

“The dilemmas of agri-food systems and food and nutrition security in Africa: Lessons from the Russo-Ukrainian war”

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THE DILEMMAS OF AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS AND FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA: LESSONS FROM THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR

Abstract

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), due to its dependence on food imports and basic necessities such as fertilizers, is impacted by far-reaching global stressors like COVID-19 and climatic transformations, increasing inflationary pressures and geopolitical conflicts. This paper aims to assess the consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian war for food security and stability in Africa. This paper explores existing analytical perspectives and data to identify challenges in agri-food systems, food insecurity, and national and regional security. Analysis of available data reveals several challenges for agri-food systems, food security, and nutrition in Africa, which are exacerbated by the Russo-Ukrainian war: increased market distortions, import dependency, hunger, and vulnerability of the poorest populations. To overcome these challenges and ensure Africa's sustainable development, it is necessary in the short term to strengthen the political will to implement planned reforms, ensure access to land, finance, and markets, expand social guarantees, create food reserves, remove market barriers, and deploy effective early warning systems. The transformation of agricultural production in the medium term should be achieved through investment in infrastructure, scaling up of technologies and digitalization, strengthening the capacity of agri-chain actors, and developing sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems through broad cross-sectoral coordination. The formation and implementation of a comprehensive policy capable of anticipating global shocks, reducing import dependency, ensuring sustainable resource management, developing year-round agricultural production, and deepening long-term regional cooperation and investment will build reliable, sustainable agri-food systems to ensure sustainable food security in the region.

Keywords

agri-food systems, food imports, food and nutrition, Ghana, global shocks, resilience, Russo-Ukrainian war, security, Sub-Saharan Africa, vulnerability

JEL Classification

Q18, Q17, D74, I30, O13

INTRODUCTION

Hunger and poverty are among the most pressing issues facing humanity. Despite their prioritization in the Sustainable Development Goals, society is still far from solving these problems. They are particularly acute in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where about two-thirds of the global population lives in extreme poverty. An estimated 490 million people across Africa earn under USD 1.90 daily (UNCTAD, 2021), illustrating the persistent barriers many individuals face in obtaining enough safe and nutritious food, which poses a challenge to the continent's sustainable development process (Kitenge, 2023; UNICEF, 2019; WFP, 2023). Most SSA countries are dependent on agricultural imports and are therefore vulnerable to global socio-economic and geopolitical-related disturbances, ranging from the COVID-19 outbreak to climate-driven impacts (IMF, 2022; Onyeaka et al., 2022). Approximately half of the region's inhabitants earn their liv-

ing from agriculture, a sector responsible for around 23% of its GDP. However, food and nutrition insecurity remain a fundamental problem for the population (UNICEF, 2019; Hassen & Bilali, 2022; EC, 2022). This is mainly because agricultural production in the region is remarkably mediocre, as the sector has not been accorded the political priority it deserves. Since the adoption of the Maputo Declaration in 2003 by the African Union, which called on all member countries to allocate 10% of their public expenditures to agricultural development, only a handful have met the target (Hörter & Rudloff, 2023). Food systems at the global, national, and local levels are highly complex and constantly changing over time (FAO, 2023a; Myers, 2023; Kalachevska et al., 2022). Further geopolitical instability, climate change, and technological transformations pose additional risks of exacerbating the situation on the continent. The Russo-Ukrainian war already serves as an illustration of the existing and potential challenges to the functioning of agri-food systems and food security globally, as well as for the African continent. Comprehending food systems and using a systems-thinking approach are crucial to uncovering the root causes of system breakdowns and preventing recurrence. This should form the basis for an urgent revision of the continent's development strategy, particularly regarding agriculture and food security.

The study aims to summarize analytical views and available evidence on the Russo-Ukrainian war's impact on food and security in Africa, enabling recommendations to enhance the robustness of African nations through the development of sustainable agri-food systems. This paper examines interrelated challenges pertaining to agri-food systems, food insecurity and national and regional security concerns in Africa in light of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war and its impact. It explores lessons SSA countries can learn from the war to build robust, resilient systems.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of socio-economic and environmental factors drive global agri-food systems. These drivers include poverty and inequality, geopolitical instability, and the degradation of resources. They interact and help to shape various elements of the global agri-food systems (Abbasov & Gurbanzade, 2025; Mehibel et al., 2025). The effects of climate-related changes, the global pandemic, widespread conflicts, mass movements of people from conflict zones, and the Russo-Ukrainian war have exacerbated the global food systems and hunger, especially in Africa (Glauber, 2023). The war has jeopardized more than a third of the world's wheat trade, 17% of the world's maize trade, and almost 75% of the world's sunflower oil trade. According to Welsh (2023), it is causing food and nutrition insecurity for millions of people in SSA. It has already led to a food shortage in Africa, at 30 Mt, and a decrease in its economic availability due to inflation (over 40% in some countries) (WTI, 2023).

