

COVID-19 Situation Report #3

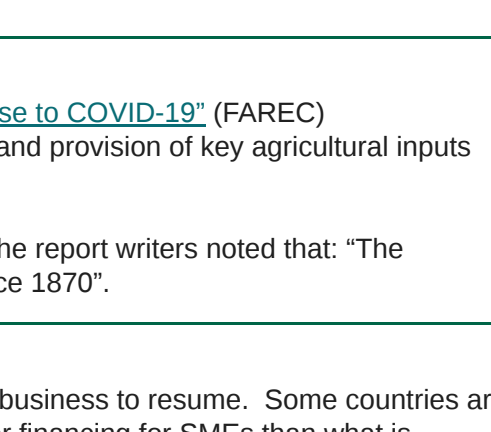
SITUATION AS OF JUNE 11, 2020

- Cases of COVID-19 continue to rise in AGRA focus (1) countries with an increasing rate of cases recorded in most AGRA focus countries - especially Nigeria and Ghana
- Donors – including the African Development Bank – are deepening support to the ag sector as the economic impact of COVID-19 threatens to devastate economies for years in sub-Saharan Africa and around the world
- Countries are easing COVID-19 restrictions gradually, allowing agriculture and business to resume
- AGRA's [May Food Security Monitor](#) reports there are continuing food shortage crises across sub-Saharan Africa, and commodity prices continue to increase - confirming the need for governments to increase efficiency at borders to facilitate regional food trade.
- AGRA'S COVID-19 "at a glance" by focus country & financial resources committed that AGRA is aware of

FOOD INSECURITY GROWS AS COVID-19 SPREADS ACROSS AFRICA

Food insecurity has continued to rise across Africa as the pandemic continues to spread – albeit more slowly than in other continents. The number of deaths from the pandemic in AGRA focus countries remains low, totaling 728 as of 9 June 2020 (end of day).

In Ghana, the World Food Program has estimated that around 2.4 million people will be food insecure in the coming months as a result of COVID-19 food production disruption. In Kenya, a survey compiled by the Ministry of Health and the Population Council found that, while commodity prices are continuing to stabilize after rising approximately 10% in the last two weeks, 64% of informal settlement dwellers reported that they had skipped meals in the last week, and 70% of those surveyed said "food" was their biggest unmet need. In Ethiopia, staple food prices are rising at a higher rate than is seasonally normal for this time of year, and COVID-19 restrictions, coupled with desert locust upsurge and flooding has led to atypically high humanitarian assistance needs across much of the country. This contrasts with the situation in Malawi where the country expects a bumper harvest.



DONORS CONTINUE TO DEEPEN SUPPORT TO THE AG SECTOR

Donors are developing response plans to stabilize food systems and maintain food security. The African Development Bank's plan ["Feed Africa Response to COVID-19"](#) (FAREC) recommends: support of food delivery for the most vulnerable; stabilization of food prices; optimization of food processing; extension support services, and provision of key agricultural inputs through smart subsidies. FAREC is one part of the AfDB's COVID-19 response facility, which is worth around \$10 billion.

A World Bank [report](#) found that economies of countries in sub-Saharan Africa will contract by 2.7% in 2020- the weakest showing in at least 60 years. The report writers noted that: "The pandemic is expected to plunge most countries into recession in 2020, with per capita income contracting in the largest fraction of countries globally since 1870".

BUSINESS IS RESUMING IN MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

Faced with this looming economic catastrophe, countries in AGRA-focus countries are easing COVID-19 restrictions gradually, allowing agriculture and business to resume. Some countries are coming out with substantial and specific measures to respond to COVID 19. Ghana has announced a stimulus package worth \$120MM, offering cheaper financing for SMEs than what is currently on offer. In Kenya, the government has announced \$503MM of economic stimulus to fight COVID-19.

In Mali, where [debt relief](#) amounting to \$40MM was announced in May, the prime minister instructed the payment of debts to domestic businesses for the 2020 financial year. The goal of this measure is to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and improve their cash flow. Also in Mali, the European Union disbursed around \$37MM (21.6 B CFA) to supplement gaps in financing – including urgent needs such as food security – to shore up the government response to COVID-19.

While AGRA has tracked some \$6 billion committed by international donors, governments, and the private sector, overall action to put this money to use to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food security remains slow in many AGRA focus countries. For example, Mozambique is showing a \$169MM gap for food security and Malawi is showing a \$131MM gap in funding for COVID-19 response. Given the large sums of money that have been committed across the continent to COVID-19 response, we do not see enough needed investment coming through to the agricultural sector. This is an area that AGRA will continue to watch in the coming weeks.

