



Arab food security monitoring framework

Country reviews

Mauritania

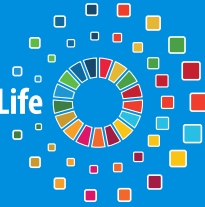


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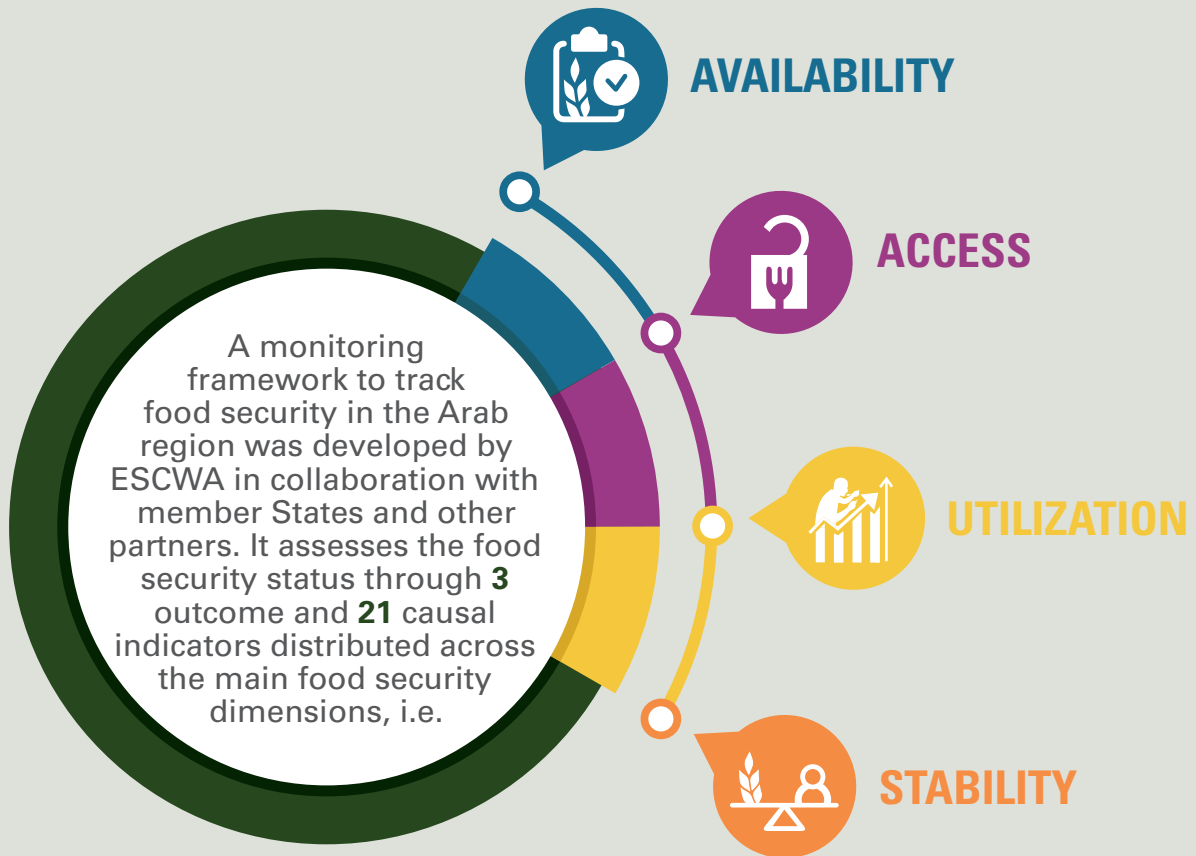


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Key Messages



The monitoring framework highlights that Mauritania is confronting a difficult food security situation, as rates of undernourishment, stunting, wasting, anaemia among women and obesity are all elevated while the country is also dependent on food imports. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.





Introduction

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and its partners developed the Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework that helps countries assess their food security situation despite its complex and multidimensional nature.¹ The Monitoring Framework is an outcome of the project entitled “Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region”, implemented in collaboration and partnership with Arab countries, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), academia and other experts, and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The framework builds on the globally agreed upon definition of food security as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”² which, as defined, comprises four dimensions, namely availability, access, utilization, and stability, can be evaluated at individual, household, national, regional, or global levels and can be seasonal, transitory or chronic. The framework was developed over a period of three years and involved consultations with more than 200 Arab and international experts. It involved a wide-ranging literature review to account for the latest thinking and experiences in assessing and monitoring food security at national, regional and global levels as well as a mapping of past and present policies, strategies and action plans.

