The Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War on Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

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Abstract

The existing discourses on the Russia-Ukraine war mainly focus on the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine as well as on the implications for the global economy. There is a lack of policy and scholarly attention to how the war threatens the prospects for the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs). Underpinned by a critical document analysis of secondary sources available in both academic and grey literature and with a focus on Africa, the article explores various global challenges ensuing from the crisis and demonstrates how such challenges impact on prospects for SDGs realisation in Africa. Using the first two SDGs as an example, the study found that with the disruption of the global supply chain by the war and the international sanctions imposed on Russia, Africa now experiences food commodity and energy shortages, soaring inflation, and commodity price hikes which now threatens to worsen poverty and hunger. The article recommends that Africa should give structural change and regional cooperation top priority, reconsidering the global financial system and the way that development finance is structured as well as maintaining a steady commitment to building resilience. Future research could be focused on the effectiveness of non-sanctions-based conflict resolutions.

Keywords: Food security, Sustainable Development Goals, poverty, Russia-Ukraine war.

1. Introduction

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022 came when the world was still recuperating from the COVID-19 pandemic which had destroyed both lives and livelihoods. With the discovery of injections in late 2020 and early 2021, there was optimism that the world would soon drift back to normalcy under the ‘new normal tradition characterised by safety protocols and vaccination passports. The advent of the Russia-Ukraine war, together with the sanctions imposed on Russia by the international community, emerged to shatter down prospects for a quick global recovery from the pandemic. With disruption in the global supply chain, food and energy shortages have been ensured. This has resulted in soaring prices for commodities globally. One of the regions most affected due to its over-reliance on commodities acquired abroad is Africa. The closure of key port operations in the Black Sea

and the sanctions on Russia have destabilised commodity flows between Russia and Africa (Berahab, 2022).

Russia and Ukraine are key sources of food commodities for Africa. North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia), Nigeria in West Africa, Ethiopia and Sudan in East Africa, and South Africa account for 80 percent of wheat imports from the two countries (Mlaba, 2022; One Africa, 2022). After the United States and Saudi Arabia, Russia is also the world's third-largest producer of oil, much of which is exported to Africa. The disruption of fuel has resulted in soaring prices, thus, increasing operational costs for Africa in which 70% of the population rely on agriculture and other related activities as a major source of income or livelihoods (Ndhlovu, 2021, 2018). The disruption of the movement of food commodities to Africa is already a huge matter of concern in a continent with the number of people undernourished has been growing in recent years. In East Africa, a total of 124.2 million people were recorded as undernourished between the years 2014 and 2016 up from 103.9 in 1992; 58.9 million people were recorded in Central Africa up from 24.2 million between 1992 while in Southern Africa the number had risen to 217.8 million in 2016 from 175.7 million in 1992. The least affected region has been West Africa which recorded 31.5 million people in 2016 down from 44.6 million in 1992 (FAO, 2017). The war, therefore, could have huge socio-economic implications for the realisation of SDGs on the continent.

Available debates on the Russia-Ukraine war rarely touch on SDGs. Balbaa, Eshov, and Ismailova (2022) explore the implications of the war on the global economy but do not link their discussion with SDGs. Duho et al., (2022) explored the war's implications on Africa, with much focus on fuel energy, but did not broaden the discussion to aspects of food shortages ensuring fuel shortages. Ehsas (2022) painted in broad strokes on the world canvas but did not consider that the war could worsen issues of hunger and poverty which had already been a problem in developing economies, such as those in Africa. Mlaba (2022) simply posits the question as to what would be the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war on Africa but does not further explore issues of poverty and hunger which are concerns of the first two SDGs. Overall, there has not been a study that has explored how the war threatens to frustrate global efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030. With a focus on Africa, this study problematises the war in the context of the SDGs.

This study (i) explores the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war for the achievement of SDGs in Africa with a focus on goals 1 and 2 and (ii) proposes strategies through which the challenges ensuing from the war can be dealt with to shield efforts towards the realisation of these goals. This study could further stimulate and refocus policy and scholarly attention on SDGs after increased focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and also on the Russia-Ukraine war. The study could also interest policymakers responsible for food security in African governments. Furthermore, it could also provoke action by the various actors in the food system chain to explore and adopt more resilient methods so as not to be heavily impacted by localised events such as the Russia-Ukraine war. The study, thus, contributes both to the emerging body of literature on food systems and to the literature on the Russia-Ukraine war. The study could also highlight more concrete methods of dealing with conflicts so that they do not threaten the achievement of long-term development efforts. Furthermore, the study could also demonstrate to African countries the value of self-sufficiency with regard to basic commodities, such as food – the centre of goals 1 and 2. As a result, the study could provoke action by African governments to explore and adopt more home-based strategies for ensuring that basic commodities, such as food are now sourced

from abroad. The study contributes both to the literature on food systems and sustainable development and to the literature on conflict resolution.