HEAVY RAINS ALSO CONTINUE TO IMPACT THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN EAST AFRICA



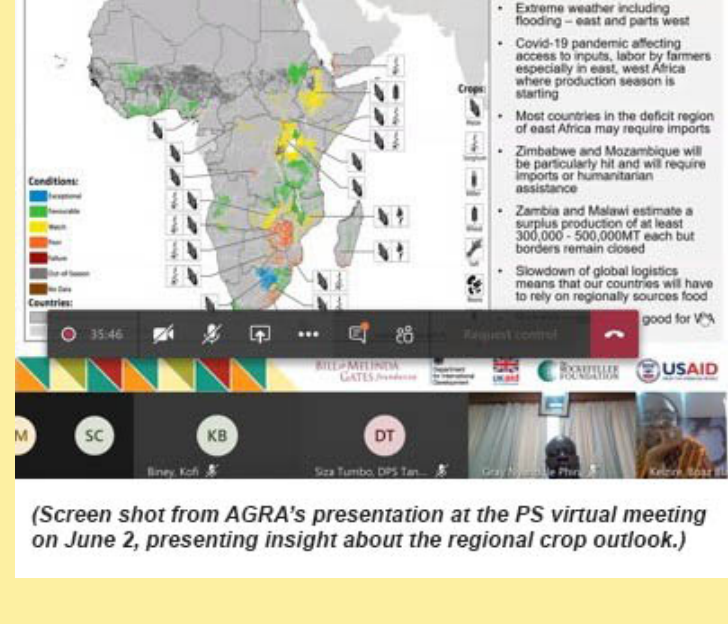
In Kenya, markets in 20% of Kenya's counties are reporting supply challenges due to heavy rains and reduced flow of commodities from Uganda and Tanzania. When the Nyando River in Western Kenya (shown at left) burst its banks in April, crops (mainly rice, maize and beans) on over 4,000 acres (1619 hectares) of land with an estimated value of over KES 800 million (\$7.4 MM), were destroyed by the floods. This is posing a threat to food availability, as well as food and nutrition security. Flooding is also becoming a cause for concern in Rwanda, and in Uganda, has led to about 2.4 million people facing hunger.

AGRA'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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. The meeting held its second meeting on June 2 (see report below).



On 2 June, AGRA organized a follow up and second virtual meeting with Permanent Secretaries (PS) of 11 AGRA focus countries. The purpose of the second meeting was to discuss issues around food security in light of COVID-19, share experience on what countries are learning, what strategic policy choices governments are making or should make to put in place food reserves and build buffer stocks for sustainable and resilient country systems. Participants also discussed challenges on food trade and supply chains and how countries are addressing the effect of restrictions on movement.

The meeting also aimed at understanding and sharing lessons from AGRA's interactions with development partners on some of the areas where AGRA and other partners can provide support to countries on resource mobilization.

From the discussions and PS presentations, coordination efforts are a major focus in all the countries to develop national COVID-19 response plans. Participants noted the need for countries to digitize agricultural services- such as extension services- to be able to reach more farmers especially with the current restriction on movements. Participants recognized concerns on regional trade and border control measures with long queues and long wait hours at border towns due to testing, and acknowledged that while people must be protected to avoid infections, encouraged each other to find workable solutions to deal with cross border controls, while ensuring health protocols are followed.

Linking farmers with buyers and processors.

- In countries such as Tanzania and Mozambique, the normal function of regional markets for crops has been interrupted, due to knock-on effects from COVID-19 mitigation efforts, specifically in Tanzania and Mozambique. In both of these countries, AGRA teams are linking farmers with agro-dealers, off takers and processors.
- As COVID-19 measures continue to be eased in West Africa, in Ghana, AGRA is engaging with partners to assess farmers' preparedness for the West African planting season. In Burkina Faso, AGRA is also assisting farmers to secure inputs.

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.

Supporting data and analysis.

In Kenya, AGRA is providing support to government data and analytics through Kenya's COVID-19 war room.

Strengthening digital innovation for small holder farmers.

In response to COVID-19, AGRA is partnering with technology partners to supply smart and SMS extension content for farmers.

- In Mali, for example, AGRA staff are facilitating the development of an electronic distribution system that will facilitate the distribution of fertilizer during the planting season.
- In Uganda, where public transport has resumed and shops are open, AGRA's village based advisors are playing a crucial role in last-mile delivery of agro inputs and off taking of produce sustainably. Especially when movement restrictions were in place, the role of village advisors has been key as they are locally known and based in farmers' communities, and are also flexible enough to reach the farmers .
- Virtual Pitching and SME Matchmaking at the Agribusiness Dealroom. AGRA has developed a Virtual Agribusiness Dealroom Platform which will facilitate substantive online dialogue and connections among businesses, investors, governments, AGRA and other partners. The platform will create a virtual pitching and matchmaking dealroom representing SMEs with a capital need (equity and loans) from \$500,000-\$50MM targeting investors and financial lending institutions, off-takers, inputs and service provider institutions and 300 agribusiness SMEs that will oversee the launch of a virtual food and agribusiness virtual dealroom which will operate all year-round. It will serve all 11 AGRA focus countries and will be available in French and English.