In Africa, more than one-third of countries rely heavily on Russia and Ukraine for wheat, including twenty countries where these sources provide 90% of imports (Statista, 2022). According to the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2022), 33 of Africa's 55

countries rely on imports for 90% or more of their wheat needs. The total volume of cereal imports is estimated at 100 Mt for the continent annually (WTI, 2023). A significant part of imports is provided by supplies from Ukraine and Russia.

Ukraine – the world leader in the production of sunflower oil – in 2021 provided the needs of this product for 36 African countries and wheat for more than half of the continent's countries. Ukraine supplied more than a third of wheat imports in Libya (48%), Eritrea (37%), Tunisia (36%), and Ethiopia (36%). Countries such as Mauritania, Morocco, and Kenya are somewhat less dependent on supplies from Ukraine, with a share of Ukraine in wheat imports of 26, 21, and 17%, respectively. In total, Ukraine supplied 13 Mt of agricultural products to 52 out of the 58 countries on the continent in 2021. Ukrainian exports are vital for maintaining food security, especially in economically disadvantaged countries facing food shortages; 33 of 36 such countries imported agricultural products from Ukraine (KSE, 2023).

The Russo-Ukrainian war has not only decreased the amount of agriexports immediately but also made the future supplies uncertain. A DLF report (DLF, 2023) estimates a 20% decrease in cultivated land availability compared to 2021 due to military operations and

mine contamination. Specifically, winter wheat sowings in 2023 covered 4.1 million hectares, down from 6.1 million hectares in 2021. Plantings of corn and sunflowers totaled just over 5.6 million hectares, a 5% reduction from 2022 (FAO, 2023b). Furthermore, over 400,000 hectares of agricultural land have been contaminated by military waste (DLF, 2023). The war drains the financial resources available to farmers owing to low domestic prices and complicated export challenges. Bogonos (2023) estimates that, with adequate financial assistance, production volumes of key export crops such as wheat and corn could return to pre-war levels only by 2030. Labor resources have declined due to military conscription and migration, and technical capabilities have also been impaired due to infrastructure damage and lost equipment from occupation, shelling, and flooding. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 84,200 units of agricultural machinery were either completely or partially damaged, four million tons of grains and oilseeds were destroyed or stolen, and storage facilities for 9.4 million tons of agricultural products were damaged or ruined. The total damages to Ukraine's agricultural sector exceed USD 6.6 billion, while the resulting losses in foregone agricultural revenue amount to USD 34.25 billion (Welsh, 2023). In such circumstances, it is obvious that matching these pre-war export volumes could prove difficult in the near and medium term.

The war is changing market structure and powers. Available data indicated that Russia has militarily and logistically squeezed Ukraine's world food market share despite a grain export agreement. Since the launch of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in August 2022, over 22 Mt of Ukrainian grains have been exported via Odesa, Chornomorsk, and Pivdennyi, collectively accounting for nearly half of the country's maritime agricultural exports prior to the war (WFP, 2022). During 2022 and 2023, Ukraine's wheat exports lagged behind Russia's by almost half, whereas from September to November 2021, Ukraine exported more than Russia did. Egyptian wheat import data demonstrate this shifting terrain. The 2022 imports from Russia nearly doubled over those from 2021 to 2.4 million metric tons, while Ukrainian imports dropped five-fold (WTI, 2023). While transport corridors may reopen, Ukraine faces intense challenges in reclaiming its pre-war agricultural export capacity and market position in the years ahead (Melnyk et al., 2025).

