

ON THE SIDELINES OF THE CELEBRATION OF AFRICA DAY

# **FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA & ITS TRANSFORMATIONS DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2022 ( AN EVALUATIVE VISION )**



## Introduction

Africa's current needs and variables is heading towards the development food policies aiming at enhancing food security and safety at all planning, political, legislative, and executive levels. To this aim, it strives to develop strategies and legal charters in this context, such as the Africa Region Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) and its updated versions for the period 1993: 2004, 2005: 2015, and 2015: 2025. In 2022, the Africa Dialogue Series (ADS) was launched in 2022 to commemorate Africa Day, under the theme **"Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening agro-food systems, health, and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social, and economic capital development."**

In this context, Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights presents an evaluative vision of the status of food security in Africa over the first quarter of 2022 by showing the meaning of and intent behind the general theme of the ADS 2022, and by focusing on the state of food security and malnutrition in Africa during the first quarter of 2022, and concludes with a set of recommendations to accelerate the realization of this goal by the end of 2022.

## First: Annals of the general topic of the African continent during the current year

The African Union is paying increasing attention to sustainable nutrition development and ambitious policies, as it issued the 2014 Malabo Declaration, approved the 2018 African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) initiative, and launched the Continental Accountability Nutrition Scorecard in 2019. In addition, March 1<sup>st</sup> is being celebrated as the African Day of School Feeding since 2016, the Africa Region Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) and its updated versions for the period 1993: 2004, 2005: 2015, and 2015: 2025, the annual meeting of the African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND) to oversee the implementation of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2016-2025, the call of the African Union Nutrition Champion to leaders to embed nutrition within the COVID-19 response and recovery in 2020, its call to ensure inclusion, promotion and smart nutrition interventions, let alone the legal charters, agreements and strategies related to nutrition, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the Convention for the Establishment of the African Centre for Fertilizer Development, the African Convention on the Conservation



of Nature and Natural Resources, the African Union Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and food security, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the African Union Sustainable School Feeding Program, the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study, Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard, Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP), the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, Agra Annual Report 2018, AU Green Recovery Action Plan 2021-2027, AU and FAO Guidelines to African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, the Africa's Commodities Strategy, the coordinated strategic action plan of action for the implementation of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI), the Africa Regional Nutrition Study, the Africa Health Strategy, and Innovative and Domestic Financing for Health: Expanding the Fiscal Space for Health in Africa<sup>1</sup>.

However, the reality of nutrition in Africa as well as its political, security, economic, social, demographic, and humanitarian variables, compounded with the effects of Covid-19, and other severe health burdens necessitated confronting under nutrition and accelerating its efforts. Africa reports poor nutrition indicators represented by the inability of 965 million people, equivalent to 75% of the population, to have a healthy diet, and 281.6 million Africans suffer from undernourishment, an increase of 89.1 million people compared to 2014, distributed by about 44% in the east, 27 in the west, 20 in the center, 6.2% in the north and 2.4% in the south of Africa in 2020<sup>2</sup>.

Concerning diseases caused by the repercussions of food shortages; in April 2021, 1.2 million African children were affected by undernourishment, with 1 in 3 children, equivalent to 30% of children under five years being stunted, and 122.7 million women of childbearing age affected by anemia. Only 18 countries have breastfeeding rates of about 50% and over 30% of women in 38 countries suffer from increased prevalence of anemia. There is also an increase in the rates of obesity, non-communicable diseases, and diet-related diseases. Moreover, 50% of child deaths in Africa are due to under nutrition. Costs of undernourishment is estimated at about 1, 9: 16, 5% of the total GDP. Since foods contain essential vitamins and minerals vital to the development of a healthy brain and body, as adults, those children will lose on

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<sup>1</sup> African union, 2022: the year of nutrition, access date 25 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3kbWzWq> .

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/new-interactive-report-shows-africa-s-growing-hunger-crisis/ar>



average 10%, making it almost impossible to lift themselves out of poverty, and contribute fully to the economic growth of their nations.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the AU theme of the year 2022 came as **“Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening agro-food systems, health, and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social, and economic capital development.”**

## Second: Status of Nutrition in Africa over the first quarter of 2022

The African continent made outstanding efforts at all legal, political, and executive levels to combat and treat under nutrition and avoid its health effects and economic costs. **However, the status of food security and nutrition in Africa over the first quarter of 2022 reveals several challenges and low indicators.** More than 25% of Africa’s estimated population of 346 million faces a food security crisis, from Mauritania and Burkina Faso in the west to Somalia and Ethiopia in the east, according to April 5, 2022 statistics.<sup>4</sup> Nearly 1 in 5 Africans suffer from hunger every day, and only 9 out of 54 African countries seek to reduce undernourishment to 5% or less by 2025.