The encompassing review led to the development of a comprehensive monitoring framework that tracks food security at different spatial levels, considers its four dimensions and accounts for both individual and household food security while facilitating a follow-up of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The end result was the Monitoring Framework that expresses food security and nutrition as a function of a multitude of indicators spread in its four dimensions, though approximately five to six indicators under each dimension account for most of the variations and thus are more consequential than the rest. Most of the selected indicators are already widely used globally to monitor aspects of the food system, and the SDGs and other plans of actions are used by major global institutions as development, economic, social, health, or environmental indicators. It was also ensured that the indicators are measurable, relevant to the Arab context and available for at least 50 per cent of Arab countries or the regional population, or both.

1 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2019. Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/4). Beirut. Available at <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/tracking-food-security-arab-region>.

2 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 2009. Report of the Committee on World Food Security: Final version. Agenda item III, Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on World Food Security, 14, 15 and 17 October 2009, CFS:2009/2 Rev.2. Rome.



The 24 indicators that were selected are split into a core pillar with three ex post or outcome indicators — prevalence of undernourishment, moderate or severe food insecurity and obesity, while the remaining 21 ex ante or causal indicators were further split into the four food security dimensions as shown below. All the indicators are global in nature while catering to regional specificities and are grouped as follows:

- **The Core Pillar** comprises three outcome indicators that provide a picture of the prevailing food security and nutrition situation resulting from policies and programmes being implemented as reflected in the form of malnutrition – undernutrition (low caloric intake), overnutrition (excess caloric intake) or nutrient deficiency (low nutrient intake);

1 Core Indicators (CO)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
C01	Prevalence of undernourishment ^R %	Undernourishment	2.1.1
C02	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity measured using FIES ^R %	Food insecurity	2.1.2
C03	Prevalence of obesity in the adult population (18 years and older) ^R %	Obesity	

^R : Reversed During Normalization

- **The Availability** dimension comprises six indicators reflecting the supply side of food, namely, physical food inflow and outflow at macro and micro levels through production, trade, distribution, and others;

2 Food Availability Indicators (AV)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
AV1	Primary wheat yield as a percentage of potential achievable yield - %	Yields	2.3.1
AV2	Agriculture Orientation index for government expenditures - Index	Agriculture expenditure	2.a.1
AV3	Food losses (% total food available) ^R %	Food loss	12.3
AV4	Average dietary energy supply adequacy - %	Dietary energy supply	
AV5	Wheat import dependency ratio ^R %	Import dependency	
AV6	Share of water resources used in agriculture out of total renewable water resources ^R %	Agriculture water	6.4.2



- **The Access** dimension comprises five indicators reflecting the ability of the population to acquire needed food through financial means and/or socioeconomic strengths with determinants including income/revenues, prices and supply-chain infrastructure;

3 Food Access Indicators (AC)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
AC1	Poverty headcount ratio ^R %	Poverty	1.1.1/1.2.1/1.2.2
AC2	Share of food consumption expenditure in total household consumption expenditure ^R %	Food consumption	
AC3	Unemployment rate ^R %	Unemployment	8.5.2
AC4	Logistics performance - index	Logistics	
AC5	Inflation, consumer prices ^R %	Inflation	

- **The Utilization** dimension comprises five indicators touching on nutrition impact or factors affecting it such as availability of basic water and sanitation infrastructure and critical health parameters showing the impact of food unavailability or nutrient deficiency, namely, stunting, wasting and anaemia;

4 Food Utilization Indicators (UT)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
UT1	The population using at least basic drinking water services - %	Drinking water access	1.4.1/6.1.1
UT2	The population using at least basic sanitation services - %	Sanitation access	1.4.1/6.2.1
UT3	Children under 5 years of age affected by stunting ^R %	Child stunting	2.2.1
UT4	Children under 5 years of age affected by wasting ^R %	Child wasting	2.2.2
UT5	Anaemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) ^R %	Women anaemia	

- **The Stability** dimension comprises five indicators highlighting the variability in food production or supply factors that might affect these such as climate change, weather events, price shocks and sociopolitical conditions, all of which might impact the other food security dimensions and the core pillar as well;

5 Stability Indicators (ST)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
ST1	Climate change vulnerability index ^R	Climate change	
ST2	Food price anomalies standard deviation ^R	Price anomalies	2.c.1
ST3	Political stability and absence of violence - ranking	Political stability	
ST4	Per capita food production variability - \$1,000/capita ^R	Production variability	
ST5	Per capita food supply variability - kcal/capita/day ^R	Supply variability	



Data are collected and computed using a dedicated Excel template. The results are presented in the form of a dashboard with two overlapping doughnut charts whose ten rings represent the data normalized to score between 0 (worst performance) and 10 (best performance), as depicted in the graph below. The inner doughnut displays the results of the core indicators while the outer doughnut shows those of the four food security dimension indicators. During the normalization process, indicators with a low value indicating good performance were reversed and are represented with an (R). The doughnut chart is always accompanied by a table presenting the raw indicator data together with the year of data collection and the overall trend between two time periods.

