Arab food security monitoring framework
Country reviews
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Arab food security monitoring framework
Country reviews
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Introduction

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and its partners developed the Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework that helps countries assess their food security situation despite its complex and multidimensional nature. The Monitoring Framework is an outcome of the project entitled “Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region”, implemented in collaboration and partnership with Arab countries, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), academia and other experts, and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The framework builds on the globally agreed upon definition of food security as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”, which, as defined, comprises four dimensions, namely availability, access, utilization, and stability, can be evaluated at individual, household, national, regional, or global levels and can be seasonal, transitory or chronic. The framework was developed over a period of three years and involved consultations with more than 200 Arab and international experts. It involved a wide-ranging literature review to account for the latest thinking and experiences in assessing and monitoring food security at national, regional and global levels as well as a mapping of past and present policies, strategies and action plans.

The encompassing review led to the development of a comprehensive monitoring framework that tracks food security at different spatial levels, considers its four dimensions and accounts for both individual and household food security while facilitating a follow-up of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The end result was the Monitoring Framework that expresses food security and nutrition as a function of a multitude of indicators spread in its four dimensions, though approximately five to six indicators under each dimension account for most of the variations and thus are more consequential than the rest. Most of the selected indicators are already widely used globally to monitor aspects of the food system, and the SDGs and other plans of actions are used by major global institutions as development, economic, social, health, or environmental indicators. It was also ensured that the indicators are measurable, relevant to the Arab context and available for at least 50 per cent of Arab countries or the regional population, or both.

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The 24 indicators that were selected are split into a core pillar with three ex post or outcome indicators — prevalence of undernourishment, moderate or severe food insecurity and obesity, while the remaining 21 ex ante or causal indicators were further split into the four food security dimensions as shown below. All the indicators are global in nature while catering to regional specificities and are grouped as follows:

- **The Core Pillar** comprises three outcome indicators that provide a picture of the prevailing food security and nutrition situation resulting from policies and programmes being implemented as reflected in the form of malnutrition – undernutrition (low caloric intake), overnutrition (excess caloric intake) or nutrient deficiency (low nutrient intake);

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Indicator description</th>
<th>Short name</th>
<th>SDG linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Prevalence of undernourishment %</td>
<td>Undernourishment</td>
<td>2.1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity measured using FIES %</td>
<td>Food insecurity</td>
<td>2.1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Prevalence of obesity in the adult population (18 years and older) %</td>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **The Availability** dimension comprises six indicators reflecting the supply side of food, namely, physical food inflow and outflow at macro and micro levels through production, trade, distribution, and others;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Indicator description</th>
<th>Short name</th>
<th>SDG linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AV1</td>
<td>Primary wheat yield as a percentage of potential achievable yield - %</td>
<td>Yields</td>
<td>2.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV2</td>
<td>Agriculture Orientation index for government expenditures - Index</td>
<td>Agriculture expenditure</td>
<td>2.a.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV3</td>
<td>Food losses (% total food available) %</td>
<td>Food loss</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV4</td>
<td>Average dietary energy supply adequacy - %</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat import dependency ratio %</td>
<td>Import dependency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV6</td>
<td>Share of water resources used in agriculture out of total renewable water resources %</td>
<td>Agriculture water</td>
<td>6.4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

: Reversed During Normalization
• The Access dimension comprises five indicators reflecting the ability of the population to acquire needed food through financial means and/or socioeconomic strengths with determinants including income/revenues, prices and supply-chain infrastructure;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Indicator description</th>
<th>Short name</th>
<th>SDG linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty headcount ratio %</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>1.1.1/1.2.1/1.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Share of food consumption expenditure in total household consumption expenditure %</td>
<td>Food consumption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment rate %</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>8.5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics performance - index</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation, consumer prices %</td>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• The Utilization dimension comprises five indicators touching on nutrition impact or factors affecting it such as availability of basic water and sanitation infrastructure and critical health parameters showing the impact of food unavailability or nutrient deficiency, namely, stunting, wasting and anaemia;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Indicator description</th>
<th>Short name</th>
<th>SDG linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>The population using at least basic drinking water services - %</td>
<td>Drinking water access</td>
<td>1.4.1/6.1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2</td>
<td>The population using at least basic sanitation services - %</td>
<td>Sanitation access</td>
<td>1.4.1/6.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Children under 5 years of age affected by stunting %</td>
<td>Child stunting</td>
<td>2.2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Children under 5 years of age affected by wasting %</td>
<td>Child wasting</td>
<td>2.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Anaemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) %</td>
<td>Women anaemia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• The Stability dimension comprises five indicators highlighting the variability in food production or supply factors that might affect these such as climate change, weather events, price shocks and sociopolitical conditions, all of which might impact the other food security dimensions and the core pillar as well;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Indicator description</th>
<th>Short name</th>
<th>SDG linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST1</td>
<td>Climate change vulnerability index</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2</td>
<td>Food price anomalies standard deviation</td>
<td>Price anomalies</td>
<td>2.c.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST3</td>
<td>Political stability and absence of violence - ranking</td>
<td>Political stability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4</td>
<td>Per capita food production variability - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>Production variability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5</td>
<td>Per capita food supply variability - kcal/capita/day</td>
<td>Supply variability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data are collected and computed using a dedicated Excel template. The results are presented in the form of a dashboard with two overlapping doughnut charts whose ten rings represent the data normalized to score between 0 (worst performance) and 10 (best performance), as depicted in the graph below. The inner doughnut displays the results of the core indicators while the outer doughnut shows those of the four food security dimension indicators. During the normalization process, indicators with a low value indicating good performance were reversed and are represented with an (R). The doughnut chart is always accompanied by a table presenting the raw indicator data together with the year of data collection and the overall trend between two time periods.

By design, the framework is mechanistic for two reasons: (i) indicators are set and distributed across the food security core pillar and four dimensions; and (ii) the interpretation of results follows a determined path consisting, first, in evaluating results of the three core indicators to identify food security and/or nutritional outcome, and second, in examining the 21 dimension indicators to identify hotspot areas that need immediate action. Stakeholders only need to enter data into the provided Excel template to generate the doughnut graph and related table containing raw data and trends. The data can be sourced at the regional, national and, if available, sub-national levels and disaggregated along gender lines or others noting, however, that a great majority of indicators cannot be disaggregated below the national level.

A complete description of the framework, which was endorsed by the Executive Council of AOAD in March 2019, was published and is available at ESCWA official publication website3 under the title “Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region.”4 In addition to providing a full background on the framework, the publication presents the key results of tracking food security at the Arab regional level and the trend over the considered years and reviews selected policies and actions that might be considered under each of the indicators to remedy arising concerns. The publication is accompanied by a technical document entitled “Manual for Monitoring Food Security in the Arab Region,” which provides a more detailed description for each of the 24 indicators comprising the monitoring framework including, when applicable, computation methodology, justification for selection, linkage to SDGs, potential data sources, and normalization process. It also overviews the use of the accompanying Excel template. Since the completion of the Food Security Monitoring Framework, numerous national agricultural and statistics experts from Arab countries have received in-depth training that took place in Tunis5 and Beirut6 and which focused on how to utilize the framework and interpret results for maximum impact for policy and programme design and development.

This report provides a series of food security overviews for the 22 Arab countries, which build on the above-described Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework. Its aim is to further highlight how to use the framework as well as to build capacity on its use with a focus on the national level. As such, it supports Arab countries in their endeavours to utilize the framework in the implementation of food security programmes, to assess the prevailing situation and

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to follow up on progress achieved towards the implementation of selected SDGs. It should further enhance capacity at country level and support efforts of national experts to collect focused data, analyse them using a dedicated framework and interpret meaningfully the results to provide policymakers with an overall view of their respective country’s food security situation while also outlining alternative paths to address the situation.

The country overviews were produced by ESCWA with data delivered by national experts who provided or reviewed the underlying data (see attached list) and from global databases, as appropriate. For some countries, critical data are still missing, which should serve as a call to action to collect and provide the necessary data as the basis of more accurate and focused advice. The data were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, some results might not reflect the current situation. It is hoped that the report will raise the necessary awareness so that countries can make additional efforts to remediate the lack of data.
## Food security indicators, world vs. Arab region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>World</th>
<th>Arab region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latest</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CORE INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO1 Undernourishment</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2 Food insecurity</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3 Obesity</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVAILABILITY INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV1 Wheat yields</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV2 Agriculture expenditure</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV3 Food loss</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV4 Dietary energy supply</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV5 Wheat Import dependency</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV6 Agriculture water</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCESS INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1 Poverty</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2 Food consumption</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3 Unemployment</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4 Logistics</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5 Inflation</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UTILIZATION INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT1 Drinking water access</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2 Sanitation access</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3 Child stunting</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4 Child wasting</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5 Women anaemia</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STABILITY INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST1 Climate change</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2 Price Anomalies</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST3 Political stability</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4 Production variability</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5 Supply variability</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **R**: Reversed During Normalization
- **n.a.**: Not Available
- **mult.**: Multiple years
- **Green**: Positive Trend
- **Red**: Negative Trend
- **Yellow**: Neutral Trend

Source: Computed by ESCWA.
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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring availability framework shows that Algeria is facing the triple burden of malnutrition, with elevated rates of obesity, child wasting and anaemia among women. The country has a high food import dependency with high unemployment which could further impact its food security. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Although Algeria is the largest country of the Arab region by land mass, it is dominated by the extensive Sahara Desert with a narrow coastal zone being the most economically active. The country is water-thirsty as the per capita renewable water availability is less than 300 cubic metres per capita per year putting it well below the absolute water scarcity threshold of 500 cubic metres per capita per year.1

Box 1. Food production in the Algerian desert

Algeria hosts a small number of refugees in the desert region of Tindouf, in the south-west of the country where livelihood opportunities are lacking. Their food security and nutrition status are poor, and, as such, they rely on food assistance. In 2018, a WFP assessment survey showed that only 12 per cent of the refugee population was food secure. Vulnerability to food insecurity affected 58 per cent of the population, while 30 per cent were food insecure mostly as a result of the widespread poverty.

WFP is attempting to address this rampant poverty and food insecurity through fish farming and hydroponic projects. Since the arid desert does not offer many potential sources of income or agricultural opportunities, notably to develop livestock production, it is the main source of both revenues and proteins for the vulnerable population. Small hydroponics units were installed in greenhouses using locally available materials to produce fodder in seven-day cycles in a semi-controlled environment powered with solar energy.

The fodder is grown in tray-sized hydroponic systems that require 90 per cent less water since it relies on a soil-less special solution that allows crops to grow twice as fast as in traditional farming. The population uses the fodder to feed their herds allowing them to produce the needed milk and meat thereby becoming less reliant on food aid while also offering sources of income opportunities both by selling fodder and animal products.

Source: World Food Programme (WFP), 2019; and WFP, 2017.

1 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2014.
B. Socioeconomy

Algeria’s economy was essentially agricultural until independence in the early 1960s. It is now mainly based on the export of oil and gas products and, among others, has experienced a substantial rural transformation.\(^2\) Per capita gross domestic product (GDP) stands at about $4,800 with the share of agriculture in total GDP standing at about 12 per cent in 2018.\(^3\)

The country’s population of about 44 million as of 2020 estimated by the United Nations,\(^4\) is concentrated in the narrow coastal strip bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Algeria has experienced fast-paced urbanization, with 72.6 per cent of the inhabitants categorized as urban in 2017, up from 52 per cent in 1990.\(^5\) Poverty is decreasing and is mostly a rural phenomenon; unemployment remains above 10 per cent.\(^6\) The agriculture sector employs more than one fifth of the labour force.\(^7\)

C. Agriculture and food security

Algeria is heavily dependent on food imports and has a food import bill of about $8.4 billion per year.\(^8\) The value of food imports over total merchandise was estimated at 11 per cent in 2011-2013 with Algeria’s large oil export being the reason that agricultural imports as a share of the value of merchandise is on the lower end compared to other Arab countries. In 2016, Algeria dedicated 4.8 per cent of its GDP to food imports compared to 5.22 per cent in 2015, which was a significant increase from 2010, when Algeria dedicated 3.33 per cent of its GDP to food import.

\(^2\) FAO, 2019.  
\(^3\) World Bank, n. d.  
\(^4\) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) Population Division, 2019.  
\(^5\) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.a.  
\(^6\) Trading Economics, n. d.  
\(^7\) Oxford Business Group, 2015.  
\(^8\) Oxford Business Group, 2018.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of Undernourishment (CO1)** decreased from 6.3 per cent in 2010 to 4.7 per cent in 2016 denoting serious efforts exerted towards eradicating undernourishment, notably considering that the prevalence of undernourishment revolved around 10.8 per cent in the early 2000s. The 2016 Arab region average is much higher, at 12.1 per cent;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** affected 8.3 per cent of the population in 2015-2017. Since the indicator was developed recently, there is not enough data to chart a trend starting from 2010. The prevalence is below the Arab regional average (12.2 per cent for 2016);

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** increased from 23.3 per cent in 2010 to 27.4 per cent in 2016, which is at par with the Arab region average (28.4 per cent). Adult obesity is more prevalent among women (34.9 per cent) than among men (19.9 per cent). The overall trend is alarming as Algeria has been recording increasing rates of obesity since 2000, when it stood at 17.4 per cent.9

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** was estimated at 34.6 per cent of potential yields in 2010 and decreased to 26.8 per cent in 2017, compared to a potential Arab regional average wheat yield of 82.2 per cent in 2017. Yields in Algeria tend to fluctuate substantially though with a long-term upward trend;

- **Agriculture Orientation Index (AV2)** data are not available;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** decreased slightly from about 7 per cent in 2010 to 6.8 per cent in 2013, which was equal to the Arab average (6.8 per cent). Food losses data might not be fully accurate as several crops lack related data. They do not also account for food waste;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** increased from 135 per cent in 2010 to 146 per cent in 2017 and is well

9 Knoema, n. d.
above the Arab region average of 131 per cent. The high value points to a high availability of food in markets, which imply that the poorer tranche of the population is likely to have access to food;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** stood at about 72 per cent in 2012, which was substantially higher than the Arab average (65 per cent). The inability to produce more food domestically and a transition towards western diet imply that Algeria has to rely on food imports;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** stands at 54.8 per cent, while the annual renewable water resources availability is only 282.4m³/capita/year, well below the water scarcity threshold of 1,000m³/capita year.

### C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** was about 4 per cent in 2011, well below the Arab average of 16.6 per cent in 2015. Though no recent data are available, a high unemployment rate might suggest that poverty levels might have increased in recent years, particularly with falling oil prices;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** decreased from 43.7 per cent in 2010 to 37.3 per cent in 2018. Despite this decrease, the share of food expenditures is still high, pointing towards low revenues for most of the population;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** was 12.2 per cent in 2018, an increase from 10 per cent in 2010. It is also higher than the Arab regional average, which was at 10.4 per cent in 2018. The high and increasing unemployment rate is an indication of worsening economic conditions, which could hamper access to food;

- **Logistics performance (AC4)** ticked slightly higher between 2010 (2.4) and 2018 (2.5) though it is still below the Arab average (2.7). The country could be facing challenges to supply the needed food in markets, notably in remote areas;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** rose from 3.9 per cent to 4.3 per cent between 2010 and 2018, respectively, though remaining well below the Arab regional average of 12.8 per cent of 2018. The inflation is slightly higher than the accepted healthy range of 2-3 per cent inflation rate per year, which could be an early warning sign of a decrease in access to food.

### D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** progressed from 92.4 per cent in 2010 to 93.6 per cent in 2017, well above the Arab average of 86.9 per cent. The country is moving in the right direction towards achieving the 100 per cent SDG target;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** shows some progress and moved from 86.6 per cent to 87.6 per cent between 2010 and 2017, respectively, higher than the Arab average of 80.8 per cent. Additional efforts need to be exerted if Algeria is to achieve the 100 per cent target of the SDGs by 2030;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** represented 11.7 per cent of all children in 2012. Although it is substantially lower
than the Arab average (22.9 per cent) of 2017 and a major improvement when compared to the year 2000 when it was 23.6 per cent. Algeria still needs to adopt good policies to eradicate stunting;

• **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** is low in Algeria according to the latest recorded figure in 2012 (4.1 per cent), which is a good progress from its 2002 high of 9.6 per cent. It is also lower than the Arab average of 8.7 per cent;

• **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** is high with a percentage of 35.7 per cent in 2016, on par with the average value for the Arab region (35.5 per cent in 2016), though it increased from 33.3 per cent in 2010. This is a concern which needs to be urgently addressed.

### E. Stability

• **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** is low (0.05), indicating that Algeria might not be significantly impacted by climate change, including increase in weather-related disasters, sea-levels rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data were not available;

• **Political stability (ST3)** ranking improved from about 12 in 2010 to 19 in 2018. The ranking is still low on a scale of 100 indicating that the country still faces substantial challenges that might affect food security;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** increased between 2010 ($14,000/capita) and 2016 ($20,300/capita), which was higher than the Arab average ($10,100/capita), which reflects the continued high fluctuations in domestic food production;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** experienced a positive trend between 2010 and 2013 as it decreased from 27 kcal/cap/year to 13 kcal/cap/year and well below the Arab average of 29.8 kcal/cap/year.
Food security dashboard

2010 Data: ▼ High: Proceed Action ▲ Average: More Action ◯ Low: Urgent Action ❔ No Data

Latest Data: ▼ High: Proceed Action ▲ Average: More Action ◯ Low: Urgent Action ❔ No Data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Algeria Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment  R %</td>
<td>12.1 2016</td>
<td>6.3 4.7 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Food insecurity  R %</td>
<td>12.2 2016</td>
<td>n.a. 8.3 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity  R %</td>
<td>28.4 2016</td>
<td>23.3 27.4 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Access Indicators

| AC1  | Poverty  R %                     | 16.6 mult.  | n.a. 3.9 2011  |       |
| AC2  | Food consumption  R %            | n.a.        | 43.7 37.3 2018 |       |
| AC3  | Unemployment  R %                | 10.4 mult.  | 10.0 12.2 2018 |       |
| AC4  | Logistics - index                | 2.7 2016    | 2.4 2.5 2018   |       |
| AC5  | Inflation  R %                   | 12.8 mult.  | 3.9 4.3 2018   |       |

### Utilization Indicators

| UT1  | Drinking water access - %        | 86.9 2015   | 92.4 93.6 2017 |       |
| UT2  | Sanitation access - %            | 80.8 2015   | 86.6 87.6 2017 |       |
| UT3  | Child stunting  R %              | 22.9 mult.  | n.a. 11.7 2012|       |
| UT4  | Child wasting  R %               | 8.7 mult.   | n.a. 4.1 2012 |       |
| UT5  | Women anaemia  R %               | 35.5 2016   | 33.3 35.7 2016 |       |

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases or national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that Algeria’s food security is relatively precarious as evidenced by the core indicators. The country has a low level of undernourishment (CO1) though additional efforts could be exerted as well. However, its food insecurity experience (CO2) is worrying, and obesity (CO3) levels are alarming, indicating that Algeria has to exert more efforts to reverse the low levels within the core pillar of food security.

Yields remain far below their potential (AV1) which further explains its high dependency on food imports (AV5). However, a rise in the average dietary energy supply adequacy (ADESA) indicates continued availability of food, which is good for vulnerable populations despite its potential negative impact on the food import bill (AV4). To buffer against systemic food price shocks, it would be necessary to enhance local wheat production, which in return would mean to increase investments in agriculture (AV2) and related technologies, notably to improve the management of the limited water resources.

Unemployment (AC3) is rising which maycurtail access to food if social safety nets are inadequate and the overall logistics (AC4) remains subpar. Expenditure on food (AC2) experienced a favourable trend while poverty (AC1) is relatively low, which might indicate slightly improving livelihoods conditions, notably for poorer consumers.

UT1 and UT2 show positive trends, which are steps closer to reaching the respective 100 per cent SDG benchmark by 2030. Stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) among children and anaemia in adult women (UT5) are major hotspot areas that need urgent action.

Political stability (ST3) is a hotspot even though it improved slightly while the remaining stability indicators point towards improvement, which could benefit the long-term food security situation of the country.

B. Action areas

To further improve the monitoring of food security, the issue of data availability will need to be addressed. Yearly data are lacking for the agriculture orientation index for Government expenditures and food price anomalies and for a few other indicators. Adequate and accurate data are needed to strengthen the sustainability of Algeria’s food system and, consequently, its food security and nutrition.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Algeria in early February 2020 and, by late September, had affected more than 52,000 people with more than 1,700 recorded deaths. In the early period, until mid-June, Algeria was largely recording less than 100 daily occurrences of COVID-19 with a peak in mid-May. Since mid-June, Algeria witnessed a sharp increase in cases with a peak reaching up to 600 daily cases towards end July, which have since decreased to the mid-May level.10

Prior to the pandemic, 7.4 million people were moderately or severely food insecure.11 However, due to the restrictive measures implemented to control the pandemic, the number of food-insecure people is expected to rise. The household impact survey of vulnerable people in the Tindouf refugee camp shows that 26 per cent of respondents record poor food consumption, out of which 88 per cent do not have enough money to purchase food, and 51 per cent are borderline. Only 16 per cent have an income

Weekly cases

52,136
confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

10 World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.
source. COVID-19 lockdown measures induced a panic buying of food products, especially staples such as semolina and wheat as people feared food shortages. This led to an increase in food prices by up to 2.3 per cent.

General unemployment figures exceeded 12 per cent, but surpassed 20 per cent among higher-education and vocational-training graduates. The pandemic hit Algeria as the country was grappling with demonstrations that have been taking place for over a year and a fall in oil prices that has weakened the country’s economy. In addition, Algeria’s foreign exchange reserves dropped from $193.6 billion in 2014 to less than $60 billion by the end of 2020. These challenges together exacerbated the already low purchasing power of Algerians, which further decreased their access to food. This multidimensional crisis, characterized by political instability, economic decline and a health crisis, raised concerns on the ability of the country to face the pandemic and prevent a deterioration of the food security situation.

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12 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020a.
13 Lockdown measures included banning public gatherings, public transportations and dining venues; closure of public and private schools and universities; and halting of land, air and sea transportation and travelling except for freights.
17 Independent Online (IOL), 2020; and NESAcenter, 2020.
18 The purchasing power of the Algerian population had weakened even before the COVID-19 crisis, after the decline of the dinar by 49 per cent between 2014 and 2019, coupled with an increase in food prices of 2.3 per cent, though salaries had yet to increase since 2012.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives in support of food security

**Government initiatives**
The Government exempted agricultural workers from curfews and facilitated the opening of agricultural input stores to avoid disrupting agricultural activities.

In March, the Government issued new wheat tenders to top up grain reserves and avoid shortages of foodstuff while, in April, it purchased around eight million tons of soft and durum wheat and imposed export bans on food products. The Government postponed customs formalities to speed up customs procedures of imported food.

The Government prioritized investments in the agriculture sector, notably in the cereal sector, including maize, but also sugar and cooking oil. It approved the direct sale of wheat from mills to consumers and encouraged people to buy and consume local produce to reduce reliance on imports.

The Government organized a National Solidarity Convoy from Ghardaia Province in May 2020 to support vulnerable groups in the towns of Ain Qazzam and Tenzawateen in Tamanrasset. It distributed 126 tons of various foodstuffs and 13 tons of mineral water to several public institutions.

**Other initiatives**
The WFP provided assistance to refugees during April-July 2020 that comprised food rations providing an average of 2,120 kcal/day. Saudi Arabia donated 350 tons of dates in July, which allowed WFP to distribute 103 per cent of the planned caloric value. It also provided food for the month of Ramadan, which included 250 grams of barley each to 19,096 households and 1 kg of roasted maize to 9,300 households registered under welfare programmes.

To treat and prevent moderate-to-acute malnutrition and anaemia, WFP provided daily food boxes and fresh food vouchers to an average of 663 women and 8,000 pregnant and lactating women each month (April – July) as well as specialized nutritious food (100 grams) to children. It suspended school feeding programmes while partially continuing the complementary livelihood activities through April and May to support 176 refugee families to produce vegetables and trees as well as to support fish farms.

WFP, together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) allocated $15 million to support food security and other sectors while governmental institutions and NGOs from France, Switzerland, Spain and Brazil provided monetary and other assistance for school feeding programmes, general food and other assistance.

To support the distribution of fresh food vouchers to pregnant and nursing women, WFP donated one car to the Algerian Red Crescent and the Media Lina Roja Saharawi refugee organization.

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a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d. b.
b The Day, 2020; Reuters, 2020; and International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020.
e WFP, 2020b.
f WFP, 2020c.
g WFP, 2020d.
h WFP, 2020e.
References


A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework shows that obesity rates as well as rates of anaemia among women are elevated in Bahrain. The country devotes an excessive amount of water towards food production despite its growing scarcity. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Located in the Arabian Gulf, the Kingdom of Bahrain is the smallest Arab country, at 770.8 km². Bahrain has a large desert and dry land that experience frequent droughts and sandstorms. The land suitable for agriculture is located in the north and north-west though it represents less than 3 per cent of the total land.¹

Box 1. A water-stressed country

With a per capita water availability of less than 100 m³/year, Bahrain is a water-stressed country. Per capita water consumption is around 300 liters per day with domestic water demand accounting for slightly less than 50 per cent of total demand while agriculture requires about 45 per cent and the remaining going towards the industrial and commercial sectors.

Rainfall is limited and inconsistent while evapotranspiration rates are high. Bahrain has an unsustainable rate of groundwater abstraction, as about 54 per cent of the water consumed is extracted from the Dammam and the Rus Umm Eradhuma aquifers. About 70 per cent of the extracted water is directed towards agriculture production. Overabstraction is leading to the rapid deterioration of groundwater quality through salinization and pollution and to the drying of freshwater springs.

To remedy the situation, Bahrain is increasingly tapping on non-conventional water sources. About 36 per cent of its water need is met through desalination and about 10 per cent from treated wastewater, part of which is used for agricultural production, notably in the high water-use efficiency, hydroponic vegetable production. However, the growing water resource scarcity and low water conveyance efficiency are significantly limiting the expansion of domestic food production, making Bahrain heavily dependent on food imports and thereby increasing its susceptibility to volatilities prevailing in global food markets.


B. Socioeconomy

Bahrain has a population of about 1.7 million people making it also one of the most densely populated countries.\textsuperscript{2} It experienced a rapid population growth following the discovery of oil, which resulted in an increased influx of foreign workers. The population lives mostly in cities omit for the north-west, where they live mostly in small villages relying on irrigation to produce horticulture and dairy products.

With a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) above $20,000 in 2017, Bahrain is among the highly affluent countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It has put in place a programme to diversify its economy by investing heavily in the petrochemical and aluminium industries, among others.\textsuperscript{3}

C. Agriculture and food security

Bahrain has a strong agriculture tradition as it was known as the country of a million date palms. Domestic agriculture is oriented towards the production of high-value fresh vegetables. Bahrain used to have a vibrant fishing industry, but it has contracted due to the heavy pollution of the Arabian Gulf. The surviving parts of the fish industry rely on artisanal fishing methods as modern trawlers are prohibited. Aquaculture is now developing fast.\textsuperscript{4}

Bahrain imports most of its food with the implication that food supply shocks such as those of the last decade as well as market and price volatility are usually a cause of concern. To remedy the situation, Bahrain has been increasingly investing in the food industry including research and development, notably for innovative technologies such as space management, irrigation techniques and the establishment of a network of food storage systems.\textsuperscript{5}

Bahrain imports up to 90 per cent of its cereal needs, which include rice and wheat.\textsuperscript{6} There is some domestic production of poultry and small ruminants, dates, eggs, milk, and some vegetables such as okra and tomato.\textsuperscript{7} Significant State subsidies are aimed towards the agriculture sector and irrigation systems.

\textsuperscript{2} United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), Population Division, 2019; and Lehane, S., 2015.
\textsuperscript{3} Lehane, 2015.
\textsuperscript{4} Crystal and Smith, 2020; Lehane, 2015; and Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB), 2014.
\textsuperscript{5} Bahrain EDB, 2014.
\textsuperscript{6} Lehane, 2015.
\textsuperscript{7} Galal, O., M. Corroon and C. Tirado, 2010.
A. Core indicators

• **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** is considered non-existent as it is well below the 2.5 per cent threshold at which it starts being recorded. This is usually the case for high-income countries;

• **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was estimated at 6.6 per cent in 2016, which is about half the average of the Arab region of 12.2 per cent.\(^8\) The national data provided were not accurately reported;

• **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** increased from 26.6 per cent in 2010 to 60 per cent in 2016 according to national estimates while the World Health Organization (WHO) puts it at 29.8 per cent. These levels are higher than the Arab regional average of 28.4 per cent. The increasing obesity is attributed to a change in diet towards a more Western style diet that contains more meat and dairy products and fast foods and sugary soft drinks.\(^9\)

B. Availability

• **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available as Bahrain is not a producer of wheat;

• **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;

• **Food losses to food available (AV3)** data are not available;

• **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)**, according to national estimates was at 100 per cent in both 2010 and 2017. Being a high-income country, the level is adequate to ensure food availability and utilization for the entire population;

• **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** decreased slightly from 94 per cent in 2010 to 90 per cent in 2018, which is substantially higher than the Arab region average of 65 per cent. The high dependence on food imports might affect food availability and accessibility in times of food markets volatility; however, the country is well-endowed financially to weather out such periods of uncertainty;

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\(^8\) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2019.

\(^9\) Galal, Corroon and Tirado, 2010.
• Water resources used in agriculture (AV6) was at 68.3 per cent in 2010 and 69.3 per cent in 2017, a negative trend that highlights the unsustainability of the use of water resources for agricultural production in Bahrain.

C. Access

• Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1) national estimates were at 0 per cent for both 2010 and 2018 while the Arab regional average was at 16.6 per cent in 2015; compared to 10.4 per cent for the Arab region. Bahrain is at full employment;

• Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2) shows a positive progress between 2010 and 2018 as it declined from 25 per cent to 21 per cent, respectively. However, for a high-income country, this share is high given that the average in the European Union is only 12 per cent, which is an indication of either low levels of income or high food prices;

• Unemployment rate (AC3) was at 3.6 per cent in 2010 and 3.7 per cent in 2016

• Logistics performance (AC4) was 3.4 in 2010 but decreased slightly to 3.3 in 2016. Generally speaking, the transport and port infrastructures in Bahrain are of good standard, which decreases challenges in the food supply chain;

• Inflation, consumer prices (AC5) was at 2.1 per cent in 2018, a slight increase compared to 2010 with 1.96 per cent. A healthy inflation rate is usually comprised between 2-3 per cent.

D. Utilization

• Population using basic drinking water services (UT1) reached 100 per cent of the population in 2010;

• Population using basic sanitation services (UT2) was also at 100 per cent by 2010;

• Stunting in children under five years (UT3) had no official data in 2018 while it was only 5.8 per cent in 2010, well below the Arab regional average of 22.9 per cent. Children stunting in Bahrain is well within the “low severity of malnutrition” classification of WHO;

• Wasting in children under five years (UT4) was similarly low as officially reported at 3.3 per cent in 2018 and no data in 2010. The Arab regional average is at 8.7 per cent;

• Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5), however, is among the highest in the Arab region, at 41.5 per cent in 2010 and 42 per cent in 2016. These rates are well above the Arab region’s average of 35.5 per cent in 2016. This situation is alarming as the values are also well above the targets set by WHO for 2030 of 15.2 per cent.10

10 FAO and others, 2019.
E. Stability

• **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** was 0.05 in 2018 meaning that Bahrain is not being much affected by weather disasters, loss of agricultural productivity or sea-level rise, the components of the index;

• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

• **Political stability (ST3)** indicator decreased between 2010 and 2018 from a ranking of about 29 to 17, respectively, which depicts a decrease in sociopolitical stability following the unrests that swept throughout the region in the early 2010s. National data were not used for this indicator as there might have been a misperception on its computation;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** shows no significant change at just below $2,000\textsuperscript{11} per capita in both 2010 and 2016;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** data are not available as the national data provided might have been misconstrued.

---

\textsuperscript{11} Constant 2004-2006 international USD.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bahrain Latest Value</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment R %</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity R %</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV1</td>
<td>Wheat yields - %</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV2</td>
<td>Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
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<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV3</td>
<td>Food loss R %</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV4</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply %</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>2017</td>
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</tr>
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<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency R %</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV6</td>
<td>Agriculture water R %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>68.3</td>
<td>69.3</td>
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<td>Poverty R %</td>
<td>16.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption R %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment R %</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation R %</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting R %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting R %</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia R %</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>42.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases or national sources.
A. **Drivers and determinants**

Regarding the food security core pillar, Bahrain is a high-income country and, as such, is not much challenged by the issues of undernourishment and food insecurity experience even though it slightly underperforms regarding the latter. As an affluent economy, however, it is increasingly facing high obesity (CO3) rates, especially among women, which needs to be addressed through appropriate dietary interventions and nutrition policies given that the prevalence of anaemia among women is also high.

**Hotspots include the following:**

- **Availability dimension:** dietary energy supply (AV4), import dependency (AV5) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Utilization dimension:** wasting among children (UT4) and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability dimension:** political stability (ST3).

B. **Action areas**

As a country that relies mainly on food imports, food production might not be high on the agenda of policymakers. However, given that local food production uses more than 69 per cent of total water withdrawals, the issue needs to be addressed urgently with a view to conserving water. Enhancing the efficient use of the scarce water and other resources (natural and financial) in agriculture is a necessity.

The issue of data availability is very important to monitor food security. There is a need to enhance and promote adequate data collection to facilitate monitoring of both food security and resource use in agriculture to limit waste. Data on food import and food loss are also missing. Given the missing data and the inaccuracies for a number of indicators, the results of this monitoring exercise are more indicative than authoritative in terms of food security and nutrition analysis.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Bahrain on February 24, 2020 and, by the end of September, had affected more than 70,000 people with more than 260 deaths. Daily cases peaked at about 600 between the end of June and early July and slightly in August before peaking again in September.\(^\text{12}\)

**Weekly cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td><strong>73,116</strong></td>
<td>2k</td>
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<td>2k</td>
<td>2k</td>
<td>2k</td>
<td>2k</td>
<td>2k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**confirmed cases**

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n.d.

Measures to stem the spread of the disease\(^\text{13}\) have targeted commercial businesses that provide non-essential services while those providing essential services such as supermarkets, banks, bakeries, or healthcare services, remained open.

In April, the Food Wealth Committee assured the availability of all food products including meat and poultry. As a result of business closures, people struggled financially to buy food and butter, among others.\(^\text{14}\)

Unemployment rate among Bahrainis is at 4.7 per cent and is expected to decrease in 2021 to reach 3.8 per cent.\(^\text{15}\)

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12 WHO, n.d.
13 Suspended dine in services, restricted religious services, prohibited more than five individuals gathering. Wristbands that track locations were distributed to people, it would monitor and send warnings when two people are 15 – meters apart. Passenger traffic at the airport were 98% less than usual.
15 Nordea Trade Portal, n. d.
Box 2. Examples of Government-led initiatives

On April 17, the GCC approved the establishment of a common food supply network among its six member states to improve the supply of food to and between these countries.a

In May, the Government signed an agreement with a private-sector entity to enhance and improve food security in Bahrain. The programme provides land and fish fingerlings to boost vegetable production by at least 20 per cent as well as fish self-sufficiency by 50–60 per cent.b

The Food Wealth Committee instructed food dealers, food retailers, supermarkets and hypermarkets not to raise prices of food commodities during the Holy month of Ramadan.c

Examples of other initiatives

Between February and May 2020, the Indian community in Bahrain received and distributed about 1,500 food kits sufficient for nearly two weeks to more than 5,000 of its members in need. Food kits contained staple food (rice and wheat), legumes (lentils), cooking oil, long-life milk, eggs, tea, sugar and food seasoning (coriander and chili powder).d

In April 2020, freshly homemade cooked food was distributed to unemployed salon workers, domestic workers, migrant workers and workers living in camps.e

More than 430,000 iftar kits were distributed during the month of Ramadan (April-May) to thousands of people who were economically or financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including expatriate workers, and an additional 100,000 meals were distributed after the month of Ramadan.f

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a Middle East Monitor (2020).
b The Fish Site, 2020.
d Starvision News, 2020c; and 2020d.
e Starvision News, 2020e; and 2020f.
f Starvision News, 2020g.
References


Comoros
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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights that rates of undernourishment and the food insecurity experience scale are elevated in the Comoros, as are rates of child stunting and wasting and anaemia among women. Adequate data is needed for proper monitoring. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

The archipelago of Comoros is located in the Indian Ocean, between Mozambique and Madagascar, with a total area of 1,660 km², most of which is arable. The country lacks major streams and thus relies mostly on rainfall for its water need as it gets up to 2,900 mm/year of rainfall.¹

Box 1. Fisheries hold potential for improving food security in the Comoros

Due to its location in the Indian Ocean and to its relatively large coastline, it is unsurprising that fishing is an important source of livelihood. It is also a significant contributor to the national economy and to employment as an estimated 30 per cent of the population is dependent on this sector.

The Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis published by the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2006 found that the most vulnerable segment of the population were the farmers and the fisherfolk as they are exposed to periodic shocks. Fifteen per cent of the fishing and agricultural households consumed just one meal per day, and 67 per cent consumed two or fewer meals. Additionally, 47 per cent of infant death was due to illnesses related to malnutrition. The study also indicated that food insecurity was largely due to failure in access to food, as the majority of the population lived under the poverty line.

Fisheries can play an important role in nutrition as a source of high-quality protein, and fish consumption is several folds the world average. Yet, the sector needs strengthening and control as fish catches are starting to decline.

Source: World Food Programme (WFP), 2006.

