

## Chapter 3.2

# Africa's Key Issues in WTO Negotiations, MC14 and Beyond

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### Historical context of the agreement on agriculture negotiations

At the creation of the multilateral trading system in 1948, agriculture was formally covered by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), including principles such as tariff bindings and non-discrimination. In practice, however, agriculture remained largely exempt from strict multilateral disciplines, as governments maintained wide policy space to support domestic farm sectors through subsidies, price controls, and non-tariff measures. This flexibility largely reflected the concerns of major agricultural economies, while developing countries, including many in Africa, remained primarily exporters of primary commodities with limited influence over global rule-making.

Early GATT negotiations focused mainly on tariff reductions, leaving agricultural support policies and non-tariff barriers only weakly regulated. As a result, agricultural trade continued to be shaped by substantial domestic subsidies and protection in developed economies, creating persistent distortions in global markets. For many African countries, these distortions contributed to structural disadvantages in agricultural trade, undermining the competitiveness of local producers and reinforcing dependence on food imports.

The Uruguay Round (1986–1994) marked a major turning point by introducing the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the first comprehensive multilateral framework governing agricultural trade. Developing countries, including several African countries, played a more visible role in the negotiations, highlighting concerns related to food-import dependence, rural development, and the need for special and differential treatment.[5] These concerns led to provi-

sions allowing developing countries greater flexibility, including lower reduction commitments and longer implementation periods.

Despite these advances, the Uruguay Round was widely recognized as only a first step in agricultural reform. Many structural distortions, particularly high levels of trade-distorting domestic support in developed countries, remained largely intact. Article 20 of the AoA mandated the continuation of reform negotiations, which formally began in 2000 and were later incorporated into the Doha Development Agenda launched at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in 2001. Ministers were committed to comprehensive reforms aimed at improving market access, substantially reducing trade-distorting domestic support, and eliminating export subsidies.

Over the past two decades, agricultural negotiations have evolved in two broad phases. The first phase, lasting roughly until 2011, was pursued under the “single undertaking” approach, where progress across negotiating areas was linked. During this period, members reached important milestones, including the 2004 Framework Agreement, which introduced formulas for reducing tariffs and trade-distorting support and reaffirmed the commitment to eliminating export subsidies. In the second phase, negotiations shifted away from the comprehensive single undertaking as progress stalled across multiple negotiating areas. Attention is increasingly focused on public stockholding (PSH) for food security purposes, a key concern for many developing countries.

Despite serious engagement and negotiating efforts, no substantive outcome has been achieved in the agriculture negotiations since MC10, including on PSH, due to significant divergences in several key elements. For many African countries, the prolonged stalemate underscores the continuing challenge of addressing structural imbalance in global agricultural trade rules, which remain central to the continent's effort to strengthen food security, support rural development, and expand participation in international agricultural markets.

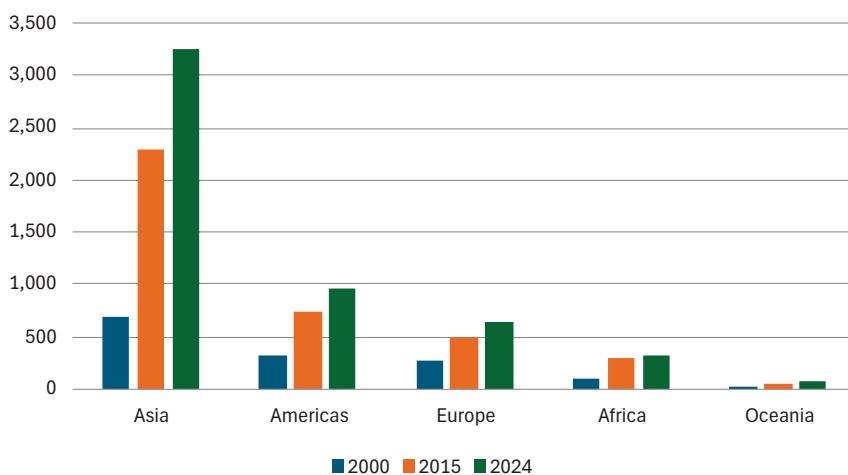
## **Agri-food systems in Africa's trade landscape**

Africa has a strong bidirectional relationship with its agri-food system, with the continent's socio-economic structures influencing the evolution of the agriculture sector. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates (2026), agriculture accounted for approximately 45.5% of total employment in Africa in 2023, only slightly lower than 48.4% in 2015. This

share is significantly far above the global average of 26%, and higher than other regions, such as Europe (4.9%) and the Americas (8.6%). Within Africa, the dominance of agriculture varies considerably across subregions. Eastern Africa has the highest dependence on agricultural employment (60.0%), followed by Central Africa with 54.2%. By contrast, Southern Africa (19.2%) and Northern Africa (21.5%) show much lower shares, reflecting their relatively higher levels of industrialization.

