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# COVID-19: Access to Food Guide for Africa

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# “We risk a looming food crisis unless measures are taken fast” – UN Food and Agriculture Organisation

As countries across the world respond to the Covid-19 health crisis, food insecurity can also arise, caused by **disruptions in global and local logistics**, by **shortages of farm workers**, by the **reduction in food purchasing power**, or by the response of **some countries hoarding food**. This is especially worrying for countries with **existing food-security challenges**.

## Production worldwide is disrupted as farms struggle to find workers...

 **India:** Severe shortage of labour caused by lockdown disrupts harvesting of winter crops.

 **Malaysia:** Closure of palm oil plantations in three districts after workers tested positive.

 **Italy:** 200,000 seasonal workers are usually needed for April – May.

...while Africa imports half of its food consumption.

## Global supply is also affected by countries' response

In 2007-2008, 45% of the increase in rice prices and 30% in wheat prices were due to one-third of countries adopting trade restrictions.

### Countries that have restricted exports of key staple foods like rice or wheat:

Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Serbia

## Past crises reveal that logistics are the key bottleneck

 **Sierra Leone:** Ebola disrupted markets' supply chains from the reduced movement of goods.

   **Food business leaders** have issued a call to the G20 to ensure smooth global trade or risk food shortages.

## Food prices are increasing, further eroding livelihoods already impacted by the crisis.

 **Nigeria:** Rice prices increased by 30% in the last four days of March.

 **Ghana:** Food prices have soared before markets were closed for fumigation. Prices of some food in supermarkets increased by 100% before lockdown.

 **China:** The food price index rose by 22% in February.





# Countries that have successful food responses have laid out their policies in a clear plan

## Estimating food needs in the next 6-12 months...

### 1 Assessing current food needs

- Monthly demand for key food items (including water)
- Specifics for the most vulnerable population
- Geographic disaggregation

### 2 Assessing existing supply chains

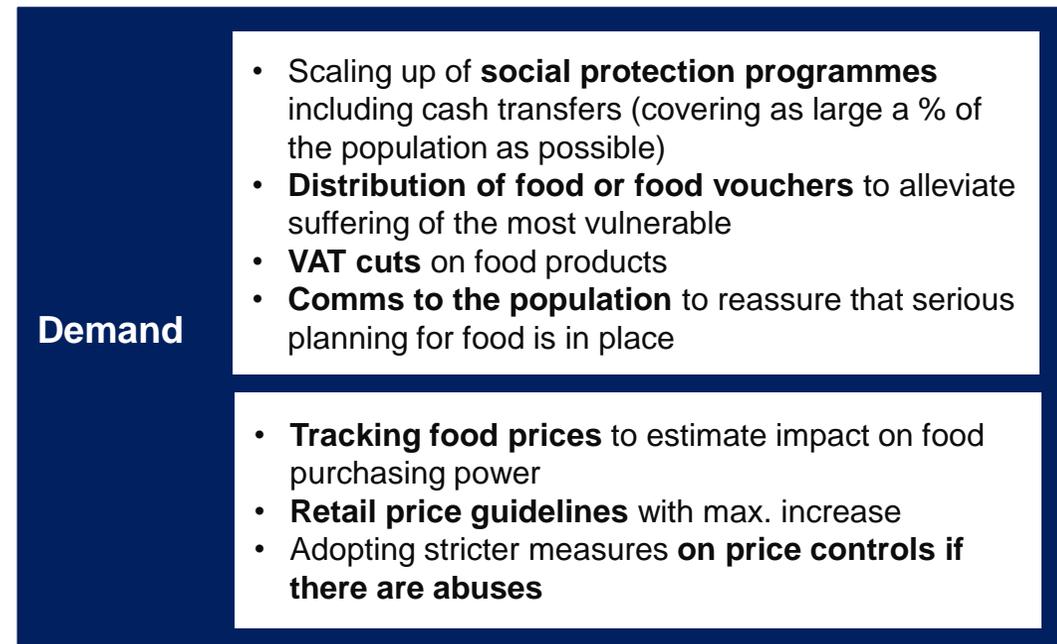
- Current players: producers, importers, retailers, transporters
- Current food reserves

