



African Nations Cup stars join Oxfam to win the match against hunger

On the eve of the 2012 African Cup of Nations, more than 25 footballers including **Seydou Keita** from Mali, **Charles Kaboré** from Burkina Faso, **Demba Bâ** from Sénégal and **Lawali Idrissa** from Niger have spoken out in solidarity with millions of people facing hunger across their region. They are appealing to the international community to work together so that “We CAN win the match against hunger”.

Mali and Barcelona football star Seydou Keita added: *“If we act now we could save the lives of women and children who are always the first victims of food crises. If we act urgently, millions of children will be saved from malnutrition and will have the chance to grow healthily and to succeed at school.”*

National teams from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal, are all determined to lift the cup for their supporters back home. They have called on governments and the international community to show equal determination to help protect millions currently threatened by a looming food crisis across the Sahel region, including over one million children threatened with severe malnutrition.

Footballers from these national teams have been photographed and recorded videos with the international agency Oxfam and its network of partner organisations which will be aired throughout the tournament calling for an early response to the coming crisis.

The region has seen poor rains in 2011, causing a 25 per cent drop in harvests compared with 2010, and pushing up food prices – almost doubling in some of the hardest hit areas. In some countries such as Mauritania, Chad and Niger, people are already been on the move months earlier than expected, and pastoralists are looking for new pasture for their livestock.

The region last saw a crisis in 2010, which affected 10 million people. The appeals of the footballers come on the back of statements by political leaders and governments in the region – including those from Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Mali who have promised to develop national emergency plans and have asked for international assistance.

“While the situation in the Sahel is serious, the worst is not yet inevitable if we act swiftly. We know about this coming crisis months earlier than we have in the past, meaning we can act now to save more lives and protect the livelihoods of many more people. This is why we are delighted that footballers across West Africa have spoken out in solidarity with their fellow citizens to call for early action to win the match against hunger” said Oxfam spokesperson Eric Hazard.”

Media Contacts for more information

Charles Bambara - Dakar - cbambara@oxfam.org.uk - +221 77 639 4178 -

Irina Fuhrman – Ouagadougou ifuhrmann@intermonoxfam.org - +226 75420508 -

Anna Ridout – Oxford - aridout@oxfam.org.uk +44 (0)7766 443506

Magali Rubino – Paris - mrubino@oxfamfrance.org +33 630466604

The international confederation of Oxfam [<http://www.oxfam.org>] is a group of independent non-governmental organisations from Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Quebec, Spain, the UK and the US.

Mahmat Ibrahim Saleh – N'Djamena - medmgrtd@intermonoxfam.org + 235 6620 2845
Patrick Ezeala - Dakar - PEzeala@OxfamAmerica.org + 221 33 869 0290

Note to media

Photos link - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/letstacklehunger/>
All photos should be credited Oxfam

Dedicated website for the campaign in the Sahel Region (**active from Friday 20th January 2012**)
<http://www.letstacklehunger.org>
<http://www.taclonslafaim.org>

Players' photos and videos available:

LES AIGLES - MALI : Seydou Keita (Barcelona, Espagne), Mahamane Traore (Metz), Cédric Kanté (Panathinakos, Grèce), Drissa Diakite (Nice), Modibo Maiga (Sochaux),

LES ETALONS - BURKINA FASO : Charles Kaboré (OM)- Alain Traoré (AJ Auxerre)- Moumouni Dagano , Capitaine (Al-Khor Sports Club)- Jonathan Pitroipa (Stade Rennais FC)- Bertrand Traoré (Chelsea),

Le MENA - NIGER: *Lawali Idrissa, capitaine (AS FAN)- Kamilou Daouda (Sfax)- Boubacar Talatou (Orlando Pirates)*

LES LIONS DE LA TERANGA - SENEGAL : Mamadou Niang (capitaine) Turquie , Fenerbahçe - Demba Bâ (Grande Bretagne , New Castle)- Moussa Sow (France, Lille) - Amara Traoré (coach), Ablaye Sarr (coach adjoint)- Jacques Faty (Turquie, club Sivasspor)- Omar Daff (France, Stade Brestois) - Souleymane Diawara (France, OM) - Armand Traoré (Grande Bretagne, Queens Park Rangers Football Club)- Lamine Sané (France, Bordeaux)- Rémi Gomis (France, FC Valenciennes) - Souleymane Camara (France, Montpellier HSC) -

- While evaluations are still ongoing to identify those at most risk, early reports suggest six million people in Niger and 2.9 million people in Mali live in areas vulnerable to the coming crisis, while in Mauritania 700,000 people – over one-quarter of the population - are reported as at risk of severe food insecurity. In Burkina Faso, official estimates not yet released are likely to include over two million people at risk of being directly affected. In Chad, 13 out of 22 regions could be affected by food insecurity
- Cereal production is down 25% across the Sahel region as a whole, but over 50% down in Mauritania in Chad, 31% down in The Gambia, 27% down in Niger, 20% down in Mali, 16% down in Burkina Faso and 13% down in Senegal
- Food prices are 40% higher than the average for the last five years, but can be over 90% higher such as in some areas of northern Mali.