




Chapter Fifteen

Food Availability, Accessibility, Utilisation and Stability in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Blind Roadmap to Agenda 2063

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Abstract

Food security remains a pressing concern in sub-Saharan Africa, with insufficient focus on the comprehensive study of its four dimensions: availability, accessibility, stability, and utilisation. This study investigates the obstacles impeding food security in the region, particularly in Southern Africa, such as poor harvests, limited access to agri-loans, human-wildlife conflicts impacting food availability, and inadequate road infrastructure affecting food accessibility. The lack of nutritious food and water also contributes to suboptimal food utilisation. Addressing these challenges is essential to achieve Agenda 2063's primary aspiration of modernising agriculture and increasing productivity. However, there is a noticeable lack of effort from African governments to fulfil the food security goals outlined in Agenda 2063. The continent's commitment to tackling these issues is evident in adopting Agenda 2063, focusing on improved food security. This chapter assesses the extent to which Agenda 2063's aspirations address food insecurity, considering accessibility, availability, utilisation, and stability. The study delves into the contextualisation of food security concepts, policies, and initiatives at the continental level. It discusses challenges affecting food security and future directions in attaining it in sub-Saharan Africa to realise



Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Data were meticulously gathered through an extensive literature review, official reports and interviews with experts, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The study underscores the urgent need for attention from the African Union to address food security challenges and work towards achieving The Africa We Want. The 21 Africa Agriculture Africa Status Report emphasises the persistent food insecurity in Africa, necessitating a collective effort to combat poverty and malnutrition and improve the lives of millions of Africans.

Introduction

In this chapter, a comprehensive analysis is conducted on food availability, accessibility, utilisation and stability in sub-Saharan Africa about the realisation of Agenda 2063. The paper is organised as follows: First, the introduction provides a general overview of food security in Africa. Section 2 introduces the contextualisation of the key concepts. Section 3 focuses on the food security and insecurity determinants in sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, an outline of policies and initiatives undertaken to address food insecurity at the continental level is provided in Section 4. On the other hand, challenges that affect food security future directions in sub-Saharan countries are well discussed in relation to Agenda 2063 in Section 5. This is followed by continental initiatives to attain food security and future directions for achieving food security in sub-Saharan Africa, presented in Sections 6 and 7, respectively. Finally, Section 8 concludes the chapter with key takeaways and recommendations. For this chapter, data were obtained by conducting an extensive literature review in the form of official reports and written publications from academic journals and reputable sources, as well as interviews with food security and agriculture experts, aiming to create a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

While several studies have been undertaken on food security in general, studying food security premised on the four dimensions of food security (availability, accessibility, stability and utilisation) has hardly received much attention

from researchers. In Southern Africa, several factors are cited for hindering the populace from being food secure, posing a considerable challenge to realising Agenda 2026 (The Africa We Want). Poor harvest due to drought, flood, inability to access agri-loans due to a lack of collateral and persisting human-wildlife conflicts are recurring and uncontrolled phenomena, consequently affecting food availability. On the other hand, the majority find it hard to access commercial markets mainly due to a lack of proper road infrastructures, particularly in connecting rural residents to urban areas, which affects food accessibility. Finally, a lack of adequate food utilisation is commonly observed in sub-Saharan Africa, given insufficient nutritious, contaminated food and water (Auma & Radeny, 2022).

While it can be acknowledged that the food supply chain disruption affects food stability, most inhabitants suffer from acute food insecurity since not all have physical and economic access to readily accessible, sufficient and suitable food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. If these notable challenges are unaddressed, there is a likelihood that attaining modern agriculture for increased proactivity and production, as enshrined in Agenda 2063 first aspiration, will be an unrealised ambition. This realisation demonstrates that little effort has been made by the African governments, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, to realise the 'Africa We Want' in terms of food security.