By design, the framework is mechanistic for two reasons: (i) indicators are set and distributed across the food security core pillar and four dimensions; and (ii) the interpretation of results follows a determined path consisting, first, in evaluating results of the three core indicators to identify food security and/or nutritional outcome, and second, in examining the 21 dimension indicators to identify hotspot areas that need immediate action. Stakeholders only need to enter data into the provided Excel template to generate the doughnut graph and related table containing raw data and trends. The data can be sourced at the regional, national and, if available, sub-national levels and disaggregated along gender lines or others noting, however, that a great majority of indicators cannot be disaggregated below the national level.

A complete description of the framework, which was endorsed by the Executive Council of AOAD in March 2019, was published and is available at ESCWA official publication website³ under the title “Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region”⁴. In addition to providing a full background on the framework, the publication presents the key results of tracking food security at the Arab regional level and the trend over the considered years and reviews selected policies and actions that might be considered under each of the indicators to remedy arising concerns. The publication is accompanied by a technical document entitled “Manual for Monitoring Food Security in the Arab Region”, which provides a more detailed description for each of the 24 indicators comprising the monitoring framework including, when applicable, computation methodology, justification for selection, linkage to SDGs, potential data sources, and normalization process. It also overviews the use of the accompanying Excel template. Since the completion of the Food Security Monitoring Framework, numerous national agricultural and statistics experts from Arab countries have received in-depth training that took place in Tunis⁵ and Beirut⁶ and which focused on how to utilize the framework and interpret results for maximum impact for policy and programme design and development.

This report provides a series of food security overviews for the 22 Arab countries, which build on the above-described Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework. Its aim is to further highlight how to use the framework as well as to build capacity on its use with a focus on the national level. As such, it supports Arab countries in their endeavours to utilize the framework in the implementation of food security programmes, to assess the prevailing situation and

3 See https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/tracking-food-security-arab-region-english_1.pdf.

4 See https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/manual-monitoring-food-security-arab-region-english_1.pdf.

5 See <https://www.unescwa.org/events/training1-food-security-monitoring-framework-arab>.

6 See <https://www.unescwa.org/events/training2-food-security-monitoring-framework-arab>.



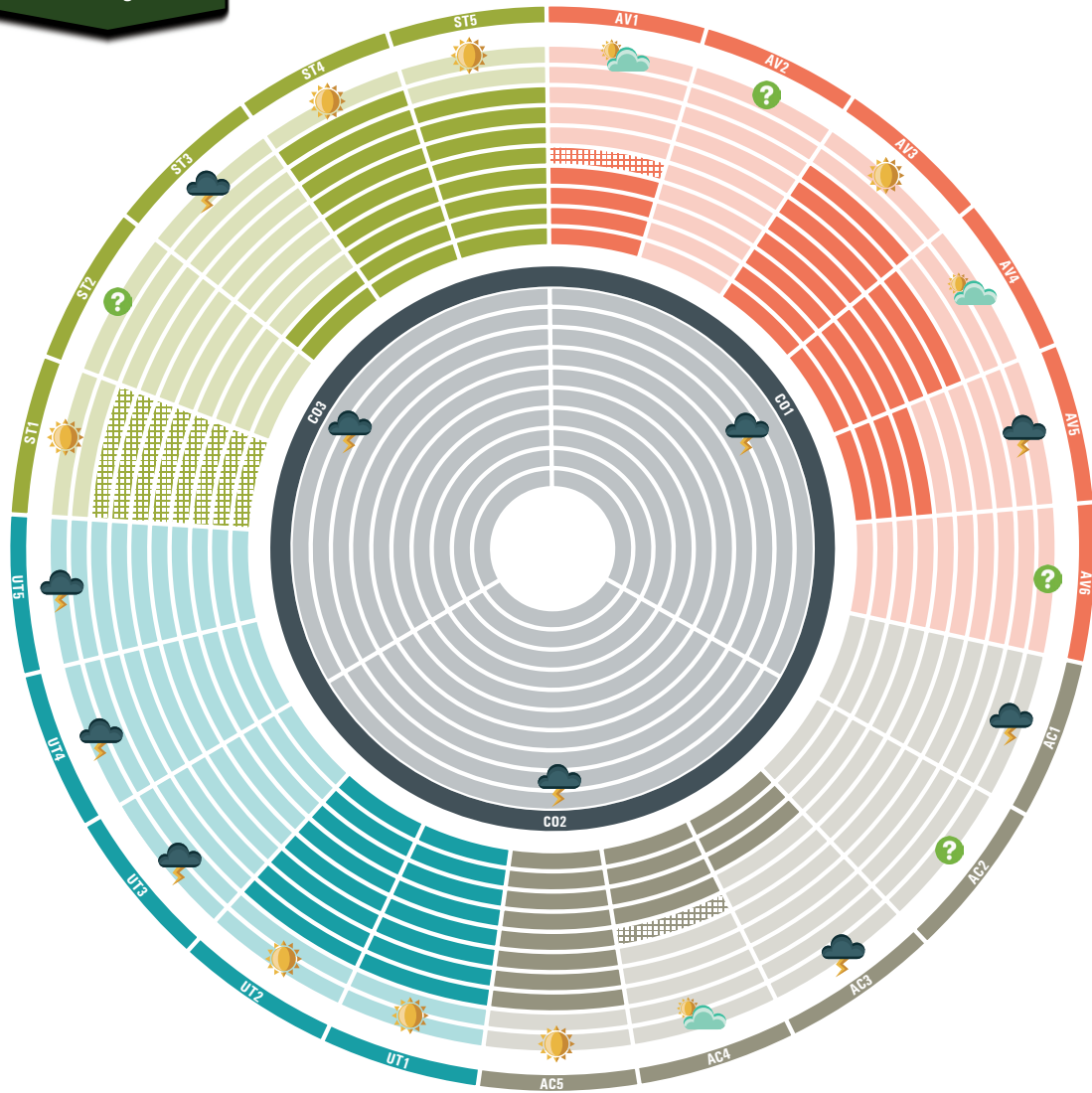
to follow up on progress achieved towards the implementation of selected SDGs. It should further enhance capacity at country level and support efforts of national experts to collect focused data, analyse them using a dedicated framework and interpret meaningfully the results to provide policymakers with an overall view of their respective country's food security situation while also outlining alternative paths to address the situation.

