

# **COMESA FOOD SECURITY RESPONSE PLAN TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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- ❖ Current Context
- ❖ Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture production Food Security and Nutrition
- ❖ COMESA Regional Food Security Response
- ❖ Challenges and Opportunities
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- ❖ Countries around the world are facing an unprecedented threat due to the emergence and rapid spread of novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19);
- ❖ The COVID-19 disease has rapidly spread across the world, and reaching a growing number of communities across in Africa and posing significant challenges to health conditions in the continent with negative repercussions on lives and livelihoods of the population;
- ❖ The African governments are implementing extra-ordinary measures to limit the spread of the virus, which primarily aimed to respond to the health concerns of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ❖ The COVID-19 pandemic has had, and will have broad spill-over effects that will aggravate the already unsuitable socio-economic conditions including food and nutrition insecurity and poverty in the African continent, the regions and Member States;
- ❖ Countries in the COMESA region are already experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity occasioned by the effects of climate change, unprecedented large outbreaks of trans-boundary crop pests, and conflicts;



- ❑ Agriculture is a critical sector in sustaining economies of most of the COMESA countries, its is the source of food and nutrition security and livelihoods for over 70% of the population in the region, accounts for more than 32% of COMESA's gross domestic product (GDP);
- ❑ The agriculture sector productivity and production in COMESA is affected by a number of constraints which include access to improved technologies, finance, and markets, and enabling policy and regulatory environment;
- ❑ The region relies heavily on food imports, spending over USD10 billion per annum in the importation of commodities such as wheat, rice, sugar and fish.
- ❑ The UNFAO-UNECA (2018) regional overview of food security and nutrition, indicates that about 25% of the region's population were undernourished, representing a staggering 137 million individuals.

# Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture production and food security



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Likely lead to huge rises in humanitarian needs and food insecurity due to both the pandemic itself and restrictive containment efforts resulting in:

- ❑ Limited availability of labour for farm work affecting food production
- ❑ Difficulties in moving food from rural to urban areas affecting food access
- ❑ Limited agro-input supplies and availability affecting production
- ❑ Closed/poor access to markets for agro-inputs and outputs
- ❑ Increased informal trade across the borders and changing to illegal trade routes, and thus increasing the risks associated with food quality and safety

# Implications of COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture production and food security



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- ❑ Restriction on agriculture extension and advisory services, and financing due to curtailed banking services
- ❑ Limiting the ability of agri-food businesses to secure raw materials and to supply value-added products to domestic and regional markets and transport food from larger urban centres to smaller towns
- ❑ Loss of incomes following closures of businesses/source of livelihoods, affecting access to food
- ❑ limited capacity to import food stuff due to reduced economic activities resulting from the lockdowns, impacting food availability



## ***A. Response Approach***

- ❑ Coordinated, coherent and collective actions that deal with a range of immediate/short, medium-and long-term and complementary issues;
- ❑ Bolster private sector, particularly SMEs and farmers participation and other key players to drive the response;
- ❑ Flexibility in design and implementation of the response to ensure its adaptation in tandem with evolving contexts and integrating it to long-term agriculture and economic development programmes;



### **A. Response Approach... cont.**

- ❑ Build on and synergize with the existing related initiatives in the region and Member States;
- ❑ Leverage the existing institutions and structures to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation;
- ❑ Adhere to the principles of coordination and subsidiarity.

### **B. Overall objective of the Response**

- ❑ To contribute to the deepening of regional economic integration through driving sustainable agricultural growth and transformation for improved food security and shared prosperity in the COMESA region.





### **c. Components of the Response**

- Provision of urgent/immediate food security and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable population
- Support for boosting agriculture production and productivity
- Enabling policy/regulations and increase access to markets, value addition/agro-processing
- Building resilience of agri-food systems
- Regional coordination and National Response Management

# Challenges and Opportunities



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## A. Challenges:

- ❑ Global and evolving nature of the crisis
- ❑ Confluence of COVID-19, desert locusts, drought and/or floods, macro-economic turbulence and conflict in the region
- ❑ Limited data on the effect of COVID-19 from the Member States
- ❑ Differences in the measures being implemented in the Member States to deal with the crisis.

## B. Opportunities:

- ❑ Development partners interest in supporting the response
- ❑ Availability of strategic partners to collaborate with in the response
- ❑ Ongoing initiatives to leverage and build synergize

# Conclusion



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- Food security response to COVID-19 pandemic calls for coordinated and harmonised efforts that address both immediate food security and nutrition needs, short-and medium-term needs integrated to the long term development goals

□ Thank you

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