



COVID 19 and Food Systems: Building Back Better

- Thursday, August 19, 2021
- 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Description

With a devastating one-two punch, a supply shock followed by a demand shock, the coronavirus pandemic has knocked out the world economy. The first-round defeat was the Great Lockdown; the second-round loss, the worst recession since the Great Depression. No modern economy has experienced anything like this. As the virus debilitates people's ability to harvest and buy and sell food, food systems are under threat as never before.

The lockdowns have triggered a steep recession. The World Bank projects the global economy to shrink 3.5 % in 2020. The IMF's latest projection is -3.9%. A collapse in demand for food due to lack of income and disruptions to local food markets indicate important vulnerabilities, and could prompt a global food crisis. Hunger and malnutrition were all around even before the pandemic. More than 2 billion people didn't have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food last year. Some 704 million of them went to sleep on an empty stomach; this included 135 million people who were on the edge of starvation. All of these could mean an additional 132 million people moving into undernourishment.

The effects of COVID-19 is even more pronounced in Africa south of the Sahara, East Asia and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific.

Africa is bracing for the worst. The epic oil price crash has been a financial bust globally. For the continent's exporters, such as Nigeria, Chad, Libya and Algeria, it has wiped out their sources of revenue. A catastrophic locust outbreak in East Africa would have forced 25 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Sudan to go hungry, even without the coronavirus. A swarm covering one square kilometer contains 80 million insects and consumes more food in 24 hours than 35,000 people. Africa south of the Sahara faces a first recession in 25 years and is especially vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19. Food systems, which directly employ over 1 billion people, are about to lose more than 451 million or 35% of its formal employment, according to an unpublished FAO/IFPRI estimate. The jobs most at risk are in food processing, services and distribution, disproportionately affecting female workers.

In this session we will bring a global assessment of COVID-19, an assessment for South Saharan Africa and East Asia and the Pacific and will also look at the impact of cities across South and East Asia.

Chairs

Maximo Torero

- FAO

Dina Umali

- World Bank

Presentations

8:20 AM Impacts of COVID-19 in Africa

Dr. Ousmane Badiane, AKADEMIYA2063

9:00 AM Effects of COVID-19 on South Asia Cities

Prof. Steven Jaffee, University of Maryland