These differences are consistent with broader structural transformation patterns across the continent. The Africa Industrialization Index 2022 (AfDB, 2022) identifies Northern and Southern Africa as the most industrially advanced subregions, with scores of 0.66 and 0.56, respectively, driven by countries such as South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia, which have consistently ranked among the most industrialized economies in Africa. In comparison, Central Africa scored 0.5, West Africa 0.49, and East Africa 0.48.

Despite the sector's critical role in employment and livelihoods, the continent also lags behind in terms of agricultural productivity. Figure 1 compares Africa's performance in terms of the value of agricultural production with regions of the world. Between 2000 and 2024, Africa recorded an increase of 196%, compared to a global average increase of 266% over the same period. It shows that Africa ranges way below the global trends. This productivity gap highlights a key structural challenge: while agriculture remains a dominant source of employment in Africa, its output growth has not kept pace with global improvements in productivity.

**Figure 1. Agriculture gross production value (USD billion)**

Source: Authors' calculation based on FAO, FAOSTAT. Accessed February 24, 2026.  
<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

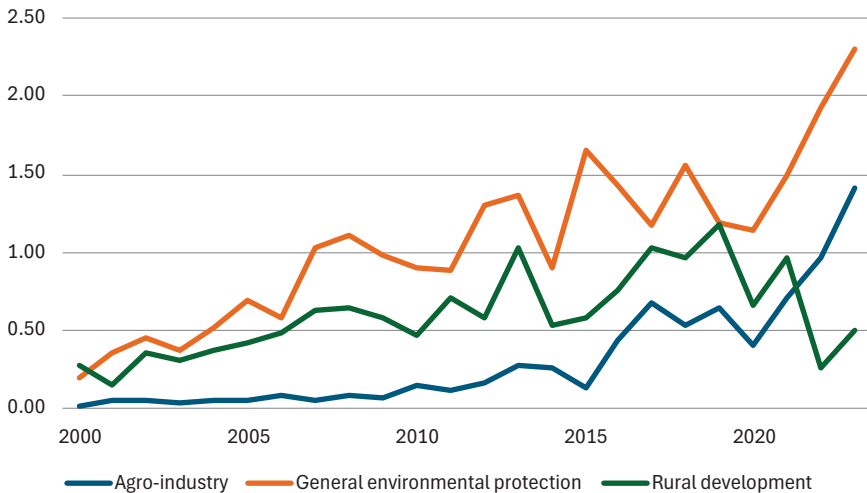
Achieving agricultural transformation in Africa requires sustained financial commitments. Within the African Union framework, the Maputo Declaration of July 2003 committed African Heads of States and Governments to allocate at least 10% of the national budget to agriculture and food security with the objective of halving hunger and poverty by 2025. However, progress toward this target has been limited. Between 2004 and 2024, only four countries met the 10% threshold for at least ten years: Ethiopia (21 years), Malawi (16 years), Mali (15 years), and Niger (12 years) (AKADEMYA, 2025).

In contrast, the continent's biggest economies have consistently fell below this target, with Nigeria averaging at 4.1%, South Africa at 2.1%, and Egypt at 1.9% of national spending allocated to agriculture. It is noteworthy that Zimbabwe, although not consistently meeting the target, has maintained an average of 10.2% since 2009. Globally, government spending on agriculture between 2001 and 2022 ranged between 1.5–2.1% of total spending (FAO, 2024).