The following section outlines the research methodology for the study. This is followed by a summary of the Russia-Ukraine war and a discussion of Sustainable Development Goals to build a conceptual framework for the study. Thereafter, the results of the study are discussed and proposals for dealing with challenges which threaten SDGs are made. Lastly, concluding remarks are made.

2. Materials and Methods

This study is based on a review of existing secondary sources on the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war. The reviewed sources included policy documents, scholarly publications, and opinion pieces, such as newspaper articles and online blogs. The articles were obtained from the internet using key terms such as Russia and Ukraine war, Sustainable Development Goals, poverty, and hunger as keywords. The inclusion criterion was that all articles had to be on the Russia and Ukraine war, published after February 2022, written in English, freely downloadable, and covering aspects of poverty and food which directly impact SDGs 1 and 2. After the screening, a total of 15 articles were eventually selected for analysis. The key research questions to which the selected articles were subjected to were (i) What are the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war on SDG 1 in Africa? and (ii) What are the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war on SDG 2 in Africa? Thematic data analysis was used in the study. The two SDGs selected for the study were used to frame the themes of the study.

Figure 1: Keywords used in the Investigation

The first figure provides an overview of some of the most important keywords considered in the study which include Russia and Ukraine, the Sustainable Development Goals, poverty, and hunger. The kinds of documents that were looked at are broken down in detail in table 1 below.

Table 1: Nature of Documents Consulted in the study

Type of Document	Policy Documents	Scholarly publication	Opinion Pieces Blogs, Newspaper Articles
Total Number of Documents Consulted	5	5	5

According to the information presented in table 1 located above, the documents that were reviewed include policy documents, research publications, and opinion pieces such as newspaper articles and internet blogs.

3. The Russia-Ukraine War: Causes and Suspicions

There are different narratives about the reasons for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The first narrative is one promoted by Russia and its allies, as well as some political analysts. This narrative avers that Ukraine is being used by the West, the United States of America, in particular, to compromise the national security of Russia. Russia also believes that Ukraine was using the military to oppress Russian-speaking citizens in separatist regions that are loyal to the Russian government, thus, committing genocide against its citizens (Ehsas, 2022). To support this narrative, Russia also believes that its ambition for a Northern Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) membership by Ukraine is a threat to its national security since if Ukraine acquires the membership, then NATO will be able to expand eastward to its border, thereby posing an existential threat (Ozili, 2022; Walker, 2022). This would enable Russia's enemy, the West, to intrude into Russia and undermine the country's national security. Russia claims that these two issues justify its invasion of Ukraine.

The other narrative is one pushed forward by the West and other pro-West media outlets. According to this narrative, Russia is an undemocratic state which is run by a dictatorship, and which now feels threatened by Ukraine's pursuit of democracy (Ehsas, 2022). It is argued that Ukraine is being invaded for resisting Russian influence and seeking partnerships with democratic countries, and for seeking to join NATO and the European Union (Balbaa, et al., 2022). It is reported that Russia resists abhors Ukraine's ambition for democracy because it could threaten Russia's national security (Ozili, 2022; Walker, 2022). For this reason, Russia launched an offensive on Ukraine to remove President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and install a new pro-Russian president in the country.

Whatever the reasons for the war, what remains clear is that the war has had huge socio-economic implications which are experienced beyond the borders of these two warring countries. One way to understand the gravity of the severity of the war is to explore its implications on SDGs.

4. Sustainable Development Goals: Key Terms of the Study

This section defines Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals as key concepts for the study.

4.1. Sustainable Development

Notwithstanding the existing debates on the concept of sustainable development, the concept can generally be understood as "the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"(Mhlanga 2021:3). Two key issues underlie the concept of sustainable development: First, the importance of prioritising the needs of people, especially the fundamental needs of the underprivileged. The second, is an analysis of the limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the capacity of the environment to meet both the needs of the present and those of the future (Parris and Kates 2003, Rogers et al., 2012, Mhlanga 2021 Mhlanga 2022a). Available research suggests that all nations, developed or developing, should explain the aims and objectives of social and economic development considering sustainability (Hák et al., (2016). This needs to be the case whether the country uses a centrally planned or a market-oriented economic structure (Rogers et al., 2012). Another crucial aspect of the notion of sustainable development is that it has different meanings depending on the country in question. Mhlanga (2022b) defines development as the steady alteration of a society and its economy. There is a school of thought that maintains the viability of following a sustainable development strategy even under severely rigid social and political situations. On the other hand, it was made clear that if development policies do not consider issues related to the distribution of costs and benefits as well as the accessibility of resources, it will be challenging to achieve physical sustainability(Mhlanga 2022a). Another key problem that has come to light is the fact that to achieve sustainability, it is vitally crucial to guarantee social equity across several generations.

