

COVID19 and Impacts on Food Security in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
Virtual conversation
Organized by OHRLLS and FAO
in collaboration with the Chairs of the LDC Group, LLDC Group and AOSIS, 7 May 2020 from 3 – 4.30
pm

The Director of OHRLLS, Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox chaired and moderated the meeting.

Opening remarks

very optimistic, as they look at GDP growth to happen in South Asia and Africa, but these regions are facing today significant challenges. (slide 4-5). If the anticipated global recession, because of COVID-19,

WFP provides assistance to countries without social protection. Before COVID-19, WFP was providing (a) 28 million people with cash-based support, (b) school meals for 18 million children and (c) mother and child assistance for 17 million mothers and children. While WFP continues to provide assistance to countries without social protection, we also have to assist governments in building their capacity to tackle the problem by providing fiscal space to support people, as lockdowns without assistance for a poor person does not work.

This is a global problem that requires a global solution. Until the vaccine is available, we need to make sure that we save lives and protect livelihoods. The commercial supply chain needs to work so humanitarian assistance can work. The message not to implement trade barriers needs to continue, as trade barriers are counterproductive and will backfire. This not only a supply issue but also also a demand problem due to a loss of purchasing power. Furthermore, the agriculture sector needs to be protected and treated as a critical service, otherwise we will have a problem next year with no ample stocks, particularly in Africa but elsewhere as well. The COVID-19 crisis is unique, as it is both a supply- and demand-side at the same time and at a global level. Famines are never about availability but are always about access, particularly now physical and economic access is disrupted. WFP's goal remains to protect lives and livelihoods during this crisis.

Lead discussants

H.E. Mr. Perks Master Ligoya, the Chair of Group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) noted the crucial role of food emergency/humanitarian response in previous crises and emphasized the mela-sfiareonde

SIDS), agriculture - and the food system more broadly – was the backbone of the economy and of employment and that these common challenges were the good basis to strengthen the cooperation.

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and LLDCs. Food security was always a challenge for Trinidad & Tobago and the wider Caribbean where food importation bill is alarming, unsustainable and not a new challenge. With the current crisis we can go into a food security emergency exasperating their current overreliance on foreign food imports. Question: 1) Seeing panic buying and trade barriers mounting how countries and suppliers can continue food production and exportation and implement measures that keep food supply chains open, accessible and affordable. 2) How can SIDS bolster their domestic food supply and interregional trade in CARICOM region. 3) What funds, programs are available to partner for SIDS. 4) How we can overcome Climate Change challenges, building sustainable food systems.

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COVID 19 calls to our attention to the commitments we have made over 24 years. Although the infection rate in Haiti is still low, assistance is needed in health, food, education and development areas. Immediate technical and financial support is needed. In the food context, IFAD in Rome is essential. The issue of increase in the number of voluntary return of migrants and its impact on food requirements was also raised.

With the Hurricane season forthcoming in the region, it is important to be well prepared.

Afghanistan noted that the most devastating impact of C

- x In past crises, there comes a stage when people are forced to sell their productive assets to meet daily needs, which contributes to chronic poverty