

# Caribbean Food Security & Livelihoods Survey

## Natural Hazards and the Cost of Living Crisis

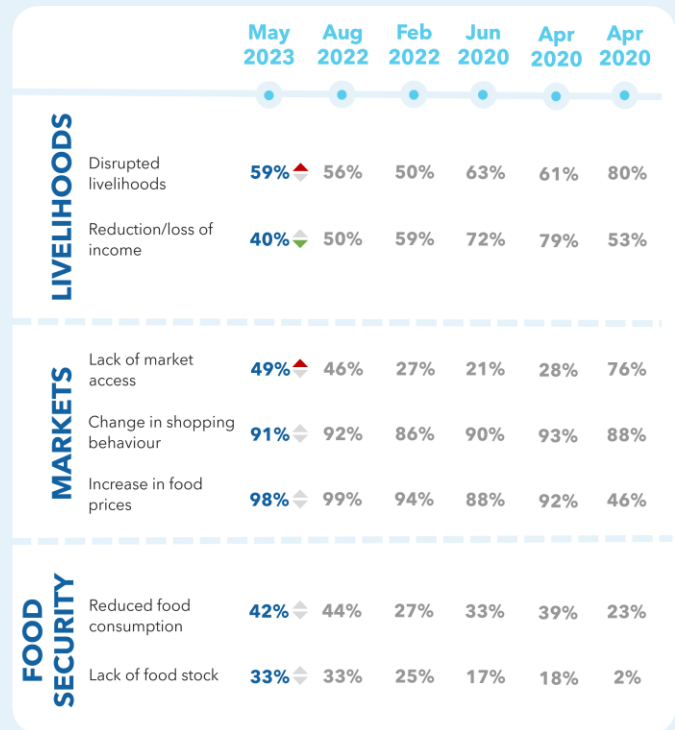
### SAINT LUCIA | August 2023

Successive shocks and crises over the last few years continue to reverberate on the food security and livelihoods of people in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The pandemic and the cost of living crisis have severely affected peoples' purchasing power where more people are forced to make difficult compromises to meet their food and other essential needs. These trends are exacerbated by the ever-present threat of natural hazards in the region, which could be devastating for those already living in poverty and a tipping point for those on the margins.

To inform decision-making in the Caribbean, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the World Food Programme (WFP) launched the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey to highlight the impact of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the effect of natural hazards on food security and livelihoods over time.

This report analyses data for Saint Lucia from the sixth round of data collection, which took place from 10 to 28 May 2023. It compares findings with five previous survey rounds conducted between April 2020 and August 2022.

#### Main results from the Saint Lucia surveys



**May 2023**

**938**

Respondents

74% | 26%

Female | Male

**Aug 2022**

**599**

Respondents

72% | 28%

Female | Male

**Feb 2022**

**322**

Respondents

74% | 26%

Female | Male

**Feb 2021**

**165**

Respondents

83% | 17%

Female | Male

**Jun 2020**

**301**

Respondents

78% | 22%

Female | Male

**Apr 2020**

**244**

Respondents

72% | 28%

Female | Male



## Cost of living crisis

Saint Lucia relies heavily on food imports, which make up 96 percent of all food trade (excluding fish; FAOSTAT, 2021). This means that local food prices are highly vulnerable to fluctuations in regional and global food markets. According to FAO's Food Price Index, global food prices have decreased by 23.5 percent as of May 2023 since the all-time high in March 2022. However, food inflation remains high in Saint Lucia (food prices increased by over 7 percent in December 2022 compared to 2021). Due to this, essential food purchases are becoming unaffordable for many in Saint Lucia.

Almost all respondents from Saint Lucia continue to report significant price increases in food, gas and housing. However, compared to August 2022 a slightly smaller proportion noted significant increases in electricity, other fuels and transport.