4.2. Sustainable Development Goals

In the year 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global call to action to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and ensure that by the year 2030, the world would be at peace and in prosperity. The 17 SDGs were integrated when they were established by the UN. SDGs are predicated on the premise that any kind of development ought to aim to maximise the equilibrium between social, economic, and environmental sustainability. It is believed that the SDGs were formulated with the intention of "putting an end to poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls."(Sachs et al.,2019). The goals also emphasise the importance of innovative and financial capacities, as well as knowledge and technology, as important to the accomplishment of the goals (Sachs, et al., 2019, Mhlanga 2022b).

5. Empirical Literature of Sustainable Development Goals

The available research on SDGs has covered a wide variety of subjects, such as the strategies that can be implemented to achieve these goals, the challenges that may be experienced, and the opportunities that may be pursued (Hák et al., 2016; Rogers et al., 2012). According to Hák, Janouková, and Moldan (2016), at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York, an Open Working Group formed by the UN General Assembly formulated a series of worldwide SDGs that contains 17 goals and 169 targets. This set of goals was referred to as the SDGs. The term "Global Goals for Sustainable Development" refers to these SDGs.

According to Hák et al., (2016), When it comes to the real world, users are frequently unable to determine with absolute certainty how correctly the indicators are used to estimate the occurrences that are being watched, a preliminary set of 330 indicators was released in

March 2015, which came after the SDGs were formed. In addition, some of the SDGs are based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which came before them, while others include whole new concepts. According to Hák et al. (2016), even though there is a significant amount of theoretical work on quality criteria for indicators, “This is even though there is a substantial amount of work on quality criteria for indicators. Due to this, Hák et al. (2016) emphasise “the necessity of operationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals aims and evaluating the relevance of the indicators”. Of all the quality traits of the indicators, the relevance quality trait is the one that is of the utmost importance, and therefore, most emphasised in this study.

According to Hák et al., (2016), the fact that the current design of the proposed SDGs and their targets has laid the groundwork for a policy framework is one of the most important takeaways. On the other hand, the signs might be difficult to understand if there is not a thorough follow-up on their operationalisation. Therefore, Hák et al. (2016) propose that “experts should focus on the "indicator-indicated fact" relation to ensure that the indicators' relevance for clear and unambiguous messages that are to be given to users' decision-makers and policymakers as well as the public”. These messages are intended to be communicated to the public. In addition, Sachs, et al., (2019) argue that SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change call for profound changes in each nation. These changes, in turn, will require complementary actions on the part of governments, civil society organizations, scientific communities, and commercial enterprises (Sachs, et al., 2019)

Sachs et al.., (2019) state that many stakeholders do not share a clear view of how the 17 SDGs might be put into practice. According to Sachs et al. (2019), for every transition outlines prioritized investment opportunities and regulatory issues, calling for behaviour by well-defined elements of the administration working in partnership with companies and civil society. In addition, each transformation calls for a different set of actors to take action. Therefore, it is conceivable for reforms to be quantified inside the government structures while still respecting the significant interdependencies that exist amongst the 17 SDGs.

Vinuesa, et al., (2020) theorise that the occurrence of artificial intelligence (AI) and its successively massive impact on several sectors necessarily requires an evaluation of its effect on the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda For sustainable development. This is because the impact of AI is becoming increasingly widespread across many different industries (SDGs). Using a process called consensus-based expert elicitation, Vinuesa et al., (2020) made the discovery that AI can facilitate the attainment of 134 targets across all of the goals, but it also can hinder 59 targets. According to Vinuesa et alargument .'s from 2020, the rapid development of AI should be supported with an appropriate level of regulatory awareness and control for AI-based technology to pave the road for sustainable growth. If this does not take place, there is the possibility that rules of transparency, safety, and ethics will be violated.

Stafford-Smith, et al., (2017) posit that on September 25, 2015, leaders from all around the world gathered at the United Nations in New York to adopt the Goals Of Sustainable development. According Stafford-Smith et al., (2017), the 17 goals and 169 targets set an agenda for SD that all countries should aim toward accomplishing. This agenda should be considered a minimum standard for global progress. The plan called for the encouragement of economic growth, the promotion of social inclusion, and the protection of the natural environment.

Stafford-Smith et al., (2017) state that once a consensus has been reached regarding the aims, attention may then shift to ensuring that the goals are carried out effectively; and,

ultimately, that they are achieved. It is also believed that across all of the objectives, 42 targets concentrate on methods of implementation and that the very final goal, Goal 17, is dedicated to the means of implementation. However, these implementation targets do not reveal anything about the interdependencies and interlinkages that exist between the goals.

Stafford-Smith et al., (2017) aver that "there needs to be a greater focus on interlinkages in three different areas: between industries such as finance, agriculture, energy, and transportation; between societal actors such as local authorities, government agencies, private sector, and civil society; and between and among countries that fall into the low-income, middle-income, and high-income categories". Stafford-Smith et al. (2017) provided seven recommendations to the United Nations categories of means of implementation to improve these interlinkages at both the global and national levels. These recommendations are as follows, "finance, technology, capacity building, trade, policy coherence, partnerships, and, finally, data, monitoring, and accountability. These suggestions are based on the current state of scientific research and practical application about global sustainability". Fleming, et al., (2017) posit that SDGs are an aspirational step toward achieving SD. These goals take a significantly broader view of sustainability than anything that has ever been accomplished in the past. nonetheless, there is still plenty of practical problems to overcome, such as how to put change into effect. This research was conducted by Fleming et al., (2017) with the "intention of determining how an important aquaculture company in Australia, Tassal, which is Tasmania's largest salmon aquaculture company, perceived the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as determining the motivations and barriers for Tassal to work towards implementing the goals".

