

Food Safety Status in Africa

QAssurance



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Introduction

- Food Safety is a shared responsibility between consumers, food businesses, farmers, and public agencies, therefore governments cannot act alone to ensure it.
- The consequences of unsafe food and foodborne illness are caused by unsafe productivity. They affect socioeconomic development, drain the healthcare systems, and hinder economic growth as well as global and regional trade. Whereas the increasingly globalized food market offers opportunities. Nevertheless, these prospects are lost in countries that are unable to meet international Food Safety standards, causing food loss, and waste of income as well as natural resources



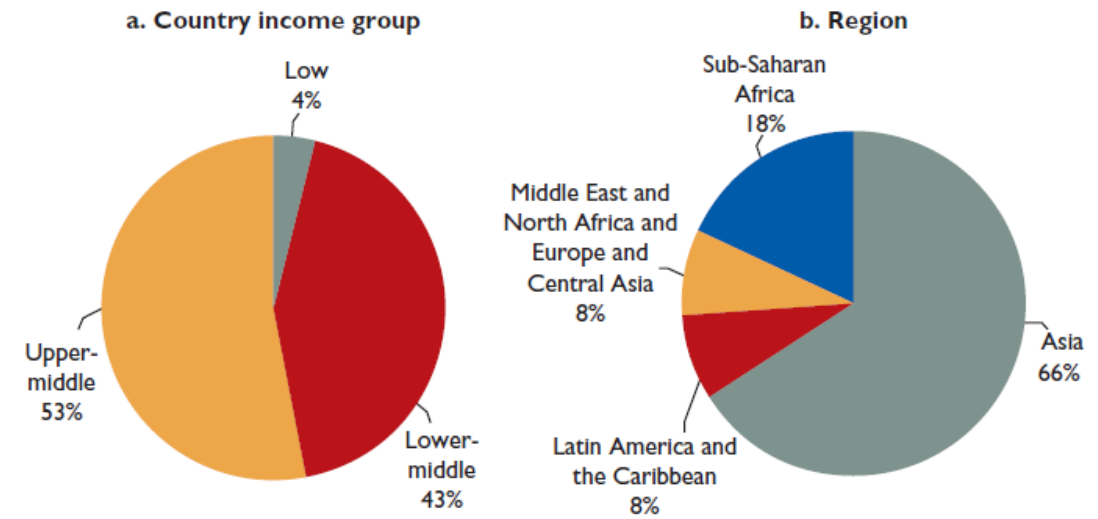
Food Safety and Food Security

- Food Safety is part of the Sustainable Development Goals and it is vital in achieving the following goals:
 - *Ending poverty*
 - *Ending hunger*
 - *Promoting good health and well-being*
- and also it contributes indirectly to:
 - *Gender equality*
 - *Clean water and sanitation*
 - *Decent work and economic growth*
 - *Sustainable cities and communities*
- Safe food is required to meet nutritional diet needs.
- Unsafe food inhibits the nutrients uptake and thus makes it unsuitable for human consumption.

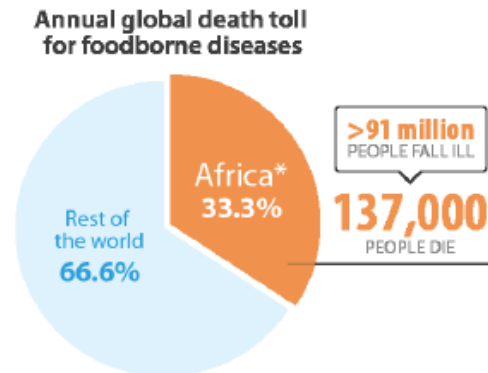


Food Safety and Food Security

- Food Safety hazards can lead to food losses and thus reduces the availability of food, which is one of the Food Security pillars.
- The global Food Security and achievement of the SDGs are hindered by Food Safety issues.
- **768 million people were food insecure in 2020 and there is an estimation of 2.5 billion tones of food waste per year.**
- **“There is no Food Security without Food Safety”** (FAO, 2019)