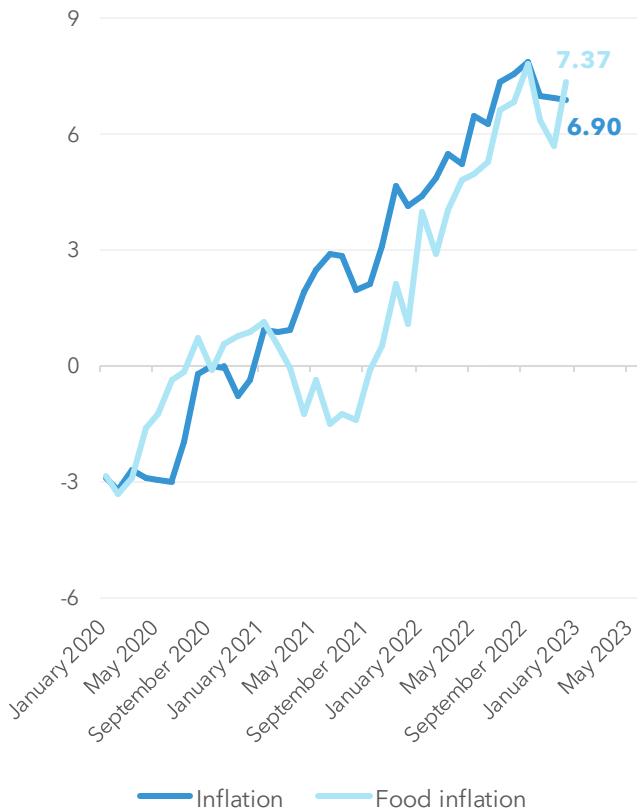
## Natural hazards

Saint Lucia is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards which pose a significant threat for climate sensitive livelihood activities and people's lives. Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) shows that there were 18 reported natural hazards in Saint Lucia between 1980 - 2022. A large portion of these were storms (12 out of 18), followed by floods (three) and drought, earthquake and landslide (one each).

Recorded events between 1980-2022 accumulatively affected over 317,000 people in Saint Lucia, with reported total adjusted damages of over US\$417 million. Hurricanes resulted in 100% of reported damages. These storm events have the propensity to cause widespread impact potentially leading to loss of life, displacement of households, and destruction of critical infrastructure.

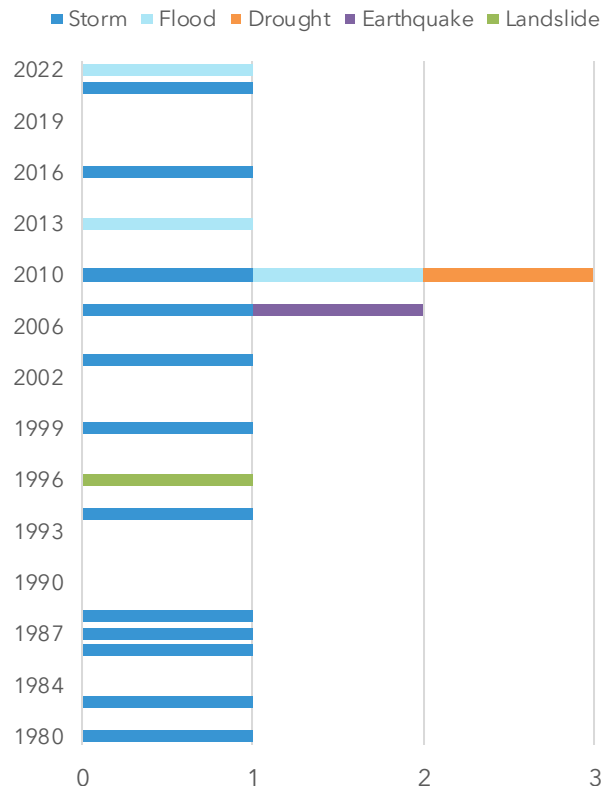
**Inflation in Saint Lucia (Jan 2020 - Dec 2022; %)**

Point-to-point inflation rates.  
Source: FAOSTAT and IMF



**Reported natural hazards in Saint Lucia (1980-2022)**

Source: EM-DAT





## Livelihoods

**The cost of living crisis continues to impact people's livelihoods in Saint Lucia.** Disruptions continue to affect livelihoods in Saint Lucia with 59 percent of respondents facing disruptions in the 30 days prior to the survey. Unaffordability of livelihood inputs remains to be the main driver cited by 68 percent of those affected by disruptions.

**Loss of income and jobs has decreased since the all-time high in April 2020,** with 40 percent of respondents reporting that their household has experienced job loss or reduced salaries in 6 months prior to the survey. However, the proportion of those having to resort to secondary or alternative source of income has been steadily increasing since June 2020, suggesting the continuation of economic hardship.



