PASAS

PLATEFORME D'ANALYSE, DE SUIVI ET D'APPRENTISSAGE AU SAHEL

PORTÉ PAR

MINKA | AFD AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

Food insecurity in the central Sahel

Governing food crisis in the central Sahel: Managing risks or strengthening stakeholders?

Summary

January 28, 2025

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Please cite this publication as follows:

(**Erreur ! Il n'y a pas de texte répondant à ce style dans ce document.**), Food insecurity in the central Sahel Governing food crisis in the central Sahel Managing risks or strengthening stakeholders ? Platform for Analysis, Monitoring and Learning in the Sahel, PASAS Production..

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CENTRAL SAHEL

The central Sahel is exposed to multifaceted, interlocking hazards and shocks (Gallais, 1994)[1] , giving food crisis their composite character. **Since the beginning of the decade 2000, the Sahelo-Sudanian zone of West Africa has experienced several episodes of food and nutritional crisis**, the most obvious manifestations of which are uncertain access to a variety of foods and, as a corollary, the persistence of high rates of chronic malnutrition. Some of these crisis are rooted in the history of territories and societies (Bjornlund and *al.*, 2022)[2] ; while others are more sudden and superimposed. The geopolitics of markets and the imported effects of globalized crisis have further aggravated them[3] over the past two decades.

The agro-climatic (aridity) and socio-economic (poverty) explanations of crisis still predominate, ahead of more political and systemic explanations (interactions between hazards, risk and decisions). The question of market and political regulations at the heart of these systems is often overlooked, even though it is essential.

The security aspect of food crisis has long been minor, apart from certain areas of Saharan irredentism. However, with the rise of societal and armed violence, **the relationship between food insecurity, state fragility and conflict has become closer** (Kemmerling, Schetter and Wirkus, 2022; Martin-Shields and Stojetz, 2019). [4]

With a population of almost 60 million in 2023**, the central Sahel is a "*hunger spot*"** (FAO-WFP, 2022)[5], the three central Sahelian states are now largely affected[6] . At the same time, analyses by the IPCC (2019 and 2021) warn of the risk of more severe and frequent extreme weather events (droughts, floods), which will in turn reinforce the trend towards food insecurity.

This study focuses on the central Sahel region of West Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger). **The notion of "Central Sahel" has emerged more recently, driven by growing security concerns since 2012**, a pivotal date of geopolitical change, for these spaces of historical nomadism to which various forms of armed violence have added their share of predation, uprooting and vulnerability. It has taken on new meaning with the brutal changes in modes of government (putsches) at the head of each of the states considered since 2022. Tensions with international institutions (EU), sub-regional institutions (UEMOA, ECOWAS) and Western partner countries, aggravated by economic sanctions, have favored their rapprochement, concretized by the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) on September 16, 2023.

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[1] Downing T. E., 1991. "Vulnerability to hunger in Africa. A climate change perspective", *Global Environmental Change*, 1(5): 365-380. https://doi.org/10.1016/0959-3780(91)90003-C.

[2] Bjornlund V., Bjornlund H., and van Rooyen A., 2022. "Why food insecurity persists in sub-Saharan Africa: A review of existing evidence," *Food Security* 14: 845-864. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-022-01256-1.

Descroix, L., Luxereau, A., Lambert, L.A., Ruë, O., Diedhiou, A., Diongue-Niang, A., Dia, A.H., Gangneron, F., Manga, S.P., Diedhiou, A.B., et *al.*, 2024. "An interdisciplinary approach to understand the resilience of agrosystems in the Sahel and West Africa," *Sustainability* 16, 5555. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16135555.

[3] 2007-2008: with the contagion effect, from world markets to national domestic markets, of price rises for certain agricultural commodities (rice, wheat, corn, etc.) due to a number of factors (crop losses, agrofuel production, export retentions, etc.);

2019-2020: with the contraction in demand (loss of business income) and supply disruptions due to health measures taken during the COVID 19 pandemic (closure of outlets, confinement);

2022-2023: with the inflationary consequences of Russia's war of aggression (blocking trade flows in the Black Sea in particular) on the prices of external inputs and agricultural commodities exported by Ukraine.

[4] Kemmerling B., Schetter C., Wirkus L., 2022; "The logics of war and food (in)security," *Global food security* 33, 100634. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100634.

Martin-Shields Ch. P., Stojetz W., 2019. "Food security and conflict: Empirical challenges and future opportunities for research and policy making on food security and conflict," *World Development* 119: 150-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.07.011.

[5] FAO-WFP, 2022. *Hunger Hotspots FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity October 2022 to January 2023 Outlook*, Rome, 66 p.

[6] In 2022, 4.8 million people (18%) in Niger were suffering from aggravated food insecurity (at least IPC phase 3), compared with 3.5 million (16%) in Burkina Faso and 1.9 million (8%).

1 - FRAMING THE STUDY

The study was based on a number of observations concerning the mechanisms, instruments and players involved in combating food insecurity in the central Sahel:

1/ Resistance to change and low renewal of agricultural and food policies and control actions in the context of interconnected crisis;

2/ The fragility - even reversal - of food and nutrition security gains from the mid-2010s (Wudil and *al.*, 2022)[7] ;

3/ The conjunctural aggravation of contextual risk factors, both local and imported (climatic shocks and matrix violence) (Charbonneau, 2024)[8] ;

4/ The multi-faceted, and sometimes redundant, nature of the measures/actions taken to combat food and nutritional insecurity, making it difficult to put them together and analyze them functionally;

5/ The catalytic role played by each food and nutrition crisis in the fight against the crisis, despite the lack of material and human resources to sustain the changes.

The study was conducted from September to December 2024. It is based on a selective literature review (study reports, policy documents, humanitarian alert and emergency bulletins, academic articles, ...), supplemented by the experiential knowledge of the 6 experts mobilized. The study favors a multidisciplinary approach[9]

From a scientific point of view, the study aims to place the issue of governance of food insecurity at the heart of analyses for the Central Sahelian zone. This issue cuts across all links in the food security chain (production, marketing, redistribution, processing and consumption). It is one of the keys to the efficiency of adverse socio-technical responses to the risk of food insecurity (Cassimon and *al.*, 2023)[10] . It is also emerging as a key to analysis and a lever for developing responses to interrelated crises (Jegen, 2020; Venturi, 2019)[11].

By governance, we mean the construction of compromise trajectories - multi-level and multi-actor - required to reconfigure struggle strategies in a context of multifaceted insecurities (armed violence, climate change, loss of fertility, food dependency, inflation, endemic poverty, etc.).

The study is therefore part of a contextual (and sometimes situated) analysis of the main food and nutrition crisis of the last two decades (2004-2005, 2007-2008, 2011-2012, 2020-2022), each with its own identity and dynamics, more or less well anticipated, measured, recognized and managed. In order to gain a better understanding of their contextual specificities, certain factors of vulnerability to food and nutritional insecurity have been brought into play, some structural and others more cyclical.

[7] Wudil A. H., Usman M., Rosak-Szyrocka J., Pilaf L. and Boye M., 2022. "Reversing years for global food security: A review of the food security situation in Sub-saharan Affrica (SSA)," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, 14836. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192214836.

[8] Charbonneau B., 2024. "The production of climate security futures in the West African Sahel," *African Affairs* 123(492): 329-348. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adae020.

[9] *Geographic, political, sociological and economic* (Su Y and Amrit C., 2024. "Literature review of food insecurity in the Sahel from an interdisciplinary perspective," *Journal of Decision Systems.* https://doi.org/10.1080/12460125.2024.2354640).

[10] "We find evidence of a robust relationship between food aid, governance quality, and food and nutrition security outcomes" (Cassimon, D. Fadare, O., Mavrotas, G., 2023. "The impact of food aid and governance on food and nutrition security in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Sustainability*, 15, 1417. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021417.

[11] Jegen, L. 2020. *The political economy of migration governance in Niger*, Freiburg: Arnold-Bergstraesser Institute (ABI). 66 p.

Venturi B., 2019. "An EU Integrated Approach in the Sahel: The Role for Governance," Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) Papers 19, 23 pp. http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep19689.

The study considers all the frameworks for organising action and institutional arrangements[12] to combat structural and cyclical food insecurity, as well as their responses to crises. Local, alternative and endogenous practices are not taken into account

The study has four related objectives:

The first one is to **identify and characterize certain causal risk factors - whether recurrent or cyclical - which play a major role in the emergence of the above-mentioned national food and nutrition crisis.**

The second aims to **understand the similarities and differences between different national situations in terms of managing food and nutritional insecurity.** This involves reconsidering the specific features of each national risk management, food and nutrition insecurity control and crisis governance system.

The third concerns the **assessment of national capacities for up-to-date crisis management.** This means taking into account both the growing complexity of food crisis in a context of heightened systemic risks, and the limits of standardized technocratic crisis management systems.

The final objective - to **build action levers to strengthen public policies for more efficient governance of food systems** - will be the subject of a limited perspective by way of conclusion (Janin and *al.*, 2023).

2 - RETHINKING CRISIS

The notion of crisis, increasingly used - and abused - to the point of trivialization, refers to any phase of sudden or accelerated change, difficult to anticipate, with destabilizing effects on a territory, a society or an individual. There can be no crisis without the materialization, over time, of shocks

Every crisis puts to the test the certainties, knowledge and resources mobilized by individuals, communities and institutions to deal with it. Traditionally, crisis are time-bound and long-term. It evolves without any real end, only partially resolving itself; and when it unravels, it gives way to new realities, without ever re-establishing old positions.