### 3 Evaluating the disruption on the above from the crisis<sup>1</sup>

- Global supply, global logistics
- Local production, local logistics
- Impact on the demand side

→ A plan with numbers has more chances to get funding and allows progress to be tracked

## ... and designing policies for food security both on the supply and demand sides



1. See example disruptions in previous slide



# Policy options for securing food supplies need to look at logistics and the local context (i)

## Imports



- **Liaising with importers** to understand and solve bottlenecks
- **Easier customs procedures** for clearance of key food items
- **Tariffs waivers** on food items to speed up clearance and reduce food prices



- **Monitoring export restrictions** from key source countries
- Involvement in **regional and global discussions on food security** to influence countries' response



- Monitoring the **status of shipping companies and air cargo** to the country
- **Regional requests** for bulk orders to facilitate logistics
- Negotiating **special charter flights** or ships

→ Track dates of import shipments and cargo

## Local logistics



- **Liaising with transport companies, retailers, traders, and storage companies** to monitor food movements
- Support of the private sector's **logistics network**



- Designating transport and logistics as **essential industries during lockdowns**
- Facilitating movement of food with passes and with the army to secure it (setting up "green channels")
- Exploring how **technology** can help
- Securing "last mile" distribution



- Identifying **alternative storage sources**, for example repurposing cash-crop industries towards food

→ Track storage and truck movements across the country



# Policy options for securing food supplies need to look at logistics and the local context (ii)

## Local food production



- Look at **input-supplies** distribution and support for the planting season
- Facilitate the **movement of farm labour**
- **Repurpose** export farmers for food
- Provide soft loans, guarantees, mobile money payments; extend payment due dates<sup>1</sup>



- Support **additional processing** in line with projected harvest
- Reduction of **post-harvest losses**
- Government could **forward purchase** (linking to feeding the most vulnerable)



- **Issue guidelines for safe farming:** designate farmers as “essential” hero workers
- Plan ahead: agriculture as the backbone of the **economic recovery**

→ Track production, processing and storage of key commodities

## Markets



- Set up and liaise with networks of **market leaders**
- **Train leaders and traders** on the new measures and to ensure hygiene
- Provide **credit support** to traders and retailers<sup>1</sup>