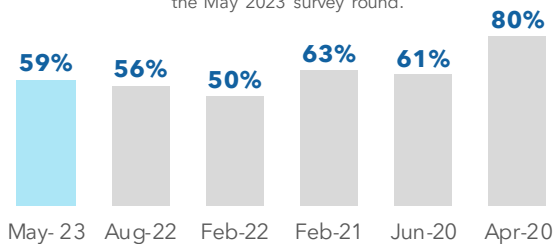
## Markets

**Nearly half of respondents reported challenges accessing markets** in the week prior to the survey, which represents the greatest deterioration since February 2023. Lack of financial means continues to be overwhelmingly reported as the main reason for limited market access, cited by 95 percent of those unable to access markets. Respondents are changing their shopping behaviour by increasingly buying cheaper and less preferred foods (74 percent) and purchasing smaller quantities than usual (65 percent).

**Prices of food and non-food items are on the rise.** Changes in food prices are being observed by respondents with 98 percent reporting an increase in the 3 months prior to the survey. The most significant price increases in non-food items have been observed for gas (59 percent reported a significant increase) and housing (52 percent reported a significant increase).

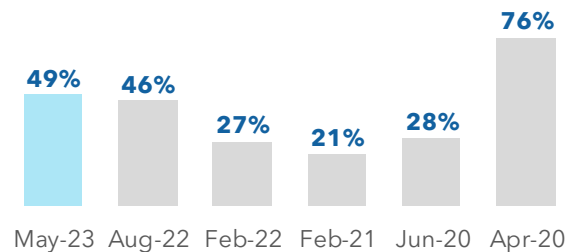
### Respondents reporting that their ability to carry out livelihood activities was affected in the 30 days prior to the survey

Recall period changed from 2 weeks to 30 days in the May 2023 survey round.



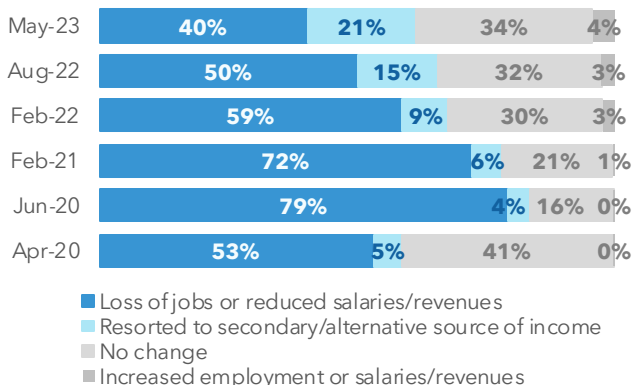
### Respondents unable to access markets in the 30 days prior to the survey

Recall period was changed from 7 to 30 days in May 2023.

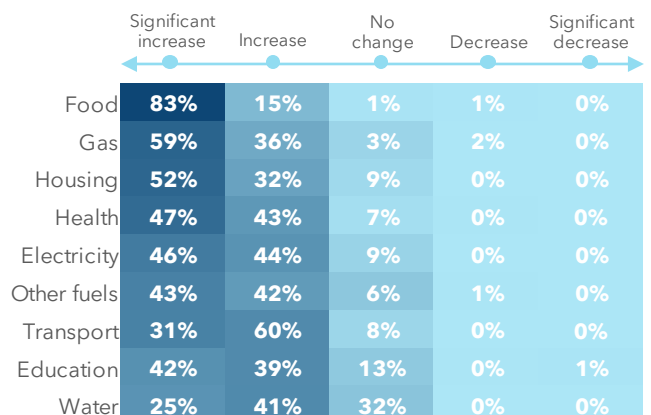


### Has your household income changed in the 6 months prior to the survey?

Recall period changed from "since COVID19" to "in the 6 months prior to the survey" in May 2023 survey round



### Respondents reporting a change in the costs of the commodities in the 3 months prior to the survey





## Food consumption

**Food consumption patterns continue to be alarming**, with 73 percent of respondents skipping meals, eating less preferred foods, or going an entire day without eating in the week leading up to the survey. These results are similar to August 2022 (77 percent).