Productivity loss due to foodborne disease classified by income and region in 2016. Source: Jaffee et al, 2019

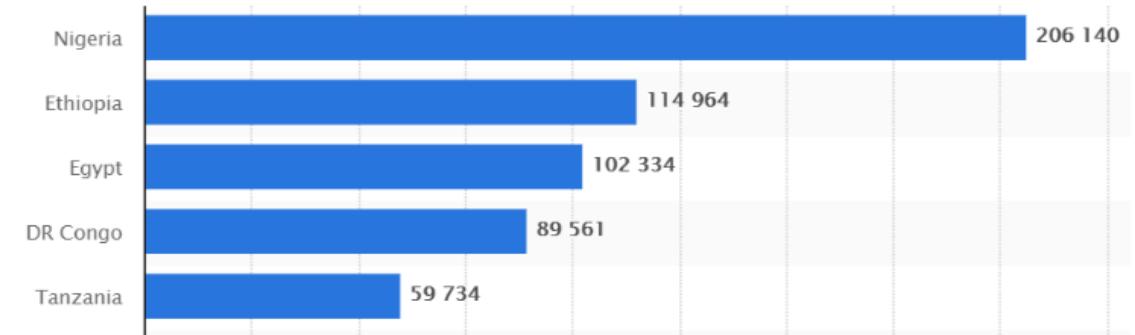


Source: WHO

Study Area: Africa

Several factors such as social, political, economic and environmental threatens the African food system as well as security.

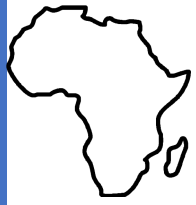
- The world's fastest-growing population especially in East, West and Central parts, with a rise from 814 to 1.2 billion from 2000 to 2015.
- The second largest population amongst continents with a 16.72 percent of the total world population.
- Has some of the world's largest growing economies in Rwanda, Ethiopia and Cote d'Ivoire.



The largest population in the African countries with Nigeria registering the highest figures. Source: Statista, 2021

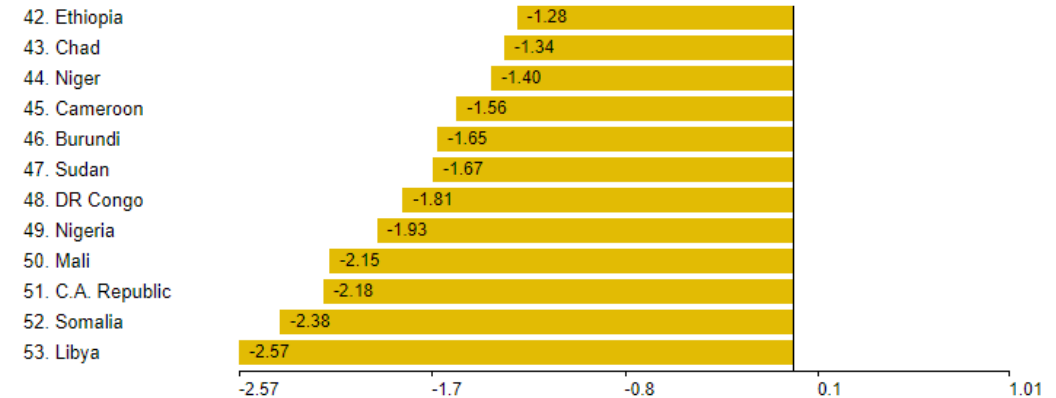
	2019	2020 esti- mated	2021 pro- jected	2022 pro- jected
Central Africa	2.9	-2.7	3.2	4
East Africa	5.3	0.7	3	5.6
North Africa	4	-1.1	4	6
Southern Africa	0.3	-7	3.2	2.4
West Africa	3.6	-1.5	2.8	3.9

