

Analysis of the Effects of COVID-19 on the Trade, Transport and Health Sectors of Burundi

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ABUCO	Burundian Association of Consumers
AMFP	Maritime Rail and Port Authority
BIF	Burundian Francs
BRARUDI	Burundi Brewery
BRB	Central Bank of Burundi
CEEAC	Economic Community of Central African States
CEPGL	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID-19	Corona Virus 2019
EAC	East African Community
EACC	East African Carriers Council
EU	European Union
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISTEEBU	Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi
OBR	Burundian Revenue Office
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PCI	Prevention and Control Infection
PHEIC	Public Health Emergency of International Concern
PHEOC	Public Health Emergency Operations Centre
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RIT	Rapid Intervention Teams
RRT	Rapid Response Teams
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SLMHS	School-Linked Mental Health Service
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

The unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19 is affecting all aspects of society and the economies of many countries. This study aims at analysing the impact of this pandemic on the trade, transport and health sectors of Burundi. It is based on data collected using semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides applied on key informants. In addition, the analysis relied on monthly trade data from some ministries and public databases.

The results reveal that there was a decline in trade when one compares values of exports and imports during the second quarter of 2020, which is the quarter when the country was in the pandemic compared to the same period in 2019, which is the period before the pandemic. Exports decreased from 99.1 billion BIF in the second quarter in 2019 to 30.8 billion BIF in the second quarter of 2020 due to COVID-19, translating to a decline of 68.92% for exports.

Restrictions on movement of people and goods have also impacted on the imports of Burundi. Imports increased from 368.5 billion BIF in the second quarter in 2019 to 416.7 billion BIF, translating to a growth of 13.08%. However, imports are estimated at 433.00 billion BIF in the first quarter of 2020 from 436 billion BIF of last quarter of 2019, meaning a slight decrease of 0.6% from the first quarter to the second quarter.

The results indicate that there is a very considerable drop in the value of goods that pass through these different modes of transport. For example, there was a 73.41% drop in value of goods passing through Melchior Ndadaye International Airport. The percentage drop registered by other transport companies are: Balloré Logistics (46.75%), Maritime Rail and Port Authority (54.89%), Volcano Transport Agency (83.97%) and Memento Transport Agency (84.84%). The results of the survey indicate that there was a very considerable drop in number of passengers using the different modes of transport. The percentage drop in passengers travelling through Melchior Ndadaye International Airport, Volcano transport and Memento transport were 99.99%, 78.74% and 77.55%, respectively.

In the health sector, the results indicate that the weekly positive case rate has been consistently very low. This low rate could be explained by the decline of the voluntary COVID-19 test in the designated places by government. On average, the weekly testing rate since the beginning of the pandemic in Burundi is 2 per 10,000 inhabitants (per week); this is very low compared to the average threshold of at least 10 tests per week in the WHO African region. In addition, there has been a gradual

decline in the screening rate. The overall screening rate estimated at 70 tests per 10,000 inhabitants remains low, with an average number of tests of about 290 per day since the beginning of the pandemic in Burundi.

From the survey results, the study recommends provision of financial incentives and subsidies for transport, storage and cold chain costs for essential products; to provide non-contact food delivery mechanisms for high-risk or infected populations; prioritization of essential transport needs in supply chains; and periodic update priorities based on current risk assessments, for example at the height of an outbreak.

On the transport and health sectors, transport of medical supplies and food is to be prioritized and given the "green light" (fewer stops, controls, tolls) when crossing administrative borders. Emergency transport for essential needs, fuel, food, medical supplies and equipment need to be well planned, and planning for rationing of essential food and fuel. Information and awareness actions of the population on preventive measures should be reinforced, in particular on the effective implementation of barrier measures. There is need to build capacity in human resources, and ensure cross-border surveillance.

1. Analysis of the Effects of COVI-19 on trade aggregate demand and supply in Burundi

Study background

Burundi, like the rest of the world, is facing the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting from the city of Wuhan (Hubei Province in China) where it was reported in December 2019, this respiratory infectious disease has spread outside China. Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005). On 28th February 2020, WHO raised its risk assessment of COVID-19 to a very high level globally and regionally, with a pandemic situation declared by WHO on 11th March 2020.

Since its discovery, its geographic distribution continues to evolve. According to WHO statistics², as of 31st March 2021, there were 4,893,186 infected persons, including 323,256 deaths. The American continent holds the sad record with 55,586,882 confirmed cases, including 1,340,530 deaths. It is followed by Europe (44,561,071 infected persons with 941,435 deaths), South-East Asia (14,763,347 infected persons with 218,604 deaths), the Near East (7,475,714 infected persons with 157,852 deaths), Africa (3,074,086 infected persons with 77,688 deaths), and the Western Pacific region with 1,887,107 infected persons with 31,471 deaths. In addition to confirmed cases, there are also undetected cases due to lack of adequate means of screening, which are potentially numerous in developing countries. In Burundi, there are a total of 2,757 confirmed cases. Six (6) deaths have been reported while 773 patients have already been cured.

The pandemic has enormous economic and social consequences. The extent of these consequences in each country is related to its epidemiological situation (number of confirmed cases in relation to the total population), its initial economic situation, and the degree of openness of its economy to the international economy. On the healthcare system, the COVID-19 has overwhelmed the domestic health system and forced it to re-allocate the medical human resource to fight the pandemic (World Bank, 2020b). Transport has been the most hit and the passenger mobility restrained. As Falchetta and Noussa n (2020) reported, the demand of urban transport has plunged while the commercial aviation has fallen dramatically.

In Burundi, the first impression was that the county is far away to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and measures to mitigate the pandemic were sluggishly taken.

Indeed, with an infection rate of 222 cases per million, Burundi is among the least-infected countries. However, the second factor places the country at a high level of vulnerability, given that it is one of the five poorest countries in the world. The third factor is that the country's economy is relatively closed and therefore less exposed to exogenous shocks, including the shock caused by COVID-19. This assertion certainly needs to be researched to determine its validity.

This study attempts to fill this gap through a descriptive analysis. It aims, among other things, to measure the impact of this pandemic on trade and transport, and the health consequences.

Context

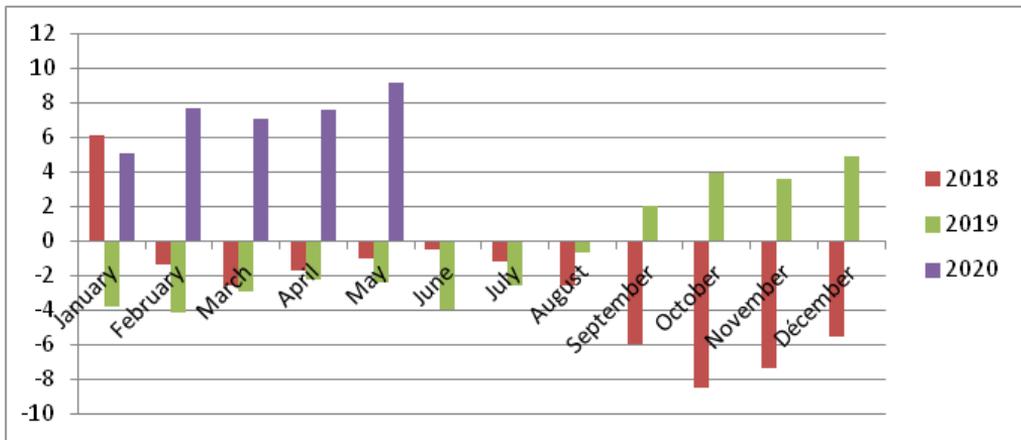
The COVID-19 crisis has received enormous attention recently. It has caused the deepest economic crisis in world history and disrupted the economic activities worldwide. WTO (2020a) projected a drop in trade of between 13% and 32%, while in Africa, trade was projected to decrease by 8% for exports and by 16% for imports.

Prior to the novel coronavirus 19 outbreak, the economic growth of Burundi had seen a general declining trend over the past decade and a moderate socio-economic performance. Since Burundi's 2015 crisis that pushed the economy into recession, economic growth hit a low level of -3.9% in 2015 and -0.6% in 2016. However, the growth improved prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, from the period between 2017 and 2019. Inflation rate was at the controllable level in 2019, with the annual mean of -2.7%. However, it reached a pick in the first months of the year 2020 from 5.1% to 9.2%, the period in which the COVID-19 struck for the first time in Burundi. The lockdown spell and restrictions by trade partners of Burundi made the prices of commodities to increase sharply.

In terms of employment, the Household Livelihood Survey in Burundi (HLSB) -2013/2014 and World Bank (2018) reveal that the labor participation rate in Burundi is high, whether in the strict sense (79%) or in the broad sense (79.7%). Survey data shows that 97.6% of the working population are employed compared to 2.4% who are unemployed. In Burundi, non-participation labor rate is 20.3% and reflects socio-demographic characteristics because the inactive are made up of young people (15-24 years old) and elderly people (over 65 years old), and the reasons given for the non-participation labor rate are education (74.2%), disability (11.2%) and being a housewife (5.1%). Regarding the structure of activities, informal production sector constitutes the main channels for job creation at 93.8% against 3.7% for the formal and 2.6% for households in the creation of employment. It should be noted that vulnerability in employment is higher among rural workers (87.7%) than among urban (39.5%). The fear is that the rise of COVID-19 cases could exacerbate the risk of deep decline of the economy. High employment and poverty are a major challenge in Burundi.

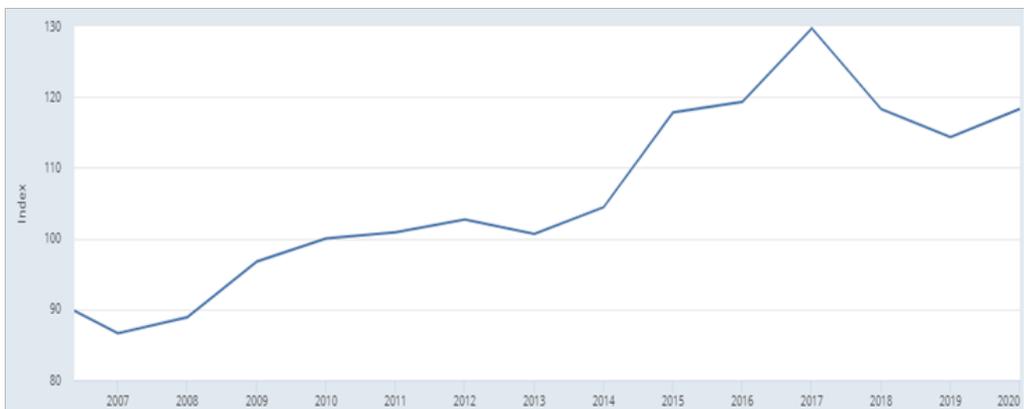
The COVID-19 hit Burundi at the time the country was coming out from the socio-political crisis of the 2015s and facing serious macroeconomic volatility. The macroeconomic indicators turn to red during the period between September 2019 and May 2020.

Figure 1: Monthly inflation rate, 2018-2020



Source: BRB (2020)

Figure 2: Rising of exchange rate from 2019



Source: BRB (2020)

On the trade sector, the country depends heavily on imports, specifically manufactured goods. The supply of commodities was hampered due to the closed borders with neighbouring countries, except the Tanzanian entry points. Coffee and other tradable raw materials have been grounded to the store-houses waiting to be exported abroad. Restrictions of movement of people and goods in some borders such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border affected the transport, tourism and health sectors.