Fundamentally, a food crisis is primarily the expression of a lack of food resources, both quantitative and qualitative, at a given moment and in a given area: it therefore illustrates a mismatch between needs and resources. However, it is also the expression of a loss of access to resources, through financial incapacity, loss of recourse, isolation or absence of rights: it then illustrates a mismatch between needs, capacities and rights.

To be classified as a crisis, at least three processes need to take place: qualification, quantification and recognition. These can be based on objective data - quantitative or qualitative - often hierarchical, but also on more subjective expressions. They are often the subject of controversy, due to the financial commitments involved and the responsibilities and legitimacies at stake.

A food crisis is very often the result of a combination of endogenous (or local) factors and exogenous, imported factors. **Multifactorial in nature, food and nutrition crisis often occur over a long period of time**, with accelerations, aggravations and remissions. These oscillations call for spatio-temporal approaches that combine longitudinal data series and multiple contexts (Bofa and Zewotir, 2024)[13]

While preventive diagnostics - via all the early warning and monitoring systems set up during the 1980s - do exist, they have never been the priority of the control systems in place. Their efficien-

[12] By hybridized systems, we mean all the *ad hoc* systems in charge of crisis management, as well as those covering agricultural and food issues to a greater or lesser extent; they may be state or para-state, but more often than not, they are mixed, at the strategic interface between the national state and its representatives, and a range of humanitarian, development and international solidarity players.

[13] Bofa A. and Zewotir A., 2024. 'A bayesian spatio-temporal dynamic analysis of food security in Africa', Scientific Reports, *Nature Portofolio*, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-65989-z.

cy and effectiveness have remained limited, with responses often late, incomplete or erratic, due to a lack of consistent, reliable data.

At the same time, **the repetition and duration of food crises in sub-Saharan Africa** - (Grünewald and Tessier, 2001; Maxwell and *al.*, 2012[14]) - **have led to a rethinking of response frameworks** (Flores, Khwasa and White, 2005[15]). Largely oriented towards reactive and curative responses, they have sought to overcome the opposition between cyclical and structural dimensions (Pingali and *al*., 2005)[16] from the 2000s onwards. By contrast, the intra-temporal dimension (cyclical and cumulative seasonality) remained neglected until the late 2000s (Devereux and Longhurst, 2010). [17]

As a result, **humanitarian aid and development actors have gradually moved towards multi-temporal approaches aimed at integrating actions** (Dieng et *al*., 2009)[18] . As a result, the logical framework for interventions has also been called into question (Hailé, 2005[19]). Thus, the notions of short, medium and long term have gradually become relevant, even essential, for understanding and acting, even if their delimitations remain blurred.

The other major advance of the 2000s was the development of hierarchical scales for measuring the risk of food and nutritional insecurity. Several institutional proposals were put forward. The one put forward by CILSS-AGHRYMET was based more on an assessment of locally produced food supplies, unlike the others, which incorporated bio-demographic indicators (*lives*) and *livelihoods*. Each of these will soon give way to the *Integrated Food Security* Phase *Classification* (IFSPC) and what appears to be a variant: the harmonized framework proposed by CILSS.

3 - EVOLVING PROFILES OF NATIONAL SITUATIONS OF VULNERABILITY TO FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY (AND RESPONSE NEEDS)

The central Sahel is historically at the heart of food and nutritional security issues. This reconfigured sub-area is made up of countries that can be considered as historical hotbeds of the major droughts, famines and food crisis of past decades (1932, 1973-1974, 1984-1985). It was in these countries that the first early warning and strategic information systems for decision-making were tested and implemented.

It is also **in this subset that acute malnutrition in children has emerged as a public health problem**. It eventually became a *proxy* for food and nutrition crisis, acting as a trigger for emergency humanitarian responses based on the mass delivery of ready-to-use therapeutic products (Crombé. and Jézéquel, 2007; Olivier de Sardan, 2008).

[14] Grünewald F. and Tessier L., 2001. "Zones grises, crisis durables, conflits oubliés: les défis humanitaires", *International Review of the Red Cross*, 83(842): 323-351.

Maxwell D., Russo L. and Alinovi L., 2012. "Constraints to addressing food insecurity in protracted crisis," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, 109(31): 12321-12325. http://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0913215108.

[15] Flores M., Khwaja Y. and White P., 2005. "Food security in protracted crisis: building more effective policy frameworks", *Disasters*, 29(1): 25-51. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.0361-3666.2005.00283.x.

[16] Pingali P., Alinovi L. and Sutton J., 2005. "Food security in complex emergencies: enhancing food system resilience", *Disasters*, 29(1): 5-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0361-3666.2005.00282.x.

[17] Devereux S. Longhurst R., 2010. "Incorporating Seasonality into Agricultural Project Design and Learning," *IDS Bulletin*, 41(6): 88-95. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2010.00186.x.

[18] Dieng I., David P., Labidi N. and Akakpo K., 2009. *Cadre harmonisé bonifié d'analyse permanente de la vulnérabilité courante. Rapport de synthèse (Mauritanie, Niger, Sénégal)*, CILSS-FAO-PAM, 30 p.

[19] Haile M., 2005. "Weather patterns, food security and humanitarian response in sub-Saharan Africa", *Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society, Biological Sciences*, 360: 2169-2182. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2005.1746.

The central Sahel is also emblematic of the acceleration of the intertwined effects of climate change, **forced mobility and cumulative precariousness**. These situations are aggravated by the dynamics of local and international conflicts and their corollaries

3.1 - Contextual characterization of four recent episodes of food and nutrition crisis

This section characterizes food and nutrition insecurity situations (and their evolution) in the central Sahel, based on an analysis of four food crisis episodes (2004-2005, 2007-2008, 2011-2012 and 2020-2022) that have affected these three countries over the past 20 years.

3.1.1. Burkina Faso

Crisis of 2004-2005

It **resulted from the invasion of gregarious locust swarms and a severe drought, which severely affected agricultural production**, particularly in the Sahel and northern regions (FAO - GIEWS/SMIAR, 2005; OCHA, August 2005). This lead to a 2% drop in cereal production compared with the average for the previous five years (DGPSA/EPA, 2005), putting more than a million people at risk of food insecurity.

Crisis of 2007-2008

It has **resulted in disruptions to world markets, with strong ramifications for national and local markets**. The FAO food price index rose by 50% between February 2007 and February 2008. The severity of this rise is also linked to structural factors, notably the priority given to market-oriented agricultural production (cotton and sesame) rather than local food security.

During the 2007-2008 agricultural season, adverse weather conditions, including flooding, disrupted families' livelihoods and reduced food availability. The floods affected 92,794 people in 89 rural and urban localities. Food riots broke out in several regions, highlighting the country's political and social instability (Engels, 2015).

Crisis of 2011-2012

The 2012 crisis is perceived as an unprecedented catastrophe, **occurring at a time when households were already weakened by the succession and globalization of economic and social shocks**. The crisis was **exacerbated by unfavourable climatic conditions** (drought), which caused a significant drop in agricultural production, resulting in a cereal deficit of around 155,000 tons (FAO, December 2012). Cereal production at national level fell by 5% compared with the five-year average, and 59% of households were unable to cover their cereal needs with their own production (DGPSA/EPA, 2012). 34% of farming households suffered from cereal insecurity. Of the forty-five provinces, seventeen had a cereal coverage rate of less than 90% (DGPSA/EPA, 2012).

Crisis of 2020-2022

Since 2020, **Burkina Faso has been facing a complex food crisis, resulting from a combination of phenomena** (armed conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic, political instability, endemic poverty and a multiplication of brutal events linked to climate disruption). In 2020, several million people were affected by the food crisis: 3.3 million were in a crisis or worse according to the analysis grids of the Harmonized Framework (CH Phase 3 or higher), including 500,000 in emergency (CH Phase 4) in August (CILSS-CH, August 2020). Some 11,400 people were suffering from acute malnutrition at a very critical level (CH phase 5). Even after the October to

December 2020 harvests, two million people remained food insecure, including 133,000 in emergency (CH phase 4) (CILSS-CH, December 2020) (Table 1).[20]

3.1.2. Mali

Crisis of 2004-2005

It is mainly cyclical in nature, due to a plague of locusts and a rainfall deficit that has made over a million people food insecure (Janin, 2011). In 2005, around 2.7 million people (25% of rural households) were food insecure. Some 3.5 million people (32% of rural households) were in a vulnerable situation, and 11% of children suffered from acute malnutrition. The alert threshold for chronic malnutrition was largely exceeded in 2006, a level unequalled in the country's history.

Food insecurity in Mali has underlying causes: growing and pervasive vulnerability and chronic poverty. The latter has exposed the poorest families and communities to shocks such as poor harvests or rising food prices. Mali has activated management instruments such as the national food security stock (SNS: 35,000 tonnes), the establishment of a 5.5 billion CFA franc food security fund, cereal imports and food aid (CSA, 2005). This system, which operated for two decades, has begun to show its limits, particularly in the face of the size of the agricultural deficit, as was the case in 2004-2005 (CSA, 2005).

Crisis of 2007-2008

In 2007, **Mali experienced a spectacular rise in food prices**. This situation lasted until the 2009-2010 season. In the post-harvest period of 2008, severe food insecurity in rural areas reached 8%, while the rate was 1% in urban areas (Waigalo, 2008). This rise in prices is due to the socio-economic situation in the West African region and the international economic context of inflation on food products, petroleum products and agricultural inputs (fertilizers, pesticides).