Development finance flows into Africa's agricultural sector also present a mixed picture. As shown in Figure 2, investment in agro-industry and environmental protection fluctuated between 2010 and 2020 before a sharp upward trend following the COVID-19 pandemic. By contrast, financing for rural de-

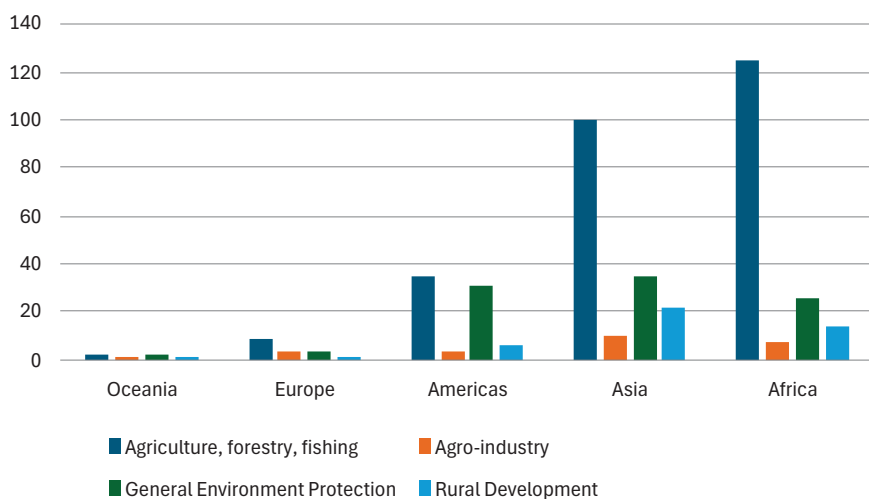
velopment declined significantly during the pandemic period, with only a modest recovery observed in 2022.

**Figure 2. Development flows into agriculture in Africa (US\$ billion)**



Source: Authors' calculation based on FAO, FAOSTAT. Accessed February 23, 2026. <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

A global comparison of development flows into the agriculture sector shows a positive trend for Africa. Since 2000, Africa has received the highest flows of donor funding towards agriculture, forestry, and fishing, followed closely by Asia. The continent also received the third-highest donor flows earmarked for general environmental protection (Figure 3). These trends indicate sustained international support for strengthening the continent's agrifood systems and environmental resilience, although significant financing gaps remain relative to the scale of transformation required.

**Figure 3. Development flows into agriculture (US\$ billion)**

Source: Authors' calculation based on FAO. FAOSTAT. Accessed February 23, 2026.

<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>

The AfCFTA holds immense potential in transforming the continent's agri-food systems. Empirical analysis by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) showed that, under full implementation of the Agreement by 2045, intra-African trade in both processed and non-processed foods is projected to record the largest increases (See Chapter 3.3 for more details). The AfCFTA is also an anchor on which regional value chains (RVCs) can be developed, enabling stronger production linkages across countries and supporting efforts to enhance food security and value addition within the continent. Although significant progress has been made over the past decades, persistent challenges continue to hinder the full realization of these opportunities.

Investment in research and development (R&D) in Africa remains significantly below global levels. According to the World Bank (2026), only Egypt spent more than 1% of its total GDP on R&D in 2023, while Rwanda and Kenya followed at approximately 0.8%. Other large economies spend less on R&D, including South Africa (0.6% in 2022) and Nigeria (0.3% in 2019). This trend pales in comparison to advanced economies that spend a much larger proportion of their GDP on research and development. For instance, in 2022, South Korea spent 5.2% of its GDP on R&D, while the United States and Japan spent 3.6% and 3.4%, respectively (World Bank, 2026). Strengthening R&D invest-

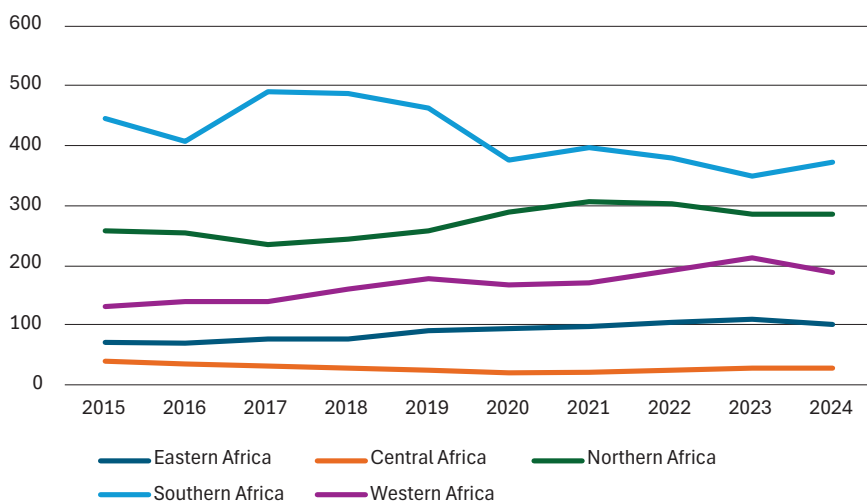
ment and capacity is therefore essential not only for agrifood system innovation but also for broader structural transformation.