The country overviews were produced by ESCWA with data delivered by national experts who provided or reviewed the underlying data (see attached list) and from global databases, as appropriate. For some countries, critical data are still missing, which should serve as a call to action to collect and provide the necessary data as the basis of more accurate and focused advice. The data were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, some results might not reflect the current situation. It is hoped that the report will raise the necessary awareness so that countries can make additional efforts to remediate the lack of data.



Food security dashboard

Arab region



2010 Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Latest Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Performance: ☀ High: Proceed Action | ☁ Average: More Action | ⚡ Low: Urgent Action | ? No Data



Food security indicators, world vs. Arab region

Indicators		World		Arab region			Trend
		Latest		2010	Latest		
Code	Description	Value	Year	Value	Value	Year	
CORE INDICATORS							
CO1	Undernourishment ^R %	10.8	2016	11.5	12.1	2016	●
CO2	Food insecurity ^R %	9.2	2018	n.a.	12.2	2016	
CO3	Obesity ^R %	13.0	2016	24.6	28.4	2016	●
AVAILABILITY INDICATORS							
AV1	Wheat yields - %	n.a.		76.5	82.2	2017	●
AV2	Agriculture expenditure - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AV3	Food loss ^R %	n.a.		7.3	6.8	2013	●
AV4	Dietary energy supply - %	n.a.		131	131	2017	●
AV5	Wheat Import dependency ^R %	n.a.		62.5	65.0	2012	●
AV6	Agriculture water ^R %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ACCESS INDICATORS							
AC1	Poverty ^R %	26.2	2015	n.a.	16.6	mult.	
AC2	Food consumption ^R %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AC3	Unemployment ^R %	5.0	2018	9.6	10.4	mult.	●
AC4	Logistics - index	2.8	2016	2.6	2.7	2016	●
AC5	Inflation ^R %	2.5	2018	5.7	12.8	mult.	●
UTILIZATION INDICATORS							
UT1	Drinking water access - %	88.5	2015	84.3	86.9	2015	●
UT2	Sanitation access - %	68.0	2015	78.9	80.8	2015	●
UT3	Child stunting ^R %	22.2	2017	n.a.	22.9	mult.	
UT4	Child wasting ^R %	7.5	2017	n.a.	8.7	mult.	
UT5	Women anaemia ^R %	32.8	2016	34.2	35.5	2016	●
STABILITY INDICATORS							
ST1	Climate change ^R - index	n.a.		n.a.	0.1	2019	
ST2	Price Anomalies ^R - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ST3	Political stability - ranking	n.a.		20	14	2017	●
ST4	Production variability ^R - \$/1,000/capita	n.a.		10.3	10.1	2016	●
ST5	Supply variability ^R - kcal/cap/day	n.a.		32.8	29.8	2013	●

^R : Reversed During Normalization n.a.= Not Available mult.= Multiple years
 ● Red: Negative Trend ● Yellow: Neutral Trend ● Green: Positive Trend

Source: Computed by ESCWA.