Compared to the other countries of the region and even far away from the region, such as Kenya or South Africa, COVID-19 cases did not pick up as quickly, and this led the government not to take stringent measures such as restriction of movement, or institute curfews on daily basis. However, campaigns on COVID-19 pandemic awareness have been taken since the first case was diagnosed.

This study aims at providing an in-depth analysis on the effects of COVID-19 on trade, health and transport. The aim is to advice Burundi on how to cope with the outbreak so that the economic sub-sectors (health, transport and trade) at least sustain performance even as the country adheres to restrictions given by the national government and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Methodology

The study was based on a survey carried out among traders from markets located at the key entry points of the border shared between Burundi and Tanzania, and Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The assumption was that the entry points are channels through which the spread of COVID-19 is taking place, given that the government was neither imposing lockdowns nor making testing mandatory to travellers at the border posts.

A total of six (6) cross-border markets were considered in the study: Gatumba, Rumonge, Kayanza, Kobero, Ruhwa and Makamba. In each cross-border market, 30 people comprising of 15 males and 15 females were randomly sampled using a list of traders of local associations. A total of 75 traders and 75 consumers were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. This data collection instrument was programmed into the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) Scan forms installed in Android tablets. The data were sent to the CBMS Portal where they could be downloaded as a consolidated dataset.

The secondary data were collected from the leading official sources such as Ministry of Trade and Industry, Burundian Revenue Office (OBR), Importers' Associations, Exporters' Associations, Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi (ISTEEBU), Traders' Associations, various market commissioners, Burundian Association of Consumers (ABUCO), Central Bank of Burundi (BRB), individual consumers, civil aviation authority, traders in the cross-border markets, carriers' associations, tourist offices and Ministry of Transport. However, given the availability of data on COVID-19 on the WHO website, we tracked the evolution of the confirmed cases on WHO dashboard.

The analysis of the data used descriptive statistics to understand the trend and effects of the pandemic on transport, health and trade. A comparative analysis based on selected variables was done to assess the effect of COVID-19 on the selected sub-sectors of the economy. Being descriptive and baseline, the study attempts to give a glimpse of the evolution of the pandemic since the outbreak, so that later on this paper may serve as a background for a cause-effect analysis.

Review of literature related to the crisis

The coronavirus pandemic has put pressure on economic and financial models built on the complex global interdependencies of trade and finance. The socio-economic

challenges brought by the COVID-19 remind us what Bell and Kristoll (1981) called the ‘crisis in economic theory’. The economists attempted to analyse the financial shock and specifically the transmission channels through which spillover effects impact on a partner country. In such way, the focus was on the contagion defined by the World Bank as the cross-country transmission shock, much understood in the realm of international mechanisms of contagion (trade, capital flows, financial institutions, and health and transport economics).

The economic literature on pandemic outbreak and other calamity stresses on the causes of global market volatility and the ripple effects on the other non-economic sectors. The efforts made were to elaborate the strategies for curbing the crisis and mitigating the susceptibility of cross-border shocks.

While pandemic diseases such as COVID-19 distort markets and macroeconomic stability, other literature looked at the crisis in the lenses of the socio-economic disturbances created by COVID-19. The socio-economy contributes to define strategies based on resilience and business models that are more equipped to resist shocks.

During this crisis, the socio-economic organization (private and public organizations) reported to have lost cash flows, a drop in revenue and disruption in personnel management (ILO, 2020 and Ernst and Young (2020). The imbalance between supply and demand that governs the modern economy is well explained and understood in the realm of socio-economy.

In fact, the COVID-19 crisis is affecting both demand and supply. The outcome is therefore quite unpredictable, particularly regarding future levels of prices. Theoretically, a drop in demand leads to lower prices but a drop in supply leads to higher prices. Therefore, one cannot predict whether there will be inflation, deflation, or prices will remain stable. This makes the distinction between the short and long-term even more difficult. The last antecedent is the Spanish flu (1918-1920), which goes back more than a century and which had different health conditions.

The theory of socio-economy has played a great role in addressing and mitigating the short-term and long-term impacts of COVID-19 crisis in the economy and society (OECD, 2020). In this study, the authors thrive to investigate the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 in Burundi. Furthermore, the desk study based on the macroeconomic data collection relies heavily on macroeconomic and financial theories that explain the effects of the shocks caused by the exogenous factor, such as COVID-19.

Trend and volatility of trade volumes

Overview of the effects of COVID-19 on the global economy

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s June 2020 forecast, the world economy would decline by 4.9% in 2020 against a growth of 2.9% in 2019 as a result of disruption of economic activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the same projections, economic activity was expected to contract in Sub-Saharan Africa

by 3.2% in 2020 compared to a growth of 3.1% in 2019. The effects of COVID-19 could lead to a sharp decline in the revenues of the main commodity exporting countries such as Nigeria and South Africa. Similarly, EAC's economic activity could decline in 2020 by 1% compared to 5.7% growth in 2019. However, the region is expected to remain resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and cover 0.9 months compared to 0.7 months of imports of goods and services in the same period of the previous year. The banking sector remained adequately capitalized and profitable following the positive effects of lower oil prices, significant investments in infrastructure, and improved agricultural production in some countries.

In Burundi, production of dry tea increased while that of green coffee decreased in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter of 2019. After a long period of deflation, inflation increased in the first quarter of 2020 due to the rise in food prices. In the first quarter of 2020, the balance of payments showed a higher financing requirement (current and capital account) than in the same quarter of 2019, resulting from the widening current account deficit. The budget deficit (including grants) narrowed in line with the increase in revenue and the decrease in expenditure.

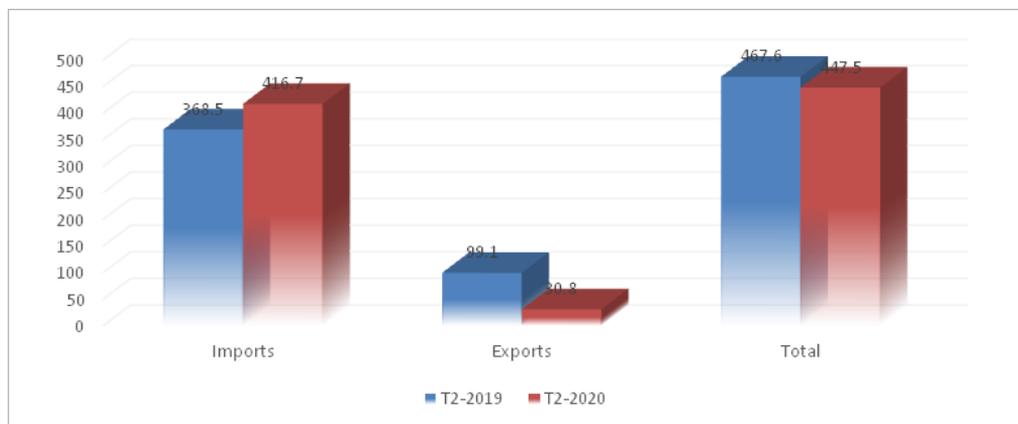
According to BRB (2020), this deficit was financed by net domestic and external debt. Year-on-year, the monetary base grew by 6.1% in line with the increase in net domestic assets. Similarly, money supply increased by 17.2% because of an increase in net domestic assets. Official reserves increased slightly, and all regulatory and prudential standards were met. All the main indicators of financial soundness improved.

Evolution and trends in trade in Burundi

This section focuses on the analysis of imports and exports during the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. Figure 1 depicts the imports and exports in the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020. From the figure, one can note that there was a decline in trade by comparing values of exports and imports in the two quarters. The decline is a result of drop in imports of rice, cement and petroleum products and reduction in exports of gold and coffee.

Exports have decreased from 99.1 billion BIF in the second quarter of 2019 to 30.8 billion BIF in the second quarter of 2020 due to COVID-19, translating to a decline of 68.92%. Imports increased from 368.5 billion BIF in the second quarter in 2019 to 416.7 billion BIF, translating to a growth of 13.08%. This increase can be attributed to lack of foreign currency and the effect of inflation. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, this trend is expected to persist if there is no resumption of exports of gold and coffee. This situation is exacerbated by the currency shortage that is observed in the country (ISTEEBU, 2020).

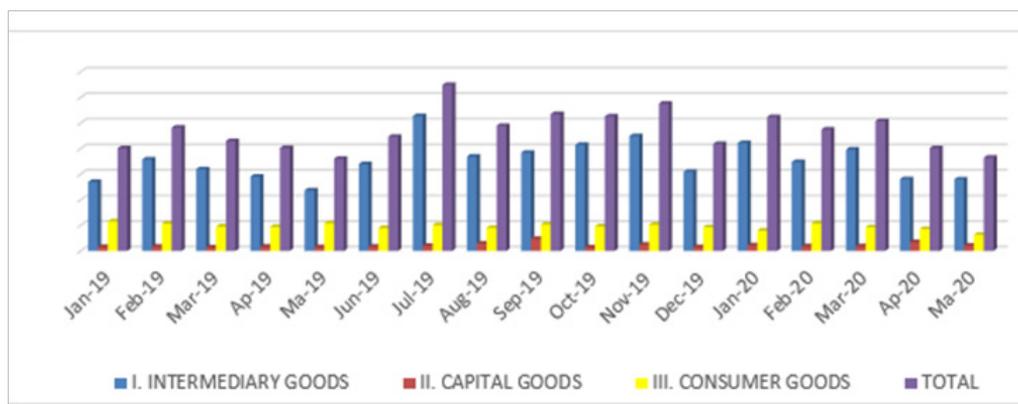
Figure 1: Comparisons of imports and exports, quarter II (2019 and 2020) (in billions of BIF)



Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

In terms of trade volume, Figure 2 shows that the period of COVID-19 outbreak (from February 2020 to March 2020) presents mixed results. The volume of consumer goods declines slightly while other types of goods (capital and intermediate goods) have an increasing trend.

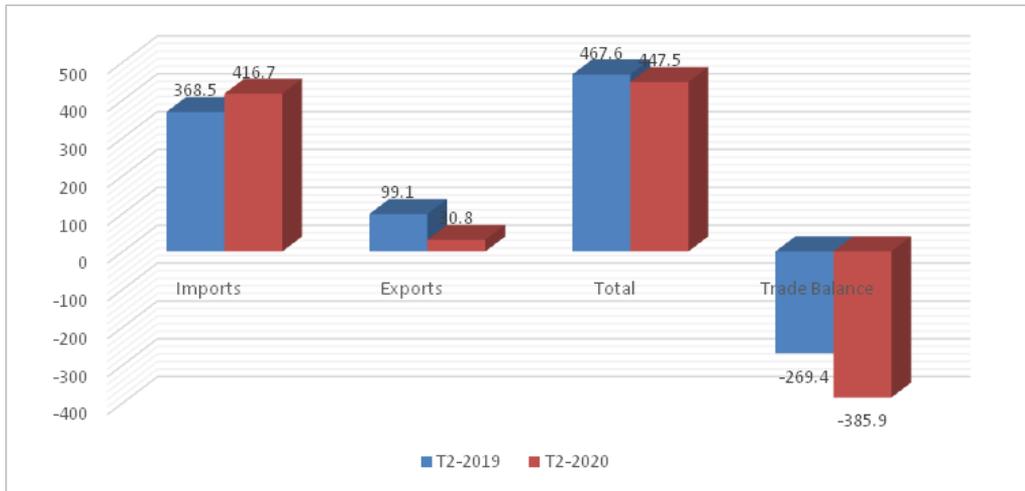
Figure 2: Imports by trade structure (in tonnes)



Source: BRB (2020) The imported consumed goods, including oil and medical supplies, receive a priority to enter in the country because they are essential goods during the pandemic crisis. Much of the oil enter the country by road, while a large part of medical utilities reach the country by air.