Underdeveloped infrastructure, especially transport and electricity, contributes to much of the food loss and waste on the continent. The World Bank Logistics Performance Index (World Bank, 2026), which measures the quality of trade and transport-related infrastructure, ranked sub-Saharan Africa at 2.3 out of 5, lower than the global average of 2.9. Eastern and Southern Africa ranked higher than the continental average at 2.5, while in Northern Africa, Egypt scored significantly higher, at 3.1 in 2021.

Limited electricity access further exacerbates inefficiencies in food systems. As of 2023, only about 53% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa had access to electricity, compared with 92% globally. Northern Africa performs significantly better, with 89.7% average access and universal coverage in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia.

At a household level, lack of adequate access to electricity contributes to a high incidence of food loss and waste. The 2024 Food Waste Index Report (UNEP, 2024) estimated that average household food wastage in sub-Saharan Africa stood at 93 kilograms per capita per year, compared to a global average of 79 kilograms. The report noted that there was a high correlation between average temperatures and food waste, denoting that a lack of adequate advanced food storage techniques led to higher waste.

Access to finance represents another critical constraint to agrifood system development. As shown in the figure 4 below, the total credit<sup>[7]</sup> to agriculture in Africa has fluctuated since 2015. Western Africa recorded the highest growth of 43.6% between 2015 and 2024, with Northern Africa recording the modest 11% growth. Southern Africa and Central Africa, on the other hand, actually recorded a contraction in credit flows of 16% and 32.6% respectively over the same period. These financing gaps continue to limit investment in productivity, value addition, and the development of resilient agrifood value chains across the continent.

**Figure 4. Total credit to agriculture (USD billion)**

Source: Authors' calculation based on FAO. FAOSTAT. Accessed February 25, 2026.  
<https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>.

The 2025 Economic Report on Africa (ECA, 2025) highlights that, realizing the gains from full implementation of the AfCFTA, Africa will need approximately USD121 billion in road, rail, sea, and air transport infrastructure equipment to meet the demand. Improvements in road connectivity alone will require between approximately \$ 32 billion and \$80 billion, while rail connectivity will require between USD26 billion and USD55 billion (Malabo Montpellier Report, 2025). Continental undertakings such as the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) are well-positioned to support the development of infrastructure connectivity.

Beyond transport infrastructure, transforming Africa's agrifood systems will require approximately USD77 billion in annual investment by 2030 (Malabo Montpellier Report, 2025). While public finance remains the main channel of funding, mobilizing greater investment from domestic and international private sectors, as well as bilateral and multilateral development partners, will be essential to close the financing gap. Increased investment in infrastructure, logistics, and agro-processing will play a critical role in boosting productivity, facilitating regional trade in agricultural products, and building modern, resilient, and

sustainable agrifood systems across the continent. Even in the face of these financing needs, it is essential to recognize that, across the continent, many countries are grappling with elevated debt burdens and limited fiscal space, which, coupled with the dwindling official development assistance flows, is likely to impede the much-needed mobilization of capital in the scale required to transform the continent's agrifood systems.

## **Africa's priorities under agriculture negotiating pillars**

Africa's interest in agriculture negotiations is driven by its critical need for food security, livelihood security, and rural development. The African Group consistently emphasizes that a medium and long-term WTO solution to food security challenges can only be delivered through outcomes that include a substantive food security and livelihoods package. This entails decisions on key issues such as domestic support, PSH, the Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM), and Cotton. Furthermore, it is imperative to secure outcomes on domestic support that address the inequitable AMS entitlements and the trade-distorting use of the Blue and Green Boxes.

Achieving these objectives would contribute to the establishment of a fair and equitable agricultural trading system. This, in turn, would provide developing countries with greater policy flexibility, enabling them to effectively support agricultural production and improve livelihoods across the continent. The primary issues and priorities of the African Group under each pillar of the WTO agriculture negotiations are discussed in the following subsections.