GDP Africa. Table adapted from African development bank, 2021



Study Area: Africa

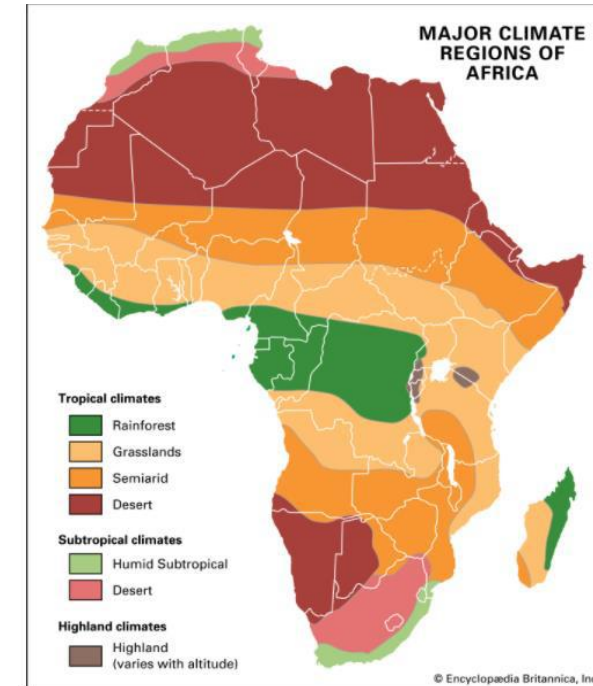
- Political instability is present in the continent. Food production is affected in countries characterized by political instability, for instance in case of conflict farmers are unable to access and invest in labour.
- In 2002 the African Union (AU), an intergovernmental organization, was established to stimulate the unity of African states, defend state sovereignty and harmonize the political, economic, cultural, health and technical development.
- Amongst the projects present on the African Union Agenda by 2063 it is the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). With this agreement it is expected that imports and exports of agricultural goods within Africa will increase due to the elimination of tariffs.



Least political stable countries in Africa in 2019. Source: The Global Economy

Study Area: Africa

- Natural and environmental hazards pose a threat to the agriculture.
- Over the years, the climate has changed:
 - *increased temperatures and sea levels*
 - *shifts in precipitation*
 - *extreme weather*
- The African food industry is affected by this factor as floods or droughts ruin crop production. In Africa, agriculture is the key to economy and livelihood.



Source: Encyclopædia Britannica. 2021

The status of Food Safety management



- The African agri-food systems are described by the following characteristics :
 - many hazards present and lack of understanding as well as lack of evidence on the costs of these Food Safety hazards
 - there are a variety of smallholders, small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) as well as foods
 - the formal, informal, domestic and export markets are growing rapidly
 - physical infrastructure challenges
 - complex, underfunded yet reforming governance systems.

The status of Food Safety management

- Lack of information and understanding regarding food hazards caused unwillingness to invest in Food Safety management.
- Furthermore, the lack of evidence on the costs of Food Safety hazards in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) led to underinvestment in Food Safety management. In addition, the investments in these countries are reactive, they occur after a foodborne disease outbreak or the imposition of a trade ban.
- In the middle-income countries the Food Safety management capacity is overwhelmed due to the urbanization and transformation of diets which caused the increased complexity of Food Safety hazards.
- Most of the people in African countries obtain their food from informal markets which are traditional markets (as opposed to modern supermarkets and stores which provide food to higher-income consumers, better quality and safe products).



The status of Food Safety management

- These informal markets operate outside of Food Safety regulations or any formal system, thus they lack sanitation facilities and infrastructure. Nonetheless, SMEs are increasing as the urbanization trend is growing and the middle class is forming. The retailers ask for high-quality and safe food, hence they put pressure on SMEs and seek producers who are able to meet Food Safety standards. However, the smallholders and SMEs cannot afford the high cost of compliance. African food system has suffered some changes in production, distribution and consumption at a rapid rate and thus the capacity of food governance systems lagged behind which generated Food Safety crises. The misalignment of regulations deprived the inter and regional trade.