It is important to emphasize the danger of importers becoming dependent on Russia's food supplies, as this can have numerous negative consequences. Russia's increased market influence is raising concerns regarding the inadequate capacity of other nations to quickly offset Ukraine's wheat supply. An increase in Russia's export taxes, resulting in a 25% wheat export reduction, would precipitate a 2 Mt decline in imports. Furthermore, the median import price is projected to surge by an average of 5.2%. If export taxes lead to a 50% decrease in exports (attributed to a 55.6% added value, a foreseeable necessity in the light of war financing requirements), total imports are anticipated to plummet by 3.4 Mt. Correspondingly, the average price is expected to experience a 9% escalation versus the levels observed before the war. Notably, certain African nations, such as Nigeria, are already experiencing an elevated price level surpassing 11% (WTI, 2023). In addition, an in-depth analysis of Russian wheat exporters across 61 importer markets from 2002 to 2011 reveals discriminatory pricing practices employed by these exporters (Uhl et al., 2016). There is a tendency by Russian exporters to amplify the impact of exchange rate fluctuations on prices, especially elevated wheat prices, which predominantly affect developing countries. When global wheat prices are high, Russian exporters tend to further inflate prices for economically disadvantaged wheat-importing nations.

The UNCTAD (2023) underscores the profound and negative impact of inflation associated with food shortages attributable to the Russia-Ukraine war. Specifically, estimates reveal an average inflation rate of 4.4% in Central Africa and exceeding 10% in other regions. North Africa experienced the highest average inflation at 25.6%, propelled by elevated food and energy expenditures in Sudan, while southern Africa recorded an average of 21%, driven by inflation in Zimbabwe. A general deterioration in economic development indicators is anticipated, with Africa's current account deficit projected to deepen, moving from 4.7% of GDP in 2021 to 5.6% in 2022. This decline is largely attributed to war-related trade deficits and price increases for food, energy, and other commodities (UNCTAD, 2023). The Russo-Ukrainian war has created significant ambiguity about when it might be resolved and its impact on agri-food systems (Flowers, 2022). Moreover, the related price spikes caused by the war are clear evidence of a broken global agricultural system.

With 600 million hectares of uncultivated arable land – nearly 65% of the world’s total (ACET, 2017; AfDB, 2019) – Africa is rich in agricultural resources. Yet crop yields fall far short of their potential (Statista, 2023). Considering that 70% of the population earns a living from farming, it is remarkable that the continent imports about USD 35 billion in food each year (Christiaensen, 2020). Shocks ranging from climate change and extreme weather events to epidemics such as pest invasions and COVID-19 are constraining the capacity of agri-food systems to provide safe, nutritious, and affordable food for all populations (Aiyedogbon et al., 2022; D. Semenda & O. Semenda, 2018). These factors have caused agricultural productivity to drop by 18% and hunger to increase by more than 20% (Flowers, 2022). Africa’s population is forecasted to reach almost 2.5 billion by 2050 (Statista, 2025), and the vulnerable people, who are already experiencing absolute poverty and malnutrition, are the worst hit. The hike in prices is pushing consumers toward more affordable but less nutrient-dense options, potentially altering diets and affecting health and well-being in Africa. For African countries to effectively fight food and nutrition insecurity, they must build more resilient and robust agri-food systems (Guliyev et al., 2024; Orlov et al., 2021; World Bank & FAO, 2021). It is worth noting the role of stable agri-input supply to guarantee the performance of agri-food chains.

Regarding fertilizer, Russia accounted for 15% of global exports and ranked as the leading exporter of nitrogen fertilizers, the second-largest exporter of potassic fertilizers, and the third-largest exporter of phosphorus fertilizers (Teixeira Da Silva et al., 2023; FAO, 2022). The imports of potash from Russia and Belarus account for about 90% of the supply in West Africa, and the war caused an increase in the price of fertilizers (three to four times), resulting in a deficit of about 2 Mt (WTI, 2023). The decline in fertilizer imports is particularly hurting agricultural yields in SSA, affecting food security and food sovereignty across Africa, with some countries failing to control their agricultural production systems due to disruption in both the energy and fertilizer supply chains (Koilo, 2024; FAO et al., 2021; FAO, 2023b; UNICEF, 2019). The prevailing market instabilities and price fluctuations are finally recognized as inflationary factors exacerbating the extant problem of poverty and food insecurity.

Additionally, the war affects other sectors of the African economy. Although the escalating prices of crude oil and natural gas are adversely affecting food and nutrition security, they are expected to augment export revenues for African countries engaged in fuel and metal sales (Afreximbank, 2022). However, there is the potential risk of these countries succumbing to a resource-curse trajectory (Sotnyk et al., 2021; UNCTAD, 2022). Despite the ostensibly advantageous conditions for commodity-dependent African exporters, a failure to take advantage of opportunities stemming from the surge in commodity prices since 2021 has been observed (UNCTAD, 2022). Moreover, in recent times, Ukraine has served as a substantial market for agricultural products from various African countries. On the other hand, in 2021, Ukraine imported 168,000 tons of agricultural commodities, valued at USD 380 million, from 39 African countries (KSE, 2023). The primary contributors to this import were Côte d’Ivoire (26%), Malawi (19%), Egypt (15%), Ghana (11%), and South Africa (7%). A reduction in Ukraine’s import capacity, arising from diminished market potential and logistical challenges, is anticipated to result in adverse consequences for African economies, including a risk to multiple facets of national and regional security.

