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Monitoring report on the impacts of COVID-19 in West Africa



World Food
Programme



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Preface

This report has been prepared by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Sub-Regional Office for West Africa, and the World Food Programme (WFP). The second of its kind, this report provides an opportunity for public and private actors to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the life of households in West Africa in 2021, following the assessment carried out in 2020.

Since the start of the health crisis in the sub-region in February 2020, the ECOWAS Member States and sub-regional institutions have spared no effort to address its humanitarian, social, financial and economic consequences, which have been exacerbated by the restrictive measures put in place to contain the spread of the pandemic, among other things. Since the third quarter of 2020, the overall health, social, and economic situation in West Africa has improved, even though there are still contrasting patterns between States. As data on the pandemic show, there has been an improvement in the health recovery rate, a slowing down in the rise of confirmed cases and an increase in the number of vaccine doses administered. Since the first months of 2021, the sub-region has seen a recovery of economic activity, linked particularly to the gradual lifting or suspension of internal restrictive measures. Moreover, a combination of other positive factors, such as the upturn in global demand for raw materials and access to vaccines, is contributing to this favourable development.

However, as presented in the report, the recovery of the regional economy still shows signs of fragility and remains insufficient to enable households to return to their pre-crisis level of nutrition and economic wellbeing. This report helps provide an understanding of the causes and overall socio-economic impact of the pandemic and its effects on the life of households, and identifies avenues for a lasting solution to the profound damage caused by the crisis.

The report also rightly highlights the need to make economies more resilient by diversifying their production bases and deepening structural reforms. The medium- and long-term economic stimulus plans proposed by States and ECOWAS to address the consequences of the pandemic respond to this context. They favour transformation of Member States' economies with a view to ending their heavy dependence on the international commodity market and strengthening socio-economic systems through greater diversification and modernization of economies. The report recommends that such plans should include increased financial support for the economy, especially for SMEs/SMLs, by mobilizing more domestic resources.

I welcome the publication of this report given the relevance of the findings presented and the quality of the partnership between the ECOWAS Commission and the partner institutions, in this case ECA and WFP. I have no doubt that it will be well received by the public, policy-makers and development partners alike. The analyses and recommendations it contains could help inform decision-making regarding measures to support the populations most affected by the crisis.

H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou

President of the ECOWAS Commission

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The monitoring report on the impacts of COVID-19 in West Africa is the product of a collaboration between the ECOWAS Commission, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through its Sub-Regional Office for West Africa.

It was prepared under the leadership of the ECOWAS Commissioners for Trade, Customs and Free Movement, Mr Tési Konzi, and for Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, Mr Sékou Sangaré, WFP Regional Director, Mr Chris Nikoi and Director of the ECA Sub-Regional Office for West Africa, Ms Ngone Diop.

The report was drafted under the supervision and technical coordination of Dr Simeon Koffi (ECOWAS), Ollou Sib (WFP) and Dr Amadou Diouf (ECA).

It includes contributions from Dr Babou Sogue (ECOWAS), Marie Ndiaye (WFP), Atsuvi Gamli (WFP), Mariam Katile (WFP), Abdoulaye Ndiaye (WFP), Idrissa Dabo (WFP) and Jerome Ouedraogo (ECA). The online survey component of the report was implemented under the technical coordination of WFP and supported by the WFP country office teams as well as the partners of ECOWAS and ECA.

Executive summary

This document analyses the evolution of the impact of COVID-19 in the ECOWAS zone. It helps provide an understanding of the overall socio-economic impact of the pandemic and its effects on the life of households, and identifies avenues for a lasting solution to the damage caused by the crisis.

As of 30 July 2021, the epidemiological situation of COVID-19 in West Africa stood at 513,946 confirmed cases and 6,710 deaths. The sub-region accounts for 10.6% of all confirmed cases in Africa, down from 13.6% in 2020.

The current context of the pandemic is characterized by the relaxation of social and preventive measures and the continuation of vaccination in the different ECOWAS countries. Indeed, 67% of the households surveyed say that the restrictive measures have been fully lifted. However, with the appearance of new variants, some countries have maintained certain measures such as extending the state of health emergency.

Economically and financially, the ECOWAS Member States have implemented actions to mobilize resources from the international community to support the most vulnerable populations and to promote economic recovery.

For instance, by July 2021, the West African Health Organization (WAHO), which is coordinating the regional health response to the pandemic in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and Member States, has mobilized nearly USD 38 million from the planned allocation, USD 8 million (or 21%) of which was mobilized internally by WAHO and at the ECOWAS Commission, while USD 30 million (or 79%) came from funding received externally and funding commitments from partners.

In response to Member States' request for targeted support for specific COVID-19 response efforts, WAHO has given approximately USD 1.109 million to 15 countries for identified areas of need, such as the deployment of rapid response teams and overseas medical personnel, staff training, or the purchase of equipment such as thermal cameras or intensive care unit equipment.

To support the most vulnerable populations, Member States have set up programmes for food distribution, money transfers and reducing electricity and water bills.

Moreover, the pandemic has negatively impacted hard-won gains in poverty reduction and inclusive growth. It is estimated that COVID-19 has increased the proportion of people living on less than USD 1.90 a day by 2.3% in 2020 and by 2.9% in 2021, leading to extreme poverty rates of 34.5% in 2020 and 34.4% in 2021 (AEO 2021 of the AfDB). The lockdowns in Africa have negatively impacted the sub-region's economy.

The recovery of the regional economy still shows signs of fragility and remains insufficient to enable households to return to their pre-crisis level of nutrition and economic wellbeing. Indeed, 62% of respondents indicate that their level of income is still low. The most affected socio-economic categories are households that depend on unstable and precarious sources of income, such as small-scale traders, street vendors and casual workers. Households that depend on remittances are also among the most heavily impacted by the effects of the pandemic. Indeed, the proportion of households surveyed that received remittances between 2020 (72%) and 2021 (54%) fell by around 20%, and the amounts received have also declined. Employees with regular income have been the least affected.

The agricultural sector continues to suffer from a shortage of agricultural labour, partly owing to the closure of land borders, which has been being relaxed since July 2021, but whose effects continue to disrupt supply chains for local agricultural products.

In addition to the pandemic, there has been a negative impact on conflicts related to households' livelihoods. In conflict-affected areas such as the Lake Chad Basin, the Liptako-Gourma region and the Sahel, households have even resorted to selling productive assets.

The loss of households' livelihoods has limited their access to food; indeed, the food security of households in the sub-region has significantly deteriorated. Nearly 25 million people are unable to meet their food needs, which is 34% higher than in 2020. The results of the March 2021 Cadre Harmonisé analysis showed that a high proportion of households have poor food consumption that lacks diversity. This is due to the low availability of food products coupled with higher prices due to the persistent impact of certain restrictive measures. This increase in food prices is the most perceptible impact of the crisis, affecting various staple products and thus affecting access to food.

The availability of food products is still low, although it has improved since last year. Indeed, there was a 20% increase in the availability of basic food items in the markets between July 2020 and 2021 in urban areas and a smaller increase (5%) in rural areas.

The education sector has not been spared the negative effects of the pandemic. In 2020, most schools in ECOWAS countries were closed in order to limit the spread of the virus. Currently, in 2021, the introduction of new preventative measures in schools, such as the installation of handwashing stations, physical distancing and wearing face masks, has facilitated the return of children to school.

In efforts to combat the spread of the pandemic, COVID-19 vaccines have been deployed in ECOWAS countries. In late July 2021, the proportion of the population vaccinated in Africa was 3.2% compared with 48.12% in Europe. Apart from Cabo Verde, which has a vaccination rate of 25.41%, the vaccination rate is low in most ECOWAS countries

(below 4%). The majority of respondents are reluctant to get vaccinated due to a lack of confidence in and information about the vaccine, which concerns 46% of respondents. The unavailability of vaccines, mentioned by 40% of respondents, also partly explains the low rate of vaccination in the sub-region.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had immediate health consequences through loss of human life and the psychological shock of infection/exposure, in addition to having a significant social impact on households. Roughly a year after the first cases of COVID-19 marked the beginning of an unprecedented pandemic, the situation in West Africa remains a matter of concern, with the number of active cases rising from 131,680 on 3 August 2020 to 513,946 on 31 July 2021, a four-fold increase in one year. Moreover, most of the restrictive measures that have been implemented to contain the pandemic, which have largely been eased, continue to have a negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the ECOWAS countries.

According to the assessment carried out last year in July 2020, jointly by ECOWAS, ECA, WFP and CERFAM, the lockdown measures, including restrictions on domestic travel, have led to difficulties accessing markets in urban and rural areas. Government actions in ECOWAS Member States, including the closure of workplaces, schools and markets, as well as restrictions on the movement of people, have had the greatest impact on households, reducing their livelihood options. This observation is confirmed by ECA's evaluation that one full month's lockdown across Africa would cost the continent about 2.5% of its annual GDP (USD 65 billion).

While the COVID-19 pandemic is having a marked impact in cities and towns, rural populations are significantly affected by disruptions in urban areas, undermining their ability to meet their food needs and other essential needs.

The results of the above-mentioned study also showed that restrictions on transport have affected the availability of staple foods, hygiene products and pharmaceuticals in rural areas. The supply chain in rural areas is longer for imported food products (for example, rice). At the same time, household food stocks have decreased considerably compared with last year. In contrast, in urban areas, stocks are larger and the supply chain is shorter, resulting in less disruption to the availability of staple food items.

The report also underlined that the impact of COVID-19 on household incomes is more severe for people who depend on unstable and precarious livelihoods and for informal workers (small-scale traders, street vendors, casual workers, etc.). With the loss of income, food has proven to be a major concern for most households in the sub-region.

In response to this situation that prevailed in 2020, ECOWAS States implemented national response plans that can be grouped into four main pillars: (i) health response, (ii) total or partial lockdown measures, (iii) resilience measures supported by social safety net programmes and economic and social recovery programmes, and (iv) strengthening regional and international cooperation.

With the new wave of infections in the second half of 2021 and adjustment of the responses of governments and partners to the changing needs of the most affected, ECOWAS, ECA and WFP have undertaken this assessment to update the information and knowledge from the first study. The methodological aspects of the survey are presented in Annex 1.

