

Trade Hot Topics



A Special Focus on COVID-19 and the Commonwealth | ISSUE 165

COVID-19 and Food Supplies in the Commonwealth

Collin Zhuawu, Salamat Ali and Hilary Enos-Edu¹

1. Introduction

As the coronavirus spreads through developing countries, the World Food Programme (WFP) has warned of potential widespread hunger that could push an estimated 270 million people to the point of starvation (WFP, 2020). COVID-19 has already affected the production of essential food items, such as rice, wheat and maize, as well as supplies in domestic and international markets (FAO, 2020a). The immediate challenge during the lockdown is to ensure access to and availability of food in developing countries, especially the poorest, to meet nutrition requirements. However, the long-term-effect of a hunger pandemic could imperil the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2 on improving food security and ending hunger.

Countries will be affected differently depending on their exposure to the pandemic and their capacity to mount an effective response. Many countries, especially least developed countries (LDCs) and net-food importing developing countries (NFIDCs),² as well as those experiencing a humanitarian crisis,³ are

likely to be affected adversely in terms of the availability of adequate supplies of basic food, primarily because of the disruption in food supply chains. Some countries may also find it challenging to import normal levels of food as financial resources are reallocated towards pandemic responses. Besides, disruptions to domestic and global transportation and logistics could affect countries' ability to source and distribute food in time, including to the most disadvantaged people, especially in remote areas. There is also the risk of interruption to agricultural production as containment measures affect the supply of inputs and the availability of labour to harvest and process crops. Some disruptions are also likely to result from policy responses introduced by other countries, such as export restrictions and other self-sufficiency policies (WTO, 2020a).

This issue of *Commonwealth Trade Hot Topics* analyses the food trade of Commonwealth countries and the possible impact of COVID-19 on these supply chains. It concludes by suggesting ways to support Commonwealth countries' access to essential food supplies during and after the pandemic.

¹ Collin Zhuawu is Economic Adviser: Multilateral Trade, Salamat Ali is Trade Economist and Hilary Enos-Edu is Assistant Research Officer in the International Trade Policy Section, Commonwealth Secretariat, London. Ose Ayewoh provided extensive research assistance. Any views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

² The World Trade Organization (WTO) list of NFIDCs comprises LDCs and 14 Commonwealth countries (WTO, 2012); however, 34 Commonwealth members were net food importers in 2018 (for details see Section 2.3.1)

³ Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu suffered significant damage and a humanitarian emergency following Cyclone Harold in April 2020. Bangladesh faces the challenges of addressing the plight of the Rohingya people and recovery from Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal.

Table 1: Leading traders of food products in the world and Commonwealth

World			Commonwealth		
Partner	Value (US\$ M)	Share (%)	Partner	Value (US\$ M)	Share (%)
A. Importers					
World	1,580,634	100.00	All CW	221,076	100.00
USA	155,557	9.84	UK	64,183	29.03
China	137,770	8.72	Canada	36,469	16.50
Germany	95,315	6.03	India	19,393	8.77
Netherlands	72,175	4.57	Malaysia	16,223	7.34
Japan	70,522	4.46	Australia	15,366	6.95
UK	64,183	4.06	Singapore	13,834	6.26
France	62,154	3.93	Bangladesh	9,202	4.16
Italy	49,012	3.10	South Africa	6,541	2.96
Spain	41,791	2.64	Pakistan	6,012	2.72
Belgium	40,136	2.54	New Zealand	4,741	2.14
B. Exporters					
World	1,565,375	100.00	All CW	247,413	100.00
USA	138,991	8.88	Canada	50,406	20.37
Netherlands	109,343	6.99	India	33,865	13.69
Germany	81,393	5.20	UK	31,005	12.53
Brazil	80,749	5.16	Australia	29,929	12.10
China	73,870	4.72	New Zealand	24,008	9.70
France	69,071	4.41	Malaysia	22,595	9.13
Spain	54,348	3.47	Singapore	13,590	5.49
Canada	50,406	3.22	South Africa	10,221	4.13
Italy	47,186	3.01	Pakistan	4,867	1.97
Belgium	45,026	2.88	Ghana	3,756	1.52

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

2. Food trade in the Commonwealth

2.1 Global trends in food trade

In 2018, worldwide trade in food products⁴ was around US\$1.6 trillion, or about 8 per cent of merchandise trade. Almost all countries engage in some sort of food trade. The global market is moderately concentrated: the top 10 countries account for around 50 per cent of global exports and about 47 per cent of imports. Overall, advanced economies and larger developing economies drive global food trade (Table 1). The USA, China, Germany and the Netherlands are the leading exporters as well as importers, together accounting for around 25 per cent of world food trade.

2.2. Food trade in Commonwealth countries

As a group, Commonwealth countries are also large traders of food products. In 2018, they accounted for

around 15 per cent (US\$247 billion) of global food exports and a similar share of imports (\$221 billion). Although most Commonwealth countries engage in food trade, only Canada is ranked among the world's top 10 exporters, with a share of around 3.2 per cent of exports (Table 1). Canada has extremely favourable conditions for food production that far exceeds the needs of the country's population.

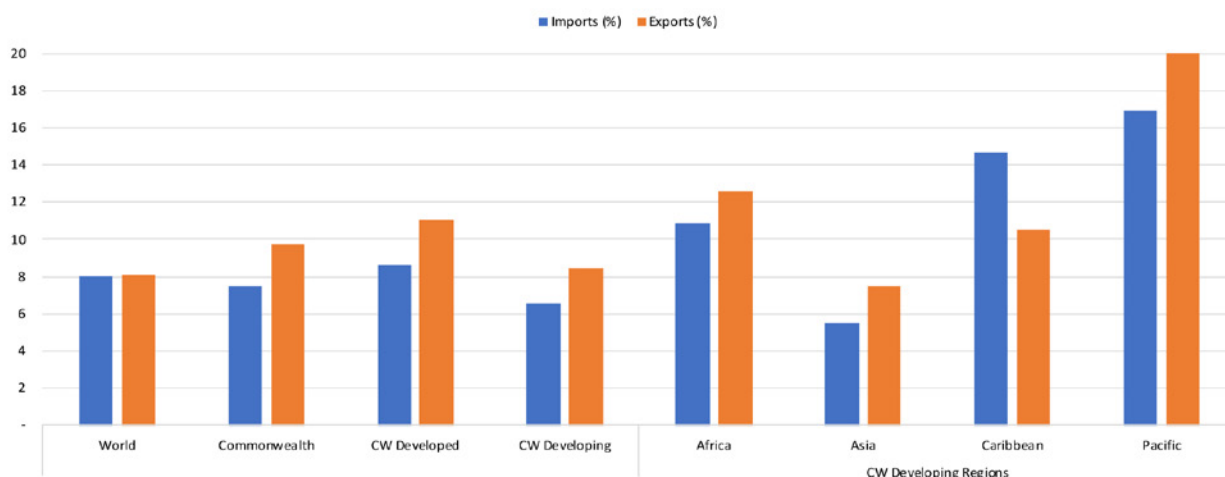
2.2.1 Share of food in merchandise trade

Put together, the share of food in the merchandise imports of Commonwealth countries is comparable to the world average of 8 per cent (Figure 1). The Commonwealth's developed countries have a relatively higher share of agricultural imports (around 8.6 per cent) than the developing countries (about 6.5 per cent), with wide variation among the latter group.

However, in relative terms, Pacific countries have the largest share of food in their merchandise

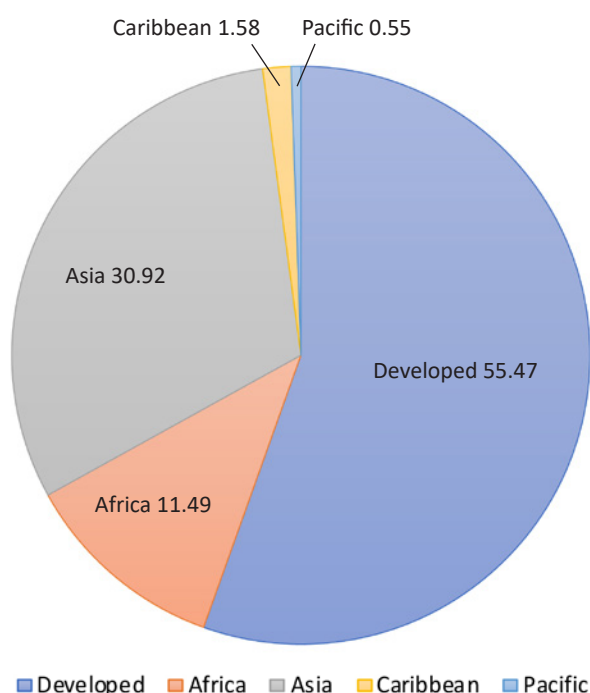
4 We use the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) definition of food trade, which includes goods classified under the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) (0+1+4+ 22). For details of product coverage, please see Section 2.4 on the composition of food trade.

Figure 1: Food trade of Commonwealth countries, 2018 (%)



Note: The chart presents the share of food trade in total merchandise trade.
Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

Figure 2: Distribution of food trade by Commonwealth regions, 2018 (%)



Note: The chart indicates the share of food imports by region. The trade share for exports is almost similar.
Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

imports, at around 17 per cent (US\$1.25 billion) in 2018. They are followed by Caribbean countries (15 per cent), importing about \$3.5 billion. The Pacific and Caribbean small island developing states (SIDS) are extremely dependent on food imports because of the physical constraints to land-based agriculture and their large tourism sectors, which have significant food requirements.