Sub-Saharan Africa has faced several challenges hampering food security that need the attention of the continental body (African Union). These challenges include poor trade, economic hardship, poverty, unemployment, and conflicts. To reduce the effects of those challenges, the African countries adopted 2013 Africa's long-term blueprint 'Agenda 2063' (Africa We Want). One area that needs special attention is food insecurity experienced in Africa since millions of Africans that are born and raised, die of poverty and malnutrition (Barrett, 2021). This is also acknowledged in the 21 Africa Agriculture Africa Status Report [AASR] (2021), in which it was noted that Africa remains food insecure, consequently

accounting for 256 million of the world's 795 million people suffering from hunger. Therefore, this chapter deals with the extent to which the agenda of 2063's first aspiration, particularly the theme that deals with improved food security. To comprehensively evaluate this phenomenon, the study's focus covers four food security dimensions: accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability in sub-Saharan Africa.

Conceptualizing Key Concepts

Food availability concept

Food availability is achieved when sufficient food quantities are consistently available to individuals within a country (Manyullei & Arundhana, 2021). In brief, food availability means such food can be supplied through household production, other domestic output, commercial imports, or food assistance (FAO, 2019:5). It has been shown that food availability is obtained from agricultural production. These products are not limited to livestock, cash crops, fishing and forestry farming. It is achievable by employing food cultivation, ideally sustainable use of natural resources and donations from charity organisations. Important to note from the above sentiment is that food availability is closely intertwined with food supply by the production and distribution of food.

At the same time, the study shows that several factors determine food production. These factors may include land ownership and use, soil management, crop selection, breeding management, livestock breeding and management and harvesting time. Given such empirical underpinnings, crop production can be affected by changes in rainfall, temperature, resources, and personnel for agricultural purposes. In this context, one contentious implication of high rainfall is that it may cause floods, thus negatively impacting food security. It is worth mentioning here that food availability is necessary to ensure food security, but availability alone is insufficient for food access. This underpins food access as an essential pillar

to consider when assessing the impact of floods on human security.

Food accessibility concept

Food access refers to securing food from the market and accessing the means of production (Ghosh & Ghosal, 2021:2570). On the contrary, the inability to access an adequate quantity of a variety of food resulting from market access challenges and production means is food insecurity (Alabi & Ngwenyama, 2023). Food access will be ensured when sub-Saharan African citizens have enough means to obtain food through readily available marketplaces. Conversely, Ahmed, Ying, Bashir, Abid & Zulfiqar (2017) infer that household income available, income distribution, and food prices are major determinants of food accessibility globally. Therefore, food access comprises substantial purchasing power and affordability in the local, community and national markets.

In this context, own production with access to inputs, land, credit for purchasing and food technology are essential in determining food accessibility (Mabuku, 2022). It is with the critical realisation that sub-Saharan African countries cannot achieve food accessibility if other countries still find it challenging to access food. This is mainly because all households in their respective countries should have access to food stores and strong purchasing power to obtain nutritious food in adequate quantities.

Food utilisation concept

Food utilisation refers to food preferences influenced by culture, food safety, food quality, health status, and consumption patterns (FAO, 2019). Murray, Gale, Adams and Dalton (2023), associated food utilisation with how well citizens are empowered to exercise their discretion in choosing what sort of food they produce, eat, and what the body utilises for nourishment for healthy living.

As seen in the preceding case, food utilisation concentrates on the proper biological use of food through a balanced diet that

provides essential nutrients for sufficient energy. In this regard, attaining NDPs and agenda 2063 in terms of food security requires that citizens possess knowledge of the role of proper food processing techniques and storage to avoid contamination that results in disease and, eventually, death. A further explanation may be that various factors affect the quantity and quality of food at the household level, for instance, a lack of access to improved water sources and sanitation facilities. This implies that one of the other important considerations for sub-Saharan countries' leadership if the long-term continental version is to be achieved, is to ensure that the food ingested is safe and enough to meet each individual's physiological requirements.