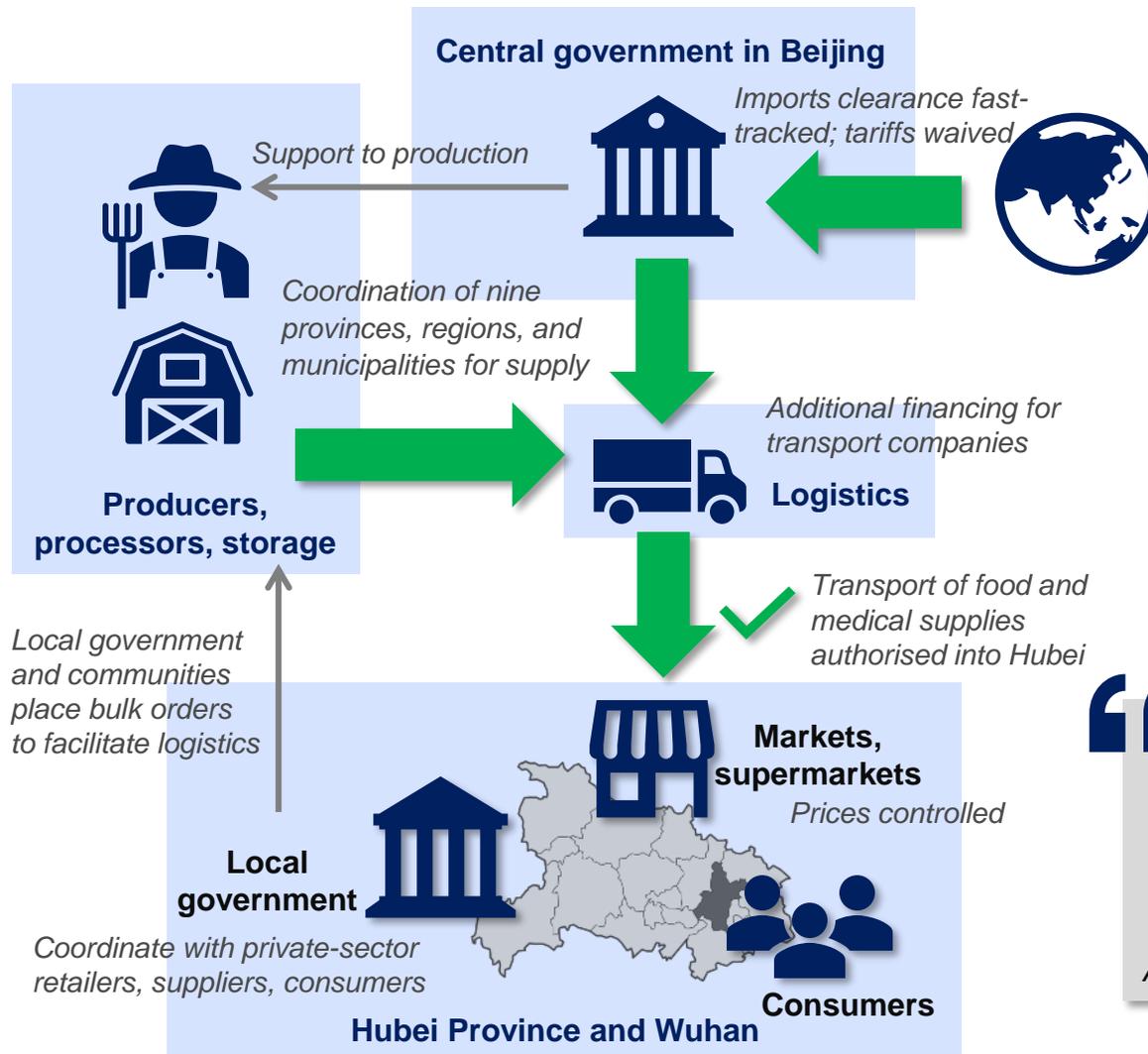
- Protect traders and consumers by **enforcing social-distancing measures** in markets (as essential industries)
- **Expand market infrastructure**, for example using stadiums
- **Secure areas** with the army and police



- Set up **hand-washing stations** and temperature checks around markets
- When possible, **fumigate markets** during the night
- Provide **protective masks and gloves** for traders

→ Track closure of markets, availability of produce (volume) and food prices

# Case study: Green channels in China ensured access to food

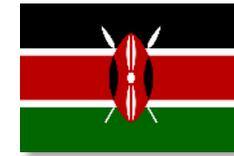


**China's green channels** were a coordinated effort to bring food supplies to the Hubei province and other areas severely affected by the virus. **Local authorities** coordinated with wholesale market owners and e-commerce platforms to ensure effective logistics between provinces, including **waiving toll fees**. **Bulk orders** were made through the local government and "organised communities" as **central distribution points**, while delivery services stayed open. Price controls for basic goods were also essential during this period. Additional steps included reducing land-use fees and directing state-owned banks to **give loans on easy terms**.

“ We got the order from our city government at 11 p.m. on Monday and we immediately contacted our farmers, asking them to pick cucumbers overnight and bring their harvest to us before 6 a.m. We sent 70 tons in the end [instead of the 60 requested]. We are waiting for the next order.

An official from a producing village ”

# Case study: The government and the private sector are working together in Kenya



As of 6 April, Kenya has imposed a 21-day “cessation of movement” in Nairobi and three coastal counties. President Kenyatta for now has ruled out a national lockdown for fear of the impact on feeding the population.