Country background

A. Natural resources

Mauritania spans over one million km² in West Africa. Approximately two thirds of the land are classified as desert and are uninhabited. Most economic activities are located in the south in the Senegalese-

Mauritanian sedimentary basin, which includes the coastal zone and Senegal River valley. The Senegal River provides most of the water.¹

Box 1. Pastoralism and food security

Pastoralism and livestock production have long been the mainstay of the agricultural economy of Mauritania and constitute to this day the bulk of agricultural gross domestic product (GDP). However, recurrent droughts over the past 30 years have placed serious stress on this sector. This is causing large numbers of nomadic producers to settle into marginal areas of the country, mostly in the southern part. Settling places additional stress on natural resources and contributes to land degradation and engages people and animals into a vicious cycle of poverty-land degradation-poverty.

There are many reasons underlying the increased vulnerability of the livestock herds. Prime among them is the shift from the traditional camel, goats and sheep herding to cow husbandry. Cows are more productive but less hardy and require higher quality feed which is not always available. Moreover, the Mauritanian State discourages mobile pastoralism and mobility. Settled herders must now compete with crop production for water and land, which causes further degradation. Agropastoralism, which integrates crop and livestock production, could be further developed as an integral system to reduce the production risk with the appropriate crop and livestock species grown or raised in specific agroecological zones.

Source: Wilson and Thys, 2018.

¹ Toupet and others, 2019.



B. Socioeconomy

The majority of its population (4.6 million) is concentrated along the rapidly urbanizing coastline. It is a low middle-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$5.2 billion corresponding to a per capita GDP of approximately \$1,200.² Agriculture contributes to 28 per cent of GDP. Half

the population is still rural and relies on a livelihood based on natural resources, including crops, livestock and fishing. The population is very young: 40 per cent are under 15 years of age, and the annual population growth rate is high, at 2.8 per cent.

C. Agriculture and food security

Pastoralism, both mobile and semi-settled, provides the country's need in red meat and alone contributes 80 per cent of agricultural GDP. Fishing on the rich Atlantic coast is an important contributor to the economy. However, 60 per cent of food staples is imported, which places stress on the country's food security. Mauritania is highly prone to droughts, which impose a heavy toll on people, resources and livelihoods. The 2012 drought left more than 800,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance. In December 2019, more than 360,000 people faced Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 (crisis) or worse (emergency) levels of food insecurity according to a recent analysis from Cadre Harmonisé.³

Food security is a recurrent concern, due to the paucity of resources and economic constraints. WFP estimates that 23 out of the 52 administrative units (departments) were affected by food insecurity in 2019.⁴ According to recent estimates by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 123,000 children will need to be assisted in order to address acute malnutrition.⁵ The south-east of the country has experienced an influx of refugees fleeing Mali since 2012. The number of refugees is estimated to be close to 60,000, all heavily dependent on food aid for their food security.⁶ WFP and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide support to the affected population (native and refugees) in the form of food assistance and direct cash transfers.

² World Bank, n. d.

³ Acaps, n. d.

⁴ World Food Programme (WFP), 2020.

⁵ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), n. d.

⁶ WFP, 2020.





Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** was 11.3 per cent in 2016, which was an increase from 8.3 per cent in 2010. This increase is due to successive droughts and consequent poor food production;
- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was evaluated at 18.3 per cent of the population. Compared to the Arab region average of 12.2 per cent, Mauritania's food insecurity is of concern;
- **Prevalence of adult obesity (CO3)** also increased in the country between 2010 and 2016, from 10.3 per cent to 12.7 per cent, respectively, though it remains well below the regional average of 28.4 per cent. Females obesity at (18.5 per cent is almost three-fold that of males at 6.6 per cent.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available, and Mauritania is not a major wheat producer;
- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** data are not available;
- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** decreased from an average of 5 per cent to less than 1 per cent between 2010 and 2018. The decrease might be a reflection of a lack of adequate data rather than an improvement;
- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** was relatively stable at 125 per cent and 126 per cent, respectively, between 2010 and 2017. The regional average is 131 per cent meaning that the country has sufficient food supply;
- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** decreased from 78.3 per cent to 67.5 per cent between 2010 and 2018. It is high as the country does not produce much wheat but rather other types of cereals;
- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** data are not available.



