cereals Board (OMC) of Mauritania, 1,500 tons of maize to urban populations and the balance of 42,600 tons of wheat to private dealers. Yet there have been no reports of food shortages from any part of the country which the government was unable to meet.

These comments are further strengthened by the fact that, at the request of the Government, the EEC pledge of 18,000 tons of coarse grains made in January 1978 was subsequently substituted by 5,555 tons of maize meal and 3,668 tons of rice, a reduction of almost 50% in tonnage, and shipment was delayed until October 1978 for use well after the end of the 1977/78 food relief campaign.

1.2 The balance of 22,475 tons of cereals scheduled for delivery during the last quarter of 1978 should suffice to cover any initial input which may be needed to meet the forecasted shortage of 65,000 tons in the northern "Region du Fleuve".

1.3 Donor representatives unanimously agreed that the harvest would be substantially higher than last year albeit lower than in a good year, excepting in the northern region where rainfed and flood recession crops are expected to be 65% below average. On another hand more millet was sown this year in the main groundnut production region of Djourbel.

These views were confirmed by the Director General of Agriculture and later by the Regional Inspector of Agriculture in St. Louis whom we visited to discuss in detail the situation in northern Senegal.

Under normal climatic and river flooding conditions 95,000 tons of cereals are harvested in the region comprising 50,000 tons of rainfed millet, flood recession crops of 35,000 tons of sorghum and 10,000 tons of maize. The regional inspector of agriculture estimates that this year the millet crop will go down by 50% and the flood recession crops by 50%; as in Mauritania, barely 20% of the arable land was flooded.

The net millet/sorghum/maize crops for the region would thus be 34,000 tons if the forecast is correct, leaving a deficit of 61,000 tons; the affected population is estimated at around 350,000. Rice production which is expected to be normal supports the additional 200,000 people of the region.

./...

There being little movement of cereals between that region and the neighbouring millet/sorghum producing region of Djourbel, the government will have to take measures to cover the deficit; according to the Director General of Agriculture this should be possible through the marketing of expected surpluses in other regions such as Djourbel and Thiès but the Food Aid Commissioner claims the shortfall will have to be met by international aid. These opposing views of the technical and political wings of government emerged also in The Gambia. However, although private sales of millet and sorghum are illegal, the newly created cereals marketing unit of ONCAD is not yet operational!

1.4 Attacks by predators in the central regions were effectively brought under control by the Crop Protection Services which are suitably structured and were well supplied with pesticides during 1978.

1.5 Rice production in the Région du Fleuve is expected to be good but the department of agriculture is concerned about the situation in the main producing region of Casamance because heavily clouded skies during long periods may have prevented sufficient light from reaching the crops. However, no conclusions of this phenomenon could yet be drawn.

2. Donor positions and trends

2.1 CIDA. Canada's contribution of 10,000 tons of wheat and 1,000 tons of DSM (for sale) had been negotiated several months before an emergency situation was reported and was designed to generate counterpart funds for development projects. The same applied to The Gambia . .

The First Secretary (Development) of the Canadian Embassy said he was quite surprised, albeit agreeably, when this tonnage was credited to his country as emergency food aid although in fact Canada's only contributions towards the emergency relief operations were made through the CAN \$8 million channelled through WFP.

2.2 EEC. The EEC contribution was not made in response to appeals for emergency food aid, even though the allocation was raised by 20% in view of the aggravated shortage resulting from the poor 1977/78 harvest, but as an indirect economic subsidy to reduce the balance of payment deficit.

2.3 USAID. The thinking nowadays is to move away from emergency relief operations and towards longer term actions in an effort to stabilize the food supply position by a combination of actions under Titles I and II and the recently formulated Title III, limiting free distributions to an absolute minimum.

Other donors such as France, The Netherlands and the U.K. with limited cereal resources will participate in emergency food relief operations as heretofore.

./...

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 No reliable and valid assessment of the potential harvest will be possible before November at the earliest, particularly this year because October late precipitations may still influence yields.

3.2 Stocks and commodities in the pipeline should suffice to meet initial interventions which may be required in the Région du Fleuve. Should international food aid be required its arrival in April/May would be satisfactory and therefore there is no need to preposition food this year.

UPPER VOLTA

1. Food supply position

1.1. Government officials and donor representatives as well as the UNDP Resident Representative, the FAO/SAA, the WFP officer and the Director of CATHWEL were cautiously optimistic in respect of this year's harvest but still had some misgivings about its order of magnitude; as in Mali and Senegal, the dominant feeling was that it would probably be higher than in 1977 but still below normal, and that the October rains could still have some bearing on the final yields. No valid assessment would be possible until some time in November at the earliest.

1.2 It is already known that the early maize crop has been poor; as maize serves to bridge the gap pending the harvesting of the millet and sorghum crops, distribution of food aid has to continue in the affected areas.