B. Socioeconomy

The country’s economy, unlike most other Arab countries, is largely based on agriculture and fishing (close to 50 per cent), which generate most of the foreign exchanges.² The population is small (about 850,000), and the gross domestic product

(GDP) is $1.2 billion or $1,362 per capita and a public debt of 31.2 per cent of GDP in 2018.³ The country relies heavily on remittances from an estimated one quarter of the population that works outside the country. Microbusinesses contribute significantly to women’s incomes, who account for 20 per cent of the employment in petty trade and similar endeavours.

C. Agriculture and food security

Comoros relies heavily on food imports to meet its food needs with food import representing 31 per cent of total imports in 2018.⁴ Agriculture production consists essentially of fisheries, the production of bourbon vanilla, ylang ylang, cloves coffee and cacao, most of which are destined for export. Staple produces include cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas and rainfed rice though they are insufficient to feed the growing population.

³ Trading Economics, n. d.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

• Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1) data are not available;

• Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2) data are not available. WFP study of 2016 (box 1) indicated that food insecurity affected a large part of the population, but these data need updating;

• Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3) is low but exhibited a slight increase from 6 per cent in 2010 to 7.8 per cent in 2016 while staying well below the Arab regional average (28 per cent).

B. Availability

• Wheat yield to potential (AV1) data are not available;

• Agriculture orientation index (AV2) data are not available;

• Food losses to food available (AV3) data are not available;

• Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4) is low (105 per cent in 2017), which implies that a portion of the population might not have access to sufficient food to fulfil its dietary needs. This value is far below the Arab region average of 131 per cent in 2017;

• Wheat import dependency (AV5) data are not available, FAO notes that Comoros is a food deficit country and that up to 40 per cent of the food is imported;\(^5\)

• Water resources used in agriculture (AV6) data are not available, but Comoros has 1,474 m\(^3\)/capita/year of total renewable water resources, a supply that is well above water scarcity levels.

\(^5\) Breuil and Grima, 2014.
C. Access

- **Poverty at 3.2$ per day (AC1)** was recorded at 37.5 per cent of the population in 2013. Although no earlier or more recent data are available to compare against, this standing is alarming as more than one third of the country’s entire population lives in poverty;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data are not available;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** decreased between 2010 and 2018 from 4.2 per cent to 3.7 per cent, respectively. Women unemployment rates were estimated at 4.06 per cent in 2018 while youth unemployment was at 8.47 per cent for the same year. The majority of the labour force in Comoros (56.9 per cent) works in agriculture;⁶

- **Logistical performance (AC4)** is about average with 2.5 in 2010 and 2.6 in 2018. This could be a major deterrent to physical access to food though the Comoros are made up of small islands on which movement is easy;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was at 3.35 per cent in 2010 while the country experienced a deflation (-4.3 per cent) in 2013, suggesting the possibility of a lack of adequate economic growth.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached 83.4 per cent of the population in 2010 but decreased to 80.2 per cent in 2017, a negative trend which pushed Comoros further away from achieving the related goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** is very low (35.9 per cent in 2017). This is an alarming situation that affects food security in general and human health in particular and is one of the lowest values recorded in the region;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** affected 32.1 per cent in 2012. Earlier data is not available to compare against but the low values point to an alarming situation as it is far from the World Health Assembly’s (WHA) target for 2030 of 12.2 per cent;

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** affected 11.1 per cent in 2012. Earlier data are not available, but the situation is concerning as it falls within the range of a high severity of malnutrition according to the classification of the World Health Organization (WHO). The country is far from achieving the World Health Assembly’s (WHA) target for 2030 of 3 per cent;

- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** affected 28 per cent in 2010 compared to 29.3 per cent in 2016, which is below the regional average (35.5 per cent in 2016). This high value points to alarming nutritional insecurity.

---

⁶ World Bank, n. d.
E. Stability

- Climate change vulnerability (ST1) data are not available;
- Food price anomalies (ST2) data are not available;
- Political stability (ST3) rose from a ranking of about 27 in 2010 to 39 in 2018, depicting an improving sociopolitical situation in the country;
- Food production variability (ST4), already low in 2010 ($4,500), decreased further to reach $1,600\(^7\) per capita indicating a stable production of food across time;
- Food supply variability (ST5) also favourably decreased from 39 to 15 kcal/capita/day between 2010 and 2013. This is a positive indicator of stability of food supply over time.

\(^7\) Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
## Food security indicators, Comoros

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<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Availability Indicators

| AV1  | Wheat yields - %             | 82.2        | 2017       | n.a.           | n.a.  |
| AV2  | Agriculture expenditure - index | n.a.     | n.a.       | n.a.           | n.a.  |
| AV3  | Food loss 9 %                 | 6.8         | 2013       | n.a.           | n.a.  |
| AV4  | Dietary energy supply - %     | 131         | 2017       | 106            | 105   | 2017   | 🟠     |
| AV5  | Wheat Import dependency 9 %   | 65.0        | 2012       | n.a.           | n.a.  |
| AV6  | Agriculture water 9 %         | n.a.        | n.a.       | n.a.           | n.a.  |

### Access Indicators

| AC1  | Poverty 9 %                   | 16.6        | mult.      | n.a.           | 37.5  | 2013   |
| AC2  | Food consumption 9 %          | n.a.        | n.a.       | n.a.           |      |       |
| AC3  | Unemployment 9 %              | 10.4        | mult.      | 4.2            | 3.7   | 2018   | 🟠     |
| AC4  | Logistics - index             | 2.7         | 2016       | 2.5            | 2.6   | 2018   | 🟠     |
| AC5  | Inflation 9 %                 | 12.8        | mult.      | 3.4            | -4.3  | 2013   | 🟠     |

### Utilization Indicators

| UT1  | Drinking water access - %     | 86.9        | 2015       | 83.4           | 80.2  | 2017   | 🟠     |
| UT2  | Sanitation access - %         | 80.8        | 2015       | 34.3           | 35.9  | 2017   | 🟠     |
| UT3  | Child stunting 9 %            | 22.9        | mult.      | n.a.           | 32.1  | 2012   |
| UT4  | Child wasting 9 %             | 8.7         | mult.      | n.a.           | 11.1  | 2012   |
| UT5  | Women anaemia 9 %             | 35.5        | 2016       | 28.0           | 29.3  | 2016   | 🟠     |

### Stability Indicators

| ST1  | Climate change 9 - index      | 0.1         | 2019       | n.a.           | n.a.  |
| ST2  | Price Anomalies 9 - index     | n.a.        | n.a.       | n.a.           | n.a.  |
| ST3  | Political stability - ranking | 14          | 2017       | 27             | 39    | 2018   | 🟠     |
| ST4  | Production variability 9 - $1,000/capita | 10.1 | 2016 | 4.5 | 1.6 | 2016 | 🟠 |
| ST5  | Supply variability 9 - kcal/cap/day | 29.8 | 2013 | 39.0 | 15.0 | 2013 | 🟠 |

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases (including, but not limited to, FAOSTAT, ILOSTAT, World Bank, AQUASTAT), according to each indicator’s accredited data source.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The core pillar indicators show a poor performance in terms of undernourishment (CO1) and food insecurity experience (CO2) with a slight bright spot in terms of obesity (CO3), which is slightly increasing though.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: Dietary energy supply (AV4);
- **Access**: logistical performance (AC4);
- **Utilization**: sanitation (UT2), stunting among children (UT3), wasting among children (UT4) and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability**: political stability (ST3).

The lack of data for a large number of indicators (10 out of 24), and the reliance on some indicators such as wheat yield gap that may be relevant for the majority of Arab countries, but not for a small island State such as Comoros is a limiting factor to the use of the framework. For instance, due to the absence of the two tier-one Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators related to food security which are also core indicators in the framework (CO1 and CO2), it is difficult to obtain a full picture of the food security situation.

Data for obesity (CO3) indicate that the country has one of the lowest rates of adult obesity in the region. Coupled with pervasive poverty, a high dependence on food imports and a severely deficient trade balance, it is expected that the calorific intake of a large proportion of the population would be below acceptable norms.

The low average dietary supply adequacy compared to most countries in the world (close to 100 per cent, noting that this is an average figure) confirms the above fact, as does the high prevalence of stunting among children under 5 along with a relatively high prevalence of wasting within the same group. This is aggravated by the low levels of access to clean water facilities (UT1) and to sanitation services (UT2), especially in rural areas, where also the low logistics performance index points to a deficiency in physical access to food for more than half of the population employed in agriculture.

B. Action areas

There is no doubt that serious measures must be taken to improve food security in Comoros, starting with improving data collection in order to be able to plan and
strategize adequately. It is imperative to develop the infrastructure and improve physical access to food. Given the economic imbalances in the country, sectoral diversification must be prioritized. Sustainable and socially equitable tourism may offer a viable alternative.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Comoros on January 3 and, by early October, had affected about 480 people with about seven deaths recorded. A peak of about 65 cases was reached early June with lower peaks occurring in both mid-July and mid-August.8

Weekly cases

![Weekly cases chart](chart)

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

Comoros’ economy is not very diversified, which makes the country highly vulnerable to external shocks. Global trade disruptions that might occur due to the pandemic, especially restrictions that could be imposed by Europe and India, the two largest importers, of 35 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively, of total exports from Comoros, would strain the economy of the country. Disruptions in global trade and reductions in inter-island movement of goods and a general decline in economic activities of the country, negatively impacted the country’s ability to export its products on international markets. This, in turn, negatively affected the agricultural sector, which is one of the driving forces of the Comorian economy (46 per cent of GDP, 57 per cent of jobs and almost all export earnings), and reduced the income

8 World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.
of the high number of unskilled labourers in the agricultural sector, which is the mainstay of the economy.

The unemployment rate increased as employees in the tourism, transport and manufacturing sectors lost their jobs. Mostly impacted were those in the informal economy who are estimated to represent 79.2 per cent of all jobs in Comoros, all female jobs, and contributed to 70 per cent of GDP. The decrease in income in these households highly affected their purchasing power.

Measures to stem the spread of the disease included suspension of big gatherings and social events, closure of educational institutions and worship places, and a curfew running from 8:00 at night to 5:00 in the morning. The measures decreased the local demand of food notably as prices of imported tuber vegetables from Tanzania and Madagascar increased by 33 per cent.

The decrease in income, coupled with a decrease in remittances (especially from France whose economy was highly affected by the pandemic), together with increased food prices, are likely to negatively affect the food security of the population.

The low access to safe drinking water and sanitation in the country puts it also at higher risk of disease spreading as hygiene and safety practices become minimal.

Box 2. Examples of Government-led initiatives

Government-led initiatives include the following:

• Easing customs measures and reduced custom duties and taxes, on food and others, by 30 per cent for importers allowing them to clear imports in one day;

• Banning water and electricity companies from cutting off services to households;

• Establishing a price control system to monitor prices of essential goods in the market to prevent price increase or inflation.

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A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights that Djibouti has elevated rates of undernourishment as well as child stunting and wasting and anaemia among women. The country is highly dependent on food imports and lacks adequate natural resources, further weakening its food security. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Djibouti has an area of about 23,000 km² and is located on the littoral of the Horn of Africa. It is one of the driest and least fertile among Arab nations. Rainfall is limited in quantity and timing and does not exceed 380 mm in areas where it rains most. Arable land is limited to a few wadis.¹

Box 1. Refugees in a poor country

The turbulent geopolitical situation of the countries of the Horn of Africa has resulted in a refugee population estimated at 30,000, half of whom are from Somalia, one third Ethiopians and 15 per cent Yemenis. There are also refugees from Eritrea and other African nationalities. About 80 per cent of the refugees live in camps and are cared for by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), while their food security is the responsibility of the World Food Programme (WFP), which provides them with a combination of food and cash-based assistance.

The country has recently legislated in favour of integrating the refugees into the national health and education system. This change was a result of the implementation of Djibouti’s Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which emphasizes on promoting refugee self-reliance and inclusion together with the provision of adequate support to communities hosting refugees. Previously, the health care of refugees was primarily assured by international organizations. Various restrictions existed for the employment of refugees omit in the informal sector where they were mostly involved in domestic assistance, fishing, restaurants and general labour.

To support Djibouti, international aid was also stepped up through innovative initiatives such as promoting the use of renewable energy technologies in the camps.

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2017; and World Food Programme (WFP), 2011.

¹ Cutbill, C. C. and P. J. Schraeder, 2019; and World Food Programme (WFP), 2011.
B. Socioeconomy

Urbanization is very pronounced, and up to 75 per cent of the population of 900,000 live in cities. Nearly 80 per cent of the rural people live below the poverty line.

The economy relies mostly on the services sector, which makes up about four-fifths of the gross domestic product (GDP), which amounted to about $2 billion in 2019 or about $1,600 per capita.\(^2\) However, the country’s location on the interface between Red Sea and Indian Ocean, and a well-protected gulf confer the port of Djibouti a special importance. A new Chinese-Djiboutian joint venture has resulted in a new multipurpose terminal in Doraleh, which contributes to turning Djibouti into a true hub for all merchandise transiting to inland countries, especially for humanitarian aid of which Djibouti is a main recipient.

C. Agriculture and food security

Djibouti heavily depends on food imports, and, according to WFP, 34 per cent of all households suffered from chronic food insecurity in 2017, while in rural areas the figure is closer to 60 per cent.

Limited agriculture is practiced in the wadis and consists of a few vegetables and dates. The remaining agricultural production consist of nomadic pastoralism on meagre rangelands and forests covering 1 per cent of the land.\(^3\) A quasi-drought in 2018 resulted in a further decline of the sector and in restricting the income of some of the poorest households, while high food prices constitute a main hindrance to the food security of households.\(^4\)

One decade ago, the Government of Djibouti attempted to acquire lands in the neighbouring Sudan and Ethiopia in order to complement its ailing agricultural production with oil crops and cereals. The project succeeded for a few years but had to stop in 2016 due to security reasons in Ethiopia and to land impoverishment in the Sudan.\(^5\)

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3 Cutbill and Schraeder, 2019.
5 Ibid.
A. Core indicators

- Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1) affected 22.3 per cent of people in 2010 and 19.7 per cent in 2016. Even though this is a positive progress towards lowering the prevalence of undernourishment, Djibouti still has one of the highest rates in the Arab region, the average of which was at 12.1 per cent in 2016;

- Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2) data are not available;

- Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3) rates slightly increased from 11 per cent in 2010 to 13.5 per cent in 2016, significantly lower than the Arab regional average of 28.4 per cent. The slight increase might point to a beginning nutritional transition, which might increase obesity rates.

B. Availability

- Wheat yield to potential (AV1) data are not available;

- Agriculture orientation index (AV2) data are not available;

- Food losses to food available (AV3) decreased from 2.06 per cent to 0.54 per cent between 2010 and 2013, showing a potentially improving situation, notably compared to the Arab region (6.8 per cent in 2013). However, accurate data might be lacking and the country imports most of its food, which tends to be better handled;

- Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4), in 2010 and 2017, was among the lowest in the region, at 105 per cent and 109 per cent, respectively; this indicates a possible lack of food access by the most vulnerable. This value is much lower than the Arab region’s average of 131 per cent of 2017;

- Wheat import dependency (AV5) was fixed at 100 per cent between 2010 and 2012 as Djibouti is a net importer of food, which puts it at the mercy of global market price fluctuations;

- Water resources used in agriculture (AV6) data are not available. However, the per capita share of total renewable water resources stands at 313.5 m$^3$/capita/year, less than half the water scarcity level of 1000m$^3$/capita/year.
C. **Access**

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** was the second highest in the Arab region in 2017 at 40.2 per cent. This is more than double the Arab regional average of 16.6 per cent. Rural poverty is especially high;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data are not available;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** decreased from 12.5 per cent to 11.1 per cent between 2010 and 2018, which was a positive trend. The gender gap does not seem to be very wide when it comes to employment as 10.4 per cent of men are unemployed compared to 12 per cent of women;

- **Logistical performance (AC4)** had a very shy improvement from 2.4 in 2010 to 2.6 in 2018, an indication of possible hurdles ensures food access in remote areas;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** decreased from 3.95 per cent to 0.2 per cent between 2010 and 2018, an indication of improved affordability and an eventual ease of economic access to food.

D. **Utilization**

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** data show that around one quarter of the population still lacked access to the service in both 2010 and 2017, which is 10 points below the Arab region average of 86 per cent;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** access was only 55 per cent in 2010 and 64 per cent in 2017 compared to 80 per cent for the Arab average. Serious efforts need to be exerted for the country to halve the percentage of people without access by 2030;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** was at 33.5 per cent in 2012. The value falls within the range of high severity of malnutrition according to classification by the World Health Organization (WHO) and far from the 2030 targets set by the World Health Assembly (WHA); 

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** was at 21.5 per cent in 2012. The value also falls within the range of high severity of malnutrition according to WHO classification and is far from the 2030 targets set by WHA;

- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** was on the rise between 2010 and 2016 and recorded at 30.9 per cent and 32.7 per cent, respectively, almost double of the 2030 target value set by WHA.

E. **Stability**

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)**, at 0.33, was among the highest in the Arab region, indicating that the country would get strongly impacted by the combined

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6 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others, 2019.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
effects of the increase in weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

- **Political stability (ST3)** decreased from 53 to 41 between 2010 and 2018. Although this is an unfavourable decrease, the value remains within the middle range for this indicator;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** stands at $1,400\(^9\) per capita in 2016, a decreasing trend from $10,300 per capita in 2010. This decrease comes as a positive sign of more stability in food production. However, this value might not affect food availability much as the country produces minimal amounts of food;\(^{10}\)

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** increased from 20 kcal/capita/day to 29 kcal/capita/day between 2010 and 2013. This increase is alarming as the country is a net importer of food and its ADESA is already relatively low.

---

\(^9\) Current 2004-2006 International USD.

\(^{10}\) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020.
Food security dashboard

Djibouti

2010 Data:    

Latest Data:    

Performance:    

High: Proceed Action    

Average: More Action    

Low: Urgent Action    

No Data
### Food security indicators, Djibouti

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#### AVAILABILITY INDICATORS

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<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC6</td>
<td>Inflation  🟢 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.8</td>
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#### UTILIZATION INDICATORS

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<th>Arab</th>
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<th>Value</th>
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<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>mult.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>21.5</td>
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<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia  🟢 %</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
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#### STABILITY INDICATORS

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<th>Value</th>
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<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>🟢</td>
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<td>ST4</td>
<td>Production variability  🟢 - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>29.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 🟢 : Reversed During Normalization
- 🟢 : Red: Negative Trend
- 🟢 : Yellow: Neutral Trend
- 🟢 : Green: Positive Trend
- n.a.= Not Available
- mult.= Multiple years

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases (including, but not limited to FAOSTAT, ILOSTAT, World Bank and AQUASTAT), according to each indicator’s accredited data source.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework core indicators show a challenging food security situation for Djibouti as the country is suffering from undernourishment (CO1) and relatively elevated rates of obesity (CO3) while it lacks data on food security experience.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: dietary energy supply (AV4) and food import dependency (AV5);
- **Access**: poverty (AC1) and unemployment (AC3);
- **Utilization**: stunting (UT3), wasting (UT4) and anaemia in women (UT5);
- **Stability**: climate change impact (ST1).

The framework lacks data for six indicators for the latest year and a bit more for 2010. This means that it is hard to paint a comprehensive picture of the trend of food security and, consequently, identify the proper actions to be undertaken to improve it.

However, food security is a serious concern in Djibouti, with a significant proportion of the population being exposed to chronic food insecurity. The large value for the prevalence of undernourishment (nearly 20 per cent), the rising obesity and the low dietary energy supply confirm the findings of WFP that nearly half of the inhabitants of Djibouti experience food insecurity. About the same proportion of the population lives under the poverty line, which indicates that food insecurity in Djibouti is essentially a problem of economic access.

The unemployment figures indicate that a large proportion of the people is unemployed or might be employed in the informal sector, and disaggregated data show that both men and women are involved in the labour market. Thus, the problem is essentially one of inability to purchase food with current incomes. Indeed, WFP reports that a proportion of the population uses the totality of its income to purchase food. The nutritional outcome of this situation is clear in the indicators: high and concerning figures for child wasting, child stunting and women’s anaemia. This is exacerbated by weak logistical performance, total reliance on imports for the main staples and political instability.
B. Action areas

There is no silver policy bullet for Djibouti. There has to be a concerted effort between the Government, Arab countries and international aid organizations. The State must seek to stimulate the economy by making use of Djibouti’s strategic position, building on successful ventures such as the Doraleh terminal, while ensuring that a system for benefit-sharing and social safety is put in place.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Djibouti in early March 2020 and, by late September, had affected more than 5,400 people with around 60 deaths. Djibouti witnessed successive peaks with the highest and longest recorded between late May and early June at slightly more than 200 cases occurring daily.

### Weekly cases

![Weekly cases chart](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Cases</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2021</td>
<td>1k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

Due to the restrictive measures implemented to control the pandemic, the number of food-insecure people in rural and urban areas is expected to rise. Unemployment was relatively high before the pandemic, estimated at 76 per cent of the population between the age of 15 and 35. In June, the Intergovernmental Agency on Development estimated that the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic led to the loss of more than 30,000 jobs, more than 10,000 informal jobs and 20,000 formal jobs, and to 31.5 per cent of households living in poverty. In July, the cost of food increased by 6.3 per cent compared to July 2019.

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11 WHO, n. d.
12 Suspension of commercial flights, lessons at schools and universities, and closure of religious sites.
14 ACAPS, n. d.
15 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), 2020; United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Djibouti, 2020; and TradingEconomics, n. d.
According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix, 26.5 per cent and 18 per cent of movements during May and July, respectively, were forced movements due to food insecurity. IOM continued to provide food and non-food assistance to migrants.\textsuperscript{16}

In April, floods caused by heavy rain hit multiple cities, which led to loss of homes, displaced more people and disrupted the livelihoods of 110,254 and 6,000 people in urban areas and in rural and peri-urban areas, respectively, including agropastoralists. Locust invaded the country and led to estimated crop and pasture losses worth $5 million.\textsuperscript{17}

The “Rising Djibouti” fundraising campaign, launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government, aims at boosting livelihoods and the local economy after being impacted by COVID-19-related restrictive measures, through microgrants (to 30,000 beneficiaries) and finance stimulus packages to 20,000 self-owned businesses.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{16} International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2020.
\textsuperscript{17} IGAD, 2020.
\textsuperscript{18} United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2020.
\end{footnotesize}
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**

The Government distributed food vouchers to vulnerable households affected by the pandemic.a

In May, the Government, in collaboration with Japan and WFP, initiated food-for-asset-creation activities aiming to support 7,000 beneficiaries.b

WFP and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in coordination with the Government, completed in-kind and cash food distributions to 6,100 refugees and the distribution of general food assistance and firewood to 5,400 individuals. WFP and the Government initiated a cash-based assistance aiming at providing $56 to 6,100 households. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) contributed by providing cash for three months for 450 households, eventually targeting 5,000 households; 3,917 households were reached by the end of August. One thousand urban refugees and 200 Djiboutian households in host communities were provided with three-month food vouchers by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, the National Office for Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims (ONARS) and UNHCR. WFP, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) distributed food parcels to 528 migrants.c

**Other initiatives**

Between early March and early May, WFP provided more than 18,000 households in various districts of Balbala suburb with general food assistance.d

In June, WFP completed the distribution of in-kind and cash food assistance to 21,000 refugees and asylum seekers. By the end of June, WFP shifted to take-home rations instead of school canteens. In July and August, WFP distributed double rations to 1,400 households while continuing food-for-assets activities with 1,200 households. Nutrition commodities to prevent and treat malnutrition in pregnant and lactating women and children were distributed as well. A third distribution cycle started by the end of August targeting 2,500 households.e

IOM distributed food and non-food items to 460 migrants in Loyada and Obock.f

For two months, WFP distributed food parcels to families who had their agricultural livelihood impacted by the pandemic and locust invasions.g

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a International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020.
c Ibid.
d Ibid.
e Ibid.
f Ibid.
g Ibid.
References


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A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights that obesity rates are elevated in Egypt, as are rates of child stunting and wasting as well as anaemia among women. The country is a major wheat producer but also a large importer, which could jeopardize its food security. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. **Natural resources**

The main characteristic of Egypt is the dominance of the Nile River, which provides most of the water resources of the country and is used for irrigation. In its upper part, the river runs through a narrow valley while the lower part opens into a fertile delta all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. The coastal regions with limited fertility and rainfall are sparsely populated though they offer opportunities for developing resorts. In about one third of the country, the Nile runs over Nubian sandstone which allows for some agricultural activities in few oases.¹

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**Box 1. The role of Egypt’s social protection system in food security**

Food subsidies, especially on bread, have long been the backbone of Egypt’s social protection system, which amounted to up to 9.7 per cent of GDP in 2015/2016. However, the country has a high prevalence of child undernutrition and, at the same time, an increasingly high prevalence of obesity notably among children and women, a further indication that the food subsidy programme might be ineffective in improving the nutritional status of the population. Egypt is also experiencing a shift in dietary patterns as a result of the growing affluence while the current design of the food subsidy system might diminish the ability of Egyptians to adapt their diets as the system facilitates access to high-energy yet low-micronutrient content.²

Under pressure from donors and lenders, these subsidies are being transformed into more targeted programmes such as direct cash transfers to the most vulnerable.³ The target population consists of some 2.1 million households including pregnant and lactating women, families with children under 18, elderly and people with disabilities. School meal programmes are among other social safety net initiatives which intend to cover 12 million school children. Today, 80 per cent of the population receives food subsidies in one form or another including through a subsidy card programme that provides bread at less than one tenth of the cost and allows beneficiaries to replace bread with a selection from 44 other designated food products.⁴

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¹ Goldschmidt, A. E. and others, 2019.
² Ecker, O. and others, 2016.
³ World Food Programme (WFP), 2018.
⁴ FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), 2019.
B. Socioeconomy

With a population of 102 million, Egypt is the Arab region’s most populated country. In 2018, its gross domestic product (GDP) was some $250 billion, with a per capita income of $2,573. Poverty and inequality are the two main challenges impeding the country’s achievement of food and nutrition security. Due to its high dependence on global food markets, the country’s poor are particularly vulnerable to food-price fluctuations, especially after the flotation of the Egyptian pound in 2016. Moreover, Egypt has received up to 200,000 migrants and refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere since 2011. They mostly live in overcrowded urban settlements, and a 2016 survey indicated that only 38 per cent, predominantly men, were economically active.

C. Agriculture and food security

Agriculture is a significant contributor to the economy, as, in 2017, it accounted for 14.5 per cent of GDP, 28 per cent of all jobs and nearly half of women’s employment. Yet, Egypt is also the largest wheat importer in the world as it imports approximately 50 per cent of its needs. Farming largely takes place in the narrow strip encasing the river Nile and the rich delta. Small farmers dominate the sector and face an increasingly burdensome livelihood. The agricultural area is only 3.7 per cent of the country’s total area, and Egypt has one of the lowest ratios of arable land per capita in the world. The recent discovery of natural gas may alleviate some of the country’s vulnerability and facilitate the implementation of its development strategy including the financing of the planned reclamation of 2 million hectares of desert land.

2 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2019.
3 World Food Programme (WFP), 2018.
4 Ibid.
5 USAID, 2017.
6 FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), 2019.
A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** is generally low even though it slightly increased from 4.5 to 4.8 per cent between in 2010 and 2016, which is well below the Arab average of 12.1 per cent of 2016. The good social safety net programme could be a reason for these low figures despite the high rate of poverty;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** had a prevalence rate of 10.1 per cent for 2016 (2015-2017), which is slightly lower than the Arab regional average of 12.2 per cent (estimated by the authors). The high poverty and unemployment rates might explain the feeling of food insecurity by a portion of the population;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** in the adult population increased between 2010 and 2016 from 28 per cent to 32 per cent, which is higher than the Arab average of 28.4 per cent of 2016. Adult obesity is more prevalent among women (41.1 per cent) than men (22.7 per cent) and might be due to a nutritional transition away from traditional diets.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** are among the highest in the world, with yields of 5.6 tons/ha in 2010 and 6.5 tons/ha in 2017, which are well in excess of potentially achievable yields of 4.65 tons/ha.\(^7\) Wheat production is almost completely irrigated which might explain the high yields;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** decreased slightly from 0.14 in 2010 to 0.12 in 2017, indicating a lesser inclination of the Government budget towards agriculture. It should be noted, however, that this does not necessarily imply less funding to the sector;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** decreased slightly between 2010 (9.9 per cent) and 2013 (9.8 per cent). It should be noted, however, that data are not complete and food waste is not accounted for. For example, losses through traditional wheat storage can be as high as 10-20 per cent and up to 50 per cent for fruit and vegetables;\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Mueller, N.D. and others, 2012.
\(^8\) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2019; and WFP, 2018.
• **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** increased from 149 per cent in 2010 to 153 per cent in 2017, indicating a favourable trend in food availability. It is noteworthy that both these values are among the highest in the world;

• **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** decreased slightly from 43.9 per cent in 2010 to 42.1 per cent in 2012. Wheat import dependency increased to 56 per cent in 2017\(^9\) as Egypt has become one of the world’s largest importers of wheat due to its growing population but also the food subsidy programme, which greatly favours bread consumption;

• **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** stood at 76.7 per cent in 2017. The agriculture sector of Egypt is heavily dependent on irrigation. However, water use efficiency needs to be further improved. Water use in agriculture could further increase as the country moves forward with its plan to reclaim desert land as part of its Vision 2030.

C. **Access**

• **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** decreased significantly from 21.4 per cent in 2010 to 16.1 per cent in 2015, which is slightly below the regional average of 16.6 per cent. There are disparities in poverty along geographic and gender lines, with women, rural people and the urban poor being the most vulnerable;\(^10\)

• **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** decreased from 43.5 per cent in 2010 to 33.3 per cent in 2018; it constitutes, along with the high poverty rates, a large obstacle to access to food. Expenditure on food might be high due to an estimated inflation rate of 13 per cent in April 2019 down from a high of 20 per cent in October 2018;\(^11\)

• **Unemployment rate (AC3)** increased between 2010 (8.8 per cent) and 2018 (11.4 per cent) and increased above the Arab average of 10.4 per cent. The unemployment rate among women was 23.1 per cent in 2018.\(^12\) In 2017,\(^13\) it was estimated that approximately 28 per cent of the Egyptian labour force was employed in the agricultural sector;

• **Logistics performance (AC4)** progressed from 2.6 in 2010 to 2.8 in 2018, slightly higher than the Arab average of 2.7, indicating potential hindrances to import, distribution and access to food, especially in remote areas and for the most vulnerable;

• **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** increased dramatically from 11.27 per cent in 2010 to 29.5 per cent in 2017, which is well beyond the Arab average of 12.8 per cent. This is an indication of substantial fluctuations in food prices, which, combined with high poverty levels and inequity, might further constrain food access for many Egyptians. The high price volatility might have been a result of the civil disturbances that occurred during this period.

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\(^9\) Based on calculations by authors.
\(^10\) WFP, 2018.
\(^11\) World Bank, n. d.
\(^12\) Ibid.
\(^13\) Ibid.
D. Utilization

• Population using basic drinking water services (UT1) was close to reaching most dwellings (98.6 per cent in 2010 and 99.1 per cent in 2017). However, many Egyptians in informal settlements lack basic drinking water services;

• Population using basic sanitation services (UT2) reached a vast majority of the population (94.2 per cent in 2017, up from 93.4 per cent in 2010); however, intestinal diseases linked to poor sanitation and hygiene still affect people in rural areas, which might interfere with nutrient intake;14

• Stunting in children under five years (UT3) affected about 22.3 per cent of children in 2014, which was slightly lower than the Arab average of 22.9 per cent. It was estimated at 30.7 per cent in 2012, implying improvement. Yet, numbers are still severe based on classification by the World Health Organization (WHO) and far from the 2030 target of 12.2 per cent set by the World Health Assembly (WHA);15

• Wasting in children under five years (UT4) was at 9.5 per cent in 2014, which is within the medium WHO range of severity of malnutrition but higher than the WHA’s target for 2030 of 3 per cent.16 Concurrently, 15.7 per cent of the children under five were overweight in 2014, which is more than two times higher than the world’s average of 5.5 per cent.17 It exposes the double burden of malnutrition. FAO estimates that 35 per cent of the disease burden in children under five is due to malnutrition;18

• Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5) is still high despite a slight decrease from 30.4 per cent in 2010 and 28.5 per cent in 2016 far from the WHA’s target for 2030 of 15.2 per cent. Micronutrient deficiency is widespread in Egypt.

E. Stability

• Climate change vulnerability (ST1) was low, at 0.09, in 2019, based on the indicator adopted in the framework; other sources indicate that climate change poses a threat to Egypt due to the predicted declines in food production by at least 30 per cent by 2040 as a result of sea-level rise in northern coastal areas and a temperature increase of up to two degrees Celsius in Upper Egypt;19

• Food price anomalies (ST2) data are not available;

• Political stability (ST3) declined from approximately 19 to 12 between 2010 and 2018, indicating less stability, notably following the 2011 social unrests;

• Food production variability (ST4) further declined from $7,500 to 5,30020 or roughly half the Arab average ($10,100) per capita between 2010 and 2016. Since food production is largely irrigated, the annual variability is usually limited compared to rainfed systems;

14 WFP, 2018.
15 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and others, 2019.
16 Ibid.
17 World Bank, n. d.
18 FAO and others, 2019.
19 WFP, 2018.
20 Constant 2004-2006 international USD.
• **Food supply variability (ST5)** also decreased from 34 kcal/capita/day in 2010 to 30 kcal/capita/day in 2013, indicating a positive trend despite the high value.
## Food security indicators, Egypt

<table>
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<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Year</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Wheat Import dependency %</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty %</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment %</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation %</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting %</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia %</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST1</td>
<td>Climate change % - index</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2</td>
<td>Price Anomalies % - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST3</td>
<td>Political stability - ranking</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4</td>
<td>Production variability % - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5</td>
<td>Supply variability % - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this table and framework were sourced from international databases including, but not limited to, FAOSTAT, ILOSTAT, World Bank and AQUASTAT, depending on the indicator.
**Food security snapshot**

**A. Drivers and determinants**

Although Egypt is performing well in terms of reduced undernourishment (CO1), the other two core indicators, food insecurity experience (CO2) and obesity (CO3), show serious underperformance meaning that the country faces concerning food security issues.

**Major hotspots include the following:**

- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access**: poverty (AC1);
- **Utilization**: children stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) and women anaemia (UT5);
- **Stability**: political stability (ST3).

**B. Action areas**

Egypt is one of the world’s largest importers of wheat even though its yields are also among the highest in the world. The amount of water and arable land that can be used to increase production are very limited meaning that the country will remain heavily reliant on imports. These may become more affordable if food subsidies become more targeted and if the gas sector becomes a significant contributor to the economy.

Food security and nutrition in Egypt is still defined by the double burden of malnutrition as exemplified notably among children who face food insecurity (UT3 and UT4) and obesity (CO3), both of which are on the increase. Obesity in women is concerning, as is anaemia. Stunting in children is accompanied by overweight, all of which are indicators of serious malnutrition. Although the trends seem to be leveling off, more work is needed in this area. Programmes dedicated to remedy this situation are urgently needed, with an assessment of the impact of the substantial food subsidies on malnutrition.

It will not solve issues associated with unequal access to food, itself associated with poverty, marginalization and unemployment, especially for women, but renewed and more targeted efforts could help lessen inequities. The marginalization of selected parts of the population is associated with poor physical food access, as evidenced by the logistics index, and is also hindered by rampant food inflation.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Egypt in early March 2020 and, by early October, had affected more than 100,000 people with close to 6,000 recorded deaths.21

### Weekly cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul 2021</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103,781 confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

The country recorded an increase in the unemployment rate as it reached 9.2 per cent by the end of April 2020 and 9.6 per cent by the second quarter22 due to lockdown measures.23 Among others, this translated into a loss of some 1.6 million employees in the informal sector.24,25 If the informal sector continues to be affected, the unemployment rate could reach 18.1 per cent.26

Food production is not anticipated to be much affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, food supply might be disrupted due to shortage in labour and agricultural inputs.

---

21 World Health Organization (WHO), 2020.
23 Air travel was suspended; dine-in venues and religious sites were closed; and curfew was imposed from 19:00-06:00.
24 The most vulnerable segment of the population are those people who work in the informal sector as they lack social benefits or labor protection.
25 Middle East Monitor, 2020a; and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020.
such as fertilizers and seeds, in addition to the potential impact of trade restrictions that might be imposed by exporting countries.\textsuperscript{27} Egypt bought approximately 120,000 tons of wheat (shipped in two batches, namely, May 15-25 and May 26-June 5) on global markets and another 578,000 tons locally produced wheat to ensure continued food availability.\textsuperscript{28} Compared to the wheat imports of 1.27 million tons during 2019-2020, Egypt increased its 2020-2021 wheat imports to 1.29 million tons.\textsuperscript{29} It also diversified its food suppliers by accrediting Brazilian companies, among others.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, Egypt halted, for a limited time, the export of locally produced legumes to ensure continued local availability.\textsuperscript{31} Collection centres were established close to farmers to facilitate the purchasing of wheat and other commodities from local farmers, who were exempted from nightly curfews during the month of Ramadan (April-May) to facilitate harvesting, transporting and distributing food.\textsuperscript{32}

Through these actions on multiple fronts, the Government and certain organizations were able to maintain food stability, at least up to this date. This was facilitated by the prevailing low world food prices and the relatively limited impact of the pandemic on the country, notably in rural areas.

