



Scoping Note

International Conference on the West African Food Security Storage System: Towards a multilateral partnership

Period: **from 28th April to 10th May 2021**

Format : **Online**

1. Background information

The increasingly recurrent food crises in West Africa led the Ministers of Agriculture of the ECOWAS Member States to adopt the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy in 2012. The West African food security storage system is based on four complementary lines of defense:

- local stocks set up and managed by local organizations or decentralized communities,
- national security stocks managed by the States or co-managed by the States and their financial partners,
- the Regional Food Security Reserve set up and managed by the ECOWAS Commission,
- the resort to international aid, when no solution can be found at the first three lines of defense.

As food mobilization is not the only response to food, nutrition and pastoral crises, the regional food security storage system also relies on a combination of physical stocks and financial reserves to tailor the response to the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

To strengthen the region leadership in resolving these crises, the Heads of State and Government created the Regional Food Security Reserve in 2013, intended primarily for emergency operations in the event of cyclical crises.

It is designed to:

- complement the efforts of Member States to provide rapid and diversified food and nutritional assistance,
- express regional solidarity to the affected Member States and populations through transparent, equitable and predictable mechanisms
- contribute to food sovereignty and to the political, economic and trade integration of the region.



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With the political support of the G20 and the financial support of the European Union, the ECOWAS Commission started in 2015 the effective operationalization of this regional integration and solidarity system through the ECOWAS Food Security Storage Support Project ("ECOWAS Stocks Project").

After five years of implementation of the support project, an internal capitalization of the results made it possible to systematize important achievements, challenges and lessons learned for scaling up to make the regional food storage strategy a pivotal instrument for eliminating hunger in the region by 2030.

To share and promote the achievements, challenges and lessons learned from this experience, the ECOWAS Commission has decided to organize an international conference on the West African food security storage system.

The conference is scheduled to take place from 28th April 2021 to 10th May 2021.

2. Why a conférence ?

The Conference is first and foremost designed to be a platform of dialogue and experience sharing on West Africa's food security storage experiences with its partners and other regions of the world. The overall objective is to build the foundations for a renewed multilateral partnership to strengthen, in a sustainable manner, the resilience of the West African Food Security Storage System and its capacity to respond effectively to the amplification and complexity of food, nutrition and pastoral crises in the region.

Participants will specifically discuss issues such as:

- Vulnerability of West Africa and the Sahel to food and nutrition insecurity,
- Food reserves and management of cyclical food, nutrition, and pastoral crises in West Africa,
- Role of stocks in the promotion of sustainable food systems and the building of the regional food market,
- Role of food reserves in the building of the resilience and social protection of households,
- Partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms and the strengthening of the resilience of the Regional Food Storage System and its capacity to respond effectively to the amplification and complexity of food, nutrition, and pastoral crises.

3. Opening ceremony

The official opening is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 28th April 2021 at 12:00 GMT under the chairmanship of H.E., Mrs Shirley Ayorkor BOTCHWEY, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana, and Chair of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers.



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4. Attendance

Attendance is open to all food storage stakeholders, including national (Member States), regional (CILSS, UEMOA, Networks of Producers' and Women's Organizations - ROPPA, ROAC, RBM, APESS, Gender Network, Women's Network for Conflict Prevention and Management, the private sector, etc.) and international (technical and financial partners, UN System Organizations, NGOs, research centers and universities).

5. Program

The conference will be held in a discontinuous format.

Sessions start at 12:00 pm and end at 4:30 pm GMT.

Wednesday 28th April 2021 from 12:00 pm to 4:30 pm GMT - OPENING CEREMONY

- **Introductory Session :** Food reserves in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus,
- **Thematic1:** Vulnerability of West Africa and the Sahel to food and nutrition insecurity.

Thursday 29th April 2021 from 12:00 pm to 4:30 pm GMT

- **Thematic 2:** Food reserves and management of cyclical food, nutrition, and pastoral crises in West Africa: achievements, lessons learned and challenges of the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Storage Strategy.

Monday 3rd May 2021 from 12:00 pm to 4:30 pm GMT

- **Thematic 3:** Role of stocks in the promotion of sustainable food systems and the building of the regional food market.

Tuesday 4th May 2021 from 12:00 pm to 4:30 pm GMT

- **Thematic 4:** Role of food reserves in the building of the resilience and social protection of households.

Wednesday 5th May 2021 from 12:00 pm to 4:30 pm GMT

- **Thematic 5:** Partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms and the strengthening of the resilience of the Regional Food Storage System and its capacity to respond effectively to the amplification and complexity of food, nutrition, and pastoral crises.

Thursday 6th May 2021

- Drafting of the synthesis report of experts' discussions (restricted session).

Friday 7th May 2021

- Seminar on the synthesis of experts' discussions (open to all participants)

Monday 10th May 2021 from 12:00 pm to 4:30 pm GMT

- Political session and closing of the conference.

For further information, please contact or visit : Email: conferencestockage@araa.org,

Web page: www.foodreserves.ecowas.int

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