

Analysis and responses of Latin America and the Caribbean to the effects of COVID-19 on food systems

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1. Editorial

Increasing the resilience of the food system and agricultural livelihoods to COVID-19



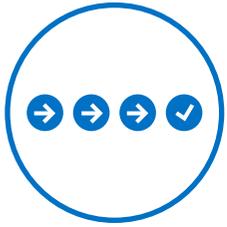
Today, as the whole world tries to cope with the most severe pandemic of this young century, it is vital to do everything possible to mitigate its effects on food production and livelihoods.

In our region, the spread of COVID-19 has deepened the vulnerability of millions of small producers and agricultural workers, intensifying uncertainty for this large part of the population. This new reality is even more intense in countries with high levels of food insecurity, since they are more exposed to the pandemic, are particularly vulnerable to a range of threats and have limited installed capacities to cope with additional risks. Consequently, if this situation is not effectively addressed in the region, the risk is that all the progress made in overcoming poverty and hunger and achieving Sustainable Development Goals will come to nothing.

Lessons learned by those who had to manage disasters indicate that it is critical to understand, monitor and anticipate the impacts of crises on agriculture and agricultural livelihoods early on. Timely and accurate monitoring enables evidence-based policy decisions to be made; acting in advance enables unwanted impacts on food security and nutrition to be avoided. To combat the effects of COVID-19 on food systems, management of this crisis requires a targeted and concrete – yet holistic – approach, focused on ensuring availability and stabilizing access to food. This approach, or any other, must give priority to the most vulnerable populations and ensure the continuity of the critical food supply chain.

The world is experiencing a health crisis unparalleled in recent history, and nations, with differences, have improvised measures based on the limited evidence available. However, we cannot ignore the fact that some ways of dealing with the virus can become cornerstones on which to build a more resilient and sustainable future. If we are strategic in the way we design policy responses, we can achieve short and long-term results that benefit both national and global interests, and that make agriculture in our region a driving force for green growth, new jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities, and rural social inclusion.

2. Phases in managing the impact of COVID-19



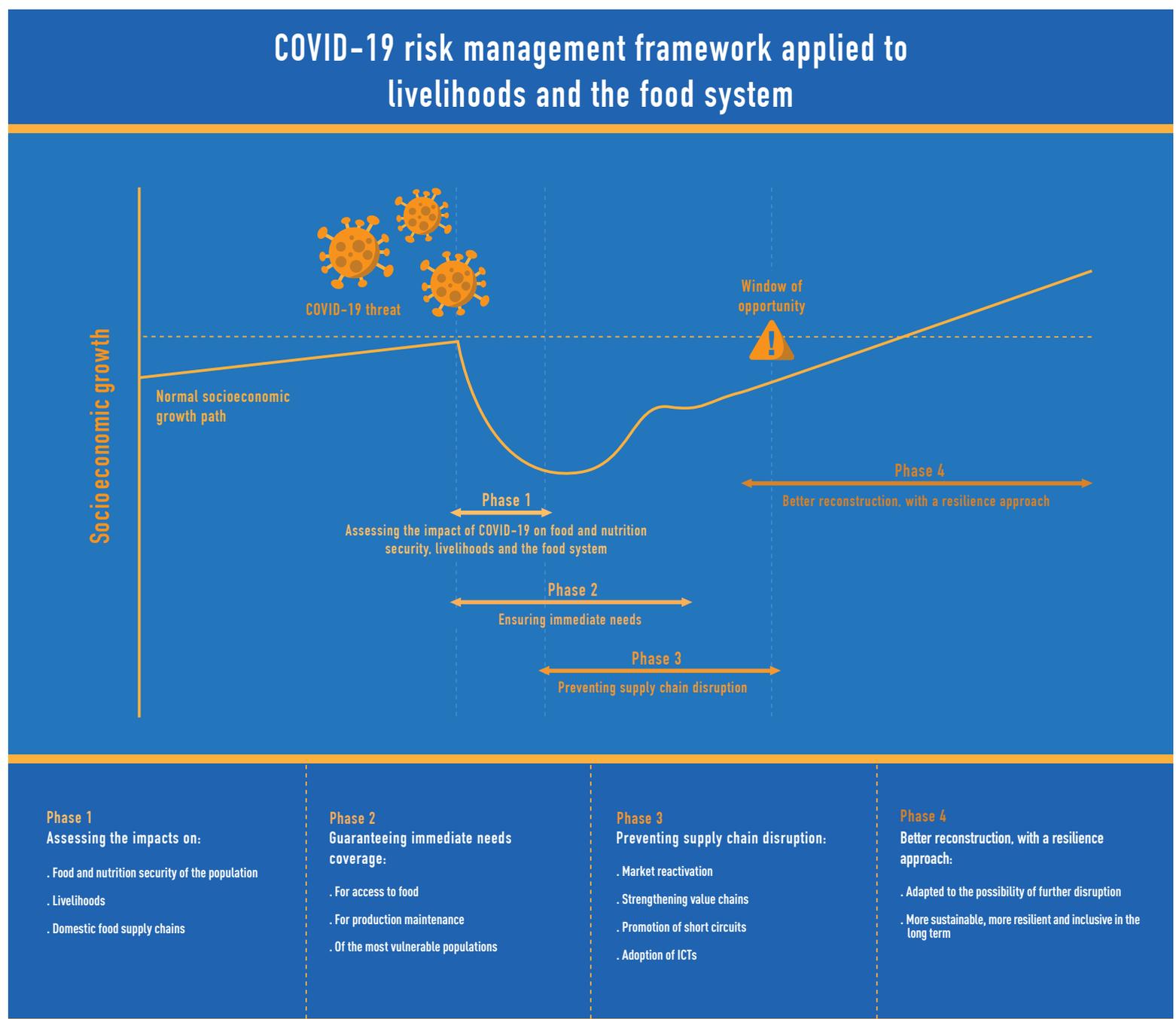
Health measures adopted in response to coronavirus around the world – border closures, restrictions on the movement of people and goods, isolation measures, among others – have impacted production, processing and marketing chains in various ways. The food supply chain may face challenges in the coming weeks or months in terms of logistical constraints and/or disruptions in food supply chains.