\textsuperscript{27} World Bank, 2020.
\textsuperscript{28} Egypt Today, 2020a; and Reuters, 2020.
\textsuperscript{29} Grainmart India, 2020.
\textsuperscript{30} ANBA Brazil-Arab News Agency, 2020.
\textsuperscript{31} IMF, 2020; and Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC), 2020.
\textsuperscript{32} Agri2day, 2020; and Reuters, 2020.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives to improve food security

**Government-led initiatives**

Egypt’s fiscal policies included the disbursement of $6.4 billion to support both the stock market and poor families.\(^a\)

Approximately $2.9 million were geared towards irregular/informal workers who had lost their jobs because of COVID-19, including women, with each worker receiving approximately $32 in cash for three months.\(^b\) In addition, farmers received support in the form of offset fixed prices for wheat and bran in an attempt to prevent an increase in the price of bread. The Government delayed debt payment for farmers for six months as well as the payment of tax on agricultural land for two years.\(^c\) It also reduced the price of wheat seeds to facilitate planting.\(^d\)

The Government increased investments in irrigated agricultural areas by 2 per cent and developed a five-pillar plan aiming to expand the cultivation of wheat, oil crops and sugar crops, improve the productivity of sugar cane and establish stores for basic commodities to achieve self-sufficiency.\(^e\)

**Other initiatives**

In mid-March, the Egyptian Food Bank launched a campaign to deliver food to the most affected, distributing food boxes to 600,000 families by the end of Ramadan. This campaign was supported by 70 private-sector companies with donations expected to reach $9.55 million.\(^f\)

WFP distributed unconditional cash transfers to families affected by the economic crisis caused by the pandemic exchangeable for nutritious food at local shops. Community teachers and school students in nine governorates received such transfers during the months of March, April, May, June and July.\(^g\)

In April, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP provided general food assistance (GFA) to 147,779 refugees, asylum seekers and casual workers.\(^h\) In May, in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration, it provided GFA and unconditional cash transfers to 113,000 refugees and asylum seekers and 44,000 Egyptian workers.\(^i\)

WFP provided monthly cash assistance of approximately $512 to 76,000 female-headed families and widows not benefiting from the “Takaful and Karama” national programme. As part of the “First 1,000 days” national programme, 38,000 children under two and lactating mothers of poor families, impacted by the economic crisis and registered in the “Takaful and Karama” programme, received $261 each.\(^j\)

WFP provided technical support for land consolidation, improved irrigation and provision of new crops and seed varieties to smallholder farmers to improve their production.\(^k\)

WFP provided online sessions on healthy eating habits and provided residents with healthy recipes during the month of Ramadan as part of the UNitedWeEa” programme, in addition to a food safety campaign in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and WHO.\(^l\)

WFP, in collaboration with Community Development Associations (CDAs), provided training on raising ducks, goats and bee-keeping to smallholders and provided 5,472 male and female smallholders with ducks, goats and bees as part of in-kind microloans.\(^m\)

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\(^a\) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020.

\(^b\) Ibid.


\(^d\) Grainmart India, 2020.

\(^e\) IFP Info, 2020.

\(^f\) Middle East Monitor, 2020b.

\(^g\) WFP, 2020.

\(^h\) Ibid.

\(^i\) Ibid.

\(^j\) Ibid.

\(^k\) Ibid.

\(^l\) Ibid.

\(^m\) Ibid.
Arab food security monitoring framework

Country reviews - Egypt

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A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e. AVAILABILITY, ACCESS, UTILIZATION, and STABILITY.

The monitoring framework highlights that Iraq is experiencing the triple burden of malnutrition with high undernourishment, obesity, child stunting and anaemia among women. With the continued sociopolitical instability, the country’s food security remains at risk. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. Natural resources

In Iraq, about 13 per cent of the land is suitable for agriculture with an additional 10 per cent considered pasture land. However, since the 1970s, about half the arable land was lost due to soil salinity. Most of the arable land are in the north and north-east and are rain-fed, and the remainder in the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys are irrigated. Rainfall and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers provide most of the renewable water resources needed for agriculture.

Box 1. Refugees and IDPs

WFP reports that the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in December 2018 stood at 1.8 million, down from 2.7 million in 2017. The number of returnees, who require special attention, was 4.17 million while the number of Syrian refugees stood at 260,000. The numbers, however, are constantly changing as the movement in and out of the camps remains high due to a mixture of political, security and economic considerations.

The overall food security situation is slowly improving following the end of the war in 2017, but the country remains in political and security transition. It is still faced with substantial challenges that include economic precariousness, high unemployment, inadequate public services, and poor standards of living, among others. As a result, some of the returnees go back to camps because of poor security and livelihood options (WFP, 2020).

The Humanitarian Needs Overview report indicates that 6.7 million people out of a population of 36 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. WFP is the main organization dealing with the provision of support to IDPs and refugees, and the programme’s main goal is to address food security through cash and food transfers.

Source: World Food Programme (WFP), 2018; WFP, 2020; and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2019.

1 Kennedy and others, 2020.
B. Socioeconomy

With the gross domestic product (GDP) stands at about $225 billion with a per capita GDP of about $5,880.2 The agriculture sector represents about 2 per cent of GDP.3 The economy is dominated by the oil and gas sectors, which bring in most of the foreign currency needed for economic development. Iraq suffered economically from the early 1980s to the late 2000s due to successive wars and economic sanctions. It has, however, rebounded since the end of the Second Gulf War, but has yet to reach its levels of the early 1990s.

C. Agriculture and food security

Iraq is slowly rising from its three decades of instability and is attempting to rebuild State, nation and society. The agricultural sector has taken its toll from the wars and economic sanctions that have prevailed since the 1980s, which deprived many of their livelihoods, while there are still hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs). Some provinces have been affected more than others, and WFP estimates, for instance, that 40 per cent of the agricultural production capacity was lost in the northern provinces due to wars, with 2.5 million people vulnerable to food insecurity.4 Most of these are IDPs, refugees and returnees.

2 World Bank, n. d.a.
3 Ibid.
4 World Food Programme (WFP), 2018.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** continues to be high at around 28 per cent indicating serious food insecurity issues. The value is more than double the Arab region’s average (around 12 per cent) in 2016 driven by poor socioeconomic conditions following decades of wars and sanctions;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** appears to reaffirm the undernourishment data as they show that 22.5 per cent of the population was suffering from severe food insecurity in 2016. This prevalence is much higher than the average of the Arab region (12.2 per cent) as food supply and production are still inadequate;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** increased from 26.9 per cent in 2010 to 30.4 per cent in 2016, which is slightly higher than the Arab average of 28.4 per cent. It is an indication of a potential nutritional transition despite the challenging situation. In 2016, obesity among men was 23.4 per cent whereas it was 37 per cent among women.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** increased from 2 tons/ha in 2010 to 2.8 tons/ha in 2017. Although still far from the estimated potentially achievable yield of 4.73 tons/ha. This increase from 42 per cent to 59 per cent is a positive step forward in closing the wheat yield gap;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** increased slightly from 6.5 per cent to 6.6 per cent between 2010 and 2019 respectively. However, it should be noted that the value might not tell the full story as several food products lacked data;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** decreased between 2010 and 2017 from an already relatively low 111 per cent to 109 per cent, respectively, indicating a reduced availability of food (calories) and the high prevalence of undernourishment (CO1). The poorest and most vulnerable are usually impacted

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first. In 2017, the value was well below the Arab region’s average of 131 per cent;

- **What import dependency (AV5)** decreased from 58.4 per cent in 2010 to 51.8 per cent in 2012 but remains high for a country that produces a relatively large quantity of cereals (approximately 4.43 million tons in 2019) that make up a major share of its diet;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** stood at around 40 per cent in 2018. This is the second-lowest value recorded in the Arab region, in the period following 2010.

### C. Access

- **Poverty at $3.2/day (AC1)** reported at 17.9 per cent of the population in 2012. This value exceeds the Arab regional average of 16.6 per cent of 2015. Poverty poses a serious challenge to access to food;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** has no data;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** slightly decreased between 2010 and 2016 from 8.6 per cent to 8 per cent, respectively. Unemployment among men stood at almost 7.1 per cent in 2017, whereas for women it was at 12.4 per cent, indicating a large gender gap;\(^6\)

- **Logistical performance (AC4)** increased almost insignificantly from 2.1 to 2.2 between 2010 and 2016, and it remains lower than the Arab regional average of 2.7 (2016), an indication of potential challenges in the food supply chain;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was low as it has been recorded during the period between 2010 and 2017 (2.4 per cent and 0.2 per cent, respectively). An excessively low inflation could be an indication of low demand and, thus, low growth rates for the economy.

### D. Utilization

- **Population using at least basic drinking water services (UT1)** stood at 86.1 per cent in 2015, an improvement compared to 82.5 per cent in 2010. Additional efforts are required to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** stood at 9.9 per cent in 2018. It is within the low range of the severity-of-malnutrition scale of the World Health Organization (WHO) and improved when compared to 2010 when it was at 22.3 per cent;

- **Population using at least basic sanitation services (UT2)** reached 85.7 per cent in 2015, compared to 83.3 per cent in 2010. Improvements are significant to enhance the safety aspect of food utilization by limiting the spread of environmental-borne illnesses;

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** stood at 2.5 per cent in 2018. It is within the low range of WHO’s severity-of-malnutrition-scale and improved when compared to the 2010 value of 6.9 per cent. It indicates a positive trend towards achieving the World Health Assembly (WHA) targets in 2030;\(^7\)

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6 World Bank, n. d.b.
7 FAO and others, 2019.
• **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** witnessed a very slight decrease from 30.1 per cent to 29.1 per cent between 2010 and 2016, respectively, but remains substantially higher than WHA's target for 2030.

### E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** was at 0.07 in 2019, indicating that the country is not heavily affected by the combined effects of increased climate-related disasters, loss of agricultural productivity and sea-level rise;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

- **Political stability (ST3)** in Iraq is very low and stood at 2.4 in 2010 and 2017, an indication that the country remains under sociopolitical stress;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** increased substantially from $3,900/capita\(^8\) in 2010 to $13,400/capita in 2016. This insinuates a large fluctuation in the stability of food production;

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** decreased from 41 kcal/capita/day in 2010 to 27 kcal/capita/day in 2013, indicating a smaller gap in calorific variability of food supply.

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\(^8\) Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
## Food security indicators, Iraq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Iraq Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment 1%</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Food insecurity 2%</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity 1%</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Availability Indicators

| AV1  | Wheat yields - %                     | 82.2        | 2017 | 42.3        | 2017   |
| AV2  | Agriculture expenditure - index      | n.a.        |      | n.a.        |        |
| AV3  | Food loss 1%                         | 6.8         | 2013 | 6.5         | 2019   |
| AV4  | Dietary energy supply - %            | 131         | 2017 | 111         | 2019   |
| AV5  | Wheat Import dependency 1%           | 65.0        | 2012 | 58.4        | 2017   |
| AV6  | Agriculture water 1%                 | n.a.        |      | 57.2        | 2018   |

### Access Indicators

| AC1  | Poverty 1%                           | 16.6        | mult. | n.a.        | 17.9   |
| AC2  | Food consumption 1%                  | n.a.        |      | n.a.        |        |
| AC3  | Unemployment 1%                      | 10.4        | mult. | 8.6         | 2016   |
| AC4  | Logistics - index                    | 2.7         | 2016 | 2.1         | 2016   |
| AC5  | Inflation 1%                         | 12.8        | mult. | 2.4         | 2017   |

### Utilization Indicators

| UT1  | Drinking water access - %            | 86.9        | 2015 | 82.5        | 2015   |
| UT2  | Sanitation access - %                | 80.8        | 2015 | 83.3        | 2015   |
| UT3  | Child stunting 1%                    | 22.9        | mult. | 22.3        | 2018   |
| UT4  | Child wasting 1%                     | 8.7         | mult. | 6.9         | 2018   |
| UT5  | Women anaemia 1%                     | 35.5        | 2016 | 30.1        | 2016   |

### Stability Indicators

| ST1  | Climate change 1%                    | 0.1         | 2019 | n.a.        | 0.07   |
| ST2  | Price Anomalies 1%                   | n.a.        |      | n.a.        |        |
| ST3  | Political stability - ranking        | 14          | 2017 | 2           | 2017   |
| ST4  | Production variability 1% - $1,000/capita | 10.1       | 2016 | 3.9         | 2016   |
| ST5  | Supply variability 1% - kcal/cap/day | 29.8        | 2013 | 41.0        | 2013   |

- **R**: Reversed During Normalization
- **n.a.**: Not Available
- **mult.**: Multiple years

### Note

Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework were received from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The food security framework shows that Iraq is underperforming in the three core pillars of undernourishment (CO1), food insecurity experience (CO2) and obesity (CO3).

Hotspots within the four dimensions of food security include the following:

- **Availability**: wheat yields (AV1) and dietary energy supply (AV4);
- **Access**: poverty (AC1) and logistical performance (AC4);
- **Utilization**: stunting (UT3) and wasting among children (UT4) and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability**: political stability (ST3).

In addition, data are lacking for expenditure in agriculture, food consumption expenditure and price anomalies. Food security is a pressing issue in Iraq because of the large number of IDPs and refugees. The data available indicate that Iraq is caught in the double burden of undernutrition and obesity, both of which fall under the rubric of malnutrition.

A policy framework based on access to food and on the appropriate utilization must be put in place. According to figures for the prevalence of food insecurity, the problem is essentially at the utilization (diet) level, although the high rates of poverty indicate problems at the level of access as well. But Iraq is a relatively resource-rich nation, and poverty is essentially a problem of resource maldistribution rather than of absence of entitlements.

The available official data are sufficient to indicate the extent of the problem: the scores are in the medium-low range for a majority of those indicators for which official data are available, although some progress has been recently achieved.

B. Action areas

The wheat yield gap is still wide, and policies for enhancing production must be enacted, which would include greater investments towards the agriculture sector notably to improve yields in rain-fed systems and expand irrigation. The dietary energy supply is low, coupled with obesity, indicating a profound maldistribution of food. Targeted social policies are essential in order to correct this discrepancy which should not exist in an oil-rich nation. Moreover, the state of sanitation facilities needs to be improved, and State expenditures should prioritize this sector.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Iraq in late February 2020 and by, early October, had affected more than 380,000 people with close to 9,500 deaths recorded. Iraq had largely recorded below 100 daily occurrences of COVID-19 until May but has witnessed a gradual increase to reach up to 4,000 cases daily by end-September.9

Lockdown measures10 included the closure of borders with all neighbouring countries and restricting movement between governorates.11 The movement of goods across borders continued. Farmers, herders and workers in the food sector, including the transportation of goods between governorates, were exempt from curfews to prevent disruptions to local production, facilitate the seasonal harvest of wheat and barley, and prevent food shortages in the market.12 These restrictive measures

9 WHO, n. d.
10 Closure of cinemas, public gathering spaces, religious sites, schools and universities, restricted land and air travels, suspension of trade with Kuwait.
delayed food shipments including rice from Vietnam, which threatened the distribution of food aid. For example, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) lacked adequate supplies to deliver food to 75 off-camp families in Chamchamal and Kalar.

In July 2020, food availability was reported stable with an average availability score of 8.5 out of 10. Cereal production for the 2019-2020 harvest season was above average levels. The quantity of wheat harvested stood at about five million tons while that of barley was estimated between 850,000-900,000 tons by July. The Government is considering the possibility of exporting what exceeds local demand. However, there is a shortage in rice availability as only 190,000 tons were available for public distribution by the end of May compared to the yearly needs of 1-1.25 million tons.

During the last two weeks of March, prices of certain food staples increased because of panic buying: the price of sugar doubled in Erbil, the price of potatoes increased by 88 per cent and 50 per cent in Nineveh and Wasit, respectively, and that of eggs increased by 48 per cent in Salah-al-Din. The price of the minimum food baskets increased by 2 per cent in March compared to February, and by 6 per cent in April compared to March. However, in the last two weeks of April, prices slightly decreased in different percentages across governorates. Since then, prices of staple food have been stable with slight fluctuations in different governorates, though doubling in the Anbar and Nineva governorates.

Also, in the absence of the cheap imported fish from Iran and Kuwait, sales of local fish doubled.

In the Spring and early Summer, locust invaded agricultural areas in Iraq affecting 5,000 ha, as well as other pests and rodents affecting among others 7,500 ha of peach and citrus fruits and 4,000 ha of tomatoes while 264 fire incidents between April 21 and June 20, 2020, burnt 3,200 ha of cultivated land in 16 governorates across the country. Also, around 60,000 laying hens were diagnosed with bird flu in mid-May in Ninewah and had to be culled.

Food consumption patterns showed improvement in Ramadan, as the annual charitable payments “zakat” allowed the percentage of respondents with sufficient food consumption to increase by 2 per cent to reach 95 per cent during the first two weeks of May. However, 33.9 per cent of responding households reported difficulty accessing markets in July, one month later.

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15 It is one of the nine dimensions of the Market Functionality Index (MFI) tool. This dimension has two questions related to whether certain goods are scarce or likely to get scarcer in the short run.
16 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020a.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020b.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Annual payments under the Islamic law that give people incentives allowing them to diversify and adopt a high-quality food intake.
28 Ibid.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**

The Government banned import of selected agricultural products to enhance local production while Kurdistan increased tariffs compared to 2019 especially on vegetables.

It tightened customs procedures, banned transportation across governorates (except for products for Government-owned silos) and fought against smuggling, especially for wheat and barley.

In April, the Government allowed agriculture leaseholders to postpone the payment of land rental charges. It launched a National Food Security Project aiming at increasing self-sufficiency of crops and animal products and endorsing food sovereignty.

It implemented a programme to combat the locust outbreak as well as other pest infestations through aerial and land spraying and trunk injections.

In May, the Government initiated an agricultural emergency plan to decrease the dependency on oil revenues, which included keeping cereals collection points open for farmers.

In June, the Government received a rice shipment, which was distributed to all governorates. It improved the marketing of wheat and accepted wheat from silos not included in the plan, while exempting farmers from financial dues for the last and current year. It promoted date packing and tomato processing and rental of governmental land (1.25-1.5 ha) to plant orchards, among others.

In July, the Government encouraged the cultivation of 250,000 ha with pistachios, olives and cereals to increase local production, and establish income-generating jobs while decreasing rural-urban migration.

**Other initiatives**

In April, WFP distributed cash assistance to more than 310,000 people, while the Food Security Cluster partners distributed food parcels to 87,210 in-camp individuals and 144,193 out-of-camp individuals.

WFP provided financial support to both in and out-of-camp people in May as a top-up to governmental food aid and to those not receiving governmental support. It assisted a total of 337,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in May and June.

Non-government organizations (NGOs) and charities provided food aid for 1,268,081 beneficiaries in response to the campaign launched by the Government in March aiming at encouraging food donations.

In June, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) allocated $1.1 million to the Food Security Cluster to carry out agriculture-related activities.

Local NGOs distributed food parcels to 54,394 households by the end of June with an additional 102,925 people receiving food aid from humanitarian organizations.

References


Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others (2020). Iraq COVID-19 Food Security Monitor Weekly Update (several issues).


Jordan
A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

- **Availability**
- **Access**
- **Utilization**
- **Stability**

The monitoring framework shows that obesity is a major issue in Jordan and anaemia is prevalent among women. The country is over-reliant on food imports, which could weaken its food security. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Jordan spans over 89,000 km² of which just 2 per cent is arable and 75 per cent is sparsely populated desert or semi-desert. Jordan can be divided into three main geophysical areas that include a desert in the east and south, uplands east of the Jordan River in the centre and north and the Jordan valley on the western flank of the country, which forms the northern tip of the African Rift Valley.¹ Rainfall is limited with the uplands getting most rain with an annual average of 200-600 mm. The Jordan River is used for irrigated agriculture while most groundwater resources are used for cities, industries and tourism.

Box 1. A haven for refugees

Just under one third of Jordan’s population of 11 million are refugees. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were 660,000 registered Syrian refugees as of April 2019, most of whom had arrived before 2013, when the Syrian conflict started. In addition, there are also refugees from Iraq, the Sudan and Yemen. The country also harbors large numbers of Palestinians who came as refugees mainly in 1948 and in 1967. Many among them have been naturalized and have now full Jordanian citizenship.

Several international organizations, including WFP that has the largest presence, are involved in ensuring the food security of the refugees. However, it is reported that 0.5 per cent of Jordanian households is also considered food insecure, and an additional 5.7 per cent is considered vulnerable to food insecurity. Targeted programmes of in-kind distribution and food vouchers are the most common approaches to ensure the stability of food and nutritional security. WFP assisted over 1 million people in October 2019, half of who received cash transfers, while nearly half a million Jordanian and Syrian children received school snack to ameliorate their nutritional status.

Source: Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2019; and World Food Programme (WFP), 2020.

¹ Bickerton, I. J. and others, 2020.
B. Socioeconomy

The gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to about $44 billion in 2019, or about $4,400 per capita, making Jordan a middle-income country.² Agriculture makes up 3-4 per cent of GDP; it accounted up to 40 per cent in the early 1950s with the decline attributed to a loss of farmland due to occupation, expansion of cities on the most fertile soils notably in the highland and labour emigration to neighbouring countries and to cities. About 4 per cent of the active labour force is engaged in agriculture and agriculture-related activities.³

C. Agriculture and food security

Jordan produces fruits and vegetables in excess as they form the bulk of its exports. However, at national level, the country remains heavily reliant on imports for its food supply, especially for cereals such as wheat, which is the basis of the local diet. The Jordanian Government had traditionally relied on bread subsidies as a form of social support. However, these subsidies have recently come under criticism as they do not distinguish between rich and poor and, in 2018, were replaced by a targeted subsidies programme and a food waste-reduction initiative. Subsidized barley is also available to pastoralists; however, the impact of this practice on food security and on livelihoods has not been explored.

² IMF, n. d.
³ World Bank, 2020a.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** increased sharply between 2010 and 2016 from 8.2 per cent to 13.5 per cent, respectively, slightly surpassing the Arab regional average of 12.1 per cent. This increase might be a result of the Syrian refugee influx into Jordan following the Syrian conflict;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was reported to be experienced by 13.9 per cent of the population. Data for 2010 do not exist; however, compared to 2014-2016, this prevalence decreased from 14.7 per cent,\(^4\) indicating a favourable trend, albeit still a high value, higher than the Arab average of 12.2 per cent;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** stood at 35.5 per cent in 2016, one of the highest in the Arab region, and above the region average of 28.4 per cent. This comes as an increase from the 2010-recorded value of 31.9 per cent. In Jordan, obesity is more pronounced in women (43.1 per cent) than in men (28.2 per cent).\(^5\)

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** was reported at 1.03 tons/ha in 2010 and 1.48 tons/ha in 2017, compared to the official potential value of 1.5 tons/ha, putting the difference between achieved and achievable yields at 99 per cent. Mueller and others put the potential wheat yield at 4.02 tons/ha;\(^6\)

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** stood at 0.14 in 2016. This is a decrease from its 2012 value of 0.18, indicating a decrease in the inclination of the State to invest in agriculture;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** recorded increased slightly between 2010 and 2017 from 4.02 per cent to 4.44 per cent, respectively. This happened concurrently with an increase in production, imports (almost two-fold) and exports (more than double);\(^7\)

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\(^4\) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2019.
\(^5\) World Bank, n. d.
\(^7\) Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), n. d.
• **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** dropped from 122 per cent in 2010 to 114 per cent in 2017. The value is well below the Arab regional average of 131 per cent, meaning that food availability could be a challenge notably among the most vulnerable;

• **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** is high as Jordan relies greatly on the global food market. It increased to 97 per cent in 2017 from 91.1 per cent in 2010 and 93.6 per cent in 2012, which makes it vulnerable to global markets gyrations as well as the impact of the volatile regional geopolitics;

• **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** was officially reported at 57 per cent in 2018. Considering that Jordan is one of the most water-scarce countries in the Arab region (96.58 m³/capita/year) and the low Government orientation towards agriculture, it is considered high and unsustainable.

C. **Access**

• **Poverty at $$3.2$/day (AC1)** was reported at 2.1 per cent in 2010, which was a substantial and continuous decrease from its all-time high of 17.2 per cent in 1992, implying a strong commitment to eradicate poverty;

• **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** was 39.6 per cent in 2010 and decreased to 32.7 per cent in 2017, implying that, on average, Jordanian households spend about one third of their income on food;

• **Unemployment rate (AC3)** increased between 2010 and 2018 from 12.6 per cent to 18.6 per cent, respectively, based on official sources, which is well above the regional average of 10.4 per cent. Youth (35.6 per cent) and female (24.1 per cent) unemployment were much higher than male unemployment (13.3 per cent) in 2016;

• **Logistical performance (AC4)** shows a favourable trend increasing from 2.7 in 2010 to 3 in 2016, implying improving conditions in the overall food supply chains;

• **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** decreased slightly from 4.8 per cent in 2010 to 4.5 per cent in 2018, which is well below the regional average but slightly higher than the accepted level for a healthy economy.

D. **Utilization**

• **Population using basic water services (UT1)** was constant between 2010 and 2017 at 98.9 per cent, above the regional average (87 per cent) but slightly below the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of 100 per cent;

• **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** was almost constant between 2010 and 2017 at 97.3 per cent, well above the regional average (81 per cent) though lower than the 2030 SDG target of 100 per cent;

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8 World Bank, n. d.
9 International Labour Organization (ILO), n. d.
• **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** was 7.8 per cent in 2012, well below the Arab regional average (22.9 per cent) and the 2030 global nutrition target of the World Health Assembly (WHA) of 12.2 per cent. However, it needs to be brought below 2.5 per cent;

• **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** had a low prevalence of 2.4 per cent in 2012, below the regional average of 8.7 per cent. Although categorized as low severity of malnutrition by the World Health Organization (WHO), it needs to be eradicated;

• **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** reached an alarming high at 42.6 per cent in 2017-2018 while it was only 29.5 per cent in 2010. This is well above the Arab regional average (35.5 per cent) and the situation needs close attention.

### E. Stability

• **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** is at 0.05, indicating that Jordan is not significantly affected by weather-related disasters along with sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity. This does not mean, however, that Jordan is completely safe from all impacts of climate change;

• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

• **Political stability (ST3)** ranking decreased from about 35 in 2010 to 28 in 2017, most probably due to the influx of refugees and the upheavals from neighbouring countries;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** remained relatively small and consistent between 2010 and 2016 at about $6,40011/capita as the country is not a major food producer while the most consequential is irrigated;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** decreased significantly from 44 kcal/capita/day in 2010 to 7 kcal/capita/day in 2013. Considering the current ADESA, this is a safe margin of variability to avoid that the country falls into a severe food insecurity trap.

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10 FAO and others, 2019.
11 Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
Food security dashboard
Jordan

2010 Data:
- Low: Urgent Action
- High: Proceed Action
- Average: More Action
- No Data

Latest Data:
### Food security indicators, Jordan

<table>
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<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>35.5</td>
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### AVAILABILITY INDICATORS

| AV1  | Wheat yields - %              | 82.2        | 2017       | 98.7  | 2017 | ⚠️    |
| AV2  | Agriculture expenditure - index | n.a.       | n.a. | 0.14  | 2016 |       |
| AV3  | Food loss ⚠️%                 | 6.8         | 2013       | 4.4   | 2017 | ⚠️    |
| AV4  | Dietary energy supply - %     | 131         | 2017       | 114   | 2017 | ⚠️    |
| AV5  | Wheat Import dependency ⚠️%   | 65.0        | 2012       | 97.0  | 2017 | ⚠️    |
| AV6  | Agriculture water ⚠️%         | n.a.        | n.a.       | 57.0  | 2018 |       |

### ACCESS INDICATORS

| AC1  | Poverty ⚠️%                   | 16.6        | mult.   | 2.1   | n.a. |       |
| AC2  | Food consumption ⚠️%           | n.a.        | 39.6    | 32.7  | 2017 | ⚠️    |
| AC3  | Unemployment ⚠️%               | 10.4        | mult.   | 12.6  | 18.6 | 2018  | ⚠️    |
| AC4  | Logistics - index             | 2.7         | 2016     | 3.0   | 2016 |       |
| AC5  | Inflation ⚠️%                 | 12.8        | mult.   | 4.8   | 4.5  | 2018  | ⚠️    |

### UTILIZATION INDICATORS

| UT1  | Drinking water access - %     | 86.9        | 2015     | 98.9  | 2017 | ⚠️    |
| UT2  | Sanitation access - %         | 80.8        | 2015     | 97.5  | 97.3 | 2017  |       |
| UT3  | Child stunting ⚠️%            | 22.9        | mult.   | 7.8   | 2012 |       |
| UT4  | Child wasting ⚠️%             | 8.7         | mult.   | 2.4   | 2012 |       |
| UT5  | Women anaemia ⚠️%             | 35.5        | 2016     | 42.6  | 2018 | ⚠️    |

### STABILITY INDICATORS

| ST1  | Climate change ⚠️ - index     | 0.1         | 2019     | n.a.  | 0.05 | 2019 |
| ST2  | Price Anomalies ⚠️ - index    | n.a.        | n.a.     | n.a.  |      |      |
| ST3  | Political stability - ranking | 14          | 2017     | 35    | 28   | 2017 |       |
| ST4  | Production variability ⚠️ - $1,000/capita | 10.1 | 2016     | 6.3   | 6.4  | 2016 |       |
| ST5  | Supply variability ⚠️ - kcal/cap/day | 29.8 | 2013     | 44.0  | 7.0  | 2013 |       |

⚠️: Reversed During Normalization  n.a.= Not Available  mult. = Multiple years  
- Red: Negative Trend  Yellow: Neutral Trend  Green: Positive Trend

**Note:** Unless indicated otherwise, all data are from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that Jordan is challenged in the core pillar of food security as all three indicators, namely, undernourishment, food insecurity experience and obesity, require urgent actions.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2), wheat import dependency (AV5) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access**: unemployment (AC3);
- **Utilization**: wasting among children (UT4) and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability**: political stability (ST3).

In addition, the country needs to address the issue of data availability in quality, accuracy and timeliness as these are needed to better understand the true extent and severity of the food-security situation and to devise appropriate remedial measures.

The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has been a major shock to the social and economic systems of Jordan. The influx of Syrian refugees and the closure of trade routes across the borders have affected food security at many levels, the impact of which can be seen in the alarming data for CO1 and CO2. Jordan also suffers from galloping obesity, which is more pronounced among women. The double burden of malnutrition is common to many developing countries and indicates issues in food security that encompass malnutrition and are caused by poor diets and excess consumption.

B. Action areas

Jordan is fully dependent on food imports, especially for its main staple: wheat. Local production of wheat and barley covers a small fraction of the nation’s needs. It should be expanded and made integral to pastoralism as it relies almost exclusively on rainfall and does not threaten the very limited water supply. However, the reliance on deep underground water for production of field crops and fruit trees in the highlands and in the margins of the badia needs to be reassessed, as this water comes with a large opportunity cost. The Ghor valley offers fertile lands and some water to produce cash crops destined for export. However, water availability and quality are both declining, and so are the profits from agriculture. The persistence of agriculture in the Ghor needs to be weighed against the need for water in other sectors and against
the social role provided by agriculture. All these recommendations require further commitment by the State that appears to be declining over time according to the Agriculture Expenditure Orientation Index.

There is some concern related to poverty levels due to the increasing unemployment and to the significant proportion of income spent on food. The evaluation of the new subsidies plan is required for the purpose of adjustment to provide social and economic support to the most vulnerable.

Much work remains to be done at the level of nutrition. Confirming the malnutrition diagnosis exposed by the large values for obesity, especially in women, it also appears that the levels of anaemia in women is particularly large. Thus, nutritional policies are urgently needed, especially focused on women.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Jordan in early March 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 17,000 people with around 120 deaths recorded (WHO, 2020). Most often, Jordan records less than 50 daily occurrences of COVID-19 though it had witnessed a succession of small peaks with a sudden large increase in September reaching up to 1,500 cases daily.

**Weekly cases**

17,464 confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n.d.

Due to the restrictive measures implemented to control the pandemic, the number of food insecure people is expected to rise as rapid needs assessments of vulnerable people showed that 72.5 per cent had difficulties covering basic needs and 36 per cent experienced an inability to access markets. Unemployment was high before the pandemic, estimated at 19.1 per cent, and could be expected to increase.

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12 WHO, n.d
13 Suspension of schools and universities, closure of airports and borders, prohibition of public gatherings and curfew from 18:00 – 10:00.
15 World Bank, 2020b.
Local food production was affected by the restrictive local emergency plan as it prevented agricultural input supplies from being distributed while farmers were unable to reach their lands, which added challenges to on-farm compulsory daily activities such as spraying and harvesting.\textsuperscript{16} Food supply was also impacted by trade restrictions and other measures implemented such as delays registered for food shipments from Egypt and India.\textsuperscript{17} As a result, vulnerable population might have suffered from a lack of sufficient food supplies during the month of June.\textsuperscript{18}

COVID-19 increased the demand for food by 80 per cent, which led to an increase in food prices.\textsuperscript{19}

The Government issued specific guidelines to ensure safe food handling to avoid the spread of the virus through food commodities and coordinated with local private companies and factories to support local food production to reduce dependency on imports and global prices volatility while also increasing strategic reserves for safe and high-quality food.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Al Jazeera, 2020; and World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020.
\textsuperscript{17} WFP and FAO, 2020.
\textsuperscript{18} Arab News, 2020.
\textsuperscript{19} WFP and FAO, 2020.
\textsuperscript{20} World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020; MENAFN, 2020; and International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**
In April, agricultural input suppliers were permitted to resume work while around $14 million in zero-interest loans were allocated to support farmers affected by both the COVID-19 pandemic and recent storms. To facilitate their movement as well as those of farmer and essential workers in the agricultural and food supply chain, electronic travel permits were distributed.a

Jordan facilitated the export of surplus of locally produced food by setting up an online import/export licensing system, which, at the same time, facilitated the import of bulgur and pulses from Turkey as an alternative new market.b

The Government distributed food, water, oil and other necessities to poor communities, including Syrian refugees. It provided a stipend to the most vulnerable while also ordering private employers to keep paying full salaries to those working from home and at least half salaries to those being furloughed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.c

The Ministry of Social Development, in coordination with the National Aid Fund, helped 30,000 families purchase food and non-food items for six months through e-vouchers worth $141.00 per month as of April 2020.d

**Other initiatives**
The International Monetary Fund provided Jordan with $1.3 billion in assistance in March to reform the economy while helping with the pandemic.e WFP has continued to provide humanitarian assistance including cash transfers to refugees despite the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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a World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020.
b Ibid.
d Almamlakatv, 2020; and World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020.


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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

Availability

Access

Utilization

Stability

Obesity

The monitoring framework highlights that Kuwait is performing well in terms of food security though it has elevated rates of obesity and is highly dependent on food imports, which could prove a risk in a volatile region. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. **Natural resources**

The largely urban State of Kuwait has an area of nearly 18,000 km\(^2\) including several islands. The country is mostly covered by deserts with a few patches of arable land around Kuwait Bay and in the south-western and coastal areas. The country experiences extremely hot weather from spring to fall, with very limited rainfall, and hence freshwater, making Kuwait one of the thirstiest countries in the world. Water is almost exclusively obtained by desalination, and the limited groundwater has been nearly exhausted due to overpumping.\(^1\)

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**Box 1. Food security in Kuwait: The need for integrated management**

Kuwait is a politically stable State within an unstable region. The short-lived but damaging Iraqi invasion of 1991 and the ensuing wars and occupation in the region constitute a painful reminder of the risks associated with a volatile geopolitical location. It is therefore understandable that the prevalent concerns of decision-makers lie in the country’s ability to satisfy its ever-increasing food requirements from external sources. The problem is not one of economic access to food, as the country’s import ledgers are well balanced, but one of hindrances to physical access to food caused by a geopolitical crisis.

This has driven the Kuwaiti Government to launch a plan for self-sufficiency by 2040, an endeavour that appears to be overambitious and that could be impeded by the limited land and water endowments. While new technologies may hold some promises, Kuwait should also be looking towards managing its food demand, which would also positively impact diet-related diseases, as well as strengthen its import-based food security through strategic trade alliances with food-producing countries.

*Source: Ismail, H., 2015.*

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\(^1\) Anthony, J.D. and others, 2020.
B. Socioeconomy

The country’s population, estimated slightly above 4.2 million people in 2020, is mostly young and composed of approximately one-third Kuwaitis and two-thirds non-Kuwaitis (mostly male migrant workers), among which 5 per cent are stateless (the “Bidoun”). Kuwait is an oil-producing country with a gross domestic product (GDP) of roughly 140 billion USD or a per capita GDP well in excess of $30,000.2

C. Agriculture and food security

Agriculture is very limited, except for a few high-tech livestock and poultry rearing facilities that cover a small fraction of the country’s needs. Kuwait has been trying to encourage fruits and vegetables production, but these efforts are hampered by limited water availability in spite of efforts to encourage wastewater reuse. Fish resources from the rich Persian Gulf are plentiful.

Kuwait suffers from overnutrition and associated non-communicable diseases. These are most prevalent in women, a large proportion of whom suffer from excessive weight. The traditional diet of rice, dates and sheep and goat milk, a diet rich in fish and low in red meat, has been replaced by a Western style diet that includes sugary drinks, snacks and fast foods. As a response, and with the assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Kuwaiti Government has enacted, over the past 25 years, a number of policies and programmes aimed at correcting the situation. These include a nutrition surveillance system and a nutrition education programme.