Food imports account for more than 11 per cent (US\$25 billion) of African member countries'

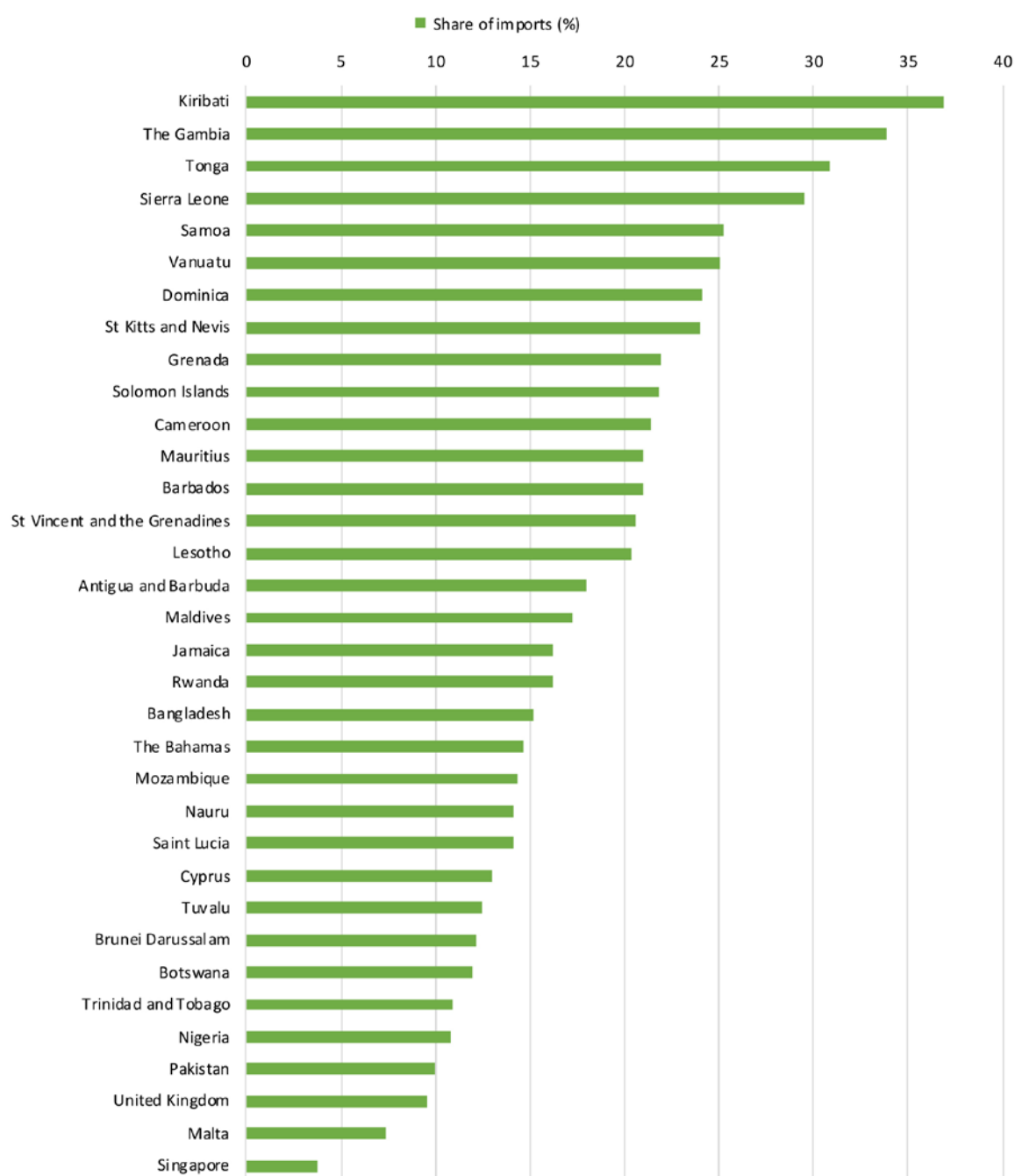
merchandise imports. Asian Commonwealth countries have the lowest food share in their merchandise imports, at about 5.5 per cent (\$68.4 billion). This is because countries like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are primarily agrarian and have a large share of the population associated with agriculture and food production.

2.2.2. The regional dimension of Commonwealth food trade

Commonwealth developed countries are large traders of food products. Food items make up 11 per cent of their total merchandise exports and 8.5 per cent of imports, and their share of the Commonwealth's total food exports and imports is around 55 per cent (Figure 2). This relatively large share of trade may suggest extensive mechanisation of production as well as pointing to the role of domestic support to farming as compared with the situation in developing countries (this analysis is beyond the scope of this *Trade Hot Topic*).

Among Commonwealth developing countries, Asian members have the most significant share (31 per cent) in food trade, followed by African countries (12 per cent). Despite their large size, both Asian and African countries are less reliant on food trade: their share of the Commonwealth's population is around 71 per cent and 22 per cent while their share in food trade is about 31 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively. Although there is considerable variation across countries, this comparatively small share of developing countries, in contrast with their large population size (94 per cent), indicates huge reliance of these countries on domestic production to meet food requirements. Caribbean countries account for 1.58 per cent of the Commonwealth's

Figure 3: Share of food in merchandise imports for net food importers, 2018 (%)



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

total food imports and 0.65 per cent of total exports. However, for the Pacific region, the share of exports (0.96 per cent) is larger than that of imports (0.55 per cent), mainly because of their significant fish exports.

2.3. The direction of food trade in Commonwealth countries

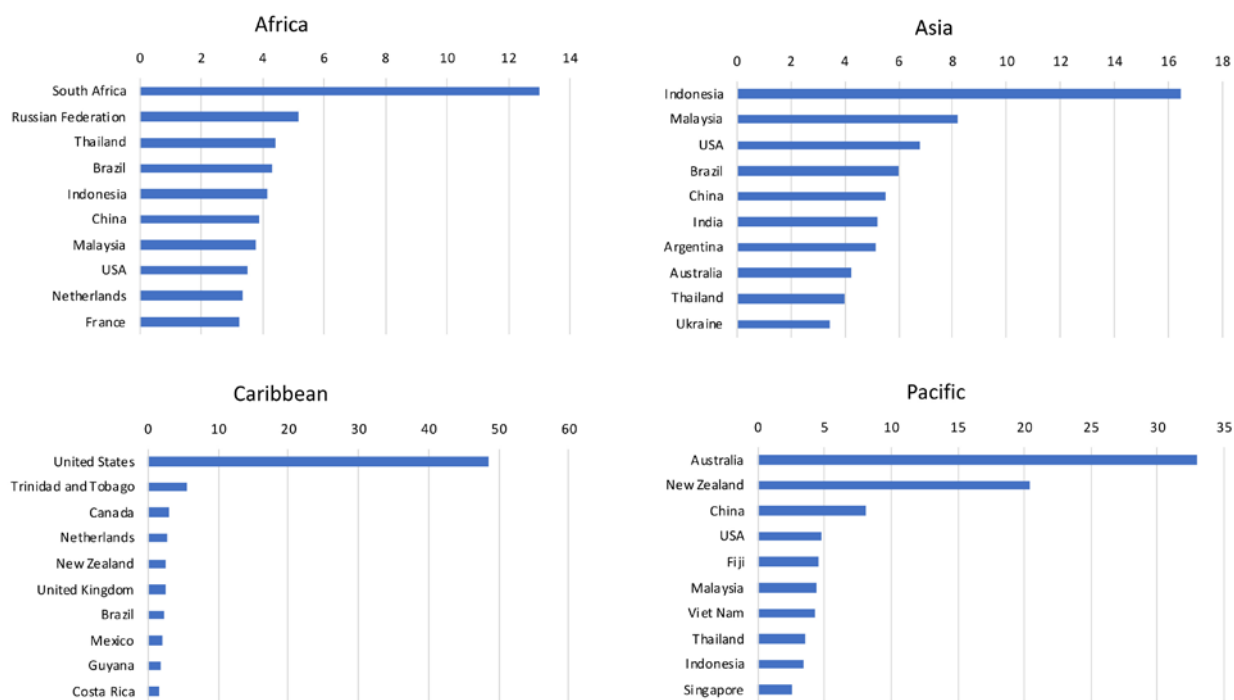
2.3.1. Food imports

Most Commonwealth countries depend on imported food products to ensure normal levels of food requirements and maintain food security. In 2018, these countries imported food products

worth US\$221 billion. Five countries accounted for 70 per cent of food imports: the UK (30 per cent) was the largest importer, followed by Canada (17 per cent), India (9 per cent), Malaysia (7 per cent) and Australia (7 per cent) (Table 1). The share of food imports in merchandise trade of other Commonwealth countries varies widely (Figure A1).

Thirty-four Commonwealth countries are net food importers (Figure 3). The leading net importers in absolute terms are the UK, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Cyprus and Botswana, in that order. However, in terms of share in total merchandise imports, Kiribati, The Gambia, Tonga, Sierra Leone and

Figure 4: Sources of food supplies in Commonwealth countries, by region, 2018 (%)



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

Samoa rank very high; food imports constitute more than 25 per cent of their total merchandise imports.

Commonwealth LDCs also rely heavily on food imports: 10 of the 14 Commonwealth LDCs, are WTO NFIDCs (i.e. The Gambia, Kiribati, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Tuvalu, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). In 2018, Commonwealth LDCs imported food products worth around US\$14.5 billion, which constitutes approximately 14 per cent of their merchandise imports. These 14 LDCs accounted for about 6.5 per cent of the Commonwealth's total food imports, with over half of this amount accounted for by the basic foods. Bangladesh, the largest LDC in terms of population, imports about two-thirds of LDC imports, with African LDCs importing most of the remainder.