The effects of this virus mainly affect the most vulnerable populations (indigenous people, women) and economic activities (small producers, rural populations whose livelihoods depend on tourism, workers in the informal sector, among others), which are less equipped to deal with the disruptions that the pandemic may cause in the food system. The impact of COVID-19 on them is much more than a momentary loss of income: it challenges their food and nutrition security.

Therefore, this threat is different from the emergencies that these populations usually face, by virtue of its unprecedented global scale and the fact that it affects both elements of food supply and demand.

To increase the resilience of livelihoods and the food system, actions need to be implemented in four stages, which are summarized in Figure 1 and described in detail below.

Figure 1/ Phases in managing the impact of COVID-19



Phase 1.

Assessing the impact on food and nutrition security, livelihoods and the food system

Countries are encouraged to create a response committee exclusively dedicated to deal with the impacts of this pandemic on food systems and food security. This committee should be composed of the ministries of health, agriculture, livestock, transport, economy, trade, planning, among others, as well as an advisory group that incorporates the private sector. This response committee is destined to play a critical role in monitoring and proposing response and recovery strategies to COVID-19.

Subsequently, it is essential to carry out an assessment of the impact on food and nutrition security and the functioning of food systems at national and sub-national levels. The consequences of the pandemic continue to unfold, and it is vital to understand, monitor and anticipate the impacts of the crisis on agriculture and agricultural livelihoods. This is particularly the case in countries already experiencing food crises. Timely and accurate monitoring will enable evidence-based decisions to be made, early action to prevent impacts on food and nutrition security, clear messages and targeted efforts to be generated and maintained in those countries where acute food insecurity is a constant threat. This assessment should address both the current situation and projections for the coming months, identifying gaps or excesses in food supply or access.

In the short term (first weeks after the initial confinement and physical distancing measures), the assessment can be carried out using secondary information and a small number of interviews with key actors. It can be supplemented with primary information, as circumstances allow¹. To facilitate the process, avoid duplicating efforts and enrich the analysis, we recommend to coordinate the exercise with different government authorities, agencies of the United Nations System and international cooperation with experience in the humanitarian and emergency field - ministries such as social development, health, agriculture; and organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Red Cross, among others.

Three main aspects need to be evaluated:

- How has access to food been affected for the most vulnerable groups, including agricultural livelihoods?
- What have been the impacts on domestic supply chains?
- What is the availability of food supplies and stocks at the national level, considering disruptions in imports and exports?



Only continuous monitoring and updated evaluations will allow us to keep track of how the situation is evolving and make the necessary adjustments. Consideration must also be given to possible changes in consumption patterns, which may lead to increases in all forms of malnutrition (undernutrition, deficiencies of certain micronutrients or overweight and obesity).

Finally, it is essential to collect data on the state of the most vulnerable populations (indigenous peoples, children, women, migrants, refugees, the sick and the elderly, among others), populations that have seen their incomes threatened (for example, rural populations dependent on tourism or remittances), and small producers or workers in affected small businesses. Key to this is to take into consideration that these populations may be underrepresented in available statistics, as in many cases they do not have access to information and communication technologies, and may work in informal sectors of the economy.

¹ A wide range of digital-based options are now available, including macro-data, applications and social networks that allow a greater number of samples and information to be reached remotely without putting pollsters at risk.

Phase 2. Ensuring immediate needs

a) Ensuring availability and access to food

The potential combined impact of COVID-19 on household purchasing power² – mainly as a result of increased unemployment – and the availability of food on local markets could seriously jeopardize access to food in the most vulnerable countries and populations. To ensure availability and access to food for affected people, minimize the negative impacts of the outbreak and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable, it is of utmost importance to take action as soon as possible.

Once the impact of COVID-19 has been assessed or, instead, the main risk factors have been identified, policies must be adapted and, for example, alliances sought with development banks to make investments in line with them, giving priority to projects that aim to support agricultural production – especially fresh food –³ and safeguard essential supply chains (while ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected). Governments, for their part, are responsible for coordinating the response across sectors, incorporating health and safety measures. Finally, it should be noted that international cooperation also plays a strategic role in crisis management. Data on food stocks and production confirm that there is enough food in the world; so putting in place mechanisms that encourage cooperation can alleviate local problems.

To ensure that production value chains are maintained, it is important to facilitate the movement of seasonal workers and transport operators at the national and international level, advocating that trade corridors remain open, provided that the sanitary conditions established by the authorities are met. It is also crucial to support the continuous operation of local food markets, for example by encouraging the use of information technologies, which can become an innovative mean of promoting fresh products supply from the farm to the consumer. It is therefore important that the private sector has room to innovate in these areas; measures should also be implemented to help local producer groups preserve their bargaining power and access to markets. Finally, in order to guarantee consumers' access to food, local markets should be allowed to remain open, applying the corresponding physical distance and hygiene protocols. All these actions need to be reinforced by information, awareness and support campaigns that provide people with security and tell them how to carry out their activities and provide themselves with food safely.

b) Food and agriculture-related income support

The COVID-19 pandemic has had substantial effects on employment, livelihoods and consequently on incomes, which have declined dramatically (or in some cases, disappeared). Thus, for much of the world's population, the chances of falling into poverty and hunger are greater today than ever before. One of the groups sensitive to this crisis is the rural poor, as most people in this group do not have insurance, either health or income protection (such as paid sick leave or unemployment benefits). Rural population in the region, which is already vulnerable, has been particularly hard hit by the pandemic, becoming even more vulnerable.

In order to address this situation, it is necessary to increase social protection measures immediately. These measures can play a critical role in protecting the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, whether by ensuring income, access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, providing support through vouchers, cash or other subsidies, acting as insurance against risks of illness or death, or facilitating access to health services. Social protection systems, including in low-income countries, must be expanded in response to the pandemic.

Some policy options in this regard include:

- complementing and increasing CTPs;
- providing food rations or take-home baskets to affected people;
- implementing food stamps; and
- public purchase of food from small producers.

