

CILSS/AGRHYMET Role in the Reduction of Food Crises and Other Hydro-climatic Risks in West Africa

By Mohamed Yahya Ould Mohamed Mahmoud, Seydou B. TRAORE, and Pape Omar Dieye
AGRHYMET Regional Center, PO BOX11011, Niamey, Niger
m.yahya@agrhymet.ne, s.traore@agrhymet.ne, p.dieye@agrhymet.ne

Abstract

The AGRHYMET Regional Center was created in 1974, at the aftermath of the catastrophic droughts that stroke the sahelian region, by the Heads of States of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) with the mission, among others, to monitor the meteorological, hydrological, crops and pasture conditions during the rainy season, and issuing alerts, if necessary, to decision makers so they take measures to prevent massive human suffering and displacement. Starting from May, it takes active part in the West Africa seasonal outlook forum (PRESAO) that gives forecasts of the July-August-September cumulative rainfall and maximum river discharges. During the remaining of the cropping season till the end of October, multidisciplinary working groups (MWGs) composed of experts from national meteorological, hydrological, agricultural extension, plant protection and livestock breeding offices in each country publish dekadal and monthly bulletins. At the regional level at the AGRHYMET Center, data and information coming from the national components are combined with satellite data to elaborate regional syntheses that are published at different time steps. In these publications, the current situation is analyzed and compared with that of the previous period, the previous year and the average. Forecasts of crop yields, that are refined from month to month, are also given. Color maps illustrate the amounts of rainfall, sowing dates, crop water requirements satisfaction indices, yield estimates and the status of natural vegetation. More recently, new indicators of vegetation status, small water bodies, active fires and burnt areas were introduced in the framework of the AMESD (African Monitoring of Environment for Sustainable Development), a pan-African project founded by the European Commission and implemented in West Africa by the AGRHYMET Center. Hard copies and electronic versions of all the publications are mailed to subscribers. They are also posted on the Center's website: www.agrhymet.ne. In this communication, we present an overview of the institutional set-up and the tools and methodologies developed throughout the years by the AGRHYMET Regional Center and its partners to fulfill its mission of drought monitoring and food security early warning. AGRHYMET also presents an exhibit at this 3rd Global Platform on the same topics using posters and brochures.