



Key takeaways of the Global Network Against Food Crises on Preventing a food catastrophe during the COVID-19 pandemic

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As we today release the 2020 edition of **The Global Report on Food Crises**, the world is facing another daunting challenge: COVID-19.

The data and analyses presented in the Global Report predate the pandemic, but reveal an already dire picture of global acute food insecurity and malnutrition – even before the disease’s spread began to impact food systems.

The report tells us that at the close of 2019, 135 million people in 55 countries and territories faced acute food insecurity, and required urgent action. In addition, over 183 million people were in Stressed food insecurity conditions, at high risk of sliding into acute food insecurity if confronted by additional shocks – which is particularly worrisome in light of the anticipated evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, 17 million children in these 55 countries and territories suffered from wasting due to acute malnutrition, and as many as 75 million had stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition.

Unfortunately, the situation in 2020 could continue to worsen due to the impact of COVID-19, although the precise magnitude of the deterioration is not yet known.

Declines in economic activity, combined with trade restrictions, are likely to diminish national budgets, reduce household incomes, and may lead to rises in food prices. Critical food value chains are at risk of disruption. Especially in under-resourced and vulnerable nations, this could have serious effects on food security.

Most countries referenced in the Global Report lack the means to provide large-scale life-saving humanitarian activities in response to the pandemic while simultaneously acting to protect and support their citizens’ ability to maintain their livelihoods and earn an income.

Those providing assistance – whether local, national, regional, or international actors -- may face challenges in reaching populations who are most vulnerable – in particular people with disabilities, the elderly, and children. Humanitarian costs may increase.

Across the world, people are being personally affected by COVID-19, including in OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries and other high-income nations. They may find it increasingly difficult to prioritize the need to assist populations affected by food crises abroad when the social and economic situations in their own countries are also greatly affected.

In light of the scale of the public health crisis and its consequences, Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets could be missed – at a time when the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) of eradicating hunger and malnutrition is already proving particularly challenging in several countries. What’s more, there is a risk of reductions in resources allocating for addressing food crises and malnutrition, with deleterious consequences for the food security, nutrition, and livelihoods of the world’s most vulnerable populations.

The countries covered by the Global Report should not have to choose between saving lives and livelihoods.



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Against Food Crises**

Integrated
actions for
lasting solutions

We therefore pledge our firm commitment to continue helping the millions of vulnerable people around the world who already face acute food insecurity and malnutrition, which threatens both their lives and livelihoods.

The Global Network will continue to provide up to date data, analyses and intelligence to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on food and nutrition security so as to inform programmes to address new needs.

We will do everything possible to maintain supply lines and food availability with in kind and cash support and keep therapeutic and supplementary feeding in place.

We are equally committed to preventing food system failures, strengthening national capacities and policies to maintain agricultural and food production and safeguard agri-food supplies, both to provide nutritious, safe, affordable and sustainable food and diets to consumers, including children, as well as provide incomes to producers, fishers, farmers, and pastoralists.

The Global Network against Food Crises will continue to drive coordination and support global and local efforts to respond to food crises and address malnutrition.

We will spare no effort to prevent households from falling into severe food insecurity and malnutrition, or to contain the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the food security and nutrition of the planet's most vulnerable populations.

News release: Global Report on Food Crises reveals scope of food crises as COVID-19 poses new risks to vulnerable countries



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