AGRA'S MONTHLY FOOD SECURITY MONITOR

The AGRA Food Security Monitor focuses on developments and changes on regional food trade in each of the AGRA focus countries (1) and the follow-on implications for food security. It provides information about changes in climate and other environmental factors on food production and implications for food trade as well as food and nutrition security; review of government interventions that impact on food trade (domestic and regional); and an overview assessment of the prices of main food staples and the food security outlook in the AGRA focus countries in East, Southern and West Africa.

AGRA's third Food Security Monitor was released on June 8:

Highlights include:

- West Africa**
Grain prices remained stable with some increases in conflict-affected areas over the past month. The disruption of informal and small-scale cross border trade activities has reduced the effective food demand as a result of lost incomes as COVID-19 pandemic containment measures persisted across the region. The region is expected to experience normal to above normal seasonal rainfall performance through to the end of June, which will be beneficial to the cropping season that is underway. Food stocks were generally low in most West African AGRA-focus countries with consumption levels exceeding production levels for the month.
- Southern Africa**
 - Food security outcomes improved from food crisis to stressed and minimal food security phases due to the increased food availability since the region is currently under its main harvest period over April/ May 2020.
 - The beginning of the main harvest season in the past two months has seen an increase in food availability and contributed to a general price decline across Southern Africa, although prices remain above prices of the previous years and are sustained by below average harvests in the previous seasons.
- The secondary impacts of COVID-19 continue to restrict food distribution activities, and the isolated cases of panic buying contributes to prices hikes in some areas. Trade activities continue but remain restricted due to COVID-19 containment measures.
- The region is entering the dry season and is not expected to receive rainfall during the month of June in most parts of southwestern Africa. For the parts of the region expected to receive rainfall, especially in southwestern South Africa, there is forecast to be a mix of below normal and above normal rainfall experiences.

East Africa

- The East African region experienced an IPC v3.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase which is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and desert locust infestations that have reduced food distribution efforts and led to significant food losses across selected countries in the region.
- Commodity prices varied over the past month but remained generally high compared to prices recorded over the same period during the previous year sustained by the disruption of marketing and trade activities, as well as panic-buying related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The wetter than usual season for most parts of the region provided beneficial cropping conditions for the on-going planting activities and crop development in the bi-modal areas.
- The risk of flooding increased due to persistent above normal rains with some parts of the region experiencing localized flooding has had an adverse impact on livelihoods and cropland losses with detrimental impacts on food and nutrition security in the affected areas.

AGRA COVID-19 NEWS

[AGRA Webinar: Securing the 2020 cropping season in the face of COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

RELATED COVID-19 NEWS

- [CGTN News: COVID-19 speeds up digitalization of African agricultural sector](#)
- [The Nation: Strategy for post-COVID-19 agriculture financing in Nigeria](#)
- [Slow Food: COVID-19 and the state of food security in Africa](#)
- [Relief Web: What African farmers and processors say about the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns](#)
- [Commodatfrica: La Covid-19 aura un impact sur la production alimentaire en Afrique de l'Ouest](#)

ABOUT THE SITREP

As COVID-19 continues to spread across Africa, our bi-weekly sitrep is designed to provide timely information, reflecting what we hear from small holder farmers and partners on-the-ground in 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (1). We welcome your feedback at sitreps@agra.org

(1) Ghana, Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mali, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania

COVID-19 SITUATION AND RESPONSE AT A GLANCE BY COUNTRY (SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS ONLY, UPDATED AS OF JUNE 5, 2020)

