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“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Food Consumption and Nutrient Deficiencies Trends in the Democratic Republic of Congo

PATRICE MIRINDI¹, JOHN MBURU¹, JOHN ULIMWENGU², WIM MARIVOET³

¹*University of Nairobi, Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Kenya*

²*International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Africa Region, United States*

³*International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), African Region, Senegal*

Abstract

All the countries members of the United Nation are committed to achieving SDG 2. Africa has seen the least progress in terms of improvement towards malnutrition prevalence. Particularly in DRC, around 4.5 million people are chronic food insecure, the country has been ranked 176th out of 189 countries figuring in the in the Human Development Index. Due to lack of data, it is hard to have indicators that give a current state of the food security and nutrition yet the situation is extremely alarming. Different studies have been conducted to give an overview of the nutritional status and economic changes in the country. Moreover, studies have shown that DRC faces a higher variability in time and space in its economy that should lead to nutrition transition. Unfortunately, there is no information on nutrition deficiencies and household behaviour or choice for diet in order to understand their motivation for the selection of food. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the consumption trends of selected food groups and nutrient deficiencies. In order to achieve this, we analysed the food budget share, the food purchased composition and mapped the nutrient deficiencies as well as their trends between 2005 and 2012 for urban and rural areas of the 26 provinces of DRC. The study used secondary data from the National Household Surveys collected between 2005 and 2012. Our results suggested that households spend $\frac{3}{4}$ of their budget on food. We were able to classify DRC in five different groups having almost similar food intake. Moreover, about 60 per cent of the budget allocated to the food is spent on cereals, root and tubers as well as meat and fish. We also found that there is a deficiency in zinc, calcium, iron and vitamin B12 in almost all the provinces for both rural and urban areas. For protein, calories, folate, and vitamin A the consumption is quite acceptable. However, the trends seem to be negative in almost all the provinces. Therefore, propoor policies, multi-stakeholder partnernships as well as nutrition education is needed to alleviate food insecurity and malnutrition in DRC.

Keywords: Democratic Republic of Congo, food consumption trend, food groups, nutrient deficiency trend, nutrition