2 Trading Economics, n. d.
A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** is low or non-existent as it stood at 2.5 per cent in both 2010 and 2016, which reflects its high-income status;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was estimated to affect 4.3 per cent of the population in 2016, less than half the Arab regional average of 12.2 per cent;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)**, however, is a serious problem in Kuwait as its prevalence increased from 34.6 per cent in 2010 to 37.9 per cent in 2016, which is much higher than the Arab regional average (28.4 per cent). Obesity among women is estimated at 45.6 per cent, the highest in the Arab region, compared to a prevalence of 33.3 per cent among men.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yields to potential (AV1)** data are not available for potentially achievable yields. The achieved yield grew from 2.34 tons/ha in 2010 to 3.14 tons/ha in 2017;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** stood at 0.944 in 2015, indicating a large balance between the Government’s expenditure on agriculture, and the sector’s value added to the GDP;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** decreased from 7.57 per cent in 2010 to 6.73 per cent in 2013. This value is within the higher range of values recorded in the Arab region, and above the Arab regional average of 6.8 per cent;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** was at 136 per cent in 2017, indicating an oversupply of food, which could lead to waste. However, the value is lower than the 2010 value of 141 per cent, which was the highest in the region for that year, but still higher than the Arab regional average of 131 per cent;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** fluctuated between 98.3 and 97.3 per cent in 2010 and 2012, respectively. This highly excessive level exposes the country to global market shocks and fluctuations but, given its high purchasing power, the country is not expected to be much affected;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available; it must be noted, however, that the country’s total renewable water resources stand at an extremely low rate of 4.834 m³/capita/year.
C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** increased slightly between 2010 and 2018 from 18.7 per cent to 19.2 per cent, which is reflective of a high-income country;
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** is also insignificant in Kuwait, at 2.1 per cent in 2018 and 1.8 per cent in 2010. Female unemployment stood at 4.61 per cent, almost five times more than the rate of male unemployment in 2018 (0.88 per cent). Data on unemployment might suggest that Kuwait is at full employment, which could be detrimental to the economy, but since the country relies extensively on foreign workers, unemployment data is more figurative;
- **Logistics performance (AC4)** was 3.3 in 2010 and dropped to 2.9 in 2018, slightly above the Arab regional average (2.7). However, being a small high-income country, logistics should not be a major challenge;
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** decreased from 4.5 in 2010 to 2.2 in 2017, indicating less pressure on food prices despite the high dependence on imports.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached the entire population;
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** are accessible to the entire population;
- **Stunting in children under 5 years (UT3)** was 4.1 per cent in 2010 and 4.9 per cent in 2015, well below the Arab average (22.9 per cent); however, it is slightly elevated for a high-income country, and additional efforts are needed to bring it under the 2.5 per cent threshold;
- **Wasting in children under 5 years (UT4)** stood at 2.4 per cent in 2010 and increased to 3.1 per cent in 2015. The values are below the Arab average but still on the upper side for a high-income country, suggesting that additional efforts are needed to bring it under control;
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** stood at 20.6 per cent in 2010 and 23.8 per cent in 2016, well below the Arab regional average of 35.5 per cent, yet still above the target set by the World Health Assembly (WHA) for 2030 of 15.2 per cent, suggesting that additional efforts should be exerted to address the problem.

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** suggests a low vulnerability to the impact of weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity.
- However, other potential negative impacts could come into play, such as reduced water availability and higher temperatures;
• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

• **Political stability (ST3)** ranking decreased from 61 in 2010 to 52 in 2018, yet still well above the regional average of 14. The decrease might be a reflection of the rising tensions in the Arabian Gulf;

• **Food production variability (ST4),** already low in 2010, at $5,400 per capita,\(^3\) decreased further in 2016 to reach $3,600 per capita. Although Kuwait is a quasi-net importer of food, this decrease is noted as a positive trend;

• **Food supply variability (ST5),** however, doubled between 2010 and 2013 to reach 92 Kcal/capita/day. Despite Kuwait's high average dietary energy supply adequacy (ADESA) and its purchasing power, this high variability exposes the population to a food accessibility risk.

\(^3\) Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
Food security dashboard
Kuwait

2010 Data: ☀️ High: Proceed Action | ☁️ Average: More Action | ⛈️ Low: Urgent Action | 🎯 No Data

Latest Data: ⛈️ Low: Urgent Action | ☁️ Average: More Action | ☀️ High: Proceed Action | 🎯 No Data
## Food security indicators, Kuwait

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<td>CO3</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Availability Indicators

| AV1  | Wheat yields (%)    | 82.2        | 2017 | n.a.          | n.a. |
| AV2  | Agriculture expenditure (% index) | n.a.       |      | 0.94          | 2015 |
| AV3  | Food loss (%)       | 6.8         | 2013 | 7.6           | 6.7  | 2013   |
| AV4  | Dietary energy supply (%) | 131       | 2017 | 141           | 136  | 2013   |
| AV5  | Wheat Import dependency (%) | 65.0      | 2012 | 98.3          | 97.3 | 2012   |
| AV6  | Agriculture water (%) | n.a.       |      | n.a.          | n.a. |

### Access Indicators

| AC1  | Poverty (%)         | 16.6        | mult. | n.a.          | n.a. |
| AC2  | Food consumption (%) | n.a.       |      | 18.7          | 19.2 | 2018   |
| AC3  | Unemployment (%)    | 10.4        | mult. | 1.8           | 2.1  | 2018   |
| AC4  | Logistics - index (%) | 2.7       | 2016 | 3.3           | 2.9  | 2018   |
| AC5  | Inflation (%)       | 12.8        | mult. | 4.5           | 2.2  | 2018   |

### Utilization Indicators

| UT1  | Drinking water access (%) | 86.9     | 2015 | 100.0         | 100.0 | 2017 |
| UT2  | Sanitation access (%)    | 80.8      | 2015 | 100.0         | 100.0 | 2017 |
| UT3  | Child stunting (%)      | 22.9      | mult. | 4.1          | 4.9  | 2015   |
| UT4  | Child wasting (%)       | 8.7       | mult. | 2.4          | 3.1  | 2015   |
| UT5  | Women anaemia (%)       | 35.5      | 2016 | 20.6          | 23.8 | 2016   |

### Stability Indicators

| ST1  | Climate change - index (%) | 0.1       | 2019 | n.a.          | 0.09 | 2019 |
| ST2  | Price Anomalies - index (%) | n.a.     |      | n.a.          | n.a. |
| ST3  | Political stability - ranking (%) | 14   | 2017 | 61            | 52   | 2018 |
| ST4  | Production variability - $1,000/capita (%) | 10.1 | 2016 | 5.4           | 3.6  | 2016 |
| ST5  | Supply variability - kcal/cap/day (%) | 29.8 | 2013 | 46.0          | 92.0 | 2013 |

- **R**: Reversed During Normalization
- **n.a.**: Not Available
- **mult.**: Multiple years
- **Red**: Negative Trend
- **Yellow**: Neutral Trend
- **Green**: Positive Trend

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases including, but not limited to, FAOSTAT, ILOSTAT, World Bank and AQUASTAT, according to each indicator’s accredited data source.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

With the exception of adult obesity (CO3), the food security situation in Kuwait seems to be exemplary as it has low undernourishment (CO1) and food insecurity experience (CO2).

The few hotspots that exist include the following:

- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2) and food import dependency (AV5);

- **Utilization**: wasting among children (UT4) and anaemia among women (UT5).

The country is outperforming the regional average on many indicators of the framework. Even though Kuwait is highly dependent on food imports, its high purchasing power balances its needs. However, the high adult obesity rates along with the slightly increasing prevalence of anaemia in women raise the issue of a possible nutrient insecurity in the country.

B. Action areas

The following two areas of improvement can be identified, which policy formulation should focus on:

1. Reducing the risks associated with an import-based food economy through an integrated strategy relying on three pillars:

   a. Increasing the local food production using state-of-the-art technologies;
   
   b. Reducing demand through education on food consumption;

   c. Achieving trade alliances and diversifying food sources and trade routes.

2. Improving the nutrition of the Kuwaiti people through programmes directed at transforming the nutrition transition to serve the aims of food security for all.

In addition, it will be important to better understand the food security status of the non-Kuwaiti residents as they are an integral part of consumers.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Kuwait in late January 2020, and by September, had affected more than 100,000 people with more than 600 recorded deaths. Daily peaks reached more than 1,000 cases.4

At the beginning of the pandemic, food availability was thought to be affected by lockdown measures5 that led to trade and supply chain disruptions, combined with panic buying caused by consumers fearing reduced availability notably for essential products, fruits and vegetables, together with an increase in prices.6 For example, onion imports from India were delayed causing shortages and a price increase in local markets.7

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4 World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.
5 Suspension of all work and educational services (schools and universities) across the nation, curfew between 17:00 and 4:00, suspension of commercial flights.
6 Fresh Plaza, n. d.
7 Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), n. d.
To mitigate the impact of the pandemic on various sectors, Kuwait issued an economic stimulus package that, among others, included the following measures:8

- Supporting incomes of those affected;
- Ensuring a minimum salary to cover basic living costs;
- Ensuring food stability in local markets;
- Providing unemployment benefits to those affected;9
- Providing small and medium enterprises with loans at interest rates of 2.5 per cent or less.10

**Box 2. Examples of Government-led initiatives**

In anticipation of potential disruptions in trade and global supply chains, Kuwait pushed for greater regional and international cooperation and increased investment in agriculture. It proposed a programme across the entire Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to facilitate the movement of food stuff across borders while also easing food import by adjusting safety requirements. It invested in high-tech greenhouses to enhance local production of fruits and vegetables.a

The Government initiated an online database to help with aid distribution to needy families.b

In April 2020, Kuwait proposed to set up special measures at border control and customs posts to facilitate the movement of basic food commodities and medical supplies within GCC countries. The proposal was met with agreement by GCC countries.c

During the same month, Kuwait eased restrictions placed on the Egyptian imports and permitted imports of beef from Brazil, in addition to increasing investments in local production; and it imported 68 and 300 tons of onions from the Sudan and Yemen, respectively.d

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8 Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), 2020.
9 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020.
10 Ibid.
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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.,

The monitoring framework highlights that Lebanon has elevated rates of obesity and anaemia among women but is performing well in terms of food security. It has a high import dependency which can prove a drawback in time of crisis. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. Natural resources

Located on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, Lebanon has an area of 10,452 km². The coastal plain, the Lebanon mountain and the Beqaa valley offer arable land. Lebanon’s total agricultural area covers 332,000 hectares, of which 230,000 are cultivated with about half being irrigated. Lebanon is a relatively water-rich country with three main rivers, the Litani, the Orontes and the Nahr al-Kalb. Yet, with 743 m³ per capita per year in 2016, Lebanon is below the water scarcity level of 1,000 m³. About 60 per cent of the water is used in agriculture.¹

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Box 1. Impact of the Syrian crisis on food security

The Syrian crisis has had a tremendous effect on the food security situation of many groups in Lebanon. Displaced Syrians as well as Palestinian refugees and Lebanese who used to live in the Syrian Arab Republic form a vulnerable population that has experienced a worsening level of food security. Despite the food assistance delivered to these displaced groups, their overall food security status remains critical.

The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees reveals that the number of food insecure households increased from 89 per cent in 2015 to 93 per cent in 2016. About 96 per cent of female-headed households are suffering from food insecurity as well as 92 per cent of male-headed households.

The percentage of households with moderate and severe food insecurity increased to 36 per cent in 2016, while that of food secure households decreased from 11 per cent in 2015 to 7 per cent in 2016. The percentage of households with poor and borderline food consumption reached 32 per cent of the refugee population as they had access to less diversified diets and experienced a decreased number of meals consumed.

With decreased consumption of nutrient-rich and healthy food, concerns are rising over the long-term impact on the health and nutritional status of those refugees as these deprivations might lead to large-scale micronutrient deficiencies.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture of Lebanon, WFP and FAO (2017).

B. Socioeconomy

Lebanon hosts a large refugee population, representing approximately 25 per cent of the current 6 million populating Lebanon. The influx of an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees since 2011 skewed the country’s demographics as some 80 per cent of the refugees are women and youth.\(^2\)

Lebanon is highly urbanized, with 87 per cent of its inhabitants residing in urban areas. A middle-income country, in 2018, Lebanon’s gross domestic product (GDP) was about $56.6 billion for a per capita GDP of about $8,300 in 2018 and a share of agriculture to GDP of about 3 per cent.\(^3\)

C. Agriculture and food security

Even though the agriculture sector employs only 8 per cent of the labour force, it constitutes a primary source of income and employment for people living in rural areas, accounting for up to 25 per cent of the rural labour force and 80 per cent of the local GDP.\(^4\)

Part of the population suffers from severe domestic water shortages, affecting up to 1.6 million people in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. The poorest neighbourhoods of the city, where dwellers live on less than $4 per day, are the most affected, as they have access to piped water for only a few hours per day.\(^5\)

Food security concerns have heightened since the recent economic crisis which occurred along the influx of refugees due to the Syrian conflict (box 1).

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2 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2016.
3 World Bank, n. d.
4 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.a.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** has increased from 4.5 per cent in 2010 to 11 per cent in 2016 due to the influx of Syrian refugees putting Lebanon in the range of the Arab region average of 12.1 per cent;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** data are not available;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** increased from 27.9 per cent in 2010 to 31.3 per cent in 2016. Obesity prevalence is above the average for the Arab region (28.4 per cent). Obesity is much more prevalent among Lebanese women with 37 per cent than Lebanese men with 27.4 per cent.6

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** increased from 2.9 tons/ha in 2010 to 3.4 tons/ha in 2017 though it is below the full potential of 4.71 tons/ha estimated by Mueller and others.7 In 2017, total wheat production was estimated at 130,000 tons, which is around 7 per cent lower than the five-year average, during 2013-2017, of 140,000 tons;8

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** was 0.12 in 2017, indicating that the agriculture sector did not receive a budget allocation commensurate to its size in the economy;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** accounted for 2.5 per cent in both 2010 and 2013. The regional average was 6.8 per cent though data might not be complete. It should be noted as well that food waste is not taken into account;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** decreased from 128 per cent to 114 per cent between 2010 and 2017, an indication of lower food supply which correlates with the increase in prevalence of undernourishment. The latest value is below the Arab regional average of 131 per cent;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** stood at 86.5 per cent in 2012 well above the Arab regional average of 65 per cent. The country’s cereal production covers only about 17 per cent of requirements;9

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6 World Bank, n. d.
7 Mueller, N. D. and others, 2012
8 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.a.
9 FAO, n. d.a.
• Water resources used in agriculture (AV6) was reported at 15.6 per cent in 2018, which might not be fully accurate as FAO AQUASTAT pointed to a value of around 60 per cent in 2005.10

C. Access

• Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1) data show a figure of 0.1 per cent in 2011, which might not be accurate. Before the Syrian war and the ensuing influx of refugees, 27 per cent of the Lebanese population lived below US$ 3.15/day, and 7 per cent were below the extreme poverty line of $2.4/day;11

• Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2) was reported at 20.7 per cent in 2018. For Syrian refugees, the ratio is estimated at 74 per cent despite the aid offered by international organizations;12

• Unemployment rate (AC3) climbed from 6.5 per cent for 2010 to 9.7 per cent in 2012. Secondary sources indicate that female unemployment was at 12 per cent in 2011-2015 and unemployment of youth (15-24) was at 21 per cent during the same period;13

• Logistics performance (AC4) decreased from 3.3 to 2.7, indicating potential issues in the food supply chain due to hindrances in transport related infrastructure;

• Inflation, consumer prices (AC5) was relatively limited even though there was a slight increase from 4 per cent in 2010 to 6.1 per cent in 2018. It is less than the average inflation rate for the Arab region (12.8 per cent).

D. Utilization

• Population using basic drinking water services (UT1) was accessed by 90 per cent of the population in 2010, which increased to 92.6 per cent in 2017. However, piped water is not always available as mentioned above;14

• Population using basic sanitation services (UT2), according to the most recent data, were available for 98.5 per cent of the population in 2017, as compared to 87.6 per cent in 2010;

• Stunting among children under five years (UT3) data are not available;

• Wasting among children under five years (UT4) data are not available;

• Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5) increased from 27.3 per cent in 2010 to 31.2 per cent in 2016, indicating rising nutrient intake deficiency. However, the value is still below the Arab regional average of 35.5 per cent though well above the World Health Assembly (WHA) 2030 target of 15.2 per cent.15

10 FAO, n. d.b.
11 ESCWA, 2016.
12 Ibid.
14 Jha, 2018.
15 FAO and others, 2019.
E. **Stability**

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** is low at 0.06 indicating a low susceptibility to weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agriculture productivity;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

- **Political stability (ST3)** ranking was 7 in 2018, which is concerning given the ongoing regional instability and the economic crisis. The food security situation could be negatively impacted;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** decreased from $20,600 to $5,800 between 2010 and 2016, respectively, indicating improving production stability;

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** decreased from 85 to 63 kcal/capita/day but was still high, notably compared to the Arab regional average of about 30 kcal/capita/day. Food supply might be constrained, which is a concern given the economic crisis noted above.
### Food security indicators, Lebanon

**Indicators** | Arab Latest | 2010 Latest | Trend
---|---|---|---
**CORE INDICATORS**

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<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
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**ACCESS INDICATORS**

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<td>Unemployment 🟢 %</td>
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<td>mult.</td>
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<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation 🟢 %</td>
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<td>87.6</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting 🟢 %</td>
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<td>Child wasting 🟢 %</td>
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<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia 🟢 %</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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**STABILITY INDICATORS**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Trend</th>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>7.8</td>
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<td>ST5</td>
<td>Supply variability 🟢 - kcal/cap/day</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>2013</td>
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**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this table and framework are from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Lebanon is mixed. The outcome core indicators indicate that undernourishment (CO1) is not a major issue while food insecurity experience (CO2) lacked data and obesity (CO3) levels are alarming.

**Hotspot areas include the following:**

- **Availability:** wheat yields (AV1), agriculture orientation (AV2) and wheat import dependency (AV5);
- **Utilization:** anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability:** political stability (ST3).

Undernourishment is generally low though the sudden and massive influx of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic has caused a systemic shock to a country that was already facing a substantial structural debt and experiencing low political stability.

This has negatively affected most of the determinants of food security, resulting in a 100 per cent worsening of the percentage in malnourishment, notably among children. This is accompanied by a nutritional transition as people, notably the youth, shy away from traditional diets, which is further exacerbated by the predominantly urban nature of the country. This is ushering increased rates of obesity, which are more pronounced among women.

The country relies heavily on imports to meet its needs of wheat, and this trend appears set to remain unchanged, especially considering the low governmental investment in agriculture. Food consumption expenditures have increased and are especially high among refugees. Sanitation and clean water are accessible to all while anaemia among women is a worsening problem.

B. Action areas

Lebanon suffers from significant data gaps that need to be addressed in order to properly monitor food security. Missing or obsolete data include, but are not limited to, the use of renewable water in agriculture, children’s stunting and wasting and the prevalence of severe food insecurity.

A detailed, data-driven analysis of Lebanon’s status and constraints regarding food security, agrees fully with findings from this monitoring framework. The review also puts forth a series of recommendations building on the strengths of the country in order to seize the opportunity of a sustainable transformation in food security. These recommendations can form a solid basis for a sustainable and durable enhancement of national food security.

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16 ESCWA, 2016.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Lebanon in late February 2020 and, by September, had affected more than 45,000 people with around 400 deaths recorded. Although Lebanon had managed to control the spread of the coronavirus, it has witnessed, since the beginning of July, another substantial outbreak, which is proving harder to control.

Weekly cases

45,657 confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

The pandemic hit Lebanon while in the middle of a financial and political crisis. On August 4th, an explosion hit the port of Beirut at the time when COVID-19 confirmed cases surged to more than 600 per day. Lockdown measures lead to trade and supply-chain disruptions, which, combined with panic buying, led to a reduced availability of some essential products. The port explosion damaged 150,000 tons of staple food stored at port silos; they included wheat, soy, corn and barley, further threatening the supply chain and food availability. The situation was made worse by an 80 per cent decrease in the value of the Lebanese pound against the

17 World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.
19 Suspension of schools and universities; and closure of all malls, cinemas, theaters, airport and restaurants.
20 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020a.
US dollar, shortage in foreign currency availability, causing cash-withdrawal restrictions from banks and high exchange rates in the black market, and the subsequent closure of some businesses.\textsuperscript{21} Their combined effect led to a detrimental impact on livelihoods and food security of many Lebanese and refugees.

The living conditions of daily earners in the informal sector,\textsuperscript{22} such as taxi drivers and street vendors, worsened.\textsuperscript{23} The destruction caused by the explosion is expected to increase food insecurity and further exacerbate the economic crisis.\textsuperscript{24} The unemployment rate, which was 9.7 per cent in 2012, is expected to increase as the latest assessment by the World Food Programme (WFP) indicates that the pandemic and financial crises have pushed nearly one out of every three Lebanese out of work so far, and reduced the salary of one in every five.\textsuperscript{25} On August 19, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) stated that more than 55 per cent of the population is living under poverty with less than $14 per day, and 23 per cent in extreme poverty.\textsuperscript{26} This percentage is expected to rise due to explosion-induced job and income losses, as is its impact on food availability and prices.\textsuperscript{27} The middle class represents less than 40 per cent of the population while the high-class population shrank by 10 per cent, to drop to 5 per cent within the next year.\textsuperscript{28} When it comes to refugees, 75 per cent are living in extreme poverty.\textsuperscript{29} The crises have led to a delay in food import, such as wheat and rice, with vendors either rejecting orders or postponing shipments; cooking oil and lentils shipments from Ukraine and Australia, respectively, were postponed for one month.\textsuperscript{30} In addition, farmers and food industries were unable to buy or import agricultural inputs and other raw materials.\textsuperscript{31}

In April 2020, Lebanese millers alerted the Government and citizens of a supply crisis if foreign currencies are not available for grain import.\textsuperscript{32} At the same time, COVID-19 was inducing panic buying and stockpiling, which further accelerated the depletion, for instance, of locally produced potatoes in the market.\textsuperscript{33}

Food prices increased dramatically.\textsuperscript{34} An assessment by WFP\textsuperscript{35} on June 17, 2020 showed that the price of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB)\textsuperscript{36} has been steadily increasing over time with cumulative inflation of 109 per cent when compared to the prices in September 2019.\textsuperscript{37} Food inflation rate, upon comparing

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{aljazeera2020} Al Jazeera, 2020.
\bibitem{arabiyaa2020a} Al Arabiya English, 2020a.
\bibitem{lancet2020} The Lancet, 2020.
\bibitem{wfpp2020} World Food Programme (WFP), 2020b.
\bibitem{escwa2020} ESCWA, 2020; and International Medical Corps, 2020.
\bibitem{imc2020} International Medical Corps, 2020.
\bibitem{escwa2020a} ESCWA, 2020.
\bibitem{arabiyab2020b} Al Arabiya English, 2020b; and Reuters, 2020a.
\bibitem{arabiyab2020c} Al Arabiya English, 2020c.
\bibitem{reuters2020b} Reuters, 2020b.
\bibitem{alakhbar2020a} Al Akhbar, 2020a.
\bibitem{arabiyab2020c} Al Arabiya English, 2020c; and MTV Lebanon, 2020.
\bibitem{online2020} Online survey capturing 3,470 randomly completed responses: 2,418 Lebanese, 887 Syrian refugees and 165 Palestinian refugees over 8 Lebanese governorates.
\bibitem{smeb} The SMEB food basket is based on a monthly ration per person of 6 kg of rice, 3.9 kg of bulgur, 1.5 kg of pasta, 1.5 kg of white beans, 1.5 kg of sugar, 0.8 liters of sunflower oil, 0.3 kg of salt and 1.2 kg of canned meat.
\bibitem{wfpc2020} World Food Programme (WFP), 2020c.
\end{thebibliography}
that of June 2020 to October 2019, rose by 245 per cent.\textsuperscript{38}

To aid in food access, the Government rushed to distribute food parcels and financial aid to vulnerable people. The Ministry of Social Affairs allotted about $12 million in March 2020 to provide food and medicine for 100,000 vulnerable families. The Lebanese army distributed aid packages in various locations. And Lebanon’s Cabinet agreed to provide 400,000 Lebanese pounds (LL) as financial assistance to those who lost their jobs and are in need. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Lebanese Foodbank and Beit al-Baraka, among many others, distributed food boxes to needy people all over Lebanon.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} The Daily Star, 2020; and Beirut Today, 2020.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**

In March, the Government authorized the import of 10,000 tons of potatoes from Egypt for industrial purposes, while in April, it requested 400,000 tons of wheat supplies from India.

To protect consumer’s purchasing power and ensure price stability, the Government subsidized food and announced a maximum price for a list of food items. This decision is to be implemented for three months by all actors across the supply chain.

The Central Bank is suggesting to lift subsidies and issue ration cards to vulnerable people who meet certain criteria. The Ministry of Agriculture, in April 2020, prepared an emergency plan aiming at the following:

- Increasing the production of soft wheat, durum wheat and barley by cultivating additional areas;
- Cultivating about 80 hectares of land owned by religious entities;
- Supporting small and medium livestock breeders by providing fodder, strengthening extension support and providing beehives and tools to beekeepers.

**Other initiatives**

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), together with other agencies, distributed cash aid to affected families to buy daily essentials, including food.

WFP extended its cash assistance programme to support one million people, helping also those impacted by the explosion. It is working to expand its National Poverty Targeting Programme and provided in-kind food assistance to 5,416 people affected by the explosion. Partners distributed food boxes containing 60 kg staple food each, enough for a family of five for one month.

World Central Kitchen paid two restaurants to prepare and deliver 70,000 hot meals to 50 locations. WFP and SHIELD distributed 400 food boxes to families in affected neighbourhoods. They also distributed food boxes to Caritas and Lebanese Food Bank to cook and serve 3,000 meals on a daily basis. Caritas, by August 13, distributed cooked food and food boxes to 30,000 people and 700 people, respectively.

To stabilize bread prices and prevent any shortages, WFP imported 12,500 tons of wheat flour on August 18 and stored them at temporary storage tanks at the port.

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a Al Akhbar, 2020a.  
b Al Arabiya English, 2020b.  
e Al Akhbar, 2020b.  
g OCHA, 2020a.  
h WFP, 2020c.  
i OCHA, 2020a.  
j WFP, 2020c.  
k OCHA, 2020b.  
l WFP, 2020c.
References


A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights a substantial lack of data for proper food security monitoring in Libya. However, rates of obesity and anaemia among women are elevated while at the same time, the country is in the middle of substantial sociopolitical instability. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. Natural resources

A vast (1,775,500 km²), oil-producing country of the southern Mediterranean, Libya is mostly desert, and economic activity as well as population are concentrated on the littoral and immediate hinterland, except for the inland oil-producing facilities. Libya has no permanent rivers but numerous wadis that fill with flash floods. It has also extensive underground water reserves, including the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer system that allowed the construction of the Great Man-Made River.¹

Box 1. Libya’s migrants and refugees

Up to the early 2000’s, foreign migrants made up one third of the Libyan population. A number of them worked in agriculture and food-related sectors. Many left during the crisis, and their numbers decreased dramatically to reach an estimated 700,000 in 2019.

The country has also traditionally been a transit hub for African immigrants to Europe. The early 1990s, for instance, saw a rush of Sudanese refugees from Darfur, a number of whom settled without legal papers in southern oases and found employment in the livestock sector.

Today, migrants are among the most vulnerable population in Libya, and nearly half of them have been reported to be food insecure. The war also led to the internal displacement of large numbers of Libyans, many among whom remain unsettled to this day. According to the 2019 Libya Humanitarian Needs Overview, 11 per cent of the population (820,000 people, half of whom are migrants or in transit) are in need of assistance. Many of these receive support from the food distribution programme of the WFP whose target is to reach 150,000 people per month. These include migrants and refugees from other African nations, in coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2019.

¹ Brown and others, 2020.
B. Socioeconomy

Libya’s economy is essentially oil-based, and oil exports constitute the main share of the gross domestic product (GDP). Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, oil production declined by nearly one half, with repercussions on the national GDP. In 2018, GDP was estimated at $48.3 billion corresponding to a per capita GDP of about $7,200. The agriculture share of GDP was estimated at 1.8 per cent in 2008. The population of 6 million is very young, with 40 per cent under the age of 18, and unemployment was estimated at 30 per cent before the crisis. About 70 per cent of the workforce was employed by the State.

C. Agriculture and food security

Hydrocarbon exports cover for food imports, and the State had put in place a strong social protection system that involved significant food subsidies, which targeted the native population and is thus not available to migrants. The protracted civil war caused food shortages that required assistance from WFP and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to FAO, food insecurity is mainly due to the lack of economic access rather than availability.3

Although the country imports 80 per cent of its food, agriculture and especially pastoralism can be a significant source of livelihoods. Around 13 million hectares, classified as pastures, form the basis of a livestock sector that was once heavily subsidized but that, after the crisis, has shrunk. Moreover, 2.4 million Libyans were moderately or severely food insecure and 69 per cent of the population was marginally food insecure.4

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2 World Bank, n. d.
3 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.
4 FAO and others, 2020; and World Food Programme (WFP), 2020a.
A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** data are not available.

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was recorded at 9.9 per cent in 2016. It is below the Arab region’s average of 12.2 per cent and is due to the on-going crisis that is impacting livelihoods.

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** was at 28.8 per cent in 2010 and 32.5 per cent in 2016. Female obesity is more pronounced with 39.6 per cent of women affected compared to male obesity that stood at 25 per cent in 2016.5

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** reached only 19.5 per cent of its full potential in 2010, with an insignificant change in 2017 (19.7 per cent). Mueller and others estimate that the potential wheat yield is 3.98 tons/ha.6

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available.

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** data are not available.

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** is one of the highest among Arab countries, with 135 per cent in 2010 and 139 per cent in 2017, indicating a large availability of food.

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** data are not available.

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** stood at 692.86 per cent in 2018 even though the country has extremely limited renewable water resources. Water availability is at 111.5 m³/capita/year, which is lower than the absolute water scarcity threshold of 500 m³/capita/year.

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5 OurWorldInData, n. d.
C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available.
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data are not available.
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** remained stable at 17 per cent between 2010 and 2018, with female unemployment at 24.6 per cent and male unemployment at 14.9 per cent. The gender gap could play a significant role in household access to food.
- **Logistical performance (AC4)** slightly decreased from 2.3 in 2010 to 2.1 in 2018, which could affect food access particularly in remote areas.
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** slightly decreased from 2.8 per cent in 2010 to 2.6 per cent in 2013. Inflation is within the accepted average range for a healthy economic growth.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached 98.5 per cent of the population as reported in 2017, bringing the country a step closer to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 6.1 by 2030.
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** was at 100 per cent meaning that the country has achieved SDG target 6.2.
- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** data are not available.
- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** data are not available.
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** recorded an increase from 30.3 per cent in 2010 to 32.5 per cent in 2016, and although still below the Arab regional average of 35.5 per cent, this value remains higher than the World Health Assembly (WHA) 2030 target of 15.2 per cent.

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** stands at 0.03, indicating that the country is not significantly impacted by increased weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity.
- **Political stability (ST3)** ranking dropped significantly from 47 in 2010 to about 2 in 2018, indicating a serious shift in security that is likely to affect availability, access and utilization of food.
- **Food production variability (ST4)** already low, remained fixed at around $3,000 per

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7 World Bank, n. d.
8 FAO and others, 2019.
9 Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
capita between 2010 and 2016, indicating that food production did not experience any serious shocks during the on-going crisis.

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** dropped significantly from 14 kcal/capita/day in 2010 to a more stable 6 kcal/capita/day in 2013. In light of a high average dietary energy supply adequacy, this reflects high stability in food supply.
## Food security indicators, Libya

<table>
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<th>Libyan Latest</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Value</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Food insecurity (%)</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity (%)</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Availability indicators

| AV1  | Wheat yields (%)                   | 82.2        | 2017       | 19.5         | 19.7  | 2017  |
| AV2  | Agriculture expenditure (%)        | n.a.        | n.a.       | n.a.         |       |
| AV3  | Food loss (%)                      | 6.8         | 2013       | n.a.         | n.a.  |
| AV4  | Dietary energy supply (%)          | 131         | 2017       | 135          | 139   | 2017  |
| AV5  | Wheat Import dependency (%)        | 65.0        | 2012       | n.a.         | n.a.  |
| AV6  | Agriculture water (%)              | n.a.        | n.a.       | 692.9        | 2018  |

### Access indicators

| AC1  | Poverty (%)                        | 16.6        | mult.      | n.a.         | n.a.  |
| AC2  | Food consumption (%)               | n.a.        | n.a.       | n.a.         |       |
| AC3  | Unemployment (%)                   | 10.4        | mult.      | 17.6         | 17.3  | 2018  |
| AC4  | Logistics - index                 | 2.7         | 2016       | 2.3          | 2.1   | 2018  |
| AC5  | Inflation (%)                      | 12.8        | mult.      | 2.8          | 2.6   | 2013  |

### Utilization indicators

| UT1  | Drinking water access (%)          | 86.9        | 2015       | 93.2         | 98.5  | 2017  |
| UT2  | Sanitation access (%)              | 80.8        | 2015       | 99.1         | 100.0 | 2017  |
| UT3  | Child stunting (%)                 | 22.9        | mult.      | n.a.         | n.a.  |
| UT4  | Child wasting (%)                  | 8.7         | mult.      | n.a.         | n.a.  |
| UT5  | Women anaemia (%)                  | 35.5        | 2016       | 30.3         | 32.5  | 2016  |

### Stability indicators

| ST1  | Climate change - index             | 0.1         | 2019       | n.a.         | 0.03  | 2019  |
| ST2  | Price Anomalies - index            | n.a.        | n.a.       | n.a.         |       |
| ST3  | Political stability - ranking      | 14          | 2017       | 47           | 2     | 2018  |
| ST4  | Production variability - $1,000/capita | 10.1  | 2016       | 2.8          | 3.0   | 2016  |
| ST5  | Supply variability - kcal/cap/day  | 29.8        | 2013       | 14.0         | 6.0   | 2013  |

- **R**: Reversed During Normalization
- **n.a.**: Not Available
- **mult.**: Multiple years
- **Color codes**: Red: Negative Trend, Yellow: Neutral Trend, Green: Positive Trend

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this table and framework are from international sources, including FAOSTAT, ILOSTAT, World Bank, and AQUASTAT.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

As noted above, due to the on-going crisis in Libya and the fact that many indicators lack data, it is difficult to characterize the precise food security situation. Nonetheless, the framework shows that the two outcome core indicators perform poorly, namely, food insecurity experience (CO2) and obesity (CO3), while undernourishment (CO1) lacked data.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: wheat yields (AV1) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access**: unemployment (AC3) and logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization**: anaemia among women (UT3).

The main problem in Libya is the protracted conflict in its civil and geopolitical dimensions. There is a serious lack of data, and the reliability of the available data is limited, in great part due to the conditions during which they were collected. For instance, the data on severe food insecurity do not match the information obtained from other FAO sources,\(^\text{10}\) which indicates that a large proportion of the migrant population suffers from food insecurity.

As the lack of food security in Libya has been described as a failure of the economic access dimension, it is not surprising that the rates of obesity continue to be high, as those who have the capacity to access food will do so in surplus. There is also a serious issue related to the logistical aspect of food access (physical access) as entire regions can be inaccessible due to confrontations and violence.

B. Action areas

The policy priorities for enhancing food security in Libya should include first and foremost the cessation of the conflict. Until that time, the main problems to be addressed, as with other conflict countries, are the following:

1. Addressing the acute food security failures through humanitarian assistance.

2. Improving economic access to the most vulnerable, especially those who were dependent on the State and can no longer receive wages.

3. Enhancing the resilience of the agrarian communities and their contribution to the availability of food by improving access to innovative and environmentally sustainable technologies for production in the drylands.

\(^{10}\) FAO, n. d.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Libya towards the end of March 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 37,000 people with close to 600 deaths recorded. COVID-19 in Libya reached its peak in September when more than 800 daily cases were recorded. Daily occurrences are slowly decreasing but still above 500 on a daily basis.¹¹

Due to the restrictive measures implemented to control the pandemic,¹² the number of food-insecure people are projected to increase to 683,000 individuals compared to pre-COVID levels.¹³,¹⁴ WFP needs assessment and mobile Vulnerability Analysis Mapping (mVAM) on samples of vulnerable people showed that one out of three respondents, namely, refugees, migrants and internally displaced people, had poor or borderline food consumption, and 48 per cent experienced an inability to access markets.¹⁵

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¹¹ WHO, n.d.
¹² Suspension of schools, markets, cafes, mosques, public gatherings and some businesses; 24 hours curfew; and suspension of flights.
¹³ Out of these, 474,000 are Libyans and 209,000 are migrants and refugees. The percentage of food insecure internally displaced persons is projected to increase from 9 per cent pre-COVID to 12 per cent post-COVID and that of migrants and refugees to increase from 18 per cent to 32 per cent, respectively.
¹⁴ WFP, 2020a.
¹⁵ Ibid.
Unemployment, which was high before the pandemic, increased to affect 70 per cent of migrants and refugees, while the payment of salaries of public-sector employees, who represent 85 per cent of the labour force, was delayed.

Local food production was affected by the continuing conflicts, increasing prices of agricultural inputs and measures restricting movement, which prevented farmers from reaching their lands. Food supply was also impacted by trade restrictions and other measures implemented, such as security restrictions at checkpoints, together with a shortage of foreign currency, as for example imports of beans and pasta were reduced. Supply chain disruptions, coupled with the closure of shops, consumers’ panic buying and suppliers’ stockpiling, caused the population to suffer from a lack of sufficient food supplies as shortages started in April; in a recent assessment, 48 per cent of the cities reported food shortages of basic food items such as vegetables, eggs and wheat products.

COVID-19 led to an increase in food prices; for instance, the price of minimum expenditure baskets increased by as much as 23 per cent in May compared to pre-pandemic price levels. However, prices declined afterwards, except in the east of Libya, because of the decline in the cost of oil. The purchasing power of migrants decreased; and 33 per cent reported an inability to buy food because of increased prices and 28 per cent reported lacking support to buy food. This situation pushed more than 100,000 individuals to ask for food assistance between March and June.