Objective of the study

This study presents the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in West Africa and its socio-economic impact on urban and rural populations, including implications in terms of food security, health and livelihoods. More specifically, the study assesses the perceptions and attitudes of people living in urban and rural areas.

The study consists of an analysis based on a household survey to directly assess the impact of COVID-19 on the populations. It is supplemented by an analysis of secondary data. Finally, it helps answer, among others, the following key questions:

- How have the governments and partners responded to COVID-19 to date? To what extent have formal and informal safety nets helped the population mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic?
- How have markets and livelihoods evolved since implementation of the restrictive measures?
- How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the agricultural season?
- How are the COVID-19 pandemic and the remaining containment measures affecting people's ability to meet their food needs?
- What changes have there been in remittances from abroad since last year?
- How are the education and health sectors being impacted by COVID-19?
- What are the main adjustments that need to be made to the response plans in place since last year?
- What is the population's perception of vaccination and willingness to get vaccinated?



I. Pandemic situation and general response measures

1.1 Epidemiological situation of COVID-19

As of 30 July 2021, the epidemiological situation in West Africa stood at 513,946 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and approximately 5.5 million tests performed. On the same date last year, there were 126,433 positive cases. Confirmed cases in the sub-region accounted for 10.6% of all cases in Africa in July 2021, down from 13.6% a year earlier. Despite this relative decline, however, the impact of the pandemic has increased from its 2020 level.

In addition, from a total of 116,174 deaths out of 4,869,789 confirmed cases in Africa, or 2,386 deaths per 100,000 recorded cases, the five regions of Africa can be ranked from lowest to highest deaths as follows: Central Africa is the least affected with 3,155 deaths, followed by West Africa with 6,710 deaths, then East Africa (16,920 deaths) and North Africa (54,320 deaths). Southern Africa has recorded the highest number of deaths, at 88,788 (African Union, Africa CDC, July 2021).

TABLE 1: SITUATION OF CONFIRMED CASES, RECOVERED CASES AND DEATHS FROM COVID-19

Region	Confirmed cases	Recovered / Active cases	Deaths	Mortality rate (%)
ECOWAS	513 946	507 236	6 710	1,3
Africa	4 869 789	4 753 615	116 174	2,4
World	197 350 473	193 142 773	4 207 700	2,1

Source: From the website <https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus-covid-19>

Moreover, as of 30 July 2021, the sub-region had 513,946 confirmed cases, with a mortality rate of 1.3%, compared with 2.4% and 2.1% for Africa and the world, respectively. The epidemiological situation of COVID-19 in the ECOWAS zone, Africa and the world alike has improved considerably compared with that recorded in the last months of 2020. Indeed, in October 2020, the West African sub-region recorded, on average, a recovery rate of 92.4%, compared with 82.1% and 74.7% respectively for Africa and the world. At that time, the mortality rate in the ECOWAS zone was 1.5%, compared with an average of 2.1% for Africa and 3.8% for the world.

1.2 General COVID-19 response measures

The current regional context of the COVID-19 pandemic is characterized by:

- continued consultation and dialogue at the regional level with a view to mitigating the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- easing social and preventive measures;
- full opening of air borders and progressive opening of land borders (Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Abidjan-Ouagadougou corridor underway);

- lifting of restrictions on inter-city travel; and
- accelerating vaccination against COVID-19.

As soon as the pandemic began, a regional response was adopted by the ECOWAS authorities to complement the specific urgent measures taken by individual States (see Annex A2). At the Extraordinary Summit, held on 23 April 2020, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government set up Ministerial Coordinating Committees on health, finance and transport to coordinate regional efforts to combat the pandemic, under the supervision of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who led the regional plan to combat COVID-19.

i). In line with the regional response implementation framework, the West African Health Organization (WAHO) is coordinating the regional health response to the pandemic, in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and Member States as well as partners including Africa CDC for implementation of this plan.

For instance, WAHO is working to mobilize internal and external resources to increase the availability of medical equipment and equipment required for prevention, surveillance and eradication of the pandemic. To date, almost USD 38 million has been mobilized from the

planned allocation of USD 51 million, USD 8 million (or 21%) of which has been mobilized internally by WAHO and the ECOWAS Commission, while USD 30 million (or 79%) has come from funding received externally and funding commitments from partners.

In response to Member States' request for targeted support for specific COVID-19 response efforts, so far WAHO has given approximately USD 1.109 million to 15 countries for identified areas of need, such as the deployment of rapid response teams and overseas medical personnel, staff training, or the purchase of equipment such as thermal cameras or intensive care unit equipment.

ii) Economically and financially, the measures taken by States concern different areas:

- a total of USD 14.37 billion has been mobilized by Member States through the issuance of Treasury bills and bonds on the financial market;
- concerning the mobilization of resources from the international community, USD 12.67 billion had been mobilized by the end of June 2020;
- with regard to support from Member States for the most vulnerable sectors of the respective countries, actions include the distribution of food, money transfers, and reducing electricity and water bills;
- in terms of support for local production, businesses have been granted tax rebates and deferred tax payments. Support funds have also been created and interest rate reduction measures have been implemented to support businesses;
- regarding the decision to negotiate external debt relief for ECOWAS Member States, UEMOA countries have been granted deferrals of the principal owed to the

West African Development Bank (WADB) for 2020. In addition, IMF debt relief has been granted to Member States in the category of least developed countries (LDCs).

In view of the economic conditions of the States and the actions already implemented, the finance ministers and central bank governors have made the following recommendations aimed at promoting recovery of their economies:

- implement uniform tariff relief measures for goods and products labelled as humanitarian products essential to the fight against COVID-19;
- adopt tax measures to assist traders and providers of transport services;
- establish a back-up system for essential products and humanitarian goods;
- develop a framework to assess the effectiveness of measures taken by Member States to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and stimulate economic recovery, in order to identify best practices to share;
- mobilize additional resources to support national and regional efforts to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19;
- develop an advocacy strategy for further debt relief within the framework of the African Union;
- implement procedures to digitize customs operations to promote harmonization and quicker processes;
- continue efforts to develop and improve programmes to support key economic sectors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Box 1: Example of resource mobilization by the sub-region

- UEMOA raises more than XOF 1,000 billion on the public securities market called "COVID-19 social bonds" to meet the financing needs;
- WADB authorizes XOF 196.6 billion of support to Member States in conjunction with the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO) and the UEMOA Commission;
- WADB approves new project funding for a total amount of XOF 158.1 billion;
- AfDB grants USD 856.35 million to ECOWAS member countries to combat the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The World Bank, IMF and European Union support the ECOWAS countries with USD 771.7 million, USD 6,449.2 million and USD 100.2 million respectively, to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

iii) In the area of humanitarian and social affairs, the ECOWAS Commission has undertaken various actions to provide rapid responses and humanitarian interventions to populations affected by COVID-19.

For example, to support States in assisting vulnerable people, it was decided, within the framework of the Regional Food Security Reserve, to allocate EUR 2.2 million to help vulnerable people in the context of COVID-19.

In addition, USD 1 million was mobilized from ECOWAS's Humanitarian Emergency Fund for the acquisition of a cereal stock. The acceptance and implementation of the "third-party payer" principle by ECOWAS and the EU has

made it possible to assist vulnerable people in Nigeria (3,999 mt of cereals), Niger (823 mt of food, including 473 mt of cereals and 350 mt of nutritional products in the process of being delivered), Burkina Faso (954 mt of cereals) and Mali (793 mt of cereals).

Finally, the extension until May 2021 of the regional project "Support with storage in West Africa" allowed approximately EUR 3.7 million to be reallocated for the purchase of cereals and fortified flour with a view to further contributing to the ECOWAS emergency plan and strengthening the total intervention capacity of the reserve of approximately 6,048 mt of cereals.

Box 2: Specific measures relating to agriculture and food security

Various regional initiatives to provide alerts regarding risks of "food crises" and increases in the number of vulnerable people:

Meeting of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food of the ECOWAS Member States on 30 March 2020, where resolutions were adopted to mitigate the impacts on access to food and risks of malnutrition, and to establish a regional emergency action plan to respond to the foreseeable impacts of the COVID-19 measures across five pillars:

- facilitation of access to agricultural inputs (so as not to jeopardize the agricultural season) and establishment of food security safety nets;

- increased intervention capacity of national food stocks and ECOWAS's Regional Food Security Reserve (see Supplementary Act A/SA.2/02/13);
- increase prevention, surveillance and control of crop pests (a locust threat at the same time as COVID-19);
- control of transboundary animal diseases (ongoing sheep and goat plague at the same time as COVID-19);
- food donations for the most vulnerable households (May to October 2020) from the RFSR and the Humanitarian Emergency Fund in Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Mali.

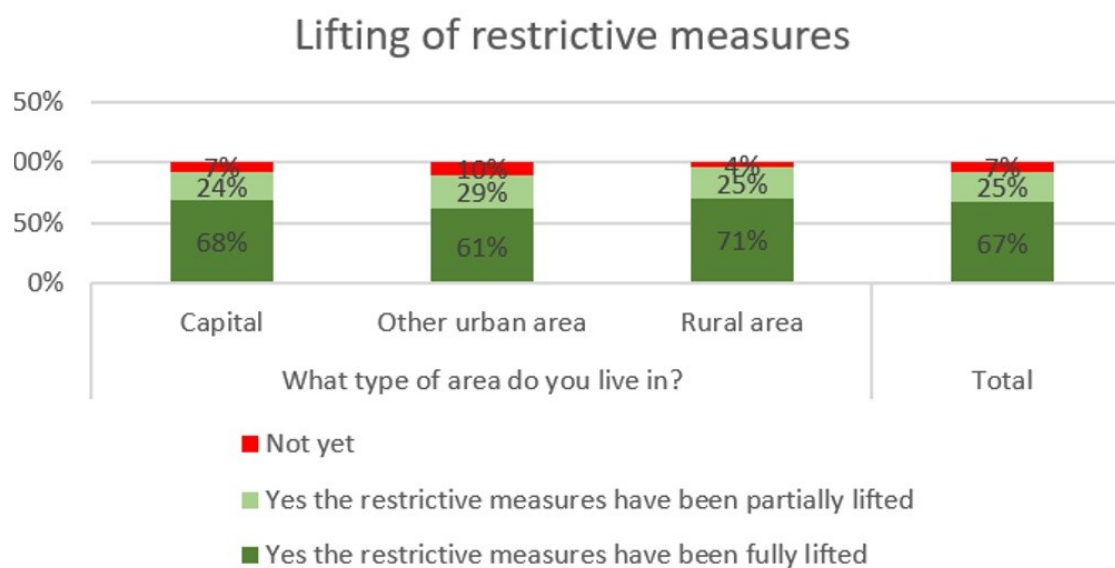
iv) The restrictive measures taken last year have been lifted in most countries.