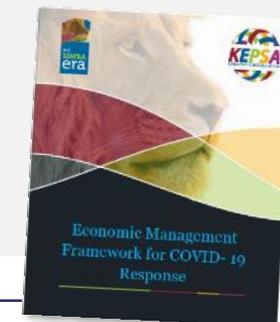


## Measures that relate to food and farming from the Presidential Address, 6 April

- ➔ The **movement of food supplies** and other cargo to continue as normal during the declared containment period
- ➔ Farmers and food transporters declared as **providers of critical or essential services**
- ➔ All county governments have **waived local fees for trade** in food items
- ➔ A county government has offered a stadium as an **open-air market** in line with the social-distancing guidelines
- ➔ Traders and farmers in fresh produce encouraged to continue with their agricultural activities within the boundaries of the protocols set out by the Ministry of Health
- ➔ National budget to be used to **provide water and food** to the most vulnerable
- ➔ **Free water** for all informal settlements

## The private sector organised itself around a Covid-19 Action Platform

- KEPSA’s platform of private-sector leaders in key sectors liaised with the cabinet to present recommendations on the economic response
- KEPSA is working with GoK on, among other things, supporting manufacturing businesses to fill gaps in the global supply chain
- Private-sector players have already:
  - Set up a call centre to inform businesses
  - Improved hygiene measures in factories
  - Provided additional infrastructure to GoK
  - Supported e-learning for closed schools
  - Increased broadband infrastructure and speed
  - Made cashless transactions and credit cheaper
  - Reduced prices of essential products
  - Supported GoK with their logistic platforms





# Case study: In Rwanda and Ghana, lockdown measures include exemptions for the food supply chain



On 21 March, the **government of Rwanda** imposed one of the strictest lockdowns in Africa, shutting movements until at least 19 April.



**Movement of food**

- Borders are still open for goods and cargo
- Transport of food authorised within the country
- Movement authorised for personnel linked to food chains
- Only markets and shops that sell food and other essentials are allowed to open



**Support to most vulnerable**

- Food delivery planned to the 20,000 most vulnerable households in the country
- Toll free number available for food delivery, under eligibility conditions



**Prices and markets**

- Prices fixed for 17 food items
- Fines for companies that increase those prices (108 fines as of 29 March)
- Daily survey of markets throughout the country



On 30 March, the **government of Ghana** imposed a lockdown on Accra and two other cities identified as hotspots.

- Shops and traders can continue operating
- Transporters of food items can continue and will be secured by the police and army
- Farmers, fishermen, inputs suppliers and food processors should continue their operation

- Food packages for 400,000 people
- Government will pay water bills for three months
- Financial package for rice, soya and feed processors

- Traders encouraged not to raise prices
- GoG reportedly looking into alternate days for access to markets to lower traffic there



## Case study: Other examples from Africa and the world

**China:** 700 goods from the US, including farm products, are temporarily exempt from tariffs that were installed during the trade war.



**Guinea Bissau:** Measures against price speculation in transport, health supplies and consumption goods.



**Kenya** is importing 2 million bags of maize to avoid food shortages. Government is willing to control prices.



**Madagascar** is providing \$2.6 million worth of food aid to those forced into unemployment by restrictions (e.g. taxi drivers), so 240,000 households.



**Guinea** has frozen prices on key food items and will provide cash transfers to 1.6 million people. Water and electricity are paid for by government.



**Nigeria:** Loans repayment for FarmerMoni, MarketMoni, TraderMoni and from the Federal government beneficiaries are under moratorium for three months.



**Sierra Leone:** Community social mobilisers were key to keep the population informed during the Ebola crisis.

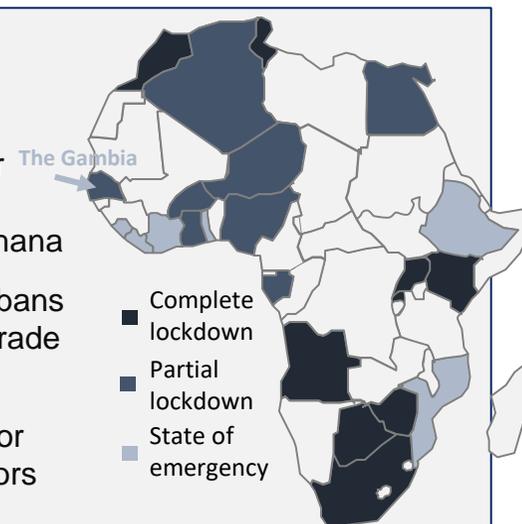


**Senegal:** 0.5% of GDP to be allocated to urgent food aid



### Local production

- Exceptions for farmers and fishermen in countries under lockdown: Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Mauritius, Ghana
- Most countries under travel bans are allowing exceptions for trade of food and essential goods
- **Ghana:** Financial package for rice, soya and feed processors
- **Rwanda:** Additional hygiene instructions to farmers
- **Liberia:** USD\$700K cash land collateral for three rice-processing companies
- **South Africa:** Tax measures for employees in agric. sector
- **Italy:** “Cura Italia”: 100 million euro incentives for agriculture, covering interests for loans and mortgages. Wage compensation transferred to agric. workers
- **China:** Guarantee to winter and spring production, agricultural water quota for wheat irrigation to curb wastage