In response to low or lacking income and increased prices, including cooking gas, migrants adopted negative coping strategies such as consuming crisis or emergency food. One in every three migrants surveyed reported low food consumption and poor dietary diversity, and 70 per cent of internally displaced people in the mVAM reported adopting crisis and emergency food methods leading to malnutrition.

Due to funding shortages, WFP is collaborating with other agencies and prioritizing assistance to the most vulnerable people to ensure their food security.

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16 Migrants, refugees and internally displaced people are the most vulnerable because they are daily workers and lack social safety nets.
17 WFP, 2020b.
19 WFP, 2020b.
21 Ibid.
22 WFP, 2020a.
24 WFP, 2020a.
25 Ibid.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

In March, the food security sector provided food assistance to more than 87,000 internally displaced people, non-displaced and host communities, and migrants and refugees in detention hubs and urban settings.a

FAO provided households impacted by COVID-19-related restrictive measures with agricultural livelihood materials, and training on climate-smart and conservation agriculture to improve their capability to produce their own food in the coming season.b

In April, WFP provided commodity e-vouchers to 5,000 needy individuals in Tripoli during Ramadan using a mobile application. It is aiming to expand the system to other areas outside of Tripoli.c

WFP and FAO are assessing the impact of COVID-19 on agricultural livelihoods.d

WFP assisted 54,000 people during the months of March, April and May through regular food distributions, e-vouchers, ready-to-eat foods, school feeding, and inter-agency rapid response modality.e

WFP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) collaborated to distribute food aid to migrants in urban areas.f

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a OCHA, 2020.
b WFP, 2020b.
c Ibid.
d Ibid.
e WFP, 2020a.
f Ibid.
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Availability

Access

Utilization

Stability

The monitoring framework highlights that Mauritania is confronting a difficult food security situation, as rates of undernourishment, stunting, wasting, anaemia among women and obesity are all elevated while the country is also dependent on food imports. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Mauritania spans over one million km\(^2\) in West Africa. Approximately two thirds of the land are classified as desert and are uninhabited. Most economic activities are located in the south in the Senegalese-

Mauritanian sedimentary basin, which includes the coastal zone and Senegal River valley. The Senegal River provides most of the water.\(^1\)

Box 1. Pastoralism and food security

Pastoralism and livestock production have long been the mainstay of the agricultural economy of Mauritania and constitute to this day the bulk of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP). However, recurrent droughts over the past 30 years have placed serious stress on this sector. This is causing large numbers of nomadic producers to settle into marginal areas of the country, mostly in the southern part. Settling places additional stress on natural resources and contributes to land degradation and engages people and animals into a vicious cycle of poverty-land degradation-poverty.

There are many reasons underlying the increased vulnerability of the livestock herds. Prime among them is the shift from the traditional camel, goats and sheep herding to cow husbandry. Cows are more productive but less hardy and require higher quality feed which is not always available. Moreover, the Mauritanian State discourages mobile pastoralism and mobility. Settled herders must now compete with crop production for water and land, which causes further degradation. Agropastoralism, which integrates crop and livestock production, could be further developed as an integral system to reduce the production risk with the appropriate crop and livestock species grown or raised in specific agroecological zones.


\(^1\) Toupet and others, 2019.
B. Socioeconomy

The majority of its population (4.6 million) is concentrated along the rapidly urbanizing coastline. It is a low middle-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) of $5.2 billion corresponding to a per capita GDP of approximately $1,200. Agriculture contributes to 28 per cent of GDP. Half the population is still rural and relies on a livelihood based on natural resources, including crops, livestock and fishing. The population is very young: 40 per cent are under 15 years of age, and the annual population growth rate is high, at 2.8 per cent.

C. Agriculture and food security

Pastoralism, both mobile and semi-settled, provides the country’s need in red meat and alone contributes 80 per cent of agricultural GDP. Fishing on the rich Atlantic coast is an important contributor to the economy. However, 60 per cent of food staples is imported, which places stress on the country’s food security. Mauritania is highly prone to droughts, which impose a heavy toll on people, resources and livelihoods. The 2012 drought left more than 800,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance. In December 2019, more than 360,000 people faced Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 (crisis) or worse (emergency) levels of food insecurity according to a recent analysis from Cadre Harmonisé.

Food security is a recurrent concern, due to the paucity of resources and economic constraints. WFP estimates that 23 out of the 52 administrative units (departments) were affected by food insecurity in 2019. According to recent estimates by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), 123,000 children will need to be assisted in order to address acute malnutrition. The south-east of the country has experienced an influx of refugees fleeing Mali since 2012. The number of refugees is estimated to be close to 60,000, all heavily dependent on food aid for their food security. WFP and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide support to the affected population (native and refugees) in the form of food assistance and direct cash transfers.

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2 World Bank, n. d.
3 Acaps, n. d.
4 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** was 11.3 per cent in 2016, which was an increase from 8.3 per cent in 2010. This increase is due to successive droughts and consequent poor food production;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was evaluated at 18.3 per cent of the population. Compared to the Arab region average of 12.2 per cent, Mauritania’s food insecurity is of concern;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** also increased in the country between 2010 and 2016, from 10.3 per cent to 12.7 per cent, respectively, though it remains well below the regional average of 28.4 per cent. Females obesity at (18.5 per cent is almost three-fold that of males at 6.6 per cent.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available, and Mauritania is not a major wheat producer;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** decreased from an average of 5 per cent to less than 1 per cent between 2010 and 2018. The decrease might be a reflection of a lack of adequate data rather than an improvement;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** was relatively stable at 125 per cent and 126 per cent, respectively, between 2010 and 2017. The regional average is 131 per cent meaning that the country has sufficient food supply;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** decreased from 78.3 per cent to 67.5 per cent between 2010 and 2018. It is high as the country does not produce much wheat but rather other types of cereals;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available.
C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** affected 31 per cent of the population in 2014. Poor people might be unable to afford food;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** reached 41.6 per cent the same year;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** slightly increased between 2010 and 2017 from 10.6 per cent to 11.8 per cent. Male unemployment stood at 9.09 per cent in 2017, whereas female unemployment was at 12.8 per cent. This might lead to further challenges in economic access to food especially in poor households;

- **Logistical performance (AC4)** is the lowest among all Arab countries, at 1.9 in 2016 indicating poor food supply and access particularly in remote areas;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** decreased in a favourable trend from 6.28 per cent in 2010 to 2.3 per cent in 2019. This could ease the pressure off the consumer, but it needs to be coupled with other safety nets that enhance the economic situation of the poor.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** improved substantially from 65 per cent in 2010 to 80 per cent in 2014; the country still has a long way to go to provide access to its entire population;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** was at 66.1 per cent in 2014, a marked improvement from 38 per cent in 2010 though the level is alarming due to its implication on food safety, notably the spread of nutrition-related diseases and microbes;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** stood at 27.9 per cent in 2015, around the upper limit of the medium severity of malnutrition, according to the classification by the World Health Organization (WHO). The country is far from the target set for 2030 by the World Health Assembly (WHA);7

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** was recorded at 14.8 per cent in 2015, within the range of the very high severity of malnutrition according to WHO classification. The value is well above the targets set for 2030 by WHA.8 This situation is alarming and needs close monitoring, and data in this context are crucial;

- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** is also extremely high in Mauritania at about 38 per cent for both 2010 and 2016.

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** was 0.25 in 2019, an indication that the country could be heavily impacted by the combined effects of increased weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

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7 FAO and others, 2019.
8 Ibid.
• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** were negative in 2017 (-0.8), which is an indication of prevailing low food prices in local markets;

• **Political stability (ST3)** increased from 14 in 2010 to 24 in 2017, a favourable trend, but still a sign of possible instability that might affect food security;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** dropped from an already low $6,600 to $2,700\(^9\) per capita between 2010 and 2016, indicating an improving stability in food production;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** dropped from 52 kcal/capita/day to 19 kcal/capita/day. Although still relatively high, the latest value implies a higher stability in food supply in light of the country's high average dietary energy supply adequacy.

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\(^9\) Constant 2004-2008 International USD.
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Arab food security monitoring framework
Country reviews - Mauritania

Food security dashboard

Performance:

- High: Proceed Action
- Average: More Action
- Low: Urgent Action
- No Data
## Food security indicators, Mauritania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Mauritania Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CORE INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO1 Undernourishment %</td>
<td>12.1 2016</td>
<td>8.3 11.3 2016</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO2 Food insecurity %</td>
<td>12.2 2016</td>
<td>n.a. 18.3 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO3 Obesity %</td>
<td>28.4 2016</td>
<td>10.3 12.7 2016</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AVAILABILITY INDICATORS</strong></td>
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<td>AV1 Wheat yields - %</td>
<td>82.2 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV2 Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
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<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV3 Food loss %</td>
<td>6.8 2013</td>
<td>5.0 0.0 2018</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV4 Dietary energy supply - %</td>
<td>131 2017</td>
<td>125 126 2017</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV5 Wheat Import dependency %</td>
<td>65.0 2012</td>
<td>78.3 67.5 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV6 Agriculture water %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACCESS INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AC1 Poverty %</td>
<td>16.6 mult.</td>
<td>n.a. 31.0 2014</td>
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<td>AC2 Food consumption %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. 41.6 2014</td>
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<td>AC3 Unemployment %</td>
<td>10.4 mult.</td>
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<td>AC4 Logistics - index</td>
<td>2.7 2016</td>
<td>n.a. 1.9 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC5 Inflation %</td>
<td>12.8 mult.</td>
<td>6.3 2.3 2019</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>UTILIZATION INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT1 Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9 2015</td>
<td>64.8 80.2 2014</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2 Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8 2015</td>
<td>37.4 66.1 2014</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3 Child stunting %</td>
<td>22.9 mult.</td>
<td>n.a. 27.9 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4 Child wasting %</td>
<td>8.7 mult.</td>
<td>n.a. 14.8 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5 Women anaemia %</td>
<td>35.5 2016</td>
<td>37.9 37.2 2016</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STABILITY INDICATORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ST1 Climate change - index</td>
<td>0.1 2019</td>
<td>n.a. 0.25 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2 Price Anomalies - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. -0.8 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST3 Political stability - ranking</td>
<td>14 2017</td>
<td>14 24 2017</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4 Production variability - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>10.1 2016</td>
<td>6.6 2.7 2016</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5 Supply variability - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td>29.8 2013</td>
<td>52.0 19.0 2013</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: Reversed During Normalization
●: Red: Negative Trend
Yellow: Neutral Trend
Green: Positive Trend
n.a.= Not Available
mult.= Multiple years

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this table and framework are from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Mauritania is uncertain. All outcome core indicators, undernourishment (CO1), food insecurity experience (CO2) and obesity (CO3), are alarming, which puts the country in a precarious food security situation.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: wheat import dependency (AV5);
- **Access**: poverty (AC1), unemployment (AC3) and logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization**: stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) among children and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability**: political stability (ST3).

There is much to be done in Mauritania to improve food security. The core indicators unveil an image of a country where undernutrition and severe food insecurity coexist with rampant obesity, the latter being essentially associated with rapid urbanization.

B. Action areas

Food availability is constrained by land and water scarcity. However, the State could invest in agropastoralism (box 1) and in the improvement of fishing. This will reduce the imbalance between food imports and exports.

Food insecurity is essentially due to very poor performance in the access pillar. Poverty is pervasive and, along with unemployment, must be addressed with special attention to women and appropriate poverty reduction policies. The achievements of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) prepared by Mauritania for the period 2001-20015 must be evaluated, and a new PRSP must be prepared.

Child undernutrition is a great concern, with values among the largest in the Arab countries. Immediate response is required for the provision of emergency support for the most vulnerable, including refugees. The low access rate to enhanced sanitation facilities and to enhanced drinking water services raises the risk of exposure to digestion-related diseases, which increases the risk of malnutrition. Aid from the international community and local funds could be targeted to addressing these most pressing issues.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Mauritania early March 2020 and, by October, it had affected more than 7,500 people with more than 160 deaths recorded. Cases increased since mid-May with a succession of peaks, recording the highest by the end of June.

Prior to the pandemic, some 2 million people were estimated to be moderately or severely food insecure.\(^\text{10}\) This number is expected to increase due to the lockdown measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic\(^\text{11}\) but also due to a decrease in rainfall that negatively impacted food production, pushing 1.4 million individuals to need assistance in the coming lean season.\(^\text{12}\)

WFP reported above average food prices, except for local sorghum and maize, and imported milk powder.\(^\text{13}\) However, the price of the average food basket remained stable in most areas. The price of small ruminants increased while that of large ruminants decreased due to the lack of forage.

A national social solidarity fund was set up, which provided support to 300,000 households. Duties were exempted on imports of wheat, oil, milk powder, fruits and vegetables.

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11 Closure of schools, restaurants and religious sites, travel restrictions, termination of football leagues.
12 WFP, 2020a.
13 Ibid.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

WFP, in April, distributed 424 tons in food assistance and provided $0.7 million in cash transfers to 59,000 beneficiaries; 57,150 Malian refugees received cash ($12) and in-kind food transfers (daily basket of 250g rice, 5g salt and 25g oil).a

WFP helped 2,117 beneficiaries in Guidimakha, Assaba and Hodh el Charghi through food assistance for assets activities and distributed hygiene kits.a

In May, WFP took the following measures:b

- Distributed unconditional full rations of cash-based transfers to 18,000 people in 226 villages and raised awareness on nutrition, hygiene and COVID-19 preventive practices;
- Distributed cash and food rations for two months to 57,633 refugees in Mbera camp;
- Started studying the possibility of distributing take-home rations as an alternative to school feeding programmes that were stopped;
- Stopped food assistance for assets and treatments for acute malnutrition to prevent the spread of the disease;
- Started using DataBridge to monitor and analyse food prices;
- Participated with Actions Against Hunger in the outcome analysis of the household economy approach to better forecast people’s access to food.

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a WFP, 2020b.
b WFP, 2020c.


A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The framework highlights that rates of obesity are high in Morocco, as are rates of child stunting. The lack of adequate data for food security monitoring is an issue. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

The Atlantic part of Morocco houses most of the arable land including the agricultural heart of the Gharb plain. The mountains have rainfall and snow, which feed an extensive network of streams that allow irrigated agriculture; with less than 1000 m³/capita/year, however, Morocco is a water-scarce country.¹

Box 1. Agriculture for the poor: a strategy to improve food security

Agriculture can offer a way to overcome food insecurity in rural areas by boosting smallholder incomes and improving their access to food.

Agriculture is also the main employer of women, who work at the low end of the value chain, and whose pay is lower than that of men, and often non-existent when offered as family labour. It is estimated that women own 7 per cent of the land but provide 30 per cent of the labour in family farms. Thus, the adoption of environmentally conserving innovative agriculture aimed at the smallholder may offer a way to improve incomes, especially when associated with social policies favouring gender-equitable enterprises.

Current farming practices are often environmentally destructive with overuse of agrochemical inputs. Irrigation efficiency is also of concern, especially where water is scarce and droughts recurrent. The Green Morocco Plan (2008-2020) was adopted by the State in order to improve food security, promoted, among others, the expansion of irrigation and pastureland management, which supported economic growth and tackled structural inequalities.

Source: Food from Morocco, n.d.

¹ Barbour and others, 2019; and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.a.
B. Socioeconomy

Morocco is a lower-middle-income country; its gross domestic product (GDP), in 2018, was approximately $118 billion corresponding to a per capita GDP of roughly $3,200.\(^2\) The contribution of agriculture to GDP stood at 13.6 per cent in 2016 and declined to 13 per cent in 2019.\(^3\) Nearly 35 per cent of its 36.5 million inhabitants are rural, of which 80 per cent depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood. Morocco’s economic growth was important in addressing extreme poverty. Yet, poverty remains a challenge for nearly 10 per cent of the rural population.\(^4\)

C. Agriculture and food security

Agriculture in Morocco follows a pronounced bifurcation in economic patterns, with 75 per cent of the land used for capital-intensive farming destined for export, while the rest of the land, which is cultivated by 70 per cent of the farmers working less than 5 ha each, is mainly used for small-scale production and subsistence. Much of the agricultural production is rain-fed, and climate fluctuations expose the country to severe variability in production, making the country a net importer of cereals.\(^5\)

Approximately 9.3 million people were moderately or severely food insecure during 2017-2019.\(^6\) Recent reforms have contributed to reducing hunger and food insecurity, and it is generally agreed that food is available for most of the population. However, there are still issues with diets and food quality, which underlie the malnutrition that is currently experienced in the form of a double burden of undernutrition and overweight, which affects more than 50 per cent of the population. Women are especially impacted, particularly in poor families. Similarly, stunting among children is still widespread, and has been associated with undernutrition in pregnant women and girls. These issues underscore an aspect of food insecurity that requires immediate action.\(^7\)

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2 World Bank, n. d.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 WFP, 2019.
7 WFP, 2019.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** reported officially at 0.1 per cent in 2014, a substantial decrease from 4.6 per cent in 1985, which is an indication of excellent progress;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** official data are not available;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)**, as reported by official country sources, increased from 11.9 per cent in 2011 to 20 per cent in 2017, which is still lower than the Arab regional average of 28.4 per cent. For the same year, female obesity stood at 32.2 per cent whereas male obesity registered at 19.4 per cent according to internationally sourced data.8

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data do not exist, according to official data sources. Mueller and others estimated the potentially achievable yield at 4.1 tons/ha;9

- **Agricultural orientation index (AV2)** data reported by the country were relatively low in both 2013 and 2017, at 0.3 and 0.4, respectively. It is noteworthy that Morocco’s agricultural sector brings 13 per cent of added value to GDP;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** data for 2010 are not available. Country sources report cereal losses in 2016 at 35 per cent. Food losses are estimated for one subset of crops only;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** data are considered unavailable as official sources provided them in caloric terms only as 2605.5 and 2828.1 kcal/day/capita in 1985 and 2001;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** official data show that the dependency on wheat import was approximately 52 per cent in 2014, which is below the regional average of 65 per cent;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)**, according to national data, was at 90 per cent in 2018. Considering the country’s already scarce water resources (811.4 m³/capita/year) and its low investment in agriculture along with the sector’s relatively small contribution to GDP, this value reflects an unsustainable practice.

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8 World Bank, n. d.
C. Access

- Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1) affected 4.8 per cent of the population in 2014, well below the Arab regional average of 16.6 per cent, according to national official sources; secondary sources show that, in 2010, female unemployment was at 10.35 per cent and male unemployment at 8.62 per cent;\(^{10}\)

- Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2) was 37 per cent in 2014 based on official data indicating that the population had sufficient disposable income to spend on non-food items;

- Unemployment rate (AC3) remained stable at around 9 per cent between 2015 and 2018 according to national data. International

D. Utilization

- Population using basic drinking water services (UT1) reached 93 per cent of the population in 2018 based on official sources. The country might be able to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)s 6, target 1, by 2030; below the “low prevalence of malnutrition” classification according to the World Health Organization (WHO); however, the rate was higher than the 2030 target of the World Health Assembly (WHA);\(^{11}\)

- Population using basic sanitation services (UT2) reached 96.9 per cent in 2018 based on official data, putting it on a path to achieve the related SDG target by 2030;

- Stunting in children under five years (UT3) was at 15.1 per cent in 2018, which was lower than the “low prevalence of malnutrition” classification of WHO but are still above the 2030 target of WHA;\(^{12}\)

- Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5) official data are not available.

E. Stability

- Climate change vulnerability (ST1) had a low score (0.09) in 2019, indicating that the country is not likely to be significantly affected by the impact of climate change on the three factors of weather-related disasters, agriculture productivity and sea-level rise;

- Food price anomalies (ST2) registered a negative value for 2017 (-0.7), which is an
indication that there is no major swing in food prices that might affect food security;

- **Political stability (ST3)** official data are not available;
- **Food production variability (ST4)** official data are not available;
- **Food supply variability (ST5)** official data are not available.

### Food security dashboard

**Morocco**

**Performance:**
- Sun: High: Proceed Action
- Cloud: Low: Urgent Action
- Average: More Action
- No Data
## Food security indicators, Morocco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Morocco Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Value</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CORE INDICATORS</strong></td>
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<td>CO1 Undernourishment %</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>AV1 Wheat yields - %</td>
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<td>AV3 Food loss %</td>
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<td>UT1 Drinking water access - %</td>
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<td>UT2 Sanitation access - %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Footnotes:
- **R**: Reversed During Normalization
- **n.a.**: Not Available
- **mult.**: Multiple years

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data in the table are from national sources except for ST1 and ST2.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Morocco is mixed as undernourishment (CO1) is not a major issue while food insecurity experience (CO2) lacks data and obesity (CO3) levels are alarming.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access**: logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization**: stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) among children.

As depicted above, data availability and data sharing are challenges that need to be addressed in order to fully take advantage of the results of the framework.

Morocco’s progress on achieving food security can be seen in its core indicators, especially CO1. Today, food insecurity is caused by the double burden of undernutrition of the poor, rural and vulnerable segments of the population (mainly women and children) coupled with overconsumption of food and obesity.

B. Action areas

Morocco’s indicators have all shown progress, but efforts must be placed on improving the following:

1. The sustainability of the livelihoods of smallholders, who are also the poorest and the most food insecure (see box 1). Evaluating the achievements of the Green Morocco Plan will help in the analysis of any gaps and guide towards focused actions.

2. The productivity of rain-fed cereal production and the integration of pastoralism within the extensive cereal farming systems.

3. Diets and dietary guidelines as the current stress on health appears to be related to the overconsumption of foods of poor nutritional value.

4. The access to clean water and sanitation as a precursor of improving health and nutrition in poor rural areas.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Morocco in early March 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 130,000 people with more than 2,300 deaths recorded. Numbers of reported cases are still following an increasing trend reaching their highest peak in late September.

Weekly cases

134,695 confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

Unemployment is expected to increase because of the pandemic and subsequent quarantine measures.¹³ The unemployment rate increased year-over-year from 9.1 per cent to 10.5 per cent compared to March 2019.¹⁴ Because of the crisis, 300,000 Moroccans are estimated to fall into poverty.¹⁵ Food production is expected to be less than last year’s due to unfavourable weather. Morocco is expected to import more wheat by 2021.¹⁶ Even though production is not anticipated to be much affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, food supply could suffer if trade restrictions were to be expanded. This has led Morocco to increase its grain reserves and to suspend custom duties on a number of key food products to mitigate inflation particularly in the crucial month of Ramadan.¹⁷

To safeguard the availability of agricultural and food products at the market, the Government maintained normal agricultural activity and production during the health

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¹³ Closure of schools and cafes and suspension of all international flights.
¹⁶ FAO, n. d.c.
¹⁷ Ibid.
emergency containment state by sustaining normal rates of production, packaging, transfer, and distribution of goods.\textsuperscript{18} Morocco is aiming to ensure availability of wheat stock up to 900,000 tons of soft wheat by the end of 2020.\textsuperscript{19}

The COVID-19 pandemic fears of food shortage and panic buying led to a surge in the price of pulses in April 2020. For example, the price of chickpeas increased by 3 per cent and that of dry beans by 8 per cent. The interministerial committee reported 768 breaches of food quality and prices during March 2020.\textsuperscript{20}

Through actions taken to stabilize food security, the country was able to maintain food stability, at least to this date. This was made easier by the prevailing low world food prices and the relatively limited impact of the pandemic on the country compared to other locations worldwide.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Box 2. Examples of initiatives}
\end{center}

\textit{Government-led}

An interministerial committee conducted weekly meetings to track and prevent fraud related to food supply and food prices. The committee reported a decrease in the price of vegetables despite a high demand. The prices of tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, green onions and dry onions decreased by 7 per cent, 5 per cent, 4 per cent, 8 per cent and 5.5 per cent, respectively. The prices of red and white meat did not change.\textsuperscript{a}

The Government halted custom duties on dried beans, beans, lentils, chickpeas and wheat in April and extended it until December 2020 in an attempt to keep prices steady.\textsuperscript{b}

The Government, through 50-100 mobile agencies that belong to Crédit Agricole du Maroc Group, delivered financial aid to those living in remote rural areas to ease the adverse economic impacts of the virus.\textsuperscript{c}

\textit{Other initiatives}

The French Development Agency provided Crédit Agricole du Maroc with $33 million as a partly early payment of the $54 million credit line, to ease the access of Moroccan micro-, small, and medium-sized businesses to financing during the bad conditions caused by the virus and to support both agricultural and agroindustrial sectors.\textsuperscript{d}

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a]{Morocco World News, 2020c.}
  \item[c]AgriMaroc, 2020a.
  \item[d]Morocco World News, 2020d.
\end{itemize}
References


A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The framework highlights that the food security situation in Oman is hard to monitor given the lack of recent data. The country has elevated rates of anaemia among women and devotes a high percentage of its scarce freshwater resources to agriculture. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. Natural resources

With a total area of 309,500 km², the Sultanate of Oman is endowed with 3,165 km of coasts overlooking three seas, namely, the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. The country has limited land available for agriculture due to its ruggedness and an average annual rainfall of 110 mm. Thus, just 7 per cent of the land has agricultural potential. There are two important agricultural regions: the Batinah plain near Muscat and the coastal plains of Dhofar. Oman has no permanent water streams and relies on rainfall.1

Box 1. Oman’s fisheries can contribute to the four pillars of food security

Oman’s geographical location and its more than 3,000 km of coastline predispose it to vastly expand its fishing resources. Sardines, lobster, tuna, horse mackerel, oysters, and bluefish are among the thousand-plus different fish and marine invertebrates found in Oman’s waters. However, to this day, fishing is 99 per cent artisanal and takes place in the relatively limited exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of 370 km.

There are plans to double the current catches by commercializing and improving the technological investment in fishing, expanding the EEZ to engage in deep-sea fishing and value-added processing. This would increase income for fisherfolk and improve the availability of healthy fish-sourced protein in the diet.

Aquaculture can also be a major contributor to livelihoods and diets. There are currently 24 projects being set up, and the first harvest took place in 2018, ushering a sector that can also multiply the availability of fish on the markets.


B. Socioeconomy

Its rapidly growing population of currently 5 million people are mostly young, with 50 per cent of the inhabitants below 25 years of age. They are mostly urban, only 20 per cent live in rural areas. Oman has a gross domestic product (GDP) of $79.3 billion, equivalent to about $16,400 per capita.2

Agriculture's contribution to GDP used to be close to 2 per cent and has grown by 7 per cent since the Government started investing in agriculture after the food crisis of 2008. Agriculture employs 4.6 per cent of the labour force, where more than 90 per cent are males.3 Agricultural production units are predominantly small, 91 per cent are under 5 ha and occupy 52.4 per cent of the land, and the greatest challenge is water availability.4

C. Agriculture and food security

Date palms, fruits and vegetables and feed are the main agricultural products. Yet, Oman is steadily increasing its local production of fruits, vegetables, red meat, poultry, and dairy, where it is getting close to achieving 50 per cent self-sufficiency. It is also engaging in an ambitious waste reduction programme and intends to reduce its current estimated 40 per cent food losses of agricultural produce to 10 per cent.

Although food security is mainly perceived in its availability dimension, Oman has made strides in the utilization dimension by developing, as early as 2009, an “Omani guide to healthy eating”, which follows the general guidelines of the Mediterranean diet, known to enhance longevity and to mitigate non-communicable diseases. The publication provides a practical backdrop for the Omani Dietary Guidelines.

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2 World Bank, n. d.
3 Ibid.
4 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2008.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)**
  Latest official data are not available but global databases indicate that undernourishment was evaluated at 5.6 per cent in 2010, well below the Arab regional average (12.1 per cent);

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)**
  Data are not available from both national and global sources;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)**
  Official data are not available but global datasets put obesity at 23.1 per cent in 2010, which is as high as in most other affluent Arab countries, though still lower than the Arab regional average (28.4 per cent).

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)**
  Estimated at 4.83 tons/ha. Global databases show the share of actual yield to potential yield at 85.4 per cent in 2010 or at 4.12 tons/ha, while latest official data were not available;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)**
  Slightly increased from about 0.54 in 2010 (as estimated by international sources) to 0.64 in 2018 (as reported by national sources), indicating an inclination towards investment in agriculture;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)**
  Data from global databases stood at 2.3 per cent in 2010 while no data was available from national sources. They are low as data are usually not available for all crops and food products;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)**
  Stood at 125 per cent in 2010 slightly below the Arab regional average of 131 per cent based on global datasets. No official data are available for the latest year. Food supply is not a major challenge for the country;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)**
  Was 95.5 per cent in 2010 based on global data sources, which was well above the Arab regional average of 65 per cent. No latest data are available from official sources. The country is almost a net importer of cereals, as are most of the countries in the region;

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C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** was reported by national sources at 0 per cent in 2015;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** stood at 25 per cent in 2018 as per official sources. As a high-income country, the population can afford its food without excessive expenses;
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** stood at 4.7 per cent in 2010 and at 1.8 per cent in 2018 based on national statistics suggesting full employment. The country also relies heavily on foreign workers;
- **Logistical performance (AC4)** stood at 3.2 in 2018 according to official sources, making it one of the highest in the region. It stood at 2.8 in 2010 just above the Arab average of 2.7;
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** had a favourable trend between 2010 and 2018 as it decreased from 3.26 per cent to 0.9 per cent (official sources), respectively. An extremely low inflation rate could hinder economic growth.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** was at about 99 per cent in 2016 based on national sources while it stood at 84 per cent in 2010 based on global data suggesting a strong improvement;
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** reached 99 per cent of the population in 2014, well on its way to achieve the related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target by 2030;
- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** was reported at 11.4 per cent in 2017, within the ranges of low severity of malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) classification. It is below the Arab region’s average (22.9 per cent) but slightly lower than the target set for 2030 by the World Health Assembly (WHA);
- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** was reported at 9.3 per cent in 2017, slightly above the medium severity of malnutrition threshold set by WHO classification and the Arab regional average of 8.7 per cent. These values are far from the WHA target for 2030;
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** recorded a favourable decrease from 36.1 per cent in 2010 to 27.8 per cent in 2017, according to both international and national data. Although still a high

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6 FAO, n. d.
7 World Bank, n. d.
8 Ibid.
9 FAO and others, 2019.
10 Ibid.
value, this is one of the lowest values recorded in the region following the year 2010. However, it remains higher than the WHA target for 2030.\textsuperscript{11}

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** data are not available;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** were reported at 102.3 in 2018. To put things in perspective, any value that is above 1 is considered abnormally high. This indicates an extremely high vulnerability of the country to price shocks;

- **Political stability (ST3)** ranking was 66 in 2010. This is one of the three highest values in the region indicating that the country’s food security situation is not highly susceptible to sociopolitical upheaval;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** was at $12,700\textsuperscript{12} in 2010 based on international data sources. This indicates a high instability in food production though no recent data are available to confirm the trend;

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** stood at 50 kcal/capita/day in 2010 according to international sources. This value is relatively high, especially in light of the country’s average ADESA values.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{12} Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
Food security dashboard

Oman

2010 Data:  
 Latest Data:  
 Performance:  
 High: Proceed Action  
 Average: More Action  
 Low: Urgent Action  
 No Data
Food security indicators, Oman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Oman Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
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<td>AC5</td>
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<td>mult.</td>
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<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
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<td>84.2</td>
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<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>97.1</td>
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<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting %</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia %</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>36.1</td>
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<td>Production variability - $1,000/capita</td>
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<td>ST5</td>
<td>Supply variability - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R: Reversed During Normalization  n.a.= Not Available  mult.= Multiple years
Red: Negative Trend  Yellow: Neutral Trend  Green: Positive Trend

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, latest data are from national sources while 2010 data are from international databases.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Oman is uncertain as undernourishment (CO1) is slightly elevated while food insecurity experience (CO2) lacks data and obesity (CO3) is at an alarming level.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2), import dependency and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Utilization**: stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) in children and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability**: price anomalies (ST2).

Oman is undoubtedly one of the best performers among other Arab countries. This is essentially due to a combination of effective policies since 2008, and the judicious use of the fossil-fuel revenues to invest in productive sectors. Oman is on track to achieving the SDGs, but a few issues remain to be addressed.

B. Action areas

There is a need to delink the concept of food security from that of food self-sufficiency and to consider all four pillars rather than to emphasize preferentially on the availability dimension. This is already happening, as, according to reports from decision makers, agriculture is seen as a contributor to food security as well as to employment, which will address the access dimension.

The issue of water use in agriculture must be prioritized, and limits must be set to the use of renewable water so as to ensure ecosystem integrity. This may impose a limit on agricultural production, but choices have to be made between importing food and losing water that might jeopardize stability. The country is making progress in wastewater reuse, but demand-side management should be the guiding principle.

There is a need to disaggregate data and focus on women. This is especially important in addressing food-related issues, such as anaemia and obesity. Issues of wasting in children must also be investigated and addressed.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Oman in late February 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 100,000 people with close to 1,000 deaths. High peaks were recorded in June and July, which decreased to about 300 cases in September. However, cases are increasing again.

**Weekly cases**

<table>
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<th>Month</th>
<th>Confirmed Cases</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Jul 2021</td>
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<td>Aug 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** World Health Organization (WHO) (n. d.).

Due to lockdown measures, unemployment increased as foreign workers, mainly in the private sector, lost their jobs. The number of unemployed were 1.67, 1.66 and 1.65 million workers during the months of February, March and April, respectively. Out of this high number of unemployed, 80 per cent was due to the loss of opportunities in the private sector that resulted from both the pandemic and a decrease in the awarding of government contracts due to lower revenues resulting from depressed oil prices; the remaining 20 per cent were due to normal work changes. The unemployment rate is expected to increase from 2.7 per cent (2019) to 3.8 per cent in 2021. To reverse the trend, the Government is implementing the “Omanization policy,” which promotes the hiring of local workers instead of immigrants.

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13 Closure of land and sea borders stopping the entry of all foreigners except from GCC; closure of educational institutions, public parks, cinemas, gyms, sport clubs, barber shops, and all shops and dining-in venues; and closure of money exchange services.
15 Middle East Center, 2020.
Box 2. Examples of Government-led initiatives

The Government imported 138,200 sheep and 8,427 cattle in March, and 169,000 sheep and 15,000 goats in April to meet the local demand for meat during the month of Ramadan. In addition, it released import licenses for livestock importers to boost availability.³

The Omani General Authority for Stores and Food Reserves, ZAD, issued contracts to purchase 10,000 tons of sugar, 10,000 tons of rice and 45 tons of red lentils. In addition, it offered free storage space to importers.⁴

The Government agreed to Kuwait's proposal to launch a unified network for food security among the GCC countries.⁵

Oman issued a series of decisions to ease the financial impact of the pandemic on the private sector and support the labour market. Decisions included reducing salaries coupled with reducing working hours for Omani employees for three months – with greater flexibility when it comes to expatriate workers, paying full salaries during imposed quarantine, and others.⁶ In addition, the Government deferred the payment of taxes; it deferred the payment of loans by banks to those earning less than $343/month by providing a three-month extension during April-June;⁷ it introduced new loans for businesses in affected sectors; and it provided $103 million to support the continuity of small and medium-sized enterprises.⁸

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⁴ Al Khaleej online, 2020.
⁵ Middle East Online, 2020.
⁶ Al Khaleej online, 2020.
⁸ Ibid.
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Alaraby (2020). ضعف الاستيراد بسبب كورونا يهدد بنقص السلع في دول الخليج. Available at https://www.alaraby.co.uk/%D8%B6%D8%B9%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AD-%D8%A8-%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%88-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7-%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D8%A8-%D9%88-%D9%82-%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AC (accessed September 7, 2020).

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Middle East Online (2020). ظاهرة أمن غذائي خليجية تولد من رموز اقتصادات الجاهلية. Available at https://middle-east-online.com/%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%BA%D8%B0%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A4%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%B6%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AD%D8%A9 (accessed September 7, 2020).


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The monitoring framework highlights the lack of data for monitoring food security in Qatar. Rates of obesity are high, as are rates of anaemia among women. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

The Emirate of Qatar is located on a small peninsula (11,581 km²). Qatar is mostly desert and low-lying with the highest point not exceeding much more than 100 meters. It has no permanent bodies of freshwater and receives very limited quantities of rainfall. Agricultural land is around 5 per cent of the total area but is affected by salinity due to poor irrigation practices.¹

Box 1. A food security investment arm

Hassad Food was created in 2008 as the investment arm of the Qatar Investment Authority, the country’s sovereign fund, with the purpose of focusing on the country’s food security in the wake of the global food crisis.

Hassad gained additional strength after the blockade on Qatar in 2017, as its efforts became more focused and multiplied. The company invested in local farms for fodder production, although this approach is now being reconsidered in view of the limited amounts of available freshwater.

It also acquired stakes in Sunrise Foods International, a cereals trading company, and is working on agreements for continued exports even in case of global food shortages.

It has also established an extension system to promote investments in high-tech farming. Along with some continued overseas investment efforts, this has allowed Qatar to absorb the shock of the blockade.

Source: Piesse, M., 2019; and Walid, T., 2009.

B. Socioeconomy

Its economy is fully fossil fuel-based. Total GDP amounts to about $191 billion, corresponding to about $127,000 per capita purchasing power parity (PPP). The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is one of the highest in the world.² The population is just

² World Bank, n. d.
under three million, but 90 per cent of the inhabitants are expatriates. There are no truly rural areas, and the population is clustered around Doha City.

The country imports 90 per cent of its food needs and is reliant on maritime trade through the Straits of Hormuz for 80 per cent of its wheat supply, which makes it vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions. Until June 2017, 40 per cent of food trade took place across the border with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, both of whom have declared a trade blockade against Qatar due to political disagreements. This catalysed further the Qatari efforts to establish new trade channels and to improve the local production of food, a policy they had engaged in since the global food price crisis of 2008.3

C. Agriculture and food security

The country invests overseas for its fodder production, in order to conserve the meager local water resources. Qatar is also harnessing high-tech approaches to produce locally fruits and vegetables using soilless systems that allow greater water savings and is planning to cover 70 per cent of its needs by 2023.4

Qatar perceives food security largely through the availability and stability lenses. This is achieved through a blend of local production, foreign agricultural investments and trade, which ensure adequate food supply and food availability. However, the utilization dimension, especially in terms of dietary transition, appears to be separate from the food security discourse.