Like LDCs, 19 Commonwealth SIDS (which are also WTO NFIDCs) and 24 small states are also largely reliant on food imports, with respective shares of 17 and 14 per cent.⁵

2.3.2. Sources of food imports

Commonwealth countries import food from a variety of sources. Overall, the USA is the leading supplier, mostly to the developed countries and the

Caribbean. Given geographical proximity, the USA supplies around half of the food imports of the Caribbean. It is noteworthy that Brazil, an agricultural powerhouse,⁶ does not have strong trade links with the Caribbean. The UK sources most of its food imports from the EU. The Commonwealth's two EU member countries, Cyprus and Malta, are also import-dependent and source most of their food from mainland Europe. Other leading suppliers to Commonwealth countries are Indonesia, China, Australia and South Africa.

African member countries mostly import from South Africa and Russia (Figure 4). The share of each of the USA and China is less than 5 per cent. African trade, in general, is dominated by intra-Southern African Customs Union (SACU) trade centred around South Africa. The SACU land borders are virtually contiguous, which facilitates trade, logistics and connectivity. Indonesia is a leading supplier to Asian member countries, followed by Malaysia, the USA and Brazil. The Pacific member countries depend primarily on Australia and New Zealand.

2.3.3. Food exports

Commonwealth countries exported food worth US\$247 billion in 2018. Five countries accounted for

⁵ Although the Commonwealth has 25 SIDS and 32 small states members, data is available for only these countries.

⁶ Brazil is a major player in global agricultural and agro-industrial markets. The country has almost unlimited arable land and water, a highly productive agriculture sector and competitive capacity in transport, storage, distribution and logistics for farming exports.

around 70 per cent of these exports: Canada (20 per cent), India (14 per cent), the UK (13 per cent), Australia (12 per cent) and New Zealand (10 per cent).

Overall, Commonwealth countries combined are net exporters of food (food exports being higher than imports in value terms). This pattern holds for all Commonwealth regions except the Caribbean (Figure 1). At country level, 20 Commonwealth members are net food exporters. In absolute terms, the top food exporters are New Zealand, Australia, India, Canada, Malaysia and South Africa, in that order. However, as a share of total merchandise trade, the top food exporters are Malawi (87 per cent), Belize (61 per cent), Seychelles (61 per cent), New Zealand (60 per cent), Uganda (54 per cent) and Fiji (51 per cent). For these six countries, the share of food in total merchandise trade is above 50 per cent (Figure 5). This large share reflects the concentration of export structure of these countries in a few agricultural products.⁷

These net food exporters include four LDCs (Zambia, Papua New Guinea, Uganda and Malawi, in that order) and seven small states, including SIDS (Papua New Guinea, Guyana, Fiji, Seychelles, Belize, Eswatini and Namibia, in that order).

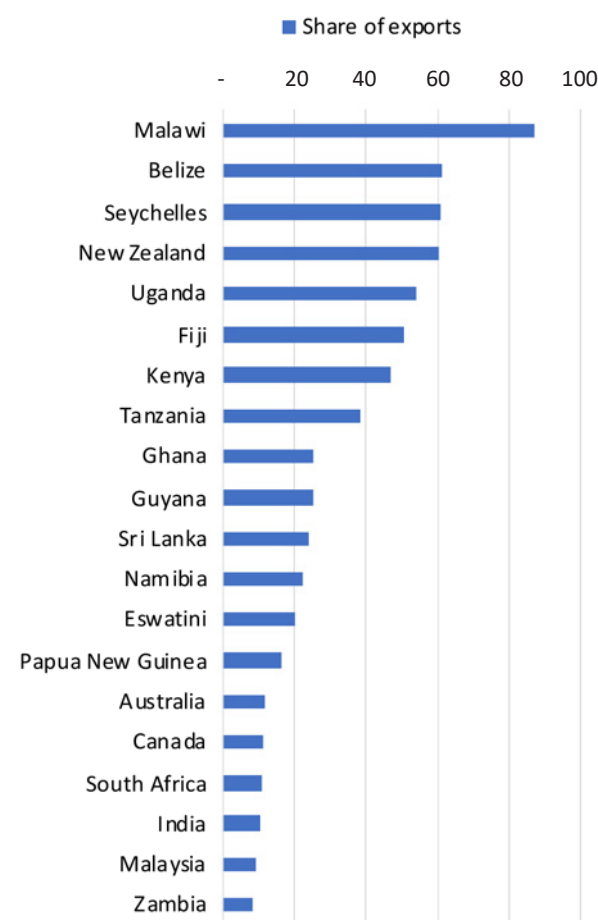
2.3.4. Main export destinations

Similar to the pattern of food imports, the USA is the predominant export market for Commonwealth countries. Developed countries as well as Asian and Caribbean countries send a relatively large share of their food exports to the USA – namely 26 per cent, 11 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively. China is the second-largest export market, absorbing around 16 per cent of food exports from Commonwealth developed countries and around 6 per cent from Asian countries. African countries mostly export to the EU under preferential trade arrangements like the Economic Partnership Agreements, and the Everything But Arms scheme for LDCs, whereas Asian and Caribbean countries have large intra-regional trade.

2.4. Structure of food trade in Commonwealth countries

Commonwealth countries import and export a wide range of food products. The basic food items classified '0' in the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) (i.e. cereals, meat, sugar, fruits, vegetables, etc.) have the largest share of the trade

Figure 5: Share of food in merchandise exports of net food exporters, 2018 (%)



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

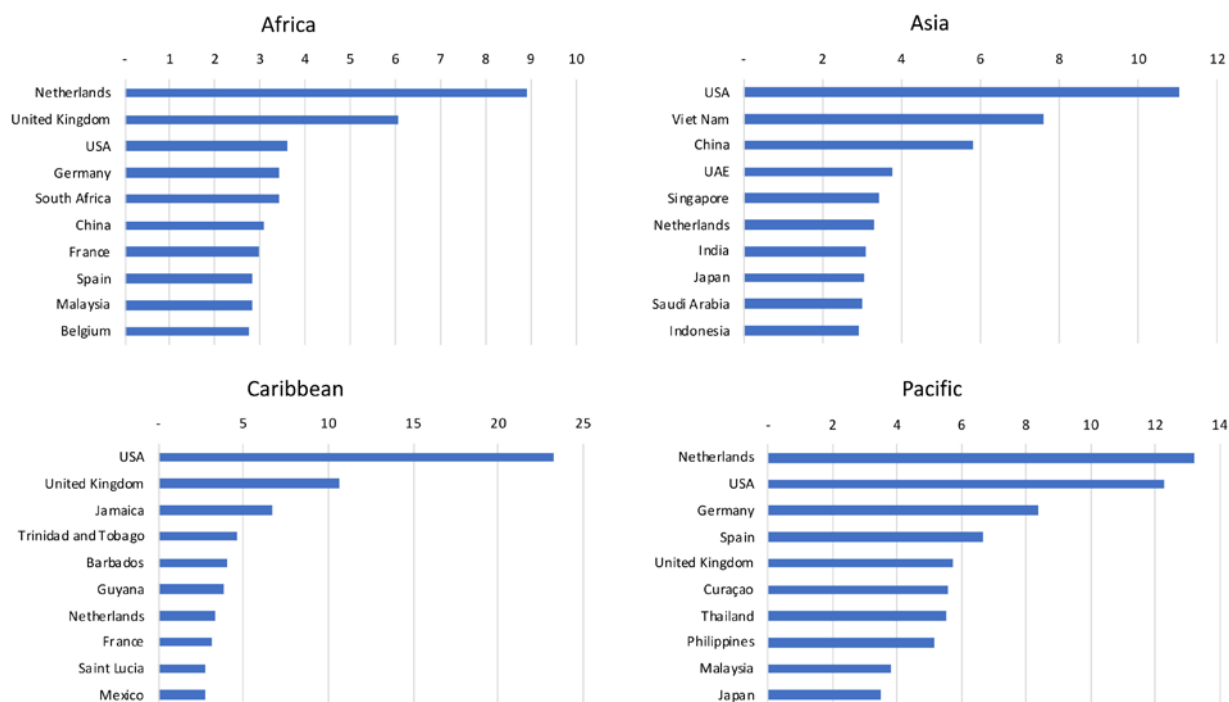
basket at more than 75 per cent for both imports and exports (Table A1). However, there are significant variations between developed and developing countries. These products comprise around 82 per cent of the food imports of the advanced economies and about 65 per cent for developing countries. Among developing countries, the share of basic food items is the lowest for Asian countries (59 per cent) and highest for the Pacific (87 per cent).

At the product level, vegetables and fruits have the largest share of imports, at about 20 per cent (Figure 7). This is followed by cereals, oils, beverages and meat products. Dairy products and sugar have a relative share of 5 per cent each. Animals and animal-based products are not widely traded.