**Respondents are trying to meet their immediate food needs by employing negative coping strategies.** Respondents in Saint Lucia are compromising their future livelihoods by selling productive assets (29 percent), spending savings (78 percent) or reducing expenditures on health and education (62 percent).

**A third of respondents have no food stocks at home.** In May 2023, 41 percent reported having less than a week's worth of food supplies. This is the same as the results from August 2022.

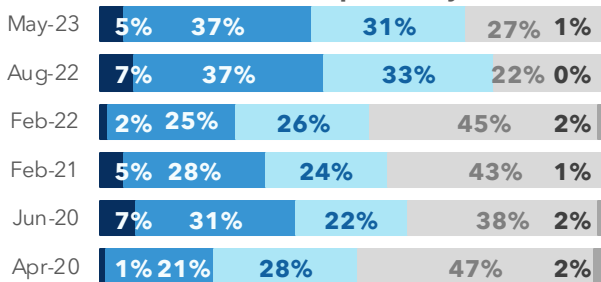


## Food insecurity

**Using the FIES methodology it is estimated that one quarter of the respondents in Saint Lucia are severely food insecure.** Additionally, 39 percent of respondents are moderately food insecure. When compared to the previous survey rounds, the food security is deteriorating. Furthermore, the prevalence of moderately food insecurity is slightly higher in Saint Lucia compared to the Caribbean average.

The negative experience most often reported by respondents in Saint Lucia was "eating only a few kinds of food" (72 percent), followed by being "unable to eat healthy and nutritious food" (63 percent). Alarming, 37 percent of respondents skipped meals or ate less than usual in the 30 days prior to the survey. Respondents describing their household income as well below average were the most affected across all individual negative food related experiences.

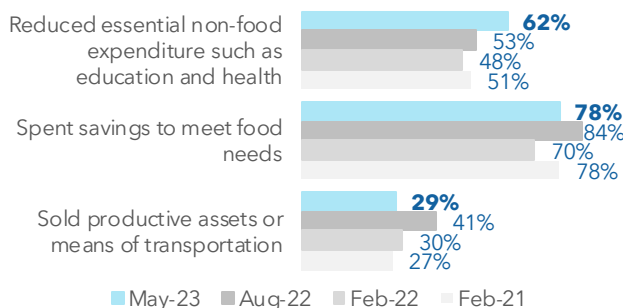
### Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?



- I went one whole day without eating
- I skipped meals or ate less than usual
- I ate less preferred foods
- I had no difficulties eating enough
- I increased my food intake

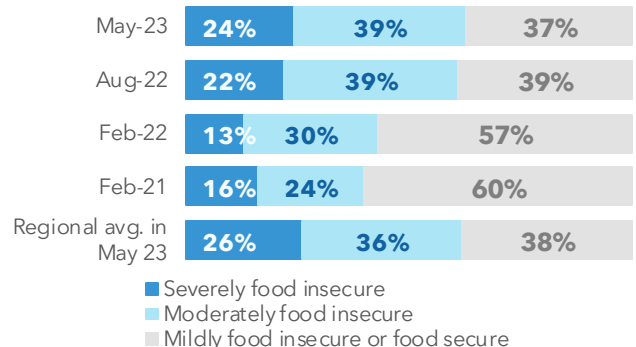
### Households' coping strategies

Multiple choices could be selected. New answer option added in May 2023- "already carried out and cannot continue to do so" in addition to "yes", both are interpreted as if the strategy has been carried out.



### Prevalence rates of food insecurity for St Lucia

Based on FIES methodology.



- Severely food insecure
- Moderately food insecure
- Mildly food insecure or food secure

"Due to insufficient salary to purchase food I had to cut down on the number of meals eaten for the day to one or two. I can't afford to eat healthy due to the pricing of items which is affecting my health." - Female, 34

"I'm never one to blame government for our hardships even though they contribute to it generally but I've had to sell my phone, television, etc to be able to purchase food for our household and my daughter." - Male, 25

"Not enough money to buy food, visit the doctor, pay for medication, and pay bills. To help with the food situation I try to plant a kitchen garden." - Female, 44



## Resilience capacity

**The occurrence of a wide range of natural hazards in Saint Lucia has significant impacts on people and their livelihoods**, with 33 percent of respondents reporting that their household was affected by natural hazard(s) in the 12 months prior to the survey. The main reported hazards were heatwaves (15 percent) and floods (10 percent). Of respondents affected by natural hazards over the last year, 48 percent reported moderate and 14 percent reported severe impacts on their livelihoods or income.