Overall, 67% of the households surveyed say that the restrictive measures have been fully lifted. However, in the face of the new wave and the appearance of new variants, some countries are maintaining certain measures such as extending the state of health emergency. According to the households surveyed, a number of restrictive measures are still in force, particularly in urban areas. The closure of land

borders continues to affect the free movement of goods and people in the sub-region. This is impeding the reorganization of transport, increasing transaction costs and adversely affecting regional trade.

The persistence of restrictive measures could also lead to a rise in social tensions, as has been seen in some countries in the sub-region. It is important to remember that last year 28% of urban households felt that there was a risk of civil unrest if the lockdown measures continued.

FIGURE 1: UPDATE ON THE LIFTING OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

A more comprehensive and effective response is also being implemented within the framework of a global partnership involving the United Nations system and the international financial institutions. In this regard, the initiative to strengthen access to immunization should be

noted, particularly the AVAT initiative¹, reinforcing the COVAX initiative, and the issuance of special drawing rights by the IMF to enable countries, including those of West Africa, to have access to additional financial resources.

¹ AVAT (African Vaccine Acquisition Trust) was established at the initiative of the African Union in November 2020 in its efforts to vaccinate at least 60% of the African population based on a pan-African approach. It is being implemented by the African Union's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the World Bank. In September 2021, 11 of the 15 West African countries received batches of vaccines within the framework of AVAT.

II. Overall socio-economic impact of the pandemic

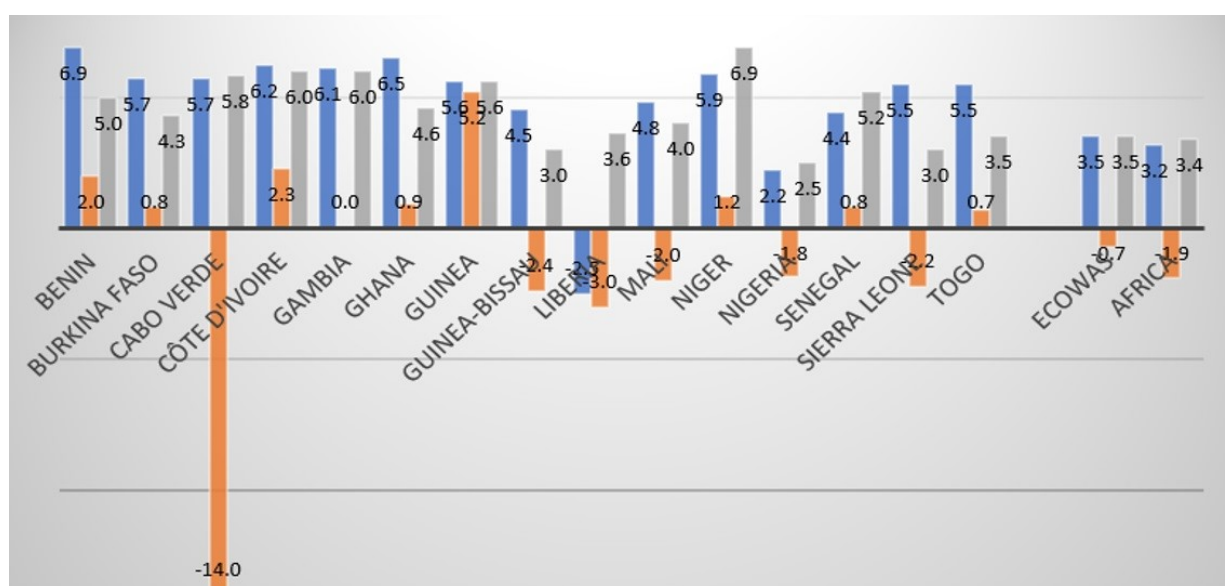
The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted economic activities throughout the world, including in West Africa and other sub-regions of Africa. It is important to understand its impact on the main macroeconomic variables in order to evaluate the risks related to achieving the 2030 SDGs and Agenda 2063. This analysis updates the assessments undertaken in the first edition of the joint ECOWAS-WFP-ECA report. It is fed by various sources and publications, including those related to ECA's COVID-19 response², the African Economic Outlook 2021 of the African Development Bank (AEO 2021 of the AfDB) and the IMF Regional Economic Outlook 2021 for Sub-Saharan Africa³. The developments are presented in the context of an analysis of the pandemic's macroeconomic and social implications, before providing policy recommendations to better orient post-crisis recovery plans to ensure greater

resilience of economies and accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs. The second part of this section analyses the main findings of the assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the life of households in West Africa.

2.1 Economic performance in West Africa in the time of COVID-19

According to the IMF's April 2021 report on Sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa's real GDP growth fell to 0.7% in 2020, from 3.5% in 2019, due to the worst global recession in over a century due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The shock was felt most deeply in six of the 15 countries in the sub-region, in Cabo Verde, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Mali and Nigeria (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH IN WEST AFRICA, 2019-2021



Source: ECA/SRO-WA based on IMF data, Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2021

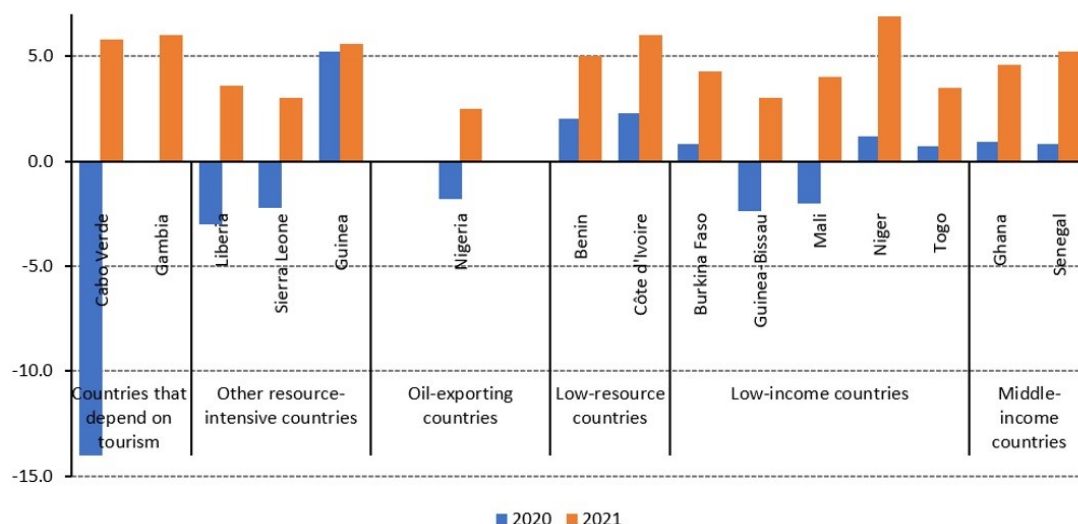
The outlook for 2021 is favourable with positive projections, given that a strong economic rebound is expected. Despite projections of V-shaped growth in 2021, the accumulation of cases of COVID-19, the high weight of debt, low resource mobilization due to the downturn in economic activity and increased government spending to cover health expenditure linked to the pandemic and social protection, limited capital due to financial market volatility, low commodity prices, and the negative impact on services such as tourism and transport, are major risk factors for recovery.

The countries that have suffered the most fall into three main groups: those that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 infections, those that depend on commodity exports and those that depend on tourism (ECA report titled Building Forward for an African Green Recovery, 2021). Different countries' economic structures and income classifications could help explain variations in growth performance between them (Figure 3).

2. <https://www.uneca.org/eca-covid-19-response/publications>

3. IMF Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa (April 2021).

FIGURE 3: GROWTH PERFORMANCE BY ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND INCOME CLASSIFICATION (%)



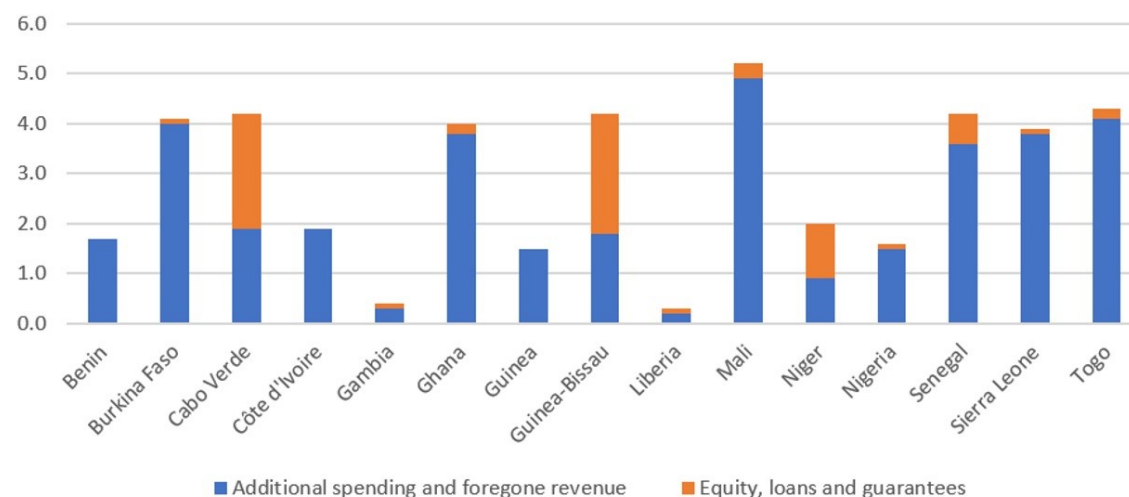
Source: ECA/SRO-WA based on IMF data, Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2021

Variations in growth performance across the sub-region. This figure reflects the economic and structural characteristics inherent in the sub-regions, including income level classification. The data show that economies that are dependent on tourism were the hardest hit, experiencing the largest decline in growth at -11.5% in 2020, including Cabo Verde (-14.0%) and Gambia (0.0%). Resource-intensive economies follow with a -4.7% drop due to lower metal and mineral prices, given the weakness of external demand, which affects Liberia (-3.0%) and Sierra Leone (-2.2%), with the exception of Guinea (which recorded the highest growth rate, 5.2%, thanks to the resilience of its mining sector). Oil-exporting economies rank third, with a 1.5% decline, owing to a collapse in demand for oil and the subsequent drop in oil prices, which led to a recession in Nigeria (-1.8%) where almost 90% of tax revenue and exports depend on this product. The growth of low-resource economies was impacted least,

with a 0.9% contraction, due to their relatively more diversified economic structures and significant past public investment. That is the case in Benin (2%) and Côte d'Ivoire (2.3%). In terms of income classification, the smallest contraction was recorded for low-income countries (0.0%), compared with -3.5% for middle-income countries; this is partly due to more targeted and less stringent restrictive measures.