The above analytical data and experts’ views confirm the profound war’s consequences for food and nutrition security in Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. That serves as a clarion call for the need to build resilient and robust agri-food systems to guarantee sustainable food supplies and strengthen national and regional security.

2. GENERALIZATION OF THE MAIN STATEMENTS

It is worth noting that shortcomings in agri-food systems and food insecurity in Africa existed before the Russo-Ukrainian war. According to AfDB (2022), about 283 million Africans were experiencing hunger prior to recent shocks. About 281 million people across Africa experience daily food insufficiency, and almost three-quarters cannot afford a diet that meets nutritional needs (Mohajan, 2022). However, the continent’s struggle with food insecurity has

gone from serious to critical, mainly because of the Russo-Ukrainian war. The current agri-food trends signal a trajectory marked by sustained food insecurity and the destruction and degradation of natural resources. Due to successive climatic events such as droughts and floods, domestic agricultural production in Africa is not enough to lessen dependence on global markets. In the African context, inadequate food access is a key factor behind political and economic instability. It aggravates social strains caused by poverty and inequality and can threaten national security. The dire consequences include political instability, military coups, social instability, criminal behavior, food fraud and counterfeiting, the exploitation of vulnerable populations, and a decline in well-being.

The continent cannot unlock the economic potential of its youthful population without a stable and plentiful food supply. This raises a critical question: why does Africa, endowed with fertile land and young agricultural labor, rely on foreign sources for its food? The Russo-Ukrainian war can, in fact, serve as a catalyst for African Union leaders. Africa needs to learn from this crisis and curb its significant dependence on imported food, particularly from developed nations. In other words, the current crisis of acute

food insecurity resulting from the Russo-Ukrainian war presents African countries with a golden opportunity to reform their agricultural policies and build resilient and robust agri-food systems based on traditional foods such as beans, bananas, cassava, maize, plantains, and yams. Transforming agri-food systems and ensuring food and nutrition security should be a key strategic aim of the continent. This, however, requires a fundamental change in the mindset of both policymakers and stakeholders.

The deployment of strategic thinking and integrated approaches is vital. This means the need to clearly outline the main challenges African countries are facing regarding the agri-food systems performance and security issues in view of the Russo-Ukrainian war, and elaboration of short-, medium-, and long-term strategies to overcome (Table 1).

2.1. Short-term actions to transform African agri-food systems

Commenting on the data presented in Table 1, to transform the agri-food systems in Africa in the short-term, the following policies and strategies should be implemented, taking into account the context of each country:

Table 1. Agri-food systems and food and nutrition security in Africa in the context of the Russian-Ukraine war: Key challenges and strategies to overcome

Source: Our developments based on synthesis and generalization of earlier analyses (HLPE, 2020, 2023; World Bank and FAO, 2021; African Union, 2023; UN, 2022b; Chikava, 2022; Flowers, 2022; Moffat, 2023; UNDP, 2022; EC, 2022; AfDB, 2022; FAO, 2022; UN, 2022a; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018; FAO et al., 2019, 2023a, 2023b).

| Key challenges | Short-term Strategies | Medium-term Strategies | Long-term Strategies |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1. Vulnerability of the population 2. Hunger. 3. Distortion of markets. 4. Malnutrition and wasting. 5. Security issues | 1. Establish and increase regional food stocks. 2. Provide access to food banks/reserves to the most vulnerable groups. 3. Remove restrictions impeding access to food markets. 4. Call for available international assistance. 5. Information and early warning system. 6. Mitigate climate and safeguard biodiversity. 7. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the agri-food system. | 1. Provide access to food banks/reserves. 2. Give priority to the most vulnerable people. 3. Increasing local, regional, and global resilience to food imports. 4. Encouraging pathways to self-reliance in combination with free trade. 5. Support production systems with comprehensive technical expertise. 6. Strengthen autonomous crop monitoring capabilities 7. Call for available international assistance. 8. Effective information and early warning systems. 9. Mitigate climate and safeguard biodiversity. 10. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of agri-food systems. | 1. Deploy holistic and integrated agricultural development approaches. 2. Build a robust and resilient agri-food system. 3. Prioritize agriculture and food systems and effectively address emerging challenges. 4. Transform farming systems 5. Practice all-year-round agriculture. 6. Greening the economy and avoiding food loss and waste. 7. Replicate the "Operation Feed Yourself Programme" of the 1970s. 8. Effective information and early warning systems. 9. Mitigate climate and safeguard biodiversity. 10. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the agri-food system. |