In terms of trade balance, the deficit for the quarter under review as shown in Figure 3 amounted to BIF 385.9 billion in 2020 compared to BIF 269.4 billion in the same quarter of 2019, implying a decline of 43.3%.

Figure 3: Trade balance (in billions of BIF)

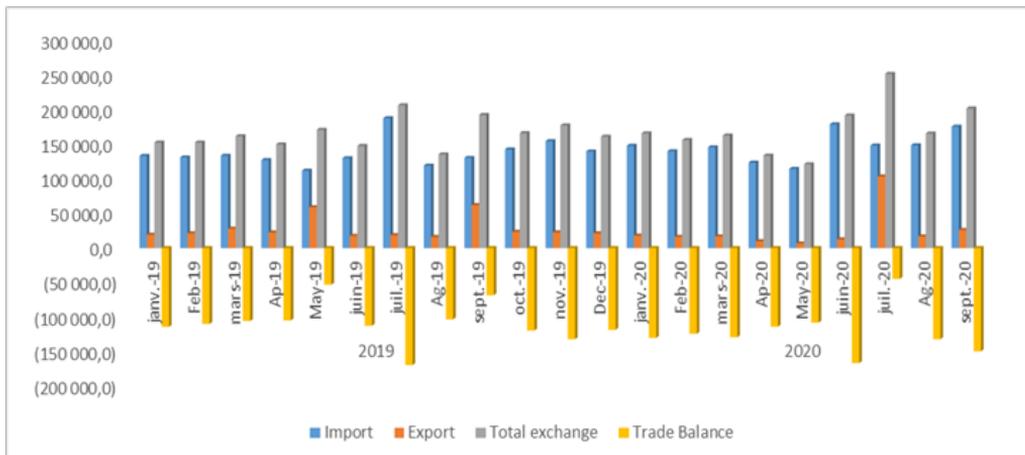


Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

The trade balance deficit for the quarter under review amounted to BIF 385.9 billion in 2020 compared to BIF 269.4 billion in the same quarter of 2019, implying a decline of 43.3%. This deterioration in exports can largely be attributed to decline in coffee and gold exports recorded during the second financial quarter of 2020. COVID-19 has led to the closure of borders, and confinement and restrictions on free movement in importing countries.

If we consider the monthly trade balance from January 2019 to September 2020 as shown in Figure 4, trade balance experienced strong variations, especially downward when comparing the first quarter of 2019 with the first quarter of 2020, and especially for products coming from abroad. This situation has worsened since the announcement of the pandemic in Wuhan, China in December and has spread to several countries, causing the closure of many current activities.

Figure 4: Monthly trade balance (in billions of BIF)



Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

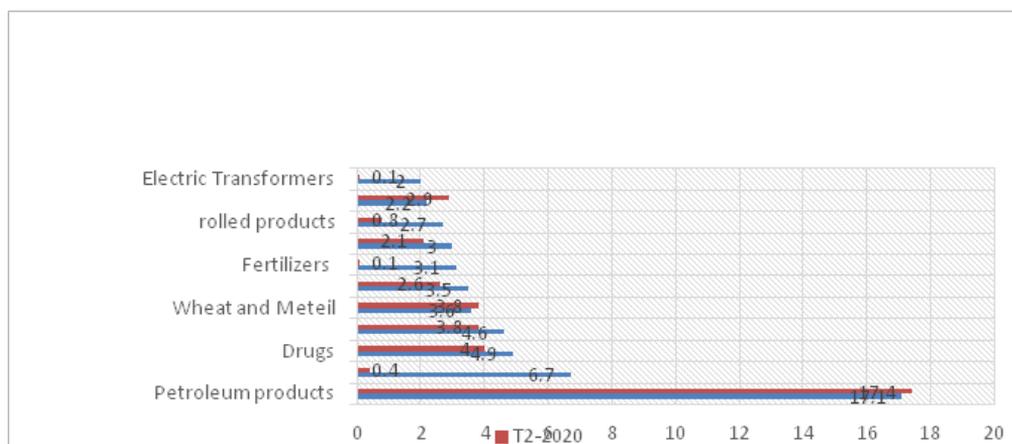
Imports

During the fourth of 2020 financial quarter under analysis , the value of imports is estimated at 416.8 billion BIF compared to 368.5 billion BIF during the same period in 2019, translating to an increase of 13.08%. However, imports are estimated at 433.00 billion BIF in the first quarter of 2020, meaning a decrease of 3.8% from the first quarter to the second quarter.

The main imported products in Burundi

The main imports in the second quarter of 2020 computed from total imports are, among others, petroleum products (17.1%), generators (6.7%), medicines (4.9%), passenger cars (4.6%), wheat (3.6%), cement (3.5%) as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Share of main imported products (in %),

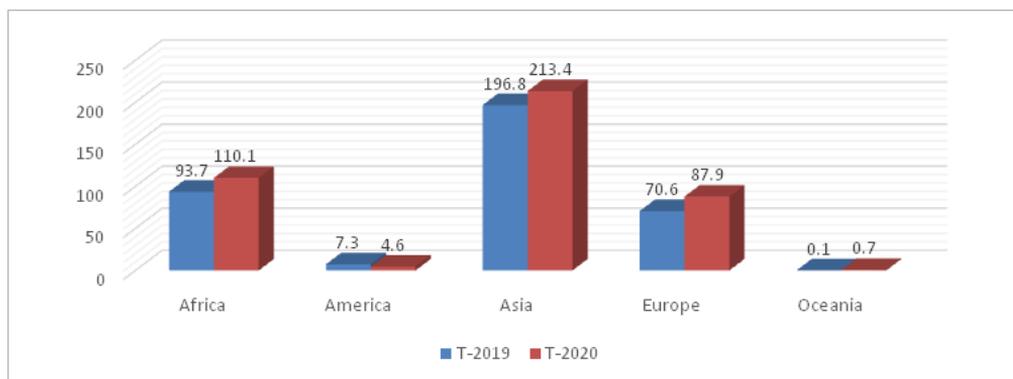


Source: ISTEEBU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, 2020 Second Quarter 2020

There has been a change in imports starting with generators, which increased by 6.3%, and drugs increasing from 4.0% to 4.9%. Broadly speaking, the products that experienced a decline in the second quarter of 2020 are only petroleum products and vehicles for transport. This decline in the import of petroleum products is the consequence of COVID-19 restrictions, which led to a drop in mobility of people and slowdown in industrial activities.

Burundi imports by continent

The value of Burundi imports from each continent is indicated in Figure 6. Imports by continent in the second quarter of 2020 are largely dominated by products from Asia.

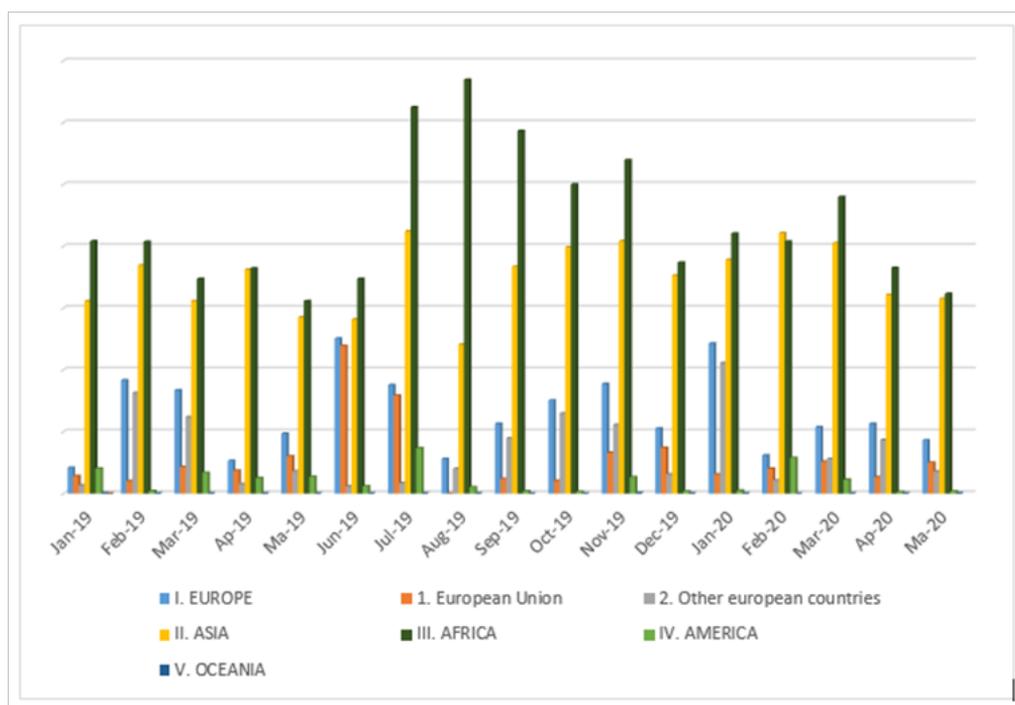
Figure 6: Quarterly imports by continent (in billions of BIF)

Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

A similar situation is observed in the second quarter of 2019. Out of the total value of imports of 416.8 billion BIF in the second quarter of 2020, goods worth 213.4 billion BIF were imported from Asia; that is, a share of 51.21% of the total value. The main goods imported from Asia are petroleum products, medicines, rolled products, passenger cars and cellular phones. The share of other continents such as Africa, Europe and America is 26.42%, 21.09% and 1.11%, respectively. From Figure 6, one can note that there was no change in the origin of the products imported by Burundi. The value of imports from all continents increased during this COVID-19 period, except for products from America, which decreased from a value of 7.3 billion BIF of imports to 4.6 billion BIF, representing a drop of 40%.

The increase in import values is explained by many factors such as inflation, transport costs and other factors noted earlier. In relation to the monthly analysis of the origin of imports in Burundi, as shown in Figure 7, Asia has been the main country of origin of imported products both before the pandemic and during the pandemic; only downward fluctuations have been experienced since the first quarter of 2019 with that of 2020.

The changes observed in Figure 8 give mixed results. During the outbreak, the entry point with Tanzania was opened but with some stringent measures made to limit the spread of COVID-19. Even with those preventive measures, we find a slight difference before and after COVID-19 outbreak, specifically on the imports originating from Europe.