Soaring food prices worldwide have resulted in a general rise in prices in Mali (Bibi et *al.*, 2009[21]). More generally, the inflation rate, which was 1.5% in 2006 and 1.4% in 2007, rose to 9.1% in 2008.

Crisis of 2011-2012

Irrespective of the political and security situation in 2012, Mali, like several other Sahelian countries, faced a serious food and nutrition crisis from 2011 onwards. **The 2011-2012 agricultural season was characterised by insufficient and unevenly distributed rainfall, resulting in a sharp drop in cereal production and a significant fodder deficit**. **This led to an early rise in food prices**. The nutritional situation has also deteriorated, with global acute malnutrition rates reaching critical levels in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, Kayes and Koulikoro (OCHA, 2012). The overview of humanitarian needs in 2012 indicated that **4.8 million people were food insecure, of whom 1.16 million were acutely food insecure, three times more than the 2011 level** at the same period.

The prolonged presence of displaced people in northern regions affects host communities and leads to a deterioration in food security levels[22] **. In areas occupied by jihadist rebel groups**, embargoes on the circulation of agricultural goods are severely penalizing local populations

Crisis of 2020-2022

During the lean season of June-August 2022, 1.84 million people were acutely food insecure. In terms of nutrition, a total of 3.3 million people (16% of the total population) required nutritional

[20]

[21] Bibi S., Cockburn J., Coulibaly M., Tiberti L., 2009. *The impact of rising food prices on child poverty and policy responses in* Mali, Innocenti Working Paper, Unicef-Innocenti Research Centre, April 2009, 93 p. http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/557.

[22] In 2024, this figure will even reach 360,000 people affected by flooding. This exceptional level in 2024 also corresponds to the highest number of internally displaced people recorded between 2012 and 2024.

assistance in terms of care and prevention in 2022, i.e. 2.2 million more than in 2021 (OCHA, 2022). In 2024, forecasts indicated a worsening of food insecurity during the lean season (June-August 2024), due in particular to the conflict, leading to a doubling in the number of acutely food-insecure people, from 715,410 to almost 1.37 million (FAO, 2024).

3.1.3. Niger

Crisis 2004-2005

This is an accessibility crisis against a backdrop of a relatively modest cereal production deficit, but a greater pasture deficit. At the same time, there has been a sharp rise in the price of millet (which has temporarily become more expensive than imported rice due to a dysfunction in the regional market), and a fall in the prices of cash crops (onions) and livestock, which represent major sources of income for rural households (particularly in areas chronically vulnerable to food insecurity).

One of the specific features of this crisis **was its nutritional dimension**, which **received particular media coverage and contributed to a late but widespread mobilization** (Olivier de Sardan, 2008). This crisis marked a turning point in the recognition of the seriousness of the nutritional dimension in Niger, and in the development of capacities to care for malnourished children, more than 330,000 of whom were received in over 800 nutritional recovery centres in 2005.

Crisis of 2007-2008

This crisis is the result of various events and trends following an internationalized financial crash. The impact on the food situation was relatively limited, given the low recourse of vulnerable households to imported food products. Millet remained affordable, while the price of imported rice soared over the period.

In a general economic climate marked by "hunger riots" and the Arab Spring, **Niger experienced large-scale demonstrations in 2009**, which played a role in the overthrow of the current government (military coup in February 2010). It should also be noted that the lean season between May and September 2010 was considered by many to be a food crisis, triggering a major mobilization of the National Food Crisis Prevention and Management Mechanism (DNPGCA) (Michiels et *al.*, 2012).

Crisis of 2011-2012

Against a backdrop still marked by soaring world food prices (and a particularly severe lean season in 2010), poor production and the threat of locusts affected Niger during the 2011-2012 agro-pastoral season. The newly elected President[23] recognized early on the prospect of a food crisis during the 2012 lean season, and called for international support as early as August 2011.

It was a crisis **of accessibility rather than availability, further exacerbated by the closure of borders with other Sahelian countries** as they sought to protect themselves from the risk of food insecurity linked to the drop in agro-pastoral production. Similarly, the 2012 crisis is once again symptomatic of the process of transformation of production methods and the impoverishment of rural households whose vulnerability has increased. It **reveals the continuing deterioration in the living conditions of a significant fringe of the rural population**, as well as the interweaving of structural and conjunctural factors in the determinants of crisis (Inter-Réseaux, May 2012). It is also taking place in a sub-regional context already marked by the crisis in northern Mali and Libya, which is affecting the usual coping strategies households use to deal with difficult times.

[23] Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou came to power in April 2012, at the end of the military transition, with food security and agricultural development as his national political priority.

Crisis of 2020-22

The 2020-2022 period will be marked by a deleterious international context, with the Covid-19 pandemic crisis in particular, followed by the start of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. In Niger, analysis of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on food and nutritional insecurity revealed a **greater impact on urban populations directly affected by the economic slowdown, border closures and confinement**, although this was very short-lived and fairly relative. The year 2021 was marked by **a very poor agricultural and pastoral campaign**, with a 37% drop in cereal production compared to the previous year and a 46% shortfall in national grazing needs for livestock.

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Overall, what has been labelled a crisis, sometimes a posteriori and not always unanimously by all the players involved, has revealed **the extreme structural precariousness in which a large proportion of the Sahelian population lives, both in rural and urban areas**.

The cumulative effects of these successive episodes of rising retail prices are very marked on the poorest and most vulnerable households. However, it seems appropriate to **consider the crisis as episodes of structural food insecurity with acute seasonal manifestations, in a general context of chronic economic vulnerability for a large part of the population**.

4 - FACTORS OF VULNERABILITY TO FOOD INSECURITY

The diachronic and longitudinal analyses adopted to grasp the multifactorial nature and differentiated dynamics of the four food and nutrition crisis episodes show how **food and nutrition insecurity is a cyclical phenomenon, having a strong impact on lifestyles** through the sudden adjustments and adaptations it implies. Food and nutrition insecurity is also **a structuring factor in public policy and humanitarian action**.

Trends between the three countries appear to be similar. They do, however, call for a distinction to be made between structural vulnerability factors and emerging factors in food and nutrition crisis.

4.1. Structural climatic and demographic factors

The state of food security in the central Sahel is highly dependent on natural and human structural factors. **The study considered certain climatic factors as well as population growth as structural factors.**

Climatic factors

Studies have shown that food insecurity increases by 5-20% with each episode of flooding or drought (IMF, 2020). Until the 2000s, the trend was towards reduced rainfall (and worsening aridity), with a reduction in the number of rainy days.

Since the 2010s, Sahelian countries have seen a marked increase in rainfall, with unstable episodes. The effects of climatic shocks on the seasonality of food prices have been established and confirmed (Kakpo et *al.*, 2022). FAO projections foresee a 20-50% reduction in rainfed cereal production in Sahelian countries by 2050, which will ultimately increase pressure on resource factors (water, land, trees) and inevitable conflicts over access and use, all the more so if customary and community regulations break down against a backdrop of insecurity. These phenomena can be found in all three countries of the central Sahel. **Recent climatic dynamics are therefore characterised by the appearance of climatic extremes** (long, intense heat waves, sandstorms, violent rainfall or flash floods).

The Agrhymet regional centre, attached to the CILSS, regularly publishes studies, notably on rainfall extremes, associated with the increase in atmospheric water vapour, which reinforces

the condensation-rain-runoff cycle and contributes to producing alternating periods of drought and rainfall surpluses. In this respect, the year 2024 was emblematic, with an extreme heat wave in April-May[24] in Niger, but also in Mali and Burkina Faso.

Over the past twenty years, Mali has experienced seven (7) years of heavy flooding, with peaks in 2020 (more than 130,000 people affected) and 2024 (more than 350,000 people). Niger has experienced the same trend, with six (6) years of heavy flooding, including three (3) exceptional years in 2012 (140,000 people affected), 2020 (170,000) and 2024 (over 400,000 people affected) respectively. Despite the near-annual frequency of floods in Burkina Faso since 2007, these have been of limited extent, with the country experiencing three (3) exceptional years of flooding, 2009 (150,000 people affected), 2010 (110,000) and 2020 (around 115,000 people affected). In contrast to Mali and Niger, few cases of people affected by flooding have been recorded (fewer than 20,000). The rains continued until October 2024, with an impact on harvests. These phenomena, which are increasing in frequency and intensity, particularly in Mali and Niger, pose new threats to food security, while also generating new types of food assistance needs, less predictable and immediate. Because of their sudden onset and scale, extreme weather events have become aggravating factors in food and nutrition crisis.

Demographic factors

Demographic growth appears to be a major structural determinant whose combination with other determinants reinforces food insecurity. **In 2019, Burkina Faso recorded annual population growth of 3% (INSD, 2022). From 1960 to 2023, the population grew from 4.83 million to 23.25 million, marking an increase of 381.5%.** Almost a third of residents live in large cities, driving urbanization forward at a rate of 4.5% annually[25] . This rapid population growth intensifies the need for food and arable land, putting limited resources under pressure

In Mali, **the population grew from 5.6 million to 23.29 million between 1960 and 2023, an increase of 342.5% in 63 years** (Perspective Monde, 2024). The year 2010 (15.5 million) marks the acceleration of growth[26] , with high densities in the South and Southeast.

Niger's population is growing at a very high annual rate (+3.9%/year): it has doubled since the 2005 food crisis, and now stands at around 28 million inhabitants. Population density is, on average, very low (around 13 inhabitants/km^2) but unevenly distributed, with more than 100 inhabitants/km^2 in the southern part of the country, where land resources and productivity are greater, but are above all reflected in very high pressure on land.