Growing budget deficit. Fiscal deficit expressed as a percentage of GDP increased in the sub-region in 2020, mainly as a result of additional stimulus spending, insufficient revenue, a shrinking tax base due to economic contraction, and a reduction in imports and exports. The tax measures implemented by countries have mainly consisted of unbudgeted fiscal support through investments in health systems, expansion of social protection programmes and support to the private sector (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: ABOVE-THE-LINE AND LIQUIDITY SUPPORT MEASURES, 2020 (%)

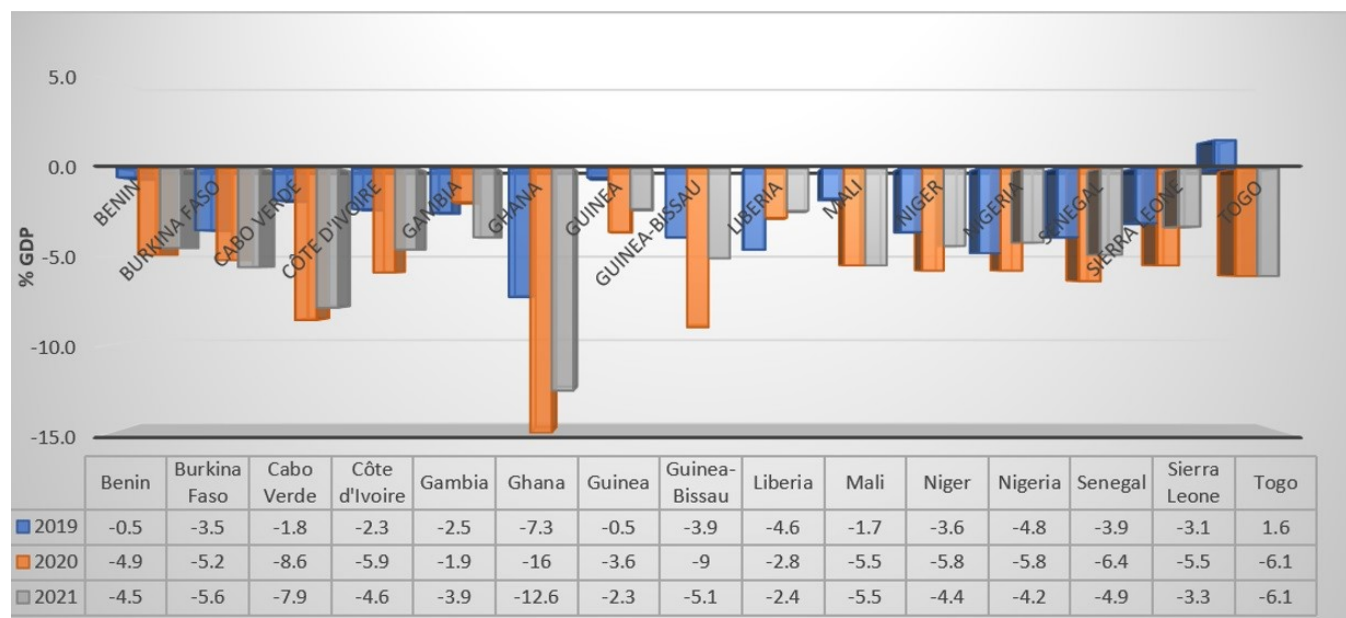


Source: ECA/SRO-WA based on AfDB data, African Economic Outlook 2021

The average level of fiscal stimulus used by countries was around 3% of GDP, ranging from less than 1% to a maximum of 32% depending on the country⁴. This has generated an increase in the financing needs of governments, and African finance ministers have called for a USD 100 billion injection of foreign aid each year for the

next three years to cover the financing deficit of more than USD 345 billion identified by the IMF⁵. Figure 5 shows a widening of the overall deficit in all West African countries (led by Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde) in 2020, which will persist in 2021 as governments will need to continue spending on healthcare and economic resilience.

FIGURE 5: OVERALL BUDGET BALANCE, INCLUDING DONATIONS (AS % OF GDP)



Source: ECA/SRO-WA based on IMF data, Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2021.

Rising debt levels. The increase in debt levels and the debt-service burden (more than 20% of tax revenue in many countries such as Ghana, 12.3%; Guinea-Bissau, 10.2%; Mali, 14.5%; and Togo, 17.3% according to World Bank data for 2019) constricted the fiscal space available for most countries. Recent debt accumulation is mainly due to exchange rate depreciation, an increase in interest

expenses and high primary deficits. It is important to point out that all West African countries are now classed as moderate- or high-debt countries (Table 2), even though 13 of the 15 ECOWAS countries (with the exception of Nigeria and Cabo Verde) have already benefitted from the HIPC initiative⁶ and multilateral debt relief initiative of the IMF and the World Bank.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW OF THE RISK OF EXTERNAL DEBT DISTRESS OF WEST AFRICAN STATES AND DEBT/GDP RATIOS (IN 2021)

Moderate debt distress	Debt/GDP ratio (%) ⁷	High debt distress	Debt/GDP ratio (%)
Benin	47,7	Cabo Verde	137,6
Burkina Faso	46,8	Gambia	73,9
Côte d'Ivoire	46,3	Ghana	81,5
Guinea	42,3	Guinea-Bissau	78,1
Liberia	57,0	Sierra Leone	70,4
Mali	46,1		
Niger	44,5		
Nigeria	31,9		
Senegal	66,8		
Togo	60,0		

Source: ECA/SRO-WA based on the ECA's Building Forward report, 2021, and IMF data, Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, April 2021.

4 AEO 2021 of the AfDB.

5 ECA Building Forward report, 2021.

6 www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/hipc

7 IMF estimate (April 2021), Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Many countries have high debt and of the 73 countries eligible for the G20 debt service suspension initiative 12 are in West Africa. This will enable the countries to access new financial resources that are essential for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total potential saving of USD 1,316.1 million (from May 2020 to December 2021) has been estimated for the West African countries participating in this initiative⁸.

In addition, the estimated USD 650 billion Special Drawing Rights (SDR) issuance initiative, which provides specific allocations to West African countries, will help ease funding constraints and support essential economic stimulus programmes. Those measures could ease debt pressure and the need for new resources, especially for most West African countries that are experiencing a difficult macroeconomic situation while simultaneously trying to build more resilient economies.

2.2 Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the life of households

Rising human toll

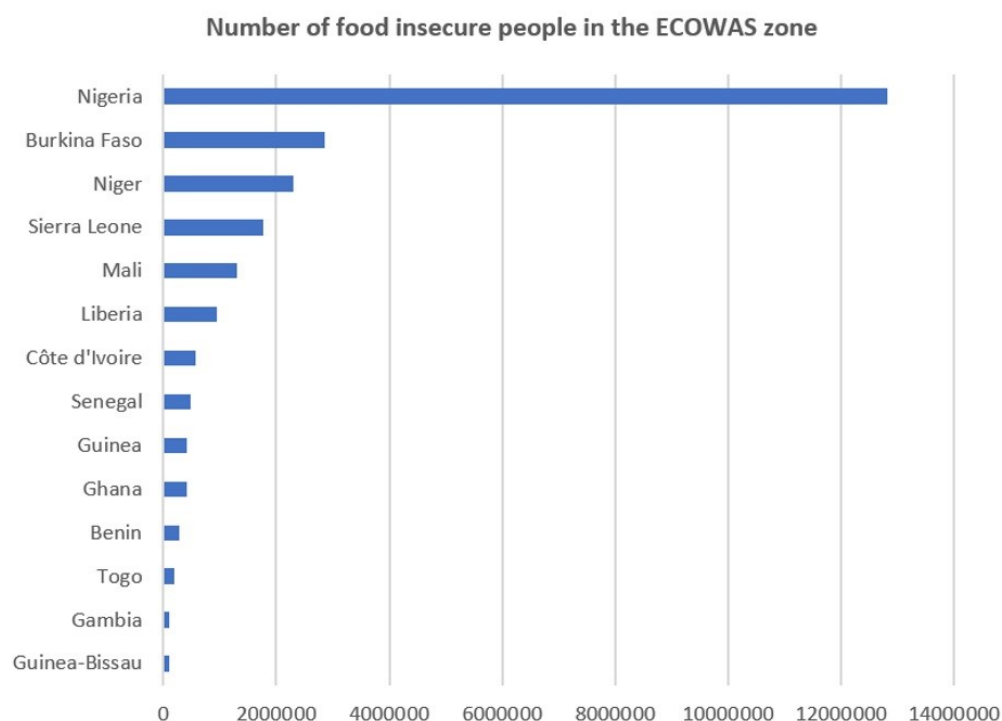
In addition to the toll on human lives, the pandemic has significantly undermined the hard-won gains in poverty

reduction and inclusive growth. It is estimated that COVID-19 has increased the proportion of people living on less than USD 1.90 a day by 2.3% in 2020 and by 2.9% in 2021, leading to extreme poverty rates of 34.5% in 2020 and 34.4% in 2021 (AEO 2021 of the AfDB). The economic cost of the lockdowns across Africa is another negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. ECA estimates that one full month's lockdown across Africa would cost the continent about 2.5% of its annual GDP (USD 65 billion), while the businesses surveyed by ECA said they are only operating at 43% of their capacity and only 70% of slum dwellers in another survey reported skipping meals or eating less because of COVID-19.