**The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) indicator was used to measure respondents' perception of their resilience to natural hazards.** The method uses nine statements and respondents rate their level of agreement with each, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These generate a score that acts as a marker of overall subjective resilience.

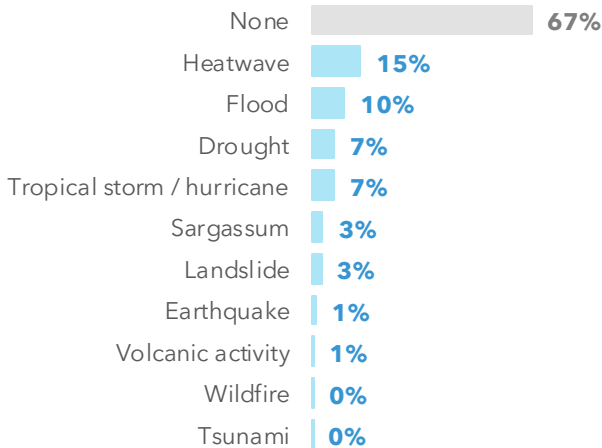
**Looking at the Resilience Capacity Score (RCS), 30 percent of respondents have low capacity to cope with, recover from and adapt to natural hazards.**

Only 6 percent of respondents are highly resilient, while 64 percent of the respondents have medium resilience capacity. Women, lower income groups and younger respondents have the lowest overall resilience capacity.

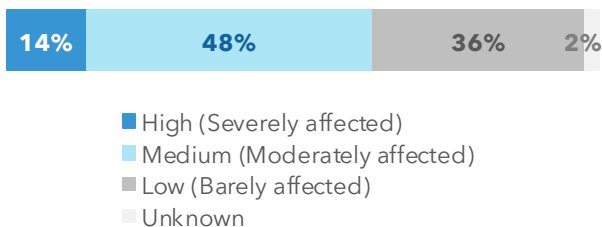
**Out of the nine resilience characteristics, respondents scored the worst on the financial (i.e. access to financial support) and institutional capital (i.e. support from government or other institutions).** On the other hand, respondents feel that they are better equipped with human capital, in that they learned lessons from past hardships, and information capital by having access to early warning information to deal with natural disasters.

### Natural hazards that affected respondents in the 12 months prior to the survey

Multiple choices could be selected.

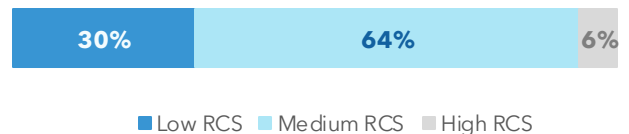


### Level of impact on livelihoods or income for respondents that were affected by natural hazard(s)



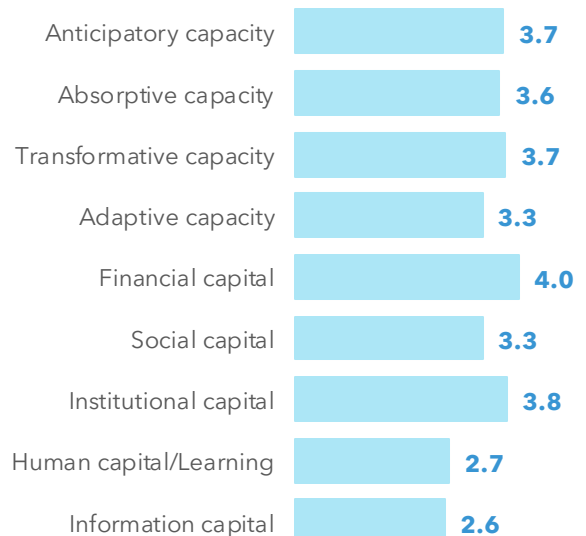
### Overall resilience capacity

Resilience Capacity Score (RCS)



### Average score for the nine resilience capacity characteristics

Scores range from 1 (high resilience capacity) to 5 (low resilience capacity). Higher score means lower resilience capacity.