The composition of the food export basket is quite different, with a large share of cereals and cereal preparations (around 13 per cent), followed by

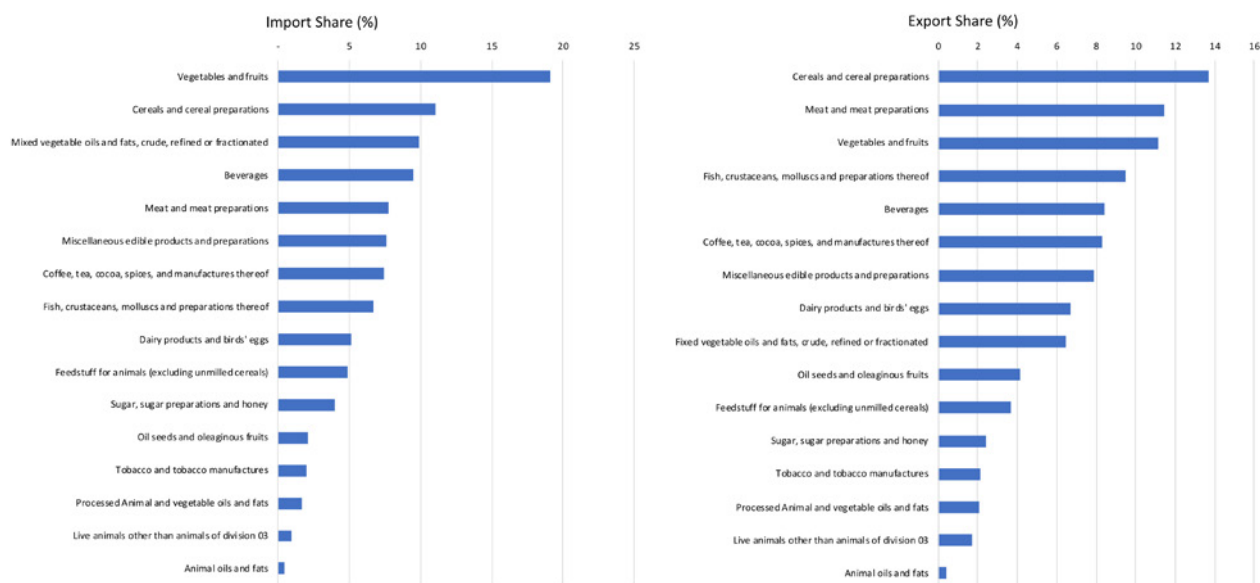
7 UNCTAD (2019) classifies the following Commonwealth countries as dependent on agricultural exports: Belize, Fiji, The Gambia, Kenya, Kiribati, Malawi, Maldives, New Zealand, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Uganda and Vanuatu.

Figure 6: Top export markets for Commonwealth countries, by region (% , 2018)



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

Figure 7: Composition of food trade in Commonwealth countries, 2018 (%)



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

meat (11 per cent), fruits and vegetables (11 per cent) and fish (9 per cent). Beverages, coffee and dairy products are also large export items. Overall, African members have a significant share in the export of basic food items (81 per cent), while the Pacific countries have the lowest (54 per cent). Caribbean member countries are large traders in beverages, which account for 26 per cent of their food exports and 13 per cent of imports.

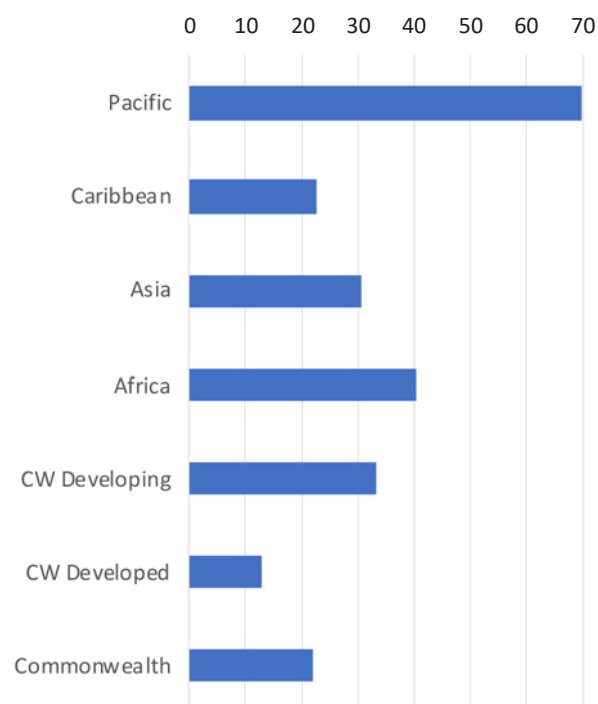
Overall, this pattern of two-way trade in food items is noticeable at the country level, which indicates consumers' 'love of variety' for different types of food (Krugman, 1980).

2.5 Intra-Commonwealth trade in food products

Food trade among Commonwealth countries was US\$46 billion in 2018 (or around 22 per cent of their total food imports of \$221 billion).⁸ However, there

⁸ The share of food products in total intra-Commonwealth merchandise trade (US\$440 billion) is almost 11 per cent.

Figure 8: Share of intra-Commonwealth trade in food imports by Commonwealth region, 2018 (%)



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

are wide variations across countries and regions (Figure 8). For example, developing countries depend relatively more on the Commonwealth for food products, sourcing around one-third of these imports from other members. The Pacific has the highest share of intra-Commonwealth food trade (70 per cent), with Australia and New Zealand being the region's main trading partners. This is followed by African (40 per cent) and Asian (30 per cent) member countries. The large intra-Commonwealth food trade in Africa reflects the role of SACU, which facilitates food trade between several Southern African member countries.

Five Commonwealth members account for half of all intra-Commonwealth food imports. The largest importer is the UK, followed by Australia, Singapore, Malaysia and India, in that order. Looking at food exporters, the leading countries are Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, India and South Africa, accounting for 62 per cent of total intra-Commonwealth trade in these products.

Four African countries – Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia, which are members of SACU – have a share of intra-Commonwealth food trade above 80 per cent (Table A2). In Asia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka are more reliant on intra-Commonwealth food imports, with each sourcing more than 50 per food from other Commonwealth countries.

3. Impacts of disruptions to domestic supply chains and food production

Policy measures to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus have disrupted regular economic activities and affected millions of workers and their livelihoods in Commonwealth countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that, as of 29 April 2020, about 68 per cent of workers in countries that have introduced measures that have disrupted economic activity have been affected by full or partial workplace closure – a decrease from 81 per cent as a result of China lifting workplace closure (ILO, 2020). Also, remittances are expected to decrease by 20 per cent in 2020, affecting the purchasing power of countries and families (World Bank, 2020).

Such disruptions have caused localised disturbances to food supplies, posing enormous food access challenges for families and threatening their food security. Loss of income is particularly significant among poor people, who make up the major part of those involved in informal income-generating activities. This could affect almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers (ILO, 2020). Women are especially vulnerable, as they form much of the informal sector and are most likely unable to adhere to lockdown measures and lack the means to shield from the COVID-19 impacts (FAO, 2020f). There is a persistent need to go out in search of food (OECD, 2020); women play a crucial role in maintaining food supply chains, and their lives depend on informal jobs as informal producers and traders of food (Montalvao and Van de Velde, 2020).

Restrictive measures have also threatened the food security of children by affecting their nutrition and generating concerns related to their nutrition security. About 370 million children are missing out on nutritious school meals, which may lead to a drop in their immunity (WFP, 2020b). The United Nations estimates the number of such children at 368.5 million across 143 countries. In some countries, it has been challenging to deliver fortified food for children (OECD 2020). The long-term effect is delayed achievement of SDGs, especially SDG 2 on achieving food security, ending hunger, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture as nutrition, particularly among younger generations.

COVID-19-induced restrictive policy measures have also reduced the labour supply in the agriculture sector, affecting land preparation,

planting, crop maintenance and harvesting (FAO, 2020e), with short- and long-term consequences for food security. For example, the supply of fresh food such as vegetables is likely to be affected in the short term and the availability of grains and cereals in the long term. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2020) suggests that significant disruptions will occur in developing countries where supply chains rely on human interaction: smallholder producers, traders, middlemen, wholesalers, processors and transporters are all involved in bringing food to the consumer and will be affected by restrictions to mobility. Women are likely to be affected significantly as they manage about 70-80 per cent of farmland in low-income countries – playing a key role in smallholder agriculture (Montalvao and Van de Velde, 2020).

There is also a risk of falling access to and availability of inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides, which will affect the production of food in the short to medium term while posing food security challenges in the long run. Besides, most Commonwealth countries, especially LDCs and NFIDCs, lack the financial resources to meet the needs of farmers and rural households for them to continue producing or enhancing their productivity. Farmers need cash handouts and safety net programmes that will help them continue operations (Cullen, 2020).

4. Impacts of disruption to global supply chains

4.1 Restrictions on international trade

The outbreak of the coronavirus has raised concerns that countries may adopt measures to contain the epidemic which could restrict international trade and disrupt food supply chains. Under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, member states can introduce measures that restrict trade in agriculture and food products under certain circumstances and conditions (Box 1).

Box 1: WTO rules for trade in agriculture and food products

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 Article XI, paragraph (2a) specifies that export restrictions introduced by countries in the context of the circumstances set out in the

Article should be applied only 'temporarily'. WTO members can also restrict trade in agriculture and food products as provided under GATT Article XX on General Exemptions, which outlines several exemptions for trade restriction such as the protection of human, animal and plant life or health as long as such measures do not constitute a disguised barrier to trade or discriminate between countries. Also, Article XXI allows members to impose trade restriction on the grounds of national security.

However, Article 12 of the Agreement on Agriculture stipulates that any WTO member applying export restrictions under Article XI of GATT 1994 shall 'give due consideration to the effects of such prohibition or restriction on importing Member's food security', and the notifying member is expected to give notice in writing 'as far in advance as practicable' on the nature and duration of the measures to be adopted and 'consult, upon request, with any other Member having a substantial interest as an importer concerning any matter related to the measure in question'.

To date, some countries have introduced trade measures that restrict agriculture and food exports in the context of COVID-19, including on cereals. This is the case despite the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) expecting cereal markets to remain well supplied through 2019/20 – enough to shield food markets from the COVID-19 crisis (FAO, 2020c).⁹ In addition, prospects for the next crop are good, while demand is likely to contract in tandem with lower global gross domestic product. The closure of restaurants, hospitality and tourism business could also alleviate potential shortages during the pandemic (Schmidhuber et al., 2020).

