



POLICY BRIEF ON IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY IN EAC AMID GLOBAL CRISES

Introduction

There are several policies within Partner States that tackle food security issues, aligned to the EAC Food and Nutrition Security policy, continent-wide initiatives such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the African Common Position on Food Systems at the global scale. Despite the policies and strategies being in place, there seems to be a disconnect between the commitments and the actual situation on the ground, partly because of global crises and the failure to follow through on the initiatives by providing a conducive environment for

actors in the agricultural value chain to thrive. Additionally, the lack of a proper coordination structure impairs the regional and national abilities to monitor progress made while following through with the proposed recommendations.

In order to realize the objectives of the plans and policies, it is necessary to ensure that there are coordinating mechanisms and supporting laws that make it easy to implement the prioritized frameworks. It is important to also find what works for each population for which a policy targets.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to cope with the emerging global crises, the agri-food systems guarantee economic resilience with regard to availability, safety and sustainability of nutritious food at prices affordable to all. As a net food importing region, with the potential to increase its food production, multi-sectoral mitigation measures include:

EAC should increase and diversify food production and transformative pathways to expand intra/extra-regional trade in agricultural products. The EAC should adopt facilitative regional trade frameworks and the following proposals:

1. Increase investment in local food production
2. Diversify food crops
3. Improve intra-industry trade of cereals, food preparations, animal dairy products
4. Improve food value chains to reduce food waste and increase access to nutritious food
5. Strengthen social safety nets to support vulnerable populations
6. Address the inflation and affordability of healthy diets by implementing policies that increase incomes and reduce food prices
7. Strengthen transportation infrastructure
8. Invest in climate change adaptation

9. Address gender inequality
10. Enhance agriculture productivity through the provision of better inputs, improved farming techniques, and market access
11. Address currency depreciation to stabilize prices of food commodities
12. Monitoring food insecurity to identify areas and populations that require immediate intervention
13. Enhance regional agricultural policy framework supporting interlinked value addition, production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal of food products
14. Ensure that SPS measures are harmonized across Partner States by adopting standard testing and inspection procedures in support of cross-border trade on key food commodities traded.
15. EAC Partner States should adhere to the commitments made on food security at the regional level through regular food security status meetings
16. Benchmark on RECs performing well on food security policies
17. Peacebuilding, early warning information systems

EAC Partner States should:

18. Fast-track the domestication of regional, continental, and global initiatives through legislation
19. Scale up food production and distribution while adopting modern agricultural practices
20. Facilitate the adoption of new technologies, local innovations, and incentive schemes to support value addition to create substitutions and diversification options of selected regional food products against major food import products
21. Promotion of balanced diets from locally produced foods
22. Ensure institutional frameworks engage with wide stakeholders including SMEs, women, youth, and the vulnerable
23. Organize national food reserves for storage of food during bumper crops to tap into during emergencies
24. Promote digitalization for ease of information access
25. Improved extension services
26. Undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of the strategies and plans to ensure the shortfalls in reaching the target are addressed before the next plan
27. Ensure budgetary allocation to agriculture is in line with regional commitments and to cater for emergencies as opposed to over-reliance on food aid amidst crises.

Overview of Food Security Policies

There are several initiatives that have been developed in order to address the food requirements of people. Some have been embraced at the country level, while others remain at the regional level. Some have been adopted as a common voice for the entire African region, such as the Africa Common Position on Food Systems (ACPFS), which was presented at the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in 2021. The Africa Common Position on Food Systems feeds into AU's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture

Development Programme (CAADP) as a continental policy framework for agricultural transformation to increase food security and nutrition and reduce poverty. It is aligned to the 10-Year Implementation plan of Africa's Agenda 2063 (Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7) as well as to the UN SDGs Vision 2030 (Goal 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition).

Regional policies of interest that have food security and nutrition strategies include SADC, IGAD, and COMESA. For instance, SADC has the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy and the Health Policy frameworks (2021-2025) to address food and nutrition security. Complementary COMESA food and nutrition policies under the Policy Framework for Food Security in Pastoralist Areas (PFFSPA) and COMESA Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2021-2025 which looks into the development of regional value chains through simplification of rules of origin, and the development of Small-Scale Cross-Border Traders (SSCBTs) into the formal economy, sustainable development of the blue economy, among other things. On the other hand, IGAD, through its membership in the Food and Nutrition Security Community of Practice (CoP), and facilitating online platform discussions bringing together a pool of Nutrition experts to foster regional and continental synergies through the sharing of good practices (AUDA-NEPAD 2023). Further, the IGAD Regional Strategy 2021-2025 Framework addresses food security and environmental protection and management of climate change variability.

It is therefore evident that food security issues are also at the heart of regional economic blocs (RECs); EAC not being an exception. The EAC Agriculture and Food Security Policy is one of the policies of the Treaty establishing the EAC in 1999, with Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania as the pioneers. Further, there are other programmes and policies that serve to enforce commitments made by Partner States in enhancing food security. Some of them include the EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (EAC-ARDS), EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Policy (EAC-ARDP), the EAC Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP), among others.

Food and Nutrition in the EAC

Persistent food insecurity issues led to the EAC Heads of States Summit held in 2011 which directed the EAC Secretariat to develop the 1st Food Security Action Plan (FSAP) 2011-2015. Later, another plan, EAC Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan (FNSAP) 2018-2022, was developed to eliminate hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty by 2022 whose immediate outcomes included: improved agricultural production, productivity and incomes; improved trade and market access; increased farm and off-farm enterprise and job opportunities for youth and women at all levels of the Value Chains; strengthened disaster risk preparedness and management with sustainable utilization of natural resources and environmental conservation under the changing climate; improved post-harvest handling, agro-processing, and value addition; and increased investment in nutrition. Also, agriculture, food security, and rural development are anchored on the second pillar of the EAC Vision 2050 (Jane Otimu 2019). Later on, the East Africa Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (FNSS) 2019-2023 was developed to provide a unified approach to the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the food and nutrition security programs at the national and regional levels. The goal of the strategy was to contribute to the elimination of hunger, malnutrition, and extreme poverty in the East African region by the year 2023. Successful implementation of the strategy was

tagged on the alignment of national and regional interventions through policies; wide stakeholder consultations to encourage ownership; and technical and financial support.

Impact of Global Crises on Food Security in the EAC

Food security status in the EAC amidst global rankings: Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, only Kenya had a score above average, followed closely by Rwanda and Uganda. At the height of the pandemic in 2020, only Burundi and DRC improved their scores, with 37 and 40.7, respectively. Consistent improvement over Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania could mean quick adaptability to the pandemic, as can be seen from their 2021 scores improving through to 2022.

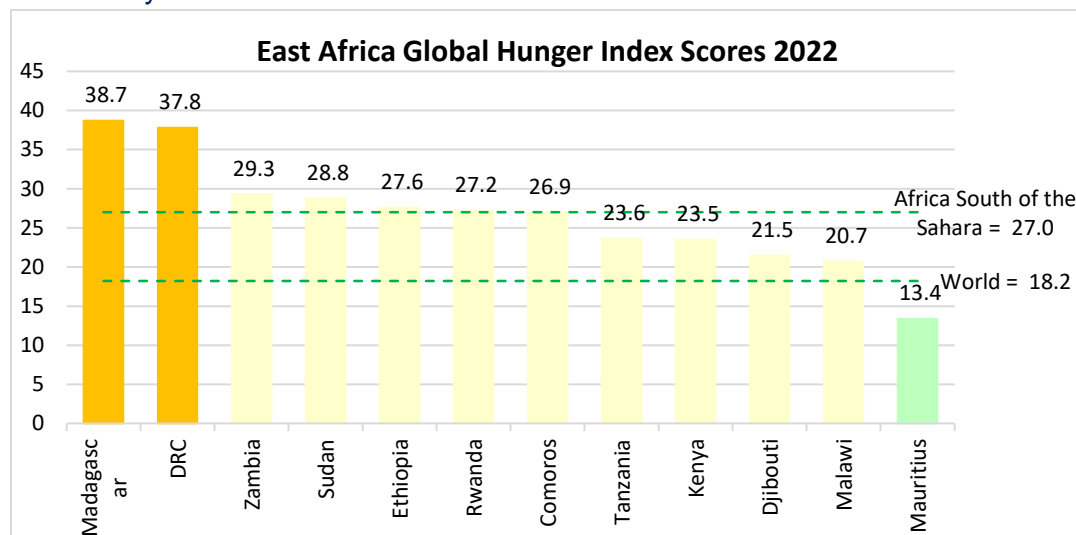
GFSI Scores of East African countries, 2019-2022