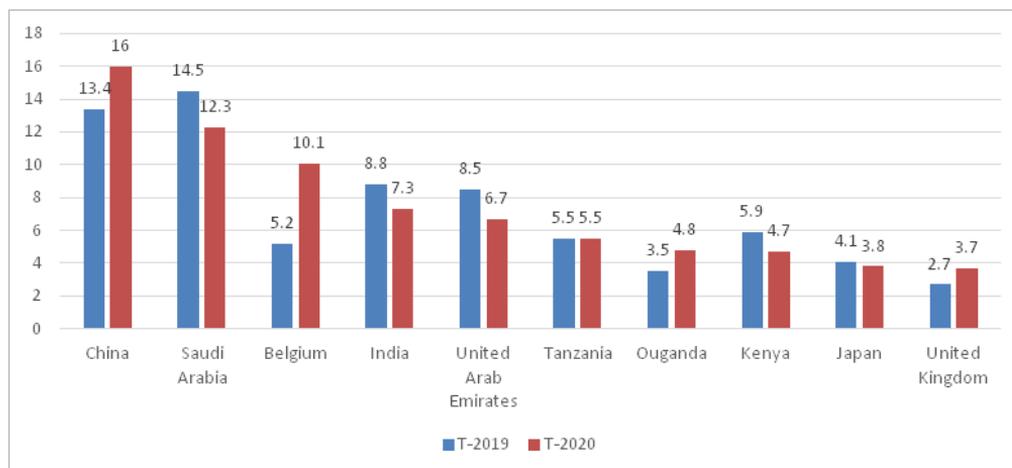
Figure 7: Monthly imports by origin (in billions of BIF)

Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

Main import countries

The shares of the main importing countries are indicated in Figure 8. Burundi's main import countries during the second quarter of 2020 are China (16.0%), Saudi Arabia (12.3%), Belgium (10.1%), India (7.3%), United Arab Emirates (6.7%), Tanzania (5.5%), Uganda (4.8%), Kenya (4.7%), Japan (3.8%), and United Kingdom (3.7%) of total imports. The figure shows an increase in products from China from 13.4% to 16.0%, Belgium from 5.2% to 10.1% and Uganda from 3.5% to 4.8% in the second quarter 2019 and second quarter of 2020, respectively.

Figure 8: Shares of the main importing countries (in %)



Source: ISTEEBU, Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

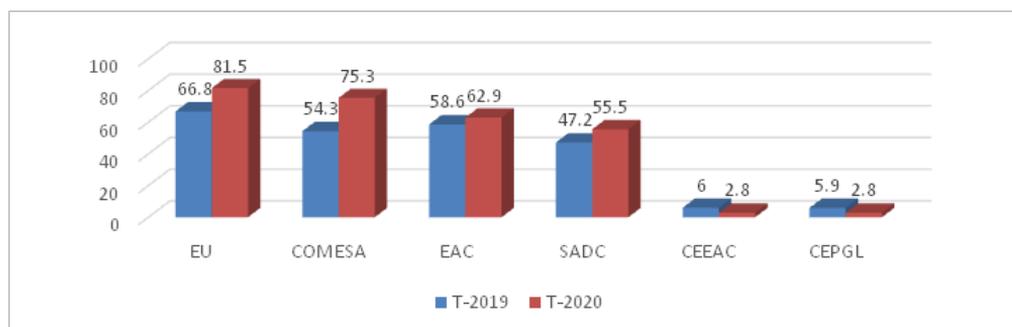
However, products from Tanzania did not change because it is the only country that had not closed its borders with Burundi and it is the main import corridor for Burundi. At the points of entry of goods on the borders, the drivers are not concerned by the isolation of two weeks reserved for other passengers from Tanzania; the drivers spend a few hours on the border waiting for customs formalities only, and the taking of temperature before continuing to Bujumbura while passengers spend two weeks of isolation in various hotels in the vicinity.

There was no cross-border trade and therefore no imports from the DRC due to border closure. The hope with the border provinces of the DRC is the upcoming reopening of land posts because the Melchior Ndadaye International Airport restarted activities since November 2020.

Imports by economic zone

The value of goods from the different economic zones is 81.5 billion BIF, 75.3 billion BIF, 62.9 billion BIF, 55.5 billion BIF, 2.8 billion BIF and 2.8 billion BIF, respectively, for the EU, COMESA, EAC, SADC, CEEAC and CEPGL as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Quarterly imports by economic zone (in billions BIF)



Looking at this figure, and compared to the same quarter of 2019, there is a decrease in imports from CEEAC and CEPGL while those from other economic zones show an increase. The increase in imports from the EU is driven by the share of basic food products from Belgium, the United Kingdom, Denmark, France and Germany. Nevertheless, it should be noted that some countries belong to more than one economic zone.

Furthermore, the borders of Ruhwa in the North-West of Burundi and of Kanyaru with Rwanda were closed. In these two borders visited, there is no more cross-border trade with DRC and Rwanda.

Exports

Exports (domestic and re-exports) for the quarter under analysis are characterized by a strong decrease compared to the same period of the previous year. Indeed, total exports in the second quarter of 2020 amounted to 30.8 billion BIF against 99.1 billion BIF in the same quarter of 2019. The decrease in exports is about 40% compared to the first quarter of 2020.

This is generally attributed to decline in coffee and gold exports observed in the second quarter of 2020. This drop illustrates the negative effect of COVID-19 on international trade.

Main products exported

Exports of domestic products in the second quarter of 2020 are valued at 27.8 billion BIF and are mainly dominated by tea (10.6 billion BIF), wheat flour (3.4 billion BIF), cigarettes (2.5 billion BIF) and coffee (2.0 billion BIF) as shown in Figure 10.

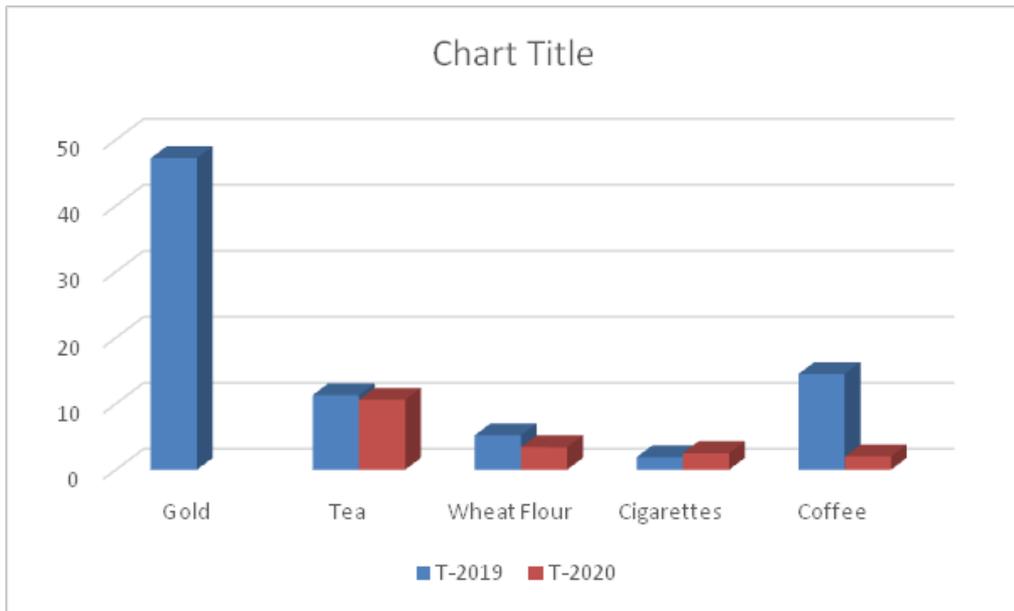
The blue bar shows the situation before the government announced the pandemic (second quarter of 2019), which we compare with the second quarter of 2020 when the government announced the pandemic in the country.

Compared to the same quarter of 2019, exports of domestic products in the second quarter of 2020 show a significant decline of 69.5%. This was due to decline in exports of coffee, tea and the total absence of gold exports. In nominal terms, they amounted to 27.8 billion BIF in the second quarter of 2020 compared to 90.9 billion BIF in the same period in 2019. This is due to the closure of borders, confinement and restrictions on free movement in the importing countries due to COVID-19.

In terms of the type of monthly exports in our analysis period from January 2019 to December 2020 as shown in Figure 11, the main products exported are types of manufactured goods such as gold, coffee, tea, etc.

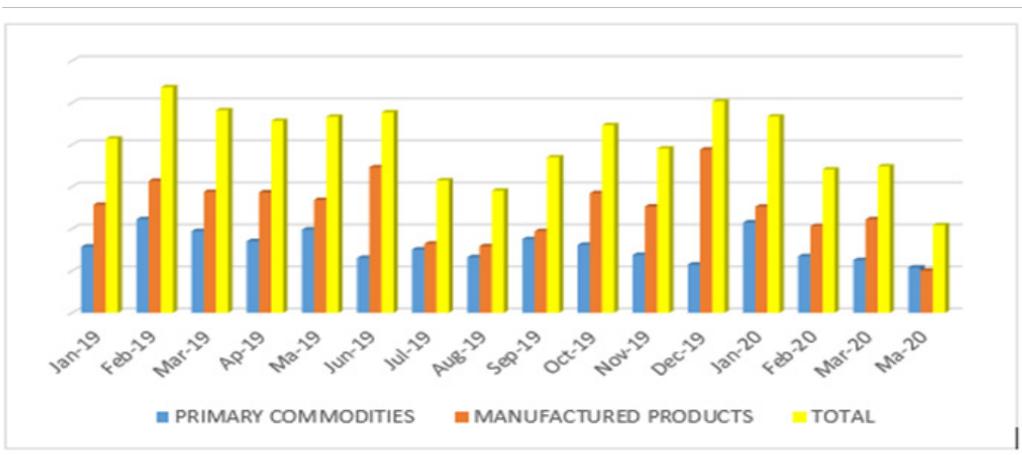
Exports of these products and those of primary products have experienced declining trends since the announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic at the global level due to the fact that the country has lacked importers for his products due to the lockdowns observed in some of the trade partners of Burundi.

Figure 10: Exports of main products (in billions BIF)



Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

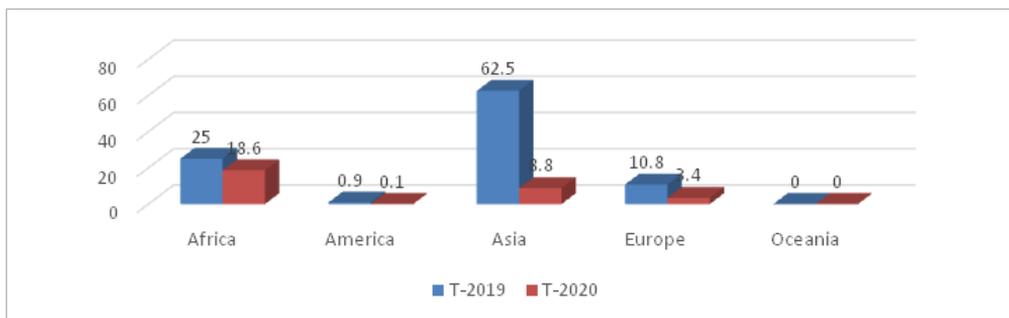
Figure 11: Monthly main product exports



Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

Exports by continent

The country's exports during the quarter under review amounted to 30.8 billion BIF and are mainly destined for Asia (60.5%), Africa (28.5%), Europe (10.9%) and the rest 0.2% of total exports as illustrated in Figure 12.