Country + summary of current situation	COVID19 challenges	Government response	AGRA activities (highlights only)
Burkina Faso. Most COVID-19 measures are suspended including curfews. Gatherings of more than 50 prohibited.	Restrictions on gatherings more than 50 people mean that it's difficult to reach stakeholders and deliver introduction and adoption of new technologies at scale and provide technical assistance	Govt allocation of \$50MM to ag sector. 25,000 MT cereal will be sold to vulnerable people at subsidized price.	AGRA has initiated a study with the chamber of commerce on the effects of measures against COVID-19 on the movement of people and agricultural products trade. Assisting farmers to secure coming season inputs.
Ethiopia. Movement restriction has been eased by regional states and there is no restriction on grain trading. Farm inputs are being distributed. There are atypically high humanitarian assistance needs across much of the country due to persistent insecurity as well as the locust invasion.	The restrictions continue to impact access to inputs including on-site support to farmers.	The Ethiopian Government and UN Habitat are working together to redesign overcrowded city markets and set up temporary markets to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Hawassa, and Adama.	AGRA country team working with grantees in preparation for planting season.
Ghana. Phased easing of restrictions from June 5. Public gatherings of up to 100 people can now take place.	The easing of COVID-19 measures are making it easier for team to implement programs. Some input suppliers may not be supplying inputs for this season as the result of COVID-19. This includes Cargill and UPL.	\$120MM credit scheme to support SMEs. Facilitate access of 1million small holder farmers to seed and fertilizer for the 2020 planting season @ 50% subsidy.	Taking advantage of the easing of COVID-19 Measures, AGRA team are engaging implementing partners including field monitoring visits to assess farmers, community based advisors, consortia members preparedness for the planting season.
Mali. Curfew remains in place including restriction of social gathering. Limited working hours 7:30am to 2:30pm. Exception to shops that are open to 7-8 pm	Food prices have increased and overnight travel is restricted.	The clearance of domestic debt, in particular the payment of mandates for the 2020 financial year. This was through the instruction of the Prime Minister. This amounts to \$190MM or CFA Franc 110.5BN . Free distribution of food to the vulnerable populations of Kati. Distribution of 272 tons of food including 171 tons of local rice and 101 tons of cereals. European Union makes an advance disbursement of CFA 21.6 billion for Mali to supplement Govt's financing need in its response to COVID-19.	Ongoing Campaign preparation activities, including facilitating farmers access to input market, and continued support to Ministry of Agriculture in development of response plan for planting and marketing season ahead.
Kenya. Govt. of Kenya revised its COVID-19 measures, with movement restricted from urban areas including Nairobi and Mombasa and extending the travel restriction on some counties. Curfew relaxed. Markets in 20% of counties are reporting supply challenges due to heavy rains and reduced flow of commodities from Uganda and Tanzania. Prices of most commodities continue to stabilize (~10% increase in the past two weeks).	Restrictions on gatherings mean that training can't be conducted.	Cash transfers to the most vulnerable are underway. War room established together with AGRA. The gov. announced \$503MM of economic stimulus to fight COVID-19.	AGRA is providing support to government war room. Team supporting digitization for village based advisors to provide trainings.
Nigeria. 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.	Nigeria Commodity Exchange commissioned 12 delivery warehouses with capacity of 26K MT to facilitate trade for cocoa, sorghum, cashew and paddy rice.	AGRA is providing support to Nigeria's extension system and planting season activities. .
Rwanda. All food markets are 100% open. 14 day quarantine for people; trucks crossing the border are disinfected.	Cross border trading with neighbors is a challenge but seems Govt easing up of COVID-19 measures Govt seem to offer a return to some kind of normality.	Govt has been distributing food to vulnerable in cities.	AGRA team continue to support farmers through planting season. Team plans to resume filed visit while still observing govt guideline on health protection.
Uganda. Lockdown measures further eased allowing public transport to resume and shops to open. As per the latest update from Disaster Preparedness Department, close to 4 million persons may be food insecure later in the year due to interrupted planting.	Restrictions on movement create a challenging environment during the planting season.	Food distribution is continuing to be eased. Focus is now on 46,000 families displaced by floods and river bank bursts Government continue developing plans of preparing a stimulus package of credit to private sector including agriculture SMEs and farmer coops. This will be channeled through Uganda Development Bank Ltd.	We are learning that VBA can play a crucial role in last-mile delivery of agro-inputs and off-taking of produce sustainably
Malawi. 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.	We expect to see the utilization of the COVID-19 agricultural budget as harvesting season gets underway.	AGRA teams are working with potential partners to develop a seed sector grant to help reform national seed program
Tanzania. Gatherings are limited, but borders are open for trade.	Limited regional movement will affect the delivery of inputs for the July planting season. Restricted public gathering above 10 people continue to present challenge to Agricultural programs. Restricted trucks movements to from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.	Convening committee to coordinate efforts among private sector/public/donor partners (supported by AGRA). MoA has budget approved to fully utilize improved National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) capacity from 250K MT to 750K MT .	AGRA Consortia have resumed providing technical support to farmers using one to one discussion and ICT platforms where possible. The support includes capacity building training, validation workshops etc.
Mozambique. The Mozambican Government announced a continuation of the Level-3 State of Emergency until June 30. Some of the measures including the Movement restrictions remains the same. International flights continue to be restricted till June 30th One open land border between South Africa and Mozambique.	Many field activities cancelled due to government restrictions on movement due to COVID-19.	A comprehensive actions plan has been published by the government including implementing Agencies and funding amount that will be implemented between now and Dec-2020. Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihood short term fund required \$105MM, Secured \$6MM,	AGRA team continue to work consortia grantees to support farmers in the harvesting season.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES COMMITTED BY INTERNATIONAL DONORS AND ORGANIZATIONS

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS.](#)

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