	Country	GFSI Scores							
		2019		2020		2021		2022	
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
	EAC								
1	Burundi	34.3	112	37.1	107	34.7	113	40.6	108
2	Democratic Republic of Congo	35.7	110	40.7	98	39.1	103	43	104
3	Kenya	50.7	86	49	86	46.8	90	53	82
4	Rwanda	48.2	95	38.8	104	40.3	101	50.6	88
5	South Sudan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6	Uganda	46.2	98	42.9	95	43.9	95	47.4	93
7	Tanzania	47.6	96	47.1	89	48	86	49.1	90

Source: *Global Security Index Report 2022*

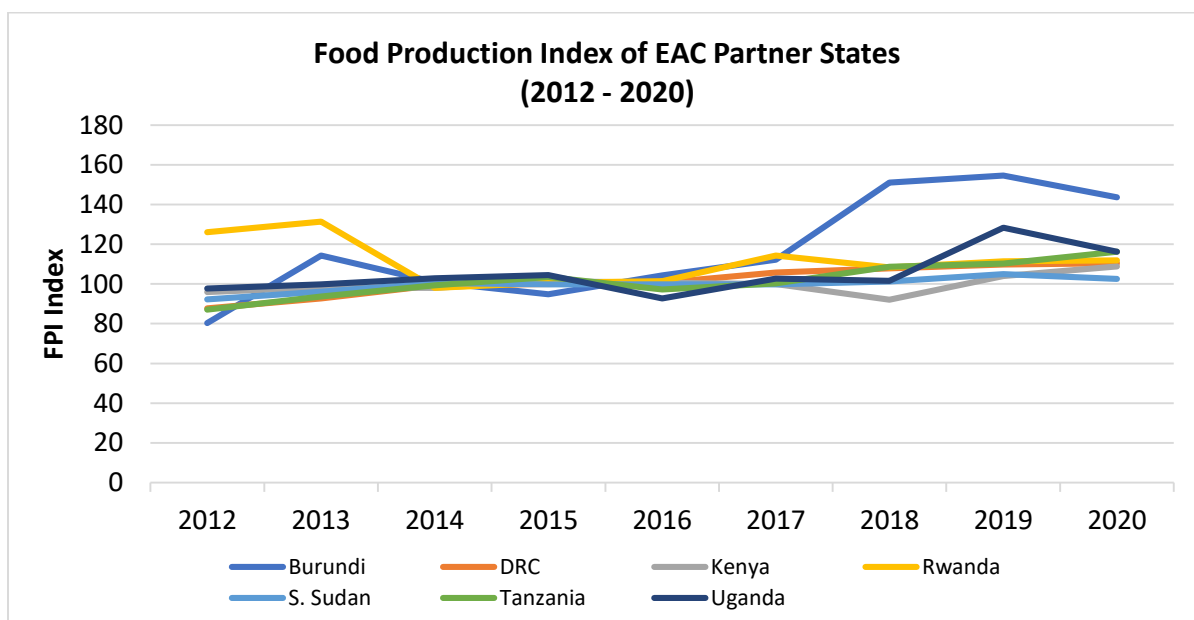
More needs to be done to ensure more East African countries are in the upper quantile of food security, just like northern Africa countries of Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria, and down south in South Africa.

EAC Hunger Index: The EAC Partner States are prone to hunger compared to global community.



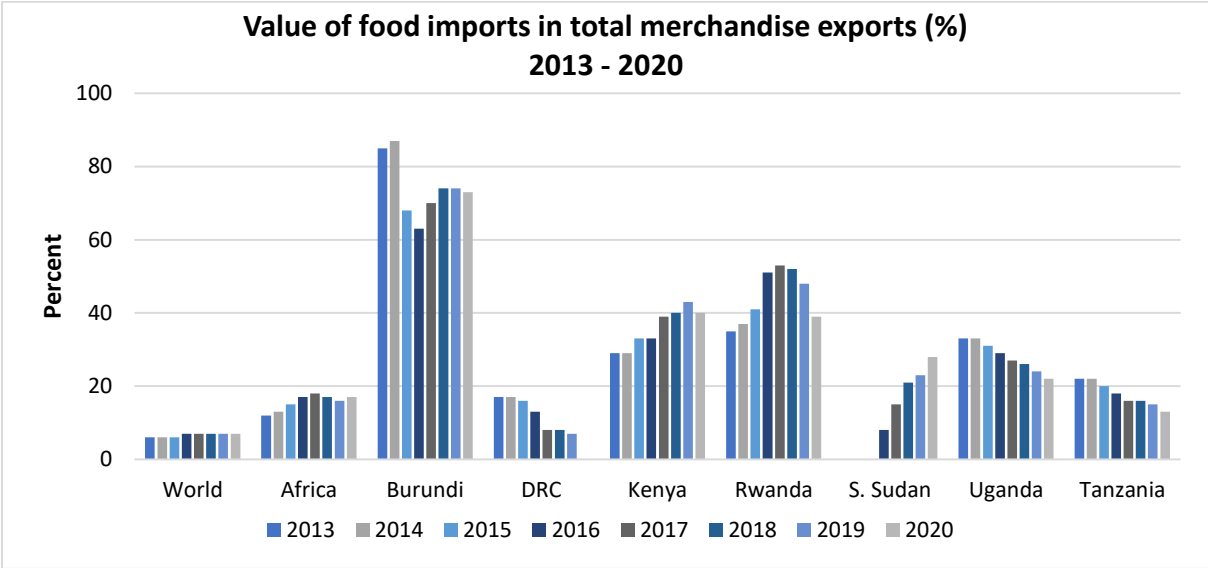
Source: Global Hunger Index Report 2022

Staple Foods in Partner States: The major food crops in the EAC are maize, rice, potatoes, bananas, cassava, beans, vegetables, sugar, wheat, sorghum, millet and pulses. Cereals are a major food product in EAC. As of December 2021, East African Countries recorded total trade of 182.6 million dollars in cereals. The share of total cost of staple food in a healthy diet is on average 15% of the total cost of food. Export restrictions have usually targeted staple foods that account for the food security of a country.



EAC Food Production Index Source: World Bank 2023. World Bank Open Data

The food production indices for the EAC region are similar, with 2014-2017 being the lowest levels of the region’s food production levels.

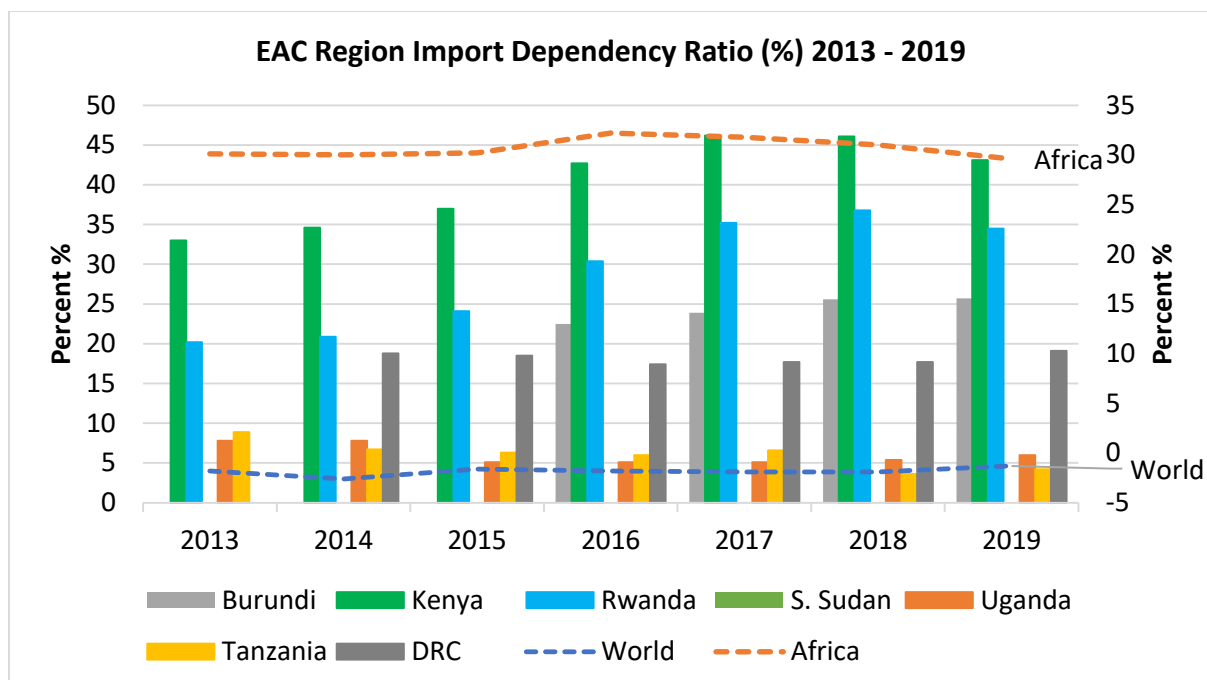


Value of Imports in total merchandise exports (%) 2013-2020 Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT: Trade

Most East African countries are net food importers, but they seem to slow down on this in the recent years possibly due to the developments in their food value chains.