### **Domestic support**

The African Group emphasizes that domestic support asymmetries remain a central source of distortion in global agricultural trade. Only 32 WTO Members hold Final Bound AMS entitlements, totalling about USD 174.37 billion as of 2018. About half of these beneficiaries are developed country Members, accounting for 88.8% of total Final Bound AMS entitlements. Developing country Members account for the residual 11.19%. The remaining 104 developing country Members have zero Final Bound AMS entitlements (*de-minimis*). This imbalance allows major subsidizing Members to concentrate large amounts of support on specific products, often far exceeding the sector's value of produc-

tion. The Group also raises concerns about the continued trade-distorting use of the Blue Box, which allows Members to provide substantial subsidies while maintaining policy space beyond de minimis limits, and about the growing reliance on Green Box measures, particularly direct payments, despite being classified as non-trade-distorting, which can significantly affect production and global market conditions. Addressing these distortions is therefore viewed as essential to creating a more equitable agricultural trading system that better supports developing countries' agricultural development and farmers' livelihoods.

### **Public stockholding (PSH) for food security purposes**

In the lead-up to the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC9) in Bali in 2013, the African Group and G-33 called for greater flexibility in the existing multilateral trade rules on PSH programmes to allow developing countries to achieve public policy objectives in this area. While trade ministers agreed on an interim solution at Bali, they also committed to negotiating a permanent solution in the post-MC9 period. However, despite subsequent Ministerial and General Council decisions, as well as proposals submitted by the African Group and other Members ahead of MC10, MC11, MC12, and MC13, negotiations have yet to deliver a permanent outcome on this critical food security instrument.

PSH programmes are crucial for sustaining production and consumption, particularly for poor and vulnerable populations in developing countries, and are essential for achieving food security objectives. The role of PSH as an effective tool for guaranteeing food security, including during the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions in international food supply chains, when many countries relied on public stockholding mechanisms to stabilize domestic markets, is all the more critical. The Africa Group is seeking a Permanent Solution that is "distinct from the agriculture negotiations" as reflected in the PSH mandate and not conditioned on the broader discussions on domestic support.

### **Special safeguard mechanism (SSM)**

The SSM is an important part of the Doha Round agriculture negotiations. If agreed upon, it would serve as a tool, within the WTO's AoA, that would allow any developing country to increase its duties above the bound rate in response to a fall in the price of imported products or an increase in the volume of the imported product beyond certain levels. An outcome on SSM is a necessary tool to cushion farmers in developing countries from the vagaries of

unpredictable global agricultural trade markets, such as import surges or price volatility, which have in recent times become regular occurrences that threaten the livelihoods of farmers, impact investment decisions, and ultimately affect food security. The African Group is seeking SSM decision not linked to the broader Market Access negotiations. However, non-proponent including the Latin American countries, have continued to consider SSM as a tool to facilitate market access reform in agricultural trade. It is this linkage between market access and SSM that has been the biggest political challenge to commencing substantive technical engagement since the launch of the Dedicated Session process in 2015 pursuant to the Nairobi Decision.

## **Cotton**

Apart from the development assistance components of the cotton initiative and the Ministerial Decision on Export Competition adopted at the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in 2015 (WTO, 2015), the WTO has yet to deliver on the core trade-related elements, domestic support and market access, of the 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, which called for the cotton issue to be addressed “ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically.” The African Group maintains that cotton should be addressed swiftly and independently of the broader market access and domestic support negotiations, as progress on this issue is long overdue and continues to disadvantage vulnerable cotton producers in Africa and other developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs). In line with the demands of the Cotton-4 countries, the African Group supports the elimination of product-specific cotton subsidies under Final Bound AMS, which distort markets and undermine the livelihoods of resource-poor producers. While improved market access for cotton is also of interest, the Group remains mindful that certain outcomes could erode existing trade preferences for LDCs and other beneficiaries of preferential access in key markets.

## **Market access**

This is an issue of interest to the Latin American Countries, the Cairns Group, USA and UK. The African Group believes progress on market access should follow advances in Domestic Support and other mandated issues. They warn of the dangers of premature market liberalization when Africa’s agriculture sector is constrained from using necessary tools which are limited by the AoA. In addition, Africa continues to face the brunt of an uneven playing field in global agricultural trade that negatively impacts its food and livelihoods se-

curity. The African Group maintain that there is a logical sequencing that has always been appreciated and this needs to be followed in the area of agriculture. It consistently argued that tariff reduction negotiations can only take place after rebalancing the Domestic Supports pillar. In the Group's view, until this has been done and by its assessment, the WTO is nowhere near, there is no logic in asking developing countries to open their markets when these markets are distorted.