Food stability concept

Food stability refers to the ability of households to obtain food over time (FAO, 2019; Zulkarnain, Dessy, Dedy, Irma, Yarmaidi & Sugeng, 2023). The forgoing suggests that food security should be applicable not only during specific periods but at all times. While the SDGs and Agenda 2063 aim to achieve this, several notable reasons hinder this realisation in sub-Saharan Africa. These incorporate natural disasters, for instance, cyclones, e.g. Idai: Mozambique (Petricola, Reinmuth, Lautenbach, Hatfield & Zipf, 2022), Freddy: Malawi (Aderinto, 2023), and floods, e.g. in Zambia (Bwalya, 2023). Primary food production level is affected by droughts, e.g. Ethiopia (Asefawu, 2022), Tanzania (Randell, Gray & Shayo (2022) and Uganda (Sunday, Kahunde, Atwine, Adelaja & George, 2023). Ongoing crop destruction is caused by wild animals, e.g. in Ethiopia (Jaleta & Tekalign, 2022), Kenya (Mwadime & Mbataru, 2022), and Namibia (Luetkemeier, Kraus, Mbidzo, Hauptfleisch, Liehr & Blaum, 2023).

Low food production is seen as a major setback worsened by poor rainfall patterns experienced over the years. Furthermore, constant civil conflicts in some sub-Saharan African countries are cited to have been caused by various factors affecting food stability over time. As a result, these countries are likely to continue to experience food insecurity for a prolonged time, defeating the goal that the African blueprint

intends to attain (Iddrisu, 2020). This endorses the general view that reinforcing endurable food systems becomes intricate when mated with a natural disaster such as drought and flood. For Bridoux and Stoelhorst (2022), food insecurity in Africa could be challenging to address, mainly because the government and other stakeholders do not prioritise improving the agricultural sector. This implies that the per capita start-up funds for the power community are not considered. Ultimately, not all people have food at all times, a worrisome trend that requires immediate intervention by African leaders.

Determinants of Food Security and Insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa

To unpack the determinants of food security and insecurity, spatial and non-spatial factors are explained as their role in affecting and aiding in gaining food security in sub-Saharan Africa. First, spatial factors influence food accessibility globally, continentally, and nationally (Pakravan-Charvadeh, Khan & Flora, 2020).

For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, poor access to stores that shelve fresh produce may significantly limit residents' opportunities to purchase and consume fresh fruits and vegetables, affecting food security. While only a countable number of the population have access to food stores, the majority, particularly the rural population, find it hard to access stores that shelve a variety of food. This may be attributed to what Battersby and Njogu (2023) cited: most of the development undertaken in African countries is urban and cities concentrated while rural areas are less prioritised. Informed by this reality, it becomes fair enough to pinpoint that realising the Africa We Want's first aspiration will be daunting since little progress has been made in addressing food insecurity, as evidenced by the developmental trend. The unbearable experience of food insecurity is even more disconcerting in areas that suffer seasonal floods where the likelihood of stores being closed during the flood season is high. This observation is substantiated by the persistent transport challenges brought

by flood plains, which affect purchasing much-needed stocks (Mabuku, 2022). Shops that sell vegetables are usually affected during floods, restraining the populace's intake of a balanced diet.

Another factor is land ownership in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been cited as contributing to food insecurity. For instance, several studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa indicate that the unfair distribution of land and ancestral land affects people's ability to have a portion of for planting (Owoicho, Sennuga, Bamidele, Osho-Lagunju & Alabuja, 2023). In addition, there are some instances where farming and grazing land for some African communities and families become scarce, exacerbating already existing poverty. While the above is the case, the study by Owoicho *et al.* (2023) noted that ownership of fertile ancestral land alone might not necessarily determine food security and easy access to markets to sell produce, but buying other essential food items for a balanced body is equally important (Anderson & Martin, 2021).

This assertion is substantiated by Munzhedzi (2017), who relates income inequality for urban and rural people as a plausible factor affecting food accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability. Urban residents are more likely to receive agricultural loans than rural residents (Mapanje, Karuaihe, Machethe & Amis, 2023). While it is uncontested that this could be due to the inability of these residents to repay the loans, there is no doubt that those in positions of power need to assist the rural population if the African blueprint is to be well realised.