Worrying food and nutrition situation

The food and nutrition situation has deteriorated considerably as a result of a combination of various factors, including conflicts between livestock farmers and crop farmers, terrorism and violent extremism, climate change and especially the restrictions related to COVID-19. The sub-region is experiencing an unprecedented food crisis. Nearly 25 million people are unable to meet their food needs, which is 34% higher than in 2020⁹. More than half of these people are in Nigeria (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: FOOD INSECURE POPULATION IN THE ECOWAS ZONE¹⁰ - PROJECTED SITUATION - JUNE-AUGUST 2021, CILSS, CADRE HARMONISÉ



8. World Bank, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative>, accessed September 2021.

9. Final Results of the CILSS Cadre Harmonisé, April 2021.

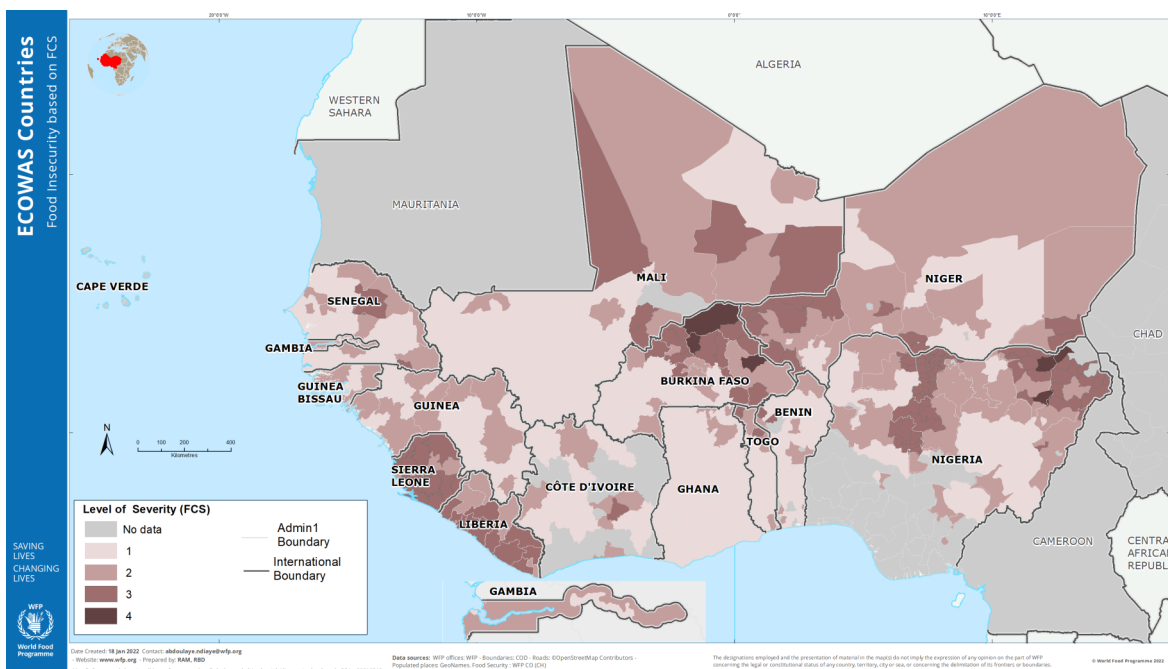
10. Data not available for Cabo Verde.

The map below shows the food consumption of households in the sub-region as measured by the food consumption score. This score is a 'proxy' indicator of food security developed by the World Food Programme that relates to certain nutritional characteristics of the food consumed. The map clearly shows that a high proportion of households have an undiversified diet; they are in the highest severity categories (3 and 4). This poor and undiversified food consumption is explained by the decline in the availability of food products by location coupled with the increase in prices due to the persistence of the effects

of the restrictive measures. The level of severity of food consumption is particularly high in conflict zones, such as Central Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, as well as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where inflation is high. This critical food situation is compounded by the overlaying of several shocks, including the security and health crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the projections for food consumption are mapped below.

MAP 1: SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE



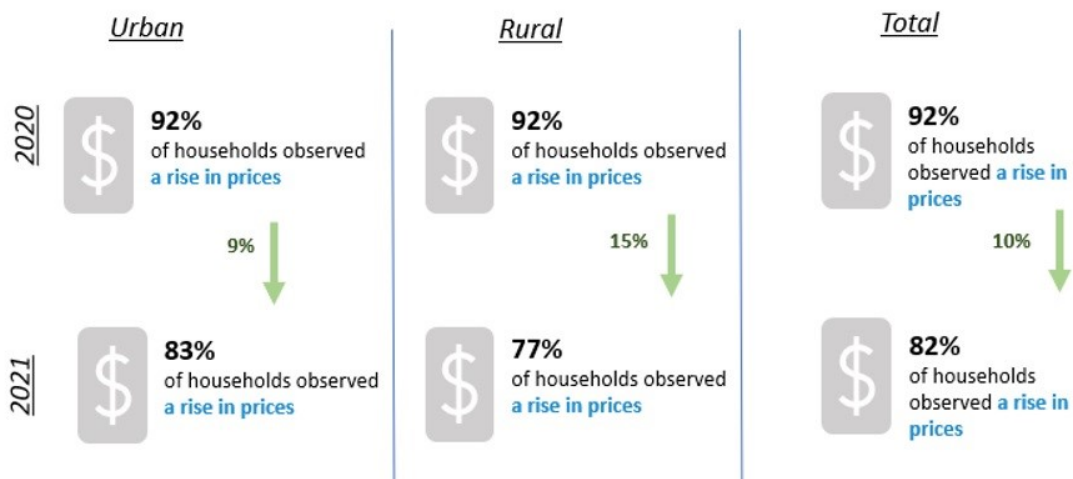
Source: Cadre Harmonisé, March 2021, projected situation, Food Consumption (FC)

Rising food prices and persistent disruption of supply chains.

The most noticeable impact of the COVID-19 crisis on households is the rise in food prices. Despite the improvement in supply in 2021, prices remain high. Most

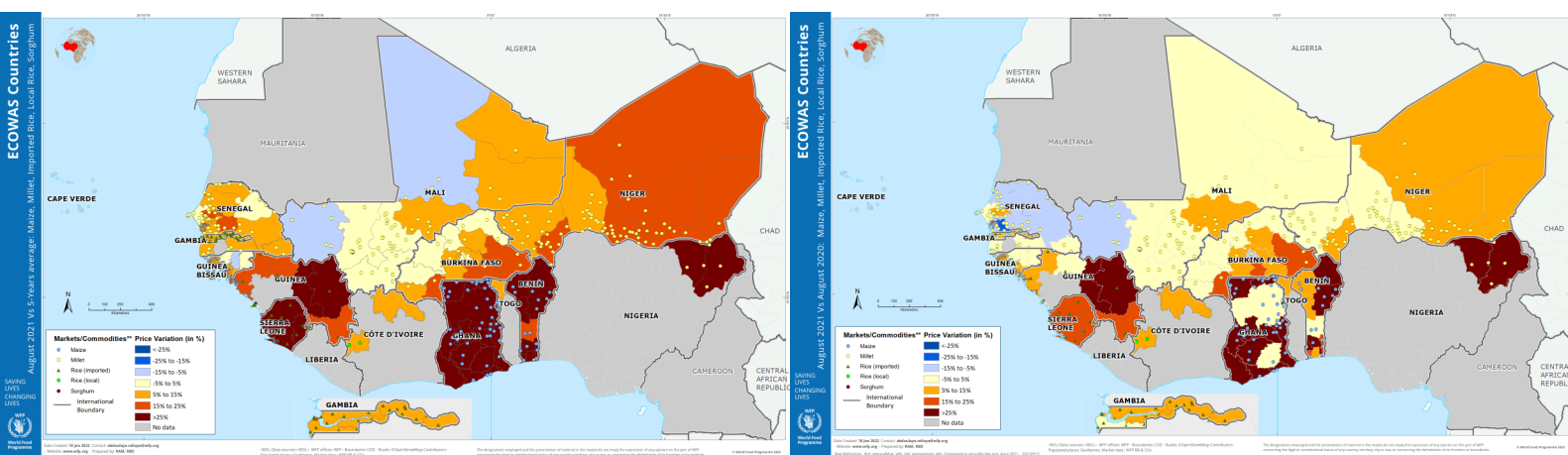
households report continued price increases in 2021, especially in urban areas where this factor was indicated by 83% of respondents, compared with 77% in rural areas. Nonetheless, these proportions have decreased since 2020 (9% and 15% lower, respectively).

FIGURE 7: CHANGE IN PRICES OF FOOD PRODUCTS IN 2020 AND 2021



Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

MAPS 2: COMPARISON OF AUGUST PRICES WITH THE FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE AND THE ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR 2020



The market monitoring system established by the countries, sometimes with technical assistance from WFP, confirms the upward trend in the prices of basic food products. Compared with the annual average for 2020, increases of more than 25% were recorded in August 2021 in several countries of the sub-region and for different staple food products. The price of maize more than doubled in Ghana in terms of annual variation (reaching +196% in the Volta Region). Nigeria, Togo, Benin and Guinea are also seeing increases of between 25% and 90%. Disruptions in trade flows related to COVID-19 have added to a poor agricultural season. Compared with the five-year average, the price increases observed since the end of last year have persisted. These increases are the result of a combination of several factors and are affecting food security for populations in bimodal areas where the first

season was affected by significant dry spells and the second season by flooding.

These persistent price increases show that food availability has remained low, even though it has risen from last year. Indeed, Table 4, which compares the level of availability of basic food products in markets in July 2020 and 2021, shows an increase of 20% in their availability in urban areas and a smaller increase (5%) in rural areas. Moreover, compared with last year, the availability of fresh food products in markets has improved. This improvement has been particularly felt in urban areas, where 76% of households reported that fresh products are still available, which is 26% more than last year. In rural areas, this increase is only 10%.