Fleming et al., (2017) found that Tassal had no "prior knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but that the company is open to the idea of incorporating them into the sustainability practices it already employs".The interviews that were conducted included company leaders, employees, and external business partners. We will conduct this evaluation of the values by adhering to the decision-making structure of Values-Rules-Knowledge. The findings suggested that "personal and company values were the primary factor in Tassal's positive responses to the SDGs; understanding the SDGs led to Tassal seeing the potential rewards from interacting with some of the targets that seemed to have less to do with aquacultures such as health and wellbeing, and the findings suggested that personal and company values were the primary factor in Tassal's positive responses to the SDGs, and the findings suggested that personal and company values were the primary factor in Tassal". These findings demonstrate that "businesses can successfully engage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), even in the absence of requirements from the government or expectations from society, provided that they are willing to broaden their interpretation of what it means to be a sustainable business and are reflective about the values they hold.

The SDGs have been criticised for being inconsistent, difficult to measure, difficult to implement, and difficult to monitor (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). Swain (2018) argues that disparaging analysis suggests that "there exists a potential inconsistency in the SDGs, particularly between the socio-economic development goals and the environmental sustainability goals. Swain's argument focuses on the potential inconsistency between the socio-economic development goals and the environmental sustainability goals". The primary focus of Swain's argument is the possibility for a conflict to arise between the objectives of socio-economic development and those of environmental sustainability. Other challenges that

have been raised by detractors include those about the observability and quantifiability of the broadly stated SDGs.

According to Swain (2018), the goals do not have any legal or contractual force, and each nation is required to develop its own national or regional plans. In addition, it is not obvious where the financial resources and investments will come from or how much those resources and investments will amount to for SDGs. According to Swain (2018), developed nations need to continue to keep their attention on both their social policies and their environmental policies. On the other hand, developing nations would be better off focusing their attention on their economics and social policies in the short run, even though environmental policies are still important for sustainable development.

According to Gupta and Vegelin (2016), the process of achieving sustainable development has become more challenging as a result of trade-offs that emphasize economic expansion rather than social welfare and the viability of the environment. The SDGs that have been agreed upon by the member states of the UN may also be impacted as a result of this. Gupta and Vegelin (2016) researched to determine what inclusive development means and the extent to which it is reflected in the formulation of the SDGs. According to Gupta and Vegelin (2016), the language on the SDGs does very well in terms of the inclusiveness of social issues, but it does less well in terms of the inclusiveness of ecological and relational issues. This is one of the most important takeaways from their research. According to Gupta and Vegelin (2016), there is a distinct potential that the methods for implementation will place a greater emphasis on social inclusion as opposed to ecological and relational inclusiveness. Gupta and Vegelin(2016) posit that this should raise some concerns

6. Results and Discussion

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has significant repercussions for all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably in the context of Africa. For this study, however, only the first two goals were chosen to serve as examples.

6. Russia-Ukraine War and Prospects for Poverty Elimination in Africa

Africa’s promising recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has been disrupted as a result of Russia's war in Ukraine, which has led to an increase in the price of food and fuel, disruptions in the trade of goods and services, a tightening of fiscal space, constraints on green transitions, and a reduction in the flow of development finance around the world, all of which have dire consequences for the African continent (Sen 2022, Lusigi 2022). The fact that some African countries rely on Russia and Ukraine for the importation of essential goods, mainly wheat, fertilizers, and steel, is an issue. A disturbance in the flow of these products hurts the countries of Africa, for example. Lusigi (2022) asserts that the true impact on any economy is proportional to the degree to which it is dependent on “oil and gas exports or imports, tourism, imported grain and fertilizer”, among other essential imports. There are several clear long-term ramifications, some of which include the possibility of a realignment in geopolitical power, social and economic instability, and unsustainable levels of debt, all of which are likely to result in increased inequality and a deeper level of poverty in Africa. The most obvious effects of the war on Africa are the recent spikes in inflation and costs of fuel and food, as well as the instability of the financial system.

Those countries with the lowest incomes are the ones which are going to suffer the most because a significant amount of their spending goes toward food and transportation.