The status of Food Safety management

- African countries lack proper and good-quality physical infrastructure such as safe storage, cold chain, sanitary facilities, processing equipment and laboratory capacity. To put it briefly, deficiency in Food Safety management capacity.
- **Food Safety management capacity** has several dimensions:
 - *human capital* (basic knowledge, specialized expertise, management, leadership as well as communication skills)
 - *physical infrastructure* (safe storage, cold chain, sanitary facilities, processing equipment and laboratory capacity)
 - *the management systems* (enterprises, regulatory control systems, laboratories).
- Assessments have been undertaken by WHO to evaluate the capacity within Africa based on indicators for Food Safety. The five-point scale shows, (1) no capacity and (5) sustainable capacity. Out of the 47 countries assessed, most of them registered low scores (1, 2) meaning there is a lack of capacity. Only Seychelles scored the highest rank for Food Safety, while Mauritius and Morocco received a score of 4.



African countries capacity ranking on Food Safety indicators according to WHO. Source: Jaffee et al, 2020

Food Safety Governance

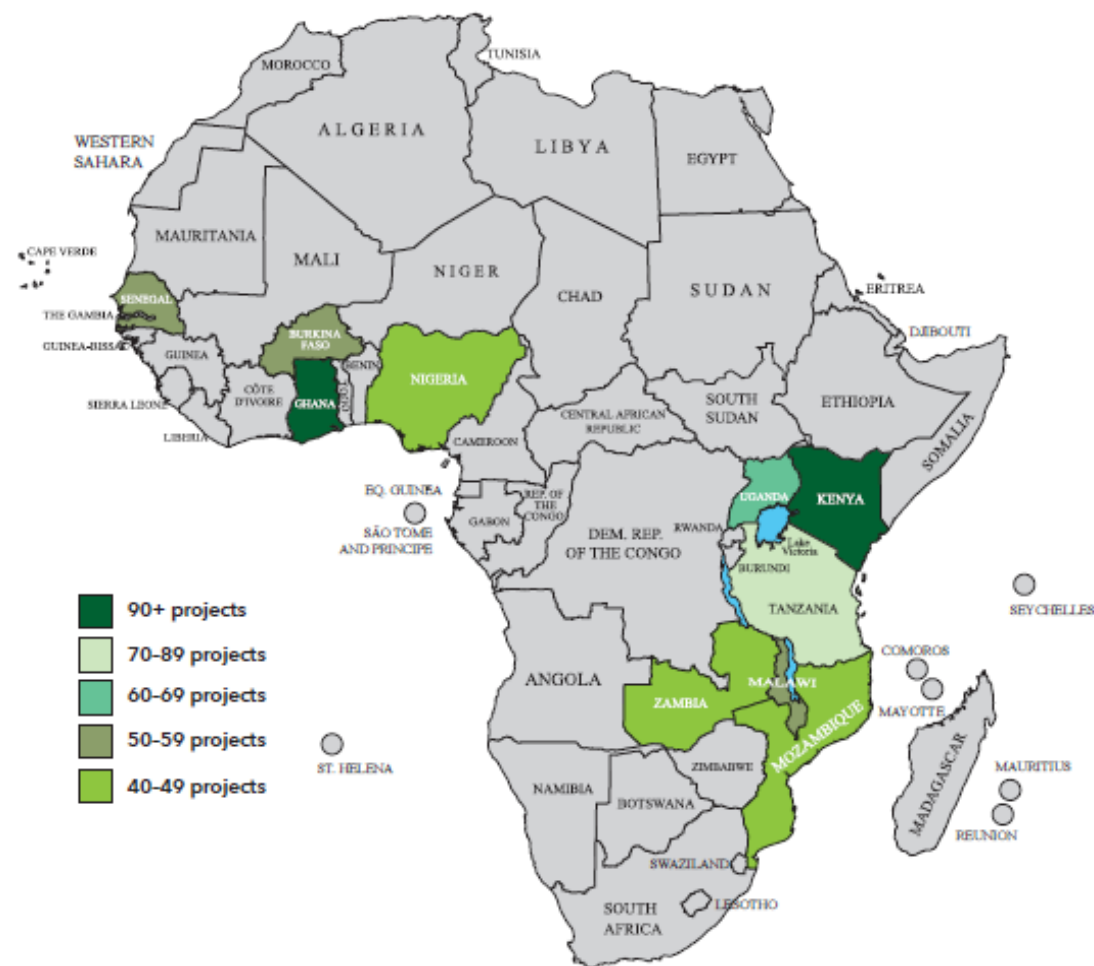
- The Food Safety governance in Africa is poor with inappropriate, weak and fragmented Food Safety systems due to:
 - outdated, weak and not based on science Food Safety law
 - scattered Food Safety authorities
 - political instability
 - corruption
 - food insecurities
 - natural disasters
 - underinvestment
- In regard to Food Safety law in Africa, this is outdated, weak, not based on science and there are multiple Food Safety authorities who are uncoordinated and unable to enforce the legislation, leading to poor governance.

