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The Impact of Coronavirus COVID-19 On Food Security in Africa and the Arab World

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in Africa and the Arab World**
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- 1. What do we know of the impact of Covid-19 on food security?**

- 2. What to do to address the negative impact?**

- 3. What FAO is doing?**

- 4. What could parliamentarians' do?**



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What we know?

Impact at Global Level

- **Global food supply chain is complex. Disruptions in one part cause implications along the whole chain.**
- **No shocks related to food availability so far. There is ample food supplies this year. Cereal markets are expected to remain balanced.**
- **Some supply shock due to logistics of movement of food.**
- **Limited impact on overall consumption.**
- **Concerns about: (a) access to food by the poor, (b) unhealthy dietary patterns / nutrition (c) disturbances in food trade.**





Impact in the Arab World

- Covid-19 came on top of other crises (e.g. conflicts). The region may lose about \$42 billion in 2020 due to Covid-19. It already lost \$11 billion due to decline of oil prices. About 8.3 million people are expected to be pushed into poverty (ESCWA)
- Lockdown caused shortage of migrant labour and reduced access to pasture.
- Cases of restriction of exports of certain products from the region but, on the other hand, cases of increased exports to Europe. Overall, no significant and lasting disruptions so far.
- Concerns about: (a) access to food by the poor especially in countries affected by conflicts if food assistance supply chains are cut or disrupted, and countries experiencing economic crises, (b) disturbance in trade especially the region is the largest food importer worldwide.



Impact in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Even before Covid-19, 239 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are food-insecure people (20% of the population).
- GDP growth is expected to decline from 2.8% in 2019 to 2.2% in 2020. Remittance flows is expected to fall by 23.1%. About 26 – 39 million people are expected to be pushed into poverty (World Bank - June 2020)
- Although not noticeable yet, agriculture and food production could be reduced through restrictions on labor availability, access to inputs and output markets,
- Most countries rely on food imports (up to 90% for cereals) that amounted to about USD 80 billion. Disruption in trade would have significant impact.
- Signals that some agricultural commodity exporters have suffered from a collapse in export demand and disruptions to supply chains.



Summary of Key Messages on Impact

- Covid-19 came on top of crises. It led to economic losses and increased poverty.
- There is enough food supply but there are some food supply shocks due to logistics
- Concerns in the two regions about:
 - access of the poor - especially in countries affected by crises, to adequate and nutritious food
 - Trade disruptions that may affect both exports from the two regions and their imports



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What to do?



Meet immediate needs of vulnerable populations

- **Emergency food assistance targeting the most needy**
- **Nutrition interventions,**
- **Safety nets programmes (e.g. social protection, school meals)**
- **Ensure uninterrupted access of the most vulnerable to humanitarian aid**



Ensure right policies (macroeconomics, trade, etc.)

- **Address inflation**
- **Adjust trade policies to ensure uninterrupted flow of international trade (e.g. Tariff cuts to ensure supply of food; address transportation bottlenecks; promote regional and interregional trade; etc.);**
- **Adjust tax and subsidies' policies (e.g. targeted subsidies rather than general ones);**
- **Use grains reserves strategically.**
- **Ensure that fiscal measures taken are not causing rise in food prices**



Protect and enhance agriculture and local value chains

- **Enhance agri-food value chains through more efficient logistics**
- **Adjust business models to sustain and strengthen agri-food enterprises**
- **Improve access of value chain actors' to inputs, services, finance, markets and e-commerce;**
- **Harness innovation and digital solutions for value chains;**
- **Reduce food losses.**



Build resilience to multiple shocks (Covid-19 and others)

- Address multiple risks in a holistic manner (Disaster Risk Reduction)
- Ensure Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
- Combat Desert Locust



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How FAO is responding?



Now

- **Actively contributing to UN-wide efforts on Covid-19 at all levels;**
- **Updating Members States on impact and advising on appropriate response measures;**
- **Conducting analyses and providing evidence-based advice & policy support to govts.;**
- **Continued implementing ongoing projects while discussing with donors possible amendments of these projects to contribute to addressing the impact of Covid-19;**
- **Supporting countries in responding to Covid-19 (awareness raising; PPEs; provision of production inputs; cash-transfers; etc.);**
- **Mobilizing resources to scale-up support to countries.**



Moving forward - Umbrella Programme

- 1. Data, Information and Analysis**
- 2. Trade – Intra-Regional Trade and Food Safety Standards**
- 3. Poverty Reduction, Economic Inclusion and Social Protection**
- 4. Preventing Pandemics of Animal Origin Through an Extended One Health Approach**
- 5. Equipping Smallholders for Post-COVID Recovery and Building Resilience**
- 6. Food Systems Transformation**



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What Parliamentarians could do? recommendations to ASSECAA's Network



- **Raise awareness on the impact and future risks of Covid-19 on food security.**
- **Ensure right policies, especially those aiming at:**
 - **Investing in agriculture and supporting smallholders**
 - **Expanding safety nets programmes**
 - **Ensuring conducive trade**
- **Engage a thorough revision of national food systems to make them more sustainable, inclusive and resilient. This contribute to wider reforms beyond Covid-19 only.**



- **Advocate for close monitoring of the medium and long-term impact of Covid-19**
- **Ensure uninterrupted humanitarian aid in countries in emergencies.**
- **Call for ceasefire in countries affected by armed conflicts during pandemic.**
- **The Parliamentary Network for Food Security in Africa and the Arab World to join other parliamentary alliances and networks in the efforts to address Covid-19**



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THANK YOU
