

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs****OCHA****Regional Office for West Africa**

19 September 2007

**SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS**

- More than 500 000 people are victims of flood in West Africa. Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso are among the most affected countries.
- Deterioration of the health situation in northern Niger and northern Mali
- Risk of worsening food insecurity due to the floods
- Cholera: resurgence in Senegal and persistence in Guinea
- The United Nations identify new challenges in West Africa through the call for Consolidated Funds (CAP)
- The identification of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal wishing to return home continues.

**1- SOCIO-POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION***Disturbing security situation in Northern Mali and Northern Niger*

In Mali – The security situation in the north deteriorated significantly in August and September, with an increase in security incidents. On 26 August 2007, 15 soldiers were kidnapped by armed men in Tedjerete, north-east of Mali. The following day, a military convoy was said to have been attacked on the Abéïbara-Tinzaouatine road, not far from the Algerian border while three vehicles and soldiers were reportedly kidnapped as well. This series of events led to clashes between the regular army and armed elements, in an area where land mines have already caused the death of at least 16 civilians in late August.

In the face of this insecurity, the populations are allegedly leaving Northern Mali - particularly the surroundings of the Kidal city- to seek refuge in the safer parts of the country. The clashes reported in this zone continue to cause casualties.

In Niger – The Movement of Nigeriens for Justice (MNJ) released fourteen Nigerien soldiers on 16 September, following Libya's intervention. On 7 September, the Movement had announced that it had captured six soldiers during an attack against a military base in Agharous, in the north, in addition to thirty-three soldiers whom they have been detaining since June. The latter were part of a group of 72 Nigerien soldiers captured during a raid which left thirteen others dead in this region. The North of Niger has become the theatre of bloody confrontations between governmental forces and the MNJ since February.

Besides, the Government of Niger has set up an ad hoc commission to put an end to the rebellion in this country. The commission, which did not set a timeframe, has already started collecting proposals for a lasting solution to the crisis.

The Office for Crises Prevention and Rehabilitation (BCPR) has included Niger in a “mine” action programme. BCPR speaks against the use of mines, which has already caused many deaths in the north of the country.

*Sierra Leone: Opposition candidate Ernest Koroma elected democratically to head the country*

Opposition candidate Ernest Koroma won the presidential elections with 54.6% of the votes during the second round held on 8 September, according to the results published by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) on 17 September. Mr. Ernest Koroma ran under the banner of the All Peoples Congress (APC) against his opponent Solomon Berewa of the ruling party, the Sierra Leone Peoples’ Party. The jubilant population took to the streets of the capital, Freetown, following the announcement of the results. Security was reinforced because of the violent incidents that peppered the start of the election campaign. These presidential elections were considered as a democratic test in a country that has just been ushered out of a decade of civil war.

## **2 HUMANITARIAN SITUATION**

### **2.1 Food security and nutrition**

*Floods can increase the risks of food insecurity*

Floods caused crop damages and affected the high-risk areas. It was the case in Burkina Faso in the provinces of Zandoma, Yatenga, Lorum, Passoré, Bam, Namentenga and Sanmatenga ; and in Niger in the regions of Agadez, Zinder, Tahoua and Tillabéri. In some areas, the water swept along the food stocks as it passed through, as was the case in Lorum, Burkina Faso where 786 grain stores are said to have been destroyed. The floods occurred at a time when the crop fields damaged by water could no longer be cultivated, and this situation certainly affected agricultural production. In Togo, the living conditions of communities already affected by the very high rate of malnutrition were further aggravated by the floods. Studies conducted by the United Nations in 2006 showed that 62.7 percent of the inhabitants of the Savannah region do not have access to adequate food while 32 percent of children under five suffer from acute malnutrition.

### **2.2 Protection and movements of populations**

*The streamlining of Mauritanian refugees continues*

An important delegation led by the Mauritanian Minister and Secretary General, President’s Office Yahya Ould Ahmed, visited Mali from 7 to 10 September to encourage the return of Mauritanian refugees living in Mali since the inter-community incidents, which opposed Senegal and Mauritania in 1989/1991. The Mauritanian delegation held discussions with Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré and the ministers concerned before meeting with the associations of Mauritanian refugees in Bamako and Kayes. The number of Mauritanian refugees established in the Kayes region and in the district of Bamako is estimated at 6000. The voluntary return of refugees is organised by the HCR.