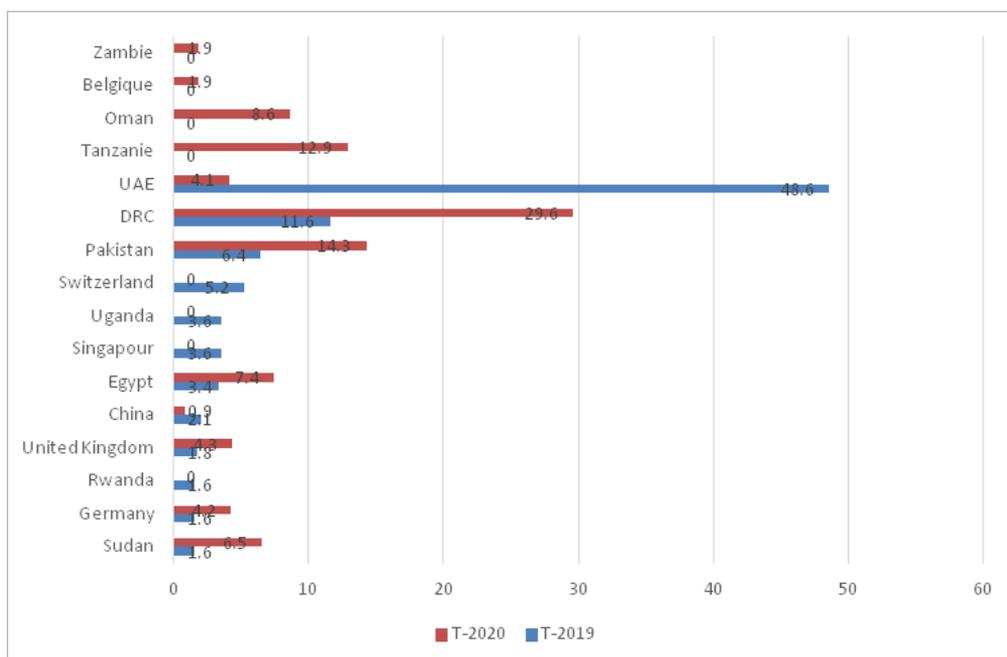
Figure 12: Quarterly exports by continent (in %)

Source: ISTEEBU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

Compared to the same quarter of 2019, the country's exports to Asia fell by 86.0% from BIF 62.5 billion to BIF 8.8 billion. Burundi's exports to Africa fell by 25.5% while products to Europe and America fell by 68.8% and 93.6%, respectively. The figure shows that Burundi has experienced a dramatic decline in these exports to all destinations. This is the consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic that has shaken the world since the first wave in December 2019.

Main export countries

Analysis of export data shows that the Democratic Republic of Congo is the main export destination with 29.6% of total exports in the second quarter of 2020 as illustrated in Figure 13 below.

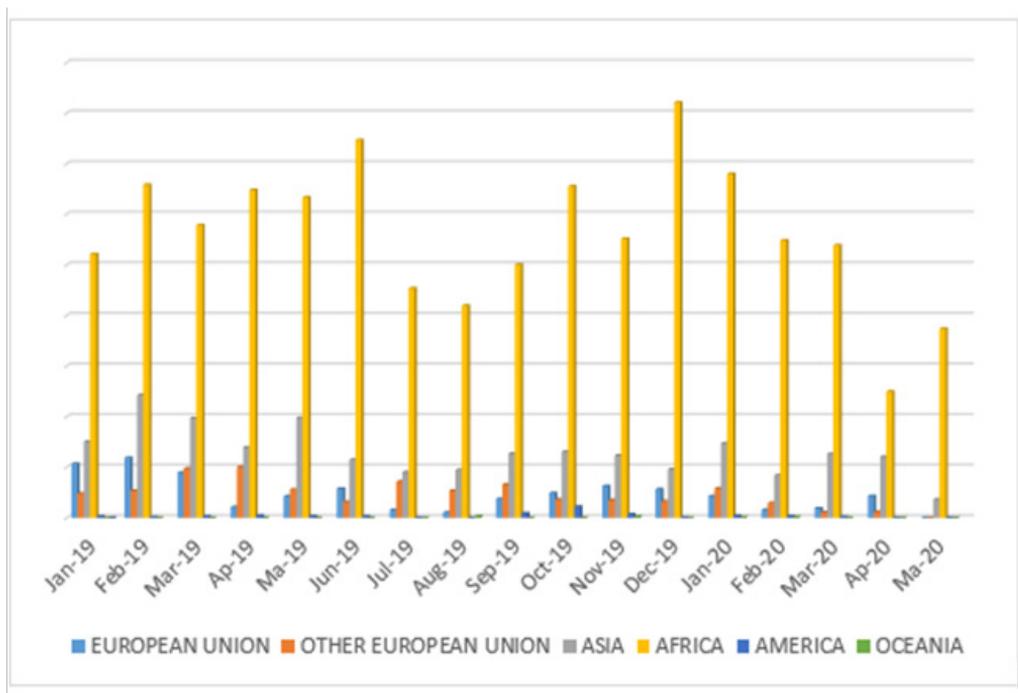
Figure 13: Main export countries (in %)

Source: ISTEEBU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

Looking at this figure, the other countries that stand out in terms of exports during the period under analysis are Pakistan (14.3%), Tanzania (12.9%), Oman (8.6%) and Egypt (7.4%). During the corresponding period of 2019, the main export destination was the United Arab Emirates (48.6%) followed by DRC (11.6%), Pakistan (6.4%), Switzerland (5.2%) and Uganda (3.6%). This is justified by the fact that these countries did not impose total confinement but some restrictions.

Regarding the monthly analysis of the main destination of exports during the analysis period from January 2019 to December 2020, the figure below shows that Africa has been the main destination for exported products, followed by America mainly for the export of manufactured products such as coffee and tea.

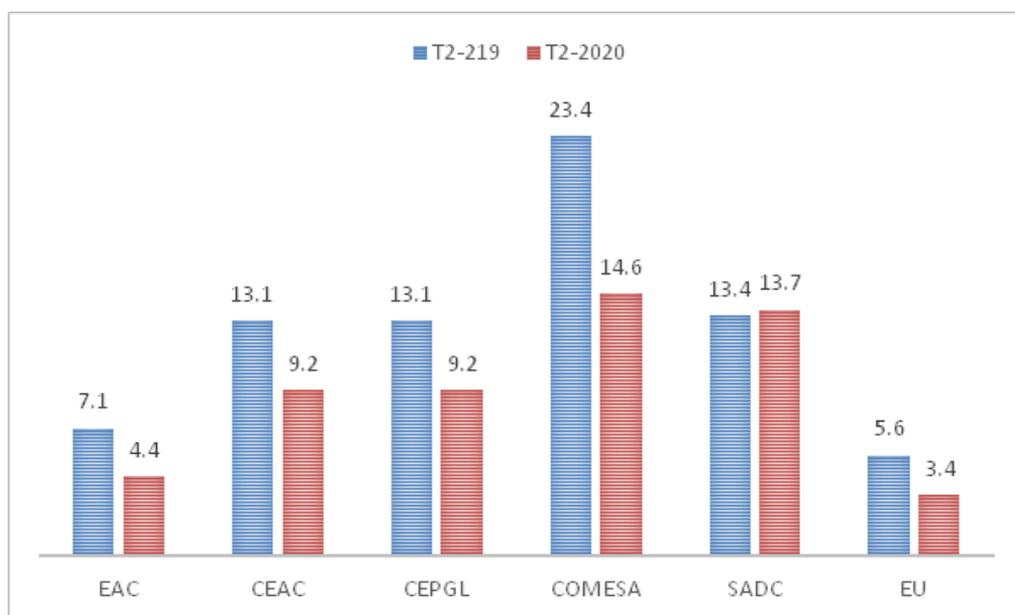
Figure 14: Monthly main export countries (in %)



Source: ISTEERU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

Exports by economic zone

Analysis of foreign trade data shows that COMESA is the largest recipient of Burundian exports (US\$ 14.6 billion). SADC is the second largest recipient of Burundian products (US\$ 13.7 billion) and in third place are CEEAC and CEPGL (US\$ 9.2 billion) as illustrated in Figure 15 below.

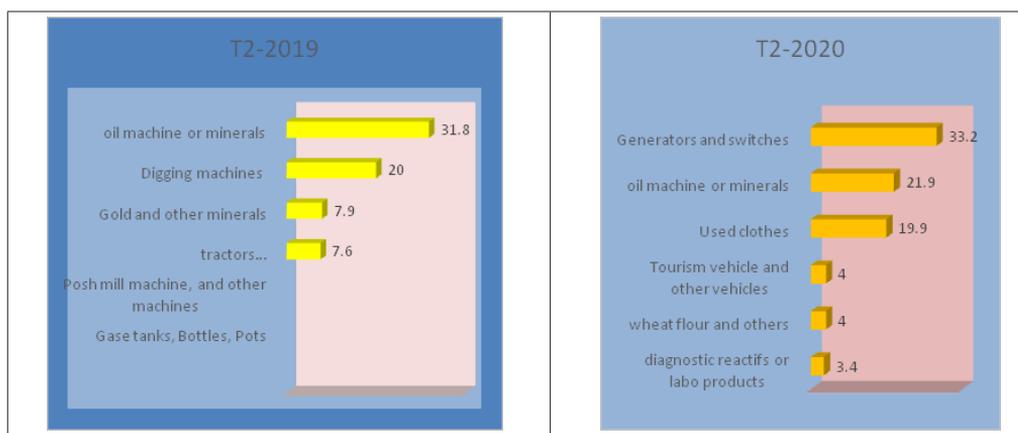
Figure 15: Quarterly exports by economic zones (in US\$ billions)

Source: ISTEEDU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

The EAC is the fourth largest recipient of Burundian exports with a value of US\$ 4.4 billion and the EU US\$ 3.4 billion in 2020 against US\$ 5.6 billion in 2019. What is visible is that COVID-19 has a negative effect on Burundi's exports in value and volume, but there is no remarkable change in the destination of Burundian exports because of COVID-19. It should also be noted that some countries belong to more than one economic zone.

Re-exports

Re-exports during the period under review were dominated by generators (1.1 billion BIF), petroleum oils (0.7 billion BIF), second-hand goods (0.6 billion BIF), tourist vehicles (0.1 billion BIF), wheat flour (0.1 billion BIF) and diagnostic or laboratory reagents (0.1 billion BIF).

Figure 16: Main re-exports (in %)

Source: ISTEEBU (2020), Foreign Trade Bulletin, Second Quarter 2020

These products account for 88.5% of total re-exports. Compared to the same period in 2019, the value of re-exports in the second quarter of 2020 decreased by 62.3% from 8.2 billion BIF to 3.1 billion BIF. Because of the pandemic, re-exports in the second quarter of 2019 are not the same as in the second quarter of 2020. The share of second quarter 2020 re-exports of generators is 33.2% whereas in 2019 they were insignificant. Other products include second-hand goods (19.9%), wheat flour (4.0%), cars (4.0%) and laboratory reagents that were not re-exported in 2019 but are re-exported in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has led Burundi to re-export new products.

Changes in commodity prices

Burundi's commodity prices vary according to region. The study findings indicate that some commodity prices have changed while other prices have remained constant. Table 1 shows the products whose prices changed and those products whose prices remained constant.

Table 1: Commodities and price changes

	Price in increase	Constant Prices	Price in decrease
Products	Chips; spaghetti; imported wheat and white rice Golden cottonseed oil, olive oil, local carrot, sugar	Local sweet potato; banana, Cassava flour Cooking salt, Local soy flour, Local sweet potato.	Imported white corn; local shelled peanuts; local red onions, red onions.