## Export restrictions

The African Group consider export restrictions as a critical tool that enables members to address the essential food needs of their people in times of food crisis. While the UK, Japan, the G-10[11], and the LDCs seek to strengthen existing AoA discipline on export restrictions, the Group is of the view that:

- i. The current disciplines on Export Restrictions, both in the GATT (Article XI) and the AoA (Article 12) are sufficient and balanced to address export restrictions as well as to safeguard policy space when required to address essential food needs of Members in times of critical food shortages.
- ii. Export Restrictions are a crisis response tool, especially for vulnerable net-food-importing countries (NFIDCs) and LDCs. This is recognized by GATT Article XI.2a, which allows it for addressing "critical shortages of foodstuffs," and Article 12 of the AoA (S&DT) provides flexible terms for notification to non-net-exporting developing countries and LDCs when such measures are taken. These articles balance the obligation with the need. Any effort to increase obligations on removing Export Restrictions, while not recognizing domestic needs to address the food crisis, will adversely affect this balance.
- iii. There is limited empirical evidence that fully liberalizing agricultural exports would effectively address food crises or improve food security outcomes. The extent to which export restrictions contribute to or alleviate food insecurity during crises remains unclear. While such restrictions can disrupt global supply, their removal may also result in essential food supplies being allocated to the highest bidders, potentially limiting access for the most vulnerable populations. Experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, when critical supplies such as masks and vaccines were largely secured by countries able to pay higher prices, illustrate the risk that unfettered market allocation during crises may exacerbate inequities in access to essential goods.

- iv. The African Group maintains that existing WTO disciplines on export restrictions do not warrant weakening this important policy instrument. For many developing countries, export restrictions remain a key tool for safeguarding domestic food security during periods of price volatility or supply shocks. Rather than eroding this flexibility, priority should be given to ensuring Members comply with existing transparency and notification requirements under Article XI of the GATT and Article 12 of the AoA.

## Food-import dependence and NFIDC challenges

Africa remains the most food-insecure continent globally. Based on FAO (2026), the prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity in the continent rose from a three-year average of 46.2% of the population in 2014-2016 to 57.9% in 2022-2024, an increase of 11.7 percentage points, nearly double the global average increase of 6.6 percentage points over the same period. In addition, 23 out of the 30 most food-insecure countries worldwide are in Africa. According to the IFPRI food import vulnerability index<sup>32</sup> (see annex 1), Africa leads with the number of countries most vulnerable to higher world food prices, with 7 out of the 10 most vulnerable countries.

The African Group stresses that NFIDCs and LDCs face considerable difficulties in providing adequate support for the development of their agricultural sectors. Limited policy space under WTO rules, combined with financial constraints and volatile global food markets, restricts their ability to strengthen domestic production and ensure stable food supplies. These structural vulnerabilities increase exposure to food insecurity and highlight the need for greater flexibility in agricultural policy frameworks.

In efforts to address these challenges, the African Group submitted a proposal on 15 January 2024, titled “Promoting Agricultural Production and Trade in NFIDCs and LDCs”. The proposal has five elements that seek to; (i) enhance LDCs and NFIDCs’ agriculture production and productivity; (ii) enhance their accessibility to food markets; (iii) enhance their access to finance for imports and enhancement of production; (iv) boost their productive capacity and (v) ensure transparency of food aid programmes and export credit, guarantee and insurance initiatives.

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32 The national Food Import Vulnerability Index (FIVI) is calculated as the geometric mean of two components: the share of calories from the 15 staple foods that are imported and the share of the population experiencing food insecurity.

The proposal includes measures to expand policy space for domestic support for staple foods, mitigate the impacts of export restrictions on food-importing countries, establish compensatory financing mechanisms for food imports, improve transparency in food aid and export credit schemes, and strengthen cooperation with international institutions to support agricultural development and infrastructure in NFIDCs and LDCs.

The African Group views these proposals as practical measures to address persistent food insecurity and support agricultural development in vulnerable economies. However, the initiative has yet to gain consensus among WTO Members. One major point of contention arises from Latin American countries advocating for the graduation of certain NFIDCs from the existing list [14], which has complicated negotiations and delayed progress toward a collective outcome.