C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at \$3.2/day (AC1)** affected 31 per cent of the population in 2014. Poor people might be unable to afford food;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** reached 41.6 per cent the same year;
- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** slightly increased between 2010 and 2017 from 10.6 per cent to 11.8 per cent. Male unemployment stood at 9.09 per cent in 2017, whereas female unemployment was at 12.8 per cent. This might lead to further challenges in economic access to food especially in poor households;
- **Logistical performance (AC4)** is the lowest among all Arab countries, at 1.9 in 2016 indicating poor food supply and access particularly in remote areas;
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** decreased in a favourable trend from 6.28 per cent in 2010 to 2.3 per cent in 2019. This could ease the pressure off the consumer, but it needs to be coupled with other safety nets that enhance the economic situation of the poor.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** improved substantially from 65 per cent in 2010 to 80 per cent in 2014; the country still has a long way to go to provide access to its entire population; malnutrition, according to the classification by the World Health Organization (WHO). The country is far from the target set for 2030 by the World Health Assembly (WHA);⁷
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** was at 66.1 per cent in 2014, a marked improvement from 38 per cent in 2010 though the level is alarming due to its implication on food safety, notably the spread of nutrition-related diseases and microbes;
- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** stood at 27.9 per cent in 2015, around the upper limit of the medium severity of
- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** was recorded at 14.8 per cent in 2015, within the range of the very high severity of malnutrition according to WHO classification. The value is well above the targets set for 2030 by WHA.⁸ This situation is alarming and needs close monitoring, and data in this context are crucial;
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** is also extremely high in Mauritania at about 38 per cent for both 2010 and 2016.

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** was 0.25 in 2019, an indication that the country could be heavily impacted by the combined effects of increased weather-related disasters, sea-level rise and loss of agricultural productivity;

⁷ FAO and others, 2019.

⁸ Ibid.



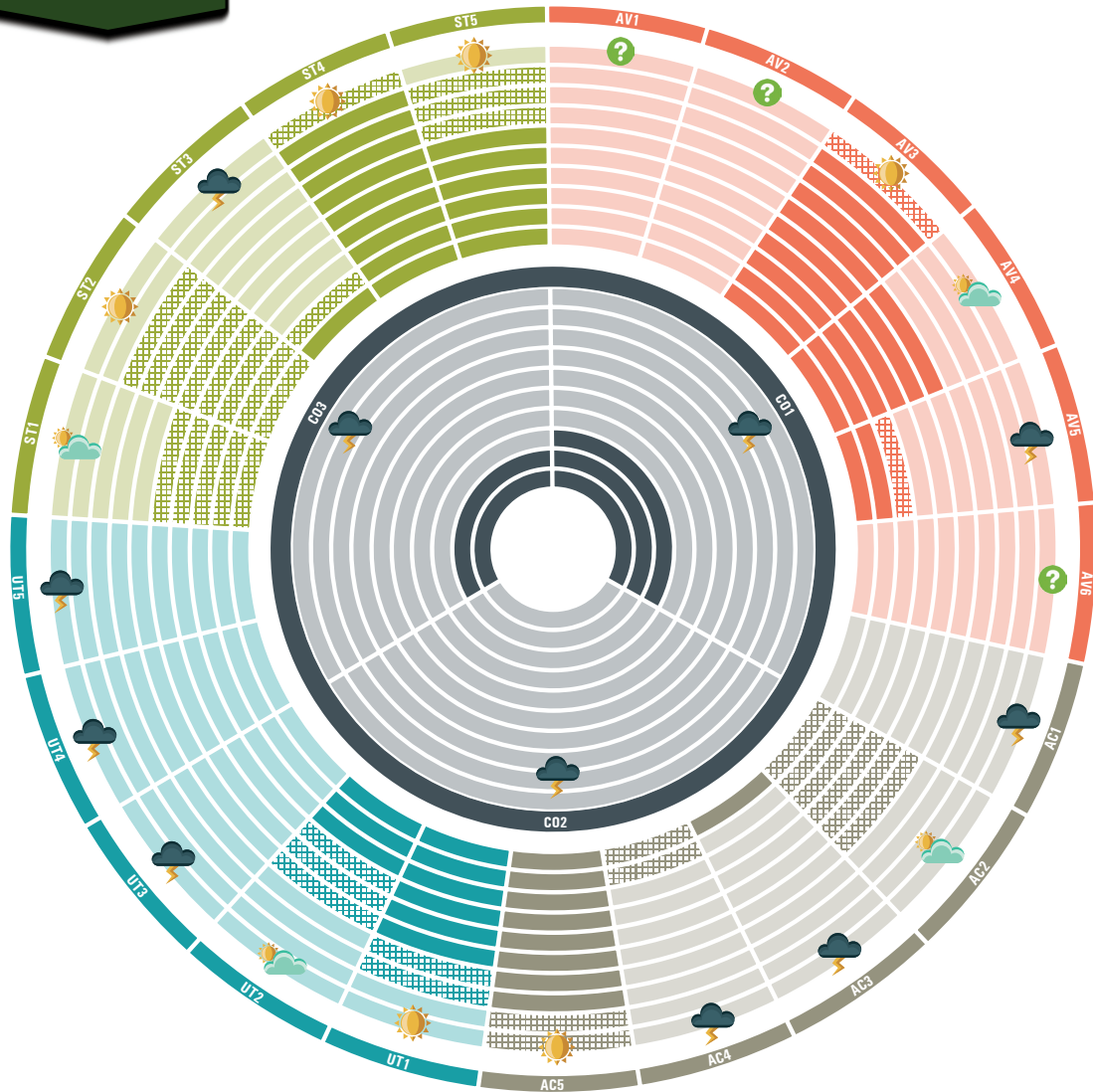
- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** were negative in 2017 (-0.8), which is an indication of prevailing low food prices in local markets;
- **Political stability (ST3)** increased from 14 in 2010 to 24 in 2017, a favourable trend, but still a sign of possible instability that might affect food security;
- **Food production variability (ST4)** dropped from an already low \$6,600 to \$2,700⁹ per capita between 2010 and 2016, indicating an improving stability in food production;
- **Food supply variability (ST5)** dropped from 52 kcal/capita/day to 19 kcal/capita/day. Although still relatively high, the latest value implies a higher stability in food supply in light of the country's high average dietary energy supply adequacy.