In addition, it is crucial to adapt school-feeding programmes, for example, through direct transfers of money or food to families whose children depend on these programmes.

² Purchasing power includes price and income. Generally, a decline in income is due to the loss of employment (whether formal or informal).

³ The non-perishable ones must be guaranteed in the first weeks – or months – by the country's reserves or its import capacity.

Phase 3. Continuity and recovery

Phase 3 seeks to ensure the continuity and/or rapid recovery of critical foods supply chain (for the most vulnerable populations and areas) and foods crucial to food systems. It is not yet clear how long the disruptions caused by the novel coronavirus will last, what their magnitude will be,⁴ how long the subsequent economic recovery will take, or whether there will be new outbreaks of the disease. Therefore, this recovery has to include adaptation measures to the possibility of further disruptions.

In the short term, it is essential to reactivate markets and agricultural operations to ensure sufficient food supplies and not to jeopardize production in the next season. To this end, plans for rapid recovery of agricultural livelihoods should be developed or incorporated into national recovery plans. In any case, no plan will succeed if workers are not provided with the necessary equipment and sanitary conditions to carry out their tasks safely according to the protocols determined by national authorities.

To revive markets, the authorities can organize production and retail networks in the territories, as well as look for innovative food storage and processing options. Strengthening value chains with short marketing circuits can minimize losses of perishable products and ensure income, as well as being less sensitive to disruption if new restrictions on movement are faced. These can be supported by recovery plans. In addition, associations and collective schemes (not necessarily formalised) should be encouraged for production, marketing and purchase of inputs, as well as for transport and logistics. Finally, the adoption of information and communications technologies to bring supply and demand closer together will be key both during and after the crisis. Digital literacy will be critical for rural populations to reap the benefits of e-commerce and Information and communications technologies (ICT's). For this to happen, it must be considered that the most isolated populations and informal actors often do not have access to these tools, so alternative strategies must be developed to reach them.

At the same time, financial support programs should be implemented for agricultural enterprises, prioritizing small ones because of their greater vulnerability, and measures should be taken to guarantee that agricultural producers have timely access to quality inputs to maintain their production and ensure that it will be available next season.

Phase 4. Better reconstruction, with a resilience approach

In the medium to long term, governments, the private sector, producer organizations and community institutions will need to increase their capacities to better respond to multiple threats and systemic risks, and to make decisions and provide services to build inclusive and employment-generating value chains. Economic recovery would benefit from an approach that privileges resilience, promoting policies to shift to more sustainable production systems that better address future risks, based on multi-sectoral strategies, with a strong focus on innovation. The ultimate goal is to achieve the most inclusive economic recovery possible, which requires explicit policies for small producers and small and medium enterprises along food system value chains that include their views and visions.

The health crisis has highlighted the interactions and cascade effects that threaten complex, hyperconnected and interdependent systems. The response, therefore, must generate systems that are more resilient to these complexities. It is important that risk management ceases to be done by silos or sectors, and moves towards a vision of systems with a global perspective. Other threats involving systemic risks, such as extreme weather events, armed conflicts, forced migration, food system disruptions, food and water shortages, unregulated digitalization, biodiversity loss and other zoonotic pandemics, represent potentially catastrophic impacts cascading through financial, ecological and social systems. This is why this crisis should be taken as an unprecedented opportunity to rethink the way our food systems work, and to adopt recovery measures that will enable a transition, in the long term, to more inclusive, sustainable and disruptive agricultural economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed humanity's instinct to transform itself in the face of a universal threat, and it can help us do the same in order to create a habitable planet for future generations.

Christiana Figueres.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/coronavirus-what-could-lifestyle-changes-mean-for-tackling-climate-change>

⁴ In March, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reduced its forecast for global economic growth in 2020 from 2.9 to 2.4 per cent, which would be the lowest level since the financial crisis a decade ago, warning that a prolonged and more intense epidemic of coronaviruses could even reduce this figure to just 1.5 per cent. The COVID-19 pandemic could also have negative effects on social and political stability (for more information, see: FAO (2020)).

3. Good practices in policy implementation by phases in Latin American and Caribbean countries



Phase 1.

Assessing the impact on food and nutrition security, livelihoods and the food system

Figure 2/ Countries that have implemented policies regarding Phase 1



Based on what has been gathered from the national offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the policies and initiatives implemented by countries to mitigate the effects of COVID-19, we can see that some have already made the effort to evaluate its impact. It is understood that this is not a priority policy, given that emergencies, mainly of the most vulnerable, require the concentration of public administration's efforts on other types of initiatives.

The countries that have carried out evaluations have implemented them at the sectoral level, focusing on those sectors that are essential for the country and, in some cases, on the entire productive sector.

Import-dependent countries have made efforts to quantify their food reserves. Others have focused their impact assessment on the vulnerable sectors, since these will first require the help of public administration.

A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

Source: UN World Map, February 2020, modified by the authors.

Phase 2.
Ensuring immediate needs

a) Ensuring availability and access to food

Figure 3/ Countries that have implemented policies regarding Phase 2a



Source: UN World Map, February 2020, modified by the authors.

The vulnerable sectors of Latin America and **the Caribbean** will be the first to see their food security affected by COVID-19. Consequently, many countries have implemented different types of measures to ensure food availability and access.

In the Caribbean, policies focused on self-production stand out, distributing seedlings, seeds and other inputs to small farmers and vulnerable families for growing basic products – such as beans, vegetables and tubers– in their own homes. In addition, some countries have made available public land for the cultivation of these types of products for public consumption.

Similarly, the state is providing food to quarantined communities and a public-private partnership agreement has been established to control domestic prices of the basic food basket.

Mesoamerican countries have also provided aid for self-production, such as support for vegetable production and pig insemination programs, as a strategy to ensure access to pork at the national level.

However, at the subregional level, the effort has been focused on continuing the social programs dedicated to the delivery of food to soup kitchens and schools, but delivering it to the homes of the beneficiaries or allowing them to withdraw it from the

establishments, taking the recommended sanitary precautions. Attempts have also been made in the subregion to keep borders open for international food trade. Thus, during the quarantine decreed for national territory, persons carrying these loads can move freely.