The EAC Partner States are net food importers, with Burundi importing the highest value as a percentage of total merchandise export despite the high production

EAC Cereal Import Dependency: In the EAC region Burundi, Kenya, and Rwanda had the highest import dependency ratios. This could be due to their staple foods mainly being cereals which are not adequately produced in their respective countries.



Cereal Import Dependency Ratio EAC 2013 - 2019 (%) Source: FAO 2023. World Food and Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2022

Producer Prices: The volatility in global prices and the EAC region has been due to pressures such as poor harvests, high production costs, market structure, subsidy schemes and unforeseen global shocks. The war in Ukraine especially has had a negative impact in the form of higher prices and overall lower fertilizer affordability in 2021/22.

Consumer Prices (Affordability): Globally consumer price inflation rose to record levels with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, impacting food security of countries

Inflation in Food Consumer Prices in EAC 2013-2020(%)

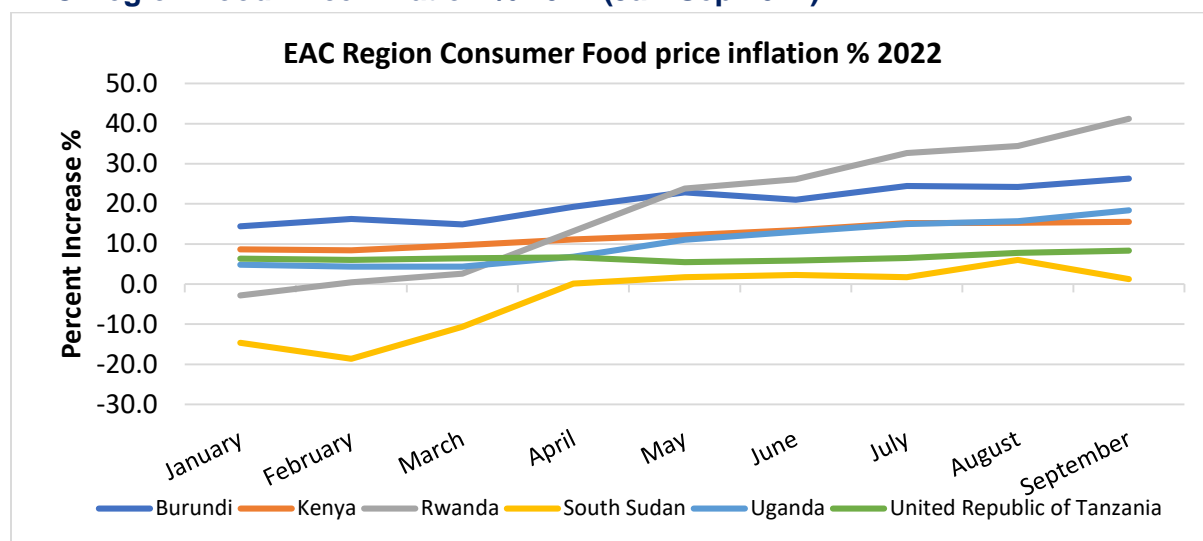
Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change	
										2018-19	2019-20
Africa	7.2	7.1	7.7	12.1	17.3	9.5	7.9	8.8	13.1	-1.6	0.9
Eastern Africa											
Burundi	9.5	2.3	5.7	7.2	24.0	-11.1	-3.1	12.1	10.4	8.0	15.2
Kenya	7.2	8.7	11.4	10.1	13.4	1.4	6.4	6.4	8.9	5.0	0.0
DRC	0.7	1.4	0.8	3.0	11.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.5	-0.2	0.0
Rwanda	8.6	2.6	3.6	12.6	12.8	-7.4	3.5	15.7	-4.1	10.9	12.2
S. Sudan	-3.1	2.5	53.7	333.7	210.6	71.6	106.4	24.4	13.5	0.0	0.0
Tanzania	8.5	7.4	7.9	7.5	9.1	3.0	2.9	4.1	3.7	-0.1	1.2

Uganda	2.3	3.5	7.2	5.6	10.2	-1.2	-0.2	1.8	1.4	1.0	2.0
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Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT: Prices

In the period January to September 2022, food price inflation in the EAC region (Figure 17) rose gradually due to supply chain constraints and effects of the war in Ukraine on commodities and imports.

EAC Region Food Price Inflation % 2022 (Jan-Sep 2022)



Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT: Prices

The **affordability** of a healthy diet measures the average cost of the diet relative to income. Rising food costs and prices without corresponding rises in incomes have led to more people at the global and regional levels being unable to afford healthy diets.

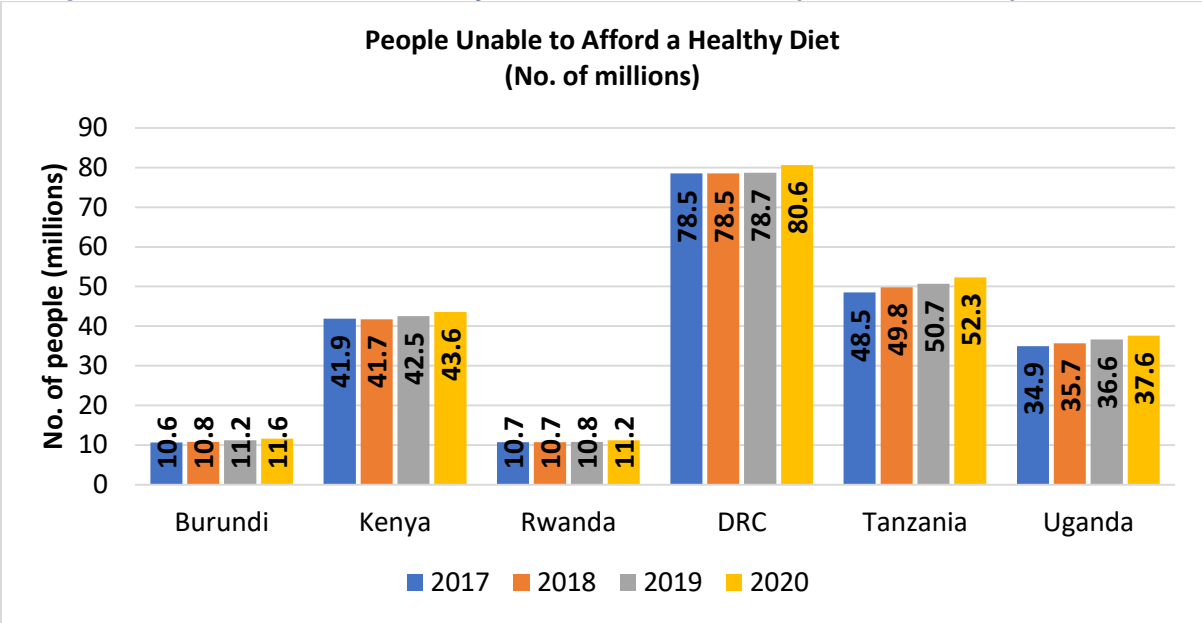
The Cost and Affordability of a Healthy Diet by Region and Country 2017 - 2020