In Senegal, the streamlining, which consists in investigating refugees to know their region of origin and their real intention before the start-up of the repatriation operation, is scheduled in October 2007. On 7 September, some 2000 families (about 14 000 people) had already expressed their desire to return to Mauritania but the streamlining of 20 000 established on the River Senegal bank continues.

## 2.3 Health

### *Cases of cholera in Senegal and Guinea*

The cholera epidemic has resurfaced in **Senegal** after a five-week respite. Actually, the cholera epidemic raged from March to July 2007, before a renewed outbreak was reported in August in three Senegalese regions : Diourbel, Fatick and Dakar. 172 cases, including one death, were reported since the resurgence. An intervention mission was organised in Diourbel region from 28 to 29 August 2007, to identify the factors which contribute to the resurgence of the epidemic and institute a mechanism to strengthen the management of cases and epidemiological surveillance.

On 3 September 2007, a meeting initiated by the Senegalese Health Minister on the situation of the cholera epidemic, was attended by WHO, UNICEF as well as the national Red Cross. On that occasion, WHO announced that 200 000 Euros will be placed at the Health Ministry's disposal to support its efforts to fight against diarrhoeal diseases in the northern region of the country. There are also plans to reinforce health measures and the populations' information and sensitization, particularly during religious ceremonies.

From the beginning of the year to 9 September 2007, some 4,437 cases of cholera were reported. 151 of these were reported in **Guinea**. The capital, Conakry, is still the most affected area with 2 431 cases of cholera, including 80 deaths. However, the highest lethality (6.3 percent) is reported in Gueckedou and Boffa with respectively 17 deaths for 266 cases and seven deaths for 112 cases of cholera.

It is to be feared that cholera and other water-borne diseases will resurface as a result of the floods already registered in 12 West African countries. It is now time for prevention and preparation to respond to epidemics caused by insalubrity and water stagnation. In October 2005, over 51 800 cases of cholera including about 800 deaths were reported in Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal.

### *A workshop on the response to a flu pandemic held in Niger*

From 11 to 13 September 2007, Niger's capital Niamey hosted a workshop on the State's preparation and response plans to the bird flu epizootic as well as to a human flu pandemic. The Niamey meeting was in line with a series of workshops initiated by the OCHA Regional Office in West Africa. The workshop was launched in the presence of Health, Animal Resources and Environment Ministers. Niger is the second African country in which the presence of the H5N1 virus was confirmed in 2006, after Nigeria. Today, in addition to these two countries, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Ghana and Togo have been affected. Moreover, Nigeria has confirmed the first human death due to H5N1 in sub-Saharan Africa. The Niamey workshop served as an opportunity to train 150 participants from the United Nations system or governments of 20 West African countries on how to respond to a bird flu pandemic. For further information on the bird flu in West Africa, please consult the web page of the regional platform on bird flu at the following address : <http://ochaonline2.un.org/Default.aspx?tabid=8443>

## 2.4 Natural disasters/Floods

### *Twelve countries affected by floods in West Africa*

The seasonal weather forecasts as announced by the African Centre for the Meteorological Applications to Development (ACMAD) seem to be confirmed in West Africa. The delays and irregularities of the rains with effect from July were succeeded by floods which affected 12 countries of the sub-region: Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Gambia, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Sierra Leone and Ghana. Today, the number of people affected by floods are estimated to be over 500 000, and at least 260 000 of these are in Ghana. The number of victims show that the situation has worsened as opposed to last year when 65 000 victims were registered during the same period. The situation is particularly disturbing in Ghana with about 260 000 people affected, in Burkina with 35 000 victims and in Togo with 111 700 people affected. At the moment, only Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mauritania have launched an appeal for aid or international solidarity. The United Nations Organisation has deployed a team responsible for natural disaster assessment and coordination (UNDAC) in **Ghana** to back up the United Nations team on the spot.

The OCHA Regional Office in West Africa centralises the existing information and publishes weekly reports on the flooding. Other documents on floods in West Africa are available on the OCHA West Africa Internet site: <http://ochaonline2.un.org/Default.aspx?tabid=10305> and on reliefweb <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc108?OpenForm&emid=FL-2007-000141-NGA&rc=1>

## 3 RESOURCE MOBILISATION

### *The humanitarian actors identifies new challenges in West Africa*

The West African regional humanitarian community embarked on new challenges for 2008, following a two-day workshop organised by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) held in Dakar from 4 to 5 September 2007. The humanitarian actors identified the following points as challenges for 2008: strengthening the capacities of vulnerable communities in the reduction of natural disaster hazards, developing advocacy to States and partners for an enhanced accommodation of humanitarian issues, improving the protection of women, children and youths in emergency and post-emergency situations, improving the rapid response to epidemics and the systematic integration of the water and sanitation aspect into humanitarian responses.