Food Safety governance

- The Food Safety issues were not addressed by the government's policies due to lack of information, thus the correct holistic Food Safety management could not be adopted.
- Some African countries have regional or national standards bodies, responsible to establish food standards based on Codex Alimentarius. Yet most of the authorities are not actively engaged in setting up national food standards. In addition, the inspection mechanism is lacking due to low professional status and lack of logistical support. Likewise, the laboratory service, capacity and training in Food Safety are also absent or limited. Most countries share responsibilities with several ministries and assign Food Safety functions related to standards-setting to National Bureau of Standards, however, the inspection and compliance control is given to another entity, leading to misalignment.

Global actors involved in Food Safety

- The donor investments done in Africa so far have focused on access to regional and global export and much of it did not target the Food Safety needs of African consumers.
- **Donors:** United Nations, Private sectors, Development banks, Foundations
- A study undertaken by the GFSP highlights the Food Safety investments:
 - All 48 nations had at least one founded project during this period.
 - The most projects targeted East and West Africa with most initiatives in Ghana and Kenya.

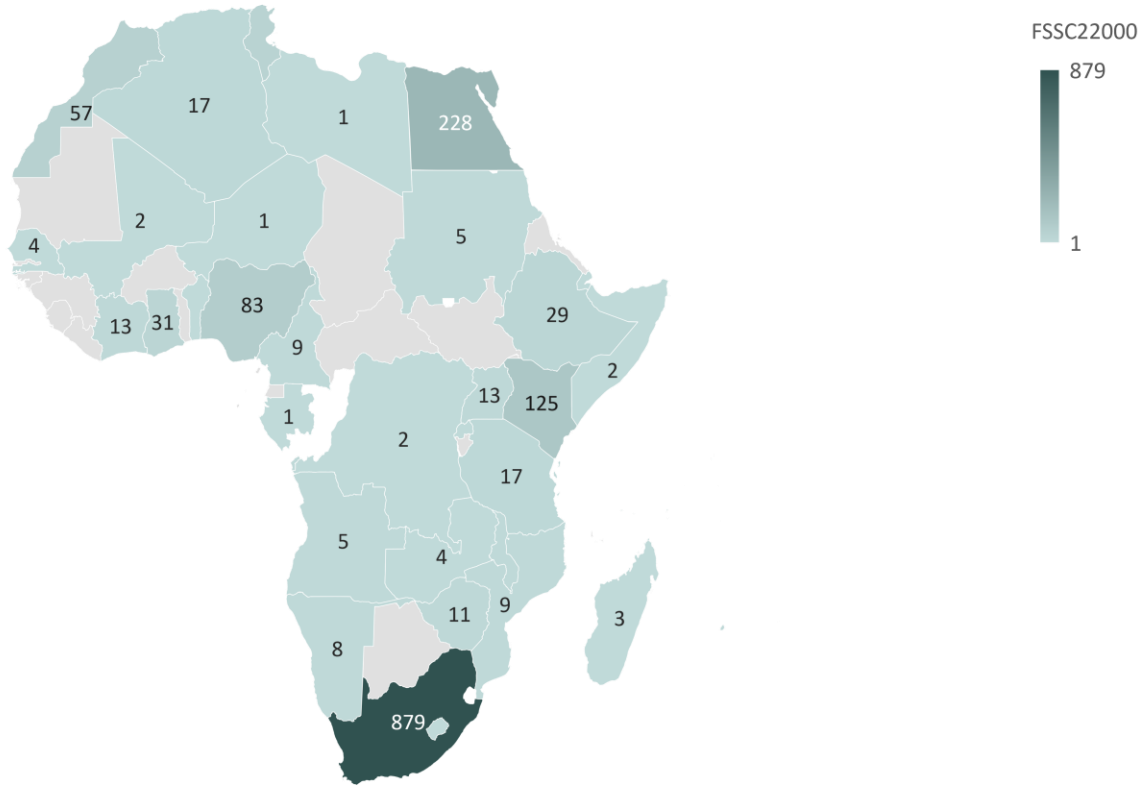


Global actors involved in Food Safety

- The national governments have the obligation to ensure safe food to their population, however, due to incapability, the Food Safety has been provided by compliance with international standards or by international donor organizations which focus on access to regional and global export.
- Both African and global actors are working on improving Food Safety management in the continent. Several investments have been done during the past years. Yet, based on the GFSP report it was primarily focused on supporting export market access, trade and thus formal markets. Furthermore, one-half of these projects targeted Food Safety by enhancing government capacity (national control systems) rather than supporting private sector capacity or knowledge generation, these two scoring one-fifth of the initiatives. The identified predominant investors were the European Commission, USA, FAO and WHO, however smaller players such as African Development Bank, Global Agriculture and security program and other countries are on the list as well.

Food Safety Certification status

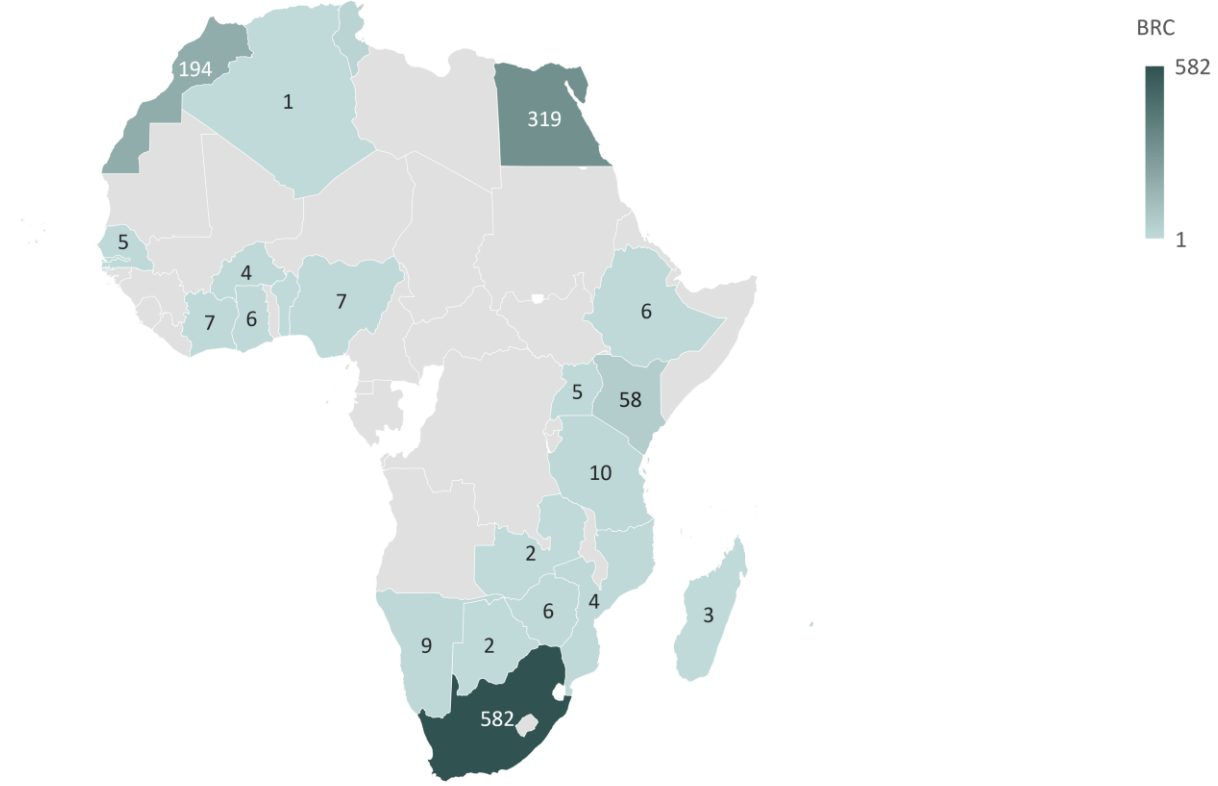
FSSC 22000 certification status in January 2022