Beyond this upward trend in the central Sahel, the impact of population growth varies from country to country**. In Burkina Faso and Niger, more than in Mali, it may be one of the variables explaining the state of food and nutritional insecurity.** Globally, the combination of strong demographic growth and agricultural pressure in a context of worsening climatic variability is contributing to a degradation of surface conditions (water-soil-plant): deforestation, overgrazing, loss of fallow land, soil erosion, etc. All these phenomena affect the quality of the soil and the environment. All these phenomena affect agricultural productivity and the level of food supplies produced in the longer term.

[24] According to the World Weather Attribution, in early April, maximum temperatures in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger rose by 1.5°C during the day and 2°C at night as a result of global warming.

[25] https://www.donneesmondiales.com/afrique/burkina-faso/climat.php

[26] https://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMTendanceStatPays?langue=fr&code-Pays=MLI&codeStat=SP.POP.TOTL&codeTheme=1

4.2 Emerging geo-security, political and economic factors

While certain natural factors are structurally prevalent and exert a negative influence on food and nutritional security, other factors have emerged and intensified over the past two decades: rising security threats, the breakdown of government regimes with a succession of brutal seizures of power, the cumulative and imported effects of volatile international prices, and so on.

Security and political factors

For a little over a decade, **the three countries of the central Sahel have been at the heart of security issues**, **marked mainly by socio-political instability and armed violence**. This instability makes the Sahel a crisis-prone area: "*the advance of the jihadist insurgency [...] seems almost unstoppable, already controlling almost half of Mali and Burkina Faso, and a tenth of Niger, and now gaining a foothold in the north of the coastal countries (Benin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire) after having established itself in a large part of northern Nigeria and the far north of Cameroon*" (Olivier de Sardan, 2023).

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the stability index **has steadily deteriorated**, with a clear acceleration at the turn of the 2010s. At the same time, **a new political order was put in place with brutal regime changes** (military putsches in 2020 in Mali, 2022 in Burkina Faso and 2023 in Niger)**: very often plebiscitary, nationalist, sovereignist and often suspending fundamental rights.** Within this framework, two elements have been instrumentalised to support this change in governmentality to the point of becoming patently hammered home: the rhetoric of the terrorist threat and the neo-colonial plot. This has fundamentally transformed government regimes, opening the door to geopolitical reconfigurations in terms of economic partnerships, military cooperation and, perhaps ultimately, and humanitarian support.

In Burkina Faso

The North and East regions are plagued by armed conflict, the effects of which have exacerbated food insecurity situations since 2018. In 2020, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) rose from 47,000 in January to 560,000 in December. This trend continued with an 87% increase, reaching 1.05 million in 2020 (OCHA and CONASUR, 2020) . These IDPs, deprived of resources and income, depended mainly on humanitarian aid, although in some areas following the example of the Sahel region, humanitarian access was hampered by the presence of armed groups, isolating a fringe of the food-insecure (ACAPS, December 2020). In 2021, the number of people affected by an aggravated situation due to deteriorating security (CH phase 3 or higher) was particularly high (CILSS-CH, November 2021).

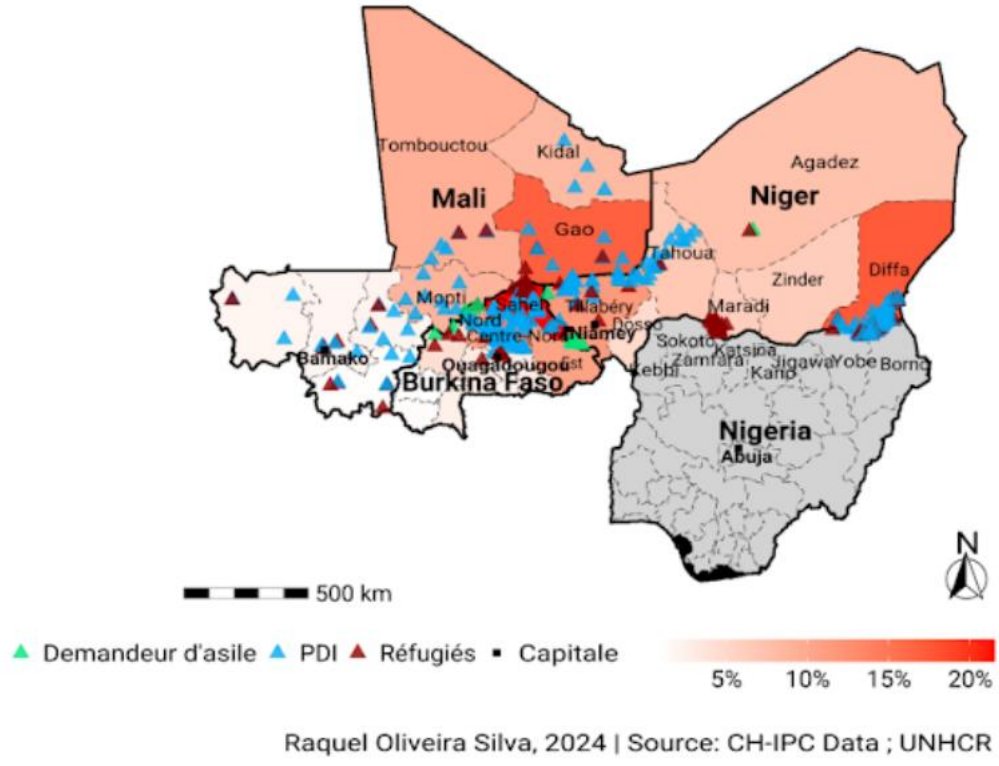
In Mali

The year 2012 is considered the period when the country tipped over into a succession of political and security upheavals that continue, including : the Tuareg rebellion in the north of the country, a military coup, then, in 2013, the intervention of the French army in Central Mali, the holding of elections. Since then, the crisis has continued until the military coup of 2021, which truly marked the establishment of military rule in Mali (Antil and Touati, 2011; Siméant, 2014; Grémont, 2019). These events led to forced internal and external displacements of Malian populations, estimated in 2021 at 346,864 internally displaced people and 48,555 refugees by the UNHCR.

In Niger

The Diffa region in the Southeast is another ISAN hotspot[27] . At the crossroads of cross-border violence linked to incursions by the Boko Haram terrorist group in Nigeria and local crisis (UNHCR, 2022), Bosso illustrates the cross-border extension of this zone of insecurity. Similarly, the incursion and gradual establishment of armed groups (independence fighters and jihadists) in certain areas of the national territory have generated insecurity and led to a decline in the presence of the State and the provision of basic social services.

The fragile regional security context has generated both internal and cross-border displacements. The localities of Diffa and Maradi in Niger, the Sahel region in Burkina Faso and Gao in Mali remain hotbeds of chronic food insecurity, as a result of growing demographic flows (IDPs and refugees). Niger's most conflict-affected territories, around Lake Chad and in Liptako-Gourma (the so-called 3-border zone between Niger, Mali and Burkina), are the hardest hit by food and nutritional insecurity. These critical areas form a vulnerable geographic corridor, with a disruptive effect on local food resources (Figure 1) and on humanitarian interventions to benefit vulnerable populations (Benjaminsen and Ba, 2009). As a result, many areas that used to be farmed or used for pastoral livestock production are now being abandoned.



Raquel Oliveira Silva, 2024 | Source: CH-IPC Data ; UNHCR

Note : Carte illustrant la proportion de la population dans le phases 3 à 5 de l'ISAN par région pour les pays du Sahel central, ainsi que la localisation des camps de personnes concernées par le mandat du UNHCR (réfugiés, personnes déplacées internes et demandeurs d'asile).

FIGURE1 . POPULATION POLARIZATION IN PHASES 3 TO 5 OF FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL INSECURITY IN HOTBEDS OF CONFLICT AND SECURITY CRISIS IN THE CENTRAL SAHEL (2014-2024)

[27] Raimond C., Fougou H. K., Carémel J.-F. and Garine E., 2023. "L'art de se nourrir en temps de crisis aggravée et en contexte d'insécurité alimentaire structurelle: L'exemple de la région de Diffa (Niger) dans le bassin du lac Tchad," *Anthropology of food* [Online], n°17, https:// .doi.org/10.4000/aof.14189

Geo-economic factors

Another factor exerting a cyclical impact, albeit variable from country to country, on the intensity of food and nutritional insecurity due to lack of access **is the imported effect of price fluctuations on external markets (regional and international).** This translates into a rising trend in retail prices on domestic markets in all three countries, and loss of access for rural and urban households.

In the Central Sahel, this phenomenon has been linked in particular to the imported effects of the international financial and economic crisis and its corollaries (2007-2008), the deregulation of the cereals market in the ECOWAS region (2012) and the effects of the Russian-Ukrainian war since 2022, which seem to be the most notable.

Indeed, in the central Sahel, the proportion of the family budget devoted to food remains very high, at around 50% (compared with 30% in the rest of the world), making them particularly sensitive to any fluctuation in retail prices (FEWS NET, 2022[28]). An inflationary trend has been in place for two decades: this makes it particularly important to collect and monitor price data to anticipate decision-making (Araujo-Bonjean et *al*., 2010[29]). This dynamic makes it even more difficult to access a nutritious, balanced and diversified diet. Food that is considered "sustainable" is even more out of reach (Bai et *al*., 2023[30]), not only for reasons of economic access, but also because of actual availability on the markets.