	Cost of a healthy diet			People unable to afford a healthy diet					
	USD Per person per day			Percent (%)			Total No. (millions)		
	2017	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
WORLD	3.314	3.425	3.537	41.5	40.9	42.0	2,973.8	2,961.9	3,074.2
AFRICA	3.248	3.376	3.460	80.2	79.9	79.9	985.3	1,005.6	1,031.0
Eastern Africa	3.022	3.257	3.367	86.7	87.2	87.4	339.0	350.4	360.8
Burundi	2.988	2.783	2.943	97.0	96.9	97.2	10.8	11.2	11.6
DRC	2.291	2.127	2.077	93.3	90.7	90.0	78.5	78.7	80.6

Kenya	2.846	2.907	2.968	81.2	80.7	81.1	41.7	42.5	43.6
Rwanda	2.609	2.537	2.698	86.6	85.2	86.3	10.7	10.8	11.2
S. Sudan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	2.598	2.681	2.736	88.3	87.4	87.6	49.8	50.7	52.3
Uganda	2.749	2.678	2.658	83.5	82.7	82.2	35.7	36.6	37.6

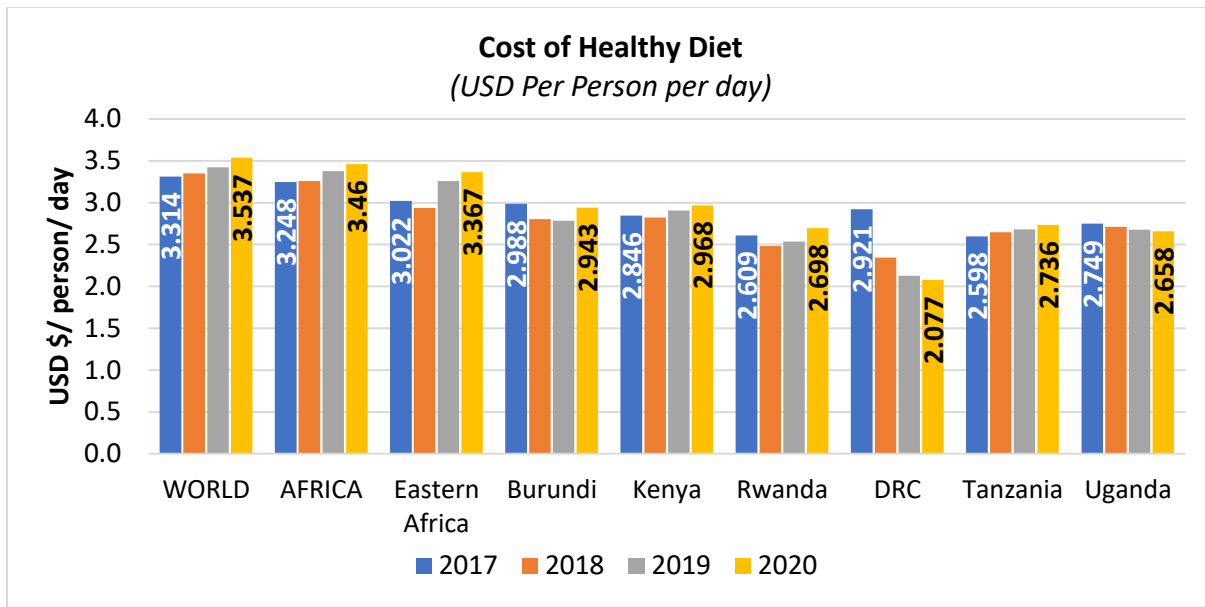
Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT: Food Security and Nutrition

People unable to afford a healthy diet EAC 2017-2020 (no. of millions)



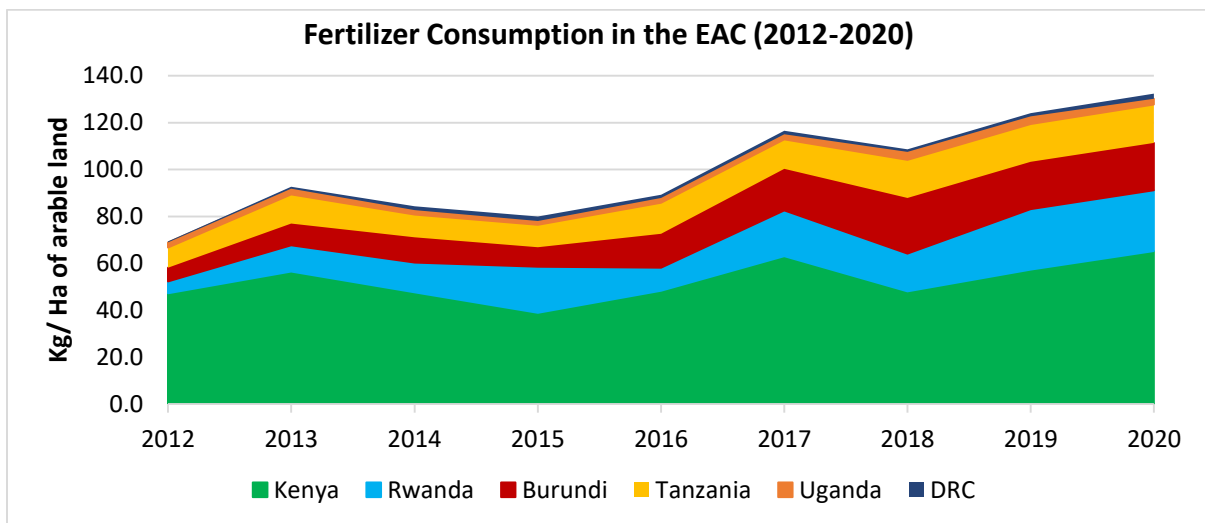
Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT: Food Security and Nutrition *S. Sudan data not available

Cost of a healthy diet: In the EAC region, the costs of a healthy diet have been rising except for Uganda where there has been a reduction in costs from 2017. Nevertheless, the costs of a healthy diet have been increasing especially in light of global shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.



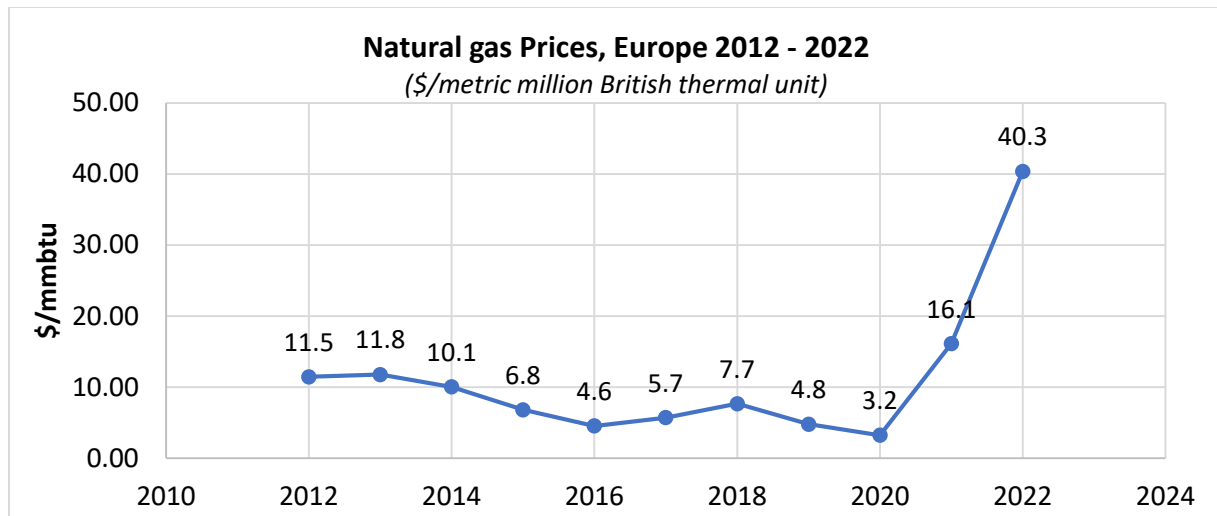
Cost of Health Diet EAC 2017-2020 (USD \$ per person per year) Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT: Food Security and Nutrition

Fertilizer usage: Fertilizer consumption in the EAC has been steadily on the rise from 2015. Majority of the fertilizer is consumed in Kenya while the least is in DRC.