## African Group's MC14 priorities

- Agriculture negotiations at the WTO remain largely deadlocked. Despite the impasse, going into MC14 Members hoped for a decision that could go beyond political declarations and provide structured post-MC14 negotiating pathways with defined objectives and timelines. In this regard, the African Group advocated for an MC14 decision entailing: A commitment to level the playing field in terms of rules on domestic support, including for Cotton;
- Concrete steps to address trade-distorting domestic support, especially extra AMS entitlements, and instructions for Members to prioritize work for reaching an outcome that integrates special and differential treatment, including the preservation of Article 6.2 support for low-income and resource-poor farmers, which must be delivered before MC15;
- A Ministerial mandate to advance the dedicated discussions on the MC10 Cotton Decision and deliver on an outcome before MC15;
- Recognition of the importance of PSH for food security, reaffirmation of the MC9 Ministerial mandate and the 2014 General Council Decision, and provision of a clear roadmap and timelines for a permanent solution on public stockholding which must be delivered before the MC15 and;
- Reaffirmation of the importance of SSM, recognizing its reaffirmed mandate for an outcome from MC10 and instructions for Members to

prioritize work for reaching an outcome on this issue, which must be delivered before MC15.

Despite efforts by the African Group to advance negotiations on these key issues, however, the MC14, like other preceding conferences, failed to achieve meaningful progress on agriculture.

## **Post-MC14 negotiating strategies**

Although MC 14 failed to deliver substantive results on agriculture, the African Group remains committed to pursuing outcomes that would level the playing field within global agricultural trade, with the goal to create a more balanced trading environment that enables all Members to compete equitably. Additionally, the Group would vigorously pursue outcomes that would grant developing countries the necessary policy flexibility to implement strategies aimed at achieving food security, bolstering domestic agricultural production, and ensuring that agricultural systems remain resilient to global shocks.

The African Group emphasizes the necessity of prioritization in agricultural negotiations, with focus placed on issues directly related to food security and crises. The Group maintains that Domestic Support and matters with clear mandates – such as PSH, SSM, and Cotton – should take precedence, while underscoring that precise, effective and operational S&DT remains a core principle in any further negotiations. It also advises against broadening the negotiation agenda to encompass new topics like Sustainable Agriculture or Emerging Agricultural Trade Issues, noting that such expansion could be counterproductive given existing imbalances within the AoA. In the same spirit, it is important that further market opening and reduction of policy space to support farming and farmers in developing countries and LDCs, in the name of “reform” is not superimposed on developing countries as a solution. They must determine their own development pathways and needs. Above all, restoration of trust in the negotiating process is imperative to ensure progress in a transparent and mutually beneficial manner and to overcome the current impasse.

Going forward, the Group’s priorities include the following outcomes:

### *a. Domestic support*

- i. Disciplines on de minimis – Introduce disciplines that cap support at de minimis levels or eliminate AMS support above these thresholds,

while integrating special and differential treatment in reduction commitments to address existing asymmetries in the AoA.

- ii. Disciplines on Blue Box subsidies – Establish tighter disciplines for countries that have made use of this support through the introduction of a cap. This would ensure that these subsidies are actually decoupled from production. Provisions should also allow countries, particularly developing countries, that have not used this instrument to access it in the future.
- iii. Disciplines on Green Box subsidies – Introduce stricter disciplines to guard against the abuse of direct payments granted under paragraphs 5-13 of Annex 2 of the AoA through the introduction of a cap.
- iv. Crisis response mechanism – Establish a trigger-ready mechanism allowing developing countries to temporarily exceed de minimis limits through product-specific support during severe food crises.

#### *b. Decision on PSH*

- i. Cover existing and future PSH programs undertaken by developing countries, with no ceiling to the quantity or value of products procured.
- ii. Include a dynamic external reference price (ERP) that is alive to current realities in the determination of what constitutes domestic.
- iii. Include Transparency arrangements that do not pose burdensome requirements on countries undertaking these programs in a manner that makes it de facto impossible to apply.
- iv. Include Safeguards and anti-circumvention mechanisms to guarantee against possible PSH induced distortions to trade that could undermine Africa's productive capacity. It is of critical importance that the stocks procured under PSH programmes do not enter the market, distort trade, or adversely affect the food security of other Members.

#### *c. Decision on SSM*

- i. Provide both volume (i.e. import quantities) and price-based triggers that will address the impact of surges in imports and price declines that are disruptive to domestic agricultural sectors of developing countries. Equally important is sufficient trigger levels on both price and volume thresholds, whilst also providing extra flexibility for LDCs
- ii. Have an inbuilt mechanism to address instances of currency depreciation to retain the effectiveness of the measure.