Regional phenomena also played a part in the development of inflation, aggravated by a shortfall in agricultural production in 2011-2012. The usually efficient and fluid regional cereals market, which enables circulation from surplus areas to deficit areas, is experiencing a dysfunction generated by diplomatic measures taken by ECOWAS concerning trade restrictions with the countries of the central Sahel. Hence the importance of import flows, despite interannual variations.

In response to this macroeconomic context, the governments of the three central Sahelian countries reacted **with costly, voluntary measures to subsidize the price of necessities**, which had already been tested during the 2007-2008 food crisis.

Overall, **the latest developments in multi-factorial crises are logically reflected in an increase in severe food and nutritional insecurity**. In contrast to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger show significant levels of severity. The evolution of the proportion of the population in phases 3 to 5 of food and nutrition insecurity from 2014 to 2023 shows a worsening of vulnerability from 2018 onwards.

The intensification of armed conflict has been identified as a major factor in the disruption of livelihoods such as agriculture and pastoralism. Historical climatic factors, of course, also play a crucial role in the deteriorating state of food and nutritional security in the central Sahel (Schlenker and Lobell, 2010[31]), as do global economic disruptions, a factor amplifying food crisis (Headey and Ruel, 2020).[32]

[28] FEWS NET, 2022. "Widespread rise in food prices further reduces food access by poor households, especially in conflict zones", West Africa - Food Security Outlook, March to September 2022, https://fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/WEST%20AFRICA_Food_Security_Outlook_mars_Final_0.pdf

[29] Araujo Bonjean C., Brunelin S., Simonet C., 2010. *Prévenir les crisis alimentaires au Sahel : des indicateurs basés sur les prix de marché*, Working Paper 95, June 2010, 134 p. https://www.afd.fr/sites/afd/files/imported-files/095-document-travail.pdf.

[30] Bai Y., J. Bouscarat, P. Heinrigs, K. Sokourenko and K. Zougbédé 2023. "Healthy Food, Costs and Food Policies in the Sahel and West Africa," *West African Notes*, No. 39, OECD Publishing, Paris, 34 p. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/-oecd/fr/publications/reports/2023/07/healthy-diets-costs-and-food-policies-in-the-sahel-and-west-africa_0e042c21/43a62f1d-fr.pdf.

[31] Schlenker, W., & Lobell, D. B., 2010. "Robust Negative Impacts of Climate Change on African Agriculture," *Environmental Research Letters*, 5(1), 014010. https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/5/1/014010/pdf.

[32] Headey, D., & Ruel, M. T., 2020. "The COVID-19 Nutrition Crisis: What to Expect and How to Protect", *World Development,136, 105176.*

5. PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF FOOD AND NUTRITION CRISIS (2004-2024)

Food and nutrition crisis, by virtue of their socio-spatial scope, complexity, duration and recurrence, have led to the implementation of increasingly structured and harmonized response and control mechanisms. Whether emergency, palliative, curative or adaptive, their institutionalization has **led to a process of increasing technicization and technocratization**, which has often been pointed out in the context of situated studies (Flores, Khwesa and White, 2005; Crombé and Jézéquel, 2007; Olivier de Sardan, 2008[33]

Among the points of debate is the issue of crisis management being driven by experts and governments (instead of open, more inclusive governance): it thus often remains centralized (for the ultimate decisions), multi-faceted (and insufficiently integrated), poorly financed (in terms of needs), redundant (by the multiple structures involved).

This raises the question of the effectiveness and efficiency of measures to combat food and nutritional insecurity, which are not subject to contradictory evaluation due to their political nature.

5.1-Characterization of national prevention and response systems and mechanisms

The four crisis episodes studied reflect the plural nature of crisis response. With marked national situations in terms of vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity (and significant response needs), the central Sahel is an excellent terrain for analyzing the dynamics of food and nutrition crisis prevention and management mechanisms (DPGCAN), in order to grasp the temporalities of (re-)configuration, governance modalities and the involvement of different stakeholders.

5.1.1. Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has set up several systems to prevent and manage food crisis. The first took the form of an early warning system (SAP) in 1988, following the serious food crisis of 1973-1974 and 1984-1985 (Sall and Evin, 2004). Their aim was to help prevent food crisis through a system of surveillance, monitoring of food insecurity risks and transmission of information to national authorities and partners.

Prior to 1990, national policies and strategies were primarily aimed at satisfying socio-economic and food requirements, with strong State involvement in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products, through Regional Development Offices (ORD) and public companies in key areas of the economy, as well as investment programs in hydro-agricultural infrastructure (Alpha and Fouilleux, 2018). **The evolution of the crisis prevention and management system over** the past decades has been marked by mutations and adjustments that have gradually made it denser and more complex (Table 1 and Figure 2).

[33] Crombé, X. and Jézéquel J.-H. (eds), 2007. *Niger 2005. Une catastrophe si naturelle*, Paris: Karthala, 260p. https://msf-crash.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Niger%202005%2C%20Une%20catastrophe%20si%20naturelle.pdf ; *Olivier de Sardan J.-P., 2008. La crisis alimentaire au Niger, in La crisis alimentaire de 2004-2005 au Niger en contexte, Afrique Contemporaine, 2008/1 n° 225, pp. 17 to 37*

TABLE1 . SUMMARY OF RESPONSE MECHANISMS IN BURKINA FASO

Period	Institutional level and organizational	Strategic and financial level	Operational and practice level
1988-2003	• Early warning systems (SAP) • State-partner framework agreement • Cereals and food security policy steering and monitoring system (CRSPC) • Important role played by the Office national des céréales (OFNACER)	• Prevent food crisis by monitoring food safety indicators and informing authorities and partners in the event of risk	• Manage strategic grain reserves, regulate prices and guarantee supplies to deficit areas
2003-2008	• Creation of the CNSA under the authority of the Prime Minister • Functions closely linked to emergency food assistance	• Plan national d'organisation et de coordination des secours d'urgence et de réhabilitation (PNOCSUR) (National Plan for the Organization and Coordination of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation), detailing operational crisis management, particularly for food security. • FASA and PTF financing	• Sales at social prices • Food distribution • Agricultural support programs: Supply of seeds and fertilizers to support local agricultural production • Food safety information system
2008-2013	• CNSA under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture • Creation of the CNCN housed in the Ministry of Health • AGIR Initiative • Integration of the SUN movement	• Integration of nutrition into the national food security policy (PNSAN). • FASA and PTF financing • Inclusive response plans for sub-sectors (resilience, nutrition, livestock) and stakeholders	• Continued improvement of monitoring and warning systems (integration of HEA, Nutrition, etc.), gradual introduction of periodic analysis exercises in line with the Harmonized Framework. • Systematization of mitigation measures (environmental *cash-for-work*), integration of low-cost sales of livestock feed. • Technical support at regional level (CILSS, AGIR, etc.)
2013-2018	• Creation of the CNPS, housed in the Prime Minister's Office. • Crucial role in implementing national social protection policy	• Improving the living conditions of vulnerable populations by coordinating multi-sectoral efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion.	• Supervision of the implementation of social protection programs (cash transfers, food subsidies, and support programs for the elderly and disabled) • Coordination of the various players involved in social protection, including ministries, NGOs and international organizations

2018- 2024	• Creation in 2021 of the National Nutrition Council (CNN), attached to the Presidency of the Republic, to replace the National Nutrition Consultation Council (CNCN) as a multisectoral consultation platform for interventions aimed at reducing malnutrition in Burkina Faso.	• Strengthen coordination and monitoring of activities included in the National Multisectoral Nutrition Policy 2020-2029 and the Multisectoral Nutrition Strategic Plan 2020-2024 (MNSP) • Improving the nutritional status of populations, particularly women, children and vulnerable groups, through the implementation of multi-sectoral nutrition interventions.	• Implementation of the national multi-sectoral nutrition policy through rolling five-year operational action plans drawn up by all stakeholders in line with the defined guidelines and priorities. • Operational action plans broken down into annual work plans (AWPs) and projects and programs drawn up in a participatory manner

