



How hard are the Covid-19 measures affecting Southern Africa countries economies? Policymakers and researchers discussing the case of Malawi

Lilongwe, Malawi April 28th

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected economies through different angles, including, among others, global financial and capital markets, global commodity trade and markets, local supply and demand of goods and services, and local labor markets and employment.

[AKADEMIYA2063](#) and The [Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems for Southern Africa \(ReSAKSS\)](#), in collaboration with the [National Planning Commission of Malawi \(NPC\)](#) and the [International Water Management Institute \(IWMI\)](#), hosted a semi-virtual country learning event on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on production, markets, trade, nutrition and poverty in Southern African Countries, with a focus on Malawi.

Chaired by Dr Rodwell Mzonde, Director of Planning at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Malawi, this event, brought forward new evidence to inform decision making on COVID-19 responses by the Malawi government, and other respective stakeholder constituencies. It presented analyses on Covid-19 responses impacts on commodity trade, food systems, and community vulnerability.

Many Southern African countries including Malawi had put measures in place to control the spread of the pandemic, including states of emergency, curfews and closed borders which in most cases were progressively lifted. Travel restrictions and constraints to the movement of

goods caused logistics breakdowns and labor shortages at different stages along food value chains. The resulting changes have had significant impacts on the supply of and demand for agricultural and food products.

“Covid-19 outbreak has placed stress and attention on the importance of food, water and energy security, as governments focus their efforts not only on blocking the transmission of the disease, but also consider how their responses affect food security today and in the future. This crisis is affecting workforces, transportation systems and supply chains - the very basis of how our food gets from field to fork. A first implication of Covid-19-related restrictions are disruptions in local staple markets which are likely to affect the cost of food consumed by the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. The effects on food availability and prices as well as changes in incomes may lead to deterioration of nutrition status in the form of micronutrient deficiencies, especially for the most vulnerable populations. Price uncertainty and disruption on the supply side could also affect farmers’ incomes” shared Dr Inga Jacobs-Mata, Country Representative, IWMI Southern Africa.

For example, data from more than 20 maize grain markets throughout Malawi showed a sudden price decrease from March to May 2020. While 100% of the grain markets had increasing prices by January 2020, by May 2020, there was a general price decline in all grain markets across the country’s rural and urban markets.

“As macroeconomic modelling confirms and predicts global disruptions on commodity markets due to COVID-19, it has led to a slowdown in economic growth and a deterioration in urban and rural poverty.” Stated Dr Greenwell Matchaya, ReSAKSS Southern Africa Coordinator. He reaffirmed the importance of such event as it “contributes to the promotion of many of the key objectives in Malawi’s development vision (Malawi Vision 2063), Southern Africa Development Community’s Regional Agricultural Development Policy and the African Union’s Agenda 2063”.

“Unless countries have a better handle at managing crises such Covid and similar shocks in the future, it will be hard to achieve the development objectives related to the sustainable agricultural production and food security, improvement of regional integration and international trade as well as those seeking to reduce vulnerability especially of poor sections of society.” said Dr Ousmane Badiane, Executive Chairperson at AKADEMIYA2063.

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More about AKADEMIYA2063

AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa-based non-profit research organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. AKADEMIYA2063’s mission is to create, across Africa and led from Rwanda, state-of-the art technical capacities to support the efforts by the Member States of the African Union to achieve the key goals of the Agenda 2063 of transforming national economies to boost growth and prosperity. The main goal of AKADEMIYA2063 is to help meet the needs of African countries in terms of data, analytics and mutual learning for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the realization of its outcomes by a critical mass of member states. For more information, please visit: www.akademiya2063.org

More about ReSAKSS

Established in 2006 under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) supports efforts to promote evidence- and outcome-based policy planning and implementation. In particular, ReSAKSS provides data and related analytical and knowledge products to facilitate CAADP benchmarking, review, and mutual learning processes. AKADEMIYA2063 facilitates the work of ReSAKSS in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD Agency), and leading regional economic communities.

More about IMWI

[IWMI](#) is an international research-for-development (R4D) organization, with offices in 13 countries and a global network of scientists operating in more than 30 countries. For over three decades, their research results have led to changes in water management that have contributed to social and economic development across Southern Africa, Africa and the world. IWMI is also part of the [CGIAR](#), global research partnership for a food-secure future. CGIAR science is dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources and ecosystem services. Its research is carried out by 15 CGIAR Centers in close collaboration with hundreds of partners, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, development organizations and the private sector.