



World Food Programme

# Food Security Overview

## Context of COVID-19

Tanzania



**58** million total population

**35%** urban, **65%** rural

**15** million under poverty line

**5** million in urban areas

**5** million under food poverty line

**2** million in urban areas

### CONTEXT

The first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Tanzania in mid-March 2020. The number of confirmed cases started rising dramatically in April 2020, reaching 480 by the end of April. To prevent the spread of the virus, the Government put in place several measures, covering aspects of health, hygiene and social distancing. No population lockdown measure has been declared. By mid-May the government began relaxing some restrictions including re-opening of higher colleges and business centres and removing the requirement of quarantine for international arrivals.

Nine regions are considered among the high-risk areas due to their proximity to border points of entry, connection to international flights and location of initial cases of reported COVID-19 amid high population density. The urban population, where the poorest households spend about 70% of their income on food, is likely to be the more affected than rural populations. Households already living below the food poverty line, those working in the informal sector, and families with members who have pre-existing health conditions and the elderly will be particularly vulnerable.

More than 80% of the urban population is employed in the informal sector and about 10 million people in the urban population live in informal settlements. Households in these areas face resource constraints to provide for their basic services due to decreasing and unstable income.

A slow-down in economic activity and a partial or full lock-down will significantly affect the income and food security level across urban areas.

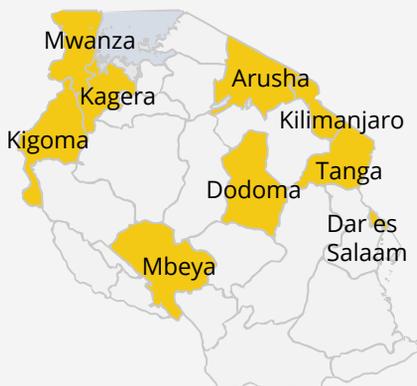
**WFP estimates that up to 2.1 million people may need food assistance as a result of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.**

The socio-economic impact of the virus has already impacted foreign-linked sectors such as tourism, transportation, horticulture and floriculture. The total or partial closure of border entry points to neighbouring countries will negatively impact inter-regional trade, constraining commodity flows throughout the region.

Efforts need to be taken to maintain the food systems in the country to avoid any supply disruptions between rural and urban food transfers. Most urban markets rely on food supplies from rural agriculture, making the transportation sector crucial in safeguarding commodity flows.

Unlike rural areas, the government's social safety nets programmes through the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) have limited coverage in urban areas. While customising the TASAF approach to fit urban context provides one option and use of the national food reserves is another option, WFP is designing humanitarian food assistance interventions that complement government actions to be implemented as the situation evolves.

COVID-19 priority regions in Mainland Tanzania - Estimated vulnerable population



Priority regions	Urban population (millions)	In poverty*	In food poverty*
Dar es Salaam	6.8	8%	2%
Mwanza	3.5	35%	9%
Dodoma	2.5	23%	4%
Arusha	2.1	25%	8%
Kagera	3.2	32%	12%
Tanga	2.4	32%	8%
Kilimanjaro	1.9	10%	2%
Kigoma	2.5	34%	14%
Mbeya	2.1	21%	8%

\*Source: Household Budget Survey 2017-18

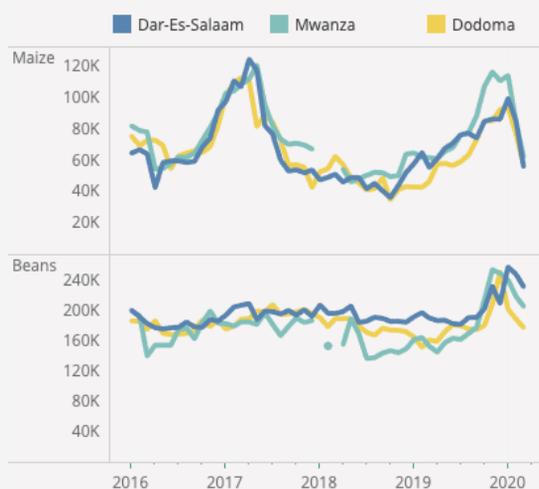
While projections of a good harvest this season would normally increase food security across the country, the health impact and restrictive actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 may reverse the positive food security outlook. Consequently, a significant proportion of market-dependent consumers may need assistance to maintain an acceptable level of food consumption in the next seven months from June through December 2020.

## FOOD SECURITY OUTLOOK

The Integrated Phase Classification food security analysis conducted last season projected that about half a million people would be facing severe acute food insecurity and in need of emergency food assistance between May and September 2020. Early recovery was anticipated based on prospects of a bumper harvest from the current agricultural season (2019/20). With the harvesting season advancing in most parts of the country, prices have been declining resulting in improved household food security among rural and urban consumers.

Despite this improved situation, the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 may compromise recovery for already food insecure populations and create new populations of food insecure through disruption of food systems, particularly markets, and loss of income sources. Voluntary or mandated market closures and restrictions of movement and reduction in the agriculture and food supply chain workforce due to COVID-19 could slow or cut food supplies within the country and drive up prices. This will adversely affect the food security levels of the urban population, whose incomes are already affected by slower economic activity, and will adversely affect populations in food-deficit rural areas.

**Food prices for maize and beans in the most populated urban centres**  
(in Tanzanian Shillings)



Vulnerability will be further compounded by the widespread floods occurring in many parts of the country as well as the potential threats of desert locusts. Increased demand from the neighbouring countries which have been suffering from drought and desert locusts, may put pressure on domestic commodity prices and availability.

## WFP's Rapid Food Security Survey in Dar es Salaam

In April 2020, WFP conducted a rapid assessment covering over 1,300 households across the urban districts of Dar es Salaam.

For most of the households assessed, the food security situation is satisfactory. However, in the event of a shock, particularly the impact from the COVID-19, the population in the 'borderline' food consumption group is likely to fall into 'poor' food consumption resulting in 20% of population in need of assistance.

**Food Consumption Groups in Dar es Salaam urban population**  
(proportion of households under each group)



Over half of the interviewed households (56%) reported to have faced food shortages due to lack of money seven days preceding the urban assessment and have thus relied on one or more negative coping strategies. Female headed households were found to have more challenges in coping compared to male counterparts. Seventy-two percent of the households rely on petty trade as their main source of income, followed by casual labour (37%) and service provision (20%) which are highly sensitive to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Observing social distancing recommendations and utilizing more efficient communications technology and services, mVAM, WFP's mobile tool for remote vulnerability analysis and mapping, will be deployed at national level to generate further evidence on the country's food security level over the coming months. mVAM will monitor key food security indicators notably on access to food and market, as well as access to health services. The information will be used to identify the geographic areas most affected and inform the necessity for food assistance or other interventions to mitigate and respond to the impacts of COVID-19.**

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