

# COVID-19 Situation Report

May 15, 2020 Pilot Edition

---

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread across the African continent. Beyond the health crisis implications, it has economic ramifications and is already impacting food security across the continent. As with all shocks, the poor are the most vulnerable and it is disrupting the livelihoods of small and medium businesses and the many low-income households across the continent. In this challenging context, AGRA continues to partner with smallholder farmers and agribusinesses to strengthen the resilience of food systems while providing critical guidance to African governments for decision making.

This weekly situation report is designed to be a source of information for governments and donors, bringing together timely information from AGRA's teams on-the-ground who are close to smallholder farmers and SMEs with insights into government mobilization and financial support given to countries by donor institutions. We welcome your feedback at [sitreps@agra.org](mailto:sitreps@agra.org)

This report is structured to first provide highlights of the situation on-the-ground followed by more in-depth information into the situation in specific regions across sub-Saharan Africa as well as AGRA's response. Highlights from AGRA's Monthly Food Monitor are also included. Annexes provide COVID-19 / agriculture information and response at a glance by country, and a round-up of financial resources committed to date, based on data available to AGRA.

## Situation as of May 14, 2020

**Food insecurity grows.** Food insecurity has continued to rise across Africa. In AGRA's program focus countries<sup>1</sup>, based on publicly available information and data supplied from government ministries, we see this increasing from around 25 million people in May to 28 million people by September. In Ethiopia for example, the government has projected that food production in the upcoming season could be lower by 8% due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Government-mandated safety measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, such as increased health at security checks at borders, and restriction of movement, continue to impact farmers' ability to harvest and sell their crops outside of their local areas. In East Africa, farmers are still feeling the impact from locust invasions, while eradication efforts continue. Ongoing flood conditions in Kenya and Uganda are shortening the planting season. However, the high rainfalls have also created an opportunity for "dry season" crops using the abundant residual moisture. In Southern Africa, recurring climate shocks are significantly contributing to reduced food production and driving staple food prices up.

The UN has increased its original appeal for COVID-19 response funds from \$2 billion in mid-March to \$6.7 billion in mid-May, as humanitarian experts have noted acceleration of the food insecurity crisis. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme warned in April "I was already saying that 2020 would be the worst year since the second world war" Already, the COVID-19 pandemic, has "taken us to uncharted territory", he said. "Now ... We are looking at widespread famines of biblical proportions."

---

<sup>1</sup> Ghana, Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mali, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania



**Restrictions due to safety concerns around COVID-19 pose challenges for farmers selling their harvests.** Government mandated restrictions around the movement of people and the need for social distancing continues to pose challenges for farmers, especially in Southern Africa, where countries are in the harvest season and workers must gather for harvesting, cleaning and packing crops for transport. To address these challenges, some farmers and traders are using social media and farm-based sales to bridge production and market gaps during the pandemic. Kenya is leading the way in these efforts. Post-harvest trainings, which help farmers meeting international quality standards, are being conducted via digital platforms through village based organizations. In Rwanda, AGRA has partnered with others to expand mechanization so as to reduce manual labor requirements and thus enable social distancing.

**Governments have classified agriculture as essential.** Over the last few weeks, while governments have moved ahead with measures such as social distancing, handwashing and border closures, they have also classified agriculture inputs and activities as essential across all AGRA focus countries. However, health and security checks at border posts continue to cause long delays to the delivery of inputs and movement of food within and between countries. Furthermore, the different approaches followed by national governments are starting to create friction leading to border closures that curtail trade. At the same time those which applied strict lock-downs are also starting to ease those measures.

**Many governments are providing relief to farmers and some have accelerated subsidy programs, supported by multilateral organizations (see Annex for current commitments to spending).** Governments in all AGRA focus countries are supporting farmers and vulnerable communities through various mechanisms including input subsidies, grain purchase and relief programs. In Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria, for example, governments have accelerated input subsidy programs to ensure farmers are able to obtain inputs in a timely manner. In Malawi, where farmers are currently harvesting their crops, the government has instituted a cereal purchase program. Financial resources from multilateral donors to mitigate the impact of the pandemic have also increased in the last month and now amount to approximately \$4.2BN according to publicly available data available to AGRA. Not counted in this total is \$10BN in resources identified by the African Development Bank Group that can be made available for member countries impacted by COVID-19. More information on this facility here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8l83peh>.

**As East and West Africa enter the planting season, access to inputs is critical.**

In West Africa, conditions have been favorable for another good harvest for the region that will contribute to sustain low prices and enhance availability and access to food. In East Africa, heavy rains and the desert locust upsurge in the first half of 2020 could lead to significant crop losses. In Ethiopia the government estimates show that the over 350,000 mt of grain has been lost by desert locust invasion and it has left over a million people food insecure. The COVID-19 pandemic has threatened to disrupt agricultural food systems and might impact on expected production levels. However, in Tanzania, the Minister in his budget speech, announced that total food harvest from the two main seasons ending in July 2020, will enable 118% food self-sufficiency. (The graphic below illustrates the main crop seasons for countries in sub-Saharan Africa).