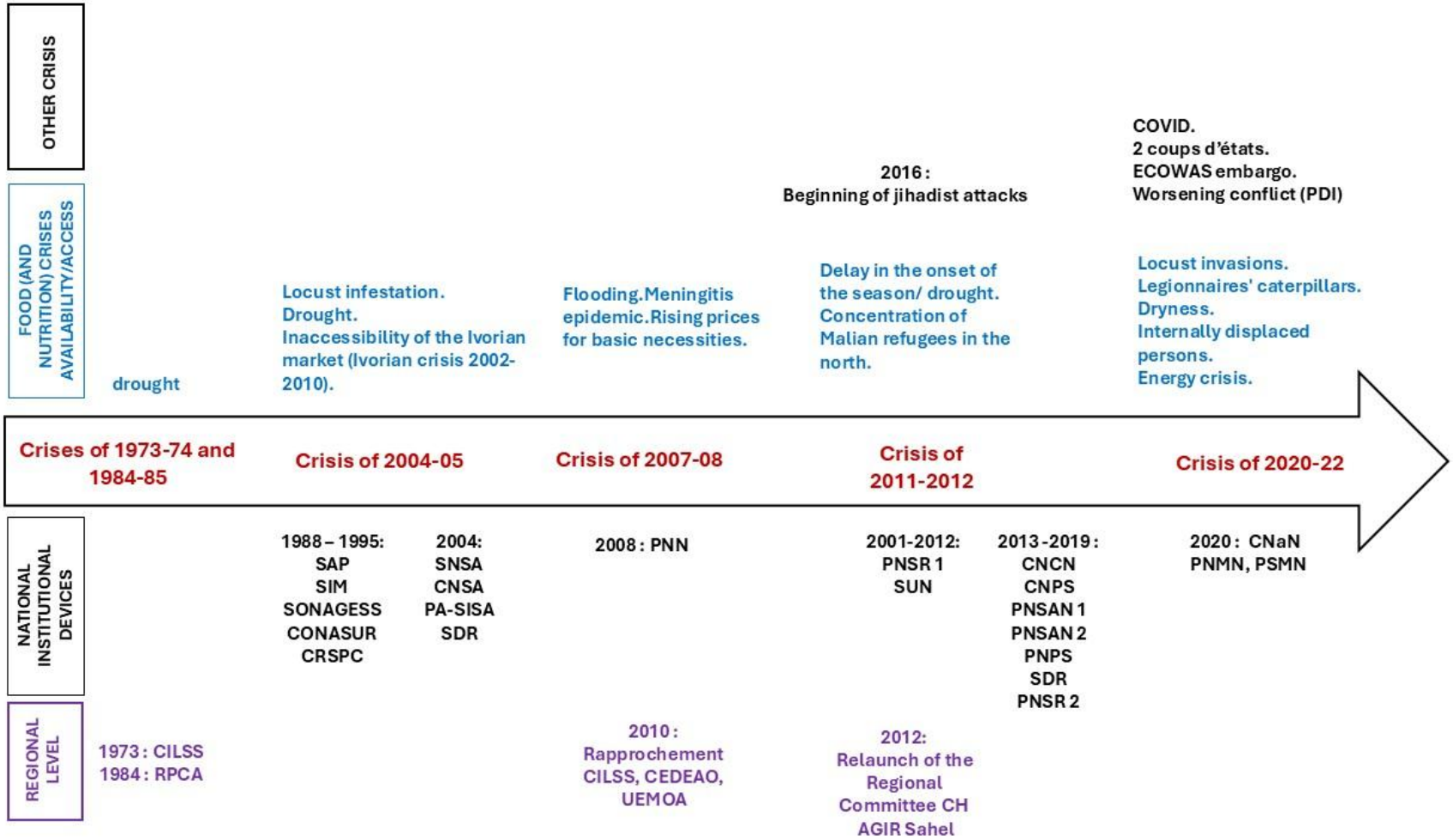


FIGURE2 . CHRONOLOGY OF CRISIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN BURKINA FASO

5.1.2. Mali

In the twenty years between 2002 and 2024, **Mali has undergone major changes in terms of food and nutrition crisis management and governance**. The institutional landscape has been marked by profound changes brought about by a plurality of actors in response to the various episodes of food and nutrition crisis.

In terms of food crisis governance and stakeholder logics, two main periods emerge from the four crisis episodes studied, and they will also mark the evolution of response mechanisms (Table 2)

- The first, between 2002 and 2012, was characterized by "a productive approach to food security", with the aim of achieving food sovereignty.
- The second, between 2012 and 2024, is better described as a "multidimensional vulnerability approach to food security".

As in the case of Burkina Faso**, the timeline of crisis and responses provided by the national crisis prevention and management system** (Figure 3) **reveals** a sort of permanent state of **adaptation and readjustment**.

5.1.3. Niger

The establishment of the National Food Crisis Prevention and Management System in its current configuration is closely linked to the history of Niger's successive food crisis, as well as to regional dynamics, notably with the creation in 1973 of the Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). Public intervention systems in Sahelian countries were originally based on coordination mechanisms between donors and government, set up in the 1980s to support the liberalization of the cereals sector. Initially aimed at managing (and reforming) national cereal offices and food aid, these mechanisms gradually became involved in preventing and managing food crisis in the context of recurrent droughts and cereal deficits (Egg et *al*., 2006[34]).

In 1989, the Early Warning System (SAP) was created, attached to the Prime Minister's Office. It manages the "information and crisis management" functions. From 1998, the "crisis management" function was entrusted to the Cellule crisis alimentaires (CCA), created to guarantee the independence of information on food security and its autonomy from mobilization and response issues (Egg et *al*., 2006; Michiels et *al.*, 2007[35]) (Table 3 and Figure 4).

[34] Egg J. et *al*, 2006, *Evaluation du dispositif de prévention et de gestion des crisis alimentaires du Niger durant la crisis de 2004-2005*, IRAM.

[35] Michiels D. and Egg J., Blein R. and Delpeuch F., 2007. *Les politiques de prévention et de gestion des crisis alimentaires. Enseignements de la crisis du Niger de 2005*, MAEE-DGCID, 92 p. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/Rapport_Niger.pdf.

TABLE2 . SUMMARY OF RESPONSE MECHANISMS IN MALI

Period	Institutional level and organizational	Strategic and financial level	Operational and practice level
Before 2004	• Governance of food crisis management around OPAM, PRMC and SAP	• Managing rural crisis in the north of the country • Strategy for regulating the agricultural commodities market	• Food assistance in kind: Low-cost sales, Targeted free distribution
2004-2012	• Creation of the CSA, attached to the President of the Republic of Mali. • Ministry of Agriculture maintains central role in food crisis governance • NGOs operating CSA projects	• An agricultural approach to achieving food sovereignty • Decentralized approach to governance structures • Sector-specific common funds (food security, health, education, etc.), with the vast majority of contributions coming from donors.	• Promoting the local storage strategy • Agricultural development program • Rice initiative versus duty-free imports
2012-2024	• Creation of the MSAH, commitment of humanitarian actors • Tension between MSAH's emergency and social protection divisions • Expansion of CNSA's responsibilities to include nutrition and social protection objectives	• Multi-sector vulnerability approach to food insecurity. • Expansion of common crisis funds (stabilization and resilience funds, humanitarian funds, COVID-19 funds) • Creation of the Common Donor Fund in 2014, including the Common Fund for Food and Nutritional Security • Trend away from humanitarian funding • Unpredictable resources	• Questioning DAGs • An attempt to harmonize intervention methods, which has so far proved unsustainable: the majority of players use cash transfers, and efforts are being made to target with investment in the RSU. • Response focused on the lean season; call for predictable multi-year programs (resilience, social protection) rather than annual support.