Fertilizer Consumption in the EAC 2012-2020 (kg/ha) Source: World Bank 2023. World Bank Open Data

Energy: Prices for natural gas rose sharply in 2021 (\$16.1 per month) and continued in 2022 (\$40.3 per month) due to various reasons such as adverse weather conditions that hampered renewable energy production and fall in gas supplies from the Russian Federation.



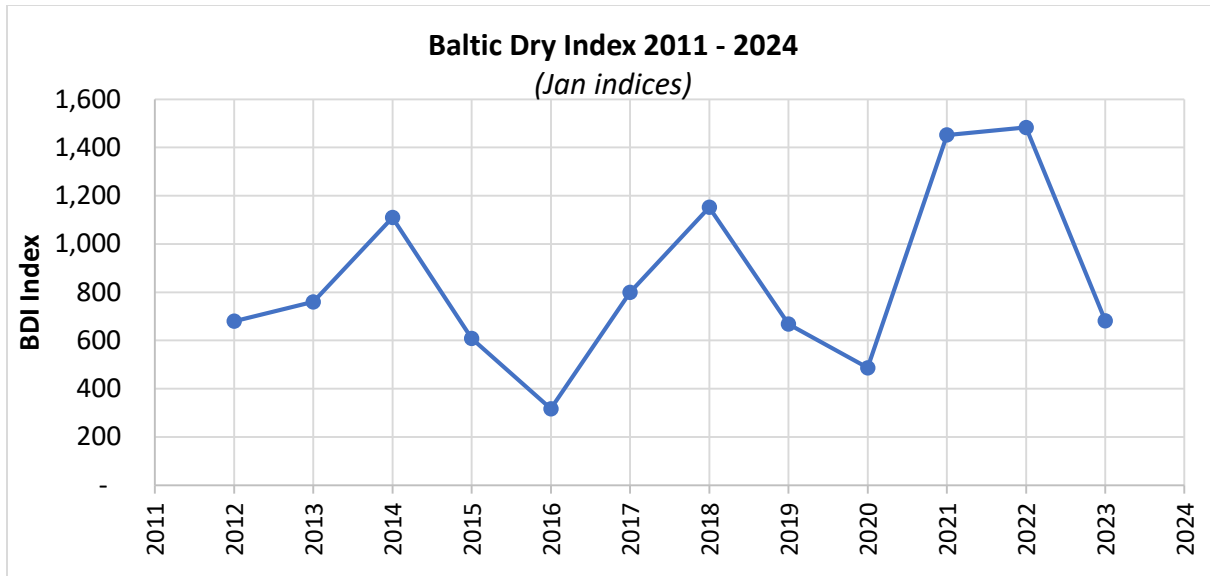
Natural gas prices, Europe Average 2012-2022 (\$/month) Source: World Bank 2023. Commodity Price Data (Nominal 2010=100)

At the onset of the Ukraine War, energy prices witnessed a sharp increase amid fears of energy supply disruption and global economic sanctions on the Russian energy industry.

Freight Costs: At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, global transportation costs are highest from 2020 -2021 due to disruptions in commodity supply chains and export restrictions by food exporting nations. The sharp increase in 2021 in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic; led to concerns of even higher costs for importers and lowered accessibility to international markets for imported commodities such as food and fertilizers as they are traded largely in bulk form.

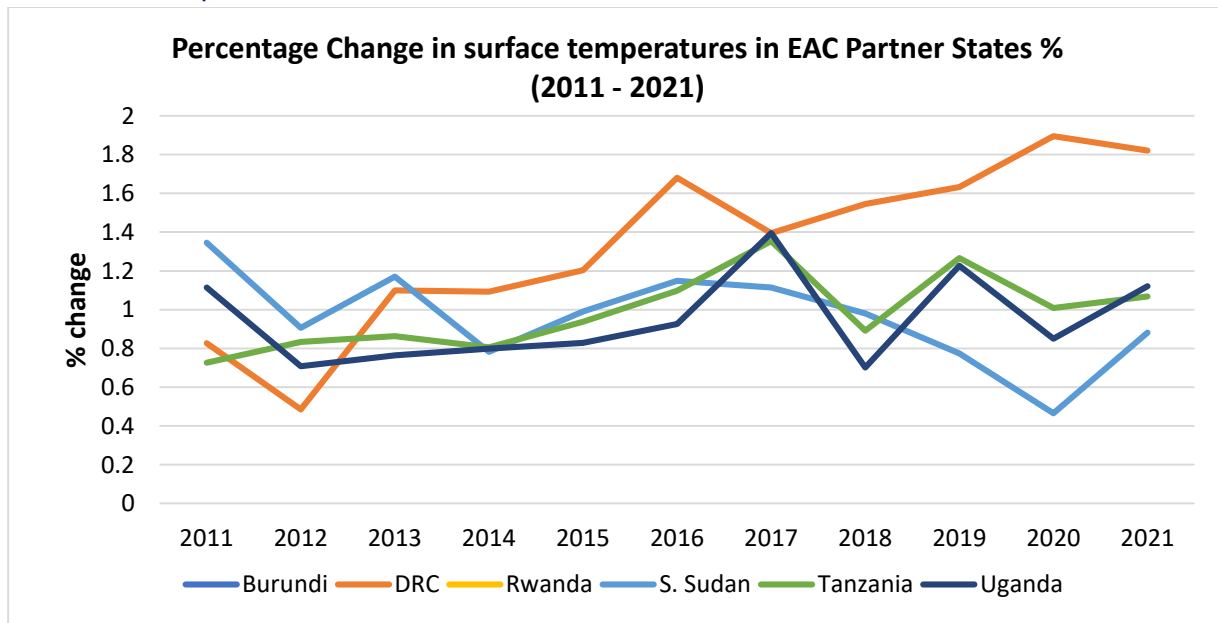
The Baltic Dry Index (BDI)¹, a measure for bulk freight quotations, provides a highly indicative gauge of actual shipment costs. Landing prices increased between 2020 – 2022 at the peak, but the BDI has since declined from December 2022 giving relief to importers. The decline reflected global recessionary pressures, particularly a fall in international demand by China – the world's largest importer of bulk commodities. International freight prices are notoriously volatile. A demand shock when shipping capacities are low or overstretched can send freight costs skyrocketing. Accordingly, importers had to keep a close watch on developments in the international freight market, since any benefit from lower export quotations (FOB prices) could be quickly eroded through higher shipping costs (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, 2022)

¹ A shipping freight-cost index issued daily by the Baltic Exchange: <https://www.balticexchange.com>



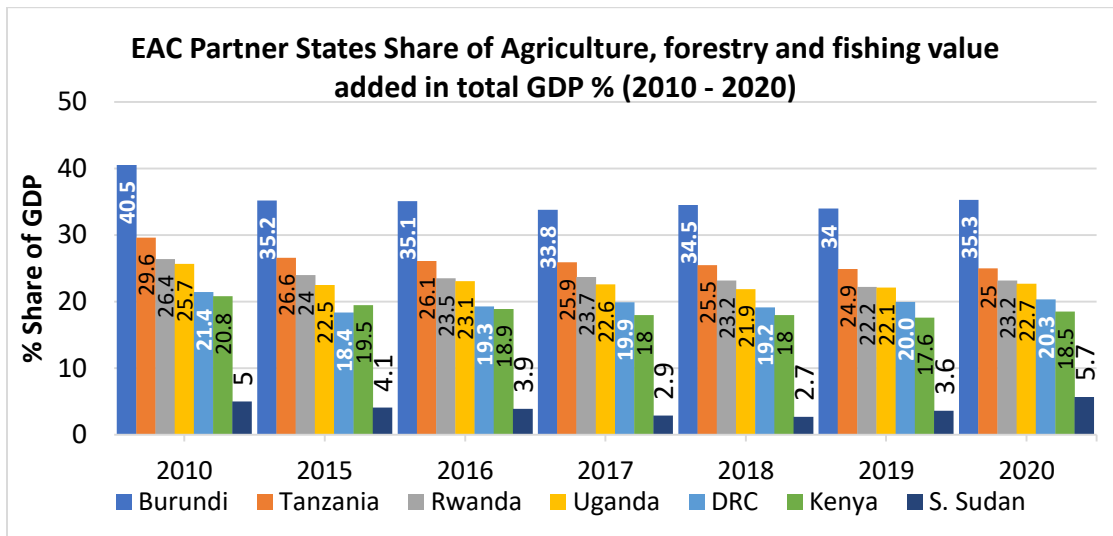
Source: The Baltic Exchange 2023. Baltic Dry Index (BDI)

Temperature: Variability of temperature in DRC is highest when compared with the rest of the EAC Partner States. In 2017, due to worsening climatic conditions, eastern Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda were hit by a recurrent drought that destroyed major crops and raised food prices in these countries. Global warming leads to adverse weather which affects long term food crops.