Data from European University Institute (EUI)-Global Trade Alert (GTA)-World Bank (EUI-GTA-WB) show that, as of 21 June 2020, 29 jurisdictions out of 195 in the world, including 4 Commonwealth countries, had introduced 47 export restriction measures (32 export curbs¹⁰ and 13 licences, quotas and export duties) on agriculture and food products, including cereals such as wheat. The numbers of jurisdictions that have adopted export restriction suggest restraint by a large majority of countries, especially

9 FAO estimated the world production of coarse grain for 2019 at 1,445 million tonnes, 36.3 million tonnes higher year-on-year, wheat at 763 million tonnes and rice at 512 million tonnes (FAO, 2020c).

10 The WTO data show that, as of 21 June 2020, 14 out of 164 WTO members have introduced 14 export curbs. The number may be more, as some countries do not immediately notify the WTO upon adopting new trade measures.

when compared with the 96 export curbs imposed on medical products during the same period.

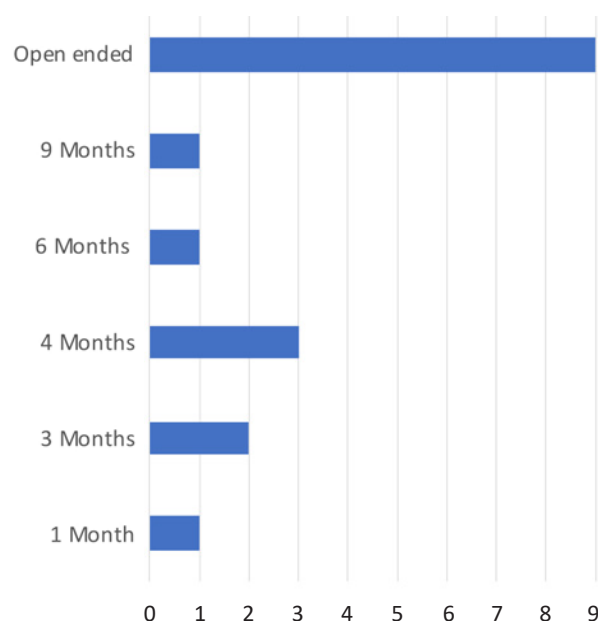
One of the effects of export restrictions is to reduce the supply of the restricted product to the world market. This causes the market to shrink and become more volatile and unsettled. In addition to triggering food price spikes, export restrictions can also lead to speculative activities in agriculture commodity markets, with consequences for importing countries. While countries that impose restrictions on exports experience a decline in earnings, importing countries may have to pay larger import bills, which adversely affect their trade balance. Moreover, export restrictions, although applied temporarily, have a long-lasting price effect on importing countries until previous trade relations are restored (Deuss, 2017).

During the 2007–2008 global financial crisis, some countries introduced export restrictions on basic food, which pushed up the world market price on staples. This also led other grain producers to limit exports to be self-sufficient and protect domestic consumers from food price rises. On the other hand, food importers eased import restrictions for food, thereby supporting demand, but kept the upward pressure on world prices (FAO, 2020a). These policy responses were damaging to the procurement of food by countries, especially import-dependent countries, and humanitarian agencies (FAO, 2020b).

In the context of the current pandemic, none of the leading global food exporters (Table 1) has introduced export restrictions. As most of these countries are now relaxing their lockdowns, they are unlikely to introduce restrictions that affect global market supply –unless they are hit by a second wave of the virus. Moreover, since only two of the leading suppliers within the Commonwealth (Table 1) have adopted export restrictions, intra-Commonwealth food trade has generally not been disrupted. Whether this situation continues may depend on the duration of the pandemic or global factors affecting the market for basic foodstuffs, such as the anticipated global economic contraction in 2020 and food running short (FAO, 2020a).

Considering the exigent nature of measures taken during a crisis, it is reasonable to assume that there was little time for consultation, or for due consideration to the effects of such measures on importing countries as per Article 12 of the

Figure 9: Number of export curbs on agriculture and food products currently in force, January 2020–June 2020



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (computation using GTA data)

Agreement on Agriculture (Box 1). Out of the 32 introduced export curbs, 15 have now lapsed. Of the remaining 17, the shortest duration is about one month and the longest is about 9 months, and 9 export curbs are open-ended and it is not known when they will end (Figure 9). Some export curbs will lapse as the pandemic unfolds. Of concern is the impromptu nature of the export restrictions, which makes it difficult for importing countries to find alternative sources of food imports; this jeopardises their food security.

Export prohibitions also affect the work of the WFP and other humanitarian agencies by making it difficult for them to buy adequate supplies of food for non-commercial humanitarian purposes. The situation of these humanitarian agencies is worsened when export restrictions constrain them from accessing food from as close as possible to where it is needed, and they are thus unable to save time and money on transport costs as they have to source food far from where it is required.¹¹

4.2. Logistics systems and transmissions channels

Food supply chains have also been affected by disruptions to national and international logistics systems and channels of transmission (Schmidhuber et al., 2020). COVID-19 has affected logistics, capital, labour, agricultural inputs, exchange rates, energy markets, credit markets and other factors, which directly or indirectly affect food supply and demand.

¹¹ <https://www.wfp.org/overview>

For example, lack of labour, poorly functioning transportation and crowded ports and warehouses have disrupted international supply chains.

The restrictions on the international movement of people have affected the delivery of humanitarian food to needy areas. For example, COVID-19 affected the speed of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga after Cyclone Harold in April 2020 (FAO, 2020d). The slowdown in the delivery of humanitarian aid could have devastating effects on affected countries. Restrictions on transport and distribution of food may also lead to a rise in delivery costs of food assistance.

5. Impact on LDCs, NFIDCs and countries in humanitarian crisis

Most Commonwealth LDCs and NFIDCs¹² are likely to be significantly affected by disruptions to international trade and food supply chains resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. For Commonwealth countries experiencing a humanitarian crisis, such as Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga (after Cyclone Harold), Tuvalu (after Cyclone Tino) and Bangladesh (Rohingya crisis), the pandemic is likely to raise the need for humanitarian assistance and food security, aggravating the existing food crisis (FAO, 2020e; OECD, 2020). Some countries, including India, Pakistan and Kenya, have experienced locust invasions, which have affected production and yields and have generated risks of food shortages for their large populations (Pandey, 2020).

To mitigate the impact of disruptions to food supplies, some Commonwealth LDCs and NFIDCs have introduced import-easing measures, such as the temporary elimination of tariffs to ensure food access and availability. For example, St Kitts and Nevis has eased imports on fruit and vegetables and Samoa on all agriculture and fishing products. Overall, these countries have introduced various policy measures that suit their social and economic situations to ensure the availability of food and food security (Box 2).

Box 2: Commonwealth COVID-19 policy responses to ensure food availability and security

- On 24 March, The Gambia introduced maximum prices for staple foods, including rice, maize, millet and bread.

- On 28 March, Rwanda fixed the retail price of rice and launched a food distribution initiative targeting vulnerable households.
- On 8 April, Nigeria approved the distribution to needy families of 46,000 tonnes of smuggled rice seized by custom services during the border closure in 2019. This decision aims to limit shortages and price hikes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat compiled from FAO sources

6. Global response and assistance

FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank and WFP have called for collective action to ensure markets continue to function without disruptions and to support access to food for the poor and the most vulnerable and those who need humanitarian assistance. The call was to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic does not threaten food security and to improve resilience to future shocks (FAO et al., 2020).

To discourage G20 members and other countries from adopting trade restriction measures in agriculture and food products, the G20 Finance Ministers (including those from five Commonwealth countries) and the G20 Ministers of Agriculture agreed that countries that needed to take such measures in the context of COVID-19 had to ensure that their efforts were 'targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary', and that the measures did not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disrupt global supply chains – thus making them consistent with WTO rules (G20, 2020a, 2020b). Such actions by the G20, despite helping avoid food shortages, also demonstrate the vulnerability of all countries, including high-income countries, to disruptions to agriculture supply chains.

In response to these calls, some WTO members, including Commonwealth countries, have also started initiatives to maintain open trade in agriculture and food products. Two Commonwealth countries, Singapore and New Zealand, issued a Declaration on Trade in Essential Goods for Combating the COVID-19 Pandemic, which outlined their commitment to maintaining open trade and connected supply chains amid the pandemic. The Declaration listed several agricultural and food products for which the two

¹² Most LDCs and NFIDCs face similar development challenges, such as those related to reliance on trade for growth and development; vulnerability to climate change, natural disasters and external economic shocks; and dependency on food imports.

countries undertook to remove tariffs and not impose export restrictions (WTO, 2020b). On 5 May 2020, 13 Commonwealth countries – Australia, Barbados, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Solomon Islands and the UK – joined 30 other countries to issue a joint ministerial statement at the WTO, which, among other things, stressed the need for the international community to maintain agriculture supply chains to preserve countries' food security. The countries also pledged not to introduce export restrictions and to avoid adopting unjustified trade barriers on agriculture and food products in response to the coronavirus pandemic (WTO, 2020c).

To help agriculture production in vulnerable countries continue, IFAD has launched the COVID-19 Rural Poor Stimulus Facility to support farmers in these countries to have timely access to inputs, information, markets and funding, by committing US\$40 million to the cause. Effective from 4 May 2020, the facility will be implemented through IFAD projects and programmes and non-state actors, farmers' organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector.¹³ FAO has embarked on mobilising \$110 million to support initiatives to maintain the provision of critical assistance to vulnerable countries through, among other things, ensuring that people working in food supply chains are not at risk from COVID-19 transmission (FAO, 2020e).