⁹ Constant 2004-2006 International USD.



Food security dashboard

Mauritania



2010 Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Latest Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Performance: ☀ High: Proceed Action | ☁ Average: More Action | ⚡ Low: Urgent Action | ? No Data



Food security indicators, Mauritania

Indicators		Arab		Mauritania			Trend
		Latest		2010	Latest		
Code	Description	Value	Year	Value	Value	Year	
CORE INDICATORS							
CO1	Undernourishment ^R %	12.1	2016	8.3	11.3	2016	●
CO2	Food insecurity ^R %	12.2	2016	n.a.	18.3	2016	
CO3	Obesity ^R %	28.4	2016	10.3	12.7	2016	●
AVAILABILITY INDICATORS							
AV1	Wheat yields - %	82.2	2017	n.a.	n.a.		
AV2	Agriculture expenditure - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AV3	Food loss ^R %	6.8	2013	5.0	0.0	2018	●
AV4	Dietary energy supply - %	131	2017	125	126	2017	●
AV5	Wheat Import dependency ^R %	65.0	2012	78.3	67.5	2018	●
AV6	Agriculture water ^R %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ACCESS INDICATORS							
AC1	Poverty ^R %	16.6	mult.	n.a.	31.0	2014	
AC2	Food consumption ^R %	n.a.		n.a.	41.6	2014	
AC3	Unemployment ^R %	10.4	mult.	10.6	11.8	2017	●
AC4	Logistics - index	2.7	2016	n.a.	1.9	2016	
AC5	Inflation ^R %	12.8	mult.	6.3	2.3	2019	●
UTILIZATION INDICATORS							
UT1	Drinking water access - %	86.9	2015	64.8	80.2	2014	●
UT2	Sanitation access - %	80.8	2015	37.4	66.1	2014	●
UT3	Child stunting ^R %	22.9	mult.	n.a.	27.9	2015	
UT4	Child wasting ^R %	8.7	mult.	n.a.	14.8	2015	
UT5	Women anaemia ^R %	35.5	2016	37.9	37.2	2016	●
STABILITY INDICATORS							
ST1	Climate change ^R - index	0.1	2019	n.a.	0.25	2019	
ST2	Price Anomalies ^R - index	n.a.		n.a.	-0.8	2017	
ST3	Political stability - ranking	14	2017	14	24	2017	●
ST4	Production variability ^R - \$1,000/capita	10.1	2016	6.6	2.7	2016	●
ST5	Supply variability ^R - kcal/cap/day	29.8	2013	52.0	19.0	2013	●

^R : Reversed During Normalization n.a.= Not Available mult.= Multiple years
 ● Red: Negative Trend ● Yellow: Neutral Trend ● Green: Positive Trend

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data in this table and framework are from national sources.





Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

The framework shows that the food security situation in Mauritania is uncertain. All outcome core indicators, undernourishment (CO1), food insecurity experience (CO2) and obesity (CO3), are alarming, which puts the country in a precarious food security situation.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability:** wheat import dependency (AV5);
- **Access:** poverty (AC1), unemployment (AC3) and logistics (AC4);

- **Utilization:** stunting (UT3) and wasting (UT4) among children and anaemia among women (UT5);
- **Stability:** political stability (ST3).