There is a high probability that food insecurity will continue, which will hurt many facets of human development, including “income, health, and education”. A global crisis in the cost of living is forecast by “the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on food, energy, and finance. This crisis will be caused by rising food costs, rising energy prices, and tightening financial conditions” (Lusigi 2022). A reaction on a global scale is required to stabilize commodity markets, address the rising cost of debt, and simultaneously increase the capacity of individuals and countries to cope with the situation. According to Sen (2022), Kenya purchased over 30 percent of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine in 2021, for instance, the manufacture of bread in Kenya, which is the third most eaten food item in that country, would be impacted if there was a disruption in the supply chain. In the year 2021, Russia accounted for 44 percent of Cameroon's total imports of fertilizers (Sen 2022). It is believed that the war would have a devastating effect on crop production in West Africa and will put the region's ability to provide food for its people in jeopardy. In a similar vein, Ukraine is the source of 60 percent of Ghana's imports of iron ore and steel (Duho, et al., 2022). The building industry in Ghana is already experiencing substantial difficulties because of the war.

Ben Hassen and El Bilali (2022) argued that because the conflict between Russia and Ukraine involves two major agricultural powers, it has a variety of negative socioeconomic implications that are now being felt internationally and that could get significantly worse, particularly for global food security. Because of disruptions in the supply chain brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic, strong global demand, and poor harvests in some countries, the conflict occurred at a bad moment for global food markets. This is because food prices were already high due to a combination of these factors. Ben Hassen and El Bilali (2022) also argued that it is essential to understand the overall impact on global food security to comprehend how disruptions in global food and fertilizer markets brought on by war or other forms of armed conflict might influence the price and availability of these commodities. According to Berahab (2022), the war has resulted in immediate and far-reaching cascading consequences on global food security. As a result of the war, exports from Ukraine have been halted, labour shortages have been caused because of conscription and population displacement, access to fertilizers has been restricted, and the prospects for future harvests are uncertain (Mlaba, 2022). Ben Hassen and El Bilali (2022) came to the same conclusion, namely that the export capability of Ukraine has been reduced. Second, shortages of workers were brought on by mandatory military service and forced population relocation. Thirdly, getting access to essential agricultural items like fertilizers might be difficult. This is a problem (One Africa, 2022; Walker, 2022).

The other issue that was brought to light by Ben Hassen and El Bilali (2022) was that the war caused a panic buying movement on both the national and individual levels. This movement has the potential to put the implementation of the SDGs in jeopardy, specifically SDG 1 which aims to eliminate poverty, SDG 2 which aims to eliminate hunger, and SDG 12 which aims to ensure responsible consumption and production. According to Balbaa, et a.l, (2022), the effects of the war on food security are being made worse by a wide range of fundamental rigidities, vulnerabilities, and inefficiencies in the global food systems. Because of this, Ben Hassen and El Bilali (2022) believe that the transition toward food systems that are healthy, egalitarian, and ecologically sustainable must be bolstered by the adoption of reforms and policies that are both immediate and long-term in nature.

7. Russia-Ukraine war and Prospects for Hunger Reduction in Africa

Pinto (2022) avers that Africa is a net food importer due to the war. This rise in food insecurity reflects the poverty, warfare, displacement, and poor mobility that exists in many states. This is placing a lot of strain on different nations which now struggle to meet their efforts to alleviate hunger (Berahab, 2022). The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has made the continent more vulnerable to fluctuations in the price of grain and fertilizer (Ehsas, 2022). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that between the years 2018 and 2020, Russia accounted for 32 percent of the total wheat imports into Africa, while Ukraine accounted for 12 percent of those imports. Countries in North Africa such as Tunisia and Egypt are dependent; nevertheless, the economic precariousness of countries in sub-Saharan Africa enhances their level of vulnerability (Pinto 2022). It is widely held that East Africa is more dependent on grain imports from Russia and Ukraine than other regions of the world. According to the UNCTAD, the countries of Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Somalia are the sources of more than fifty percent of the wheat that is imported into those countries.

In addition, food insecurity was already on the rise throughout the region because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the civil war in Ethiopia, below-average rainfall, and locusts. Several African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, and Cameroon, have reported significant price rises for wheat (Mlaba, 2022). Since February 2022, as was previously mentioned, extensive complaints about rising food prices have been heard in Kenya, a country in which more than forty percent of the wheat that is consumed originates from the region surrounding the Black Sea. Cassava, a crop that is grown locally, has been recommended to Cameroonian inhabitants by their government as a suitable substitute for wheat due to the country's ongoing food problems. Food prices have increased by a whopping fifty percent in Nigeria (Duho et al., 2022). Those living in urban poverty who are more prone to consume grains that are imported are already feeling the effects of this. Nevertheless, in contrast to the time of the pandemic, when the urban poor were the most vulnerable to the effects of inflation on food prices, rural people are now also being adversely affected. They are compelled to cut back on their usage of fertilizers or completely stop using them, which lowers the productivity of the land.