**Malnutrition rates remain remarkably high;** 13.7% of infants suffer from low birth weight and 30.7% of children between the ages of 0 and 5 years suffer from stunting, and more than 40% of women of childbearing age suffer from anemia, according to February 7, 2022 statistics. While the percentage of the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding in Africa is 43.6 percent away from the global average, and adult obesity is 12.8 percent in Africa<sup>5</sup>.

This is evident in the high degrees of economic exposure of African countries; the conflict in Ukraine has food repercussions on the African continent, food prices are rising under wheat 90% of Russian imports to Africa, and the cost of the food basket in Ethiopia and Somalia by 66%, 36%. Food insecurity and threats to increase food insecurity are increasing by 40% to be 38 million by June 2022 in West Africa<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://newafricanmagazine.com/25730/>

<sup>4</sup> African business, apo-newsfeed/across-africa-a-disaster-goes-largely-unnoticed-as-1-in-4-people-face-food-security-crisis/, access date 24 April 2022, <https://african.business/2022/04/apo-newsfeed/across-africa-a-disaster-goes-largely-unnoticed-as-1-in-4-people-face-food-security-crisis>

<sup>5</sup> الرابط: <https://bit.ly/3PGlGPY> الأمم المتحدة، القرن الأفريقي: مخاوف من ارتفاع عدد الجياع بسنة ملايين شخص خلال هذا العام بسبب الجفاف، ١٩ أبريل ٢٠٢٢، الرابط: <https://bit.ly/3PGlGPY>

<sup>6</sup> منظمة الأغذية والزراعة، أزمة الغذاء في غرب أفريقيا، أبريل 2022، <https://www.france24.com/ar/>

**The status of nutrition in Africa**, food insecurity crises are rising in all African regions, especially in East Africa, which includes 7 million people suffering from food insecurity, 5.5 million of whom are severely malnourished by 1.6 million children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, according to statistics of 13 April 2022<sup>7</sup>. This is intensified in the Horn of Africa, with hunger rates rising from 14 million to 20 million people between 2021 and 2022. Not to mention the death of livestock in pastoral and rural communities, similar to the deaths of 1.4 million animals in the latter half of 2021 in Kenya<sup>8</sup>. 25.3 million People are projected to suffer from “acute and severe food insecurity” by mid-2022.<sup>9</sup>

This is not so different in the West Central Africa, which monitors the multiplication of the number of hungry by 4 times, reaching 41 million in West Africa<sup>10</sup>. At least 900,000 young people are at risk across Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal and 6.3 million children under the age of 5 in the Sahel region of Africa reported wasting according to statistics 6 April 2022.<sup>11</sup>

### Third: Nutrition status in the African regions during the first quarter of 2022

Food insecurity crises are severely exacerbate in many African States. While Algeria was ranked first in the list of countries with less than 2.5% malnourished during 2018: 2020, Morocco ranked second with 2.5%: 4.9%. Central Africa, the Congo and Madagascar were among the countries most affected by malnutrition at 35% of the total population<sup>12</sup>. It was monitored that 1.5 million children in east and South Africa lacked treatment services for severe wasting<sup>13</sup>. The status of nutrition in a number of African countries can be highlighted as follows:

<sup>7</sup> UN, food security in South Sudan, access date 24 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116132>

<sup>8</sup> UN, report nutrition in Africa, access date 24 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115922>

<sup>9</sup> United nations, FAO launches \$138 million plan to avert hunger crisis in Horn of Africa, 17 jan 2022. Link: <https://bit.ly/3wBnmCv>

<sup>10</sup> RT, الأهرام، برنامج الغذاء العالمي: منطقة الساحل وغرب أفريقيا تواجه أسوأ غذاء منذ عشر سنوات، ٩ أبريل 2022، <https://bit.ly/3v3tzGR>

<sup>11</sup> UN, scale up action to combat child malnutrition in Africa Sahel, 6 April, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3k4JC0t>

<sup>12</sup> RT, Algeria is the first and Morocco us the second in Africa in food security, 29 December 2022, <https://bit.ly/3KSHRX>

<sup>13</sup> WFP, horn-africa-drought-late-rains-ethiopia-kenya-and-somalia-are-inflaming-hunger-warns-wfp, access date 24 April 2022, <https://www.wfp.org/stories/horn-africa-drought-late-rains-ethiopia-kenya-and-somalia-are-inflaming-hunger-warns-wfp>



## 1. Ethiopia

The interactions of the security, political, economic and climatic challenges in Ethiopia have had severe repercussions on the status of nutrition. In Ethiopia, over a million livestock have died,<sup>14</sup> and an estimated 7.2 million people wake up hungry every day in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia as the country grapples with the most severe drought since 1981. 9 million people in Ethiopia were supported with emergency food and nutrition assistance, including 40% of the population of Tigray suffering from acute undernourishment, 15 months after the beginning of the conflict and 83 % suffer from food insecurity.<sup>15</sup> 13 % and 50 % of children and pregnant women suffer from undernourishment, respectively, by 14 % and 1/3 of the Amharic women and 28 % of children under the age of 5 in the Afar region in eastern Ethiopia.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Somalia