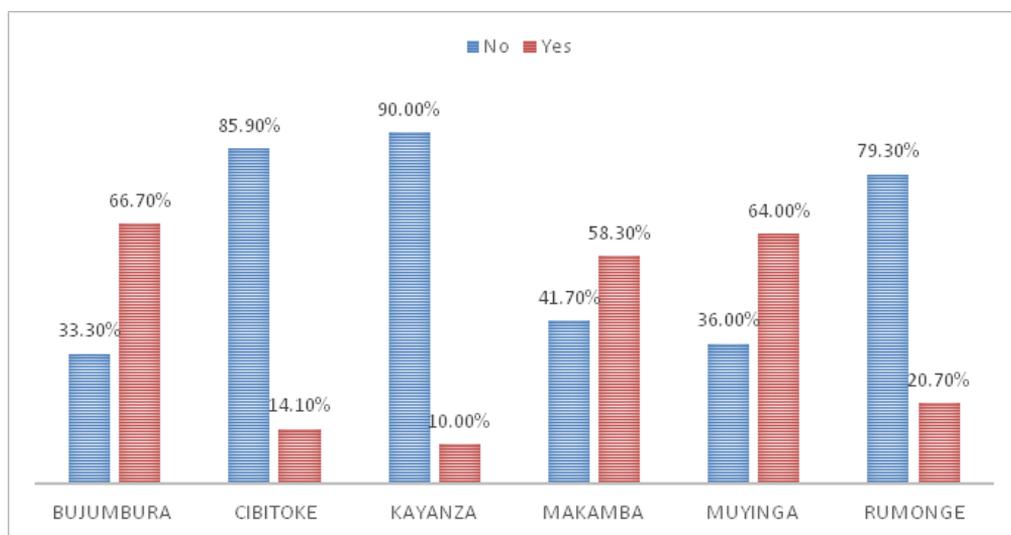
Source: Authors' Survey results, 2020

The products whose prices have increased are mainly imported products. The prices for locally produced products did not change frequently because these local products do not have foreign demand. The products showing declining prices are mainly seasonal, perishable and those products that are about to expire.

Product prices increased on average by 30.3% while price decreases were 11.9%, on average. This trend was observed in the province of Rumonge where the demand for commodities is made by people coming from the DRC through the port of Rumonge. The main products affected are milk and locally produced rice, among others. The respondents interviewed in the neighbouring provinces have problems in getting the commodities they need from neighbouring provinces in countries of Rwanda and the DRC.

As shown in Figure 17, the most affected province is Kayanza where 90% of the population and traders interviewed told us that they lack products because of the closure of the border between Rwanda and Burundi. However, it should be noted that the closure began before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 17: Consumers and traders surveyed in border provinces that have not imported products



Source: Authors' survey, 2020

As shown in Figure 17, the other province most affected is the province of Cibitoke, northwestern Burundi, bordering Rwanda and the DRC where 85.9% claim that they lack products because of COVID-19 in the case of the DRC, and diplomatic and security reasons in the case of Rwanda. The province of Rumonge no longer receives people from the DRC, but receives some traders from Tanzania; at least one boat arrives at the port of Bande once a week whereas before COVID-19, the port used to receive at least twenty boats loaded with goods and passengers.

For the province of Muyinga, the frequency of trucks has not changed, but the number of travellers and passengers has dropped by over 95%. For the province of Makamba, at the border post of Mugina, there is no cargo of goods but there is traffic of traders sailing from the other border even though the frequency is decreasing.

According to the respondents, they lack products because of high product prices caused by inflation (36.5%), lack of accessibility of border markets (23.5%) and other reasons such as lack of liquidity (40%). The lack of these products causes the price of these products to rise as mentioned above. The variation in prices as mentioned above is around 30% for imported products, which is detrimental to the welfare of households.

2. Analysis of the effects of COVID-19 on international transport in Burundi

Analysis of the flow of passengers and goods according to the different modes of transport

Several cross-border challenges arose for the transport and logistics sector (WTO, 2020b). These challenges resulted in significant new costs borne by transporters (importers and exporters) in East Africa, with a doubling of the time required to transport goods within the region. An analysis by the East African Carriers Council (EACC) reported that it took, on average, up to four days for a round trip to Mombasa (Kenya)-Kampala (Uganda) before COVID-19 restrictions were imposed but with the restrictions in place, it takes 7-9 days. For Kigali (Rwanda)-Mombasa (Kenya), it now takes 14 to 16 days up from 7 to 8 days previously. For Southern Sudan, it now takes 21 to 26 days up from 9 to 10 days. The study findings also indicate an increase in storage costs as companies seek to increase stocks in response to stock-outs at the beginning of the crisis.

From the survey carried out in Bujumbura, the main transport agencies gave crucial information on how COVID-19 affected their transport services (Table 2).

Table 2: Variation in the value of goods on different modes of transport (first quarter 2019 and first quarter 2020, in BIF)

	Total First Quarter 2019	Total First Quarter 2020	Difference (Change 2019 to 2020)	Percentage Change
Bujumbura Airport	79,460,734,700	21,125,782,656	-58,334,952,044	-73.41
Bolloré Logistics	93,462,545,922	49,769,312,323	-43,693,233,599	-46.75
AMFP (Maritime Rail and Port Authority)	136,738,403,823	61,679,552,894	-75,058,850,929	-54.89
Volcano Transport	2,127,464,255	341,000,048	-1,786,464,207	-83.97
Memento Transport	2,189,128,528	331,938,524	-1,857,190,004	-84.84

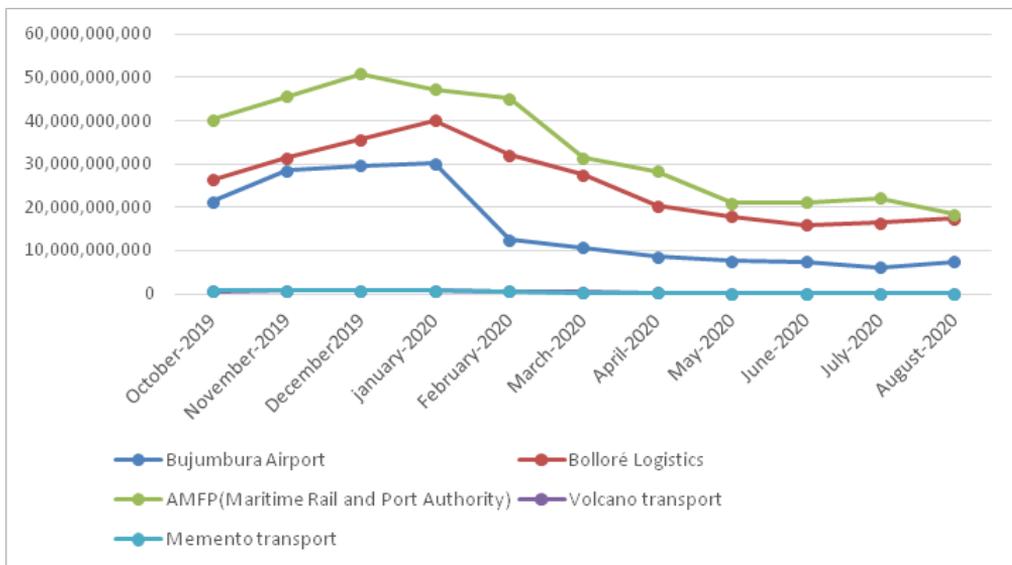
Source: Authors' survey, 2020

The period of analysis of the effect of corona virus on international transport of goods was based on the comparison of the first quarter of 2019 (June-July-August); that is the period the corona virus pandemic had not yet been declared, with the first quarter of 2020 (June-July-August); that is the period after the Government of Burundi reported cases of COVID-19 in the country.

From Table 2, one can note that the main mode of international transport of goods in Burundi is air transport; the study surveyed Melchior Ndadaye International Airport. The second mode is maritime transport under which two categories were surveyed: the public sector represented by the Maritime Rail and Port Authority (AMFP), and the private sector represented by Bolloré Logistics. The third mode is land transport represented by Volcano Transport, and Memento Transport.

The results indicate that there is a very considerable drop in the value of goods that pass through these different modes of transport. For example, there was a 73.41% drop in the value of goods passing through Melchior Ndadaye International Airport. The percentage drop in the value passing through the other channels are: Bolloré Logistics (46.75%), AMFP (54.89%), Volcano Transport (83.97%) and Memento Transport (84.84%). In terms of the effect of the pandemic on transport of goods in Burundi, the value of goods transiting through the various modes of transport has decreased since the beginning of the crisis as noted earlier and illustrated in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Trend in value of goods per mode of transport (first quarter 2019 to first quarter 2020)



Source: Authors' survey, 2020

The trade implications of the COVID-19 crisis may be far more complex than anticipated. It can be seen from Figure 18 that from the beginning of the crisis until the end of the first quarter of 2020, the value of goods passing through the above mentioned transport modes dropped.

Table 3 indicates that the main mode of international passenger transport in Burundi is air transport. In addition to air transport, passengers also have the option of using land transport or water transport. However, information on water transport is very scanty in Burundi. According to information collected in the survey within

AMFP, the only data available is that relating to the crew members of the different ships transporting goods, since there are no official statistics of people who travel by boat in Burundi.

Table 3: Passenger flows and modes of transport (first quarter 2019 and first quarter 2020, in BIF)

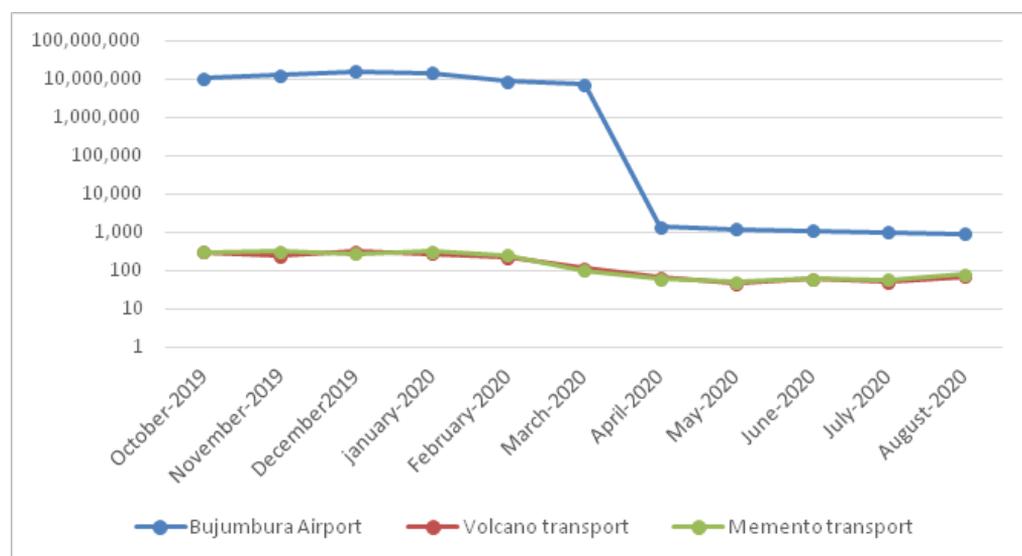
	Total First Quarter 2019	Total First Quarter 2020	Difference (Change 2019 to 2020)	Percentage Change
Bujumbura Airport	38,556,413	3,000	-38,553,413	99.99
Volcano Transport	856	182	-674	78.74
Memento Transport	882	198	-684	77.55

Source: Authors' survey, 2020

The results of the survey indicate that there was a very considerable drop in the number of passengers using the different modes of transport as shown in Table 3. The percentage drop in passengers travelling through Melchior Ndadaye International Airport, Volcano Transport and Memento Transport were 99.99%, 78.74% and 77.55%, respectively.