---

4 Ibid.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** data are not available;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** data are not available;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** increased from 31.1 per cent in 2010 to 35.1 per cent in 2016, much higher than the Arab regional average (28.4 per cent). The increase might be due to the current dietary habits of the Qataris. Looking into the numbers, the female obesity rate stood at 43.1 per cent whereas the male rate stood at 32.5 per cent.\(^5\)

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** data are not available;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** data are not available;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** data are not available;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** was not reported for 2010 but stood at 397 per cent in 2018. This undoubtedly unsustainable practice is a result of both the prevailing water scarcity (21.98 m\(^3\)/capita/year\(^6\)) and its use for agriculture production (dairy).

C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** was at 12.5 per cent in 2010 and

---

\(^5\) World Bank, n. d.

\(^6\) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (n. d.)
12.3 per cent in 2018. This shows the high purchasing power of the country despite their high reliance on food imports;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** was negligible in both 2010 and 2018, at 0.5 per cent and 0.1 per cent, respectively. Female unemployment also recorded low values in Qatar at 0.63 per cent in 2018, and male unemployment at 0.06 per cent in the same year;

- **Logistics performance (AC4)** was 3.5 in 2018, which was an improvement from 3 in 2010;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was recorded at 0.3 per cent in 2018, compared to a deflation in 2010 at -2.43 per cent. Inflation numbers are really low, which could impact the economy, but being mainly a natural resource exporter, the low inflation rates do not have a dire significance.

### D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** essentially cover the entire population;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** cover the entire population;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** data are not available;

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** data are not available;

- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** recorded a slight increase between 2010 and 2017, from 25.7 per cent to 27.7 per cent. Compared to other countries of the region, this is one of the lowest values; however, it is still far from the World Health Assembly’s (WHA) target for 2030.

### E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** was recorded at a low 0.09, meaning that the country does not seem to be prone to negative impact through climate change in relation to weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** was low between 2010 and 2016, standing between $2,200 and $1,700, respectively. This implies a high stability in the production of food, despite the potential occurrence of geopolitical shocks;

- **Political stability (ST3)** ranking dropped significantly from 90 in 2010 to 69 in 2018, due to the latest security developments in the region during that period as well as to the blockade;

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** data are not available.

---

7 World Bank, n. d.
8 FAO and others, 2019.
9 Constant 2006-2004 International USD.
Food security dashboard

Qatar

2010 Data: Low: Urgent Action
High: Proceed Action
Average: More Action
Low: Urgent Action
No Data
Food security indicators, Qatar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>2010 Value</th>
<th>Qatar Latest</th>
<th>Value Year</th>
<th>Trend</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CO1 Undernourishment 🟢 %</td>
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<td>CO2 Food insecurity 🟢 %</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO3 Obesity 🟢 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.4 2016</td>
<td>31.1 2016</td>
<td>35.1 2016</td>
<td>🟢</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>AV1 Wheat yields - %</td>
<td></td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>AV2 Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
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<td>AV3 Food loss 🟠 %</td>
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<td>AV4 Dietary energy supply - %</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV5 Wheat Import dependency 🟡 %</td>
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<td>65.0 2012</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV6 Agriculture water 🟡 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>396.6 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACCESS INDICATORS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1 Poverty 🟢 %</td>
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<td>16.6 mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2 Food consumption 🟢 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>12.5 2018</td>
<td>12.3 2018</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3 Unemployment 🟢 %</td>
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<td>10.4 mult.</td>
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<td>0.1 2018</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4 Logistics - index</td>
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<td>2.7 2016</td>
<td>3.0 2018</td>
<td>3.5 2018</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5 Inflation 🟢 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.8 mult.</td>
<td>-2.4 2018</td>
<td>0.3 2018</td>
<td>🟢</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UTILIZATION INDICATORS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UT1 Drinking water access - %</td>
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<td>86.9 2015</td>
<td>100.0 2017</td>
<td>99.6 2017</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2 Sanitation access - %</td>
<td></td>
<td>80.8 2015</td>
<td>100.0 2017</td>
<td>100.0 2017</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3 Child stunting 🟢 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.9 mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4 Child wasting 🟢 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.7 mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5 Women anaemia 🟢 %</td>
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<td>35.5 2016</td>
<td>25.7 2016</td>
<td>27.7 2016</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STABILITY INDICATORS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST1 Climate change 🟡 - index</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1 2019</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.09 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2 Price Anomalies 🟡 - index</td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST3 Political stability - ranking</td>
<td></td>
<td>14 2017</td>
<td>90 2018</td>
<td>69 2018</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4 Production variability 🟡 - $1,000/capita</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.1 2016</td>
<td>2.2 2016</td>
<td>1.7 2016</td>
<td>🟢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5 Supply variability 🟡 - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.8 2013</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ิน: Reversed During Normalization n.a. = Not Available mult. = Multiple years


Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework, have been sourced from international databases.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework results are not conclusive due to a substantial lack of data including those for undernourishment (CO1) and food insecurity experience (CO2) while obesity (CO3) is at an alarming level.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access**: logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization**: anaemia among women (UT5).

Food security in Qatar is one of the best, if not the best, in the Arab region. On the availability and stability fronts, Qatar appears to be on track and to have adopted an effective strategy.

B. Action areas

The following policy recommendations can be made based on the monitoring framework:

1. Qatar needs to collect and share its food security data with the relevant international databases;

2. Qatar’s efforts in developing its food production sector need to be moderated given prevailing environmental constraints. Water must be used parsimoniously and fertilizer addition, which is reportedly high, also needs to be controlled;

3. The utilization component of food security, especially women’s obesity and anaemia, needs to be urgently addressed. Dietary guidelines have been published in 2015, but their adherence must be made a strategic food security priority.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Qatar in early March 2020 and, by early September, it had affected more than 126,000 people with more than 200 deaths recorded.⁠¹⁰⁠ As per the data sourced from the World Health Organization (WHO), the daily peak was reached towards the end of May at more than 2,000 confirmed cases. Since then, the number of daily cases has declined to reach about 300.

Weekly cases

![Weekly cases graph]

**126,692**
confirmed cases

**Source:** World Health Organization (WHO) (n. d.).

There are neither conclusive data on the number of severely or moderately food insecure citizens in Qatar prior to the pandemic nor an estimated number amid the pandemic. However, being a high-income country, Qatar is generally assumed to be food secure and could put in place appropriate social support mechanisms to assist the most vulnerable.

Food availability is not anticipated to be much affected amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown measures.⁠¹¹⁠ This is due to the sustainable measures that Qatar implemented aiming at diversifying and expanding local production.⁠¹²⁠ Such measures included the establishment of the first local dairy and meat farm with thousands of imported cows from the United States.

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⁠¹⁰ WHO, n.d.
⁠¹¹ Closure of all educational institutions and food outlets; placement of travel ban.
and the European Union, and the usage of technology to boost the local production of fruits and vegetables that increased from less than 10 per cent to 30 per cent availability in local markets in three years.\textsuperscript{13} During the pandemic, store shelves were always replenished with essential staple food items such as rice, sugar and oil. The Government reassured the population that food stock would be available to cover the demand of a whole year.

To mitigate the economic impacts of the pandemic, some large enterprises either reduced the salaries of their non-Qatari employees such as Qatar Airways that reduced salaries by 35 per cent or cut out employees such as Qatar Petroleum that reduced 800 jobs.\textsuperscript{14}

---

**Box 2. Examples of policies approved to support food availability**

In March, Qatar signed an agreement with 14 new companies in an attempt to diversify its suppliers and increase its storage of essential food commodities such as wheat, edible oils, rice, frozen red meat, long-life milk, powdered milk and sugar.\textsuperscript{a}

The Government initiated an electronic system that allows access to detailed data at all stages of the supply chain including types and quantities of stock, availability and locations of warehouses, distribution points and others.\textsuperscript{b}

Retailers were provided maximum official fixed prices at which they could sell fresh food. Retailers not abiding to the guideline are subject to fines or closure as per the Consumer Protection Law No.8.\textsuperscript{c}

The Government exempted food imports from customs duties.\textsuperscript{d}

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\textsuperscript{a} Baladna, 2020.
\textsuperscript{b} Food Navigator, 2020.
\textsuperscript{c} IloveQatar, 2020.
\textsuperscript{d} International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Atalayar, 2020.
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Saudi Arabia
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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

- AVAILABILITY
- ACCESS
- UTILIZATION
- STABILITY

The monitoring framework highlights that Saudi Arabia faces elevated and rising rates of obesity, with other areas of concerns including the high dependency on food imports and elevated rates of anaemia among women. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Saudi Arabia is a country of over 2 million km² that covers 80 per cent of the Arabian Peninsula with coastlines on both the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea. The central part of the country is mostly sand desert, and the country has no permanent surface streams but numerous wadis and substantial underground water reserves that fueled agricultural development.¹

Box 1. Saudi Arabia and wheat: from exporter to importer to conserve water

Driven by concerns over the security of its food supply and the potential use of food as a geopolitical weapon, the country initiated its wheat production programme in the early 1980s to achieve at least self-sufficiency; however, the programme became so successful that it turned Saudi Arabia into a net wheat exporter. At its apex, the country had become the sixth world wheat exporter due to its generous support programme. Wheat was produced on vast desert lands overlying deep fossil water aquifers.

The programme led to a rapid decline in the levels of water in the aquifers and, by 2008, the country had to drastically change its wheat policy choosing to roll back its entire wheat programme by 2016. Though wheat was replaced by alfalfa destined for its dairy industry, the Government also decided to discontinue its production and to ease the import of both wheat and alfalfa instead.

Saudi Arabia consumes about 3.35 million tons of wheat per year and has built a network of silo complexes in major cities that allow the storing of up to 3.1 million tons. Efforts are underway to further increase this capacity to about 3.7 million tons.


B. Socioeconomy

Saudi Arabia is home to more than 33 million people, 38 per cent of whom are non-nationals. The country is heavily urbanized, with more than 83 per cent living in urban areas in 2018 compared to an Arab average of slightly less than 60 per cent. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) revolved around $21,000 in 2018, which was about 165 per cent of the world per capita GDP average, putting Saudi Arabia among developed Countries.

C. Agriculture and food security

Only 2 per cent of the country is considered to be adequate for farming. The country is self-sufficient for eggs and milk and its fisheries sector is developing rapidly. The sector today accounts for 5 per cent of the non-oil economy and engages about 7 per cent of the labour force. Despite its limited role, Saudi Arabia continues to invest in the agriculture sector as a means to improve livelihoods in rural areas and to enhance economic diversification.

The Government changed tack with its strategy for food production and embarked on an agricultural modernization programme that saw the emergence of a strong animal production sector (especially dairy) coupled with an increase in cereal imports as the national cereal production programme was wrapped up due to its impacts on the groundwater resources.

Concurrently, Saudi Arabia sought to enhance its overseas agricultural investments and constructed large silos for grains, the storage capacity of which increased from 40,000 tons in 1978 to 3.5 million tons in 2016. One of the outcomes of urbanization is the shift in diets towards a more Western diet rich in animal fats, sugars and red meat. The growth in meat consumption has been rapid and will place further stress on national water resources if it is to be produced locally, due to the large water footprint of meat.

2 UN-DESA Population Division, 2019; and Gulf Research Center (GRC), 2020.
5 Mordor Intelligence, 2020.
6 Trading Economics, n. d.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** dropped from 7 per cent in 2010 to 5.5 per cent in 2016, well below the Arab average (12.1 per cent), indicating good progress. Being a high-income country, Saudi Arabia has no high concerns with undernourishment though additional efforts are being exerted through the Vision 2030 reform programme;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** stood at 8.1 per cent in 2016, lower than that of the Arab region average (12.2 per cent) for the period 2015-2017. The high prevalence of food insecurity could be attributed to a prevalence of relative poverty;\(^7\)

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** recorded an increase from 31.5 per cent in 2010 to 35.4 per cent in 2016, which is well above the Arab average of 28.4 per cent. Adult obesity is more prevalent among women (42.3 per cent) than among men (30.8 per cent). The rise in affluence has led to a substantial change in diets, which is a major driving force of the high prevalence of obesity.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** was recorded at 6.14 tons/ha in 2010, and then at 5 tons/ha in 2017, above the country’s estimated maximum potential for wheat yield which stands at 4.66 tons/ha. However, the country is phasing out wheat and forage production due to their negative impact on non-rechargeable aquifers;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** were relatively low at around 3 per cent between 2010 and 2013. Food waste is not taken into account, but the available data might not represent the reality on the ground as data are missing for a large number of crops and produces;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** stands at 130 per cent; the higher the better as food is usually not uniformly distributed among the entire population.

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population. The Arab average stands at 131 per cent;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** is high as the country’s low agricultural natural resource endowment makes it almost impossible to sustainably produce its own food, which makes it an almost net importer of food, with a 96 per cent compared to the already high Arab average of 65 per cent;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** indicate that water withdrawals are 800 per cent of the renewable water compared to an Arab average of about 40 per cent. Saudi Arabia has practically no permanently running surface water streams, making it reliant on non-renewable underground water resources and desalinated water.

### C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available. As a high-income country with relatively good social programmes, poverty is not major issue;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** stands at almost 21 per cent of total expenditure. This is on the high range for a rich country as for example the average for the European Union stands at about 12 per cent;\(^8\)

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** was relatively stable at around 6 per cent between 2010 and 2018, which was well below the Arab average of about 10.4 per cent. Female unemployment is reaching up to 20 per cent, whereas male unemployment stands at only 3 per cent as a result of prevailing sociocultural characteristics. This is among the largest gender gaps within the region;

- **Logistics performance (AC4)** stood at 3.2 in 2010 and remained relatively stable throughout 2016 and above the Arab average of 2.7. Saudi Arabia has relatively good infrastructure and good trading procedures as it relies heavily on trade to import the food it needs;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was 5.34 per cent in 2010 and dropped to 2.5 per cent in 2018, compared to an Arab average of 12.8 per cent. Inflation is among the few indicators subject to substantial changes on a short-term basis, for instance, from one quarter or year to the next depending on the prevailing situation. It was relatively high in 2010 as it followed the food price crisis that prevailed in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

### D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** stood at 100 per cent as the country’s infrastructure is well developed and stable;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** reached the entire population as well, which is usually a given for a high-income country;

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\(^8\) Eurostat, 2018.
• **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** data are not available though it is assumed to be well below the Arab average of 22.9 per cent due to its relatively good social programmes;

• **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** data are not available but is assumed to be well below the Arab average of 8.7 per cent;

• **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** is very high in Saudi Arabia standing at 41.5 per cent in 2010 and 42.9 per cent in 2016 compared to an Arab average of about 35.5 per cent.

**E. Stability**

• **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** does not indicate that the country is highly vulnerable to climate change as it scores 0.02. The subcomponents of this indicator, namely, weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and agricultural productivity loss, might not be readily applicable to Saudi Arabia;

• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** was 0.6 in 2017, which is moderately high, indicating a probability that Saudi Arabia could be affected by price shocks. This might be attributed to its quasi-complete dependency on food imports;

• **Political stability (ST3)** ranking was at about 37 in 2010 and dropped to about 29 in 2018, which is above the Arab average of 14. This ranking indicates that Saudi Arabia could be impacted by instability, most probably due to the ongoing conflict in Yemen and in the Arabian Gulf;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** slightly increased from $3,300 to $4,100\(^9\) per capita between 2010 and 2016. Although this is an unfavourable change depicting an increase in variability, the value is still among the lowest in the region as the Arab average is at about $10,000 per capita;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** recorded very high values between 2010 and 2013 with 37 and 75 kcal/capita/day, respectively, which were well above the Arab average of about 30 kcal/capita/day. The high variability might be the result of the trade restrictions that prevailed following the food price crises of the late 2000s and early 2010s.

\(^9\) Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
Food security indicators, Saudi Arabia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Saudi Arabia Latest</th>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Value</td>
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<td>Wheat yields - %</td>
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<td>Dietary energy supply - %</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency ⬆ %</td>
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<td>mult.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption ⬆ %</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation ⬆ %</td>
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<td>mult.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
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<td>Child wasting ⬆ %</td>
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<td>Political stability - ranking</td>
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<td>Production variability ⬆ - $1,000/capita</td>
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<td>Supply variability ⬆ - kcal/cap/day</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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R: Reversed During Normalization  n.a.= Not Available  mult.= Multiple years
Red: Negative Trend  Yellow: Neutral Trend  Green: Positive Trend

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework have been sourced from international databases or national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

In relation to the core indicators, Saudi Arabia has a slightly elevated prevalence of undernourishment (CO1) while the other two core indicators, namely, prevalence of food insecurity (CO2) and obesity (CO3) show alarming levels.

**Hotspots among causal indicators include the following:**

- **Availability dimension:** food import (AV5) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Utilization dimension:** anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability dimension:** food price anomalies (ST2) and political stability (ST3).

Saudi Arabia is a high-income country with an affluent population. There are rural pockets with poorer people, but the lack of data does not allow a clear assessment of the situation.

Following largely unsuccessful attempts at self-sufficiency, which exacted a heavy toll on the water resources, Saudi Arabia is now looking beyond its borders to satisfy its food needs. As a country that can afford a large food bill, this is a better policy option than local production. However, fair and equitable trade and investment deals must be sought in order to avoid undesirable political repercussions. Food access does not appear to be an issue, although data must be segregated and then analysed to identify potential pockets of poverty that can explain the poor performance in severe food insecurity.

B. Action areas

By far the largest problem remains the nutritional status of the population, especially of women, whose obesity and anaemia scores are concerning. Whether this is associated with the low inclusion of women in the labour force remains to be determined. This shortcoming needs to be addressed through focused nutrition and specially designed programmes including appropriate social safety nets for the most vulnerable. Saudi Arabia has developed dietary guidelines, but additional efforts should go towards their implementation through focused national programmes.

As is the case with many countries of the region, unavailability of data is a limitation for the efficient monitoring and reporting of food security in all its dimensions and challenges.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Saudi Arabia in early March 2020 and, by October, had affected about 336,000 people with close to 5,000 deaths recorded. The country recorded a succession of peaks with the highest of close to 5,000 confirmed daily cases towards mid-June. However, reported cases are following a decreasing trend now.\(^{10}\)

**Weekly cases**

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**336,766**

confirmed cases

*Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.*

Beside lockdown measures,\(^{11}\) Saudi Arabia is facing an economic slowdown as oil revenues fell by 24 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the previous year.\(^{12}\) The anticipated reduced touristic and religious events (hajj and omra) in the Gulf region are also expected to lead to a loss of 400,000 jobs related to tourism in all countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It is expected to lead to the departure of 1.2 million foreign workers (9 per cent of total employment) from the labour market in Saudi Arabia.\(^{13}\) However, this is anticipated to open vacancies to Saudis, which might decrease the unemployment rate. The Government implemented the following policies that supported 80,000 firms and provided employment to 400,000 Saudis:\(^{14}\)

---

10 World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.
11 Suspension of international and domestic flights; closure of all educational and vocational training institutions, malls and amusement parks; banning of public and social events; nation-wide curfews from 7 p.m. till 6 a.m. in all cities except Mekkah and Medina, where the curfew is 24 hours.
13 Ibid.
• A $13 billion stimulus package announced by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority to support businesses and extend finance to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for six months;\textsuperscript{15}

• An economic package of $18.7 billion aimed at preserving liquidity in the private sector by exempting or deferring payments of taxes;\textsuperscript{16}

• The disbursement of $2.4 billion aimed at paying 60 per cent of around 1.2 million salaries of private sector employees for three months as part of an unemployment insurance scheme;\textsuperscript{17}

• An economic package of $13.3 billion aimed at paying Government dues to the private sector at a faster pace and paying 30 per cent of electricity bills for three months for the agriculture, industrial and commercial sectors.\textsuperscript{18}

Box 2. Examples of Government-led initiatives

The Saudi Agriculture Fund announced an action plan to support local food security and agricultural production.\textsuperscript{a} It allocated $665 million\textsuperscript{b} to support farmers and ease imports by:

• Encouraging domestic production of fruits and vegetables including boosting the output of tomatoes and cucumbers by 50 per cent;

• Encouraging growers to adopt hydroponics in their farming systems through loans worth $80 million;\textsuperscript{c}

• Boosting farming abroad in 10 countries in Africa, the Black Sea area and Latin America by offering low-interest loans for a total of $533.33 million to companies that send at least half of their overseas harvest to Saudi Arabia;\textsuperscript{d} covered crops include alfalfa, wheat, barley, sugar, rice and corn;

• Allocating $40 million to support small-scale livestock owners, fish farming projects and poultry producers;\textsuperscript{e}

In April, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture lifted the ban on livestock imports from Somalia in an attempt to boost and ensure sufficient local supply.\textsuperscript{f}

Under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, the G20 ministers of agriculture agreed not to impose export restrictions or extraordinary taxes on food and agricultural products purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes.\textsuperscript{g}

\textsuperscript{a} Arab News, 2020.
\textsuperscript{b} Bloomberg, 2020b.
\textsuperscript{c} SUSGT, 2020.
\textsuperscript{d} Arab News, 6\textsuperscript{d} 2020); and SUSGT, 2020.
\textsuperscript{e} Arab News, 2020.
\textsuperscript{f} Hornidiplomat, 2020.
\textsuperscript{g} G20 Saudi Arabia, 2020.

\textsuperscript{15} Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2020.
\textsuperscript{16} Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), 2020.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
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A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights that food security is a challenge in Somalia, as the average dietary energy supply is very low and the country is still experiencing sociopolitical instability. The availability of data is an impediment for proper food security monitoring. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. **Natural resources**

Located on the north-eastern tip of the African continent, Somalia spans over 637,660 km². The country is drought-prone and regularly experiences severe occurrences (once every seven to nine years), which can cause major famine. The fertile lands are located along the only two rivers of Somalia, which are the Juba and the Shebelle.\(^1\) Arable land is limited and accounts for less than 2 per cent of the area, while 70 per cent of the land is in permanent pasture. The mean annual rainfall is 280 mm, but it can reach 500 mm in the dryland.

**Box 1. Somalia always teetering on the brink of famine**

Famine is a constant threat in Somalia. The year 2019 saw some of the lowest cereal harvests in Southern Somalia and a significant decline in yields of cereals in the north, reaching up to 40 per cent according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET).

These poor harvests are compounded by the fact that many Somalis have not yet recovered from the near-famine that was caused by the 2016-2017 drought, and the largest impact is on the estimated 2.6 million internally displaced people who are already in levels 3 (crisis) or 4 (emergency) of food insecurity of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC). It is estimated that up to 2.1 million Somalis could be experiencing IPC 3 by December 2019, a 40 per cent increase since the beginning of 2019.

Moreover, floods from above-average rains in the current season are expected to damage crops in the fluvial plains across the country. As every year, humanitarian assistance is critically needed.


B. **Socioeconomy**

Of its estimated 12 million people, 55 per cent are still rural, the majority of who are still mobile pastoralists or agro-pastoralists, living in poverty and vulnerable to droughts.

The nominal gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 was $8 billion and the per capita GDP was $716. The economy is essentially based on agriculture, which makes up 40-75 per cent of GDP and 50 per cent of exports earnings, mainly as livestock sales to Saudi Arabia. It employs 70 per cent of the labour force. Unemployment figures are high and reach up to 75 per cent for women. Somalia is a rapidly urbanizing nation with nearly 50 per cent of the population under the age of 14. Poverty rates are high and have been estimated at 70 per cent.

It is estimated that 2.6 million Somalis are internally displaced, 80 per cent of whom are in urban areas. Progress is still hindered by a multitude of interacting factors including droughts, floods, civil conflict, external military and political interference, and profound inequality of class and gender.

C. Agriculture and food security

Somalia has a history of devastating famines, the most recent of which was the 2010-2012 famine, which was followed by a food crisis in 2014 and a near famine in 2016-2017, which was only averted because of an early warning system and intensified humanitarian assistance.

Food insecurity is always looming and is caused by complex, interacting drivers. Approximately 1.1 million people are food insecure. At the household level, crop failures and livestock losses are compounded with conflict, displacement, political and economic instability, and inequalities. Food insecurity is more frequent and intense among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and in specific regions of the country. Women are the most affected segment of society. Malnutrition, especially in infants and children, is driven by food insecurity and by sociocultural factors related to gender inequalities.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** data are not available;
- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** data are not available;
- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** was reported by official sources at 8.3 per cent in 2016, an increase from 6.4 per cent in 2010. Obesity in Somalia is one of the lowest in the region, although female obesity, at 12.3 per cent, is almost four times the rate of male obesity, at 3.9 per cent.¹⁵

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available;
- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;
- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** data are not available;
- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** remains below 100 per cent, after having slightly increased between 2010 and 2017 from 81 to 87 per cent. This implies that a significant portion of the population is not receiving an adequate supply of energy from food;
- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** data are not available;
- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available, but the country’s total renewable water resources (997.1 m³/capita/year) is slightly under the water scarcity threshold of 1,000 m³/capita/year.⁶

C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data are not available;

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¹⁵ World Bank, n.d.
⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (n. d.).
• **Unemployment rate (AC3)** did not change much between 2010 and 2016 as it remained between 14.6 and 14 per cent according to official sources. Male unemployment was recorded at 13.8 per cent in 2016, whereas female unemployment registered at 15.7 per cent, as reported by international sources;7

• **Logistics performance (AC4)** recorded a shy improvement from 1.3 in 2010 to 1.8 in 2016 but remains well under standard meaning that the food supply chain might be heavily affected;

• **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** data are not available.

### D. Utilization

• **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached only 40 per cent of the population in 2015, compared to 33.4 per cent in 2010. The country is unlikely to meet the related target of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 by 2030;

• **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** reached 16.2 per cent in 2015, compared to 18.5 per cent in 2010. These values are alarming as a large number of nutrition-related diseases is associated with inadequate access to clean water and sanitation services;

• **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** data are not available;

• **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** data are not available;

• **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** is extremely high, at around 44 per cent in both 2010 and 2016, which are among the highest levels in the region and well above the regional average of 35.5 per cent. They are also very far from the target set for 2030 by the World Health Assembly (WHA).8

### E. Stability

• **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** index is at 0.24, indicating the possibility that the country could suffer from increase in weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and/or loss of agricultural productivity;

• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

• **Political stability (ST3)** ranking rose from 0 in 2010 to about 3 in 2017. Although an improvement, this score still indicates many hurdles hindering the stability of safe access to, and availability of, food;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** dropped from $7,800 to $3,800 between 2010 and 2016.9 This implies a larger stability of food production across time;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** also decreased from 55 kcal/capita/day in 2010 to 29 kcal/capita/day in 2013. Although a favourable decrease, these values remain very high, especially considering the country’s extremely low average dietary energy supply adequacy.

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7 World Bank, n.d.
8 Food and Agriculture Organization and others, 2019.
9 Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
## Food security indicators, Somalia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
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### Notes:
- \(\text{R}\): Reversed during normalization
- \(\text{n.a.}\): Not available
- \(\text{mult.}\): Multiple years
- Red: Negative trend
- Yellow: Neutral trend
- Green: Positive trend

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework were received from national sources.
A. Drivers and determinants

Although many indicators lack data, the food security monitoring framework shows that food security is a major challenge for Somalia. Undernourishment (CO1) and food insecurity (CO2) lack data while obesity (CO3) levels are good but require close monitoring.

**Hotspot areas include the following:**

- **Availability:** Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4) and water resources used in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access:** unemployment (AC3) and logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization:** access to water services (UT1), access to sanitation services (UT2) and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability:** political stability (ST3).

The evaluation of the monitoring framework for Somalia unveils some of its main limitations, which is its applicability for countries in protracted conflict and crisis where data collection, evaluation and policymaking do not operate as in stable countries. For the specific case of Somalia, some data are available, but is not accessible through the databases the framework relies upon. It is located within humanitarian assistance organizations, and sometimes uses different measurements from those relied upon for the framework data. This applies to information related to food insecurity, which uses the IPC classification rather than the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

Moreover, regional differences are very wide, especially in countries experiencing civil conflict and which are de facto divided, or where logistics and communications are poor and regional exchanges of goods and merchandise is impeded by political and physical barriers. It is, therefore, recommended to assess food security at the regional level, although the current format of the framework does not lend itself easily to this endeavour.

B. Action areas

Our analysis using the framework data and complementary observations allow us to identify the following areas that can be strengthened by policy and action:
1. Humanitarian aid in the form of in-kind and cash-based transfer will remain necessary for the foreseeable future, especially in drought-prone regions and in vulnerable groups;

2. The livelihoods of pastoralists and agropastoralists must be made a priority. They must be enhanced through direct support in supplementary feeding, veterinary care and access to water;

3. Similarly, small farmers must be supported through livelihood-enhancing activities that conserve the environment and enhance diversification;

4. Particular attention should be given to women and children as they are the most vulnerable. Nutrient imbalances and micronutrient deficiencies must be addressed through a country-wide nutritional support programme.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Somalia in mid-March 2020 and by October had affected more than 3,700 people with close to 100 deaths recorded. In general, Somalia records less than 100 daily occurrences of COVID-19, and the bulk of cases occurred between mid-April and mid-July. Following a lull during the month of August 2020, cases seem to be on the rise again with a substantial spike on September 27 of 123 cases.

Due to the restrictive measures, including suspension of international flights and the closure of educational institutions, implemented to control the pandemic, the number of food-insecure people increased to 2.7 million between April and June and further increased to 3.5 million between June and September. It is predicted to further increase to 4.15 million, aggravate acute food insecurity and push one in every six children (1 million) into severe malnourishment (Riddell, 2020), with the presence of other factors such as decreased rainfall during the rainy season (deyr) from October to December subsequent to below-average rainfalls during the rainy season (gu) between March and June, which affect the 2020 and 2021 planting and harvesting seasons.

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Short rainfalls, coupled with crop losses and decreased agricultural work salaries, will drive areas that depend on pastoralism into IPC phase 3 in the early months of 2021. The most vulnerable people are the poor residing in urban areas, agrarians, pastoralists, and IDPs who depend solely on food and livelihood aid.

In southern pastoral areas, food security is advancing (IPC phases 1 and 2) where pasture is available for livestock and camels, and milk is available for sale and consumption.

Import restrictions impacted the availability of food notably in the northern and central parts of Somalia. Compared to one year earlier, July’s import of rice was lower by 54 per cent, wheat flour by 10 per cent and sugar by 22 per cent. This led to an increase in the price of these food commodities reaching as high as 53 per cent above average in regions such as Galgaduud in the centre and Togdheer in the north of Somalia. The decision to halt the hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia due to the pandemic affected the livestock sector considerably and led to a decrease of exports to Saudi Arabia (mainly from the north-western region) by 50 per cent; trade with Kenya was also halted due to the closure of the livestock market in Garissa in north-eastern Kenya. In connection with a decreased local demand due to the closure of local restaurants, prices of goats decreased, remaining marginally average though. These affected the terms of trade of goat-to-rice especially in north-west Somalia, which also exports to Saudi Arabia, where the value of one goat decreased to 67 kg, compared to 70 kg in the central regions.

Camel milk was also heavily impacted as its demand decreased, resulting in lower prices, at a time when camel milk was at its highest seasonal availability in terms of quantity and quality. With restrictions on exports, decreased remittances and increased livestock transportation costs, the income and the purchasing power of pastoralists were negatively impacted, increasing their food insecurity.

At the beginning of the growing season, locust invasions affected 180,000 hectares of rangeland adding a threat to local production that used to feed less than a quarter of the population. Floods and restrictive COVID-19 measures prevented the FAO from reaching all pastoralists for livestock vaccination campaigns. Floods damaged roads linking rural and urban areas, which led to increased prices of fresh foods such as bananas, onions or tomatoes.

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13 Ibid.
14 Goat-to-rice terms of trade range between 57 and 85 kg of rice per goat.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**
In April 2020, the Government of Somalia announced tax exemptions on imported rice and dates and a 50 per cent tax discount on imported wheat flour and vegetable oil.a

**Other initiatives**
The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), in collaboration with Al-Musbah Development Association, supported 7,200 individuals in Somalia by distributing 1,200 Ramadan food baskets.b

World Vision Somalia improved access to water through water trucking to internally displaced people.c

A total of 279 humanitarian organizations provided food aid for some 700,000 people, 2.3 million people, and 1.8 million people in April, May and June 2020, respectively.d

In May, the Somalia Food Security Cluster and the WASH Cluster distributed one-month food parcels to 2,000 households and trucked water with hygiene kits to 700 households covering 18 regions in Somalia.e

Thirty-one per cent of the United Nations’ Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was allocated to the Food Security Cluster to alleviate the impacts of the pandemic, locust invasion and flooding on food security of the vulnerable residents in Somaliland, Puntland and Banadir. Aid was provided in the form of unconditional cash transfers, cattle vaccination and locust control measures.f

The global humanitarian team Mercy Corps connected small and medium livestock traders with buyers serving export abattoirs and Ethiopia’s market.g

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a FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), 2020.
d United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), (2020).
e Ibid.
f Ibid.
g Ibid.
References


The State of Palestine
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A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

Key Messages

The monitoring framework highlights the lack of sufficient data for monitoring food security in the State of Palestine. However, given the high poverty rate and the widespread restrictions imposed because of the occupation, food security remains a cause of concern. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

The State of Palestine is under occupation with its land and water being heavily restricted by Israel. The West Bank is landlocked and sits on the west bank of the Jordan River while the Gaza Strip is a narrow coastal strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea. Farming is determined by the agro-ecology of the concerned areas based on altitude, proximity to water sources and soils.

Box 1. The marginalized in Palestine: Bedouin communities

Throughout the Arab world, mobile pastoralists and herders, also known as “Badou” or Bedouins in English, are among the poorest and most marginalized. This is also the case in Palestine, where their plight is multiplied by the constant fear of forced transfer and resettlement that looms over their heads. An estimated 30,000 Bedouins live in Area C under complete Israeli control. Access to rangeland and mobility is the key to their livelihood strategy. Yet, their movement is constantly curtailed by the Israelis. In Gaza, some 75,000 Bedouins live in areas suffering from various restrictions to movement. Bedouins are the most vulnerable and marginalized segment of Palestinian society and are considered to be at the bottom of the social ladder. All Bedouins are registered as refugees, even those who are under the Palestinian authority. This comes in spite of the economic contribution, estimated at 40 per cent of the Palestinian agriculture gross domestic product. Their level of food insecurity is very high, and they rely on aid for survival.


B. Socioeconomy

Restriction of movement and travel, within and between Palestinian areas, and the constant pressure exerted by Israel prevent the development of an efficient Palestinian economic, social and political system. Food is quasi exclusively obtained from Israeli sources, which controls all entry and exit points to the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS). Similarly, any farm produce from the WBGS must be marketed through Israeli channels.

The protracted occupation is affecting each of the 4.7 million Palestinians living in the
WBGS. In 2018, the gross domestic product (GDP) in WBGS was evaluated at $14.6 billion, which translates into about $3,200 per capita. Agriculture represented about 3.2 per cent of total GDP and employed 6 per cent of males and 7 per cent of females.¹

C. Agriculture and food security

Recent estimates by WFP are that one third of the population of the West Bank is food insecure and that two thirds of the inhabitants of Gaza experience food insecurity. Thus, 1.7 million are affected by food insecurity, which is driven by poverty and unemployment.² Food insecurity is highest among women, especially in Gaza. Malnutrition is frequent, and poverty is pervasive and affects half the population of Gaza, which has been under a sea, air and land blockade for 11 years.

1 World Bank, n. d.
2 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1) data are not available;
- Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2) was reported at 9.5 per cent in 2016 lower than the average of the Arab region at 12.2 per cent, but this might be due to the occupation that gives Palestine a context that is different from all other countries of the region;
- Obesity (CO3) data are not available.

B. Availability

- Wheat yield to potential (AV1) data are not available;
- Agriculture orientation index (AV2) doubled from 0.14 in 2010 to 0.28 in 2017; though it is still a small value, it nevertheless indicates the Government’s willingness to invest in the agricultural sector;
- Food losses to food available (AV3) data are not available;
- Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4) data are not available;
- Wheat import dependency (AV5) data are not available;
- Water resources used in agriculture (AV6) remained at around 21 per cent between 2010 and 2017 as per official sources. The low rate of abstraction would be sustainable; in reality, however, most of the water is used by Israel, which is causing its degradation in spite of the low Palestinian extraction rates.

C. Access

- Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1) was reported at 29.2 per cent in 2017, an increase compared to 25.7 per cent in 2010 and way above the regional average of 16.6 per cent;
- Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2) was reported at 30.5 per cent in 2017 compared to 36.4 per cent in 2010, meaning that households spend about a third of their income on food. However, many receive humanitarian assistance;
• Unemployment rate (AC3) was reported at 30.8 per cent in 2018, an increase compared to the 23.8 per cent of 2010. The high rates are due to the lack of opportunity due the occupation and restricted economic activities;

• Logistics performance (AC4) data are not available;

• Inflation, consumer prices (AC5) was -0.2 per cent in 2017 pointing towards the possibility of a deflation. It was 3.74 per cent in 2010.