The severity of food insecurity has rapidly worsened in Somalia owing to the combination of political, economic and security complexities and the intensification of climate changes, especially droughts and the effects of Covid-19. 5.6 million people suffered from food insecurity in April 2022, before they reached 6 million in June 2022, equivalent to 38% of the population, including 1.7 million people in food emergencies and 81,000 in food disasters. Not to mention that 2.8 million were unable to meet their daily food needs<sup>17</sup>. Emergency food and nutrition assistance is estimated at 2 million people in February 2022.<sup>18</sup>

## 3. South Sudan

In South Sudan food insecurity continues, giving rise to many challenges. Between February and March 2022, 36 counties across the country were classified in emergency and 40 counties in crisis with only two counties classified in acute stress and between April to July 2022. 52 districts were classified in case of emergency and 23 districts in case of crisis food insecurity is expected to rise by about 7% in the coming months of 2022. 7.74 million people will face the equivalent of 62.7% of the population, or 80% of the population of Jonglei, Upper

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<sup>14</sup> Cherwell, ethiopia-sees-staggering-increase-in-food-insecurity-warns-oxford-study, 10 February 2022, <https://cherwell.org/2022/02/10/ethiopia-sees-staggering-increase-in-food-insecurity-warns-oxford-study/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2022/01/1092832>

<sup>16</sup> Relief web, ethiopia-food-security-outlook-june-2021-january-2022, access date 24 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3NsAqjk>

<sup>17</sup> IFRC, Hunger Somalia 2022, access date 25 April 2022, <https://www.ifrc.org/emergency/somalia-hunger-crisis-2021>

<sup>18</sup> Relief Web, somalia-food-security-outlook-february-september-2022, access date 25 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3yUPdPW>



Nile, Lake and Eastern Equatoria.<sup>19</sup> 1.34 million Children under the age of 5 reported suffering from malnutrition and 600,000 women reported suffering from acute malnutrition in April 2021 before reaching more than 2/3 population by May and July 2022.<sup>20</sup>

#### **4. Kenya**

The status of food security in Kenya is no different from other African countries suffering from climate change and severe droughts. 15 of 23 arid and semi-arid provinces suffer from water stress and the number of people in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in Kenya rose from 1.4 million in a year, of whom 465,000 were children and 93,000 were breastfeeding women in 2021 to 3.1 million in 2022. 500,000 of them face emergency levels of hunger, not to mention the death of 1.4 million cattle at the end of 2021.

#### **5. Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is advancing its indicators to the extent that it is the first African country to suffer from severe food insecurity by 27 million people, of whom 6.1 million are at critical levels and 200,000 need urgent treatment, 860,000 children under the age of 5 and 470,000 are severely malnourished<sup>21</sup>.

#### **6. Central African Republic**

Food insecurity rates are increasing in Central Africa. It classified 31 sub-prefectures and Bangui as being in critical nutritional status with the remaining sub-prefectures remaining on nutritional alert in February 2022, with the population spending 65%: 75% of income on food. 2.1 million people experiencing food insecurity equivalent to 45% of the population, including 1.8 million severely food insecure, 214,000 children and 98,000 women are acutely malnourished.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> relief web, new-assessment-confirms-deteriorating-food-security-across-south-sudan, access date 25 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3w>

<sup>20</sup> UN, Food security in South Sudan, access date 25 April 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116072>

<sup>21</sup> Relief web, democratic-republic-congo/democratic-republic-congo-food-security-nutrition-snapshot-november, access date 25 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3wLfwVM>

<sup>22</sup> Relief web, Food security in central African, access date 25 April 2022, <https://www.wfp.org/countries/central-african-republic>

## Recommendations

Having reviewed the status of malnutrition in Africa by focusing on a number of African models: Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan, a set of recommendations can be made as follows:

- A. **African States should endeavor to improve the food system by increasing food production, improving food quality and improving the country's security and safety.** By increasing food agricultural areas and increasing food crop composition, raising adaptations to climate changes, localizing agricultural technology, raising food and price controls in African countries, reducing dependence on import, introducing appropriate techniques for land management, irrigation and agricultural research development.
- B. **African countries should activate their legal, political and human rights obligations with regard to food** and to link nutrition systems to universal health coverage, including healthy, inclusive and sustainable diets, drinking water supply, social protection systems and investment in food education for all.
- C. **African countries should cooperate and work together to increase food and health investments** in order to increase the health and therapeutic response to high rates of malnutrition, wasted obesity and, in particular, to the most vulnerable and vulnerable refugees, displaced persons, migrants, women and children in all African States, particularly in Central Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan.
- D. African countries should seek to allow partnerships with stakeholders, civil society and the private sector to play their developmental and social role in boosting nutrition and food security through food assistance and investment.