In order to facilitate access to food, hoarding and increasing the price of some products, such as grains, is not recommended (and in some cases prohibited). In some countries, sales of agricultural products have been organized on state agricultural markets, where they are traded at prices below market rates to facilitate people's access to food.

Some countries have authorized the purchase of food (meat and grains) to maintain basic food stocks and ensure food security in the country. However, the outstanding policy is the delivery of a family food basket, a "solidarity bag" or food packages to the most vulnerable families who find themselves with restricted access to markets because of quarantine.

In the South American subregion, policies relating to feeding children through the school curriculum were the most frequently mentioned: children were allowed to withdraw food from school, food was delivered to their homes or their card was credited digitally. Food delivery systems were also organized for vulnerable people who could be affected by restrictive health measures. In a few cases, price control measures on basic inputs were seen.

b) Food and agriculture-related income support

Figure 3/ Countries that have implemented policies regarding Phase 2a



Among the policies that in one way or another seek to ensure immediate needs, is income support related to agriculture and food.

In **Mesoamerica** and **South America**, policies have been implemented to increase companies' liquidity with the aim of subsidizing costs for a few months. Some of these are the moratorium on credit payments for three to four months, the cancellation of debts with the state or the reduction of the tax burden of the affected companies, mainly if they are micro and small enterprises.

Another package of policies aims at subsidies or direct transfers of resources to individuals and/or enterprises for subsistence or productive purposes.

In order to specifically support small producers, a subsidy has been provided to ensure the supply of agricultural products such as beans, corn and vegetables. In addition, instruments have begun to be implemented for the purchase of food from local producers. For their part, the governments have asked the private sector to commit to preserving jobs.

Phase 3.
Continuity and recovery

Figure 4/ Countries that have implemented policies regarding Phase 3



In this regard, policies aim at not interfering with the food production chain. Thus, several governments in **the Caribbean and Mesoamerica** aim to standardize the transit of food and inputs both within the country and internationally through agreements implemented bilaterally or multilaterally.

On the other hand, initiatives have been implemented to protect agricultural and livestock livelihoods through various economic incentive programs.

The countries of **South America** have also tried not to interrupt the transit of goods at the national and international level, even securing fuel for food transport. However, initiatives have also been implemented for the direct sale of fresh products from family farming at the national level. The initiative is complemented by the use of digital channels for their sale and a communication campaign that recognizes the work of smallholders and family farming.

Source: UN World Map, February 2020, modified by the authors.

4. Interview



© National Assembly of Ecuador

Xavier Lazo Guerrero, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Ecuador (MAG, by its initials in Spanish), looks in depth at the situation in his country and how Ecuador is dealing with the pandemic.

1. How has the food supply in your country been affected by the blockade and reduction in international trade imposed in response to the coronavirus outbreak?

In order to avoid disruptions in the food supply, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has implemented several actions within the framework of the provisions issued by the National Emergency Operations Committee (COE, by its initials in Spanish), such as

- 1) Implementation of four safe logistic corridors in the roads of the country to facilitate the transportation of agricultural products;
- 2) "Agrotienda Ecuador", an initiative that brings producer organizations closer to consumers in a direct way, through the sale of product baskets. In addition, there are other complementary measures with other institutions to ensure food supply at the national level.

Food supply by product imports has not been affected, since the Customs has had a good management of goods entering the country, so yellow corn was imported without problems until March 31 and we continue to import important raw materials for the production of animal protein, such as wheat and soybean cake.

The problem lies in export products that could not be sent due to the closure of ports in other countries, as in the case of pitahaya to Hong Kong; cocoa, flowers, bananas to the European Union, among others. Several export products present large falls in prices, due to the oversupply at the national level. For example, the case of pitahaya that could not be sent to Asia, but was sent to the United States with very low prices: from USD 3.40 per kg to USD 0.80. So all the actors in that chain have been affected. In flowers, exports have fallen by more than 70 percent.

2. Have there been major disruptions in food availability and/or food prices in your country due to coronavirus response measures? Has this affected the population's ability to meet their nutritional needs?

One of the main problems detected in the supply to different agricultural product commercialization chains is the closure of roads by community members or local governments that, due to fears of contagion, have not allowed producers and suppliers access to cultivation areas and subsequent transportation. Also, during the emergency, labour for harvest and post-harvest has been scarce. Transportation generated new rates. All this contributed to the price increase. This situation has been normalized by the need of producers to continue marketing their products.

In this context, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock generated approaches between producers and the demand to allow an alternative supply and avoid speculation. Closer relations with private enterprise were also generated (the "Nearby Shop" initiative, "Tienda Cerca" in Spanish).

Finally, this state portfolio maintains a constant monitoring of the supply and dispatch status of the main supermarket chains in the country, a the monitoring of basic products in municipal retail markets (jointly with commissioners, mayors and other authorities) at national level, as well as a permanent monitoring of markets and farmer's fairs at provincial level.

3. Who do you see as most affected by the general situation? Rural or urban populations? Why?

Analysing the data, rural population is the least exposed to COVID-19. This is corroborated by information on infections published by the Ministry of Public Health, which shows that 93 percent of infections are concentrated in cantons with a mainly urban population, while the remaining seven percent are found in mostly rural cantons.

On the other hand, food supply does not represent a problem in productive rural areas, although the main impact on rurality comes from a potential lack of placement of their products in urban centres, as was done under normal conditions.

The problem occurs in urban areas where, due to logistical issues and the fears of producers and traders, access to food products of agricultural origin becomes complex. Although the overall impact of the pandemic makes no difference at the time of infection, it is once again clear how important it is to generate long-term agricultural policy to make agriculture a competitive and sustainable production sector that contributes to a higher goal: overcoming urban and rural poverty.

4. If this crisis requires a prolongation of health restriction measures, do you think that food production and trade will be more affected in your country?