In addition, rising oil prices drive up the cost of transportation, which is an essential factor in determining the level of food security (Ehsas, 2022; Ozili, 2022). Even oil exporting nations such as Nigeria and Angola are having a tough time mitigating the immediate effects of rising food prices. Grain prices have reached an all-time high, as recorded by the Food Price Index maintained by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Over the period spanning from 2019 to March 2022, the prices of cereal and fertilizer increased by 48 and 35 percent, respectively. The current trajectory of events seems to indicate that commodities conflicts will play a significant role in the not-too-distant future. This potential is especially detrimental to sub-Saharan Africa, which already contends with enormous demographic issues, excessive dependence on imports, economic precariousness, and political unpredictability. More than 1.1 billion people live in 46 different nations in Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for the majority of the continent (Lusigi 2022, Pinto 2022). Several variables, including a worldwide health crisis and the economic measures needed to address it, volatility in the energy market, and inflation, all of which were compounded by the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, are to blame for the recent surge in the price of grain and fertilizer (Pinto 2022). Rising costs of grains have been the primary contributor to

inflation in a region where the cost of food makes up an estimated forty percent of the total cost of consumption. Food is an inelastic good, which indicates that a rise in price does not cause a corresponding decrease in demand.

To survive, people need food. In this context, the consequences may be particularly detrimental in urban areas that are home to a high proportion of low-income households. These households have a low level of savings and are reliant on uncertain sources of income; as a result, they are extremely susceptible to price swings (Sen 2022, Pinto 2022). Following the beginning of the conflict, the price of certain types of fertilizer more than doubled, eventually hitting an all-time high. This occurred in conjunction with an increase in the cost of natural gas as well as fears of disruptions in production, transportation, and sanctions. Even before they invaded Ukraine in February, the Russian government had already restricted the export of ammonium nitrate. In addition, the Chinese government is planning to prohibit all fertilizer exports beginning in the summer of 2021 to ensure that adequate supplies are maintained within the country (Abu Hatab 2022, Pinto 2022). Lusigi (2022) proposed that supply restrictions were the root cause of both food and fuel insecurity. This increase in food and fuel insecurity is being caused by supply restrictions that extend beyond the crisis that is currently unfolding. There was a crisis that occurred before this crisis in terms of the availability of food.

Variability in the climate, insufficient recovery of global and regional supply systems, and low productivity are the fundamental causes of the problem. In 2022, a significant portion of the Horn of Africa was subjected to below-average rainfall, while several regions in West Africa and Southern Africa were hit with high levels of precipitation and flooding. The other difficulty is that inadequate infrastructure means that food that is available in one region of a country or continent cannot reach other regions of the same country or continent where it is required the most. A significant portion of Africa's agricultural sector is performing below its potential as a direct result of low productivity brought on by insufficient utilization of inputs and technologies. In addition, a low degree of agro-processing, along with insufficient storage and strategic reserves, results in a significant amount of post-harvest loss and waste.

Sen (2022) also stated that the war in Ukraine is a "clear and present risk to multilateralism" since development projects in Africa are being delayed or cancelled as a result of the conflict. After all, the increased costs of projects are discouraging some development partners, while other partners are considering redirecting cash to address the humanitarian catastrophe produced by the war in Europe. Sen suggested that major projects in Africa are either delayed or scrapped altogether because certain development partners are discouraged by the increased price of the projects. There is evidence to suggest that financial support for the improvement of Africa may be declining. Abu Hatab (2022) also stated that the Russian war on Ukraine in February 2022 has appeared as an economic shock to worldwide supply chains, that also prefigures worrisome effects on Africa's alimentary and nutritional security and continues to threaten to sidetrack national and international attempts to stop poverty and hunger and accomplish long-term sustainable development objectives on the continent.

An early estimate of the ramifications the invasion would have for Africa's food supply systems and the continent's overall level of food security was provided by Abu Hatab (2022). Abu Hatab (2022) argued that “the timing of the invasion and the two parties involved in the conflict are two particularly aggravating factors, which explain the current

and likely future impact of the invasion on Africa's food security". Both factors explain why the invasion is having such a negative impact. According to Abu Hatab (2022), the invasion causes disruptions in African food supply chains through four major channels, "the availability and prices of agricultural production inputs; domestic food price inflation; trade sanctions and other financial measures; and energy markets and shipping routes". In addition, the essay discusses the potential for social and political unrest to be stoked because of disruptions to food supply chains and increases in the prices of domestically produced foods. Behnassi and El Haiba (2022) stated that there is a favourable link between food security and stability. They based their argument on several studies.

Behnassi and El Haiba (2022) went on to claim that in a globalized society, armed conflicts might be a primary source of food scarcity that affects places beyond the battlefield. Their argument was based on the fact that armed conflicts are becoming more frequent. The food crises of the last decade have brought to light the systemic problems that exist in the fight against food insecurity in environments where there is conflict. In a globalized period, Behnassi and El Haiba (2022) stated that armed conflicts might be a primary generator of food shortages that affects territories beyond those directly involved in the conflict. According to Behnassi and El Haiba (2022), the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has highlighted preexisting systemic flaws in international food security while also contributing to the development of new instances of food insecurity. Conflicts of any kind make it more difficult for nations, households, and even individual people to meet their dietary requirements. These disputes have the potential to disrupt actions that try to cultivate and harvest food, as well as process and transport it, supply, and market it, and so on. The effects of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on the efficiency and adaptability of the global food supply chains were studied by Jagtap et al. (2022). Food is one of the most traded items, according to Jagtap et al. (2022), and the crisis in Ukraine, which is one of the European breadbaskets, has generated a substantial extra disruption in the global food supply chains after the impact of COVID-19. The disruption to food production, supply chains, availability, and price may have an effect that lasts for a long time.