Availability of basic food products

TABLE 4: AVAILABILITY OF BASIC FOOD PRODUCTS

	Urban		Rural	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Always available	82%	62%	46%	41%
Sometimes available	15%	33%	46%	45%
No change	1%	2%	5%	6%
Rarely or never available	0%	2%	1%	4%
I don't know	1%	2%	2%	4%

Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

Availability of fresh food products

TABLE 5: AVAILABILITY OF FRESH FOOD PRODUCTS

	Urban		Rural	
	2021	2020	2021	2020
Always available	76%	50%	41%	31%
Sometimes available	20%	43%	45%	58%
No change	2%	2%	10%	7%
Rarely or never available	1%	2%	2%	3%
I don't know	1%	3%	2%	1%

Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

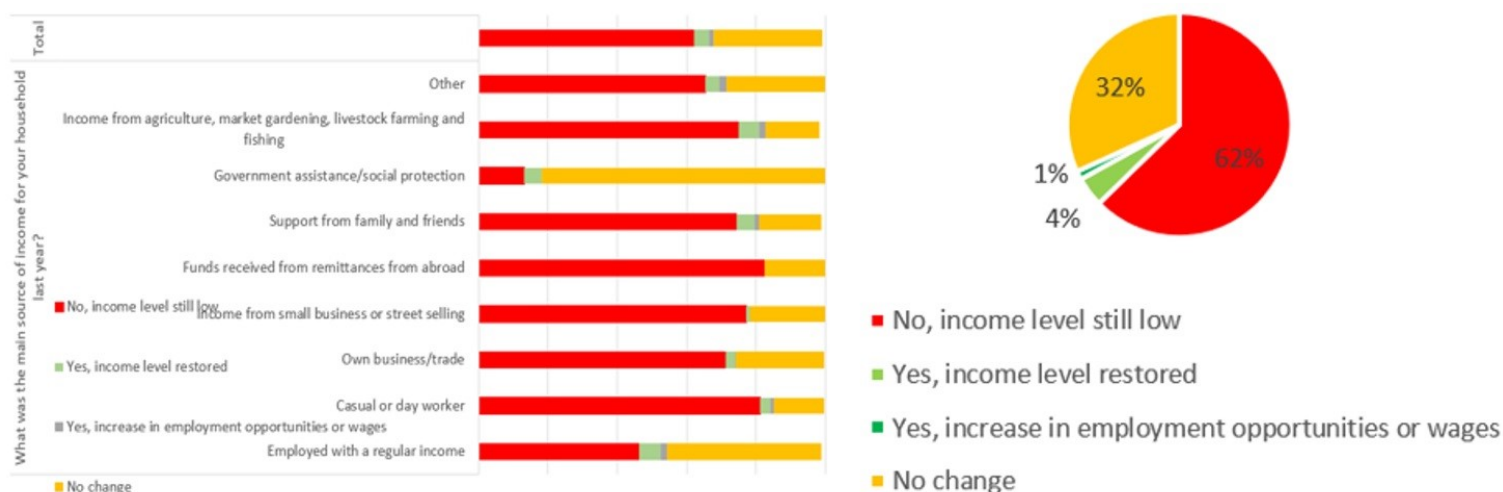
Loss of livelihoods

The household survey covered various groups of socio-economic actors, such as crop farmers, casual workers, traders, employees, etc. The results of the survey show that despite the lifting of restrictions, income levels have not improved among these various categories. 62% of respondents indicate that their income level is still low. The households most severely affected have unstable and precarious sources of income, such as small-scale traders, street vendors and casual workers. Indeed, people working

in the informal economy have, for the most part, lost their only source of income due to the reduction in employment opportunities as a result of the Covid-19 prevention measures.

Employees with regular income have been the least affected. Overall, only a very small proportion of households (1%) reported having returned to their pre-pandemic income or having new employment opportunities.

FIGURE 8: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOUSEHOLDS' MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME



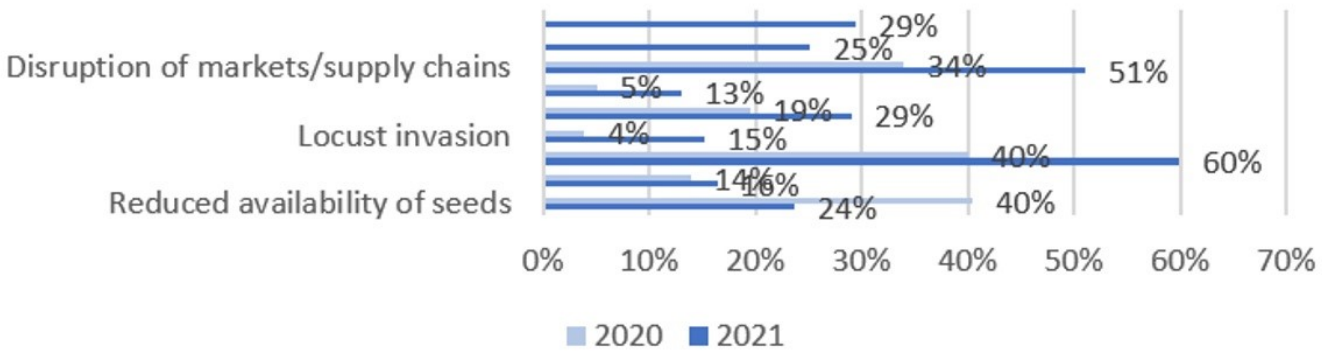
Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

Disruption of agricultural production

The agricultural sector continues to suffer from a shortage of agricultural labour, partly due to the closure of land borders. It is important to note that seasonal and/or permanent migration of agricultural labour at the regional level plays a major role in the production system of the sub-region. Furthermore, the closure of land borders

continues to disrupt supply chains for local agricultural products, even though those closures have started to be relaxed since July 2021. In addition, the price increases accompanied by a reduction in demand (29% of respondents versus 19% in 2020) is definitely continuing to disrupt markets and supply chains (51% of respondents in 2021 versus 34% in 2020).

FIGURE 9: MAIN CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING THE AGRICULTURAL SEASON



Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

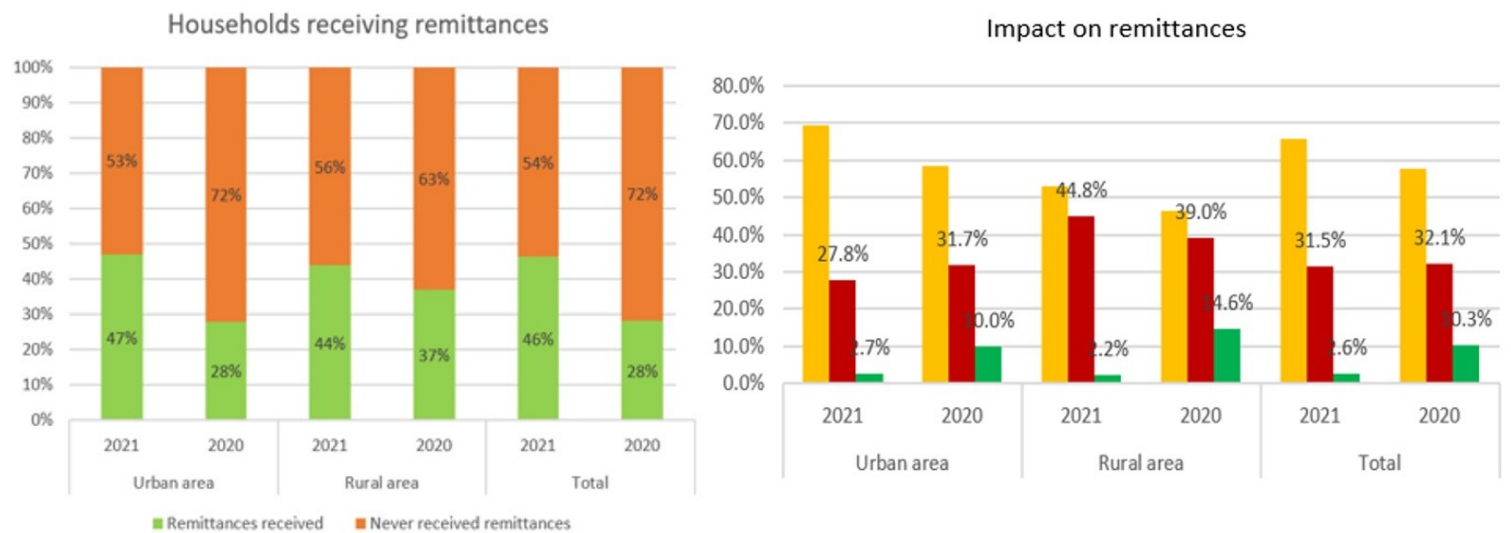
Decline in remittances

Households that depend on remittances have been the most heavily impacted by the effects of the pandemic. The impact on remittances is two-fold.

Firstly, the proportion of households surveyed that received remittances between 2020 (72%) and 2021 (54%) fell by about 20%. Both urban and rural areas have been

affected by the decline in remittances. Secondly, the amount of funds received has declined. Indeed, 10% of respondents had received more funds in 2020, compared with only 3% in 2021. Rural households have felt this drop in remittances more acutely. Some of the main reasons for this are loss of employment and loss of income in urban areas where most remittance senders are based.