In the face of this health emergency, which has also led to an economic crisis, we can foresee that the productive sectors will suffer the consequences. In the agricultural sector we are taking all the necessary measures to guarantee the prolonged supply of food to the citizens. We must take into account that agricultural production and trade are also subject to the consumption and liquidity dynamics of the population. It is understandable that the volume of production in the countryside is going to be directly related to the temporality of the health emergency, since as the state of emergency is prolonged, the logistical or monetary liquidity problems of citizens are deepened, which affects the agricultural sector.

5. Have you estimated which productive sectors would be most vulnerable in the event of a prolonged crisis?

In my view, the most vulnerable sectors, due to restrictions, are large-scale poultry and pig farming. Small producers will only have difficulty selling at the daily fairs until order and biosecurity are generated. The rest of the sectors will require liquidity or sources of credit to inventory what they cannot consume or sell immediately. Agriculture is very resilient and can be accommodated by managing inventories, crop planning and biosecurity.

6. Ecuador has taken steps to respond to the impacts of the novel coronavirus on food supply chains. Can you tell us more about the measures implemented to date? What has the implementation process been like? Who is the target audience for these policies?

AGROTIENDA, baskets plus meat and vegetable trucks. With a group of officials we first worked on the analysis of each province, where we verified that:

- The price of each item in the basket should be compared with the supermarket price and guarantee a minimum discount of 23 percent .
- The contacts that each association had to take orders were not always available online or didn't always have the capacity to handle an effective closing of the sale by phone (mostly negotiating delivery times, among other commercial aspects). That is how it was defined that direct MAG officials would be the contact numbers that support the online sale.
- Process for entering new baskets: the format for creating baskets was standardized, where the District Director of each province had to review and indicate the officials assigned to support the sale and coordination of deliveries; after this, it goes to the verification team, where the indicated lines are called and given a brief explanation with opening hours, products are verified and the respective offer is analysed. After this, we proceed to the design of the digital flyer, where each province was given a distinctive colour, and then promotion is made on social media and shared with the public.
- Transport: due to the emergency the MAG supported the deliveries in the provinces together with the associations, since this value was raising too much the final price of the food basket because of the conjuncture. Therefore, the MAG, with its fleet of vans, supports the delivery of the majority of food baskets at national level.

7. If the crisis is prolonged, what actions should the countries of the region take?

A global health crisis requires joint action to address it. In this regard, I would like to mention that we have worked in several virtual meetings with ministers of agriculture of the Andean region, of the hemisphere and we have even signed the "Declaration on COVID-19 and risks in the food supply chains", together with 25 countries of the region and motivated by FAO, with the aim of establishing joint policies to ensure the supply of sufficient, safe and nutritious food for the 620 million consumers in the region.

Having said that, in the scenario of a prolonged crisis, as authorities we must focus our actions on issues such as:

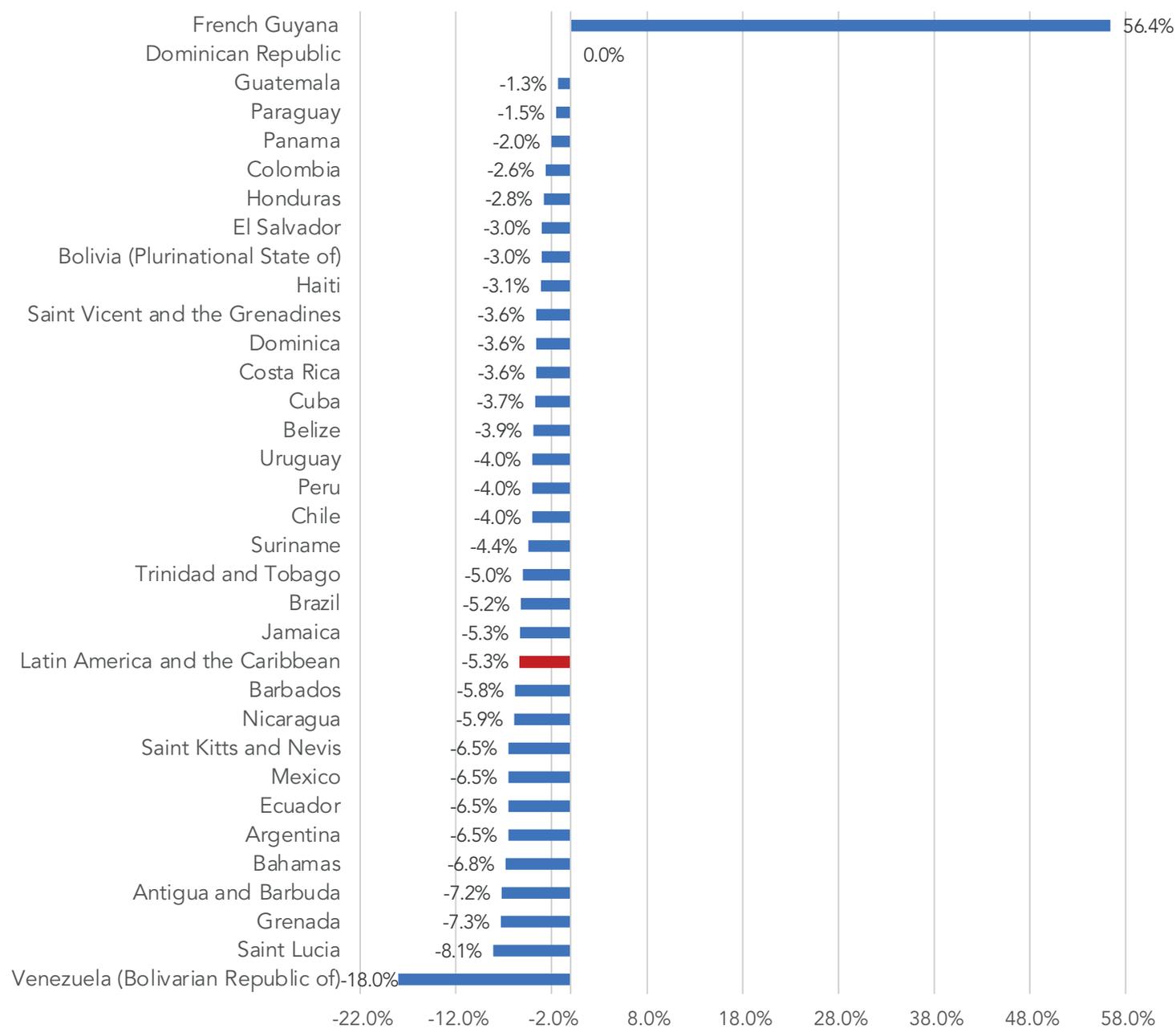
- Biosafety and use of protective equipment.
- Distancing and avoidance of crowding at work sites.
- Production and commercialization partnerships.
- Start direct sale with the help of digital platforms.
- Ensure product safety.