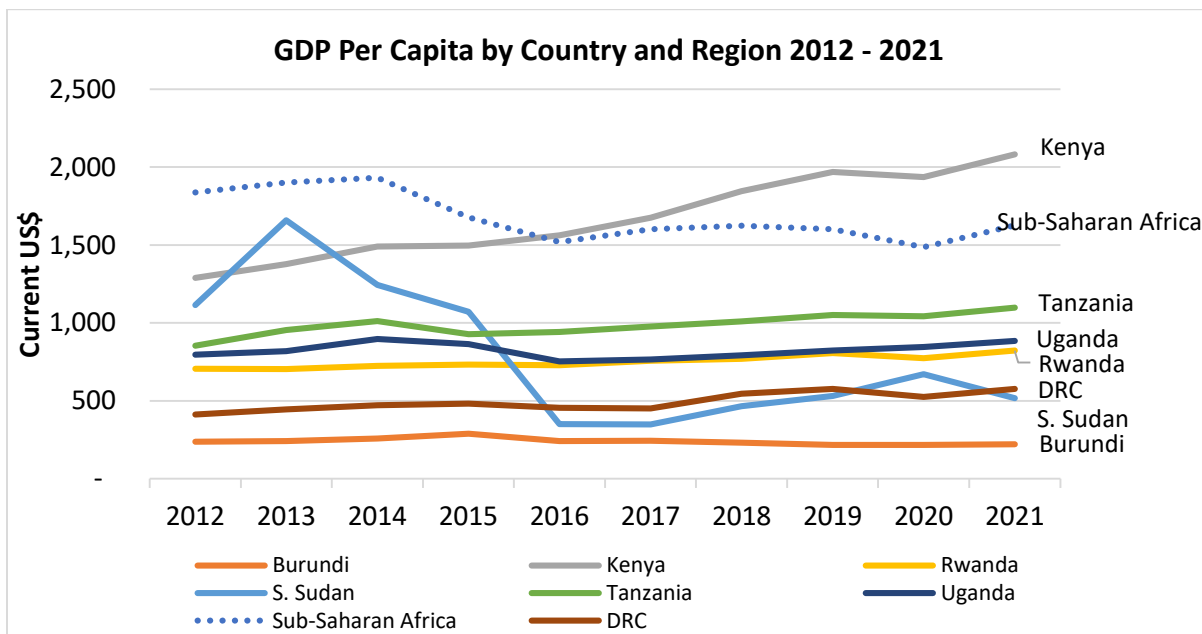


Percentage change in surface temperature in EAC Partner States % (2011-2021) Source: World Bank Group 2023, Climate Change Knowledge Portal

Agriculture contribution to GDP: Agriculture contribution to GDP is highest in Burundi and lowest in South Sudan. The remaining countries operate between 18.5 - 25.0% agriculture contribution to GDP.



Share of agriculture, forestry, and fishing value added in total GDP Source: FAO 2023. FAOSTAT Macro-Economic Indicators

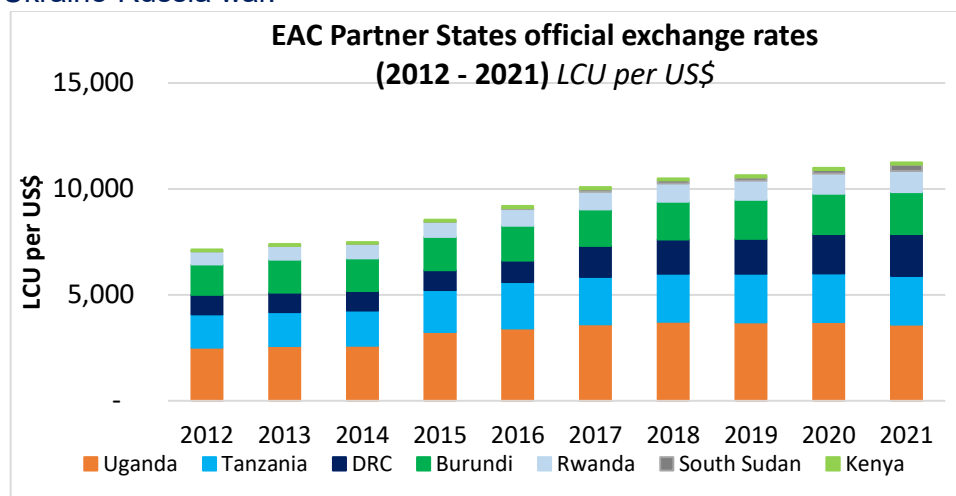


GDP Per Capita by Country and Region 2012-2021 Source: World Bank 2023. World Bank Open Data

With increasing GDP, there should be better ways of handling the food security situation that needs to be addressed for better outcomes.

Population – Gender Differences in food Security: There is also a growing gender gap in food insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic had as disproportionate impact on women’s economic opportunities and access to nutritious foods.

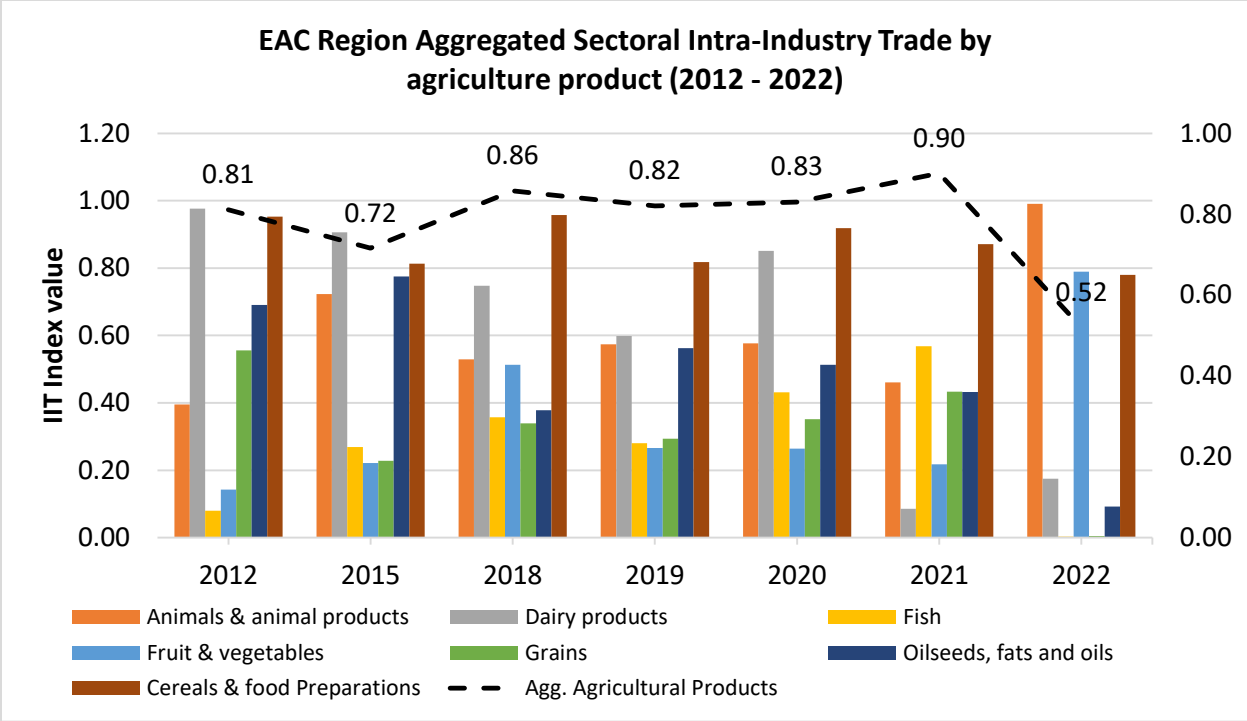
Exchange Rates: All the regional currencies maintained gradual depreciation against the dollar, with highest depreciation aligned to climate change variabilities, COVID 19 and Ukraine-Russia war.