FIGURE 10: IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON REMITTANCES



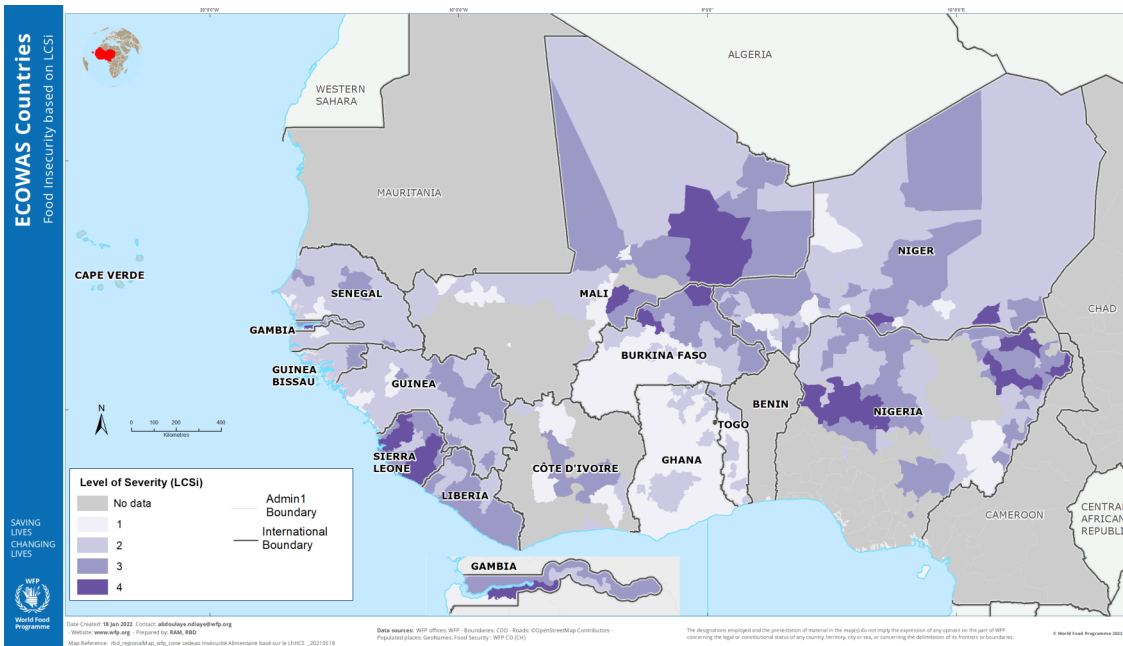
Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

Change in livelihoods

To cope with the loss of their livelihoods, households in the sub-region have resorted to survival strategies that are sometimes severe. As shown in Map 3 below, a significant proportion of households resorted to severe coping strategies in all countries of the sub-region, reflecting the increased difficulty in accessing food and greater reliance

on precarious and unstable sources of income. In addition to COVID-19, the map also highlights the negative impact of conflicts on households' livelihoods. In areas affected by security conflicts, like the Lake Chad Basin, the Liptako-Gourma region, northern Nigeria and the Sahel, households have resorted to more severe coping strategies such as selling productive assets.

MAP 3: SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHANGE IN LIVELIHOODS



Source: Cadre Harmonisé, March 2021, projected situation, Change in livelihoods (EME)

Return to school

In 2020, children's education was interrupted in most ECOWAS countries. The closure of schools, which was one of the main steps taken by governments to limit the spread of the virus, had completely disrupted the school system.

In 2021, children (girls and boys alike) returned to school in all countries. This was facilitated by the introduction of new preventative measures in schools, such as the installation of handwashing stations, physical distancing, the wearing of face masks and taking children's temperature, which were integrated into school life.

FIGURE 11: RETURN OF CHILDREN TO SCHOOL SINCE THE RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON CLASSES



■ Yes, girls and boys ■ Yes, only girls ■ Yes, only boys ■ Schools are still closed

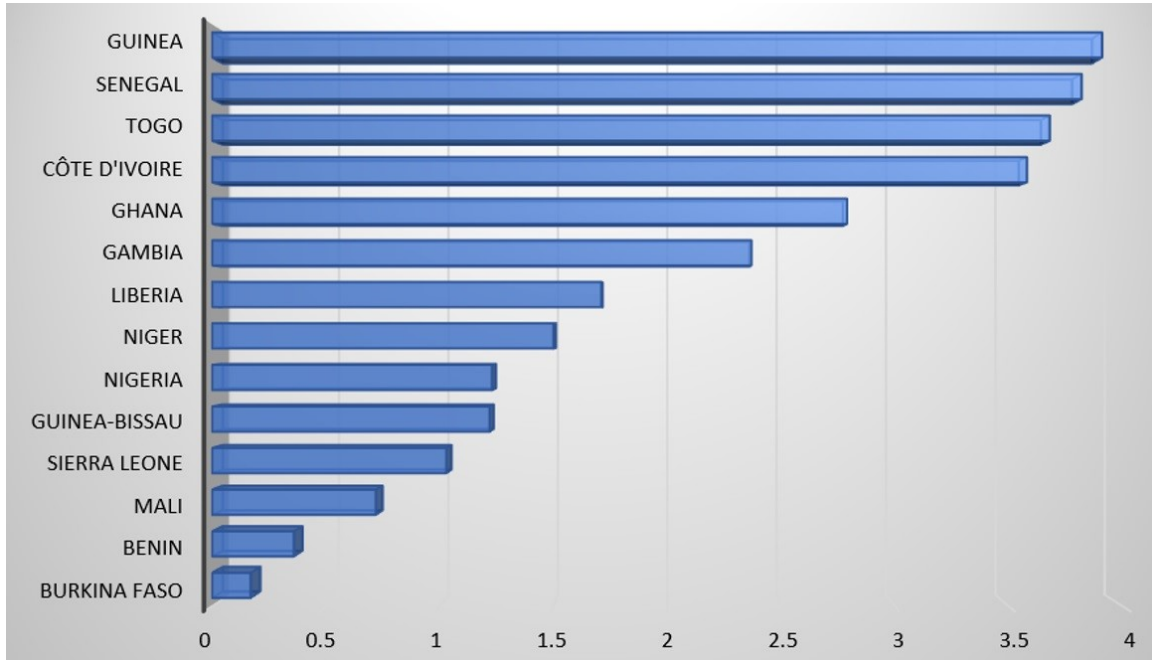
Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

2.3 Status of vaccination in the sub-region

The data available at the end of July 2021 show that 3.21% of the population of Africa had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine compared with 48.12% in Europe¹¹.

The populations of most ECOWAS countries have poor access to vaccination. With the exception of Cabo Verde (25.41%), the vaccination rate ranges from a minimum of 0.17% in Burkina Faso to a maximum of 3.91% in Guinea (see Annex 2).

FIGURE 12: PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION THAT HAS RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE DOSE OF COVID-19 VACCINE (%)



Source: Based on data from www.ourworldindata.org, 29 July 2021

NB: Cabo Verde (25.41%).

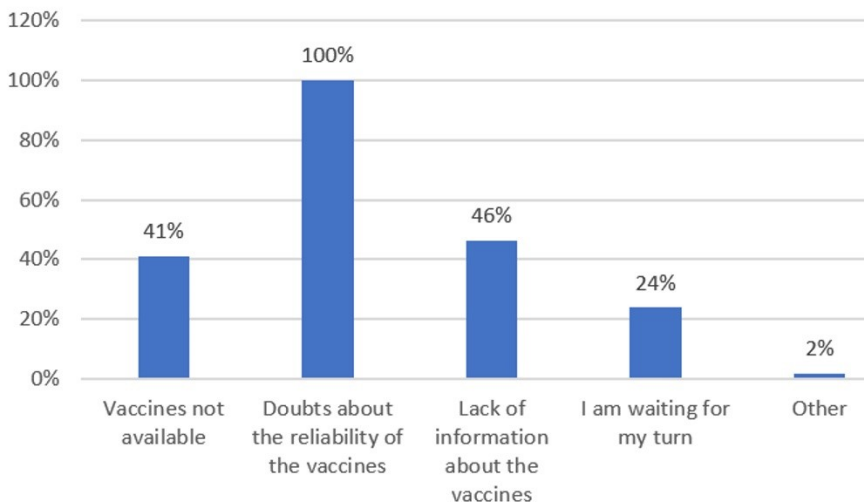
Doubts expressed by households about vaccination

The survey gathered households' perceptions of vaccination. The results explain the low level of vaccination in West Africa compared with other regions of the world. Indeed, it emerged that the vast majority of respondents are reluctant to get vaccinated because they have doubts about the reliability of the proposed vaccines. Lack of

information (46%) and unavailability of vaccines (41%) are also mentioned among the main barriers to vaccination.

The slow rollout of vaccines in West Africa also partly explains the low vaccination rate in the sub-region. This situation is corroborated by the survey, where 40% of respondents mentioned unavailability of vaccines.

FIGURE 13: HOUSEHOLD PERCEPTION OF COVID-19 VACCINES



Source: ECOWAS Commission/analysis of the survey data, July-August 2021

11. <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>

Conclusion

The pandemic continues to be a reality in West Africa. However, the response measures taken by States and regional institutions, as well as the vaccination campaign, point to a favourable outlook. The relative improvement in the health situation has led to the gradual lifting of the restrictions taken at the start of the crisis in 2020, as confirmed by the ECOWAS household survey, even though successive waves and new variants are generating fears that some of those measures could be reintroduced.

It would appear that in general the lifting of those measures has not had immediate, substantial effects in terms of improving the socio-economic conditions of households in the sub-region. The following data reveal the scale of the crisis and its impact on the living conditions of households in 2021:

- nearly 25 million people, almost one in 16 West Africans, are affected by food insecurity, an increase of 34% compared with 2020;
- 62% of households surveyed indicate that their level of income is still low;
- a persistent rise in food prices, of more than 25%, is

recorded in several countries in the sub-region and for different food items, which is severely affecting access to food;

- the agricultural sector is suffering from the disruption of supply chains, which is hindering the availability of products in the market;
- the shortage of agricultural labour, which is partly due to the closure of land borders, continues to undermine agricultural recovery in the sub-region.

The total lifting of the restrictive measures, which is essential for the recovery of the entire economy of the sub-region, would require the effective implementation of mass vaccination programmes, among other things. For now, the sub-region has a low vaccination rate, as a consequence of low vaccine availability and some people's reluctance to get vaccinated. In relation to the latter, it would appear that doubts persist among the population about the reliability of the proposed vaccines and due to a lack of information about them (46%).

In view of this sometimes unfavourable state of affairs, the recommendations below are made.

