Project title
COVID disruptions and resilience of retail food prices around the world

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Abstract
This project will use new price indexes to conduct nearly real-time monitoring of retail prices by food group and nutrient composition, measuring month-to-month changes in the cost and affordability of nutritious diets in various countries around the world. We will use software tools and data developed through a project funded by UKAid and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation entitled Changing Access to Nutritious Diets in Africa and South Asia (CANDASA): https://sites.tufts.edu/candasa.

The CANDASA project’s new aims related to COVID-19 are:
1. Obtain monthly updates for item-level food prices from as many countries as possible;
2. Match items to nutrient composition and food group to compute diet costs;
3. Compute cost-of-diet indexes by food group and for nutrient adequacy monthly for each location;
4. Identify price spikes that signal supply chain failures, and price declines that would signal loss of income and effective demand, as anomalies relative to the spatio-temporal price surface observed in previous years;
5. Match food price anomalies to the timing, location and severity of COVID outbreaks, to identify conditions that make retail food prices more or less resilient to COVID-related disruption.

Data
The principal source of authoritative data on retail food prices are national statistical agencies, whose price data collection is conducted for the purpose of computing an overall Consumer Price Index (CPI). In some cases, agriculture ministries and other organizations collect food prices for Market Information Systems (MIS). Our aim is to assemble these in standardized, machine-readable form for processing to compute nutritional price indexes using methods developed through the CANDASA project.

JEL codes
Q11, E31, I15

Keywords
Food prices, nutrition, retail markets

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