Conversely, non-spatial factors relate to a country's socio-economic features affecting food accessibility (Pakravan-Charvadeh, Khan & Flora, 2020). From the present view, non-spatial factors in a country's socio-economic challenges affect not only food accessibility but also food availability, utilisation and stability. These factors are not limited to income, age, access to agricultural loans, dependency ratio, ethnicity, gender, education of farming practices, geographical location, society social status and unemployment rate (Aboaba, Fadiji & Hussayn,

2020). The authors' views represent the current situation in sub-Saharan Africa concerning the extent to which non-spatial factors have affected food security. For instance, in terms of age, the senior citizens who had depended most of their lives on agricultural practices, suffer the most when acquiring food for daily survival.

The above is mainly due to strained energy and reduced agricultural activities. Undoubtedly, the situation normally worsens since senior citizens produce less during their active years, affecting their future savings. For this reason, animal and crop farming in sub-Saharan Africa is more practised (Tabo, 2023). Premised within the preceding realisation, caution must be made when explaining these aspects. Since these agricultural practices are the immediate reference to many livelihoods, persistent frontage to spatial and non-spatial factors aggregates their exposure to food insecurity. Siphon and Nolvazi (2021)'s study found that several households in sub-Saharan Africa, mainly in rural areas, experience low-income levels due to family status and are primarily affected by food insecurity. To this point, it is more apparent that family status as a non-spatial factor specifies how much food can be secured since low-income families may find it hard to access markets, loans, agricultural education or fertile land. Consequently, food insecurity has become chronic, halting the acceleration of Africa's biggest blueprint, the 'Africa We Want,' in terms of achieving food security for all Africans.

Sub-Saharan Africa's Progression Towards Agenda 2063's Aspiration on food security

In its first aspiration of Agenda 2063, Africa has acknowledged the need to transform Africa's economies by raising productivity and competitiveness. It is more achievable through modern agriculture methods to increase productivity. Despite this realisation, the implementation towards attaining this has not been pleasing in many sub-Saharan African countries; few efforts are geared towards radically transforming agriculture for the possibility of food self-reliance (Tabo, 2023).

When critically analysing the role of food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa, there is no denying that other aspirations of the 'Africa We Want' are more affected by the failure to address food insecurity by African countries. For instance, Aspiration 4 looks at attaining a peaceful and secure Africa. Therefore, additional uncertainty arises from the fact that one of the contributing factors to conflict is a poorly developed economy and the desire for people to be food secure. When these essential services are not met by increased agriculture productivity, which directly impacts the economy, citizens resort to conflict, particularly targeting the ruling government, causing accelerated insecurity. This was also acknowledged in the recent study by Mabuku and Olutola (2022). It noted that neglected groups that feel the government neglects them in providing food and other necessities are likely to resort to unpeaceful means. The Zambezi case (the former Caprivi region) offers a practical example in Namibia. Some residents of this region claimed to have been neglected by the government in effectively addressing the human security index. They believed their plight could only be addressed if they became an independent country from Namibia (Mabuku & Olutola, 2022).

The dissatisfaction of a particular ethnic group, mainly individuals presuming that the region is marginalised, led to mobilising an armed group (Mabuku & Olutola, 2022). In addition, they attacked some vital government installations and buildings and killed several people in the process. The above causes a substantial security threat to the national state. Even today, the group still exists and puts pressure on the government to free the Zambezi region to be an independent state for possible self-determination. This on its own demonstrates that food insecurity, if not adequately addressed, the anticipated culture of peace and tolerance, as well as addressing emerging threats to Africa's peace and security and stable and peaceful Africa goals, will be impossible to achieve.