In terms of the effect of the pandemic on the flow of passengers in Burundi, the trend of the flow of passengers through the various modes of transport has decreased since the beginning of the crisis, as noted earlier and shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Trend in passenger flows per mode of transport (first quarter 2019 to first quarter 2020)



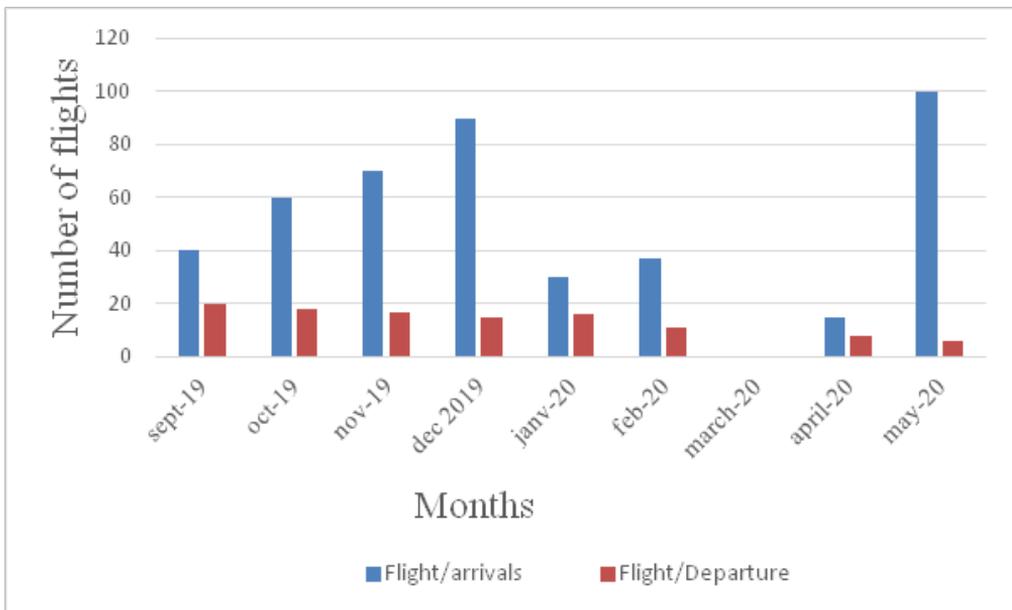
Source: Authors' survey, 2020

Thus, apart from the lake route (traditionally rarely used by passengers), which has maintained the status quo (Figure 19), the other two modes of transport, including international land transport represented by Volcano Transport and Memento Transport and air transport represented by Melchior Ndadaye International Airport have experienced significant reduction. A close look at Figure 19 reveals that from the beginning of the crisis up to the end of the first quarter of 2020, the flow of people using the various modes of transport has exhibited a downward trend.

Analysis of monthly freight at International Airport of Bujumbura

The incoming and outgoing goods using the airway are not the same during the analysis period, whether it is before the COVID pandemic in Burundi or during the pandemic period (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Flights during COVID 19 outbreak



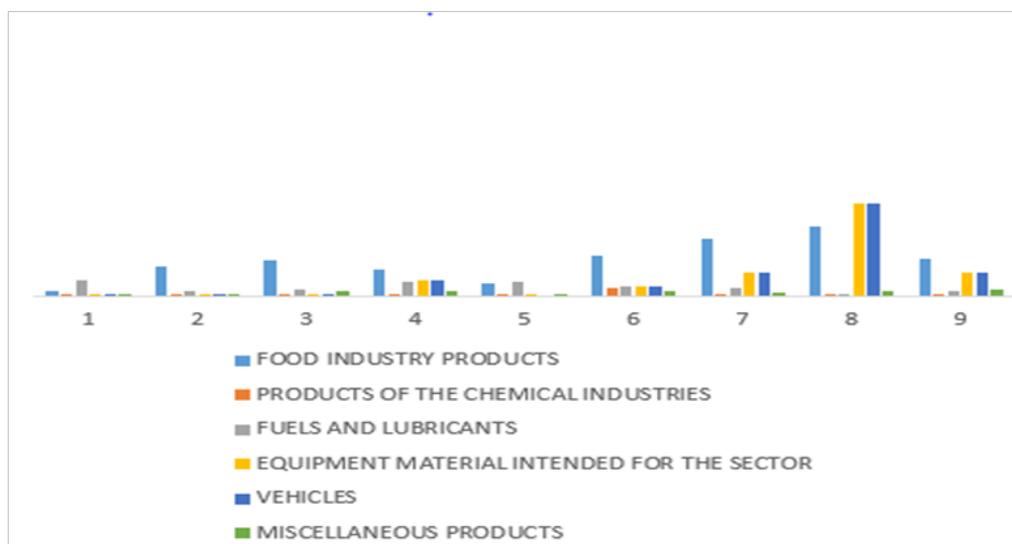
Source: Authors’ survey, 2020

As the imports of Burundi outweigh the exports before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in Burundi, there was increasing variations in goods entering Burundi until December 2019 when the pandemic began to spread to China. China is one of the main sources of imported goods for Burundi. However, a decline of imports from China was observed in March 2020, a month in which Burundi experienced the first positive COVID-19 test cases.

Analysis of monthly goods at Maritime Rail and Port Authority

The period of analysis is from September 2019 to May 2020, therefore 9 months in total, 4 months before the COVID pandemic and 5 months during the COVID-19 at the global level. The main incoming products using the seaway are: food industry products, products of the chemical industries, fuels and lubricants, equipment material intended for the sector, vehicles and miscellaneous products as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Disaggregated data of food and other products shipped in



Source: Data drawn from AMFP's 2020 report

For this figure, incoming goods vary much more prior to the pandemic than during the pandemic period, especially during the pandemic period. Burundi has been much busier importing food industry products than other products.

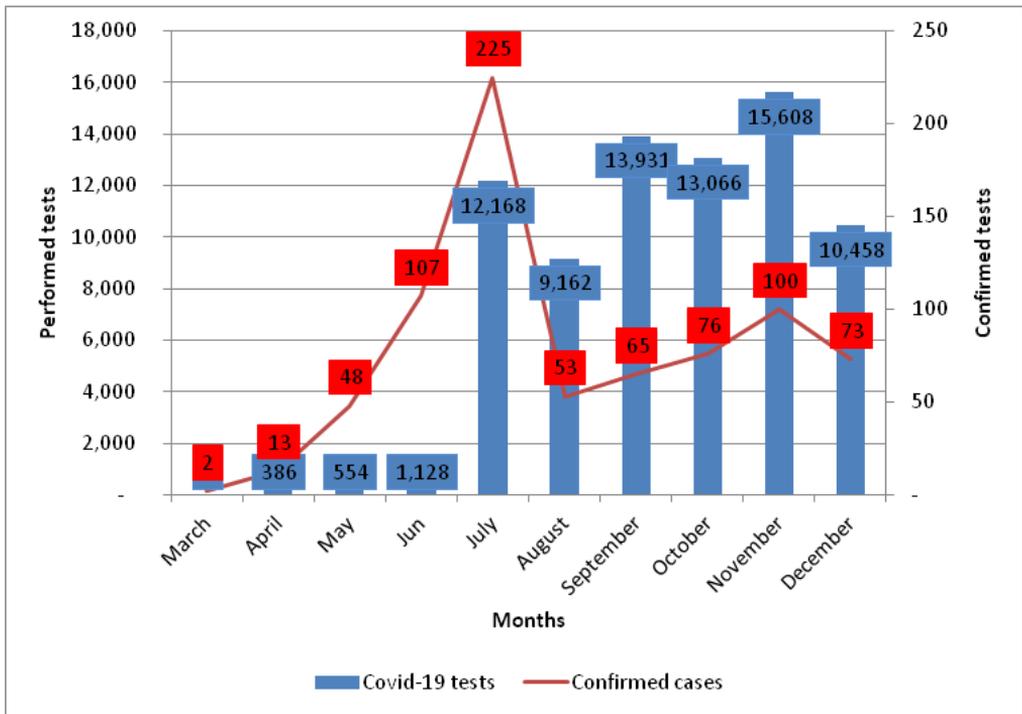
3. Effect of COVID-19 on health in Burundi

Like other countries, Burundi was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, regarded as the evil of the second decade of the twenty-first century. Together with its partners, Burundi has taken a series of measures to ameliorate the effects of the pandemic. The review of the effects of COVID-19 on the health sector in Burundi was done in different stages. First and foremost, we analysed the successive evolution of tests performed and confirmed cases, public health actions undertaken and mitigations aligned to counter the surge of the outbreak, the persistence of many challenges, and finally recommendations and monitoring key actions prioritized.

Evolution of tests performed and confirmed cases in Burundi

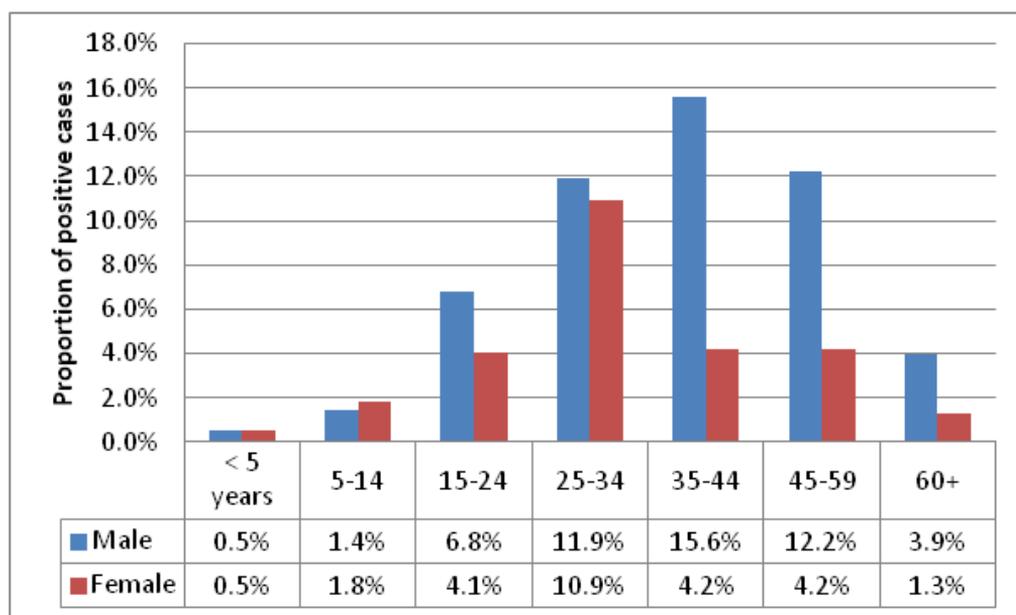
Burundi confirmed its first two positive cases of COVID-19 on 31st March 2020. Since then, the number of positive cases has continued to increase. With slightly above 1,000 cases in June 2020, the cases have increased more than tenfold in one month as shown in Figure 22. This exponential growth can be explained by a mass campaign (from 6th July 2020 to 5th October 2020) which, under the impetus of the President of the Republic and the Ministry of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS, made it possible to screen 38,445 people, including 324 people confirmed positive for coronavirus in 2020.