5. Macroeconomic and sectoral information



In order to keep an eye on the evolution of the consequences of COVID-19 on food supply and demand, we will publish different macroeconomic and sectoral indicators that may be useful for decision makers.

Figure 6/ GDP growth projections for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020 (in %)



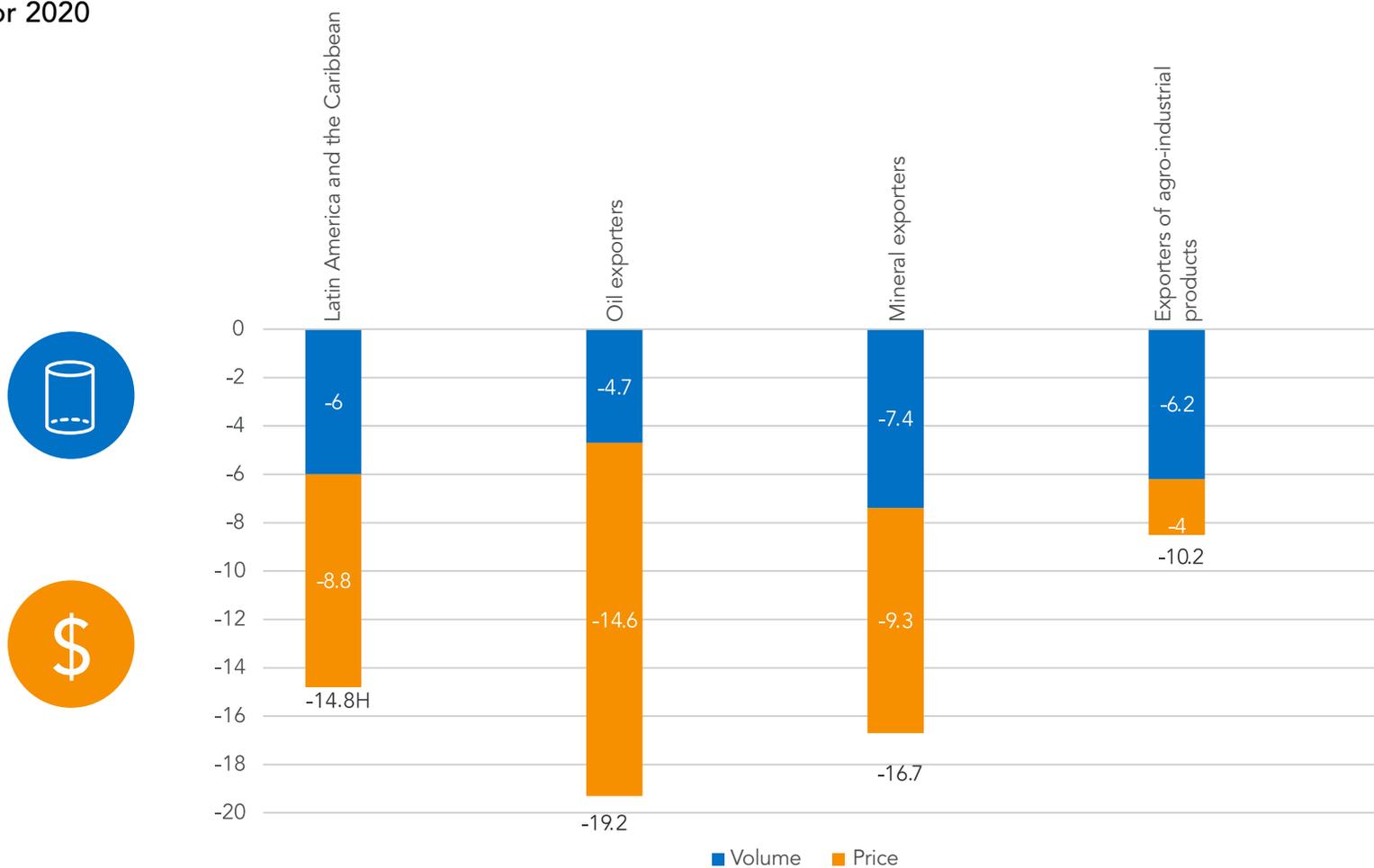
Source: FAO based on ECLAC (2020).

As we saw in the previous issue of our Bulletin, Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to enter an economic recession in 2020. ECLAC projected GDP growth for the region in 2020 to be 5.3 percent. This is mainly attributed to falling commodity prices, disruptions in value chains and lower demand for tourism services.

In addition, the fall in international trade will imply a reduction in the value of the region's exports by around 15 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean, caused mainly by a reduction in prices in the face of lower world demand (see Figure 7).

For countries exporting agro-industrial products, ECLAC projects a 10.2 percent reduction in their value.

Figure 7/ Variation (in %) in exports of goods for Latin America and the Caribbean and main export countries, projections for 2020



Source: FAO based on ECLAC: *Measuring the impact of COVID-19 with a view to reactivation*.

In this scenario of falling GDP growth, and therefore lower household incomes, the possibility of the region's inhabitants to have access to sufficient resources to satisfy their basic needs such as health or food is reduced.

If we add to this the fact that in some countries of the region the Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) has raised domestic price alerts (see Figure 8), the consequence is that households will have to deal with a scenario of low income and high food prices, a situation that could put the food security of their inhabitants at risk.