## Main Crop Seasons 2020

Country	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>PIATA Focus countries</b>												
Uganda												
Tanzania												
Rwanda												
Nigeria												
Ghana												
Ethiopia												
Mozambique												
Mali												
Kenya												
Malawi												
Burkina Faso												
South Sudan												
<b>Other African countries</b>												
DRC												
Angola												
Madagascar												
Chad												
Eritrea												
Cameroon												
Sierra Leone												
Niger												
Senegal												
Cote D'Ivoire												
Benin												
Guinea												
Togo												

Government mitigation efforts supported by AGRA interventions have been robust. Inputs such as seeds and fertilizers are getting to farmers during the planting season, largely through agro-dealers, farmer organizations and other input distribution channels. It is not yet clear however the extent to which restrictions on movement have impacted this. A number of initiatives have been kicked off to introduce stress tolerant crop varieties which will help mitigate the impact of COVID-19, as well as climate related shocks.

### AGRA's response to COVID-19

While AGRA remains focused on 2020 programmatic priorities, it is supporting governments and other stakeholders to mitigate the impact of the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. AGRA's COVID-19 related engagements include:

- **Linking farmers with buyers and processors.** In countries such as Tanzania and Mozambique where regional markets for crops are not functioning efficiently due to knock-on effects from COVID-19 mitigation efforts, specifically in Tanzania and Mozambique AGRA teams are linking farmers with agro-dealers, off takers and processors.
- **Unlocking financing for agri-focused SMEs.** AGRA is working with UNECA to unlock how Africa Exim Bank can support agri-focused SMEs so they can access money to be able to continue doing business.
- **Coordinating support to governments.** Across all AGRA focus countries, we are participating and supporting co-ordination efforts and design of COVID-19 response plans.
  - AGRA has convened a meeting of 11 permanent secretaries from agriculture ministries in focus countries to understand the changes caused by COVID-19, what they have done to respond, what their needs are and what they have learned.
  - In Kenya, AGRA is providing support to government data and analytics through its COVID-19 war room
- **Enabling grantees and private sector partners** to respond to COVID-19 in the modification of 65% of AGRA's grants
- **Raised funding.** AGRA's team in Ghana have raised \$1.5 million in COVID-19 response funding, and our team in Rwanda has secured \$246k for mechanization to mitigate shortage of labor.
- **Scaling-up digitally remains a key focus area.** This includes planning to utilize ICT for strengthening information-sharing platforms on food reserves and markets, and enabling the work of Village-based Advisors (VBAs) for last-mile delivery of inputs, and training to facilitate the effective delivery of extension services to small-holder farmers.

- **Basic extension services using digital platforms.** AGRA is working together with local partners to utilize digital platforms to provide key extension messages on Good Agronomic Practices, and post-harvest crop management to small-holder farmers through Village-based Advisors and local businesses
- **Developed COVID-19 emergency response plans across six countries, and efforts are continuing for the other countries.** These include guidelines for fertilizer, seed, extension, input distribution, market & post-harvest management, inclusive finance and resilience for partners to use in offering services to farmers to minimize risks exposing them to the disease.

### AGRA's Monthly Food Trade Monitor

AGRA's Food Trade Monitor which is issued monthly, covers AGRA focus countries in East, Southern and West Africa. The focus countries are: East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda), Southern Africa (Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia) and West Africa (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo). The Food Trade Monitor discusses changes/ forecast of rainfall, temperature and environmental conditions in the recent and near future; review of government interventions that impact on food trade (domestic and regional); overview assessment of prices of main food staples and food security outlook. The discussion focuses on implications of the developments and changes in each of the above on regional food trade and food security. You can find the entire text of the Food Trade Monitor at: <https://tinyurl.com/ydf33awk>

### AGRA's Food Security Monitor Highlights include:

#### West Africa

- West Africa is projected to experience above normal rains in May; these favorable rains coincide with the planting that started in March for the main season across the southern parts of the region
- Insecurity and armed conflict in the Lake Chad Basin and the Central Sahel areas resulting in destruction/closure of livelihoods and basic social services, disruption of: productive activities (including agriculture), markets and trade flows
- Prices of staple foods remain below average except in deficit and conflict affected areas
- Most of the region is expected to experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes up to September 2020