D. Utilization

• Population using basic drinking water services (UT1) stood at 61.9 per cent in 2010 and dropped slightly to 59.1 per cent in 2017, pointing to serious challenges to achieve the corresponding 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target;

• Population using basic sanitation services (UT2) increased from 90.8 per cent to 99.7 per cent, respectively, between 2010 and 2017 and covers almost the entire population;

• Stunting in children under five years (UT3) exhibited a favourable trend between 2010 and 2014 as it declined from 10.3 per cent to 7.4 per cent, respectively. Both these values are under the low prevalence of malnutrition threshold, set by the World Health Organization (WHO) classification, and the target set by the World Health Assembly (WHA) for 2030;

• Wasting in children under five years (UT4) affected only 1.2 per cent, a significant drop from the 2010 value of 3.2 per cent. This value also goes under WHO classification of low prevalence of malnutrition and below the WHA target for 2030;

• Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5) was reported officially in 2010 at 27.1 per cent, while no later data was provided.

E. Stability

• Climate change vulnerability (ST1) data are not available;

• Food price anomalies (ST2) data are not available;

• Political stability (ST3) data are not available;

• Food production variability (ST4) was relatively low in both 2010 and 2016, at $8,100 and $7,300, respectively. It shows stability in the food production system; the low values might be due to the limited production as a result of the various restrictions put in place by the Israeli occupation;

• Food supply variability (ST5) data are not available.

3 Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
Food security dashboard

State of Palestine

Performance:
- High: Proceed Action
- Average: More Action
- Low: Urgent Action
- No Data

2010 Data:  
- AV1
- AV2
- AV3
- AV4
- AV5
- AC1
- AC2
- AC3
- AC4
- AC5
- UT1
- UT2
- UT3
- UT4
- UT5
- ST1
- ST2
- ST3
- ST4
- ST5

Latest Data:  
- CO1
- CO2
- CO3
- CO4
- CO5

Low: Urgent Action  
High: Proceed Action  
Average: More Action  
No Data
## Food security indicators, State of Palestine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest Value</th>
<th>State of Palestine Latest Value</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment  🆕 %</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Food insecurity  🆕 %</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity  🆕 %</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV1</td>
<td>Wheat yields - %</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV2</td>
<td>Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.28</td>
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<td>AV3</td>
<td>Food loss  🆕 %</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV4</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply - %</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency  🆕 %</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV6</td>
<td>Agriculture water  🆕 %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty  🆕 %</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>25.7</td>
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<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption  🆕 %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>30.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment  🆕 %</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>23.8</td>
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<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation  🆕 %</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>61.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>90.8</td>
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<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting  🆕 %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting  🆕 %</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia  🆕 %</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>27.1</td>
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</table>

### Stability Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest Value</th>
<th>State of Palestine Latest Value</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST1</td>
<td>Climate change  🆕 - index</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2</td>
<td>Price Anomalies  🆕 - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST3</td>
<td>Political stability - ranking</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4</td>
<td>Production variability  🆕 - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5</td>
<td>Supply variability  🆕 - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework were received from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

Data are seriously lacking to have a good grip on the food security of the State of Palestine based on this framework. Undernourishment (CO1) and obesity (CO3) lack data while food insecurity experience (CO2) is concerning.

Hotspot areas include the following:
- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2);
- **Access**: poverty (AC1) and logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization**: anaemia among women (UT5).

B. Action areas

A country under occupation cannot be judged with the same policy criteria as any other. However, a close reading of the framework and of associated literature unveils a set of policies that can guide the resilience of food systems and the improvement of food security in the State of Palestine, which include the following:

1. Improve data collection and share data with the international organizations in order to harmonize all data. WBGS is home to a large number of international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which have established procedures for data collection. These data need to be confirmed, triangulated and made accessible through international databases. This will allow better planning and policymaking.

2. Food security is high on the agenda of the Palestinian National Authority. This is the time to address concurrently the two interdependent issues of poverty and food insecurity. The humanitarian response plan of FAO of 2019 is on target, and should be adopted and supported by the Palestinian National Authority. Its main features are the following:
   a. Restore agricultural production, especially using sustainable production techniques: This will enhance the resilience of the farming community and contribute to delinking from the Israeli food dumping system;
   b. Support vulnerable women and youth in herding communities: This will target the marginalized (women and youth) within the marginalized (Bedouins and pastoralists) (box 1);
   c. Emergency livelihood support in cash or kind: Under occupation, it is impossible for many to survive without direct assistance, as people are not operating in a regular economy;
   d. Strengthen food security coordination: This will avoid redundancies and allow a set of targeted and focused actions.
It should be noted that recommendations a, b and c address concurrently the availability and access dimensions of food security which are the two most critical dimensions in the case of the State of Palestine. It must also be noted that, as Palestinians routinely put it, they face one problem: occupation.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached the State of Palestine in early March 2020 and, by October, had affected close to 53,000 people with about 400 deaths recorded. The first peak was reached in late June/early July with daily rates of about 400 daily cases. Currently, the State of Palestine is going through a second peak with daily cases hovering at 400 and more.

**Weekly cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td>2k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>6k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>4k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2021</td>
<td>52,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The restrictive measures implemented to control the pandemic exacerbated the existing economic challenges, and the number of food-insecure people is expected to increase to possibly 50 per cent, worsening their already existing poor living conditions and limited dietary diversity.4

Lockdown measures5 negatively impacted livelihoods and led to the loss of income, pushing 100,000 people into poverty.

Furthermore, the purchasing power of Palestinians has been impacted by the closure of schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the refusal of the Palestinian National Authority to accept the tax money collected by the occupation leading to the termination of the cash-for-work opportunities and payment of governmental salaries for the month of May. Restricted social safety nets and

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4 World Health Organization (WHO), 2020; Middle East Centre, 2020; and FAO, 2020.

5 Closure of non-essential businesses and institutions; curfew from 20:00 to 06:00 on weekdays and from 20:00 to 06:00 on weekends; suspended public transportation between governorates (not within); prohibiting public and private events; restrictions on businesses and commercial movements; and suspension of coordination with the occupation’s authorities.
frozen salaries pushed more people into food and nutrition insecurity. The decrease in purchasing power led to a decrease in the demand for retail food. For example, in Gaza, red meat consumption decreased by 15 per cent. All of the above combined pushed 29 per cent of registered workers into need of humanitarian assistance.6 Lockdown measures also disrupted the local and global supply chains, primarily impacting the agricultural livelihoods of Bedouins and farmers as they struggled to export their fruits and vegetables, sell their sheep due to a decrease in demand and prices, and import/acquire inputs, fertilizers and feeds.7

The high prices of the available low-quality agricultural inputs, together with the cuts of water supplies that pushed the farmers to buy water from private sellers, increased local production costs. Increased food prices were reported in Gaza. Moreover, due to import disruptions, meat prices increased, especially those of broilers and turkey and that of chicken doubled due to increased demand during Ramadan. In the meantime, the availability of food products from external sources competed with locally produced food items.8

Some improvements were witnessed in the agricultural sector, such as the export of avocado, lemon and guava, except for red meat and dairy. However, improvements did not last long due to the heat wave that further disrupted the agricultural sector in late May and early June and the spike in the daily confirmed COVID-19 cases in July that brought back lockdown measures leading to the same negative impact on farmers, supply chains, and others, as reported earlier.9

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**

Several municipalities and Government entities distributed food and water to the population. In addition, farmers and cooperatives donated fruits and vegetables and flour bags to benefit affected people in Bethlehem Governorate and Toubas. In early May, 1,000 beneficiaries in Gaza received a total of 700 tons of broiler feed.

The Government in the West Bank, in collaboration with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and charities, distributed one million seedlings, fertilizers and animal feed worth $1 million for home gardens; 90 per cent was completed by end of April. In addition, the number of vulnerable families was assessed, the availability of food monitored through an online survey, and $100 distributed to 100,000 families each.

**Other initiatives**

The private sector distributed food items to needy families in Bethlehem.

Local NGOs distributed more than 160 tons of vegetables and 5 tons of dates to poor families and farmers by the end of April.

An interagency response plan was formulated between WFP, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Union of Agricultural Workers Committee to help the food-insecure households impacted by COVID-19, to provide them with in-kind and cash assistance, including e-vouchers, and to put in place a new door-to-door delivery method in Gaza. Requirements for the food security sector were $11,781,726.

To protect agricultural livelihoods, FAO provided Bedouins and shepherds with animal feed, and NGOs purchased the locally produced food. Total funds received were $10,954,867; 78 per cent of the Response Plan was completed by July 28.

In March, UNRWA added 12 facilities for food distribution to ensure social distancing at distribution centres. Jointly with WFP, it distributed 4,000 food boxes to 1,113 households.

WFP and FAO monitored market availability and prices, and access to food, markets and inputs across the State of Palestine. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee sent wheat to 200 households in the Bedouin community and to more than 120 households in Bethlehem.

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f OCHA, 2020.
g Ibid.
h Ibid.
i Ibid.
j Ibid.
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A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights the lack of data for tracking food security in the Sudan. Collecting and sharing appropriate data needs to be prioritized. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.


A. **Natural resources**

The Sudan spans over nearly 1.9 million km² and links East Africa with the Sahel. The Nile River cuts the country south to north and provides irrigation water for the bordering fertile plains, making them suitable for irrigated farming and livestock production. The 20 million hectares of cultivated land represent less than 10 per cent of the country.

**Box 1. Currency crisis affecting food security**

Among the outcomes of the separation of South Sudan in July 2011 was a hard currency shortage which is still ongoing. The Sudanese pound was devalued thrice since 2017. Wheat and wheat flour import subsidies were cancelled. The State also limited the withdrawal of hard currency from banks.

In February 2019, the Central Bank of Sudan set the official exchange rate at 47.5 Sudanese pound per US dollar, almost half the black-market rate of 72 Sudanese pounds per US dollar in February. It was 60 Sudanese pounds per US dollar in January.

These financial conditions have resulted in serious hindrances to the import of essential food and non-food items by both private and public sectors. This is worsened by the continued shortage of hard currency and the rapid depreciation of local currency. Shortages of wheat flour continue to be experienced on the local market along with a 60 per cent increase in the prices of food and non-food items since October 2018. Due to fuel shortages, transport costs almost doubled. Agricultural labour wages have followed suit and are reported to have tripled in certain regions.

*Source: USAID, 2019.*

B. **Socioeconomy**

Total population exceeded 40 million in 2017, growing at 2.5 per cent per year, of which nearly two thirds are still rural, and 40 per cent is below 15 years of age. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth has been steady, and GDP per capita is
now about $1,959 per year. Agriculture contributes almost one third of the country’s $117 billion GDP and about two thirds of its employment.

C. Agriculture and food security

The food self-sufficiency ratios (SSRs) for the Sudan are among the highest in the Arab region: during 2012-2013, SSRs were 82 per cent for cereals, 100 per cent for meats and 98 per cent for fruits and vegetables. About 20.4 million people were classified as moderately to severely food insecure.

Despite its generous natural endowment, the Sudan suffers from a limited availability of major staple grains (sorghum, millet and wheat), which form the basis of the local diet. Growth in yield has been slower than population growth, essentially due to poor land, water and labour productivities. The country imported 2.7 million tons of wheat in 2019, a nearly 5 per cent increase from the previous year when bumper crops reduced imports by 3 per cent. The Sudanese Government is striving to increase wheat acreage in order to reduce dependency on trade, but efforts are severely limited by a lack of technical expertise and financial and human resources.

Livestock is an important sector, which accounted for 50 per cent of the total agricultural export revenue in 2012. The sector, however, also suffers from low productivity issues and is vulnerable to climate vagaries. Milk and meat consumption are still very low.

Generally, the Sudan has a low level of food and nutrition security. The situation is exacerbated by the presence of refugees from South Sudan, whose number is expected to reach close to one million this year.

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1 World Bank, n. d.
2 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2015.
3 FAO, 2019.
5 FAO, n. d.a; USAID, 2019.
6 USAID, 2019.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** data are not available;
- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** data are not available;
- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** data are not available.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available;
- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;
- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** increased from 3.4 per cent in 2010 to 4 per cent in 2018; data might not be completely accurate as many produces lacked data on losses;
- **Average dietary supply adequacy (AV4)** data are not available;
- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** data are not available;
- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available.

C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)**, according to official data, was at 36.1 per cent in 2014. The poor are concentrated in rural areas (57.6 per cent), and there are strong variations between states;\(^7\)
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data are not available;
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** increased between 2010 and 2018 from 17.7 per cent to 22.2 per cent, respectively, as reported

\(^7\) World Bank, n. d.
by official national sources, with female unemployment recorded at 23.2 per cent, whereas male unemployment was at 9.1 per cent. FAO quotes a figure of 22 per cent for youth (15-24) unemployment in 2011-2015, which is aligned with global figures.\(^9\)

- Logistics performance (AC4) data are not available;

E. **Stability**

- Climate change vulnerability (ST1) data are not available;
- Food price anomalies (ST2) data are not available;
- Political stability (ST3) data are not available;
- Inflation, consumer prices (AC5) is high and increased from 13 per cent in 2010 to 43.6 per cent in 2018. This inflation rate is well above the Arab average of 12.8 per cent. The high fluctuation in prices negatively affects the food security of the poorest and in remote regions.

- Food production variability (ST4) data are not available;
- Food supply variability (ST5) data are not available.
## Food security indicators, Sudan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Sudan</th>
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<td>2010 Latest</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Value</td>
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<td>Value Value Year</td>
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<td>Food insecurity</td>
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<td>Obesity</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016 n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
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<td>82.2</td>
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<td>Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV3</td>
<td>Food loss %</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>2013 3.4</td>
<td>4.0 2018 •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV4</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply - %</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>2017 n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency %</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>2012 n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV6</td>
<td>Agriculture water %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty %</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>mult. 36.1</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment %</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>mult. 17.7</td>
<td>22.2 2018 •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2016 n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation %</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>mult. 13.0</td>
<td>43.6 2018 •</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>2015 n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>2015 n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult. n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting %</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult. n.a.</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia %</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016 n.a.</td>
<td>51.7 2018 •</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stability Indicators
- **ST1**: Climate change - index 0.1 2019 n.a. n.a.
- **ST2**: Price Anomalies - index n.a. n.a. n.a.
- **ST3**: Political stability - ranking 14 2017 n.a. n.a.
- **ST4**: Production variability - $1,000/capita 10.1 2016 n.a. n.a.
- **ST5**: Supply variability - kcal/cap/day 29.8 2013 n.a. n.a.

### Notes
- Red: Negative Trend
- Yellow: Neutral Trend
- Green: Positive Trend
- Green: Positive Trend
- n.a.: Not Available
- mult.: Multiple years
- •: During Normalization

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework were received from national sources.
A. Drivers and determinants

Official data are lacking to conduct a meaningful assessment of food security in the Sudan as shown in the framework table and graph above.

However, based on global data sources, the framework-based analysis showed that the situation in the Sudan was either stagnant or worsening. Both undernourishment (CO1) and severe food insecurity (CO2) were alarming according to global data sources putting the Sudan at the border of famine and on emergency in selected states. Little data are being systematically collected and, as such, it would be difficult to put in place the appropriate strategies for enhancing food and nutrition security. Data collection and data sharing should, therefore, be prioritized as they are the backbone of any monitoring programme.

B. Action areas

The framework unveils a bleak picture, one of a country with potential, but unable to fully make use of it due to a set of intrinsic and extrinsic conditions. The reliance on wheat, for instance, is associated with a nutritional transition that has led to the abandonment of the more adapted and less water-demanding sorghum and millet.

The livestock sector suffers from poor access to animal health and to other forms of support and is, therefore, operating largely under its basic potential. Poverty is widespread, but more so in rural areas, which are experiencing out-migration towards the urban centres and their swelling slums, and unemployment is rife.

These conditions overlaid onto extremely limited access to clean water and to sanitation contribute to very poor nutritional performance especially for women and children and the vulnerable. There is a significant variability between states, exacerbated by a poor logistic performance index indicating major hindrances of proper food availability and accessibility. The situation in the Sudan is one of emergency caused by an extended chronic condition. Conflicts and refugees add to the existing burden.

The 2015 food security policy plan put forth by the Ministry of Agriculture provides a pertinent analysis of the causes underlying poor food security and nutrition. The results it shows resemble those derived from this framework. The policy recommendations proposed by the Ministry are pertinent and can serve as a solid base for future action.

The COVID-19 pandemic reached the Sudan in mid-March 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 13,600 people with more than 800 deaths recorded.

### Impact of COVID-19

**Weekly cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Confirmed Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>13,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2021</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2021</td>
<td>13,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2021</td>
<td>13,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2021</td>
<td>12,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2021</td>
<td>11,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul 2021</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2021</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2021</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis showed that 9.6 million people were experiencing poor food security between June and September 2020 and were in urgent need for humanitarian assistance;\(^{11}\) including herein are 6.2 million people in need for food and livelihood support.\(^{12}\) The unemployment rate was 22.1 per cent in 2019 and increased to 25 per cent in 2020.\(^{13}\)

Food availability is anticipated to be much affected by lockdown measures\(^{14}\) that interrupted working capacities and infrastructural services.\(^{15}\) Curfew measures and border closures with neighbouring countries led to a shortage in labour, decrease in the value of the local currency against foreign currencies and interruptions to the fish and livestock export chain to Saudi Arabia.\(^{16}\) The Sudan also witnessed

---

11 These are mainly the internally displaced people, returnees, refugees, poor agropastoralists and pastoral communities, and those living in urban and semi-urban centres.
12 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 2020; and OCHA, 2020a.
13 International Monetary Fund (IMF), n. d.
14 Closure of all air and land borders, educational institutions, dining-in venues, together with a 6:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. curfew.
16 Ibid.
a drop in local production of sorghum and millet, the harvest of which is 19 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, lower than the five-year average.\textsuperscript{17} Floods, affecting more than 250,000 people, and locust infestations exacerbated this decrease.\textsuperscript{18} All the factors mentioned above, in addition to high transportation costs and panic buying, contributed to a 50 per cent increase in the prices of staple food.\textsuperscript{19}

The annual inflation rate increased from 98.8 per cent to 114.23 per cent in one month, namely, between April and May 2020,\textsuperscript{20} and reached 167 per cent in September. The price of sorghum and millet doubled between February 2019 and October 2020 and that of meat increased from $9.00 to $14.47.\textsuperscript{21} Prices are expected to remain high throughout the year. At the same time, the purchasing power of residents is decreasing as unemployment increased, local currency devalued and food prices increased.\textsuperscript{22} The price of a basic food basket is around 75 per cent of a household income.\textsuperscript{23}

With only one third of the population having access to clean water, proper hygiene and sanitization services are inadequate leaving the community more susceptible to catch the virus.\textsuperscript{24} Around 12 million people, 28 million people and 7.5 million people lack access to clean water sources, improved sanitation and hygiene services, respectively.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{18} OCHA, 2020b; and FAO, 2020. \\
\textsuperscript{19} The Guardian, 2020. \\
\textsuperscript{20} IPC, 2020. \\
\textsuperscript{21} The Guardian, 2020. \\
\textsuperscript{22} IPC, 2020. \\
\textsuperscript{23} OCHA, 2020b. \\
\textsuperscript{24} IPC, 2020; and OCHA, 2020b. \\
\textsuperscript{25} United Nations Country Team (UNCT), 2020.
\end{flushright}
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**
A COVID-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan was developed by the Government, humanitarian partners and United Nations agencies. It includes eight pillars of which three focus on food security and livelihoods, nutrition and the WASH programme.a

**Other initiatives**
United Nations humanitarian assistance was able to reach 1.7 million people during the first three months of 2020.b

A wheat production programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) yielded around 202 tons using modern farming technology, in an attempt to improve food security and livelihoods in an area that hosts 260,000 refugees and internally displaced people.c

In May 2020, $23.1 million were allocated by the United States' Government to help the Sudan mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19, out of which $5 million was distributed as cash assistance to vulnerable families affected by the pandemic, more than $1.3 million to support agriculture and other livelihood activities of vulnerable people enabling them to meet their nutritional needs, and $16.8 million for WASH-related programmes.d

In June 2020, the United Nations mission in Darfur distributed 1,000 liters of clean drinking water and more than two water containers.e

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b OCHA, 2020c.
c OCHA, 2020a.
d Ibid.
e Ibid.
References


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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework shows that the food security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic is concerning, as both the food insecurity experience scale and obesity rates are high, with elevated rates of child stunting and wasting and anaemia among women. Sociopolitical stability is a concern. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
A. Natural resources

Spanning over 187,437 km², the Syrian Arab Republic has a series of mountain ranges in its east and some in the central part while the remaining country is mostly undulating plains most of which are desert. Its three main rivers are the Euphrates, Orontes and Yarmouk, and it has a few lakes.1 The Syrian Arab Republic has vast areas of arable land (25 per cent of the territory) and large steppe rangelands (Badia) extending over 45 per cent of the territory. Irrigated agriculture, mainly from the Euphrates irrigation projects (14,000 km²) and adjacent deep bore wells, coupled with extensive pastoralism formed the mainstay of the agricultural economy.2

Box 1. Food security and conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic

A publication issued by the Syrian Center for Policy Research in May 2019 reported on the outcomes of an extensive study that looked at food security through the lens of the conflict. The study addressed the historical development of food security in the country and reviewed the status of the different dimensions of food security between the years 2010 and 2018, through primary data gleaned from interviews with 2,100 respondents across the country.

This unique effort unveiled a sad reality and confirmed the use of food as a weapon by all parties involved. The food security index dropped by 40 per cent between 2010 and 2018 due to the systematic decline in all components and drivers such as availability, stability and employment. The regions most affected were those of al Hasaka, Raqqa, Aleppo, Quneitra, Deir al Zour and Idlib.


B. Socioeconomy

The Syrian Arab Republic, the heart of the Arab Mashreq (the Levant), has been devastated by a protracted war since 2011. More than 14 million people have been displaced, including 6.2 million internally displaced people (IDPs), putting 11.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, of which 5 million are in acute need.

1 Hamide and others, 2020.
2 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR), 2013.
Various estimates place the gross domestic product (GDP) in the vicinity of $50 billion and the purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita GDP at $3,000. The agriculture GDP is estimated at 20 per cent, and agriculture employs 17 per cent of the labour force.³

C. Agriculture and food security

Until the beginning of the war, the Syrian Arab Republic was a mainly agricultural nation and largely self-sufficient in its main staple, cereals, during most years, in spite of its dry climate and the frequent droughts it experiences. The Government provided large subsidies in agricultural inputs and food.

Today, approximately 80 per cent of people in the country live in poverty and food insecurity affects 7.9 million individuals, representing a 22 per cent increase between 2019 and early 2020.⁴ Displacement continues to be the main driver of food insecurity, although open conflict has ceased in many regions. Damage to the agricultural infrastructure has had its toll on cereal production and pastoralism, affecting people’s livelihoods.

The country continues to be in need of humanitarian assistance to address food insecurity estimated to impact at least 11.7 million people, or 65 per cent of Syrian households.⁵ The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has also negatively affected food trade in the entire region as, due to its strategic location, the country operated as a transportation hub between the Levant, on the one hand, and Iraq and the Gulf countries, on the other.

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³ World Bank, n. d.
⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and World Health Organizaton (WHO), 2020.
⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Syria (OCHA-Syria), 2019.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** official data are not available;
- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was reported at 30 per cent in 2017, well above that of the Arab region (12.2 per cent);
- **Prevalence of obesity (CO3)** increased from 23.8 per cent in 2010 to 27.8 per cent in 2016 according to official national sources, slightly under the Arab regional average of 28.4 per cent. Adult obesity is more prevalent among women than among men, at 34.8 per cent and 20.9 per cent, respectively, in 2016.6

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** as a share of potential yields was about 71 per cent in 2010 and 85 per cent in 2017, almost comparable to the Arab average of 82 per cent. The estimated potentially achievable yield in the Syrian Arab Republic is approximately 4 tons/ha as estimated by Mueller and others;7
- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** decreased from 8.1 in 2010 to 4.6 in 2015 according to the country’s official sources, which indicates a strong support for the agricultural sector, though it is excessive given its contribution to overall GDP;
- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** official data are not available;
- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** stood at 134 per cent in 2010 and 2017, slightly higher than the Arab regional average of 131 per cent. Given the prevailing disruptions in food supply and distribution the value might be slightly high for the situation;
- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** remained relatively low, between 32.7 per cent in 2010 and 35.3 per cent in 2016, despite the ongoing conflict;
- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** official data are not available, though total renewable water resources are estimated at 822.7 m3/capita/year.8

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6 World Bank, n. d.
8 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.
C. **Access**

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** official data were reported at 12 per cent in 2010 while later data are not available; the values might not be representative given the prevailing state of conflict in the country;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data were not available for 2010 and was reported at 50 per cent in 2017. A great share of income is spent on food, which is concerning for food security; however, this could be due to the high inflation rates;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** official data were recorded at 8.6 per cent in 2010 and at 8.8 per cent in 2018; however, the values might not be representative given the prevailing state of conflict in the country;

- **Logistics performance (AC4)** dropped from 2.7 in 2010 to 1.6 in 2016, indicating potential bottlenecks and disruptions throughout the food supply chain;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was recorded at 38.5 per cent in 2015 compared to 4.4 per cent in 2010. This high inflation might be a result of the ongoing conflict and the increasing disruptions prevailing in the food supply chain.

D. **Utilization**

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** were at 96.4 per cent in 2010 and 99.7 per cent in 2017 though many people are displaced and the situation might not be correctly reflected;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** were at 92.9 per cent in 2010 and 99.9 per cent in 2017. The situation might not be reflected correctly due to the high prevalence of population displacement;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** increased from 10.3 per cent in 2010 to 12.7 per cent in 2016. This value is under the low severity of malnutrition according to the classification by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is almost on par with the 2030 target set by the World Health Assembly (WHA);\(^9\)

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** was reported at 9.3 per cent in 2010 and at 2.2 per cent in 2016. The latest value is also under low severity of malnutrition on WHO’s scale and is below the WHA’s 2030 target;

- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** was reported at 33.6 per cent in 2016, compared to 31.6 per cent in 2010. The latest value is slightly above the Arab regional average of 35.5 per cent, and above WHA’s 2030 target.

E. **Stability**

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** index is reported at 0.09, an indication that the country is not likely to be heavily impacted by weather-related disasters, sea-level rise or loss of agricultural productivity;

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\(^9\) FAO and others, 2019.
• **Food price anomalies (ST2)** official data are not available;

• **Political stability (ST3)** dropped from 22 in 2010 to 1 in 2017 due to the ongoing conflict;

• **Food production variability (ST4)** was recorded at $31,200 in 2010 and dropped to $23,700 in 2016. Even though this insinuates more stability in food production, the number is still extremely high and indicates big fluctuations and instability;

• **Food supply variability (ST5)** increased from 41 kcal/capita/day in 2010 to 44 kcal/capita/day in 2013. Compared to the country’s average dietary energy supply adequacy (ADESA), these values are extremely high and alarming but are probably a result of the ongoing conflict.
## Food security indicators, Syrian Arab Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Syrian Arab Republic Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment 🟢 %</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Food insecurity 🟢 R %</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity 🟢 %</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV1</td>
<td>Wheat yields - %</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV3</td>
<td>Food loss 🟢 %</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV4</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply - %</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency 🟢 %</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV6</td>
<td>Agriculture water 🟢 %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty 🟢 %</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption 🟢 %</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment 🟢 %</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation 🟢 %</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>96.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting 🟢 %</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting 🟢 %</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia 🟢 %</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this table and graph are from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic is concerning, which is in line with reports from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Undernourishment (CO1) has no data while both food insecurity experience (CO2) and obesity (CO3) are alarming.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability:** agriculture orientation (AV2);
- **Utilization:** stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) in children and anaemia in women (UT5);
- **Stability:** political stability (ST3).

As with all countries in conflict, the limits of the current monitoring framework are perceptible. Food insecurity caused by the conflict and exacerbated by climatic conditions continue to pose a definite threat on people and livelihoods. Physical and economic access to food has been curtailed, and high inflation rates and a low logistical capacity index are essentially by-products of the war. Instability is also evident from the high values of food supply and production variability, which indicate that, in some instances, people might have been receiving less than 100 per cent of their average dietary energy needs, which leads to malnutrition.

B. Action areas

The lack of data poses a serious challenge for monitoring the impact of the current food security situation in the country. It is, therefore, difficult to recommend policies apart from the immediate cessation of conflict and the initiation of social and physical reconstruction efforts. Until then, the Syrian Arab Republic will remain dependent on humanitarian aid for its food security. However, post-conflict situations can offer a space for the initiation of new measures. Among these, are the following recommendations:

1. Regain cereal self-sufficiency based on supplemental irrigation and the enhancement of the use of green water;
2. Strengthen agropastoral livelihoods, especially in the Badia, the Syrian

10 OCHA-Syria, 2019.
steppe, through livestock amelioration programmes coupled with poverty alleviation initiatives;

3. Improve communications between the different regions and between the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries in order to enhance trade logistics;

4. Ensure that the role of women in the labour force is fully expressed in decent employment;

5. Continue to work with agencies to address malnutrition and nutritional imbalances caused by the conflict.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached the Syrian Arab Republic in late March 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 4,400 people with more than 200 deaths. The country has largely recorded daily occurrences of COVID-19 below 100, with the bulk of cases happening between the beginning of August and mid-September.

The COVID-19 pandemic reached the Syrian Arab Republic in late March 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 4,400 people with more than 200 deaths.

**Weekly cases**

4,411 confirmed cases

![Weekly cases chart]

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

In April, WFP reported that 9.3 million individuals were food insecure, with 1.4 million people pushed into food insecurity in a period of six months and an additional 2 million people at risk of food insecurity. Out of the food-insecure population, 87 per cent have no savings, and a total of 4.6 million breastfeeding mothers and their children require nutritional support, with 3.7 million acute cases.¹¹

Lockdown measures¹² exacerbated livelihood challenges caused by the nine years of conflict and led to livelihood losses. The measures led to the closure of restaurants and shops and affected the livelihood of

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¹¹ Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM), 2020.

¹² Suspension of schools and universities, both public and private; sports activities; religious institutes; public and private (weddings, engagement parties and others), cultural and religious events; and publication of printed newspapers. Authorities postponed the parliamentary elections. Dining restaurants, café, bazaars, wedding and mourning halls and tents were closed. Curfew was declared from 6:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.
1.2 million farmers.\textsuperscript{13} Import difficulties and movement restrictions increased the price of agricultural input and animal feed and negatively affected local production, poultry businesses, small livestock owners, and food availability (FAO, 2020). For example, the price of pesticides doubled in Hama, the price of a tomato seeds pack increased by $6.00, and the restaurants demand for meat decreased.\textsuperscript{14}

Lockdown measures and the closure of schools led to the suspension of school feeding programmes operated by WFP to assist more than one million children.\textsuperscript{15}

Shortage of bread and inconsistency in its quality has been witnessed across Syrian governorates, especially in camps of IDPs who lack access to bakeries. For example, in Rif Dimashq and Damascus, the price of the subsidized bread bundle sold for $0.077, while the unsubsidized bread bundle was sold at $0.541.\textsuperscript{16}

Local production of wheat is estimated to be between 2.1 and 2.4 million tons based on interviews with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representatives, which is much lower than pre-conflict levels.\textsuperscript{17} Of all wheat-producing land, 70 per cent is in the hands of Kurdish forces, who are aiming to store enough wheat for 18 months and sell the rest, if any remains, to the Government. The economic crisis and the decrease in the value of the Syrian pound against the dollar is compromising the ability of the Government to buy local wheat to compensate for the decrease in imports and stocks.\textsuperscript{18}

COVID-19 induced panic buying, which, together with the Lebanese financial crisis, led to increased food prices in the Syrian Arab Republic. The average nation-wide cost of a food basket increased by 16 per cent from March to April (111 per cent year-on-year in April).\textsuperscript{19} This was followed by an 11 per cent increase from April to May (15.8 times higher than the five-years pre-crisis average; 133 per cent year-on-year increase) and a 48 per cent increase from May to June (240 per cent year-on-year increase). Prices stabilized in July but are still 23.5 times higher than those of the five-years pre-crisis average and two times higher than those of the 2016 crisis.\textsuperscript{20}

Due to fund shortages, and as of April, WFP had to reduce caloric value of the food in the General Food Assistance distributed in the north-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic.\textsuperscript{21} WFP needs $300 million to continue working until January 2021; if this amount cannot be secured by August, further reductions in food rations and number of beneficiaries will have to be applied as of October.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{13} World Food Programme (WFP), 2020a.
\textsuperscript{14} FAO, 2020.
\textsuperscript{15} WFP, 2020b.
\textsuperscript{16} Enab Baladi, 2020.
\textsuperscript{17} Reuters, 2020.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} WFP, 2020b; and UOSSM, 2020.
\textsuperscript{21} FAO, 2020; and WFP, 2020b.
\textsuperscript{22} WFP, 2020c.
\end{footnotesize}
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**
To ensure sufficient good-quality bread, the Syrian Government took the following measures:

- Supported distributors to use “mobile bakery” cars to distribute bread to local residents in all areas, under the supervision of administrative units;
- Created a technical committee to investigate the reasons of reduced bread quality and frame new guidelines with approved quality standards to be met by bakeries;
- Decided to repair the inactive grain silos;
- Agreed to give financial support for repairing the production lines of the “Syrian Bakeries Institution” aiming at maximum working ability;
- Created a rewarding system to improve the output of bakery workers and decided to help in labour shortages;
- Bought wheat from farmers at the increased price of $0.154 per kilo for hard and soft wheat for the 2019-2020 harvest season;
- Granted farmers an on-time delivery reward of $0.019 per kilo (price of one kilo to $0.174);
- Provided facilities to bakeries, private silos and importers to import wheat and flour aiming at increasing local availability.

As of April 29, the Government eased travel restrictions within governorates to allow the movement of providers of humanitarian aid.

**Other initiatives**

Germany donated EUR 130 million to WFP to provide humanitarian assistance to 4.8 million people.

Japan donated $3.2 million to WFP, of which $1.8 million were allocated to repairing water services for 67,000 farmers enabling them to plant their crops and the remaining $1.4 million dedicated to providing food assistance to 460,000 individuals aiming at improving their food security and ensuring resilience.

To guarantee availability of assistance in the north-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic, WFP stocked sufficient food for two months.

WFP, in collaboration with WHO, started an institutional feeding project distributing food for vulnerable people in quarantine centres for a period of six months.

FAO initiated the “low tunnels vegetable seedlings project” in March aiming at locally producing seedlings and repairing/establishing efficient irrigation systems. The project has a time frame of one year and is likely to benefit 700 farmers directly and 7,000 farmers indirectly.

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b World Food Programme (WFP), 2020d.
c WFP, 2020e.
d WFP, 2020f.
e WFP, 2020g.
f WFP, 2020d.
g FAO, 2020.
References


__________ (2020e). German funding helps WFP to provide food to 4.8 million Syrians. Available at https://www.wfp.org/news/german-funding-helps-wfp-to-provide-food-4-8-million-syrians (accessed September 30, 2020).


The United Arab Emirates
A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework shows that food security in the United Arab Emirates is not a concern though the country faces rising rates of obesity. Anaemia among women is high, and dependency on food imports amid food waste is a concern. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates along the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. The total area is about 83,600 km², of which 77,700 km² are the mainland surface area where the population lives. The country is dominated by desert, which covers 80 per cent of the area, especially the western part, and has no perennial streams and natural bodies of surface water. Agriculture is practiced in oases including Al-Ain, the largest of them.¹

Box 1. A special focus on food security

The United Arab Emirates is the first Arab country to create a Ministry of Food Security and to appoint a women minister to the post. The country, which has near total reliance on food imports, is addressing its vulnerability to potential market volatilities and to its limited biophysical endowment by investing in trade and in high-tech. In a bid to become one of the most food secure nations in the world by 2021, the United Arab Emirates has recently launched a food security road map. The plan is based on five pillars, each addressing a specific limitation, as follows:

- Building a food data strategy;
- Developing an innovation research and development strategy;
- Establishing a national food waste programme;
- Expanding nutritional guidelines;
- Enhancing the regional trading environment.

Source: Bridges, 2019.

B. Socioeconomy

Expatriates make up 80 per cent of the 9.4 million inhabitants. A high population growth rate coupled with a growing affluence and a nutritional transition geared towards more meat consumption are resulting in increased and unsustainable food demand. With a gross domestic product (GDP) of $414 billion corresponding to a per capita GDP of about $43,000 in 2018, the United Arab Emirates is among the richest economies in the world. However, it is overreliant on a single source of income, namely, fossil fuels.

The country is food secure largely due to its oil and gas wealth, and its relatively striving economy while it also enjoys political stability. It has recently established a Ministry of Food Security, indicating the importance the country is devoting to the issue. In addition, it is actively engaged in planning for a post-oil economy by investing and strengthening new sectors including tourism. These developments are bound to increase food demand and food-price inflation. Consumption was growing at 12 per cent per year in 2017, and the value of food imports was expected to reach $8.4 billion in 2020.

C. Agriculture and food security

Agriculture and food production are limited due to the prevalent biophysical conditions. The food self-sufficiency ratio is 2 per cent for cereals, 26 per cent for meats and 21 per cent for fruits and vegetables (2011-2013). Although the United Arab Emirates has been exploring unconventional approaches to food production such as saline agriculture, vertical farming or overseas investments, it is expected to remain largely reliant on food imports.

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2 World Bank, n. d.
3 Bailey, R., 2013.
4 Fischbach, T., 2018.
6 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d. a.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** showed a good progress between 2010 and 2016 as it decreased from 5.9 per cent to 2.5 per cent, respectively. This value is lower than the Arab region average (12.1 per cent);

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** in the United Arab Emirates was reported at 6.1 per cent in 2016, which is below the Arab regional average (12.2 per cent);

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** increased from 27.7 per cent in 2010 to 31.7 per cent in 2016. This is higher than the Arab regional average (28.4 per cent).