## Worries and sentiments

**Inability to meet essential needs (48 percent) and illness (36 percent) are the top concerns among respondents in Saint Lucia**, followed by unemployment (35 percent), decreasing savings (33 percent) and inability to cover food needs (31 percent).

**Four percent of respondents have received assistance from the government** in the year prior to the survey compared to 12 percent in August 2022.

**Nearly two thirds of respondents expressed negative or very negative sentiments.** Respondents were given the space to provide more nuanced insights on how they are coping and adapting. Out of the 599 respondents in Saint Lucia, 254 responded to the open-ended question. Responses were analysed with Chat GPT to categorize and determine the degree of positive and negative emotions.



## Main differences

**Differences were most pronounced when comparing income levels.** Households that reported below and well below average incomes show the poorest results on all key metrics of well-being and are at risk of further falling behind economically. Correspondingly, those with lower level of education and those relying on informal labour also performed worse across all key metrics.

The results suggest that younger respondents face greater challenges compared to older respondents. Single parent and mixed households were also more affected than other households. Differences between male and female respondents are less obvious across most of the metrics, however women are on average less resilient and worry more about being able to cover household's essential needs compared to men. Key figures showing differences are included below.

### Main worries expressed by respondents

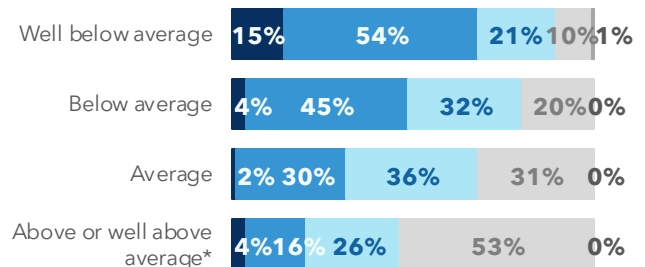
Multiple choices could be selected. Answer options were adjusted in May 2023, adding new options and removing Covid-19 related options that are now displayed as "Other worries".

	May-23	Aug-22	Feb-22	Feb-21	Jun-20
Inability to cover essential needs	48%	48%	31%	37%	45%
Illness	36%	34%	46%	65%	46%
Unemployment/Income loss	35%	44%	38%	52%	63%
Decreasing savings	33%	27%	18%	16%	21%
Inability to cover food needs	31%	44%	24%	25%	37%
Inability to receive or repay loans	15%				
Violence/crime in the community	13%	15%	13%	8%	8%
Child/dependent care	12%	14%	14%	14%	15%
Natural hazards	12%				
Inadequate infrastructure	6%				
Inadequate housing	5%				
Disruption of public services (edu., health)	2%	7%	19%	13%	9%
Other worries	2%	14%	35%	27%	0%
Violence/abuse in the household	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
No access to services due to migration status	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%

### Which statement best reflects your food situation over the past 7 days?

#### By perceived income level

\*Low response numbers in this category may affect results.

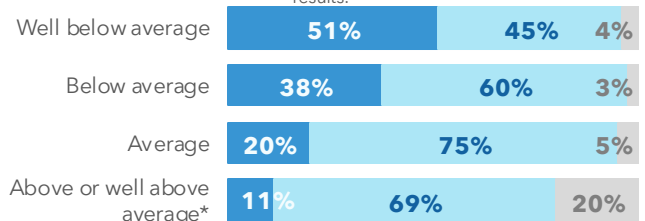


- I went one whole day without eating
- I skipped meals or ate less than usual
- I ate less preferred foods
- I had no difficulties eating enough
- I increased my food intake

### Overall resilience capacity

#### By perceived income level

\*Low response numbers in this category may affect results.



- Low RCS
- Medium RCS
- High RCS







#### INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD

The dashboard contains additional country-level data and analysis beyond the present report on the Food Security and Livelihoods Survey. It may take a second to load. Scan the QR code to access it or follow this link:

<https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsSurvey/Overview>

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#### REPORTS

The website contains links to all current and past regional and country reports on the Food Security and Livelihoods Survey. Scan the QR code to access it or follow this link:

<https://www.wfp.org/publications/caribbean-covid-19-food-security-and-livelihoods-impact-survey>

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