7. Way forward

In the current COVID-19 pandemic, one of the priorities for the international community should be to maintain open food supply chains and avoid food shortages. This requires several actions.

First, countries should avoid imposing trade restrictions on food exports and work together to ensure open and operational supply chains at the international level. Countries, especially large importers, must avoid stockpiling food when their stocks are already high, as this would lower availability on the international market (FAO, 2020b). Also, governments must keep air and seaports open to support the flow of food to where it is needed. For example, Australia provided emergency funding of A\$110 million (US\$67.40 million) to subsidise air freight for agro-food

exports following disruptions resulting from cross-border restrictions as a consequence of the global coronavirus pandemic (FAO, 2020a).

Second, WTO members should work together constructively to resolve long outstanding issues to find a permanent solution to allow developing countries to provide support for traditional staple food, in pursuance of Agriculture Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes. This will help some countries better prepare for any future crisis.

Related to the above, countries must invest in food production and build sustainable food systems to ensure food security for the future. To this effect, countries must consider establishing monitoring systems for food supplies and availability. Countries should also consider promoting climate-resilient technologies, such as drought-tolerant seeds (FAO, 2020d). Increasing urbanisation calls for innovative solutions and better food and nutrition initiatives, such as 'foodsheds' and 'city-region food systems', to enhance food resilience (OECD, 2020).

Third, consideration should be given to how LDCs and NFDCs can utilise the existing facilities of international financial institutions or other facilities established in the context of trade adjustment programmes to address the short-term financial difficulties they face in financing normal levels of food imports. This was one of the decisions in the previous Uruguay Round.¹⁴ Although the decision does not explicitly mention situations of crisis, disruptions to agricultural and food trade in the context of COVID-19 have led to trade adjustments measures by LDCs and NFDCs, such as reducing import duties.¹⁵ Considering that it is challenging for most LDCs and NFDCs to mobilise resources for fiscal measures to maintain food supply chains, the provision of technical and financial assistance is necessary to improve their agricultural productivity and infrastructure and better prepare for future crisis.

Fourth, countries need to develop conducive trade policies that facilitate imports and exports. For example, they can create dedicated lanes for the release of goods and ensure the smooth and quick flow of food. Trade facilitation can also be enhanced by using information and communication technologies for e-payments, e-signatures and e-contracts to speed up the movement of goods at the border, while

¹³ <https://www.ifad.org/en/rpsf>

¹⁴ Decision on measures concerning the possible adverse effects of the trade reform programme on LDCs and NFDCs.

¹⁵ On 26 March 2020, St Kitts and Nevis temporarily eliminated import tariffs on vegetables and fruits for a period of about six months, which affects government revenue.

at the same time reducing physical interaction between customs official and traders. E-commerce platforms can play a critical role in connecting producers and consumers and ensure the flow of food and agriculture inputs to farmers (FAO et al., 2020).

Fifth, given the disruption to agriculture and food production, countries must find ways to minimise disruption and ensure continuous domestic production of agricultural and food products. One way of doing this is to adopt measures to maintain physical distance, reduce interaction among co-workers and provide enough hygiene products to ensure health and safety as well as screen and monitor workers for COVID-19 (FAO, 2020g). Similar measures are also crucial in the transportation and logistics sectors to ensure the well-being of workers moving food products and other tradable goods. Countries must also consider exempting agricultural labourers/workers from movement restrictions. For example, South Africa has classified agricultural labourers as system-essential services providers and exempted them from movement restrictions (ibid.); India provides passes to farmers to facilitate wheat harvesting and procurement (FAO, 2020a).

To mitigate the COVID-19 impact on women informal traders and producers of food, countries can adopt measures such as designating markets, coupled with, for example, alternating the days traders operate, allowing traders to sell outside their homes, providing them with protective clothing soap and handwash, installing hand-washing stations in designated markets and providing them with cash to help them maintain their business and inputs to help them continue producing (Montalvao and Van de Velde, 2020).

Finally, strengthening regional cooperation in the time of COVID-19 is key to promoting intra-regional trade in agriculture and food products. For example, the Caribbean Community and Common Market has developed a COVID-19 Agri-food Risk Management Framework to guide planning and risk management at the regional level (FAO, 2020d). Regional cooperation initiatives must reinforce cooperation to mobilise resources to ensure member countries are not food-insecure during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as developing strong regional supply chains to mitigate future crisis food requirements. In addition, member countries must refrain from introducing trade restrictions on agricultural and food products and relax restrictions on cross-border movement to allow the free flow of food. For Africa, the rapid and

effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area will help build productive capacities in agriculture and food production and increase intra-African trade in agriculture.

References

- Cullen, M. (2020) 'COVID-19 and the Risk to Food Supply Chains: How to Respond'. FAO Policy Brief, 29 March. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8388en>
- Deuss, A. (2017) 'Impact of Agriculture Export Restrictions on Prices in Importing Countries'. Food and Agriculture and Fisheries Papers 105. Paris: OECD
- FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) (2020a) 'Agricultural Market Information System Market Monitor', No. 78, May. http://www.amis-outlook.org/fileadmin/user_upload/amis/docs/Market_monitor/AMIS_Market_Monitor_current.pdf
- FAO (2020b) 'Agri-Food Markets and Trade Policy in the Time of COVID-19'. Policy Brief, 2 April. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8446en>
- FAO (2020c) 'Ample Supplies to Help Shield Food Markets from the COVID-19 Crisis'. Policy Brief, 2 April. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8445en>
- FAO (2020d) 'Small Island Developing States Response to COVID-19: Highlighting food security, nutrition and sustainable food systems'. Policy Brief, 7 May. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8994en>
- FAO (2020e) 'Addressing the Impacts of COVID-19 in Food Crises April-December 2020'. FAO's Component of the Global COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan'. Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8497en/ca8497en.pdf>
- FAO (2020f) 'Addressing Inequalities in Times of COVID-19'. Policy Brief, 28 April. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8843en/CA8843EN.pdf>
- FAO (2020g) 'Policy Responses to Keep Input Markets Flowing in Times of COVID-19'. Policy Brief, 4 May. <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8979en>
- FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), World Bank and WFP (World Food Programme) (2020g) 'Joint Statement on COVID-19 impacts on Food Security and Nutrition'. <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1272058/icode/>

G20 (2020a) 'G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting'. Communiqué. [https://g20.org/en/media/Documents/G20_FMCBG_Communicu%C3%A9_EN%20\(2\).pdf](https://g20.org/en/media/Documents/G20_FMCBG_Communicu%C3%A9_EN%20(2).pdf)

G20 (2020b) 'G20 Extraordinary Agriculture Meeting'. https://g20.org/en/media/Documents/G20_Agriculture%20Ministers%20Meeting_Statement_EN.pdf

Krugman, P. (1980) 'Scale Economies, Product Differentiation, and the Pattern of Trade'. *The American Economic Review* 70(5): 950-959.

ILO (International Labour Organization) (2020) 'Monitor: COVID-19 and the World of Work'. Third Edition, Update 29 April'. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf

Montalvao, J. and Van de Velde, P. (2020) *COVID-19 and Food Security: Gendered Dimension*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2020) 'When a Global Virus Meets Local Realities: Coronavirus (COVID-19) in West Africa'. Brief, 11 May. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=132_132742-b9si5r6w73&title=when-a-global-virus-meets-local-realities-coronavirus-COVID-19-in-West-Africa%20

Pandey, S. (2020) 'The "Insect Plague" That's Eating Crops in India & Why Monsoon May Not Bring Good News'. *The Print*, 3 March. <https://theprint.in/theprint-essential/the-insect-plague-thats-eating-crops-in-india-why-monsoon-may-not-bring-good-news/374439/>

Schmidhuber, J., Pound, J. and Qiao, B. (2020) 'COVID-19: Channels of Transmission to Food and Agriculture'. Rome: FAO.

UNCTAD (2019), 'State of Commodity Dependence', eISBN:978-92-1-004301-4, https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditccom2019d1_en.pdf#:~:text=The%20State%20of%20Commodity%20Dependence%202019%20was%20prepared,the%20writing%20team%2C%20comprising%20Rodrigo%20Carcamo%20and%20Alexandra

WFP (World Food Programme) (2020) 'Coronavirus and hunger: WFP ready to assist largest number of people ever'. <https://insight.wfp.org/coronavirus-and-hunger-wfp-ready-to-assist-largest-number-of-people-ever-23aea919e87d?gi=7219a0420123>

World Bank (2020) 'COVID-19 Crisis through a Migration Lens'. Migration and Development Brief 32, April. <https://www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Migration%20%26%20Development%20Brief%2032-COVID-19%20Crisis%20Through%20a%20Migration%20Lens.pdf>

WTO (World Trade Organization) (1994) *The Legal Text: The Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