Figure 8/ Domestic price alerts for selected Latin American and Caribbean countries

Argentina:

High food inflation persists

Growth rate (in %)		
	On 02/2020	Average for the same period
3 months	0.7	-1
12 months	-0.6	2.1



Colombia:

Rice prices rose to record or near record levels in March

Growth rate (in %)		
	On 03/2020	Average for the same period
3 months	5.6	0.9
12 months	2.4	-0.1



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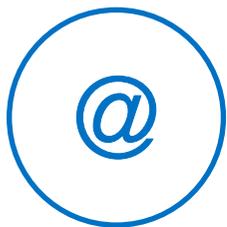
Corn and rice prices are still higher than a year earlier

Growth rate (in %)		
	On 02/2020	Average for the same period
3 months	-5.8	1.1
12 months	0.6	-0.1



Source: FAO (2020a).

6. Resources



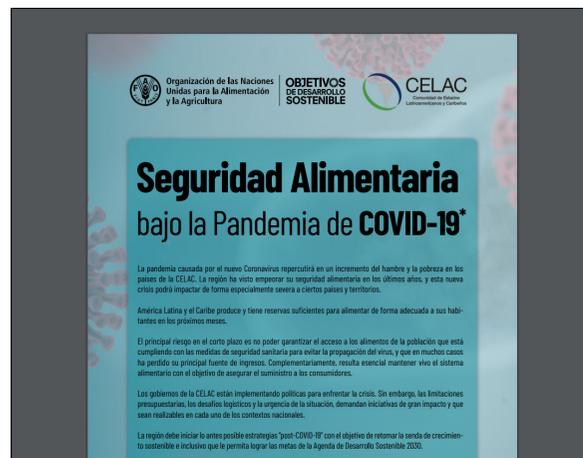
In this section you will find relevant information concerning the topic that has been discussed in case you wish to go deeper into it.

FAO/CELAC

Food security under the COVID-19 pandemic

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/rhc/docs/covid19/Boletin-FAO-CELAC.pdf

This article analyzes the policies implemented by Celac governments to face the crisis. Also FAO presents policy proposals that are showing success in food systems sustainability and food security in the context of COVID-19.

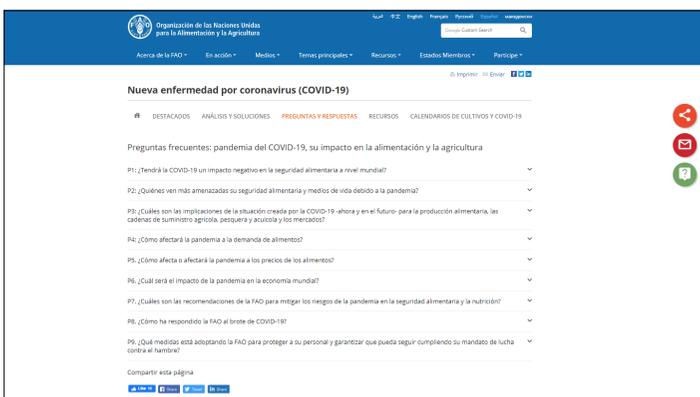


FAO

New coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

<http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/q-and-a/impact-on-food-and-agriculture/es/>

Frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on food and agriculture.

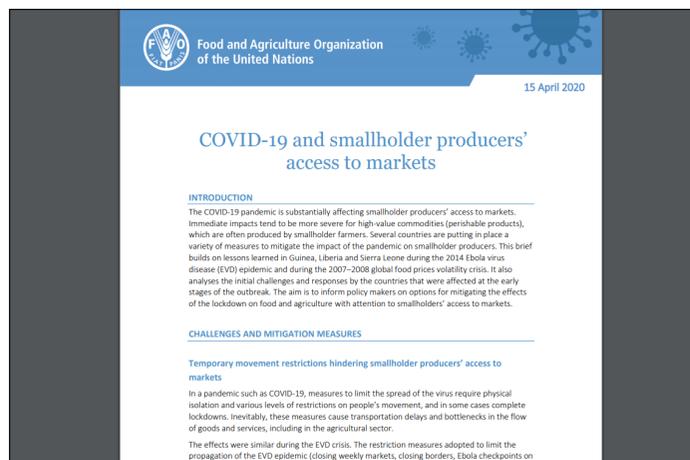


FAO

COVID-19 and smallholder producers' access to markets

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8657en/CA8657EN.pdf>

Article on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on small producers and the measures being implemented in some countries to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on small producers.

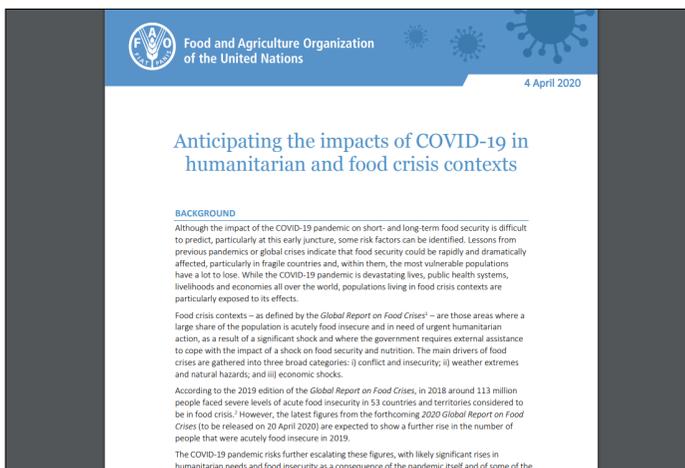


FAO

Anticipating the impacts of COVID-19 in humanitarian and food crisis context

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8464en/CA8464EN.pdf>

Article warning about actions and policies to be considered in countries with existing humanitarian crises.



FAO

Responding to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on food value chains through efficient logistics

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8466en/CA8466EN.pdf>

Article providing examples of practices that can help governments and the private sector maintain logistics in food value chains.