On the other hand, food insecurity threatens aspirations 6 and 7 of the 'Africa We Want', an Africa whose development is people-driven and a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner. There is an unceasing observation

thus far in most African countries, including sub-Saharan Africa: people driving conflict are mostly unsatisfied youths. This attests to the fact that history has it that most revolutions in the world that ever happened were staged by youth. For instance, for Africa's citizens to be actively involved in decision-making in all aspects and become major partners in global affairs and peaceful co-existence, improving Africa's partnerships is impossible without food security. Of all these aspirations of Agenda 2063, one of the most important goals that needs to be achieved first is Aspiration 1, which calls for a creation of an Africa that is prosperous, inclusive and with sustainable development.

When adequately achieved, the African populace would become satisfied and is more likely to be actively involved in attaining other aspirations the continent aims to achieve. In Eswatini, agriculture is viewed as the source of the country's economy due to its strong linkages to different sectors of the economy (Mhlanga-Ndlovu, 2022). In 2022, it was believed that the country would record an increase in maize production and citrus fruits by 100% between 2013 and 2020. However, beef production declined by 63%, and sugar production declined by 2.5% (Mhlanga-Ndlovu, 2022). In 2021, Namibia implemented the Zero Hunger Strategy to improve food and nutrition security. It established Food Banks to address urban food poverty, reducing undernourishment prevalence from 21.6% in 2013 to 14.6% in 2019. This was noted in a country's state of food security and initiatives towards realising Agenda 2063 ministerial report (Mulonda, 2022).

This was mainly influenced by the prevailing pandemic (COVID-19) by then. In addition, a NAD 560 million Emergency Income Grant was channelled to assist 769,000 Namibians. While the above are essential measures to address food insecurity in Namibia, it should be noted that these measures are unsustainable (Mulonda, 2022:142). The preceding denotes that they were put in place on a temporary basis and failed to address chronic food insecurity in Namibia. It must be noted that with these interventions food insecurity challenges in Africa, as in Namibia, will not be addressed come 2036. Equally

problematic is that measures taken were reactive to reduce the pandemic's impacts on food insecurity temporarily. This observation is also true in most sub-Saharan African countries (Tabo, 2023).

Subsequently, this poses substantive drawbacks in improving the state of food in the countries in the long run since more emphasis is put on reactive and short-term strategies. Notably, in most sub-Saharan countries in 2022, it was observed that they had not embraced modern agriculture methods to improve food security (Africa Agriculture Status Report, 2021). This was evident, for instance, in countries like Mauritius, Mauritania, Nigeria, Namibia, Seychelles, South Sudan, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Seychelles. By 2022, they had zero per cent improvement in agricultural products through modern means. Meanwhile, Uganda (15%), Tunisia (25%), Rwanda (84%), Togo (100%) and Senegal (100%) recorded an improvement in their agricultural produce through the adoption of modern technology.

This demonstrates that the attainment of food security as Agenda 2063 dictates is still a far-fetched reality, and the need for a responsible government to take up measures cannot be overemphasised if the African Blueprint is to be achieved. Smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe who adopted agroecological practices were able to improve their food security and reduce their poverty levels. The producers implemented strategies such as crop rotation, intercropping, and using natural pesticides and fertilisers, which resulted in increased crop yields and improved soil health (Paracchini, Justes, Wezel, Zingari, Kahane, Madsen, Scopel, Hérault, Bhérier-Breton, Buckley & Colbert, 2020). A similar situation was observed in Ethiopia, where farmers in the Tigray region adopted agroecological practices, including crop diversification, intercropping, and using natural fertilisers and pesticides (Gebru, Ichoku & Phil-Eze, 2020). These practices enhanced soil fertility, higher yields, and greater food security.

Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has developed the Soil Health Program to encourage smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa to implement agroecological practices,

including conservation agriculture (Sinyangwe, Mwamakamba, Mkandawire, Madzivhandila, 2023). There are opportunities and challenges for promoting transitions to agroecological practices for sustainable food production in sub-Saharan Africa. While some sub-Saharan African countries have devised national policies and plans to encourage the use of agroecology, not all countries have specifically mentioned agroecology in their policies (Tabo, 2023). However, this does not inherently imply that agroecological practices are not implemented in these nations. For instance, Nigeria has no explicit national policy promoting agroecology (Fadairo, Olajuyigbe, Adelokun, & Osayomi, 2023). However, some Nigerian farmers, primarily in northern regions, have been practising agroecology for decades.