#### Southern Africa

- The consecutive poor seasons and extended dry conditions at the beginning of the season resulted in perpetual below average yields in many parts of the region such as in southern Mozambique, Madagascar and Zimbabwe
- Worsening macroeconomic shocks, consecutive droughts and poor access to productive inputs contributing to dire food security outcomes in Zimbabwe
- Food trade environment in the surplus countries critical to ensure no trade impeding measures such as export bans are implemented especially in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Recurring climate shocks in Southern Africa significantly contributing to reduced food production and driving staple food prices up

#### East Africa

- Favorable rains and cropping conditions expected to contribute to improved seasonal harvests and food availability at the end of the season.
- Desert locust upsurge situations remains a threat in East Africa with new generation of swarms forming and maturing as eradication efforts continue.
- Areas with limited control measures and already experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 2+) outcomes are expected to severely suffer from the desert locust threat due to low coping capacity and significant crop losses

- Below average 2019 cereal outputs and difficult macroeconomic conditions contributed to high prices above the levels of the previous year
- EAC member states signed Administrative Guidelines to facilitate movement of goods and services during the COV- ID-19 pandemic Good harvests in early 2020 are contributing to decreasing prices in some parts of the region
- Despite good harvests in some parts, staple food prices are expected to remain above average
- Southern Africa is experiencing and is projected to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crises (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity outcomes in parts of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, DRC, Lesotho and Madagascar
- SADC Guidelines on Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region during the COVID-19 Pandemic put in place.



### COVID-19 situation and response at a glance by country (selected highlights only)

Country + summary of current situation	COVID19 challenges	Government response	AGRA activities
<b>Planting season</b>			
<b>Burkina Faso.</b> Borders are closed and curfew is in place with gatherings of >50 people prohibited. Farmers can buy inputs; central markets opened end April. Goods transport is not restricted and farmers can buy inputs.	Restrictions on gatherings mean that it's difficult to reach stakeholders.	Govt allocation of \$50MM to ag sector. 25,000 MT cereal will be sold to vulnerable people at subsidized price.	AGRA is facilitating contract farming, providing inputs need assessment and connecting farmers organizations with financial partners.
<b>Ethiopia.</b> Movement restriction has been eased by regional states and there is no restriction on grain trading. Farm inputs are being distributed. There are 8.5M food insecure people due to persistent insecurity as well as the locust invasion.	Restrictions on public transport and gatherings which means trainings are not being conducted.	Govt has COVID19 and locust response worth \$1.3B from GoE and international donors. Govt planning \$2.4B stimulus package with \$40M for producer cooperatives. Large expansion of wheat areas to reduce reliance on imports planned.	AGRA is providing support to government to develop the response action plan. AGRA is supporting the use of ICT for training via video and radio broadcasts. Villages to demonstrate mother and baby demos for upcoming planting season completed.
<b>Ghana.</b> Partial lockdown lifted and no restrictions on persons and goods but land borders with neighboring countries (Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso) remained closed. Ghana's Food Reserve is mostly in the hands of the private sector, aggregators and processors. About 1.5 million people in Ghana (approximately 5% of population) are food insecure and 2 million people are vulnerable to become food insecure if COVID disrupts planting season for 2020. Planting has commenced and 60% of farmers demand for seeds and fertilizer is secured.	Restrictions on public gatherings is making it difficult for our farmer and Community Extension training programs	Fiscal and monetary policy incentives to Commercial Banks to increase supply of credit to private sector – US\$120m credit scheme to support SMEs  US\$ 100m COVID-19 Social Protection Fund  Facilitate access of 1million small holder farmers to seed and fertilizer for the 2020 planting season @ 50% subsidy •Develop new lands under irrigation and inland valleys for rice production	AGRA leading a campaign to mobilize support for the 2020 planting season- PPEs to support the work of agriculture front line staff reach out to farmers  Facilitate farmer access to private sector driven input and out markets, and digital payment system: Facilitate Area yield insurance for 10,000 farmers- bundle agro-input with insurance  Digital extension service through SMS messaging, Radio, videos etc are being introduced and adopted;
<b>Mali.</b> Curfew in place with working hours limited 7.30 am to 2.30 pm. Farmers can purchase inputs and government fertilizer and equipment subsidy in place.	Food prices have increased and overnight travel is restricted.	Free food and cash transfers to the most vulnerable households. World Bank has approved \$25.8 M and IMF disbursed \$200M. Govt to disburse 1BN FCFA	AGRA is providing support to government war room.  Team supporting digitization for village based advisors to provide trainings.
<b>Kenya.</b> Agricultural products have been classified as essential so even with movement restrictions, farmers can procure inputs; grain markets are open in most counties. @ 1.3 M people are severely food insecure, mostly in Northern Kenya. Some farming activities affected by floods.	Restrictions on gatherings mean that training can't be conducted.	Cash transfers to the most vulnerable are underway. War room established together with AGRA  Substantial funds released from international donors led by IMF approval of \$758 M emergency fund	AGRA is providing support to government war room.  Team supporting digitization for village based advisors to provide trainings.