EAC Partner States official exchange rates- 2012-2021

Source: World Bank 2023. World Bank Open Data

Intra-Industry Trade: The aggregate intra-industry trade index provides an overall measure of the EAC regions economic trade profile. The highest economies of scale in the agricultural sectors are found in animal and animal products; dairy products; cereals and food preparations respectively. It also shows that aggregate intra-industry trade remained stable until 2022 where the index score decreased by 32% 2022 from the index value of the previous year. The concentration of intra-industry and intra-firm trade in particular products means that the international transmission of the certain industry- or product-specific global shocks may be especially rapid. This is seen by the decline in grains, oilseeds, fats and oils from 2020 and especially in 2022. This can be attributed to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The most traded items were cereals and food preparations followed by dairy products.



Source: Authors calculations from WITS Data

Food security indicators: The EAC has made steady progress toward improving food security by registering positive growth from 2012. The region has also been affected by the effects of unprecedented levels of global shocks that have erased gains made in improving food security. Furthermore, the region is still susceptible to existing longer-term stresses affecting the global food system which include volatility in agricultural production, scarcity of natural resources and trade and supply-chain volatility.

Food insecurity in households is still an issue of national and regional importance as it touches on the all the dimensions of food security. While there has been a steady decline in food insecure households over time, Kenya and DRC have shown an increase over three-year time periods since 2014 and 2018 respectively, whereas Tanzania has not been steady. South Sudan, on the other hand, seems to suffer with the most severe forms of food insecurity (above 60%), with minimal improvements since 2014. Uganda and Rwanda seem to be on the right path towards reducing severe insecure households since 2014.

Food Insecurity Levels in the EAC 2014 - 2021 (%)

Country	Prevalence of Severe Food Insecurity				Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity			
	2014-2016	2017-2019	2018-2020	2019-2021	2014-2016	2017-2019	2018-2020	2019-2021
Burundi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kenya	15.0	23.4	24.9	26.1	50.7	64.4	67.7	69.5

DRC	-	-	38.5	39.2	-	-	69.2	69.5
Rwanda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
S. Sudan	-	63.7	63	62.3	-	84.9	85.7	86.4
Tanzania	20.6	25	24.4	25.8	48.8	56.1	56.3	57.6
Uganda	19.2	24.4	23.3	23.2	63.4	74.5	72.9	72.5

Source: FAO 2023. World Food and Agriculture Statistical Yearbook 2022

Partner State Policies and Strategies/ Plans

Food and nutrition security is at the heart of the EAC Partner States, and therefore addressed in the constitution, development plans, strategic plans, policies, and other private initiatives. There are several policies that are aligned with global, continental and regional objectives on the matter. Some of the policies and strategies in place include:

Partner State	Policy	Strategy/ Plan
Burundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environment, Agricultural, and Livestock Policy-DOPEAE 2020-2027 ▪ National Gender Policy (2012–2025) ▪ Action Plan for Youth Employment (2021–2024) ▪ Investment Code (2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Development Plan (2018-2027) ▪ National Program for the Capitalization of Peace, Social Stability, and the promotion of economic growth NPCP-SS-PEG ▪ National Health Development Plan (2021–2025) ▪ National Road Map for Strengthening Food Systems
Democratic Republic of Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Democratic Republic of the Congo Country Strategic Plan (2021–2024)
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Act and Land Policy (2012) ▪ Agricultural Policy (2012) ▪ Climate Change Act (2016) ▪ National Agricultural Extension Policy (2012) ▪ National Agricultural Research System Policy (2012) ▪ Seed Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS) 2019-2029 ▪ National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) ▪ National Food and Nutrition Security Policy Implementation Framework (NFNSP-IF) ▪ Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (2010-2020) ▪ National Climate Change Action Plan (2013) ▪ Agricultural Development Strategy
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Agriculture Policy (NAP 2017–2030) ▪ National Fertilizer Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Strategy for Transformation (NSTI 2018-2024)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Food and Nutrition Policy (2013) ▪ Crop Intensification Programme and Policy (2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2013–2018) ▪ Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA4 2018-2024, PSTA3, 2013-2018) ▪ Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (ASIP 2013–2018) ▪ National ICT for Agriculture Strategy ▪ Feed the Future” Multi-Year Strategy ▪ Livestock MasterPlan
South Sudan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food and Agricultural Policy Framework (FAPF) (2006) ▪ Animal Resources Policy framework (ARPF) (2006) ▪ Fishery Policy Framework (2006) ▪ Transport Sector Policy (2007) ▪ Trade and Industry Policy (2009) ▪ Agriculture Sector Policy Framework - 2012-2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
Tanzania (United Republic of)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Agricultural and Livestock Policy of 1997 ▪ National Agricultural Policy (NAP) 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS) ▪ Tanzania Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plan (TAFSIP) ▪ Agricultural Sector Development Plan II
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Agriculture Policy (2013) ▪ National Fertilizer Policy (2016) ▪ National Extension Policy (2016) ▪ Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy UFNP (2003) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) 2015/16-2019/20 ▪ Uganda Food and Nutrition Strategy and Investment Plan (UFNSIP)

Gaps in the Food Security Policies

There are a number of policies and strategies in place that are geared towards addressing food security and nutrition, but they fall short of meeting their objectives and goals. There

seems to be a disconnect between the policies and the situation on the ground, as most people in rural areas seem not to be aware of them. For those who may be aware, they do not seem to be getting good deals due to the positioning of middlemen who buy food produce at farm gate prices and end up selling at exorbitant prices in urban markets. Therefore, there is little to show for the main producers of the crops.

There are dynamic shifts in country-level policies on agricultural trade that tend to impact trade in agricultural products. For instance, the suspension of maize exports to Kenya by Tanzania, or requiring special one-way import permits for maize for Kenyans, makes it hard to plan around food shortages in EAC Partner States. This then makes it more costly to import from outside the EAC bloc, affecting the price of food. This is occasioned by the lack of full regional integration; hence protective measures imposed by countries in an ad hoc manner may have a negative impact on food security in the neighboring Partner States.

Recommendations

East African Community

- i) Increase investment in local food production: The EAC region should prioritize increasing investment in local food production to reduce import dependency. This could include providing incentives for smallholder farmers, investing in infrastructure to improve food distribution and storage, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.
- ii) Diversify food crops: The EAC region should encourage the diversification of food crops to reduce reliance on a few staple crops of cereals. This could include promoting the cultivation of indigenous crops that are better adapted to local growing conditions and that are less vulnerable to climate change.
- iii) Increase trade between EAC countries: The EAC region should prioritize increasing trade between member countries to reduce reliance on imports from outside the region. This could include reducing trade barriers and promoting regional integration.
- iv) Improve food value chains: The EAC region should prioritize improving food value chains to reduce food waste and increase access to nutritious food. This could include investing in transportation infrastructure, improving food storage and processing, and promoting sustainable food production practices.
- v) Strengthen social safety nets: The EAC region should strengthen social safety nets to support vulnerable populations during periods of food insecurity. This could include providing cash transfers, food vouchers, and other forms of social protection to those in need.
- vi) Address inflation and affordability of healthy diets: The EAC region should address the inflation and affordability of healthy diets by implementing policies that increase incomes and reduce food prices. This could include increasing agricultural productivity, reducing trade barriers, and promoting sustainable food production practices.
- vii) Strengthen transportation infrastructure: Improving transportation infrastructure can help in reducing freight costs, thereby lowering the cost of imported commodities,

including food and fertilizers. This will also improve the accessibility of international markets for imported commodities.

