

Session title:	Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition in Africa
Session number:	16
Type of session:	Webinar
Day:	Monday, 6 September 2021
Time:	13:15-14:15 EAT
No. of participants:	32
Session Organizers:	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Moderator:	Dr. Robert Gouantoueu Guei, FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for West Africa
Rapporteur:	Abeshaw Gebru, Emergency and Rehabilitation Officer, FAO Regional Office for Africa
Relevant outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment and policy priorities to support advocacy and country programming for policy makers and other decision makers to guide the design and implementation of COVID-19 response and recovery policies, programme and investments in the Africa region. Share experiences, identifying best practices, innovations and lessons learnt going forward focusing on emerging challenges and response, recovery and building resilience from the impacts of COVID-19 in Africa.
Objectives:	The side event is to discuss the findings and recommendations of various assessments of the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition in Africa and to support advocacy and country programming by policy makers and other decision makers who are designing and implementing COVID-19 response and recovery policies, programmes and investments in Africa. The session intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the pandemic in Africa based on an analytical review of available evidence. The keynote presentation will underline the macroeconomic impact as well as the impact on agricultural production, livestock, fisheries, markets, trade, food security and nutrition. In addition, priority countries for response and recovery programmes/investments are identified based on a

composite index analysis. A panel will deliberate on the implication of the findings and recommendations as well as highlight promising policy and investment interventions that can stimulate an inclusive recovery to help build back better resilient agri-food systems.

Speakers:

(*Name, Title, Organization)

1. Dr. Jean Senahoun, FAO Senior Economist for Africa
2. Ms. Sara Mbugo-Bhana, Director of the East and Southern Africa Division (IFAD)
3. Ms. Rita Missal, Recovery Advisor (UNDP)
4. Mr Antoine-Marie Moustache, Principal Secretary for Agriculture of Seychelles
5. Dr Theresa Teneh Dick, Deputy Agriculture Minister II of Sierra Leone
6. Ms. Elizabeth Nshimbadala, President of PAFO

Main highlights:

(*For Insights and newsletter. To be based on the theme of the day. Fill in in bullet form)

- “The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to have significantly reduced the 2020 GDP growth rate in the region, the deepest economic contraction on record, and increased extreme poverty and food insecurity.” Dr. Jean Senahoun, FAO Senior Economist for Africa
- “More than half of food consumed in Africa comes from small-scale producers sourced through SMEs. SMEs play a critical role in the food system, backbone of the value chain involved in sourcing, packaging and transport of food to consumers” Ms. Sara Mbugo-Bhana, Director of the East and Southern Africa Division (IFAD).
- “The priorities to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 include supporting agricultural productivity growth in vulnerable countries, strengthening domestic markets, promoting inter-regional trade in agri-food product, inclusive policies to address the situation of disproportionately affected groups.” Dr. Jean Senahoun, FAO Senior Economist for Africa

KEY CHALLENGES

- High vulnerability of Africa with already 264.2 million undernourished people in 2020, 97.9 million people in 38 countries in Africa, faced acute food insecurity or at risk of hunger and required urgent food assistance, the continent with the highest number of LDCs (Least Developed Countries) and high poverty as well as an unfolding desert locust crisis in the Horn of Africa;
- The socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 such as reduction of GDP ,meaning lower investment in the agriculture sector, are happening in the context of a continent already affected by multiple shocks, and not surprisingly leading to a

sectoral approach for the recovery from the impact of COVID-19 including expanding infrastructure, social safety net, education and agriculture production.

- The Principal Secretary for Agriculture of Seychelles provided a snapshot of the peculiar challenges of Seychelles, a SIDS country, due to the impact of COVID-19, which resulted in a drop in production, servicing and sale of agricultural produce, notably fishery, crop and livestock. The proposed solution were subsidies to boost local production, safeguard agriculture sector to allow access and movement, government import of agriculture inputs and guarantee purchase of fish catch for semi-commercial fishermen.

-Sierra Leone: The Deputy Minister of Agriculture highlighted the key challenges of agriculture due to the implementation of the measures and polices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In response to these multiple challenges and compound effects of Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of Sierra Leone provide assistance for the local production of food items through the distribution of inputs, enhanced access to tractors and other machineries and strengthen extension support.

-PAFO: PAFO President highlighted the organization support to farmers in terms of inputs, post-handling and transporting to mitigate the adverse impacts of COVID-19 while advocating for governments to ease movement and leave open channel for agriculture production and more inclusive policies.

Tweetable quotes with timestamp:

(*For podcast and to go to AGRF Communication for social media. Minimum 3 per session)

- None

How has the session contributed to the AGRF outcomes?

*(For end of AGRF communique/ Press release. List 3 - 5 top outcomes)

- The session has contributed to a shared understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition in Africa and share experiences, identifying best practices, innovations ,and lessons learnt going forward ,focusing on emerging challenges and response, recovery ,and building back better resilient agri-food systems.

COMMITMENTS

- FAO will work with other key partners to advocate and for informed decision making for policy makers to guide countries' response and recovery programme and investments to address COVID-19 impacts in Agriculture, Food Security ,and Nutrition in Africa.