- iii. Ensure appropriate coherence and address possible overlaps between similar measures that might be applicable in preferential trade arrangements.

*d. Cotton trade-related component*

- i. Seek to reduce substantially and progressively the trade-distorting domestic support in the cotton market.
- ii. Seek to reduce market access barriers, pursuant to the Hong Kong, Bali, and Nairobi Ministerial Decisions, for LDCs that produce and export cotton.
- iii. Include commitments to improving transparency and monitoring of cotton-related trade measures affecting the global cotton market through the Dedicated Discussions on cotton held on a bi-annual basis.
- iv. Include commitment by Members to open their markets to allow greater purchases of cotton products and by-products from cotton-producing LDCs and the C-4+ countries, including by providing them with duty-free and quota-free market access.

## Conclusion

The African Group's priorities are well aligned with the continent's agricultural transformation goal. This transformation will be enabled by, among other factors, a level-playing field in the international arena, where all countries have proportional influence over trade; adequate policy space to support agricultural productivity and infrastructure development; and commensurate development in the socio-economic spheres. This way, the continent will be in a position to address food insecurity and other long-standing structural challenges emanating from the underdevelopment of the agricultural sector.

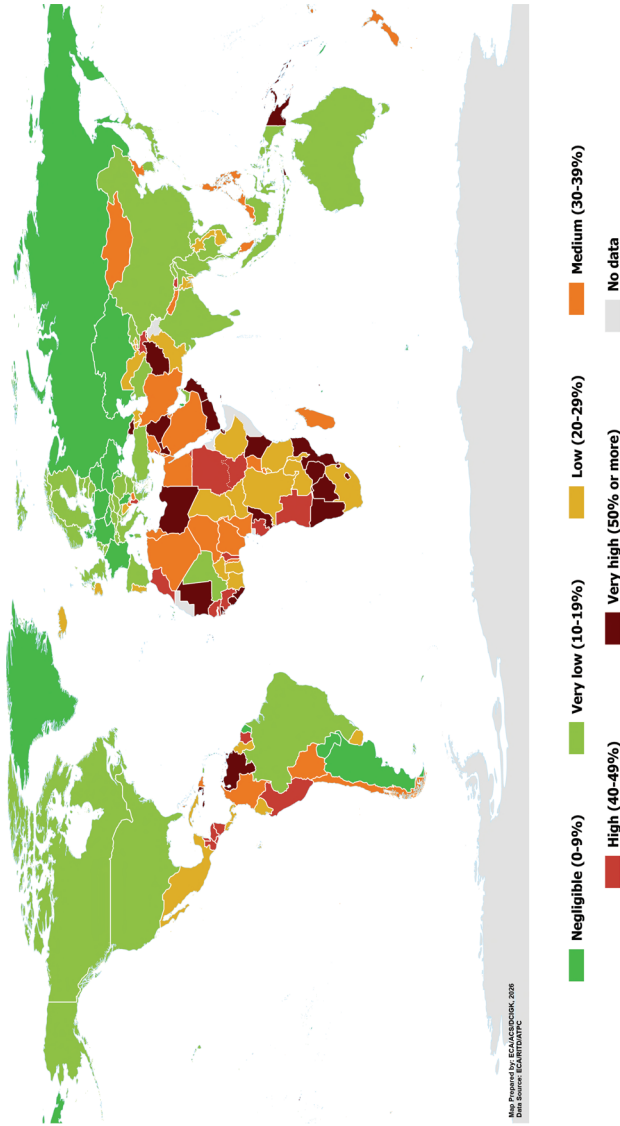
The African Group aims to exercise flexibility to preserve the gains made thus far, to ensure consensus on a high-level political declaration at MC-15, which will reinforce commitments for more ambitious post-MC14 negotiations on key issues of interest, including PSH, SSM and cotton.

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## Annex

### Annex 1. Food import vulnerability index (all 15 staple foods)



The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed by India and Pakistan. The Final Status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed. A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Source: Minot, N., Vos, R., Park, B., Kim, S., Zaki, S., & Mamboundou, P. (2023). *Vulnerability to Global Market Shocks V2: Price Shocks to Major Staple Foods*. *Food Security Portal*. <https://www.foodsecurityportal.org/node/2502>