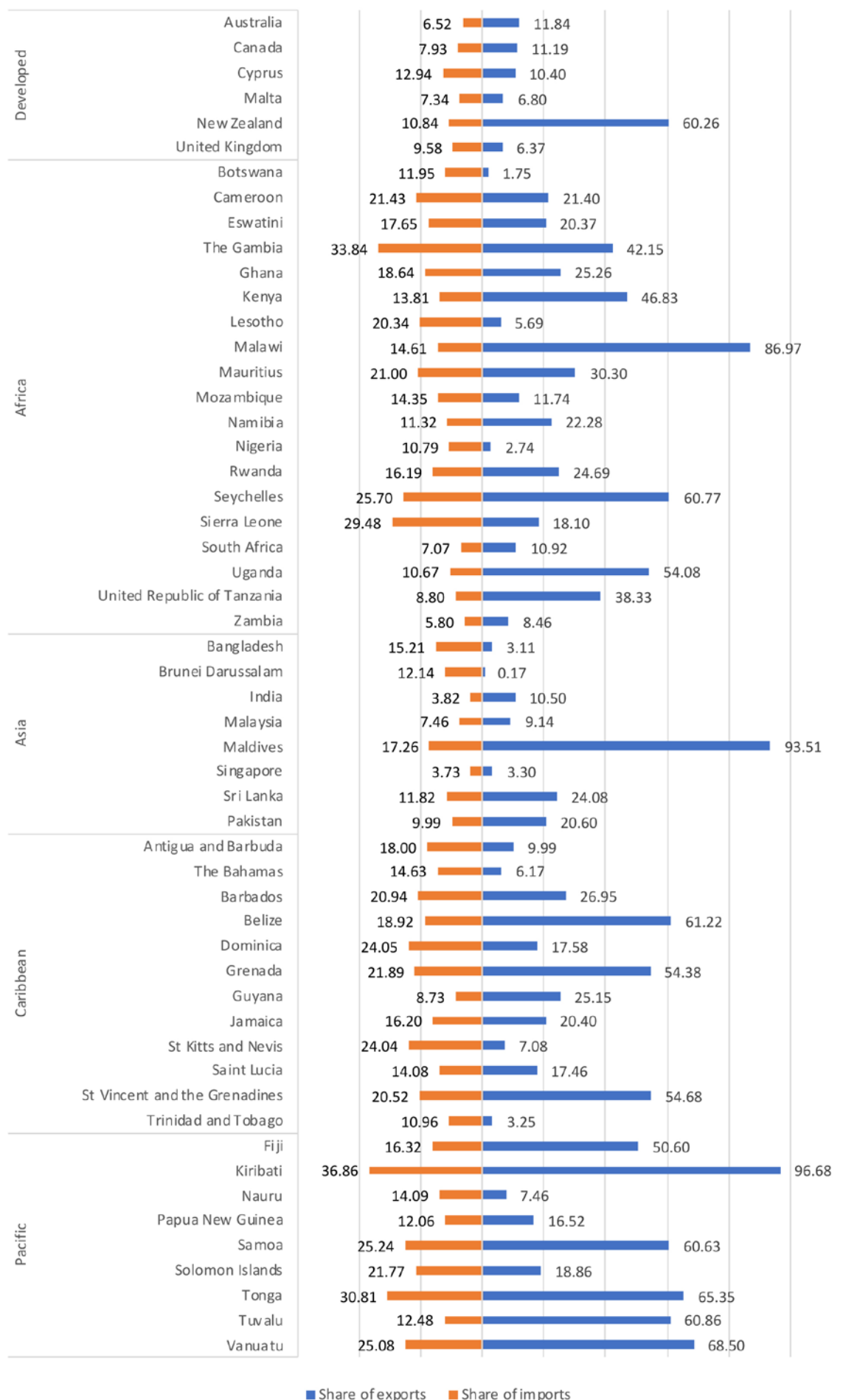
WTO (2012) 'WTO List of Net-Food Importing Developing Countries for the Purposes of the Marrakesh Ministerial Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed Countries and Net-Food Importing Developing Countries ("The Decision")'. WTO Document G/AG/5/Rev.10, 23 March.

WTO (2020a) 'COVID-19 Farm Support Packages and Export-Restrictive Measures under Scrutiny'. WTO News, 18 June. https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/agri_18jun20_e.htm

WTO (2020b) 'Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Ensuring the Free Flow of Trade in Essential Goods for Combating the COVID-19 Pandemic'. WTO Document G/C/W/777, 16 April.

WTO (2020c) 'Statement on COVID-19 and the Multilateral Trading System by Ministers Responsible for the WTO'. WTO Document WT/GC/212, 5 May.

Figure A1: Share of imports and exports by country and region



Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

Table A1: Composition of food trade in Commonwealth countries

	World	All CW	Developed	Developing	Africa	Asia	Caribbean	Pacific
	Imports							
All food items (SITC 0 + 1 + 22 + 4)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
FOOD AND LIVE ANIMALS (SITC 0)	76.8	74.5	81.9	65.2	79.0	58.8	82.7	86.9
Live animals other than animals of division 03	1.5	0.9	1.1	0.7	1.2	0.6	0.2	0.2
Meat and meat preparations	9.2	7.7	10.5	4.2	5.3	3.2	12.5	18.6
Dairy products and birds' eggs	5.9	5.1	5.4	4.7	4.7	4.4	9.4	8.7
Fish, crustaceans, molluscs and preparations thereof	9.5	6.7	7.3	5.8	10.7	3.9	6.9	8.2
Cereals and cereal preparations	11.9	11.1	8.9	13.7	26.5	8.6	15.5	23.3
Vegetables and fruits	17.3	19.1	23.2	14.1	6.9	16.9	13.8	10.4
Sugar, sugar preparations and honey	3.0	4.0	2.8	5.5	7.8	4.8	4.4	3.2
Coffee, tea, cocoa, spices, and manufactures thereof	6.8	7.4	8.4	6.1	3.9	7.2	2.5	2.6
Feedstuff for animals (excluding unmilled cereals)	5.6	4.9	5.4	4.2	4.0	4.3	5.3	4.1
Miscellaneous edible products and preparations	6.1	7.6	8.9	6.0	7.9	5.0	12.2	7.5
BEVERAGES AND TOBACCO (SITC 1)	10.4	11.5	13.6	8.8	9.8	8.3	13.2	8.4
Beverages	7.3	9.5	12.0	6.3	6.5	6.1	10.5	5.8
Tobacco and tobacco manufactures	3.1	2.0	1.6	2.5	3.3	2.2	2.6	2.6
OIL SEEDS AND OLEAGINOUS FRUITS (SITC 22)	6.3	2.1	1.2	3.1	0.7	4.2	0.9	0.5
Oil seeds and oleaginous fruits	6.3	2.1	1.2	3.1	0.7	4.2	0.9	0.5
ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE OILS, FATS AND WAXES (SITC 4)	6.5	11.9	3.2	22.8	10.5	28.7	3.2	4.3
Animal oils and fats	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.3
Fixed vegetable oils and fats, crude, refined or fractionated	5.0	9.9	2.2	19.5	9.5	24.4	2.5	3.6
Processed Animal and vegetable oils and fats	1.2	1.7	0.7	2.8	0.9	3.7	0.4	0.3

Exports											
All food items (SITC 0 + 1 + 22 + 4)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
FOOD AND LIVE ANIMALS (SITC 0)	77.9	76.4	79.0	73.2	81.3	70.9	73.1	53.9			
Live animals other than animals of division 03	1.5	1.7	2.6	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.3	0.0			
Meat and meat preparations	9.7	11.4	17.3	4.3	2.1	5.3	1.0	0.6			
Dairy products and birds' eggs	6.1	6.7	11.0	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.2	0.3			
Fish, crustaceans, molluscs and preparations thereof	10.2	9.5	7.5	11.8	9.9	11.9	16.4	28.9			
Cereals and cereal preparations	11.4	13.7	14.6	12.6	5.8	15.2	16.6	2.2			
Vegetables and fruits	17.6	11.2	10.3	12.2	25.5	7.7	15.2	3.0			
Sugar, sugar preparations and honey	2.9	2.4	1.6	3.3	5.0	2.6	10.3	2.5			
Coffee, tea, cocoa, spices, and manufactures thereof	6.8	8.3	3.4	14.3	24.5	10.8	4.0	14.9			
Feedstuff for animals (excluding unmilled cereals)	5.4	3.7	4.0	3.3	2.9	3.5	2.4	0.9			
Miscellaneous edible products and preparations	6.3	7.9	6.6	9.5	2.8	12.2	5.7	0.5			
BEVERAGES AND TOBACCO (SITC 1)	10.5	10.6	11.5	9.4	13.8	7.5	26.3	8.4			
Beverages	7.4	8.4	11.1	5.1	6.0	4.4	23.5	7.4			
Tobacco and tobacco manufactures	3.1	2.1	0.4	4.2	7.8	3.1	2.8	1.1			
OIL SEEDS AND OLEAGINOUS FRUITS (SITC 22)	5.4	4.1	6.1	1.8	2.2	1.6	0.2	3.9			
Oil seeds and oleaginous fruits	5.4	4.1	6.1	1.8	2.2	1.6	0.2	3.9			
ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE OILS, FATS AND WAXES (SITC 4)	6.2	8.9	3.4	15.6	2.7	19.9	0.4	33.8			
Animal oils and fats	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0			
Fixed vegetable oils and fats, crude, refined or fractionated	4.9	6.5	2.5	11.3	1.9	14.1	0.4	33.3			
Processed Animal and vegetable oils and fats	1.0	2.1	0.3	4.2	0.7	5.7	0.0	0.4			

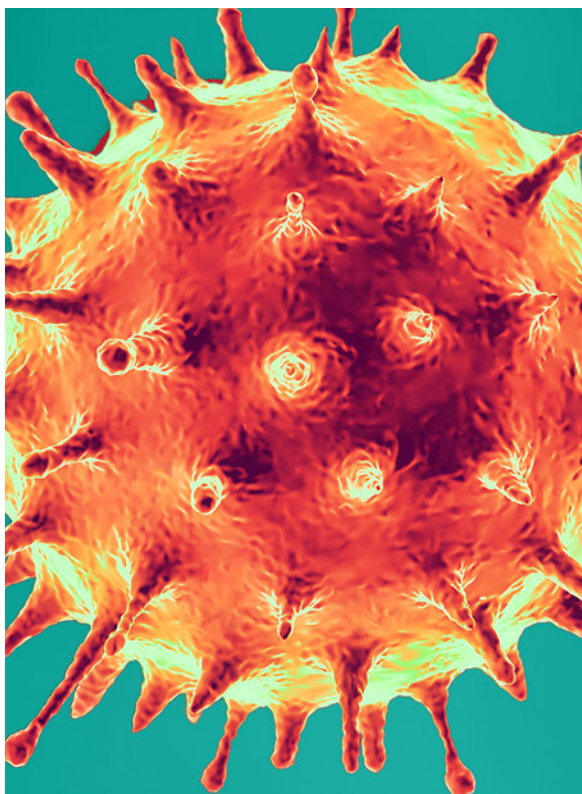
Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)