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BRCGS certification status in January 2022



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Food Safety Certification status

- The public-private partnerships with support for both sectors can lead to providing Food Safety and food security in Africa.
- Due to the lack of Food Safety management capacity in emerging African countries the third-party certification and compliance with international food standards have increased and offered a great deal of benefits in managing Food Safety systems and accessing global markets.

Food Safety Certification status

- However, the certification costs raised as regulations became stricter, hence smallholders cannot afford them and are dominated by larger players.
- Additionally, the presence of multinationals companies in developing countries, leads to a two-tier Food Safety operation in these areas. Multinational companies have strict Food Safety management as they rather focus on internal auditing than inspections led by governments, as they have the capacity (laboratory testing, personnel etc.) for this. Whereas the local companies/start-ups are characterised by an unregulated street food supply chain (prone to Food Safety risks) and are accessed by poor and middle-class people.

Key points

- Lack of Food Safety management capacity (human capital, physical infrastructure, management systems)
- Poor governance
- Poor targeted investments
- Two-tier situation: strict Food Safety management for multinationals while unregulated and informal food supply chain for the local companies
- However, Food Safety has become a priority. Currently, the African Union is working towards harmonisation of regulations and free trade area (AfCFTA).



Conclusion

- The need for Food Safety is becoming more important, and the African Union is working intensely towards harmonisation and improving Food Safety in the continent. The challenges are related to a lack of Food Safety management capacity such as physical infrastructure, skilled people and regulations.
- In regard to Food Safety governance in Africa this is characterized by weak and fragmented Food Safety systems due to political instability, food insecurities, corruption, diseases, and natural catastrophes. Furthermore, Food Safety law is outdated, weak, and not based on science with scattered food authorities that are not coordinated.
- Additionally, even if the legislation is there, factors such as lack of technical capacity and awareness of the impact of poor-quality goods, as well as weak enforcement hinder the implementation of Food Safety management.
- Furthermore, it can be argued whether the donor investment done so far in Africa was efficient and targeted the right purpose. The investments focused on access to regional and international export markets and less on reducing foodborne illnesses amongst the African population who access informal markets. This shows African food system is dominated by a two-tier system, with safe and high-quality food for export and an unregulated and informal food supply chain with lower standards for the domestic informal market.

Recommendations

- Most of the LMICs have laws and regulations related to Food Safety as well as authorities responsible to enforce these laws, however, this is fragmented. Moreover, even fewer countries have proper Food Safety policy frameworks. Without this policy framework, investments in building as well as maintaining Food Safety management capacity tend to be inadequate and thus, Food Safety governance becomes weak and fragmented, leading to poorly targeted investments.
- The World Bank's report suggests a more effective Food Safety policy framework and comes up with the following recommendations for better implementation of it:
 - *” Reform Food Safety regulatory practice, shifting from policing to facilitating compliance*
 - *Invest smartly in essential public goods for effective Food Safety management*
 - *Institutionalize a structured approach to Food Safety risk management*
 - *Leverage consumer concerns on Food Safety to incentivize better food business practices”*