		to manage COVID19.	
<b>Nigeria.</b> Curfew from 8pm to 6am but restrictions on movement relaxed. Farmers can buy inputs and government has provided movement passes to farmers and agro dealer with movement on ag goods unrestricted.	Limited access to inputs and extension agent services due to restriction of movement. Farmers training slowed due to restrictions on gathering.	IMF has provided \$34M emergency assistance and \$3.4 BN loan. EU has provided N42BN+\$50M. Government has purchased grain to distribute where there are food shortages.	AGRA is providing support to Nigeria's extension system and planting season activities. .
<b>Rwanda.</b> Movement restrictions and curfew in place. 14 day quarantine for people and trucks crossing the border are disinfected.	Cross boarder trading with neighbors is a challenge.	Govt has been distributing food to vulnerable in cities. US Embassy provided \$4M	At govt request, AGRA is supporting mechanization and introduction of drought tolerant seeds. A
<b>Uganda.</b> Lockdown in place since mid-March with movement of public and private transport banned Cargo movement allowed and agro input outlets are allowed with strict guidelines. 3M people need food relief . Floods have threatened lives and farm activities.	Restrictions on movement create a challenging environment during the planting season.	Food support to food insecure people. Substantial funds released from international donors led by IMF approval of \$491.5 M to manage COVID-19.	AGRA is convening a meeting between govt and sector actors to discuss preparedness & response to COVID-19. AGRA is also providing support to SMEs in accessing financial services to prepare for harvesting season.
<b>Harvest season</b>			
<b>Malawi.</b> Gatherings are limited, but harvesting is allowed; special provisions have been made for trade observing social distancing and wearing masks. 1.1 M people are estimated to be food insecure	Grain trading limited due to limited mobility; post harvest handling challenges.	Govt has allocated \$22M to agriculture from COVID-19 response budget. \$12.5 M set aside to buy grain.	AGRA teams are working with potential partners to develop a seed sector grant to help reform national seed program
<b>Tanzania.</b> Gatherings are limited, but borders are open for trade. Tanzania has a substantial food reserve and is expected to be able to continue exporting regionally.	Limited regional movement will affect the delivery of inputs for the July planting season. Marketing strategies to sell crops will need to be adapted.	Convening committee to coordinate efforts among private sector/public/donor partners (supported by AGRA).	AGRA is supporting government coordinate efforts among private sector/public/donor partners.
<b>Mozambique.</b> State emergency in place with restrictions on movement. The country is in a food emergency; only one border is open for food to come into the country. COVID-19 is expected to increase by at least 50% those receiving humanitarian food assistance.	Many field activities cancelled due to government restrictions on movement due to COVID-19.	IMF is providing \$309M loan with World Bank disbursing \$100M. Islamic Dev. Bank to provide \$132M to health support program.	AGRA is supporting farmers' marketing activities.



Financial resources committed as of May 8 2020. It's important to note that these are resources committed that AGRA is aware of and may change as updates occur.

	Total	World Bank	IMF	Donors	WFP	Govt	Local Private Sector	Other	Remark
	\$MM	\$MM	\$MM	\$MM	\$MM	\$MM	\$MM	\$MM	
Ghana	1,125.5		1,000.0	125.0	0.5				The Govt. has proposed \$390MM humanitarian budget
Mali	230.9	25.1	200.0				5.8		
Burkina Faso	2.8							2.8	
Nigeria	0.7							0.7	
Ethiopia	493.6	82.6	411.0						The Govt. has set up a \$1.3BN Budget to mitigate COVID-19
Kenya	1,149.0	50.0	758.0	141.0		200.0			EU = \$5MM, Other UN agencies = \$135M, RF = \$1MM GOK has set up \$100MM SME recovery budget and \$100MM cash transfer to vulnerable people
Uganda	581.5		491.5	75.0		15.0			US Govt. 3.4MM, EU \$31.6MM to support Govt effort to tackle COVID-19 GOG has dedicated \$15MM for food relief and IFAD set up \$40MM rural poor stimulus fund envelope
Tanzania	-								
Rwanda	4.0			4.0					US Embassy has donated to support Govt. effort
Malawi	34.5					34.5			Govt allocated \$22MM to agriculture, \$12.5 for grain purchase
Mozambique	569.0	100.0	337.0					132.0	Govt. setup \$700MM budget to mitigate COVID-19 Impact Islamic development fund has 132M in project support in the IMF's Pro-Saúde health support Program
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,191.5</b>	<b>257.7</b>	<b>3,197.5</b>	<b>345.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>249.5</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>135.5</b>	