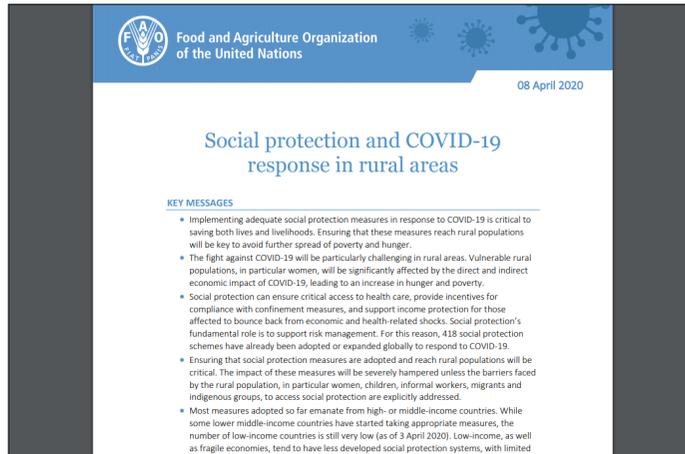


FAO

Social protection and COVID-19 response in rural areas

<http://www.fao.org/3/ca8561en/CA8561EN.pdf>

Article on how certain social protection measures could protect rural inhabitants, for whom it is difficult to comply with the strong restrictions on movement imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19.

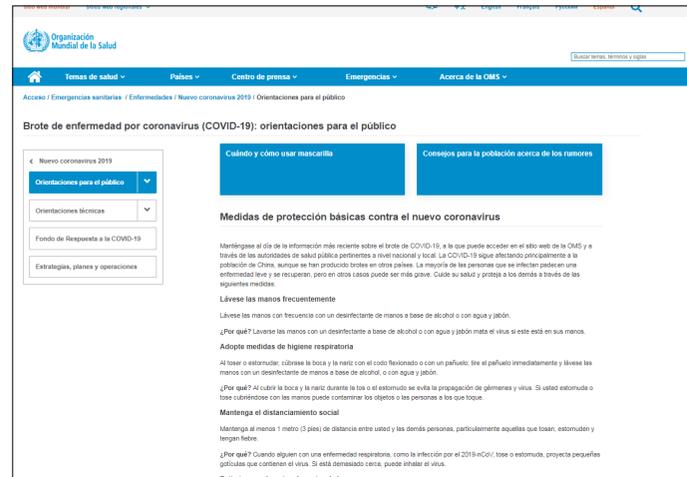


OMS

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disease Outbreak: Guidelines for the Public

<https://www.who.int/es/emergencias/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Basic protection measures against the novel coronavirus are provided.



CEPAL

Measuring the impact of COVID-19 with a view to reactivation

<https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/45445-dimensionar-efectos-covid-19-pensar-la-reactivacion>

Second Special Report on the evolution and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean.

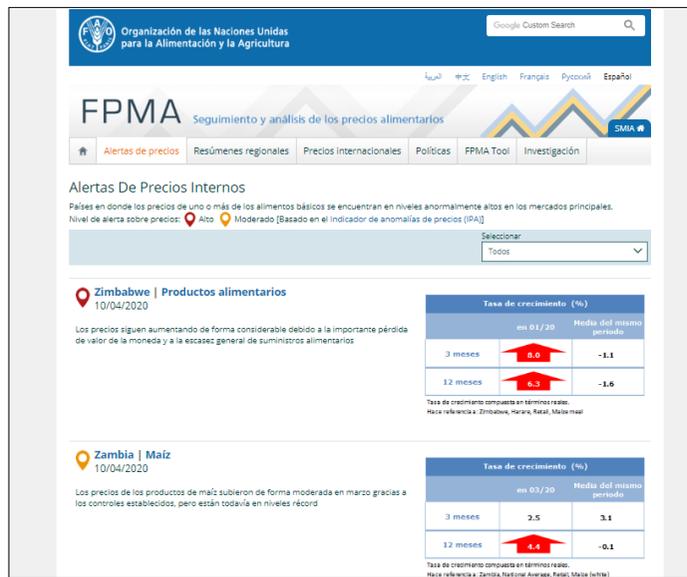


FAO

Food price monitoring and analysis (FPMA)

<http://www.fao.org/giews/food-prices/price-warnings/es/>

A website that monitors world food prices and alerts countries where the prices of one or more staple foods are at abnormally high levels.



7. Key messages



- The proposal for disaster risk management points to the importance of understanding, monitoring and anticipating the impacts of crises on agriculture for which an action protocol is presented.
- Timely and accurate monitoring enables evidence-based programmatic decisions to be made and action to be taken in advance to avoid impacts on food and nutrition security.
- This approach must give priority to the most vulnerable populations and ensure the continuity of the critical food supply chain.
- However, the response also offers a significant opportunity to build a more resilient and sustainable future.
- Latin American and Caribbean countries are in the early stages of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, which influences the focus of implemented policies and initiatives.
- The main implemented policies and initiatives focus on food availability and access, although the way in which these are applied may vary at the subregional level. While in the Caribbean and Mesoamerica these are geared towards self-production, in South America they focus on the delivery of food kits to the most vulnerable people and schoolchildren.
- The other package of measures aims at the continuity of food production processes, focusing on maintaining a normal transit of food and inputs.
- While a rapid impact assessment is essential for proper resource management, we understand that this is not a measure reported by all countries, as urgency leads governments to act quickly on needs.
- In the medium term, it will be necessary to contemplate in the public, private and academic spheres how to adapt to a very different future reality, focusing on the resilience of food systems.
- In macroeconomic terms, GDP growth for the region in 2020 will slow considerably, mainly due to falling commodity prices, disruptions in value chains and lower demand for tourism services.
- In addition to the fall in international trade, it is estimated that the value of the region's exports will fall by around 15 percent, mainly due to a reduction in prices (lower world demand).
- In a scenario of lower GDP growth and, therefore, lower household incomes, the possibility of people in the region to have access to sufficient resources to meet their basic needs, such as health or food, diminishes.
- If we add to this the fact that in some countries of the region domestic price warnings have been raised, households will have to deal with a scenario of low income and high food prices, a situation of high risk for the food and nutrition security of their inhabitants.
- Financial support must be sought in order to, firstly, save lives and, secondly, rebuild with a focus on the resilience of food systems to new threats.

8. References



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