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** reached 71.5 per cent of the potential yield in 2017 or 3.3 tons/ha, with a potential of 4.65 tons/ha. The country has a low self-sufficiency ratio in cereals of 2 per cent, making this indicator poorly relevant notably as it is a high-income country;

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** was 0.05 in 2015. The new minister of food security is set on enhancing new and innovative technologies to produce fresh foods through public investments;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** amounted to 22.6 per cent in 2010 but decreased to 10.4 per cent in 2013. However, food waste is not included while it is consequential;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** increased from 117 per cent to 128 per cent between 2010 and 2017, respectively, indicating greater food availability;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** stood at 83.5 per cent in 2010 and 100 per cent in 2012. The share of food imports to GDP was at 2 per cent, and the share of agriculture imports as a percentage of merchandise exports for 2011-2013 was

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7 Ibid.
at 4 per cent. Food consumption is more likely to be limited by physical supplies availability than purchasing ability;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available. Due to the very limited agricultural production, this indicator has little relevance to the country.

### C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** data are not available;

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** was recorded at 14.5 per cent in 2010 compared to 13.7 per cent in 2018. This is a low value and more reflective of that of other developed economies with high income;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** was 2.7 per cent in 2010 and 2.6 per cent in 2018. Female unemployment was at 10 per cent while that of youths was at 12 per cent.\(^{10}\)

It must be pointed out, though, that the United Arab Emirates relies on foreign workers mostly;

- **Logistics performance (AC4)** is one of the highest in the world improving from 3.6 in 2010 to 4 in 2018 due to the development of its transport infrastructure and focus on trading efficiency;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was at 0.88 per cent in 2010 and reached 3.1 per cent in 2018. It is among the lowest inflation rates in the Arab region.

### D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached 98 per cent of the population in 2017;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** reached 99 per cent of the population in 2017;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** data are not available;

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** data are not available;

- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** increased from 25.6 per cent in 2010 to 27.8 per cent in 2016. While a cause for concern, it is noteworthy that these rates are among the lowest in the Arab region.

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10 FAQ, 2019.
E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** is 0.04 indicating that the country will face little impact from climate change, as evaluated through weather-related disasters, sea-levels rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;

- **Political stability (ST3)** remains high despite its decrease from 73.9 in 2010 to 71 in 2018;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** was at $11,000 in 2010 and increased to $26,900 in 2016. Though this might indicate potential vulnerability, the country is not a major food producer as it lacks the necessary natural resources;

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** was at 17 kcal/capita/day in 2010 and dramatically increased to 61 kcal/capita/day in 2013. This fluctuation in food supply might be the result of an increase in food imports.
Food security dashboard

United Arab Emirates

2010 Data: |

Latest Data: |

Performance: 

High: Proceed Action

Average: More Action

Low: Urgent Action

No Data

Arab food security monitoring framework Country reviews - The United Arab Emirates
## Food security indicators, United Arab Emirates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Arab 2010</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment ⬝ %</td>
<td>12.1 2016</td>
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<td>Food insecurity ⬝ %</td>
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<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity ⬝ %</td>
<td>28.4 2016</td>
<td>27.7 2016</td>
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<td>AV1</td>
<td>Wheat yields - %</td>
<td>82.2 2017</td>
<td>127.3 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV2</td>
<td>Agriculture expenditure - index</td>
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<td>AV3</td>
<td>Food loss ⬝ %</td>
<td>6.8 2013</td>
<td>22.6 2013</td>
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<td>AV4</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply - %</td>
<td>131 2017</td>
<td>117 2017</td>
<td>128 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency ⬝ %</td>
<td>65.0 2012</td>
<td>83.5 2012</td>
<td>100.0 2012</td>
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<td>AV6</td>
<td>Agriculture water ⬝ %</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty ⬝ %</td>
<td>16.6 mult.</td>
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<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption ⬝ %</td>
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<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.7 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment ⬝ %</td>
<td>10.4 mult.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6 2018</td>
<td>⬝</td>
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<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
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<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation ⬝ %</td>
<td>12.8 mult.</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.1 2018</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9 2015</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>98.1 2017</td>
<td>⬝</td>
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<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8 2015</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>98.6 2017</td>
<td>⬝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting ⬝ %</td>
<td>22.9 mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>⬝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting ⬝ %</td>
<td>8.7 mult.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>⬝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia ⬝ %</td>
<td>35.5 2016</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>27.8 2016</td>
<td>⬝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST1</td>
<td>Climate change ⬝ - index</td>
<td>0.1 2019</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.04 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST2</td>
<td>Price Anomalies ⬝ - index</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>ST3</td>
<td>Political stability - ranking</td>
<td>14 2017</td>
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<td>71 2018</td>
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<td>ST4</td>
<td>Production variability ⬝ - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>10.1 2016</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>26.9 2016</td>
<td>⬝</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST5</td>
<td>Supply variability ⬝ - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td>29.8 2013</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>61.0 2013</td>
<td>⬝</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data in the table are from international sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation of the United Arab Emirates shows good results for undernourishment (CO1), middle of the way on food insecurity experience (CO2) and concerning for obesity (CO3) levels.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: agriculture orientation (AV2) and import dependency (AV5);
- **Utilization**: anaemia among women (UT5).

In spite of data gaps, the emerging picture is that of an affluent nation that relies heavily on imports to meet its food requirements. Undernourishment (CO1) and severe food insecurity (CO2) are practically non-existent while obesity (CO3) is a major issue. The creation of a food trading hub is a major step in the direction of dampening the effects of shocks. Out of the three outcomes of food security, obesity is the major issue. It needs to be addressed by promoting healthy eating habits and adequate nutritional guidelines. Women’s nutritional and health status is of particular concern, especially anaemia. The issue of food waste is also flagged as it will contribute to reducing quantities imported.

B. Action areas

As long as incomes are commensurate with food prices, the food security situation appears to be stable. The road map of the Ministry of Food Security is certainly a step in the right direction, and its policies are clearly set and supported by the findings of the monitoring framework. It is built around five pillars that address the challenge areas of the framework, which are the following:

1. Building a food data strategy;
2. Developing an innovation research and development strategy;
3. Establishing a national food waste programme;
4. Expanding nutritional guidelines;
5. Enhancing the regional trading environment.

It would be interesting to segregate the food security data of the United Arab Emirates by taking migrant labourer workers into account.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached the United Arab Emirates towards the end of January 2020 and, by October, had affected close to 100,000 people and 429 deaths had been recorded. The peak of reported cases was reached in May 2020 with daily infection rates exceeding 750 people. They have since declined to about 400 daily cases, however, with occasional smaller peaks.

**Weekly cases**

99,733 confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

Lockdown measures led to trade and supply chain disruptions,\(^{11}\) which disrupted the availability of some essential products. For example, imported vegetables from India faced delays due to restrictive transportation measures to combat the spread of the disease.\(^{12}\) Such measures, together with the increase in original purchase cost from the source country, led to an increase in prices of food, especially imported fresh fruits and vegetables.\(^{13}\) Other examples include the prices of onions from India, bananas from the Philippines and potatoes from Egypt that increased by 30, 40 and 21 cents, respectively. The prices of other staple fruits and vegetables, especially those rich in vitamin C, increased between 27 to 57 cents.\(^{14}\) Consumers started to better plan their purchases leading to a decrease in food waste as people became more selective on what they would spend their money on.\(^{15}\)

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11 Curfew from 22:00 p.m. to 06:00 a.m. with 24 hours curfew in Dubai; closure of schools, malls, fish, meat and vegetable markets, and religious sites; and suspension of international flights, except cargo.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Assisting vulnerable people:**

- In Abu Dhabi, a project was launched to distribute 100,000 food baskets comprising rice, pasta, dates, beans, tea, jam and noodles to those whose salary have been affected by the pandemic and do not benefit from other humanitarian projects. The project was launched on April 19, 2020 and covered a period of three months as of May 2020;

- The “Ten Million Meals” project was initiated, which worked in collaboration with the “World’s Tallest Donation Box” to distribute food boxes and financial aid with food parcels;

- A volunteer group helped foreign workers and more than 100 children in Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Abu Dhabi and Al Ain by providing them with food aid. Food baskets included noodles, cooking oil, baby food, rice, sugar and canned goods.

**Assisting the private sector and businesses:**

- In July, 4,500 dairy cows were imported from Uruguay in a bid to produce more milk locally;

- To support the agricultural industry, the Agriculture and Food Safety Authority in Abu Dhabi, in June, granted $174 million to 30,632 farmers and breeders, 138,000 families and 259 small-scale producers.

**Assisting consumers:**

- Union Coop aimed at cutting the prices of 25,000 food products by allotting slightly less than $41 million to this purpose and distributing food products to competitive suppliers during food shortages. It also facilitated online grocery shopping, which reached 32,000 food and non-food items which were home-delivered; 500 people were employed in this online service;

- Dubai Economy initiated a price monitor so that consumers can track prices of 41 basic commodities on a daily basis.

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g Gulf News, 2020b.
References

Al Mheiri, M. (2019). Technology will make the UAE one of the world’s most food-secure countries by 2021. Available at https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/technology-will-make-the-uae-one-of-the-world-s-most-food-secure-countries-by-2021-1.814174.


A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

The monitoring framework highlights that Tunisia is on the right track with its food security situation, as rates of both undernourishment and obesity are low. The country relies on food imports and faces elevated rates of child stunting and wasting and anemia among women. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Tunisia, with its 136,610 km², harbors more than 11 million ha of agricultural land, half of which are rangelands and forests and the other half is under cultivation, with nearly 10 per cent under irrigation. Fertile soils are found in the northern valleys of the Tunisian Dorsal or Tell mountain range, an extension of the Rif and Atlas ranges, part of the High Steppes region and mostly the humid coastal plain in the east.¹ Its 1,300 km of coastline is an asset for the development of fisheries.

Box 1. Tunisian household’s resilience to food insecurity

Due to a decrease in household income, an increase in food prices and a negative effect of climate change on agricultural production, Tunisia faces a difficult food security situation, especially in rural and arid areas. Household resilience to food insecurity in two villages, Selta and Zoghmar, in central Tunisia was studied in a recent paper.

A cross-sectional survey of 250 sample households was conducted in those villages. The results indicate that only approximately 36 per cent of the households were resilient at different levels. In Selta, 62.8 per cent and in Zoghmar, 66.7 per cent of the households were vulnerable. Income and food access, adaptive capacity and social safety net were important dimensions of household resilience to food insecurity, being positively correlated with the resilience index. However, asset possession and climate change negatively affect household resilience.

The authors recommend interventions that address the different levels of resilience and that contribute to building farmers’ knowledge of how to face the different difficulties and challenges.

Source: Dhraief, M.Z. and others, 2019.

B. **Socioeconomy**

In 2017, Tunisia’s population was 11.5 million, with a population growth rate close to 1 per cent. Approximately 25 per cent of the population is below 15 years of age. The gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 was $40 billion for a per capita GDP of approximately $4,000/year. Agriculture, which is an important sector in Tunisia, accounts for 10 per cent of GDP, a significant figure for the Arab region. It employed 15 per cent of the active labour force in 2014 and contributed up to 6 per cent of the country’s export earnings.²

C. **Agriculture and food security**

The country is self-sufficient in a number of commodities such as fruits and vegetables, milk and meat. Wheat, which remains the main staple crop, is imported. Depending on weather conditions, the country imports between 40 and 85 per cent of its wheat needs. The country food exports³ mainly comprise fruits and vegetables and olive oil. However, expanding agriculture and the accompanying irrigation is a drain on water resources, which is leading to coastal aquifer salinization.⁴

During 2017-2019, some 2.3 million people were classified as moderately or severely food insecure.⁵ Tunisia is undergoing a nutritional transition towards increased meat, milk and dairy consumption, but cereals still account for 50 per cent of the calories consumed, the highest rate in the world.⁶

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² Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2017.
³ ITES, n. d.
⁵ FAO and others, 2020.
⁶ ITES, n. d.
Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** recorded a favourable decrease from 9.3 per cent in 2010 to 5.1 per cent in 2016, which is below the Arab region’s average of 12.1 per cent;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** official sources indicate that, in 2010, this indicator did not have available data, and that it recorded 7.5 per cent in 2016. This is lower than the Arab average of 12.2 per cent;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** levels were at 6.6 per cent in 2016. This rate is a positive decrease from its 2010 value of 10.4 per cent and is well below the average in the Arab region of 28.4 per cent.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** increased from approximately 36 per cent in 2010 to 47 per cent in 2017, but still represents a large yield gap. However, both wheat and barley yields were expected to be 40 per cent higher in 2019 than usual due to favourable weather;\(^7\)

- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** was 0.73 in 2010 but dropped to 0.59 in 2012 indicating a decreased prioritization of agriculture in the Government’s budget;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** stood at 6.8 per cent in 2010 and is identical with the Arab regional average. The values reported by the country account for barley, soft wheat and durum wheat;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** was 105 per cent and 109 per cent in 2010 and 2015, respectively, which is low compared to the Arab regional average of 131 per cent. Vulnerable population might have difficulties accessing food;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** was 57.5 per cent in 2010 and increased to 61.4 per cent in 2017. Official sources report a slightly different computation methodology than used in the framework.\(^8\) The dependency ratio is high, which negatively affect the country during times of high volatility in global markets;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** was around 82 per cent in 2018. This is an

---


\(^8\) \(100 \times \frac{\text{import}}{\text{production} + \text{import}}\).
unsustainable practice as the country’s total renewable water resources stand at 400.2 m³/capita/year,⁹ which is less than half the water scarcity threshold (1,000 m³/capita/year).

C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** stood at 9.5 per cent in 2010 according to national official data and dropped to 2.5 per cent in 2015. Poverty is essentially rural and exceeds 32 per cent in the central, western and north-western regions;¹⁰

- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** was almost one third of the total consumption expenditure for both 2010 and 2015, namely, 29.3 per cent and 28.9 per cent respectively, noting a slight decrease;

- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** increased from 13 per cent in 2010 to 15.3 per cent in 2019, well above the Arab regional average of 10.4 per cent. Unemployment for women was at 24 per cent and for youth at 38 per cent;¹¹

- **Logistics performance (AC4)** was 2.8 in 2010 and decreased to 2.6 in 2018, similar to the average for the Arab region (2.7). Further improvements would be needed in the food supply chain;

- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was at 4.3 per cent in 2010 and increased to 7.5 per cent in 2018. The fluctuation in inflation might affect the purchasing power of households and particularly the most vulnerable groups.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** reached 85.7 per cent of the population in 2010 compared to 85.9 per cent in 2018. Greater efforts are needed to meet the related SDG target by 2030;

- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** reached 84.2 per cent of the population in 2010, which increased to 96.6 per cent in 2015, a substantial improvement. Efforts should be kept up in order to achieve the related SDG target by 2030;

- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** was at 8.3 per cent in 2018 according to official national data. The latest value is well below the target set by the World Health Assembly (WHA) for 2030;¹²

- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** in 2018 was 2.1 per cent. During the same year, 14.3 per cent of the children were overweight. This value is below the WHA’s target for 2030;¹³

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⁹ FAO, n. d.
¹⁰ ITES, n. d.
¹¹ World Bank, n. d.
¹² FAO and others, 2019.
¹³ Ibid.
• **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** was 27.4 per cent in 2010 and increased to 31.2 per cent in 2016, which is below the Arab regional average of 35.5 per cent. The rate is still high, and dedicated programmes are needed.

### E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** stands at 0.07 indicating a low vulnerability to weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** official data are not available;

- **Political stability (ST3)** ranking stood at 44 in 2010 but dropped to 16 in 2018, which might reflect the crisis the country has experienced since 2011;

- **Food production variability (ST4)** grew from $11,100 to $36,600\(^{14}\) per capita between 2010 and 2016, indicating more fluctuation in food production and less stability across time;

- **Food supply variability (ST5)** was 30 kcal/capita/day in 2010 and dropped to 16 kcal/capita/day in 2013. This relatively low value reflects a more stable supply of food for Tunisians.

---

\(^{14}\) Constant 2004-2006 International USD.
Food security dashboard

Tunisia

2010 Data: 🌞 High: Proceed Action ☁️ Average: More Action ☁️ Low: Urgent Action 🏷️ No Data

Latest Data: 🌞 High: Proceed Action ☁️ Average: More Action ☁️ Low: Urgent Action 🏷️ No Data
### Food and security indicators, Tunisia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Tunisia Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>2016</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV1</td>
<td>Wheat yields - %</td>
<td>82.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV4</td>
<td>Dietary energy supply - %</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>AV5</td>
<td>Wheat Import dependency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV6</td>
<td>Agriculture water</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC1</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC2</td>
<td>Food consumption</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AC3</td>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>2019</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC4</td>
<td>Logistics - index</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2018</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC5</td>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT1</td>
<td>Drinking water access - %</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT2</td>
<td>Sanitation access - %</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>2018</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT3</td>
<td>Child stunting</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT4</td>
<td>Child wasting</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>mult.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT5</td>
<td>Women anaemia</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST1</td>
<td>Climate change - index</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST2</td>
<td>Price Anomalies - index</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ST3</td>
<td>Political stability - ranking</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST4</td>
<td>Production variability - $1,000/capita</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST5</td>
<td>Supply variability - kcal/cap/day</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
- Red: Negative Trend
- Yellow: Neutral Trend
- Green: Positive Trend
- R: Reversed During Normalization
- n.a. = Not Available
- mult. = Multiple years

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data are from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Tunisia might be on the right track as undernourishment (CO1) and obesity (CO3) show improvement even though food insecurity experience (CO2) remains a concern.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability**: wheat yields (AV1), agriculture orientation (AV2), average dietary energy supply adequacy (ADESA) (AV4), import dependency (AV5) and water use in agriculture (AV6);
- **Access**: unemployment (AC3);
- **Utilization**: stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) among children and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability**: political stability (ST3).

Tunisia is still undergoing a political transition, but the changes of the past decade have generally been positive in terms of food security. Undernourishment (CO1) is low and so is the prevalence of food insecurity (CO2).

Obesity (CO3) is on the rise, indicating more affluence and the advent of a nutritional transition. The country is a net food importer, especially of wheat, its main staple. It is unlikely that this will change, in spite of the cereal production strategy the country has initiated which aims at increasing acreage and productivity to reduce import dependency. However, climate fluctuations can act positively or negatively on the sector. Tunisia is a renowned olive oil producer and exporter and is also attempting to boost the sector to offset some of the food imports.15

Unemployment, poverty and inequality, especially in rural areas, coupled with price inflation can cause food insecurity among the marginalized population. The Government’s food subsidies offer temporary help, but more sustainable solutions may be needed especially in light of the decline in political stability. There is an increase in anaemia in women, similar to what is observed in other Arab countries, indicating the need for collaboration to address this important issue.

B. **Action areas**

Policy recommendations will include the following:

1. Proceed with attempts to improve cereal yields, focusing on green water in order to avoid overuse of blue water;
2. Initiate a major effort to implement healthy dietary guidelines and mitigate the dreadful impacts of the nutrition transition. Malnutrition is a serious problem in Tunisia, especially among women and children, and must be urgently targeted;
3. Adopt sustainable water use management techniques to keep water use within the renewable range;
4. Develop policies to address unemployment, especially among women, and link these to the rapid urbanization rates and their impact on the livelihoods of the vulnerable groups.
Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Tunisia in early March 2020 and, by October, had affected close to 23,500 people with more than 300 recorded deaths. Tunisia recorded less than 50 daily occurrences of COVID-19 until mid-August but has since witnessed a sharp rise in cases peaking at more than 200 cases per day with the highest daily infection recorded at 465 cases in mid-September.

Weekly cases

23,453
confirmed cases

Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

The pandemic affected most of the population with the two lowest quintiles feeling the highest impact in terms of higher prices and job losses. Close to 80 per cent of people in those quintiles reported job losses according to interviews conducted by the Institut National de la Statistique and the World Bank.16 The unemployment rate is projected to increase by as much as 12.2 per cent, following a total loss of 430,000 jobs over a three-month lockdown period from March till May, with the majority of losses occurring in the services sector, which is affecting urban areas.

The agricultural sector is expected to be least affected from the pandemic even though it has already witnessed a huge decline in activities due to decreasing demand from restaurants and hotels and disruptions in traffic. Consequently, urban non-poor households are prone to experience the greatest loss in average income level with an estimated monthly loss of $155.87, followed

by rural non-poor, rural poor and urban poor with an average loss in income of $125.69, $71.37 and $62.49 respectively. Remittances are expected to decrease by 12.2 per cent to reach 4.4 per cent of GDP in 2020. Tunisia experienced cuts in external trade; for instance, in March, exports decreased by 30 per cent and imports by 27 per cent.\(^{18}\)

Food availability is anticipated to be much affected by lockdown measures\(^{19}\) and stockpiling. Local markets witnessed shortages in the supply of fruits and cattle due to movement restrictions.\(^{20}\) Increased demand of staple food products such as semolina, flour, sugar, oils and dairy products led to shortages and disruptions throughout the supply chain; an increase by 26 per cent in the demand of wheat was recorded.\(^{21}\) Export of agricultural products dropped significantly because of import restrictions on fresh produces imposed by the European Union. An estimated loss of slightly less than $5 million on fish exports was noted.\(^{22}\)

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic could further harm the economy, which was already struggling due to the high public debt and youth unemployment. Travel restrictions will strongly affect the tourism sector, a mainstay of the national economy, which accounted for approximately 14 per cent of the economy and employed 11 per cent of the workforce. The confinement has also affected the informal sector, which employs 60 per cent of the labour force.\(^{23}\)

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17 The exchange was about 0.35506USD/Tunisian Dinar in September 2020.
19 Closure of land and sea borders, educational institutions and restaurants, and restricting domestic movement.
21 Ibid.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

**Government-led**

The Government established a National COVID-19 Monitoring Authority that tracks the supply of basic commodities and the distribution of social aid to the poor and the vulnerable, in addition to reassuring consumers on the availability of all food products.\(^a\)

The organization for Consumer Protection in Tunisia called on citizens to moderate their purchases and limit panic buying. It reassured them on the availability of all commodities.\(^b\)

The Government allocated $376 million, of which slightly less than $160 million are intended for unemployment compensation and $52 million for vulnerable and low-income registered people. This money will benefit 260,000 families in need, 464,000 families with limited income and 382,000, 121,000 and 286 families looking after children, elderly and people with disabilities, respectively.\(^c\)

The Government issued a decree that prevents firing workers because of pandemic-related confinement measures.\(^d\)

The Government took the following measures to support small businesses:

- Deferring the payment of taxes;
- Deferring the payment of loans by banks to those earning less than $343/month by providing a three-month extension from April until June;\(^e\)
- Introducing new loans for businesses in affected sectors;
- Providing $103 million to support continuity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).\(^f\)

**Other initiatives**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) committed $200,000 as cash transfer to 750 primary school students in the Siliana region to compensate for the absence of nutritious school meals for six months.\(^g\)

WFP will initiate a price-monitoring and market analysis to technically support the Government and ensure food access of the vulnerable population.\(^h\)

Italy provided the Central Bank of Tunisia with a loan of approximately $57 million to support companies impacted by the crisis.\(^i\)

The European Union donated $276.5 million to aid in combating the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.\(^j\)

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\(^a\) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020.
\(^b\) Babnet Tunisie, 2020.
\(^c\) Arab Reform Initiative, 2020.
\(^d\) Ibid.
\(^e\) OECD, 2020.
\(^f\) Ibid.
\(^g\) World Food Programme (WFP) 2020.
\(^h\) Ibid.
\(^i\) OECD, 2020.
\(^j\) Ibid.
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Key Messages

A monitoring framework to track food security in the Arab region was developed by ESCWA in collaboration with member States and other partners. It assesses the food security status through 3 outcome and 21 causal indicators distributed across the main food security dimensions, i.e.

- **Availability**
- **Access**
- **Utilization**
- **Stability**

The monitoring framework shows that Yemen has high rates of undernourishment and obesity as well as anaemia among women, meaning the country is confronting the triple burden of malnutrition. Dependency on food imports is high, which in combination with the ongoing sociopolitical crisis weakens its food security situation. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.
Country background

A. Natural resources

Yemen, with an area of 528,000 km², is mostly a mountainous country at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The narrow Tihama coastal plain is largely agricultural, as are the subtropical wadis that dissect the vast mountain range. An elevated plain flows towards the interior’s elevated desert.¹

Box 1. Qat, food, water and war

Yemen is a country with great agricultural potential, and agriculture is still the largest employer, especially of women. In a country that is experiencing a near-famine situation, it is justified to ask why local production is not catering for some of the people’s needs.

Qat (catha edulis) is a mild stimulant, the leaves of which are traditionally chewed by both men and women (and a large proportion of children under 12 according to the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to procure a euphoric feeling.² While it is estimated that food production has declined by an estimated 38 per cent since the beginning of the recent conflict, reports also indicate that the cultivation and use of qat have increased. As an irrigated crop, qat contributes to the decline in the levels of water tables as the crop, as estimated by the Ministry of Agriculture, uses one third of irrigation water.³ It is also a cause of the degradation of the health status of the population as many households will compromise on the quality of food to purchase qat.⁴

So why do people prefer growing qat to growing food? The qat tradition is deeply entrenched in the Yemeni culture and promotes social interaction. During the war, it acts as an escape mechanism. In addition, no crop can compete with qat economically, as its trade is estimated at millions per year.⁵

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¹ Wenner and others, 2020.
² World Health Organization (WHO), 2008.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
B. Socioeconomy

Since 2011, Yemen has been in conflict. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is about $950 for a total GDP of $27 billion. Agriculture is traditionally important and takes place on 44 per cent of the land and accounts for 20 per cent of GDP while oil accounts for 25 per cent. Agriculture employs 45 per cent of the workforce, and accounts for 66 per cent of women’s employment. Yet, Yemen relies heavily on food import to satisfy its food needs. As with famines elsewhere, food shortages are due to a loss of entitlements rather than to the unavailability of food.

Its population of nearly 30 million is mostly young, with 40 per cent under 14 years of age. It is still largely rural (63 per cent) in spite of a rapid urbanization. Yemen is also home to 3,650,000 Internally Displaced Peoples equally divided between men, women, girls and boys, in addition to 280,000 refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia.

C. Agriculture and food security

Yemen is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, with 24 million out of its 30 million inhabitants in need of humanitarian assistance and 20 million facing food insecurity and hunger, including 10 million on the brink of famine. According to FAO, 238,000 people are in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 5 (famine) and risk joining the 65,000 people who are currently experiencing extreme stages of hunger if food assistance is slightly disrupted.

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2 World Bank, n. d.
3 World Food Programme (WFP), 2018.
5 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020a.
6 Ibid.
A. **Core indicators**

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** increased from 25.7 per cent in 2010 to 34.4 per cent in 2016, more than double the average of the Arab region (12.1 per cent), most probably due to the prevailing war situation;

- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** official data are not available;

- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** also increased from 13.5 per cent to 17.1 per cent between 2010 and 2013. It is more pronounced among women (22 per cent) than it is among men (12 per cent). However, these values are much lower than the average of the Arab region (28.4 per cent).

B. **Availability**

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** decreased between 2010 and 2017 from 45 per cent to 40 per cent. Wheat yield stood at 1.56 tons/ha as reported by official sources in the country, while the estimated potential is 3.93 tons/ha;

- **Agricultural orientation index (AV2)** data show that the Government invested more in agriculture in 2018 compared to 2010, as the index increased from 0.89 to 2.26, denoting an increased focus;

- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** are low and were recorded at around 5 per cent in 2013 though data might not be complete;

- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** stood at 91 per cent in 2012, indicating that part of the population might not be getting adequate amounts of food. This value is extremely low compared to the Arab regional average of 131 per cent;

- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** data show that the country relies almost entirely on food imports with a dependency of 95.3 per cent in 2012;

- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available; though, the country’s total renewable water resources are 74.34 m³/capita/year, which is below the water scarcity threshold.

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7 World Bank, n. d.
9 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.
C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at $3.2/day (AC1)** affected more than half the population (52.2 per cent) in 2014. This is a challenge that hinders people’s economic access to food;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** data are not available;
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** levels reached 67 per cent in 2017, which is staggering but anticipated given the prevailing conflicts;
- **Logistics performance (AC4)** official data are not available;
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** is substantially high, at 24 per cent in 2017. This is related to the war and the siege imposed on the country.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** was reported at only 63.5 per cent in 2017, which, however, was an improvement from 54 per cent in 2010. The country needs to invest more if it wants to meet the related 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target;
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** was at 53 per cent in 2010 and 59.1 per cent in 2017, well below the Arab average of 81 per cent;
- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** was reported at 46.5 per cent in 2013, well above the Arab average of about 23 per cent, the classification by WHO for “very high” prevalence of malnutrition and the targets that were set for 2030 by the World Health Assembly (WHA). The ongoing war is exerting an enormous pressure on food security among children;
- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** was recorded at 16.3 per cent. The value surpasses the Arab region’s average of 8.7 per cent, WHO classification for “very high” prevalence of malnutrition and the targets that were set for 2030 by WHA;
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** is also alarmingly high in the country, at 69.6 per cent in 2016. It is the highest in the entire Arab region and is more than triple the target set for 2030 by WHA.

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** does not seem to affect the country much as it only scores 0.04 according to international data. But this is noting that the used index only accounts for the increase in weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and the loss of agricultural productivity;

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10 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), n. d.
11 FAO and others, 2019.
• Food price anomalies (ST2) data are not available; However, the low level could be due to the low production caused by the war;

• Political stability (ST3) official data are not available;

• Food production variability (ST4) was almost stable between 2010 and 2016 at $2,500 and $3,000 per capita, respectively. Food supply variability (ST5) witnessed a shy decrease from 16 to 13 kcal/capita/day. However, given the country’s already problematic calorie deficiency along with the challenging access to and availability of food, these values are worrying.
Food security indicators, Yemen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Arab Latest</th>
<th>Yemen Latest</th>
<th>Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORE INDICATORS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO1</td>
<td>Undernourishment %</td>
<td>12.1 2016</td>
<td>25.7 2016</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2</td>
<td>Food insecurity %</td>
<td>12.2 2016</td>
<td>n.a. n.a.</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO3</td>
<td>Obesity %</td>
<td>28.4 2016</td>
<td>13.5 2016</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| AVAILABILITY INDICATORS | | | | |
| AV1  | Wheat yields - % | 82.2 2017 | 45.4 2017 | Red |
| AV2  | Agriculture expenditure - index | n.a. | 0.89 2018 | Green |
| AV3  | Food loss % | 6.8 2013 | 3.2 2013 | Red |
| AV4  | Dietary energy supply - % | 131 2017 | 102 2017 | Red |
| AV5  | Wheat Import dependency % | 65.0 2012 | 87.7 2017 | Red |
| AV6  | Agriculture water % | n.a. | n.a. n.a. | Red |

| ACCESS INDICATORS | | | | |
| AC1  | Poverty % | 16.6 mult. | n.a. 2014 | Red |
| AC2  | Food consumption % | n.a. | n.a. n.a. | Red |
| AC3  | Unemployment % | 10.4 mult. | 67.5 2017 | Red |
| AC4  | Logistics - index | 2.7 2016 | n.a. n.a. | Red |
| AC5  | Inflation % | 12.8 mult. | 8.7 2017 | Red |

| UTILIZATION INDICATORS | | | | |
| UT1  | Drinking water access - % | 86.9 2015 | 54.0 2017 | Red |
| UT2  | Sanitation access - % | 80.8 2015 | 52.9 2017 | Red |
| UT3  | Child stunting % | 22.9 mult. | 46.5 2013 | Red |
| UT4  | Child wasting % | 8.7 mult. | n.a. 2013 | Red |
| UT5  | Women anaemia % | 35.5 2016 | 63.3 2016 | Red |

| STABILITY INDICATORS | | | | |
| ST1  | Climate change - index | 0.1 2019 | n.a. 2019 | Red |
| ST2  | Price Anomalies - index | n.a. | n.a. n.a. | Red |
| ST3  | Political stability - ranking | 14 2017 | n.a. n.a. | Red |
| ST4  | Production variability - $1,000/capita | 10.1 2016 | 2.5 2016 | Red |
| ST5  | Supply variability - kcal/cap/day | 29.8 2013 | 16.0 2013 | Red |

Disclaimer: Unless otherwise indicated, all data in the table are from national sources.
Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Yemen is worrying as undernourishment (CO1) and obesity (CO3) levels are alarming while food insecurity experience (CO2) lacks data.

Hotspot areas include the following:

• **Availability**: wheat yields (AV1), agriculture orientation (AV2), the average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4) and import dependency (AV5);

• **Access**: poverty (AC1) and unemployment (AC3);

• **Utilization**: stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) among children and anaemia in women (UT5).

As with other conflict-affected countries, the framework’s output provides only a partial image as it seeks to help address causes of chronic food insecurity rather than crisis-driven food insecurity. The first priority is for the immediate cessation of the conflict, as the World Bank estimated that economic growth would have been in double digits in 2019 if violence had stopped in mid-2018.

B. Action areas

A set of strategic priorities is emerging, however, that can serve as a basis for policymaking. These priorities include the following:

1. Enhancing the nutritional status of the most vulnerable population, especially women and children, through in-kind and cash transfers to women. For this to work, humanitarian aid must be facilitated by parties in conflict and international organizations be given sufficient latitude to operate freely.

2. Focus on water and sanitation infrastructure, especially in remote rural areas.

3. Increase participation of women in the labour force as a key to revitalizing the economy and lowering poverty rates.

4. Equip vulnerable households across Yemen with equitable social safety nets and basic services.

5. Enhance the productivity of small and medium-sized farmers and encourage the growing of food as a replacement to qat production.
The COVID-19 pandemic reached Yemen in early April 2020 and, by October, had affected more than 2,000 people, with around 600 deaths recorded. Most often, Yemen records less than 50 daily occurrences of COVID-19, though it has witnessed a succession of small peaks with the last occurring around mid-July.

Prior to the pandemic and according to the latest IPC report, 2 million people, 25 per cent of the total 7.9 million analysed, were classified as highly food insecure during February-April 2020. This number is expected to increase due to the lockdown measures, floods, locust invasions and a deteriorating economy, which are negatively impacting people’s lives and livelihoods, pushing an additional 1.2 million individuals (40 per cent) into food insecurity (IPC phase 3 and above) in the second half of 2020 if humanitarian assistance continues at the same level and scale. In March, it was reported that more than 230 out of 333 Yemeni districts are food insecure, out of which 103 districts are at risk of famine, 41 districts have malnutrition rates above 15 per cent, 54 districts have acute water, sanitation and hygiene deficits, and 46 districts are at high risk of cholera.

Worldwide and local lockdown measures disrupted global and local supply chains.

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12 FAO, 2020b.
13 OCHA, 2020a.
14 Closure of dining-in venues, public and private gathering venues; suspension of social and religious events; and suspension of international flights.
causing shortage in food availability and disrupting access. Yemen imports 90 per cent of its food need\textsuperscript{15} and, compared to last year, imports recorded a 12 per cent, 43 per cent and 39 per cent decrease in February, March and April, respectively, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.\textsuperscript{16}

Locally, lockdown measures, together with locust invasions and fuel shortages, led to disruption in agricultural activities,\textsuperscript{17} food availability, supply chains and food distribution.\textsuperscript{18} By July 23, 2020, fuel shortages and high fuel prices hindered further food supply and food distribution, notably in flood-affected regions.\textsuperscript{19}

The decrease in the value of the Yemeni dinar against the US dollar and the huge dependency of Yemen on food imports led to an increase in food prices. The price of the minimum food basket increased by 8 per cent compared to the pre-COVID period and increased in different percentages across various governorates recording its highest increase, namely, by 35 per cent and 27 per cent in the Aden and Lahj governorates, respectively.\textsuperscript{20} Food prices are expected to further increase in September.\textsuperscript{21} The decrease in global oil prices led to a 60-70 per cent decrease in the remittances sent by Yemenis living abroad, mainly those sent from Saudi Arabia,\textsuperscript{22} causing an 80 per cent decrease in the incomes of households dependent on remittances, pushing them into poverty.\textsuperscript{23} Lockdown measures led to income losses as businesses had to shut down or permanently close. All these factors contributed to the decrease in the purchasing power of Yemenis who depend on their livelihoods to secure their needs.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{15} Including 95 per cent of its wheat and 100 per cent of its rice (OCHA, 2020a).
\textsuperscript{17} Damaged crops, livestock pastures and beehives, in addition to disrupted fishing activities.
\textsuperscript{18} FEWSNET, 2020.
\textsuperscript{19} OCHA, 2020c.
\textsuperscript{20} OCHA, 2020d; and UNICEF, 2020.
\textsuperscript{21} FEWSNET, 2020.
\textsuperscript{22} Saudi Arabia has the highest number of expatriate workers, and 90 per cent of remittances come from the Gulf region.
\textsuperscript{23} OCHA, 2020d; and UNICEF, 2020.
\textsuperscript{24} FEWSNET, 2020; and OCHA, 2020d.
Box 2. Examples of initiatives

During April-June 2020, WFP distributed general food assistance packages and treated and prevented moderate acute malnutrition in children and pregnant and lactating women through the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP) and the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP).a

WFP also assisted local communities as follows:

- Distributing food to 8.6 million people in April and 8.8 million in May;b
- Providing food packages through the rapid response mechanism (RRM) to 9,080 people in quarantine centres in nine governorates in April;c
- Assisting 169,876 individuals in April, and 139,937 individuals in June through food assistance for assets (FFA) and/or food assistance for training (FFT) programmes;d
- Distributing food to 958,121 students in April by readapting school feeding programmes into take-home distributions.e

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a  World Food Programme (WFP), 2020a.
b  Ibid.
c  Ibid.
d  WFP, 2020b.
e  WFP, 2020a.
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