Recommendations

In a context still marked by uncertainty about whether the pandemic will soon come to an end or be brought under control, and with recovery being necessary to preserve the chances of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, ECOWAS and its Member States should:

1. Health measures:

- continue enforcing measures relating to social distancing, wearing face masks and handwashing, maintaining constant surveillance;
- consolidate the mobilization of efforts at the national and regional levels to significantly increase the availability of vaccines and strengthen the population's adherence to COVID vaccination by stepping up information and awareness campaigns;
- continue to support the health sector by providing adequate resources to consolidate the progress made in the fight against the pandemic;
- continue routine public health campaigns, such as immunization of children against polio and measles, treatment of malaria, maternity care and treatment of other chronic diseases, which must not be interrupted

due to excessive attention being diverted to the COVID-19 pandemic;

2. Financial and economic measures:

- continue providing financial support to the economy, particularly SMEs/SMLs, to aid economic recovery;
- continue to mobilize internal and external resources to finance economic stimulus plans; international support in the form of donations and concessional loans should be strengthened, particularly within the framework of the IMF and World Bank Debt Service Suspension Initiatives (DSSI) and the issuance of special drawing rights by the IMF;

3. Social measures:

- tackle the recurring problem of rising poverty by establishing social safety nets and capacity-building strategies, particularly for women and young people, and promoting income-generating activities;
- consolidate health and financial support measures to ensure the normal functioning of schools;

- reduce the cost and expand the scope of social protection programmes by providing, if necessary, in-kind aid such as free food banks, medical supplies and facilitated access to housing¹² ;

4. Sustainable development measures:

- step up active labour market policies to reskill the workforce, particularly in terms of retraining and requalification efforts to enable workers to move from old, low-productivity sectors and jobs to new and emerging sectors and jobs, especially in relation to the digital economy and digital finance, whose importance for economic survival has been highlighted by the pandemic. Therefore, it is necessary to speed up structural transformation through digitalization, industrialization and diversification. To make

economies more resilient, countries must deepen structural reforms and diversify their production bases.

- take advantage of the continuing expansion of the digital economy to increase efficiency and explore new opportunities for economic growth (e-commerce, fintech, etc.).

The above recommendations can be summarized through the prism of the ECA's R3 roadmap, which calls for moving from the response stage to the recovery stage, then the reset stage. The roadmap sets out the strategic critical path for providing short-term liquidity to countries, managing insolvency if necessary, and laying the groundwork for future actions that will help achieve the 2030 SDGs and support Agenda 2063.

12. <https://www.uneca.org/stories/digitization-an-opportunity-to-propel-african-economies-even-as-covid-19-rages>



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Annex 1: Methodology

This survey covered the 15 ECOWAS countries, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

It employed a combination of approaches to answer the research questions, including a thorough review of the literature, analysis of secondary data using WFP data, and remote surveys via the internet in all the ECOWAS countries.

Given the difficulty of simultaneously deploying survey teams to collect data from households in the 15 ECOWAS countries, the infection risks linked to the pandemic in the field and the resource constraints to conduct this kind of exercise, the technical teams of WFP, ECOWAS and ECA explored alternative data collection methods, such as online surveys. Online surveys are used to gauge people's opinions and understand their perceptions about a given subject. This type of survey makes it possible to cover a large geographical area in a short time and at a lower cost. It does not necessarily target a representative sample but aims to mobilize a large number of participants in order to gather a variety of information and opinions related to the specific topic. This technology was successfully used last year in the first cycle of the study with a good level of participation throughout the sub-region.

Regarding data collection tools, the household questionnaire originally developed for the first survey was updated and adapted to the new objectives of the study. It was translated into the three languages officially spoken in the sub-region (English, French and Portuguese). The questionnaire is structured around the demographic characteristics of the respondent's household, restrictive measures, impact on markets and livelihoods, coping strategies and people's perception of the vaccines. This questionnaire was developed on the "ArcGIS Survey123" platform, which made it possible to generate a link accessible through web forms using all types of devices (telephones, computers, etc.).

Different channels were used to promote the survey, including:

- invitation by email via the networks of institutions working in the humanitarian field;
- dissemination on websites and public forums;
- sharing in social networks (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.);
- sharing via SMS through mobile network operators.

This dissemination was accompanied by broad communication to promote the survey in order to obtain a sufficient number of participants.

The data was collected between 1 June and 19 July 2021 and 3,533 households took part.

Annex 2: Vaccination situation by country

TABLE 6: VACCINATION SITUATION BY COUNTRY

Countries	Quantity of vaccines supplied	Vaccines administered	Coverage rate	Administration rate	Start of the vaccination
Benin	649 400	57 976	2,68%	8,93%	29/03/2021
Burkina Faso	115 200	34 749	0,28%	30,16%	02/06/2021
Cabo Verde	211 050	152 937	17,59%	72,46%	18/03/2021
Côte d'Ivoire	1 123 420	902 092	2,13%	80,30%	01/03/2021
Gambia	202 200	43 557	4,21%	21,54%	12/03/2021
Ghana	1 331 000	1 271 393	2,14%	95,52%	01/03/2021
Guinea	985 460	799 884	3,76%	81,17%	31/12/2020
Guinea-Bissau	60 800	25 872	1,52%	42,55%	02/04/2021
Liberia	398 400	95 423	3,91%	23,95%	01/04/2021
Mali	396 000	196 862	0,98%	49,71%	31/03/2021
Niger	931 400	401 133	1,92%	43,07%	29/03/2021
Nigeria	3 940 000	3 938 945	0,96%	99,97%	05/03/2021
Senegal	1 459 000	889 854	4,37%	60,99%	23/02/2021
Sierra Leone	324 125	139 684	0,00%	43,10%	15/03/2021
Togo	576 620	454 208	3,47%	78,77%	10/03/2021
CEDEAO	12 704 075	9 404 569	3,09%	74,03%	31/12/2020

Source: Data from the website <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>

Annex 3: Overview of specific measures by ECOWAS Member State

TABLE 7: OVERVIEW OF SPECIFIC MEASURES BY ECOWAS MEMBER STATE

Countries	Response measures
Benin	Adoption of a response plan for 2020 at a cost of XOF 150 billion (1.7% of GDP).
Burkina Faso	Adoption of a COVID-19 response plan at a cost of XOF 394 billion (USD 658,495,000) representing 4.45% of GDP to implement all the measures to tackle the COVID-19 crisis. This amount includes the health response plan, which accounts for approximately XOF 178 billion (USD 297,493,000).
Cabo Verde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the 2020 budget to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. • Support to the private sector, including loan guarantees and tax obligation facilities, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * loan guarantees of up to 50% for large businesses; * up to 80% for businesses in the tourism and transport sectors; * up to 100% for small and medium-sized businesses. • Support estimated at CVE 2.2 billion for the most vulnerable.
Côte d'Ivoire	Adoption of a XOF 95 billion 880 million (USD 161,618,000) health response plan to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the government prepared an Economic, Social and Humanitarian Support Plan worth XOF 700 billion (USD 2,865,570), or about 5% of GDP, to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the population and economic actors in the formal and informal sectors. The Plan is divided into three main areas: (i) measures to support business, (ii) measures to support the economy and (iii) measures to support the population.
Gambia	USD 9 million COVID-19 Action Plan.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHC 11.2 billion to address the pandemic and its social and economic consequences in 2020. • Reduction of spending on goods and services, transfers and capital investments totalling at least GHC 1.1 billion. • Drawing of USD 218 million from the Stabilization Fund and borrowing up to GHC 10 billion from the Bank of Ghana.
Guinea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of an economic response plan of more than GNF 3,000 billion. • Facilitation of imports. • Approval of EUR 25 million for food distribution for the most vulnerable. • Reduction of the central bank's intervention rate to support the financing of the economy.
Guinea-Bissau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social measures to support the most vulnerable households: • mass distribution of grains and livestock fodder to the poorest households, • the provision of electricity and water free of charge to the poorest consumers, • tax relief (customs duties on imports of staple foods such as rice and milk).
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of a national food security and nutrition emergency plan to stimulate local production of staple food crops. • Measures to alleviate the liquidity constraints of businesses in difficulty. • Tax deferral and relief, particularly for the hospitality sector. • Implementation of a USD 30 million food distribution plan.
Mali	Response plan valued at 18.4% of GDP, including measures for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distribution of food and two months of free public utilities (water, electricity) for vulnerable households, • temporary tax relief for hard-hit sectors.

- Niger**
- XOF 597 billion COVID-19 Pandemic Response Plan targeting 2.7 million vulnerable people.
 - Increase of XOF 156.18 billion in the initial budget to combat COVID-19, a 6.89% increase.
 - Increase of XOF 343 billion in the support plan for vulnerable people.
- Revised 2020 budget, including a COVID-19 intervention fund equivalent to 3.1% of GDP to:
- Nigeria**
- support the incomes of vulnerable people;
 - conditional cash transfers;
 - allocation of NGN 150 billion to meet the spending needs of States and local authorities;
 - NGN 2.3 billion recovery plan to finance labour-intensive projects (agriculture, roads and housing);
 - Etc.
- In April 2020, the government launched the Economic and Social Resilience Programme to support many sectors of the economy with a budget of XOF one trillion (USD 1.67 billion). The main aims of the programme are:
- Senegal**
- XOF 69 billion (USD 115 million) to strengthen the social resilience of the population;
 - maintain financial and macroeconomic stability to assist the private sector and maintain employment;
 - maintain the country's supply of fuel, food, medical supplies and pharmaceutical products.
- Sierra Leone**
- Local food production for the COVID-19 emergency response and assistance to farmers to produce rice.
 - Reduction of the monetary policy rate from 16.5% to 15%.
 - Creation of an SLL 500 billion special credit facility to support the production, purchase and distribution of essential goods.
 - Extension of the minimum reserve maintenance period from 15 to 28 days to ease liquidity.
- Togo**
- Establishment of a national solidarity fund, including contributions from the State budget, development partners and voluntary donations from the Togolese private sector and diaspora.

Acronyms

AEO	African Economic Outlook
AfDB	African Development Bank
AVAT	African Vaccine Acquisition Trust
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CERFAM	Centre of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (Comité permanent Inter-États de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel)
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
CVE	Cape Verdean Escudo
DSSI	Debt Service Suspension Initiative
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECA/SRO-WA ECA	Sub-Regional Office for West Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EME	Change in livelihoods (Évolution des Moyens d'Existence)
EU	European Union
FC	Food consumption
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHC	Ghanaian Cedi
HIPC	Heavily indebted poor countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDCs	Least developed countries
RFSR	Regional Food Security Reserve
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDRs	Special drawing rights
SLL	Sierra Leonean leone
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SMI	Small and medium industries
SMS	Short Message Service
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
USD	United States dollar
WADB	West African Development Bank
WAHO	West African Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
XOF	Franc of the Financial Community of Africa

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- Map 1: Spatial distribution of the food consumption score
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For further information, please contact :

Management of Communication, ECOWAS Commission

Tel.: +234 8102507938 - Email: soulate@ecowas.int

Twitter: [@ecowas_cedeao](https://twitter.com/ecowas_cedeao) - Facebook: [Ecowas-Cedeao](https://www.facebook.com/Ecowas-Cedeao)

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