Because of the war, Jagtap et al., (2022) feel that the availability and supply of a wide variety of food raw materials and finished food items are in jeopardy. In addition, recent spikes in food prices have been observed throughout worldwide markets. In addition, Jagtap et al., (2022) argued that "the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has hurt food supply chains, having significant effects on production, sourcing, manufacturing, processing, and logistics, as well as significant shifts in demand among countries that are dependent on imports from Ukraine". As a result of the war and the international sanctions imposed on Russia, the global supply chain has been disrupted, and as a result, Africa is currently experiencing shortages of food commodities and energy, as well as soaring inflation and increases in commodity prices, all of which threaten to make poverty and hunger in the region even worse.

8. Potential Strategies for Shielding Sustainable Development Goals

Although the war is causing a great deal of harm, particularly on the potential to eliminate hunger and reduce levels of poverty, several strategies can be taken to ensure that the African continent is on track toward meeting the SDGs. Figure 1 highlights some of the possible strategies.

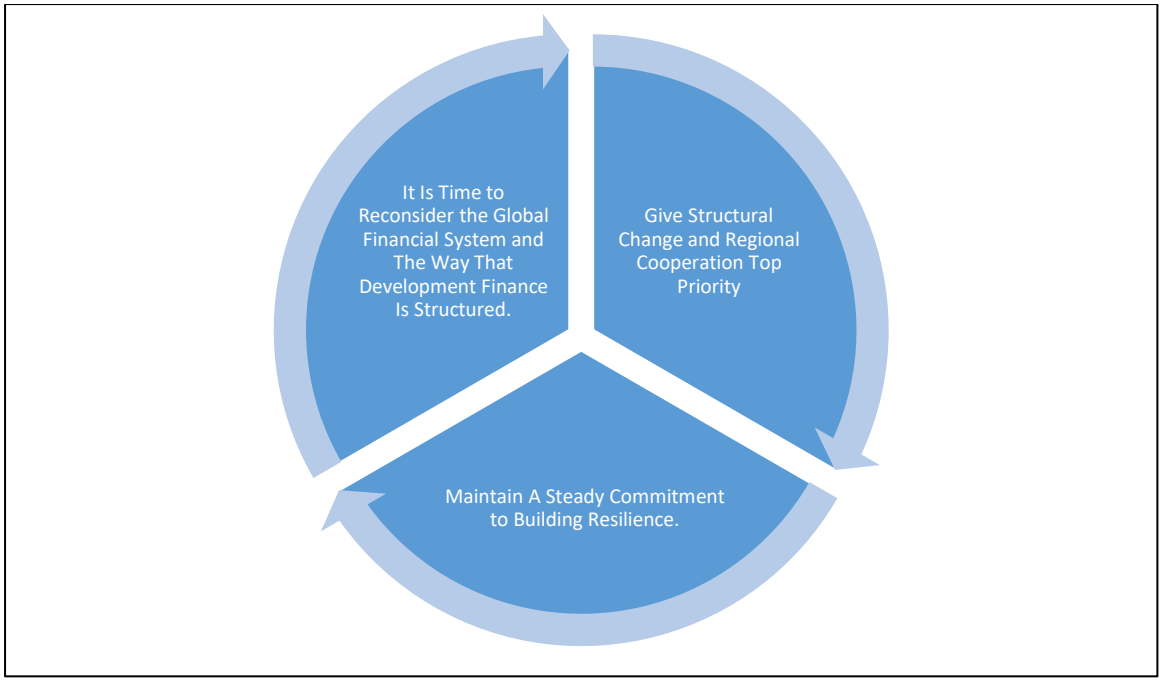

Figure 2: Potential Strategies for Shielding Sustainable Development Goals

Although the war is causing damage, especially to the ability to end hunger and reduce poverty levels, Figure 1 shows that several strategies can be followed to ensure that the continent is on track to achieving the SDGs. Some of the potential strategies include giving structural change and regional cooperation top priority, reconsidering the global financial system and the way that development finance is structured and maintaining a steady commitment to building resilience.