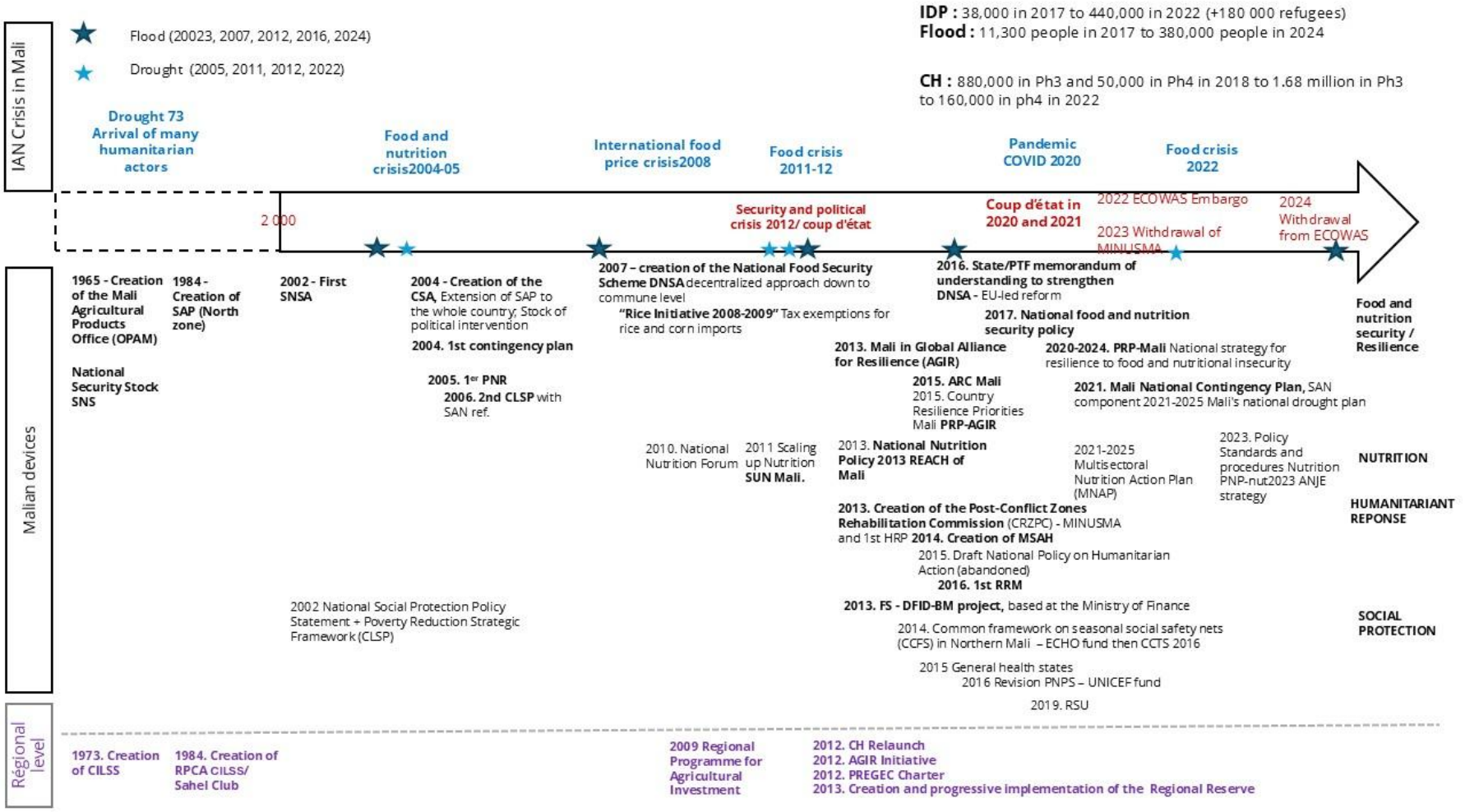


FIGURE3 . CHRONOLOGY OF CRISIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN MALI BETWEEN 2000 AND 2024

TABLE3 . SUMMARY OF RESPONSE MECHANISMS IN NIGER

Period	Institutional level and organizational	Strategic and financial level	Operational and practice level
1998-2005	• SAP then CCA housed at the Primature • Important role of the Office des Produits Vivriers du Niger (cereal stocks)	• Strengthening the SAP/CCA partnership • State-donor framework agreement, Common Donor Fund	• Food assistance in kind: Low-cost sales, Targeted free distribution
2005-2012	• Creation of the DNPGCA permanent secretariat to act as an interlocutor for partners and strengthen the coherence of warning, mitigation and response actions.	• Operationalization of CA and FCD provisions, procedures manual • Consideration of crisis mitigation/prevention	• Gradual integration of nutritional needs and response (prevention and care) by stakeholders • Reinforcement of warning systems and diversification of monitoring indicators (pastoral balance sheet, prices, markets, etc.).
2012-2017	• DNPGCA housed in the Prime Minister's Office, under the supervision of the PM's Office, but with no SP/Cell hierarchical link • Support for reforms by the High Commission for the 3N Initiative (Presidency) • Creation of a social nets cell	• Almost fully funded by the CDF (operations) and via projects (operations) • At regional level DNPGCA considered a "reference" for alert and response • Inclusive response plans for sub-sectors (resilience, nutrition, livestock) and stakeholders	• Continued improvement of monitoring and warning systems (integration of HEA, nutrition, etc.), gradual introduction of periodic analysis exercises based on the Harmonized Framework. • Systematization of mitigation measures (*cash for work* with an environmental focus), integration of VPM for animal feed • Technical support at regional level (CILSS, AGIR, etc.)
2017-2023	• Attempt to strengthen the SP's prerogatives over the Cells (but without changing the institutional and legal structure)	• Public finance reform, EU budget support, increased "domestic" financing • Reducing project approaches and CDF contributions • Integration of multi-year social safety nets into the Support Plan (chronic vulnerability to food insecurity) • Development of the DNPGCA 2021-2025 strategy	• Beginning of local purchases from small producers (for part of the replenishment of the national storage system) • Strengthening coordination between CCA and other players • Search for cash/food synergies, hunger relief/social nets

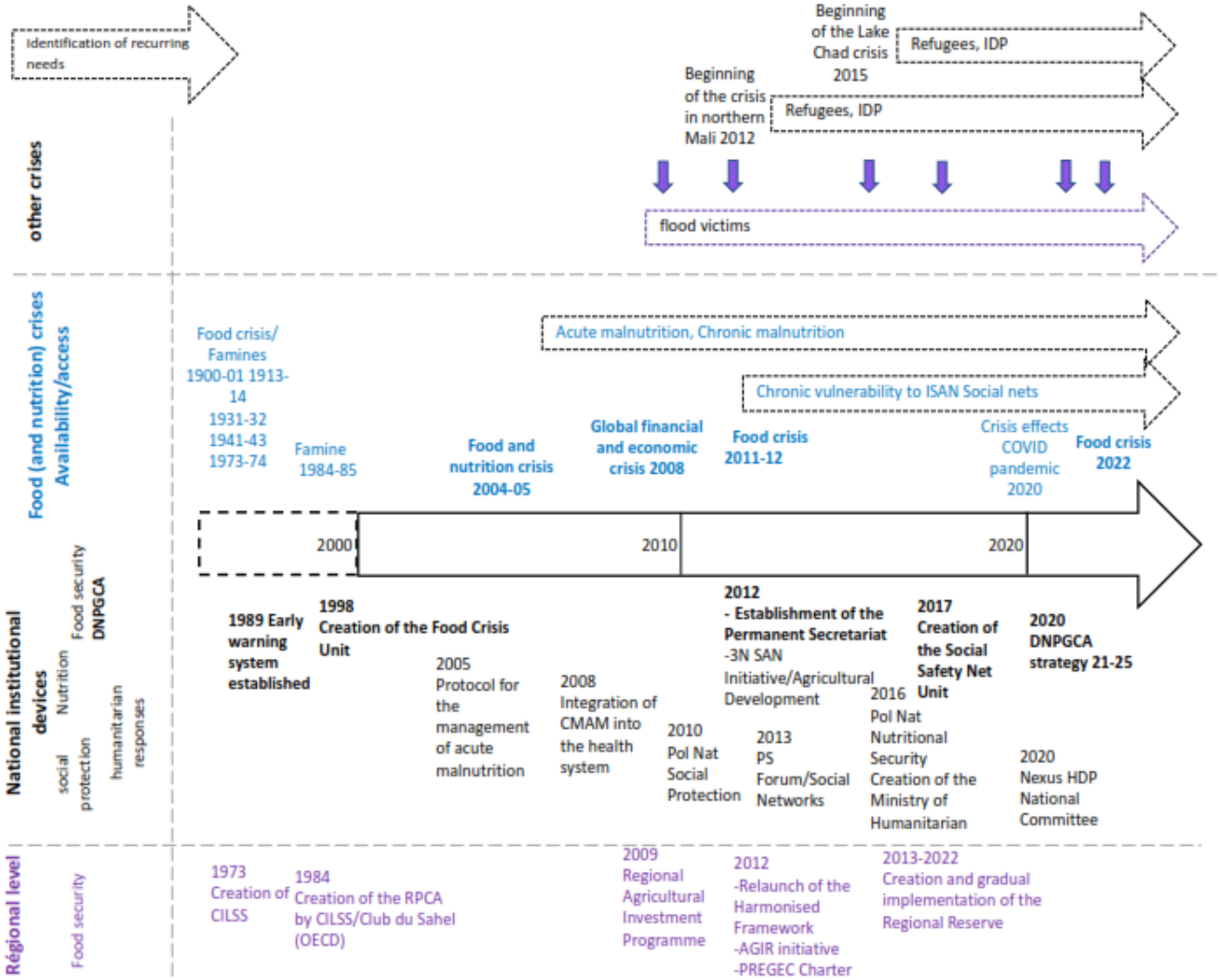


FIGURE4 CHRONOLOGY OF CRISIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT MECHANISM AND OTHER RELATED INSTITUTIONS IN NIGER

5.2 Analysis of the functionality of responses to each food and nutrition crisis

An analysis of food and nutrition **crisis response mechanisms** in the central Sahel **has shown their organizational richness**: the structures may often change name or scope, but demonstrate a certain timelessness in their primary combat objectives. This permanence is directly linked to the importance of structural forms of food and nutritional insecurity.

At the same time, the lability of the systems is obvious: **state actors are following advances in practical and operational treatment, re-appropriating discourses and paradigms to evolve strategic frameworks and modes of action**: chronic malnutrition tends to be better analysed and treated; the question of livelihoods is the subject of a consensus; the notion of resilience is gaining recognition despite its vague and multifaceted nature; social links are regaining interest with the emergence of crisis with no precise beginning or real end; the notion of sovereignty - which reactivates the terms of food independence of past decades - is coming back in force.

5. 2. 1 Diversity of players, roles and responses

The field of crisis prevention and management involves a wide range of players, at the crossroads between the development sector (agricultural and pastoral livelihoods, adaptation to climate change, resilience, etc.) and the humanitarian sector (emergency response, support for vulnerable people, etc.).

Beyond the specific features of each country's systems, their structure reveals organizational and functional similarities that reflect a regional trend in crisis response (Figure 5).

However, given the multi-dimensional nature of crisis and emerging factors over the last ten years or so, **the implementation of policies to prevent and manage food and nutrition crisis calls for the implementation of multi-sectoral systems**. This multi-dimensionality has resulted in sectoral systems **having to interact with each other, a source of redundancy and competition**, reinforcing the difficulties of coordination both at central level (stakeholder games for pre-eminence in decision-making and resource management) and at decentralized level (fragmentation, even operational confusion).

5. 2. 2 Financing bottleneck

National systems for preventing and managing food crisis - and, more broadly, for responding to structural and/or cyclical food insecurity - are costly. Particularly in a context of high demographic growth and low poverty reduction (especially in rural areas), the budgets of these mechanisms have increased considerably over the last 20 years, due to the growing number of people affected. Their financing has always been a crucial issue, in particular to ensure a certain predictability of financial resources for early interventions, at a volume adapted to needs. **The financial issue therefore remains a bottleneck for governments in Central Sahel countries**.

