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Dialogue on “*Susceptibility of food security and safety (urban and rural areas) due to corona virus (COVID-19)*”

Date: Friday, 24 April 2020

Time: 10h00 – 12h30

Background for the dialogue

A recent (late 2019) **outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)** – an infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus – has spread rapidly across the world, negatively affecting lives and livelihoods. The full impact of the virus on **food security and safety** is not yet known, nor will likely be known, for months to come as the spread of the virus continues. What is clear is that it will have, and is already having, significant negative effects on people along the food supply chain, from farmers and producers to processors, dealers and vendors, transporters and consumers. As a broad term, “food security” is defined by: (1) the availability of safe and nutritious food and (2) a guaranteed capability to procure and acquire food of good quality in a socially acceptable way. Food safety on the other hand is a scientific discipline describing handling, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent food-borne illness.

South Africa needs to strengthen food production and distribution systems to fight hunger and ensure readiness to tackle diseases wherever they emerge. The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a global health crisis, and international organisations such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) are playing a role in assessing and responding to its potential impacts on people’s life and livelihoods, global food trade, markets, food supply chains and livestock. This will allow countries to anticipate and mitigate possible disruptions the pandemic may trigger for people’s food security and livelihoods, avoiding panic-driven reactions that can aggravate disruptions and deteriorate the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable.

The Water Research Organisation (WRC) is working closely with its local and international partners, harnessing broad networks to drive further research, support ongoing investigations and share critical knowledge. The WRC will be hosting a virtual dialogue to facilitate the meeting of a body of experts who can provide advice and ideas on specific sector related challenges.

Aim of discussion

The aim of this webinar is to share knowledge and explore effective solutions and mechanisms for post COVID-19 and similar pandemics, as well as increase the awareness to ensure household food security and safety going forward. As well as accelerating the attainment of SDG 2 which aims to; end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. This is to ensure that everyone, everywhere has enough good-quality food to lead a healthy life especially in places people are already experiencing **food crises**.

Programme:

Facilitator:

Time	Content	Presenter
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introductions	WRC
Sharing experiences		
10:05 – 10:15	Opening remarks	WRC CEO
10:15 - 10:30	Covid-19: A water-plant-food safety and security risk?	Lise Korsten and Erika du Plessis (UP)
10:30 – 10:35	Discussion / Questions	WRC/All
10:35– 10:50	Threat of food security in urban and rural areas by corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic	Joseph Asiwe (UL)
11:50 – 11:55	Discussion / Questions	WRC/All
11:55 – 12:15	The novel coronavirus Sars-CoV-2 – a concern for farming and fresh produce production?	Stefan Schmidt (UKZN)
12:15 – 12:20	Discussion / Questions	WRC/All
12:20 – 12:30	Summary and wrap up	WRC

Who should attend?

All stakeholders in the Water, Agriculture, Health and local government sectors including members of community of practice, government departments, academics, farmers, food producers, processors and dealers and the general public should attend.