There is much to be done in Mauritania to improve food security. The core indicators unveil an image of a country where undernutrition and severe food insecurity coexist with rampant obesity, the latter being essentially associated with rapid urbanization.

B. Action areas

Food availability is constrained by land and water scarcity. However, the State could invest in agropastoralism (box 1) and in the improvement of fishing. This will reduce the imbalance between food imports and exports.

Food insecurity is essentially due to very poor performance in the access pillar. Poverty is pervasive and, along with unemployment, must be addressed with special attention to women and appropriate poverty reduction policies. The achievements of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) prepared by Mauritania for the period 2001-20015 must be evaluated, and a new PRSP must be prepared.

Child undernutrition is a great concern, with values among the largest in the Arab countries. Immediate response is required for the provision of emergency support for the most vulnerable, including refugees. The low access rate to enhanced sanitation facilities and to enhanced drinking water services raises the risk of exposure to digestion-related diseases, which increases the risk of malnutrition. Aid from the international community and local funds could be targeted to addressing these most pressing issues.

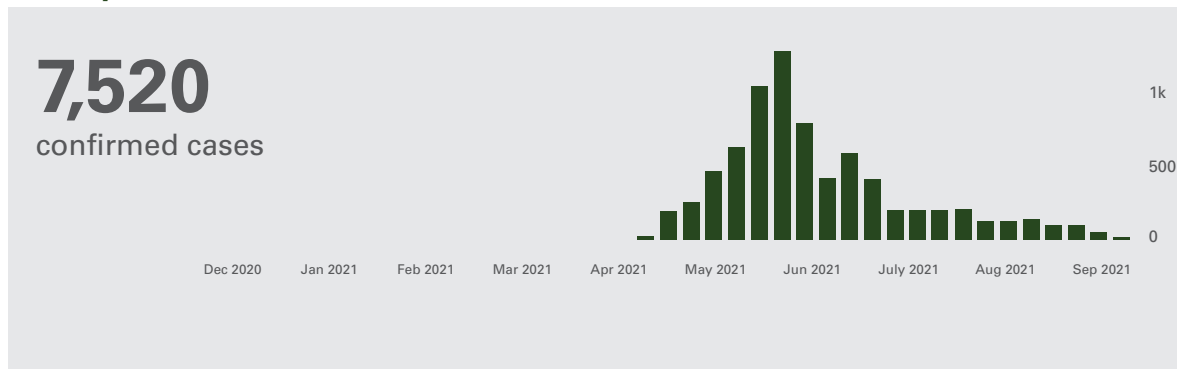


Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Mauritania early March 2020 and, by October, it had affected more than 7,500 people with more

than 160 deaths recorded. Cases increased since mid-May with a succession of peaks, recording the highest by the end of June.

Weekly cases



Source: World Health Organization (WHO), n. d.

Prior to the pandemic, some 2 million people were estimated to be moderately or severely food insecure.¹⁰ This number is expected to increase due to the lockdown measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic¹¹ but also due to a decrease in rainfall that negatively impacted food production, pushing 1.4 million individuals to need assistance in the coming lean season.¹²

WFP reported above average food prices, except for local sorghum and maize, and

imported milk powder.¹³ However, the price of the average food basket remained stable in most areas. The price of small ruminants increased while that of large ruminants decreased due to the lack of forage.

A national social solidarity fund was set up, which provided support to 300,000 households. Duties were exempted on imports of wheat, oil, milk powder, fruits and vegetables.

¹⁰ FAO and others, 2020.

¹¹ Closure of schools, restaurants and religious sites, travel restrictions, termination of football leagues.

¹² WFP, 2020a.

¹³ Ibid.

Box 2. Examples of initiatives

WFP, in April, distributed 424 tons in food assistance and provided \$0.7 million in cash transfers to 59,000 beneficiaries; 57,150 Malian refugees received cash (\$12) and in-kind food transfers (daily basket of 250g rice, 5g salt and 25g oil).^a

WFP helped 2,117 beneficiaries in Guidimakha, Assaba and Hodh el Charghi through food assistance for assets activities and distributed hygiene kits.^a

In May, WFP took the following measures:^b

- Distributed unconditional full rations of cash-based transfers to 18,000 people in 226 villages and raised awareness on nutrition, hygiene and COVID-19 preventive practices;
- Distributed cash and food rations for two months to 57,633 refugees in Mbera camp;
- Started studying the possibility of distributing take-home rations as an alternative to school feeding programmes that were stopped;
- Stopped food assistance for assets and treatments for acute malnutrition to prevent the spread of the disease;
- Started using DataBridge to monitor and analyse food prices;
- Participated with Actions Against Hunger in the outcome analysis of the household economy approach to better forecast people's access to food.

a WFP, 2020b.

b WFP, 2020c.





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