Give Structural Change and Regional Cooperation Top Priority

There is a need to enhance long-term resilience by addressing the structural fundamental causes. Africa needs to take advantage of digital technologies and advocate for free and fair competition on a global scale. Additionally, the continent should ramp up its "support for regional integration and economic diversification, and it should mobilize resources to fill critical gaps in technology, skills, and infrastructure" (Lusigi 2022). It is not an appropriate reaction to concentrate on finding answers in the short term. The current response to inflation caused by increases in the cost of food and gasoline has not been sufficient to prevent longer-term repercussions. Several nations that have excess capacity are preparing to increase their output of oil and gas to make up for shortages in the market. On the other hand, thinking that is focused on the short term is prevalent, and there is an excessive reliance on monetary policy instruments such as increases in interest rates. The temporary relief that will result from the decision made by numerous nations to halt food exports will only be temporary. It does not consider the interdependent relationship that exists between our economy and our shared future. It punishes producers who are unable to obtain the full value of their productivity and discourages investments in production in the future, both of which are unintended consequences. As a result of the skyrocketing cost of imports, both consumers and businesses that produce goods will be unable to get their hands on any goods or inputs from other countries (Lusigi 2022, Sen 2022). By prioritising structural transformation that is green, inclusive, and resilient, we can ensure that no one is left behind and that Africa is

better prepared for the next crisis. This can be accomplished by tackling the structural causes that are at the root of these crises, which can provide an opportunity to move forward.

This can be accomplished through the promotion of environmentally friendly structural transformation, which will need strategic investments in long-term finance for improved economic and digital infrastructure and services, particularly in underserved and marginalized areas. This is necessary to fuel productivity growth in fundamental as well as developing industries, which are frequently ignored. For instance, to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, we need to make investments in clean, affordable energy as well as technology and financing that is specifically geared toward micro, small, and medium enterprises that are engaged in fisheries, agriculture, small-scale mining, nature-based products, and services such as tourism. Utilising digital transformation to address the logistical constraints that keep many groups and geographical areas behind can help inclusive structural transformation move forward. This can be accomplished by putting this transformation to use. Innovating businesspeople all over Africa are already exhibiting the ability of digital to connect firms, customers, and producers both inside and between nations. The reduction of susceptibility and the impact of foreign price shocks on domestic economies can be accomplished through resilient structural change, which is dependent on regional integration and collaboration across international borders. For example, regional strategic grain stockpiles and improved trade across Africa's borders can help to reduce the likelihood of people being hungry.

It will contribute to making groceries and other commodities more readily available and more reasonably priced. It is imperative that non-tariff barriers to food commerce, such as excessive transportation costs, documentation, certification, and standards, be eliminated as quickly as possible. The use of African currencies in commercial transactions is made possible by payment networks such as the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System. To prevent an unhealthy level of dependency on goods imported from other countries, Africa must achieve independence and sovereignty.

Reconsideration of the Global Financial System and the Way That Development Finance is Structured

For Africa to retain a bigger part of the real worth of its strategic mineral deposits, agricultural resources, and human resources, the very first step should be to enhance the region's ability to better mobilize its resources. Africa ought to increase its investments in value addition. Benefits linked with the use of value-added foods include better nutrition for children and mothers, higher income for manufacturers, access to new markets, and the development of innovative methods to enhance packing and storage to reduce waste and increase food safety. The other strategy is accomplished by improving Africa's ability to improve its ability to better mobilize its resources by increasing Africa's overall tax effort, increasing the average tax-to-GDP ratio from its current level of 17.5 percent to 24 percent, and doing away with tax exemptions that aren't necessary for large enterprises. When taken together, these actions will bring about a reduction in the number of illegal funds flowing off the continent by roughly $90 billion (Sen 2022).

Maintain A Steady Commitment to Building Resilience

Africa should make it a priority to consistently invest in resilience to develop democracy and infrastructure that is more resistant to shock because growth without resilience is not

sustainable. This should be done because the process of development is not a linear progression and various shocks can reverse advances made. It is possible for Africa to become more climate-resilient through the implementation of initiatives that, among other things, make it possible for the continent to make full use of its natural resources, benefit from financial structures that are kind to the planet, and place an emphasis on investing in ways that are sensitive to climate risk(Sen 2022). Africa and its development partners need to make investments to maintain a steady supply of food and fuel, enhance their productive capacity, and increase the value-added content of their manufactured goods and exports.

9. Concluding Remarks

The current narratives on the conflict between Russia and Ukraine concentrate their attention, for the most part, on the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine as well as the repercussions for the economy of the entire world. There has not been enough attention paid, either by policymakers or academics, to how the war poses a risk to the achievement of SGDs. The article investigates a variety of global challenges that have arisen as a direct result of the crisis, with a particular focus on Africa. Using the first two SDGs as an example, the study discovered that because of the disruption of the global supply chain caused by the war and the international sanctions imposed on Russia, Africa is currently experiencing food commodity and energy shortages, as well as soaring inflation and price hikes for commodities, all of which threaten to make poverty and hunger more severe. The article suggests that Africa should make the structural change and regional cooperation its top priority, rethink the global financial system and the way that development finance is structured, and maintain a steady commitment to building resilience. These are just some of the recommendations made in the article. Possible topics for investigation in the future include the efficacy of dispute resolution strategies that do not rely on punishments.

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