

The Role of WTO in Food Safety During COVID-19 Pandemic

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COVID-19 is a humanitarian crisis on a global scale. The virus continues to spread throughout the globe, placing health systems under unprecedented stress in the battle to save lives. The human scale of this tragedy is set to worsen as the virus spreads to lower income countries with weaker healthcare systems. COVID-19 could play a key role in developing serious collapses of the world economy. Worsening of the world economy is the main factor which affects the effectiveness of the international measures on poverty reduction of the world. Since the COVID-19 period each country has priority to develop national and international Programs on food safety and develop/keep export programs in order to stabilize national economy and reduce poverty. It is important to keep and develop food producing system, increase possibility to export, improve international trade between countries. In this aspect the WTO could play a key role.

Introduction

Today we are all in a unique situation. For the first time in recent history, humankind is facing a pandemic of disease on a global scale. This situation has not bypassed any country in the world and is a global threat to all mankind. According to the FAO, the combined impact of the global spread of Covid-19, measures to suppress the pandemic, and the global economic downturn will disrupt the functioning of food systems and cause serious damage to the health and nutrition of the population. Currently, 135 million people in 55 countries are experiencing an acute food and livelihood crisis [1]. Another 183 million people are living in near-critical food insecurity. 75 million children under the age of five are stunted, and 17 million children are malnourished [2].

The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting the world with unprecedented public health, social and economic challenges, including in international trade. Measures to curb the spread of the disease have shut down large swathes of the world economy, leading to dramatic downward supply and demand shocks. World trade is expected to fall by between 13% and 32% in 2020 as the COVID 19 pandemic disrupts normal economic activity and life around the world [3].

Millions of people around the world depend on international trade for their food security and livelihoods. As countries move to enact measures aiming to halt the accelerating COVID-19 pandemic, care must be taken to minimise potential impacts on the food supply or unintended consequences on global trade and food security [4]. Due to COVID-19, global health, economic and social crisis is threatening lives and livelihoods. The livelihood of the half of the global workforce has been severely affected, tens of millions of people are being pushed back into extreme poverty and hunger [5].

The role of the WTO in the implementation of the food security system is extremely important and, as we believe, will continue to grow. This organization, forming a new model of international trade law, has a significant impact on the domestic legislation of member countries. It should also be noted that numerous conflict situations related to food safety are related to international trade issues and, therefore, are related to the prerogatives of the WTO. An objective description of the degree of WTO participation in the field of food security implies a clear definition of the target function of its activities, the scope of these activities and the powers granted to the WTO by its member States.

While ensuring food security is not mentioned among the tasks, indirect evidence of the WTO's attention to this problem is provided by one of the wording of the preamble, indicating that the ways to achieve the stated goals should directly correspond to the needs and interests of participants. In addition, trade liberalization has an important impact. Ensuring national food security is a serious problem, especially in States that rely on the import of basic food products. In these countries, trade liberalization can significantly reduce the level of self-sufficiency in basic food production and increase confidence in imported goods. However, it should be borne in mind that this does not amount to a deterioration of national food security, which is mainly affected by the country's ability to earn enough foreign currency to import the necessary foodstuffs.

Common features of the problems that many countries are currently experiencing in connection with the pandemic are a decrease in demand for export products, and the termination of the tourism industry, agricultural products and food exports. This situation is particularly harmful for States that are also food-importing countries. In Uzbekistan in a timely manner take important decisions in order to ensure the stability of all sectors of the economy, implementation of foreign liabilities, effective social support, to prevent a sharp decline in people's incomes during the period of counter the spread of coronavirus infection and other global risks. Thus, one of the priority directions of agricultural development is to saturate the domestic market with food products, achieve self-sufficiency in their production and ensure food security.

Global trading channels must remain open. Without open trade is essential to the functioning of global food markets. In the long term, incentives aimed at addressing existing threats to food security should aim to increase the resilience of food systems to future pandemics.

References

References

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