1.3 Unfortunately, although appointments were arranged twice, Mr. La Stella (ESC/FAO) and I were unable to meet the Director of Agriculture. It is generally recognized that deficits in the millet/sorghum crops will occur in the central eastern region of the country and a belt stretching from Ouagadougou to Kaya; however opinions vary as to the importance of the feared deficit. While AGROMET is exaggeratedly pessimistic, the Director of CATHWEL, which employs eighteen field workers, including six nutritionists to supervise its projects and monitor the food supply position in sensitive and disaster prone counties (arrondissements), forecasts that there will be localized shortages of varying severity in a number of counties in the northern and eastern regions in particular; irregular precipitations and

./...

distribution of rainfall render assessment of harvest difficult; as the production in the regions affected is around 200,000 tons, its success or failure is an important factor. :

1.4 Considering that the FRG pledge of 2,500 is not for distribution but a contribution towards the security stock and that the Dutch contribution is now 3,500 tons of maize meal against the previously report 4,000 tons of cereals/maize, total pledges stand at 42,748 tons of which 35,000 tons have been received and onforwarded to distribution centres, leaving 7,748 tns in the pipeline and scheduled for delivery during the last quarter of 1978. The Government also purchased from Argentina and distributed 10,000 tons of sorghum.

1.5 OFNACER, the cereals board, which is also responsible for the sales and free distribution of emergency food aid was reorganized a few months on the basis of a study carried out by a joint FAC/USAID mission; all donors paid tribute to the way the organization carried out the 1978 food relief operations. Unfortunately, the director who restructured OFNACER and applied rational administrative procedures has been replaced following the government reshuffle.

2. Donors

Here again, the EEC contribution of 8,500 tons of maize was not related to the emergency situation but a regular programme indirect economic subsidy.

USAID is currently investigating the possibility of providing food aid under Title III of P.L. 480 on a regular medium-term basis instead of year in year out emergency aid; such food aid would be for sale.

3. Food aid requirements

3.1 The objective of OFNACER with the support of the FRG and FAO/FSAS is to establish food security and market stabilizing stock of up to 60,000 tons; however a target of 30,000 tons is probably more realistic.

A study by IMF concludes that the food deficit in a normal harvest year is 60,000 tons and therefore in considering emergency food aid this tonnage should be added to production prior to determining the emergency aid needed as a consequence of unfavourable climatic conditions or some other natural disaster.

3.2 It was recommended to the government that this basic food production deficit should be the subject of negotiations with potentially interested donors with a view towards having it covered within the framework of medium term development projects or indirect economic subsidies.

./....

4. Conclusions

The real food supply position will not be known until mid November at the earliest; no valid pre-assessment is possible at this stage and developments will have to be watched carefully in the meantime. Notwithstanding this reservation, should outside food aid be required, delivery of commodities need not take place before March or April and therefore no earmarking need be foreseen until the 1979 food position has been assessed and an eventual formal request for emergency food aid received from the Government.

./...

CILSS

Twiest?
In the absence of the Executive Secretary the objectives of the mission were discussed with the official especially concerned with emergency food aid.

We reviewed the current outlook for the 1978/79 harvest and came to the same conclusions.

We also discussed the matter of the periodic escalation of the claimed food deficits by some countries which had been raised at the CILSS meeting in Bamako. Apparently the Council of Ministers during their review of the recommendations drafted by the technical commissions took note of the concern I had expressed and would take it into consideration in the future so as to protect the credibility of CILSS and its member countries.

He also agreed with the suggestion that in future, when assessing food aid requirements, needs resulting from a natural calamity should be differentiated from the recurrent "normal" deficit and that measures to resolve the latter should be envisaged within the framework of medium/long term development projects. It is planned to discuss this approach at the November meeting of the Club des Amis du Sahel.

./...

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

With the reservation that no valid assessment of the harvest could be made at this stage, it would appear that for the zone in general the outlook is favourable and that harvests are very likely to be better than last year, albeit lower than the preceding year or a so-called normal one.

Mauritania is the exception and it is already clear that international food aid will be required in 1979 but the order of magnitude will not be known until early November.

The situation of Upper Volta is unclear and developments will have to be watched carefully during the next few weeks while the harvest in other countries, such as Chad may suffer from threatening crop pests: grasshoppers and granivorous birds in particular.

1. The assessments made by the MDM in 1977 were substantially correct with the possible exception of those for Senegal which were overestimated.

2. Subsequently, because of representations made by governments, the aid originally recommended by the MDM were raised without any technical assessment; this applies in particular to The Gambia, Mali and Senegal. The representations made by these governments prove to have been unfounded and therefore it would be advisable in future that MDM recommendations be revised only after a technical evaluation of any claim put forward by the government of the country concerned unless it is clear that the original assessment ignored some important factor at the time it was made.

This mission combined with that relating to the CILSS meeting in July suggests that the formulation and presentation of MDM reports should be amended and standardized; while of course allowing a fair amount of flexibility to the mission, the presentation of the following data should be standardized to allow a more realistic assessment of the emergency food aid required.

- a) The report should include a table giving by region or even sub-region: population, acreage cultivated, types of cereals and production of the current crops and those of a so-called normal year. This information is necessary to decide on actual amounts of food aid needed because of the compartmentation of resources which are mainly for auto-consumption and the weaknesses of the grain marketing systems.
- b) The recommendations for emergency food aid should be the net deficit due to the calamity after all outside inputs have been taken into consideration including food aid provided more or less regularly as indirect economic aid to reduce the balance of payment deficit; this applies particularly to EEC and CIDA bilateral aid which are not tied to emergency situations.