- viii) Invest in climate change adaptation: As the region is prone to variability of temperature, investing in climate change adaptation measures such as drought-resistant crops, irrigation systems, and soil management can help in ensuring long-term food security.
- ix) Enhance agriculture productivity: As agriculture is a major contributor to GDP in the region, enhancing agriculture productivity through the provision of better inputs, improved farming techniques, and market access can help in improving food security.
- x) Address gender inequality: Addressing the growing gender gap in food insecurity can help in improving the overall food security situation in the region. This can be achieved by providing women with equal economic opportunities and access to nutritious foods.
- xi) Address currency depreciation: Addressing the issue of currency depreciation can help in stabilizing prices of food commodities, thereby improving food security in the region.
- xii) Improve intra-industry trade: Improving intra-industry trade can help in improving food security in the region by ensuring a stable supply of food commodities. This can be achieved by promoting trade in cereals, food preparations, animal and animal products, and dairy products.
- xiii) Monitor food insecurity: Monitoring food insecurity in the region is crucial in identifying the areas and populations that require immediate intervention. This will help in developing targeted food security programs that can effectively address the needs of the affected populations.
- xiv) The EAC Secretariat needs to bring together donors to support various regional-level food security initiatives through a common regional fund, as opposed to a Partner State fund. This will complement the initiative that Partner States are meeting through their respective line ministry budgets.
- xv) The policies also appear very technical, hence they are mostly accessible to large-scale traders who are well-informed, leaving out the majority of rural traders. By translating, simplifying, and popularizing the policies, more farmers and traders would pursue their interests with clarity and understanding.
- xvi) There is a need to fast-track legislation on the establishment of more national food reserves, specifically, grain stores for the Partner States through the legislature. Through the Eastern Africa Grain Council - warehouses were identified in Kenya

Country Specific recommendations

Burundi

- i) It is recommended that more farmers, especially those in rural areas, come together to form associations/cooperatives to make it easier for them to access inputs, technical, and financial support. The Federal Chamber of Commerce, through the Sectoral Chamber of Agribusiness, needs to incentivize cooperatives through policies that encourage public-private partnerships.
- ii) With the National Development Plan (2018-2027) and the National Program for the Capitalization of Peace, Social Stability, and the Promotion of Economic Growth

NPCP-SS-PEG, there is a need for proper advocacy strategies to reach the depths of the country to popularize initiatives.

- iii) There is a need to establish agricultural financing schemes through policies to advance cheap loans to investors in the agricultural sector so that they can purchase more sophisticated machines, which are faster and more efficient compared to the hoe, which is common among households as a tool for farming. The shift from rural farming practices requires more government advocacy on the matter.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo's Country Strategic Plan (2021-2024) aims to address food and nutrition security, among other things. With the current strategic plan nearing the end of its term, there is a need to evaluate whether its objectives were met and how best to improve in the next one.

- i) There needs to be a proper national coordination mechanism to handle matters of food security. Being constantly prone to diseases such as Ebola, measles, and tuberculosis, there is a need to have an integrated approach to solving such matters while still ensuring agricultural productivity.
- ii) There is a need to develop appropriate food and nutrition policies, including a national agricultural development plan to provide equitable and inclusive farming, strengthen the socio-economic fabric in rural areas, and employ youth, among others.
- iii) There is a need to increase the share allocated to agriculture in the national budget and monitor the effective implementation of the Maputo declaration.
- iv) There is a need to enforce tariff barriers on agricultural and food imports at all border crossings, especially those touching on their staple foods - maize, rice, and cassava (Chiarini 2021).
- v) There is a need to establish a coordination mechanism for all partners in the agricultural and food security sector, headed by national authorities, to help create synergies among partners.

Kenya

The Kenyan government is highly motivated to slash hunger and malnutrition in the country. This commitment includes building and strengthening self-reliance with the purpose of immensely scaling down chronic food insecurity. To lessen the potential impacts of future crises, foreign food aid is used in connection with long-term development strategies, such as FNSP. The Kenyan government in 2011 launched the FNSP, the policy targeting persisting hunger and under-nutrition, affecting one-third of the Kenyan population. There are three main broad goals declared in the policy. Firstly, the policy aims to improve the possibilities for all Kenyans to have a fully nutritious diet. Secondly, it is attempted to boost the quality and quantity of the food the Kenyan population accesses at all times. The final goal attempts to protect the food-wise vulnerable part of the population by using innovative safety programs for the country's long-term development

- i) The government needs to fast-track the construction of more warehouses, especially for maize grain, to ensure food levels are adequate. This will prevent post-harvest losses and exploitation by middlemen, among others.
- ii) The government needs to make information easily accessible to farmers and traders on how to access regional and international markets.
- iii) There is a need for surveillance and rapid response to crises to avoid further damage, for instance, stopping wars and banditry attacks to avoid people abandoning crops and livestock for safety.
- iv) The government needs to move fast to ensure that agricultural land is not all converted to "quick money" residential plot subdivisions. This is further done by ensuring that the land laws clearly define the land tenure systems and are enforced.

Rwanda

Rwanda has done well in ensuring that it embraces policies and strategies meant to improve food and nutrition insecurity in the country by engaging development partners to revise its national food and nutrition policy in line with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme for its 2013-2018 strategy. This was done to have private-sector-led growth in agriculture by encouraging capacity building within the value chain to improve the competitiveness of farmers and commodities. In addition, there was a need to improve food security interventions in Western Province for over 42% of severely food-insecure households (Weatherspoon 2019).

- i) The country needs to move from policies and programs that focus solely on income growth and market access for rural households to also improving household health outcomes. The Strategic Plan for the Transformation of Agriculture, for instance, aimed at increasing food production to raise rural incomes and reduce poverty, but it made people sell nutritious animal products to replace crops that were less nutritious. There is a need for policies that encourage diversity in food production.
- ii) The agricultural policies in place, which serve to subsidize poor diets, have led to a focus on trading items rather than households consuming them. This results in low dietary diversity. Therefore, there is a need to restructure the policies to balance trade and nutrition outcomes in households.
- iii) There is a need to open up cross-border trade to neighboring countries and maintain stability at the same time. This will encourage the growth of border towns in the trade of agricultural food and other goods. This will mainly impact small-scale traders, including youth and women.
- iv) There is a need to have or support policies and research in agriculture by providing incentives to actors in the sector. Specifically, more research on high-yielding food varieties will translate to better food reserves.

South Sudan

- i) Food insecurity is often caused by poor food handling, post-harvest losses, changing climatic conditions, and conflicts that lead to the abandonment of crops. Therefore, food insecurity persists even after the rainy season and during harvesting. Additionally, inadequate food production leads to the need for food aid. Hence, policies should target households by building their resilience.

- ii) The taxation policies that discourage investments in agriculture and trade need to be reexamined. High taxation regimes tend to discourage engagement in agriculture and trade in the country.
- iii) The technical and financial support from development partners such as GIZ, FAO, and others in agricultural extension services and animal vaccination are expected to translate into better food outcomes. Therefore, the government needs to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for the impact of programs supported by development partners to ensure the sustainability of food security. Furthermore, there needs to be a shift from crisis/emergency-driven programs to development-oriented programs.
- iv) The country needs to identify particular value chains of interest to its citizens, such as livestock farming, and develop them with the assistance of many development partners to reduce reliance on imports and encourage growth in local industries.
- v) There is a need to establish special economic zones and advocacy plans, particularly in rural areas where government policies are not well established, yet are the main food producers.

United Republic of Tanzania

- i) There is a feeling that cross-border trade policies are quite dynamic, which makes trade unstable. This, coupled with political issues surrounding cross-border trade, needs to be addressed so that investors along the agricultural value chain can have a sense of stability. This will lead to growth in trade, especially when there is a surplus of agricultural produce.
- ii) Full regional integration needs to be embraced to enable access to the expertise needed in the agricultural value chain from within the region.
- iii) It is also recommended that the government reduces taxes imposed on food items to make them more accessible to households.
- iv) The government needs to focus on implementing early warning systems and regenerative agriculture.
- v) The country's agricultural training needs should be addressed, such as adherence to standards, SPS measures, food certification, etc., to make it easier to enter regional and international market trade. Additionally, precision agriculture and the use of modern farming equipment need to be included in the training, shifting from theory to practical training.
- vi) The rural population also needs to be sensitized about the importance of diversified foods and nutrition knowledge.
- vii) At the higher levels of national governance, there appears to be a mismatch between policy formulation and actual implementation. Better coordination among agriculture-related ministries and regulatory bodies is needed. A proper coordination structure, coupled with increased allocation in support of agricultural programs (which are mainly funded by donors), will help revitalize the sector.

Uganda

- i) The government needs to strengthen and upscale research and development to increase the stock of quality seeds that are more resilient.

- ii) There is a need to revive the agricultural extension services at the grassroots and evaluate their services.
- iii) There is a need to operationalize the irrigation policy and master plan to ensure adequate water.
- iv) Illicit trade along the porous borders, largely on food products from Uganda, requires law enforcement to counter.

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