Table A2: Relative importance of the Commonwealth in food supplies

Region/Country	Food exports					Food imports						
	Total exports	Value (US\$ M)	% total exports	to CW (US\$ M)	% to CW	% NCW	Total all products	Value (US\$ M)	% total imports	from CW (US\$ M)	% from CW	% NCW
World	19,414,008	1,565,375	8.06	220,243	14.07	85.93	19,670,072	1,580,634	8.04	258,104	16.33	83.67
Commonwealth	2,550,474	247,413	9.70	45,927	18.56	81.44	2,937,646	221,076	7.53	48,571	21.97	78.03
Developed	1,238,039	136,079	10.99	16,893	12.41	87.59	1,425,897	122,622	8.60	15,819	12.90	87.10
Australia	252,776	29,929	11.84	5,211	17.41	82.59	235,519	15,366	6.52	5,259	34.22	65.78
Canada	450,278	50,406	11.19	2,421	4.80	95.20	459,866	36,469	7.93	2,599	7.13	92.87
Cyprus	5,065	527	10.40	163	31.00	69.00	10,813	1,399	12.94	141	10.07	89.93
Malta	3,012	205	6.80	15	7.33	92.67	6,323	464	7.34	52	11.30	88.70
New Zealand	39,839	24,008	60.26	6,187	25.77	74.23	43,736	4,741	10.84	2,244	47.34	52.66
United Kingdom	487,069	31,005	6.37	2,896	9.34	90.66	669,640	64,183	9.58	5,524	8.61	91.39
Developing	1,312,435	111,333	8.48	29,034	26.08	73.92	1,511,748	98,454	6.51	32,752	33.27	66.73
Africa	222,480	27,946	12.56	10,417	37.28	62.72	234,911	25,410	10.82	10,253	40.35	59.65
Botswana	6,573	115	1.75	67	57.89	42.11	6,169	737	11.95	718	97.39	2.61
Cameroon	3,838	821	21.40	91	11.14	88.86	6,053	1,297	21.43	208	16.04	83.96
Eswatini	1,838	374	20.37	307	82.07	17.93	1,813	320	17.65	305	95.37	4.63
Gambia	102	43	42.15	19	43.30	56.70	551	187	33.84	35	18.74	81.26
Ghana	14,868	3,756	25.26	1,078	28.71	71.29	11,880	2,215	18.64	602	27.17	72.83
Kenya	6,050	2,833	46.83	1,096	38.69	61.31	17,377	2,400	13.81	1,191	49.62	50.38
Lesotho	1,175	67	5.69	57	85.23	14.77	2,184	444	20.34	437	98.33	1.67
Malawi	1,046	910	86.97	200	21.98	78.02	2,795	408	14.61	280	68.66	31.34
Mauritius	2,372	719	30.30	180	25.10	74.90	5,669	1,191	21.00	567	47.63	52.37
Mozambique	5,196	610	11.74	206	33.71	66.29	6,786	974	14.35	533	54.76	45.24
Namibia	5,395	1,202	22.28	581	48.31	51.69	8,289	938	11.32	805	85.77	14.23
Nigeria	62,400	1,709	2.74	430	25.14	74.86	43,012	4,639	10.79	1,004	21.64	78.36
Rwanda	1,126	278	24.69	124	44.63	55.37	2,518	408	16.19	266	65.27	34.73
Seychelles	569	346	60.77	103	29.86	70.14	1,137	292	25.70	67	23.05	76.95
Sierra Leone	554	100	18.10	17	17.17	82.83	1,354	399	29.48	136	34.12	65.88
South Africa	93,570	10,221	10.92	4,748	46.46	53.54	92,579	6,541	7.07	1,998	30.55	69.45
Uganda	3,087	1,670	54.08	552	33.04	66.96	6,729	718	10.67	315	43.83	56.17

United Republic of Tanzania	3,669	1,407	38.33	337	23.93	76.07	8,554	753	8.80	336	44.68	55.32
Zambia	9,052	766	8.46	225	29.34	70.66	9,462	549	5.80	449	81.74	18.26
Asia	1,062,861	79,402	7.47	17,347	21.85	78.15	1,245,850	68,351	5.49	20,865	30.53	69.47
Bangladesh	38,471	1,198	3.11	323	26.95	73.05	60,495	9,202	15.21	3,386	36.79	63.21
Brunei Darussalam	6,574	11	0.17	7	64.67	35.33	4,164	505	12.14	337	66.66	33.34
India	322,492	33,865	10.50	4,840	14.29	85.71	507,616	19,393	3.82	4,009	20.67	79.33
Malaysia	247,324	22,595	9.14	7,479	33.10	66.90	217,358	16,223	7.46	4,260	26.26	73.74
Maldives	339	317	93.51	131	41.33	58.67	2,961	511	17.26	258	50.58	49.42
Pakistan	23,631	4,867	20.60	1,069	21.96	78.04	60,163	6,012	9.99	1,947	32.38	67.62
Singapore	411,743	13,590	3.30	2,954	21.74	78.26	370,504	13,834	3.73	5,156	37.27	62.73
Sri Lanka	12,288	2,959	24.08	543	18.36	81.64	22,589	2,670	11.82	1,513	56.66	43.34
Caribbean	15,297	1,602	10.47	724	45.20	54.80	23,838	3,484	14.61	789	22.65	77.35
Antigua and Barbuda	87	9	9.99	5	55.91	44.09	501	90	18.00	40	44.50	55.50
Bahamas	655	40	6.17	9	23.03	76.97	3,543	518	14.63	12	2.22	97.78
Barbados	458	123	26.95	63	51.46	48.54	1,600	335	20.94	124	37.07	62.93
Belize	452	276	61.22	118	42.66	57.34	958	181	18.92	27	14.81	85.19
Dominica	20	4	17.58	2	62.64	37.36	307	74	24.05	28	38.32	61.68
Grenada	31	17	54.38	8	45.60	54.40	456	100	21.89	39	38.58	61.42
Guyana	1,487	374	25.15	118	31.66	68.34	1,825	159	8.73	66	41.56	58.44
Jamaica	1,879	383	20.40	143	37.37	62.63	6,126	993	16.20	163	16.46	83.54
Saint Kitts and Nevis	54	4	7.08	2	64.59	35.41	335	80	24.04	19	23.93	76.07
Saint Lucia	133	23	17.46	20	84.77	15.23	693	98	14.08	46	46.85	53.15
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	44	24	54.68	22	91.89	8.11	354	73	20.52	32	44.21	55.79
Trinidad and Tobago	9,997	325	3.25	213	65.61	34.39	7,140	782	10.96	193	24.64	75.36
Pacific	11,796	2,383	20.20	546	22.93	77.07	7,150	1,209	16.91	844	69.82	30.18
Fiji	1,041	527	50.60	118	22.38	77.62	2,720	444	16.32	341	76.82	23.18
Kiribati	13	13	96.68	1	4.38	95.62	120	44	36.86	28	62.20	37.80
Nauru	16	1	7.46	0	12.54	87.46	118	17	14.09	16	95.19	4.81
Papua New Guinea	10,041	1,659	16.52	385	23.23	76.77	2,600	314	12.06	224	71.52	28.48
Samoa	46	28	60.63	3	12.09	87.91	363	92	25.24	47	51.07	48.93
Solomon Islands	569	107	18.86	21	19.23	80.77	601	131	21.77	69	52.38	47.62
Tonga	15	10	65.35	3	34.20	65.80	269	83	30.81	52	62.71	37.29
Tuvalu	0	0	60.86	0	0.32	99.68	36	5	12.48	3	69.96	30.04
Vanuatu	55	38	68.50	15	39.35	60.65	323	81	25.08	65	80.48	19.52

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (calculated using data from UNCTADStat)



Previous Ten Issues of the Commonwealth Trade Hot Topics Series

Issue 164: Prioritising the Poor: LDCs and Trade in COVID-19-Related Medical Supplies

Issue 163: COVID-19 and Tourism: Charting a Sustainable, Resilient Recovery for Small States

Issue 162: Leveraging Digital Connectivity for Post-COVID Competitiveness and Recovery

Issue 161: The Potential Impact of COVID-19 on Commonwealth Trade, Recovery and Resilience

Issue 160: Digitalising Trade Facilitation Implementation: Opportunities and Challenges for the Commonwealth

Issue 159: Trade in COVID-19-Related Medical Goods: Issues and Challenges for Commonwealth Countries

Issue 158: Special and Differential Treatment in Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations: Priorities for Pacific SIDS

Issue 157: Natural Disasters and Trade Resilience in Small States

Issue 156: Creative Industries in the Digital Economy: Opportunities for Small States

Issue 155: Natural Disasters, Trade and LDCs



Trade Hot Topics

ISSN: 2071-8527 (print) ISSN: 2071-9914 (online)

Commonwealth Trade Hot Topics is a peer-reviewed publication which provides concise and informative analyses on trade and related issues, prepared both by Commonwealth Secretariat and international experts.

Series editor: Brendan Vickers

Produced by Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate of the Commonwealth Secretariat

For further information or to contribute to the Series, please email b.vickers@commonwealth.int