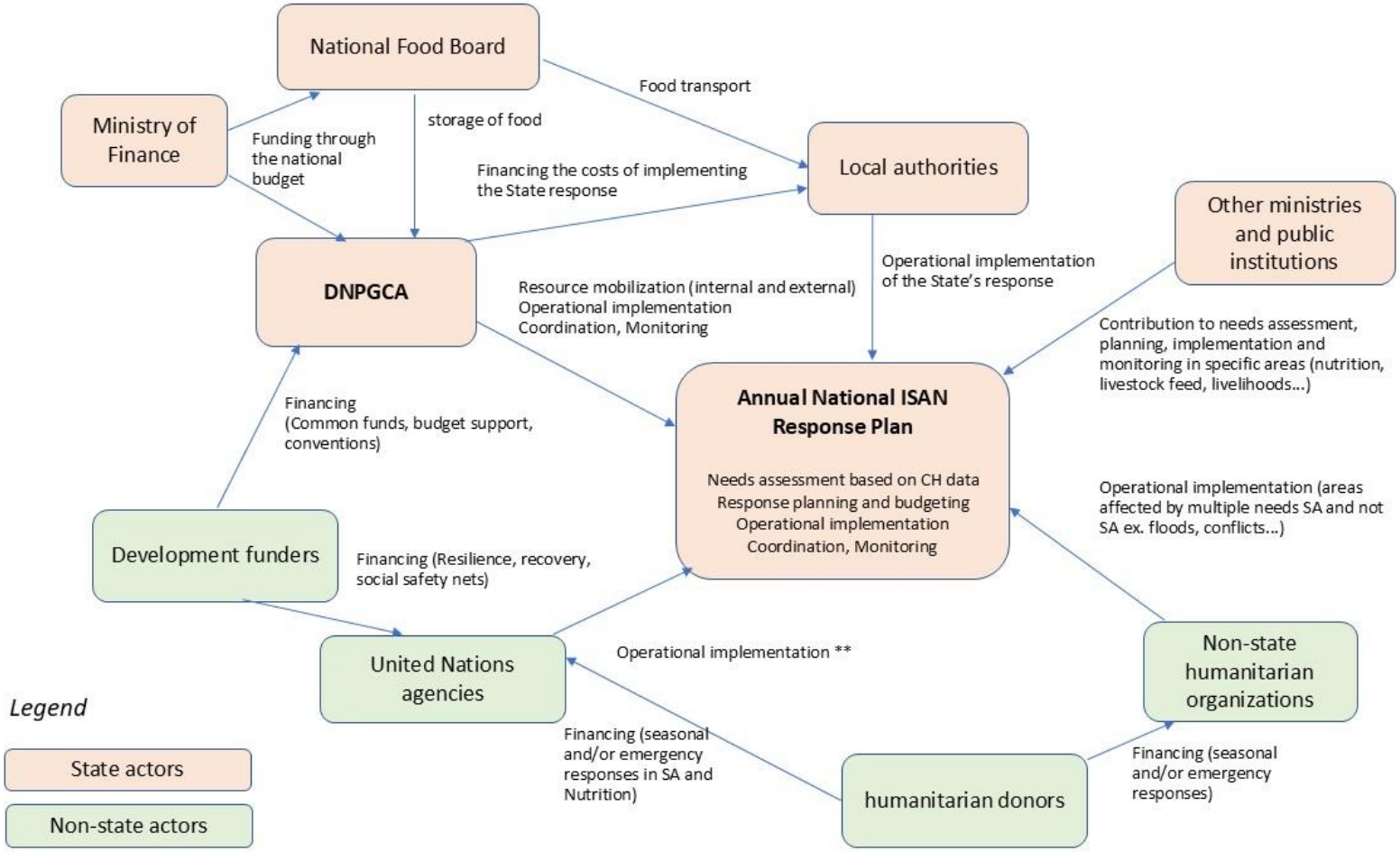


FIGURE5 . REPRESENTATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE GROUPS OF STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR PREVENTING AND MANAGING FOOD AND NUTRITION CRISIS IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE CENTRAL SAHEL.

DNPGCA: National food crisis prevention and management system

6. CONCLUSION: TOWARDS NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS FOR CRISIS RESPONSE

In conclusion, a look back at the limits of current approaches would seem to be in order to suggest some ways of governing future crisis preventively (and not just trying to manage their effects).

6.1. Putting resilience on the agenda and its limits

The 2010 decade saw a wealth of paradigmatic innovations in crisis management, notably with the emergence of the concept of *food security resilience*, which was rapidly re-appropriated from the middle of the decade onwards. It builds on two approaches to risk analysis and adverse response, while seeking to renew them.

Firstly, **vulnerability has been at the heart of risk analysis and treatment approaches for almost two decades**, since the first United Nations framework (UNDRO, 1979) on natural hazards, to which the World Bank added a more social dimension with its *Social risk management approach*.

The second is the individual assessment of vulnerability to insecurity, which erases certain relationships and exchange links. It involves pre-established categorization of the vulnerable to facilitate targeting

As armed insecurity in the central Sahel has progressed, the practical application of resilience has seemed to shift away from "hyper-rationalized risk management strategies" (Hinrichs, 2013[36]), and even security strategies (Breisinger and *al.*, 2014)[37] . Making it an achievable goal in a few years therefore seems illusory, especially in local contexts marked by state withdrawal, ethno-communal conflictualities and armed violence.

6.2. Actions to respond more effectively to crisis

The approaches implemented by all the players involved in the fight against food and nutrition insecurity (and **in crisis management) are almost all based on the same logic and routinized habits on** the part of the institutions in place. In particular, they are finalised with objectives to be achieved and practices to be respected, rich in programmatic and documentary intentions that are always difficult to put into practice because of the timeframes chosen, the weight of resistance (interests and path dependency), the lack of resources or political will; standardised, at the same time, in terms of risk measurement, monitoring and evaluation, giving rise to a continuous production of quantified data that is difficult to analyse across the board and put into perspective with certain qualifying processes.

They prioritize socio-technical priorities according to competition and established power relations, rather than building participative, inclusive and legitimate arenas for debate, leading to the emergence of choices based on compromise and consensus. At the same time, they struggle to build integrated policies that take full account of the interactions and short-, medium- and long-term effects of technocratic choices.

In general, they have been led - despite analyses - to over-invest in emergency actions due to the acceleration of threats, shocks and demands, and a crying lack of resources. What's

[36] Hinrichs C. C., 2013. 'Regionalizing food security? Imperatives, intersections and contestations in a post-9/11 world', *Journal of rural studies* 29(1): 7-18. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2012.09.003.

[37] Breisinger C., Ecker O., Maystadt J.-F., Trinh Tan J.-F., Al-Riffai Perrihan, Bouzar K., Sma A. and Abdelgadir M. 2014. "Building resilience to conflict through food-security policies and programs. Evidence from four case studies", Building resilience for food and nutrition security 2020, Conference Paper n° 3, may 2014, 39 p.

more, they will find it difficult to integrate and put into practice the emerging "sustainable food systems" approach, unless they start from a territorialization and localization of actions.

So, in order to build genuine crisis governance, the first step is undoubtedly to recognize that crisis are complex, and that answers cannot be stato-centric, disciplinary or given outright: they must be sought, tested and put to the test without bias or preconceived ideas.

Governance implies **gradually decentralizing systems (and responses to food crisis) and taking them out of their humanitarian framework**: **they should be thought of more as political objects, built around coalitions/competitions of interests**. **It relies on the search for negotiated compromises, starting from an open analytical framework, revealing avenues and scenarios, mobilizing a wide panel of stakeholders, using a participatory approach with no hierarchy of knowledge**.

This governance of crisis - adaptive (to the issues) and adapted (to societies) - is based on a few fundamental principles (Termeer and *al*., 2015[38]) - reflexivity, adaptability, responsiveness, inclusivity/connectivity, agency (Clapp and *al.*, 2022)[39] - that enable us to understand and act in unstable, uncertain and complex environments, while striving to build the essential arrangements gradually.

[38] Termeer C. J. A. M., Dewulf A., Breeman G., and Stiller S. J., 2015. "Governance capabilities for dealing wisely with wicked problems," *Administration and society* 47(6): 680-710. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399712469195.

[39] Clapp J., Moseley W. G., Burlingame B., Termine P., 2022. "Viewpoint: The case for a six-dimensional food security framework," *Food Policy* 106, 102164, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2021.102164.

PASAS

PLATEFORME D'ANALYSE, DE SUIVI ET D'APPRENTISSAGE AU SAHEL

MINKA | AFD

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Ce rapport a été élaboré dans le cadre d'un financement du Fonds Paix et Résilience Minka.

Le Fonds Minka, mis en oeuvre par le groupe AFD, est la réponse opérationnelle de la France à l'enjeu de lutte contre la fragilisation des États et des sociétés. Lancé en 2017, Minka finance des projets dans des zones affectées par un conflit violent, avec un objectif : la consolidation de la paix. Il appuie ainsi quatre bassins de crise via quatre initiatives : l'Initiative Minka Sahel, l'Initiative Minka Lac Tchad, l'Initiative Minka RCA et l'Initiative Minka Moyen-Orient.

La Plateforme d'Analyse, de Suivi et d'Apprentissage au Sahel (PASAS) est financée par le Fonds Paix et Résilience Minka. Elle vise à éclairer les choix stratégiques et opérationnels des acteurs de développement locaux et internationaux, en lien avec les situations de crises et de fragilités au Sahel et dans le bassin du Lac Tchad. La PASAS se met en oeuvre à travers d'un accord-cadre avec le groupement IRD-ICE après appel d'offres international dont le rôle est double : (i) produire des connaissances en réponse à nos enjeux opérationnels de consolidation de la paix au Sahel et (ii) valoriser ces connaissances à travers deux outils principaux : une plateforme numérique, accessible à l'externe, qui accueillera toutes les productions et des conférences d'échange autour des résultats des études. La plateforme soutient ainsi la production et le partage de connaissances, en rassemblant des analyses robustes sur les contextes sahéliens et du pourtour du Lac Tchad.

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