These producers have been using traditional farming methods that promote soil health, biodiversity, and ecological balance. In addition, they employ agroecology's fundamental principles, such as intercropping and crop rotation, which are low-input and climate-smart agricultural practices (Fadairo *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, agroecology practices are not explicitly stated in Kenya's national policies, but many smallholder farmers have been practising them. Traditional practices such as intercropping, crop rotation, and natural insect management have been utilised by these farmers to produce healthy and nutritious crops while conserving the environment (Leippert, Darmaun, Bernoux, Mpheshea, Müller, Geck, Herren, Irung, Nyasimi, Sene & Sow, 2020). Despite a lack of clear legislation, Burkina Faso, Senegal, and Mali are among the other sub-Saharan African countries where agroecology methods are being adopted (Africa Agriculture Status Report, 2021). Smallholder farmers in these nations are implementing agroecology practices to increase crop yields, improve soil health, and conserve natural resources (Leippert *et al.*, 2020; Bottazzi, Boillat, Marfurt & Seck, 2020).

Continental initiatives to attain food security

Several bodies initiated by the United Nations and still continuing such as the Agriculture and Food Security Department, oversee the effective implementation of AU agricultural transformation

decisions in Africa. This is in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency, the New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Commissions, and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Notably, these institutions have emphasised common positions on fisheries and aquaculture and their role in strengthening food security in Africa and sub-Saharan Africa (Shilomboleni, 2017).

Further, these bodies promote organic agriculture in partnership with the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme in Africa and other partners. As a result, the African Union Commission has established and chaired the Continental Steering Committee for the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative for Africa. Furthermore, regional training workshops on organic standards, certification systems, modern organic production, and marketing for farmers have been facilitated (Shilomboleni, 2017). The department commenced with the implementation of the Africa-Arab Joint Action Plan (JAP) on Agricultural Development and Food Security. This move is geared towards strengthened cooperation between Africa and the Arab region in the area of agricultural development and food security (Abdelmagid, & El Shibly, 2020).

Last but not least, the department has facilitated the application of the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer, intending to increase fertiliser use in Africa to 50kg/ha. Market access is facilitated to enhance trade in agricultural commodities on the continent. For instance, the African Union has launched the Africa Agroecology Initiative to encourage smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa to employ agroecological practices (Bottazzi *et al.*, 2020). In addition, the number of organisations and initiatives promoting agroecological practices in sub-Saharan Africa has increased. For instance, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) is a network of organisations promoting agroecology and food sovereignty. In sub-Saharan Africa, AFSA has been involved in capacity building.

Challenges experienced towards attaining food security in Sub-Saharan Africa

Even though in some regions of the world, agricultural expansion has been a key factor in reducing poverty, much of Africa has experienced dismal agricultural growth over the past 40 years or so, with poor or even negative per capita growth (Diao, Hazell, Kolavalli & Resnick, 2019). Because policymakers have disregarded agriculture, this situation has not improved. Using new technologies and imported inputs, sustainable intensification is a widely accepted goal for agricultural growth in Africa.

Kenya found that farmers who adopted agroecological practices faced challenges such as low access to credit, high cost of inputs, and limited access to markets (Sinyangwe *et al.*, 2023). In Nigeria, smallholder farmers who adopted agroecological practices faced challenges such as limited access to land, inadequate extension services, and inadequate storage facilities. For these reasons, building resilient and sustainable food systems is crucial for ensuring sustainable economies and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 Goals. This provides evidence and insights into the prospects of achieving resilience and sustainability in Africa's food systems (Africa Agriculture Status Report, 2021).

