

NEWS BUSINESS

COST OF LIVING

High food prices leading to unhealthy eating – FAO

ALFRED ONYANGO/The number of people opting for unhealthy foods to cushion them from the high cost of living is increasing significantly, Food and Agriculture Organisation now says.

In its 2023 State of Food Security and Nutrition report, the organisation says the cost of a healthy diet has been on the rise since 2019.

"Globally, it increased by 6.7 per cent between 2019 and 2021, with a notable single-year increase of about 4.3 per cent in 2021," FAO says.

"This reflects the overall rise in food inflation that hit every region following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic."

Unaffordability in Africa is said to have continued to worsen as 5.11 million more people could not afford a healthy diet in 2021 compared to 2019, with the highest increase of 31 million

people recorded from 2019 to 2020.

The Sub-Saharan Africa reported the largest increase in the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet, 54 million, from 2019 to 2021, with most of them living in Eastern and Western Africa.

Eastern Africa recorded 361.9 million people while Western Africa recorded 350.1 million in 2021.

In Kenya, consumers are grappling with a high cost of living mainly driven by a rise in food prices. Inflation remained high at 7.9 in June.

World Bank data shows the country's food inflation stood at 10.3 per cent in May, up from 10.2 per cent the previous month.

It had hit a 7-year high of 15.8 per cent in October last year, a mark last witnessed in 2017.

According to the lender, the country's rates indicate a year-on-year



A bread vendor along Gana-hola area of Mlkidandi in Mombasa
/LABAN WALLOGA

commodity price increase of 5 to 30 per cent, a situation that has pushed many households to become food insecure leading to malnutrition.

According to the humanitarian information source firm Reliefweb, as at February an estimated 4.4 million people, 27 per cent of the ASAL pop-

ulation, are facing high levels of acute food insecurity in the country.

"This on the back of skyrocketed food commodity prices amidst the decreasing purchasing power of most vulnerable households, with terms of trade also at a seasonal low," Reliefweb says.

TOURISM
Mombasa hoteliers revive push for more foreign direct flights

Government has invested over Sh7bn in modernising the Moi International Airport

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Hoteliers and travel industry players have renewed calls to the government to open up Mombasa for more scheduled international flights.

This is to boost foreign tourist arrivals into the region, as the global travel and tourism industry picks to pre-Covid level.

While the government has invested over Sh7 billion to modernise the Moi International Airport (Mombasa), including the runway and lighting system, it mainly serves local scheduled flights.

"Not wise at all. We want three million to five million tourists, how will they come to Mombasa if we keep denying them the licence to get there," Pollmans Tours and Safaris Group Director of Operations, Mohammed Hersi, posed.

According to Hersi, Mombasa requires more scheduled international flights.

"There is a reason why we called it international. Airlines are begging to land in Mombasa," the veteran hotelier said, noting that demand for Mombasa and the Kenyan coast is huge, but lack of enough scheduled flights has denied the region from achieving its potential.

Airlines interested in direct Mombasa flights include Turkish Airlines, Qatar, KLM and Emirates. Currently, only Ethiopian Airlines and RwandAir have scheduled flights to Mombasa, with a number of chartered flights that mainly serve the Germany, Italy and Romanian markets. Kenya Airways,



which in December commenced four weekly flights to Dubai, is mainly serving outbound business travellers.

Last year, Moi International Airport received 86,100 international visitors, the Economic Survey 2023 indicates, with the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport handling the bulk of arrivals at 1.1 million.

"We need to have open skies and see if we can bring in more international tourists. With this, the issue of low season will be a thing of the past," Kenya Coast Tourism Association (KCTA) chief executive Julius Owino told the Star.

There has been a push to implement the 1999 Pan-African treaty on liberalisation of access to air transport markets, the Yamoussoukro Decision, which was aimed at addressing shortcomings in the continent's aviation industry. However, countries are keen on

protectionism for their respective struggling national carriers, among them Kenya Airways.

The Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers and Caterers (KAHC) is also pushing for increased frequencies under an open sky drive not only for Mombasa but also Nairobi and possibly Kisumu.

According to KAHC chief executive Mike Macharia, Kenya has the potential to tap visitors from Europe, a key market source for beach destinations travellers, with the majority coming to Kenya on holiday preferring the coast region.

"We had a conversation with the CS (Tourism CS Peninah Malonza). If we can get a few more frequencies, then we can be sure of a good recovery," Macharia told the Star on the telephone.

Driving international numbers into the country is expected to boost earnings from the sector.

Mombasa county tourism department officials receive tourists from Ukraine, at the Moi International Airport / FILE

which during the Covid-19 pandemic period heavily depended on the domestic market as global travellers were grounded.

The tough economic times being experienced, mainly on the high cost of living, are however expected to affect the sector as households cut on travelling and holiday spending.



MOHAMMED HERSI

There is a reason why we called it international...

Airlines are begging to land in Mombasa

The anatomy of learning



ENTREPRENEURS' TOOLBOX
BY SAMUEL MPAMUGO

Monthly, I get notifications from my Udemy app about new courses or special offers. Also, the internet is full of free courses. These are all learning opportunities. Now, you can easily acquire a new skill. In different ways, we are encouraged to keep our information bank full. However, learning has a deeper meaning.

Learning is a powerful concept at the heart of change, and it's an essential skill in modern culture. It is the conscious engagement in the personal transformation process to attain your next level of maturity. The process may include Udemy courses, new habits, new relationships, etc. – the details are generally personal, but at the core is your willingness to change.

Willingness is the next step after a vulnerable first one, the transformation epiphany. Beyond getting new information, this is when it dawns on you that your current level of awareness and function needs an upgrade; it is the moment of epiphany when you realise that you must change to reach the next level or make progress. It hits you that what got you to your current level won't get you to the next, and the gap is clear. Once this occurs, the stage is set for new learning.

The transformation epiphany is a vulnerable space because it reveals our inadequacies. Generally, people are uncomfortable knowing they are not as competent or effective as they thought they were. Furthermore, uncovering learning gaps can be unnerving, and often, people's egos kick in and hinder the learning process. Ego gets in the way when people are too uncomfortable to make the transition from the old to new learning. Consequently, they stick to old ways to protect their ego.

The next step is willingness. After the transformation epiphany, are you willing to take the steps necessary to change? Are you ready to forgo your old ways for new experiences? Do you see that new learning could bring new opportunities? Willingness is your agreement to the terms of the learning process. It is your consent to the requirements of change.

Willingness naturally leads to the next step: pay the price. A willing person pays the price to change their mindset (thinking), they show up daily, complete the course, and do whatever it takes to learn effectively. This stage is marked by action. Those who pay the price are determined to enjoy the transformation that comes through learning. They understand that at the end of their sacrifice is a new, improved version of themselves – and it's worth it.

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