### *Call for Consolidated Humanitarian Funds (CAP) financed at 46%*

As at 19 September, the Call for Consolidated Humanitarian Funds for West Africa was financed to the tune of 46%. The humanitarian organisations still need more than 184 million dollars to meet the needs of the vulnerable populations affected by the crises in the sub-region. This level of financing is below that of late September last year which was 63%.

*Table of 2007 CAP financing level per theme (as of 19 September 2007)*

Themes	Requests in \$ US	Financing in \$ US	%	Pledges in \$ USD
<b>Food Security and Nutrition</b>	129 594 263	44 687 782	34%	2 000 000
<b>Health Emergencies</b>	18 533 225	6 758 504	36%	0
<b>Protection /Movements of populations</b>	181 981 560	100 785 700	55%	7 034 899

<b>Trans-thematic</b>	9 764 017	2 353 011	24%	7,407,006
<b>Theme not yet specified</b>	0	769 063	0%	769 063
<b>Overall Total:</b>	<b>309 873 095</b>	<b>155 357 760</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>3 763 896</b>

For more information on the CAP 2007 financing, please refer to [www.reliefweb.int/fts](http://www.reliefweb.int/fts) . The direct link for information concerning the CAP West Africa: <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts2/pageloader.aspx?page=emerg-emergencyDetails&emergID=15184>

## 5 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Date	Events	Where	Who
25 October	Inter-ministerial meeting on illegal emigration	Praia, Cape Verde	Government of Cape Verde and UN RC
26-28 October	Meeting of the African Platform for the reduction of natural disaster hazards	Dakar	Government of Senegal and ISDR
27 October	Guinea Bissau After Action Review	Bissau	UN RC/OCHA Guinea Bissau
27 October	ECHO – Sahel Strategic Meeting	Dakar	ECHO and partners
27 October – 10 November	SA Forum – Electronic Forum on food sovereignty (daouda.diagne@sentoo.sn)	Internet	ROPPA
31 October	Coordination Meeting of the Working Group Health	OCHA Regional Office, Dakar	WHO/OCHA
31 October -1 November (TBC probablement 7-8 Nov)	Workshop for the preparation of the UNCT Senegal Inter-Agency contingency plan	Dakar	UN RC/OCHA
2 November	Coordination Meeting of the Working Group Protection and movement of the populations	Dakar	OCHA
2-3 November	Round table discussion on local perspectives on the reduction of natural disaster hazards in Africa	Dakar	ENDA
3 November	Coordination Meeting of the Regional Working Group food security and nutrition	OCHA RO, Dakar	UNICEF/OCHA
7-11	Formation of ECOWAS	Accra	ECOWAS

November and 13-17 November	emergency response teams		
7-10 November	Regional Forum on food sovereignty	Niamey	ROPFA
19 November	Local and parliamentary elections in Mauritania	Mauritania	Mauritania
7-8 November	Donors' round table conference for Guinea Bissau	Geneva	UN
11-19 November	SPHERE Trainers' training course	Dakar	SPHERE Project and IFRC regional delegation
16-17 November	Sub-regional conference on Peace, Security and Confidence Building in the Mano River space	Conakry	Host: Government of Guinea, Facilitators: UNOWA/DPA, HCR, UNDP/BCPR
20 November	Regional launching of the United Nations' study on child abuse	Dakar	UNICEF
28 November	Coordination Meeting of the Regional Working Group Health	OCHA RO Dakar	WHO/OCHA
30 November	Global launching of consolidated fund calls by the United Nations Secretary General	NY- Geneva	UN
1 December	Coordination Meeting of the Working Group Food Security and Nutrition	UNICEF Regional Office, Dakar	UNICEF
4-8 December	Workshop on the directives and principles of internal displacement.	Abidjan	OCHA Côte d'Ivoire
5 December	Regional launching of Cap West Africa	Dakar	OCHA
4-6. December	ALNAP Bi-annual meeting	Dakar	
6-8 December	Global Meeting on bird flu	Bamako	UNSIK

For further information on the humanitarian situation in West Africa and to consult other reports on the humanitarian situation in the region: <http://ochaonline.un.org/westafrica>

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