Figure 22: COVID-19 tests and confirmed, 2020



Source: Ministry of Health and Fight against HIV/AIDS (2020)

The rate of positive cases by age as shown in Figure 23 shows that the most affected age groups are: 25-34 years (23%); 35-44 years (20%) and 45-59 years (16%). Only 5% of the positive cases are aged 60 and over. The average age of confirmed cases is 37-40 years. Of all these confirmed cases, 11% are in the 15-24 age group. The sex ratio is 2; i.e. 2 infected men for 1 woman with a total of 52.49% of cases.

Figure 23: COVID-19 by age and gender, 2020

Source: Ministry of Health and Fight against HIV/AIDS (2020)

The weekly positive case rate has been consistently below 1% since August 2020. This low rate can be explained by the decline of the voluntary COVID-19 test cases in the designated places by the government. On average, the weekly testing rate since the beginning of the pandemic in Burundi is 2 per 10,000 inhabitants (per week); this is very low compared to the average threshold of at least 10 tests per week in the WHO African region. In addition, there has been a gradual decline in the screening rate. The overall screening rate estimated at 70 tests per 10,000 inhabitants remains low, with an average number of tests of about 290 per day since the beginning of the pandemic in Burundi (31st March 2020).

The spread rate is higher in the three districts of Bujumbura town, which concentrates almost all the positive cases reported by the country. It is also relatively high in the provinces bordering neighbouring countries because of free movement of affected people across the border, though the government has put in place some mitigating measures at every entry border post. These represent a significant proportion. Indeed, in the last four months of 2020 (1st September to 20th December 2020), 314 laboratory-confirmed positive cases have been reported in the country. The majority of these, 81.21% or 255 out of 314 cases are imported cases compared to 59 (18.79%) cases of local transmission. Since the beginning of the epidemic, among the positive cases (762), 280 cases are imported (36.75%) and 482 cases are local transmission (63.25%). Thus, there is an upward trend in the proportion of imported positive cases. This situation amply justifies the systematic testing and quarantine of people coming from abroad.

The monitoring of people tested has also attracted the attention of health officials. Since the beginning of the epidemic outbreak on 31st March 2020, a total of 4,898 tested have been identified and monitored; an average of 7 tested per COVID-19 positive case. Almost all the tested (89.30%, 4,374/4,898) came from Bujumbura where 67.98% of the confirmed COVID-19 positive cases live.

Burundian preventive and mitigation measures against COVID-19

Although the COVID-19 pandemic number for Burundi has remained low, the government and the Burundian population needs to remain alert because the pandemic is far from being defeated. Indeed, even the vaccines already being administered mainly in developed countries may be inaccessible to the Burundian population or, at best, will arrive late. Consequently, the Burundian government and its partners led by the World Health Organization (WHO) have taken a series of public health and response measures, as outlined below:

Coordination, planning and monitoring-evaluation:

- Daily joint WHO/SLMHS review of epidemiological and response data and preparation of a joint situation report.
- Official appointment by the Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control of the Director of the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre.

Epidemiological surveillance, rapid response teams and tested follow-up:

- From 21st to 24th December 2020, the organization of a supervision mission of 24 Rapid Intervention Teams (RITs) from districts in 11 health provinces of the country to assess the preparedness capacities and the quality of their interventions (investigation of alerts, secure transport to treatment centres, identification and follow-up of contacts).
- Keeping on carrying out a systematic screening of incoming and outgoing travellers at border entry points (Bujumbura International Airport, Kobero/Muyinga Land Entry Point and Mugina/Makamba border entry point).

Infection prevention and control:

- Continued disinfection of infectious outbreaks (homes, health facilities and Nile source hotel, quarantine sites) according to WHO recommendations.
- Continued supervision in quarantine sites with emphasis on compliance with Prevention and Control Infection (PCI) measures.

Case management:

- As of 21st December 2020, 62 confirmed active cases are still under medical treatment. All these positive cases are minor (minor symptoms and asymptomatic cases). The majority of these patients (58.06%; 36/62) are treated outside the hospital environment (home, hotel and military camp).

New country guidelines for screening after country public awareness campaigns on COVID 19

- The implementation of screening facilities at Melchior Ndadaye International airport for inbound travellers and at the Kobero Port of entry (Northeast of the country) for travellers crossing or entering by land.
- For all incoming travellers, screening is systematic and quarantine for at least 72 hours at a local hotel. Screening fees are US\$ 100 for non-citizens and US\$ 30 for citizens.
- For outgoing travellers requesting screening certificates for COVID-19, the only screening centre is the reference laboratory of the National Institute of Public Health for a fee of 10,000 Burundian Francs.
- Voluntary screening in district hospitals of the Province of Bujumbura town and in provincial hospitals in the up-country. This voluntary screening remains free of charge for all persons residing in Burundi.

Persistence of many challenges

Of the measures outlined above, significant challenges remain, including the following:

- Actively seeking out suspect cases for screening, contacts of confirmed and probable cases for appropriate follow-up.
- Availability of consolidated and complete data on cases (positive and probable) and contacts to have a real epidemiological situation of the country.
- Making available the hotline 117 in order to answer queries on COVID 19 and to respond quickly for emergencies.
- Intensification of communication to renew the population's interest in voluntary testing.
- Reinforcement of control and screening at the partially open land entry points and the Melchior Ndadaye International Airport, which was opened to commercial flights on 8th November 2020.
- Strengthening compliance with the barrier measures put in place by the government among the population in view of the observed slackening in the country.

- Availability of inputs to cover the country's needs: reagents, consumables and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Recommendations and key prioritized actions to be monitored

The issues mentioned above call for appropriate measures to be constantly adapted to the evolution of this pandemic, as highlighted below:

- Strengthening the coordination of the national response
- Accelerating the effective implementation of the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre
- Conduct formative supervision visits for district rapid response teams
- Integrate screening and management of COVID-19 into the package of activities of the country's health facilities
- Set up COVID-19 surveillance teams at the district and sub-district/hospital levels. This will also strengthen the identification and follow-up of contacts in the field
- Reinforce information and awareness actions of the population on preventive measures, in particular the effective implementation of barrier measures
- Build capacity in human resources and screening kits (PPE kits, laboratory reagents and medical products)
- Establish a consolidated and complete database of positive, probable cases and contacts
- Strengthen cross-border surveillance
- Organize the intra-action review of the response to COVID-19

In conclusion, the aim was to gauge the capacity of the Burundian population and government to contain, control and even eradicate the pandemic caused by COVID-19. Many prevention and eradication measures have been taken. However, since the month of October 2020, the people of Burundi downplayed all the measures put in place until January 2021 when the government revisited and restated all measures and urged all the officials in the Ministry of Public Health and Fight against HIV/AIDS and governors to enforce those measures. This was done when a second wave of corona virus struck again in some of the European countries. The seriousness and careful decisions taken to protect the people in Burundi showed enough willingness of the government to kick off COVID-19 out the country.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, prices of various commodities have risen sharply; beverage production has fallen; exports of coffee, gold, and other minerals have declined; and foreign exchange reserves have been depleted. There is no longer any doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic is hitting the Burundian economy hard. On August 2020, the Central Bank of Burundi (BRB) published a report of the Monetary Policy Committee of the first quarter of 2020. According to the report, global economic activity contracted in the first quarter of 2020, particularly in advanced OECD countries (1.8%) following the adverse effects of COVID-19. Burundi is not an exception.

According to the report, inflation rate increased in the first quarter of 2020 to 6.6% compared to -3.6% in the same quarter of 2019. Inflation could even reach 8.0% compared to -0.7% in 2019. As a reminder, the convergence rate is 8.0% for most member countries of the East African Community. This pandemic has affected the consumption of local products. The beverage production of BRARUDI, Burundi's leading industrial company, fell by 6.9%. Similarly, overall industrial production in Burundi decreased by 8.2% compared to the first quarter of 2019. This is mainly attributed to decline in production in the food industries. The report reveals that Burundi cannot finance import spending through exports. The gap has widened compared to the last quarter of 2019. To pay the import bill, Gitega the political capital of Burundi had to draw on foreign exchange reserves equivalent to BIF 385,663.4 million compared to BIF 369,505.4 million in the previous quarter. This deficit worsened due to increase in imports in a context of a significant decrease in exports. The fall in exports mainly affected coffee, with a decrease of 66%, gold 100% and minerals 34.6%. In fact, foreign exchange derived from imports financed only 10.9% of exports while the rate of coverage of imports by exports was 15% in the last quarter of 2019. Public debt increased by 4.4% compared to the previous quarter. It rose from 2,909.4 to 3,408.0 billion BIF. Composed mainly of Treasury securities and Central Bank advances, domestic debt represents 71.6% of total public debt. Foreign exchange reserves stood at US\$ 73 million in December 2020 against US\$ 113.5 million in December 2019. They covered 0.9 months of imports of goods while the board level is set at 4.5 months in the convergence criteria of the East African Community.

The Central Bank of Burundi document also shows that the stock of foreign exchange broke a new record, with a critical low level never reached in a long time. From 2014 to 2020, foreign exchange reserves have shrunk by more than three-quarters; from US\$ 317.3 million to US\$ 73 million. According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the main sectors in Burundi affected by the COVID-19 pandemic are essentially international trade, tourism, hotels, transport and travel, the informal economy and the food supply chain.

Recommendations

Safeguarding the logistics sector and reopening borders

The pandemic threatens to wipe out all the progress made in reducing time and costs on various trade corridors in the EAC. Compliance with individual and collective protective measures against the pandemic has led to increased direct and indirect costs (transport and storage) of exports from the EAC, and thus altering their competitiveness. The lack of harmonization of the anti-COVID-19 regulatory framework within the EAC makes any estimate of the time it takes to export and import illusory. This uncertainty in the supply chain leads traders and manufacturers in the region to resort to overstocking, thereby leading to higher production costs.

Health and administrative restrictions at the post-border level are particularly detrimental to women who make a living from cross-border trade. These women account for 74% of all cross-border traders in the EAC. They also invest 90% of their profits in family and social welfare. It goes without saying that cross-border trade contributes significantly to the economic development of households, and anything that hinders it pushes households into the throes of poverty.

From the survey results, the study makes the following recommendations:

- Provide financial incentives and subsidies for transport, storage and cold chain costs for essential products.
- Provide non-contact food delivery mechanisms for high-risk or infected populations.

Prioritize essential transport needs in supply chains and periodically update priorities based on current risk assessments; for example, at the height of an outbreak, transport of medical supplies and food is prioritized and given the "green light" (fewer stops, controls, tolls) when crossing administrative borders.

Emergency transport planning for essential needs, fuel, food, medical supplies and equipment, planning for rationing of essential food and fuel.

- Organize and manage long distance and high volume travel, such as transportation of medical supplies, doctors and nurses, construction of emergency hospitals or quarantine facilities at strategic locations, and return of essential workers to their workplaces.

Notes

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2. <https://covid19.who.int/> consulted on 31st March 2021 at noon

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