- Strengthen initiatives that provide food to vulnerable populations through access to strategic reserves. This approach should be multi-stakeholder-led and not only include governments.
- Major grain producers in Africa should be encouraged to increase their production and distribution systems.
- Barriers limiting market access, such as border limitations on food and feed movement, should be eliminated.
- Essential inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers, machinery, and energy, should be provided to ensure sustainable production throughout the dry and wet seasons.
- Relevant data, especially shaped to meet the demands of small-scale farmers, should be provided to enable them to practice all-season operations.
- Fixing the causes of inflationary and seasonal price fluctuations makes it more difficult to get access to food supplies.
- Safeguarding biodiversity and mitigating climate change impacts are vital for strengthening agricultural outputs and promoting access to healthy nutrition.
- Harvesting rainwater for dry season farming to supplement rainy season harvests, and particularly vegetable crops production.

2.2. Medium-term policy to transform African agri-food systems

In the medium-term, the bottom-line objective is that African leaders and development stakeholders must pursue effective strategies that aim to achieve long-term food sovereignty and safety. Developing efficient and resilient agri-food systems in Africa should prioritize ending hunger, advancing research on climate-resilient crops, linking smallholder farmers to markets, and providing farmers with timely and relevant data to make informed decisions. African policymakers must prioritize building resilient agri-food systems and strength-

ening the capacity of local communities, especially smallholder farmers, to improve agricultural productivity and access to food. This also requires adequate investment in infrastructure and technologies that support sustainable agri-food systems. In addition, climate change is a major cross-cutting factor that must be included in the strategies for building resilient agri-food systems in Africa. Such measures will help secure food for the continent while also enhancing stability and security. The war underscores the need for Africa to provide its citizens with nutritious, affordable food to ensure health and productivity. African countries should put in place policies to retain the bulk of locally produced food within Africa.

2.3. Long-term strategy to transform African agri-food systems

African countries must prioritize long-term solutions to prevent recurring food crises. Policies should adopt a holistic and inclusive approach, integrating climate change, environmental sustainability, mental and physical health, and overall quality of life into decision-making and implementation. In the long run, prioritizing resilience over efficiency in the agri-food system is vital. The long-term goal is to strengthen these vital sectors by limiting import flows. Government policies and emergency measures should focus on keeping people out of poverty. Key long-term measures for building resilient agri-food systems are summarized below.

2.3.1. Investing in agricultural production

African countries must channel investment into regions with untapped production potential for cultivating the land, which is the most critical factor in food production on the continent. African countries need to recall the Maputo target and reinforce their support for agriculture. Access to productive resources, decent employment opportunities, social protection, quality education and health care, better rural infrastructure, and digital and financial services must be ensured. In addition, long-term resilience for human resources development requires the anchoring of efforts in all parts of societies, especially in the deprived rural areas. Africa has great potential to supply the global market with many tropical foodstuffs.

2.3.2. Relevant research and development on agri-food systems

Africa's food supply system vulnerabilities, exposed by the Ukraine war, require research and development efforts that address urgent issues while planning for the future. Investment in agricultural and food system research and development (R&D) is key to increasing productivity, concentrating on nutrition-friendly crops, determining the most suitable regions for cultivation, and strengthening food and nutrition security over the long term. It is crucial to deploy sustainable agriculture practices and conserve fertile lands to enhance food and nutrition security. The critical role of data and the necessity for robust data systems must be accorded serious attention in Africa. Harnessing science, technology, and innovation can help address the continent's underperformance in agriculture. However, this potential remains unexploited, as many African countries experienced a decline in R&D funding, which amounted to only 0.39% of GDP between 1990 and 2016 (Mishenin et al., 2022). Africa's 33 million small-scale farming households, key drivers of both agricultural output and employment, should be accorded the necessary priority. Transforming and modernizing agri-food systems in Africa also requires the deployment of digitalization, innovation, effective early warning and monitoring systems, and the agricultural market information system. Better access to reliable data for informed decision-making will allow agriculture to more effectively support inclusive economic development. Developing a regional food balance sheet will improve data systems, facilitating informed and objective decisions. The collected data will facilitate an understanding of what is working well and the design of effective integrated regional approaches. The data will also help to ensure that food moves from surplus to deficient areas.