Other studies have noted that climate change and extreme weather events affect the full realisation of food security in Africa (Adedoyin, Bekun, Hossain, Kwame, Gyamfi & Haseki, 2023). This is more prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa which is highly vulnerable to climate change and has increased the frequency and intensity of droughts. Given this situation, it is hardly surprising that sub-Saharan Africa does not embrace new drought coping strategies, particularly given that humankind has less influence on preventing drought. With this, in addition to floods in these areas, it is evident that achieving food security in sub-Saharan Africa in relation to Agenda 2063 is a blind roadmap and a doubtful task. Persistent floods and unusual rain patterns have been a challenge that poses a significant threat to the realisation of food security in the sub-Saharan countries.

These events affect agricultural productivity, leading to crop failures, livestock losses, and reduced food production.

Notably, the problem of floods is expected to intensify in the region due to climate change, for instance, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Adelekan, 2011; Alicia, 2012; Mashebe, 2015). In addition, soil erosion, deforestation, and improper land management practices contribute to land degradation and declining soil fertility. As a result, agricultural yields decrease, making it difficult to achieve food security. From this, one should accept that land degradation and soil fertility are determinants of food security to a more marginal extent.

Limited infrastructure and poor market access: Inadequate rural infrastructure, including roads, storage facilities and market access, hinders farmers' ability to bring their products to markets. Therefore, this leads to post-harvest losses and reduces farmers' income, making food security a challenge. There is now a relatively large consensus among some scholars, for instance, Mabuku (2022) supports the general view that strengthening sustainable food systems becomes complex, even harder, when coupled with a natural disaster such as a flood or drought. Ultimately, most of the populace suffers from transitory food insecurity brought about by reduced food distribution, supplies and market access. Therefore, acknowledging these challenges highlights the distance that sub-Saharan Africa needs to go to attain the 'Africa We Want' aspiration and SDGs for achieving sustainable food security.

The other challenge is chronic poverty, which lingers within sub-Saharan society. What has been established and is now generally accepted in sub-Saharan Africa is that poverty is prevalent in most of the population. This prevents those social groups from accessing agricultural credits and loans (Lawal, 2023). High poverty levels and limited access to credit prevent smallholder farmers from investing in improved farming practices and technologies. The foregoing perpetuates the cycle of low productivity and limited food security. With unaddressed poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, it may be accepted that food

security through accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability will still be a blind roadmap in relation to Agenda 2063 and SDGs aspirations.

Political instability and conflicts: Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced political instability and conflicts, which disrupt agricultural activities, displace farmers, and disrupt food supply chains. These situations exacerbate food insecurity and hinder progress towards the SDGs. It is evident now that countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan are still characterised by unceasing political instability.

Therefore, since political instability has been identified as a major contributing factor in the decline in food production, leading to direct acute food insecurity, expecting these countries to attain food security by 2063 is a blind ambition. In particular, given that there is an undeniable relationship between peace and high food production, this becomes a determinant of how a nation may be food secure or insecure.

The worrisome observation is that politically stable sub-Saharan countries are also indirectly affected by countries with conflicts. These may include harbouring displaced people and providing support, which increases and strains those countries' feeding capacity. Therefore, it is encouraging to retaliate my earlier observation that to attain Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063: a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, in particular, Goal 3 of this aspiration, food security, requires fulfilling other aspirations. For instance, note Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa by ensuring that mechanisms for conflict resolution are enhanced to realise modern agricultural practices which could improve food security. Importantly, without nurturing a culture of peace and tolerance in sub-Saharan Africa, improved economy and food security seem to be a random road map.

Weak policy implementation is a plausible hindrance to sustained food security in sub-Saharan Africa. There is no doubt that several internal and local policy initiatives have been crafted regarding agricultural practices. Nonetheless,

inadequate agricultural policy implementations and effective strategies hinder progress towards attaining food accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability in sub-Saharan Africa.

