

AUDA- NEPAD and RECs COVID19 Response on
Nutrition and Food Systems.

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ECOWAS Commission Response Plan

by

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Presentation Plan

- Background
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- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Way Forward

Background

- ECOWAP overall objective is to sustainably contribute to the satisfaction of the food needs of the people , economic and social development and poverty reduction in Member states , as well as inequalities between territories, zones and countries.
- The current population of the ECOWAS region stands at 368 million people with high rates of urbanization and rural to urban migration.
- Food and nutrition interventions in the ECOWAP 2025 are aligned with global, continental and regional policy instruments such as the SDGs, Agenda 2063, Malabo Declaration 2014.
- Progress made over the years in commodity value chains such as cereals and livestock, food and nutrition is still a challenge in the region.

ECOWAS Response to Covid 19

- Covid 19 has affected all the ECOWAS Member states with varying degrees of infection, treatment/discharges and deaths.
- ECOWAS Member states have put in place various coordination mechanisms to address the management and control of the pandemic taking into consideration the specificities of Member states. There are Presidential/ Ministerial Committees and Task Forces to coordinate national responses.
- The principal objectives of the coordinating bodies is to save lives, contain the spread of the virus, provide palliatives for vulnerable populations, provide support systems to cushion the national and local economies and development of safety nets amongst others.

Response at the Regional Level

- The President of the ECOWAS Commission has been at the forefront in leading regional coordination with ECOWAS Member states, development partners and the citizens.
- The West African Health Organization(WAHO) the health agency of the ECOWAS Community has been the lead agency providing technical guidance, procuring health equipments for Member states and promoting health standards for Covid 19 as defined by WHO.
- The Authority of Heads of State and Governments in April 2020 held an Extra-Ordinary Summit by virtual means to provide a common position on the management and control of the pandemic and all related matters covering health, food and nutrition, macro-economic management, security and foreign debt amongst others. President Muhammadu Buhari was designated as the Covid 19 Response champion for the region.

ECOWAS Response –continued.

- The Ministers of Agriculture of ECOWAS met earlier to identify resource requirements to manage the pandemic and came up with addressing both national and regional food and nutrition needs. The recommendations of this Ministerial meeting are being implemented by ECOWAS Commission.
- An ECOWAS Action Plan for the Regional Response of the Impact of Covid 19 on Food and Nutrition Security is in place.
- The Action Plan has four Major Axis: 1.Preservation of existing food production capacities and initiatives.2. Provide food support to vulnerable populations for the rest of 2020 for them to be able to survive the covid 19 pandemic.3.Accelerate investments in rural sector , especially in the agro-sylvo- pastoral value chains.4 Reinforce Macro-economic sectors especially agriculture 5. Coordination , Monitoring and Evaluation.

ECOWAS Response Continued

- The ECOWAS Commission has proposed a budget of US\$500 Million which will be used from now up to the end of 2020 as follows:
 1. Development of Social Safety Nets for local Communities in ECOWAS Member states, Chad and Mauritania(CILSS Member states)- 34% of budget.
 2. Increase regional food reserve stocks to 300,000tons of cereals- 30% of budget.
 3. Build capacities of Departments of Crop Protection Services in the light of the emergence of locust on the continent- 16% of budget
 4. Build capacities of Departments of Veterinary Services in 17 Member states- 15% of budget
 5. Coordination, Monitoring and Knowledge Management- 5% of budget.

- The Management of the ECOWAS Commission had a special session in April 2020 to address food and nutrition issues and take relevant policy decisions , which include inter-departmental collaboration in addressing the challenges of food and nutrition during the pandemic.
- Internal reviews and viaments of budgets to release fund for Covid 19 food and nutrition interventions have taken place and resource mobilization efforts are bearing positive results.

Funding Short and Medium Term Period

- The strategy is to ensure that interventions by ECOWAS Commission bridge the gap from now up to the next harvest season.
- The funding will be directed at activities that will reduce the scourge of hunger amongst the population. The regional food reserves will help countries in meeting some of their food needs.
- The preservation of food value chains will be critical and support systems such as research, innovation, extension and development needs to be maintained.

Challenges

- In the light of the competing health needs, resource mobilization with and outside the region is a challenge.
- Loss of lives and livelihoods due to the pandemic is a cause for concern. Development of adequate safety nets for small producers.
- Disruption of agricultural value chains and consumers having to buy food at a higher cost. Disruption of transportation and market systems due to lockdowns, curfew and closure of national boundaries
- Lack of adequate stimulus packages for small and medium enterprises in the food and nutrition sector. Stimulus packages where they exist tend to be for large private sector operators

Opportunities

- The Covid 19 pandemic provides a fresh opportunities to implement budgetary commitments enshrined in the Malabo Declaration 2014.
- Safety nets to be developed taking into consideration the experiences generated by Covid 19.
- Capacity development for small producers in all agricultural value chains.
- Integration of nutrition sensitive agriculture in the development agenda of Member states. Promotion of local food systems and diets.
- Investments in School Feeding Programme by having targeted response of the poor and vulnerable children.
- Strengthening of early warning systems at regional and national levels.

Way Forward in a Covid 19 Era.

- Build a strong collaboration between Food, Nutrition and Health interventions during this pandemic.
- Increased investments in social protection/safety net programmes in the Member states.
- Investments in School feeding programmes for students in rural and peri-urban areas.
- Economic stimulus packages should cater for small scale operators in the food and nutrition sector.
- Promote local food systems /diets in the Member states.
- **THANK YOU VERY MUCH.**