2.3.3. Greening the economy and tackling food loss and waste

Climate change is likely to become the foremost challenge to ensuring food and nutrition security worldwide. By disrupting weather patterns, climate change negatively affects the growth and

productivity of African agriculture. Supporting climate-resilient technologies can help expand food production and productivity while building resilience and reducing hunger and poverty. African policymakers must therefore formulate sustainable, long-term measures to improve crop resilience to climate change. There is a need for African countries to speed up the green transition. Accelerating the decarbonization mechanisms and the deployment of nature-positive solutions are critical. Increasing the resilience of agri-food systems also calls for safeguarding, responsibly managing, and rehabilitating natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems. Combining the building of robust and resilient agri-food systems with the reduction of emissions and climate risks is the right strategy to pursue. Renewable energy is the key pivot of this strategy. By using ample clean energy, the fertilizer industry can cut its own emissions while also offering solutions that lower emissions across other sectors.

Efforts should focus on growing climate- and nutrition-sensitive crops, pinpointing regions for optimal productivity, and improving food and nutrition security along with system resilience. In other words, it is necessary to deploy sustainable agriculture practices and soil fertility conservation methods to boost long-term food production and security. Another important long-term strategy for building resilient agri-food systems in Africa is to curb food loss and waste, generating a three-pronged benefit for climate, food security, and sustainability of food systems.

2.3.4. Diverse multi-stakeholder inclusion

National policies must be harmonized at all levels, regional and continental. It is crucial to support the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders, such as public sector organizations, the private sector, as well as civil society and philanthropic organizations, to help the most vulnerable in communities in a coordinated manner. The Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) is an important framework for developing trade and agri-food systems on the continent. In addition, cooperating with international organizations and other relevant stakeholders will help to address the root causes of food and nutrition insecurity and build sustainable agri-food systems in Africa.

2.3.5. National, regional, and continental approaches

Building resilient and robust agri-food systems in Africa requires continental and regional approaches. In this context, the AU has been at the forefront of implementing Africa-wide strategic initiatives. In the medium- and long-term, international trade can offer African countries access to foreign markets. It is therefore important that the Regional Economic Communities on the continent harmonize their key policies and strategies

in order to strengthen markets and implement measures that will improve cross-border trade in agricultural products. The Africa Continental Free Trade Area offers enormous opportunities to create more jobs, foster trade, and bolster the resilience of agri-food systems on the continent. It will improve regional trade linkages, overcome barriers to transporting crucial food items, enable new markets, and strengthen supply chain networks. In addition, international development partners are essential for strengthening continental and regional agri-food systems.

CONCLUSION

We summarize analytical views and available data on the impact of the Russo-Ukrainian war on the food and security situation in Africa and draw recommendations to strengthen the resilience of African countries through the development of sustainable agri-food systems.

The following interrelated challenges, pertaining to agri-food systems, food insecurity, and national and regional security concerns in Africa, were identified in light of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war and its effects: increased vulnerability of the population, widespread hunger, market distortions, worsening malnutrition, and exhaustion, as well as exacerbation of national and regional security problems. In light of the identified risks, short-term strategies include expanding regional food reserves, ensuring access to food banks for the most vulnerable groups, removing barriers to market access, activating international support, and strengthening early warning and monitoring systems. In the medium term, the focus shifts to strengthening food security through the development of self-reliance alongside open trade, supported by technical assistance for agricultural operations, improved yield monitoring, expanded information systems, and continuous assessment of agri-food processes. In the long term, the priority is to overcome structural risks through the implementation of integrated agricultural approaches, the development of sustainable agri-food systems, the transformation of farming based on year-round production, the ‘greening’ of the economy, the reduction of food losses, and the institutionalization of stable early warning and control systems.

In conclusion, the Russo-Ukrainian war clearly reveals the vulnerability of most African countries to external and multi-dimensional shocks. The war also highlights the interconnection among food systems, national security, and how geopolitical conflicts can disrupt global food security, especially in Africa. To mitigate Africa’s significant dependence on food imports, it is essential to learn from the impacts of the Russo-Ukrainian war, as the failure to address food and nutrition insecurity in Africa can compromise regional, national, and even global security.

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