# Resources

**Traditional partners:** Once you have prepared your plan, contact the country representative for support from FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNDP, World Bank, AGRA, ADB, IDB, bilaterals, etc. Most of them have already started to support in a bespoke way (IFAD, AGRA) and have adapted their country programming at the government's request.



**The WFP** are logistics experts and key stakeholders for the food response. They have already set up a humanitarian corridor in Southern Africa and have stored three months of food for the most vulnerable countries.

- More information [here](#)

**WFP HungerMap** can layer COVID data and food security data: [here](#)



**Africa's agritech platforms** are stepping up to support farmers and consumers including through buying and selling platforms like [Mkulima Young](#) or [Twiga](#) and e-commerce like [Jumia](#) or [Famobile](#). [Investiv](#) in Côte d'Ivoire is repurposing drones used for spraying agrichemicals to disinfect urban areas. [Farmcrowdy](#) allows to directly support farmers. [Atlas AI](#) supports the management of farms from afar.



**COLEACP** has daily updates on how the horticulture sector is affected by the Covid-19 crisis [here](#)



**Logistics Cluster** has daily updates on the state of global logistic links and disruptions related to covid-19 [here](#)



**GRO Intelligence** has a Covid-19 monitoring kit that tracks supplies of key food, prices, trade, inventory and China's post-crisis situation [here](#)



**Devex** tracks the funding opportunities for the Covid-19 response (although doesn't single out food) [here](#)



**FAO** offers governments policy and data advice on responding to the Covid-19 crisis and is re-orientating its country programmes.

- More information [here](#)
- FAO Covid-19 plan [here](#)
- FAO's advice for countries [here](#)
- FAO repository of measures [here](#)



**The IsDB** secured a \$300 million rapid response that includes the sustenance of essential value chains.

- More information [here](#)
- \$500 m call for innovations [here](#)



**Private initiatives**, working mainly with NGOs: [Unilever](#), [Nestle](#), [Cargill](#), [Olam](#), [Kraft Heinz](#), [AB In BeV](#), [PepsiCo](#), [CocaCola](#)  
It's worth liaising with your local business associations to see what the private-sector support to the response can be (see Kenya example on previous page).



# Operational guidelines for companies in the agriculture supply chain

- Assess the **risk** to your different workers
- Set up a central response team that liaises with staff and prepares **clear, communicated guidelines**
- Install **temperature checkpoints** and washing stations and increase ventilation rates
- Enforce **regular hand washing** and display signs on the new measures
- **Isolate infected staff** (consider providing company housing) and trace who they have been in contact with
- Consider **different shifts** to reduce the number of people working at the same time
- **Train workers** on the new procedures and communicate on every new decision

**WHO**  
guidelines for  
businesses  
here



Companies should also look into their **CSR response**: how will they support employees and their communities



## Farms and agro-processing plants

**The goal is to set up a safe environment for staff while maintaining or increasing production.**

- Enforce 2 metre (6ft) **social distancing** and consider new plant/production chain layout
- Step up the provision of **protective equipment**, which might depend on the identified risk for the worker
- **Increase hygienic procedure** in the plant; if possible fumigate every night

## Agrodealers and traders

**The goal is to set up a safe environment for staff and consumers while ensuring uninterrupted distribution.**

- **Restrict the number of customers** able to enter the shop (ex. in AGRA agrodealers in Kenya: 10 at a time)
- Set up **queue lines** with 2m (6ft) distancing
- Consider **new store layout** to implement distancing
- Ensure staff have at least **protective masks and gloves**
- **Liaise with your suppliers** to understand their measures