./...

- c) By definition these reports are the conclusions and recommendations of a MDM, not an FAO mission; therefore, the report should be published as written and not as revised by FAO/OSRO. The final text should be drawn up at a debriefing session in Rome attended by all external members of the mission as was the practice previously.
- d) Because WFP is responsible for the monitoring, coordination and reporting, there is a tendency among recipient countries to transfer to the Programme the responsibility for the recommendations made by MDMs and this at a local level rebounds onto our field staff. It is therefore imperative that WFP participate more actively in the preparation and briefing of such missions and that headquarters staff rather than field staff participate in them so as to protect field staff from criticisms by the authorities if the recommendations of the mission are at variance with their views.
- e) The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the mission must be discussed with the government so that it represents at least a consensus and thus prevents subsequent contestations or recriminations.

Reports on emergency food relief operations should relate strictly to emergency aid and not include food inputs contributed under bilateral development programmes such as indirect economic aid and the establishment of food security stocks; these inputs must be taken into consideration and included into availabilities prior to fixing the amount of emergency aid required.

Emergency food aid should also be restricted to the component of the shortage resulting from the calamity and not be based on the theoretical net crop deficit as such deficits exist in most countries even when the crop is "normal". This recurrent deficit should be met under medium/long-term development projects designed to stabilize the grain market and ensure regular supplies. USAID thinking is finally moving in that direction and it might be more constructive if the Programme also revised its position and policies in dealing with long drawn relief operations such as those relating to the Sahelian zone of West Africa and Ethiopia. For instance, an IMF study concludes that Upper Volta faces a recurrent yearly crop deficit of 60,000 tons of cereals; this shortage should be covered by commercial inputs and medium/long-term assistance while shortages in excess of that amount would be met by emergency assistance. This approach was discussed with officials in all countries and some donor representatives and CILSS.

Whereas EDF representatives indicated that the EEC would allocate more or less the same tonnages of food aid in 1979 as in 1978, a senior EEC official met in Ouagadougou stated that the EEC input in 1979 will certainly be reduced - possibly as much as by 50% on an average - because some members of the commission have been questioning the disproportionately large amounts of food granted to West African countries in recent years.

The question of sales versus free distribution is becoming increasingly a major issue in all countries, excepting The Gambia and Senegal. Considering the new trend in USAID thinking, there is a danger of WFP becoming the "odd man out" if more flexibility is not introduced into its current policy on emergency aid. While appreciating the timely assistance provided by the Programme, the authorities in Mali and Upper Volta are clearly annoyed about the lengthy haggling which dominated the discussions on the sales of part of the WFP contribution; a firm veto would have been preferable.

The basic reason of the governments concerned is not to raise funds - this although useful is incidental - but to reduce free distributions to an absolute minimum for the exclusive benefit of vulnerable and destitute groups because of their serious disincentive effects on rural populations in particular; free distributions also foster the development or aggravation of an atmosphere of mendacity; governments are seriously worried by these trends.

If the Programme cannot convince the CFA to relax its position on the sales of emergency food, then it should restrict its contributions to countries whose governments give a firm undertaking to respect the terms of the Letter of Understanding; long drawn arguments on the subject can only sour relations. The position of the CFA is to say the least disconcerting, even irrational. Some members would appear to be afflicted with a form of schizophrenia as, while their governments allow up to 100% sales of emergency food aid granted bilaterally, their representatives insist that the food aid channelled through WFP be distributed free of charge; this attitude is somewhat suspicious. Could it be a question of getting someone else to pull the chessnuts out of the fire?

This report only touches on some of the major aspects of the agro-pastoral situation; they will be gone into in more detail in the FAO/ESC report. Basically the methodology used by the EWS is sound; however ways and means to refine it will need to be studied because the climatic conditions prevailing in the zone are of an erratic nature especially in respect of rainfall, the patterns of precipitations must be considered vertically as well as horizontally as must be the nature of the soils. The limited number of synoptic stations is also a dominant handicap.

Finally, should a formal request from the Government of Mauritania not have been received by early November, the Programme might take administrative measures to preposition the 10,000 tons of cereals, so that they reach the country by January/February 1979.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND APOLOGIES

The fullest support was afforded by all WFP field staff and FAO country representatives or SAAs in arranging meetings, contributing valuable background information and advice and providing logistical support. Both Mr. La Stella and I are most grateful for the assistance given while also

./...

apologizing for having added to their (normal?) duties and workload by being the 101st mission which has descended upon them during the last 12 months. Their resilience, patience and spirit of cooperation were quite impressive and denies some gratuitous and uninformed suggestions that they are underemployed — they are certainly not in the Sahel Zone.

Because of the relative urgency of drafting this report it is maybe not as comprehensive as it would otherwise have been without that constraint. If need be some of the points raised can be enlarged upon or clarified later.