Future Directions for Attaining Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa

While persistent challenges that affect the realisation of food security in sub-Saharan Africa can be acknowledged, the contingent relook into the future is essential in attaining food security. First, promote and invest in climate-smart agricultural practices resilient to climate change (Ajibade, Simon, Gulyas & Balint, 2023). This includes promoting drought-tolerant and disease-resistant crop varieties, agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and efficient water management techniques. These aspects are fundamental to withstand the impact of climate change that seems to affect food sustainability in the sub-Saharan countries negatively. It is vital for the international community, political officer bearers, and agricultural officers to ensure efforts are geared to mitigate climate change and that coping strategies are aligned to the geography setting.

The need to strengthen policy frameworks and governance must be considered in future undertakings for food sustainability. The existing national and international policies need to be implemented effectively. This may be done by strengthening governance structures and promoting transparency and accountability in the agricultural sector. However, other possible explanations exist for why strengthening policy frameworks in sub-Saharan Africa is essential. Notably, frameworks facilitate the adoption and expansion of agroecological techniques. Moreover, the policies align with a sound understanding of foreseeable agroecology benefits and challenges resulting from inputs from farmers, civil society, government and private agencies.

Equally important is fostering regional cooperation and collaboration to address common challenges and promote knowledge and technology transfer, paramount to realising sufficient food security within the four dimensions. There is

a need for accelerated partnerships between governments, civil society organisations, research institutions, and the private sector to leverage resources and expertise in sub-Saharan Africa. In this way, digital technologies, such as mobile applications, remote sensing, and data analytics, can be embraced to improve agricultural productivity, market access, and information dissemination.

Research in agricultural practices must be intensified to promote contemporary sustainable farming practices based on informed policy and implementation strategies. In this way, sub-Saharan African countries may develop long-term monitoring systems to assess the environmental impact on agroecological practices and social and economic impact on food accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability. The observed correlation between research and improved agricultural yield might be further explained in this way: research assists farmers in making agricultural decisions not on what worked previously but on what works currently and would seem relevant in the future. This will mean that achieving food security as envisaged by the African blueprint becomes practical.

While it can be confirmed that some international and national policies partially promote agricultural practices based on research, it is also true that funding and support from both the government and private sectors have been disappointing thus far. On the other hand, research on agroecological practices in sub-Saharan Africa is increasing; most of the research is founded on experiences from other regions and may not immediately apply to the region's diverse agroecological conditions.

This is the case despite the growing research on agroecological practices in sub-Saharan Africa. Analysed within the premises above, we cannot exclude the possibility that when agroecological techniques adopted are not regionalised, the research role in improving agricultural sectors becomes less useful. These future directions require a holistic and coordinated approach involving governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector. By addressing these areas,

sub-Saharan Africa can make significant progress towards achieving food security and ensuring sustainable development.

Conclusion

This chapter, 'Food accessibility, availability, utilisation, and stability in sub-Saharan Africa: A blind roadmap to Agenda 2063', sheds light on the pressing issue of food security in the region and highlights the need for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to address this challenge. Sub-Saharan Africa faces significant hurdles to ensure food accessibility, availability, utilisation and stability. While the region possesses abundant natural resources and agricultural potential, numerous factors hinder its ability to meet the nutritional needs of its population. These factors include inadequate infrastructure, climate change, political instability, limited access to resources and technologies and how these seem to affect the realisation of the 'Africa We Want.'

The chapter underscores the significant link between food availability, accessibility, utilisation, and stability. It highlights that achieving food security can be viewed not only by food availability but also by the presence of all four dimensions of food security. To this end, the chapter emphasises the importance of a multifaceted approach to tackle these challenges. It calls for implementing comprehensive national and regional policies and strategies that integrate short-term and long-term food security solutions. Moreover, it highlights the significance of regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building to address common challenges collectively.

In conclusion, achieving food security in sub-Saharan Africa is a complex and multifaceted task that requires a holistic and integrated approach. The chapter highlights the urgency of prioritising food accessibility, availability, utilisation, and stability in the region's development agenda, as outlined in Agenda 2063. By addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity and implementing sustainable and inclusive strategies, sub-Saharan Africa can pave the way for a future where every individual has access to safe, nutritious, and

affordable food, thereby contributing to the overall well-being and prosperity of the region.

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