

Côte d'Ivoire

Overview



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What's happening

59%

Population below international poverty line

40%

Population below national poverty line

€91

per month

National minimum wage

€153

per month

Rural living wage

€405

per month

Rural living income

40%

Agricultural workforce

21%

Agriculture share of GDP

4

high

Risk to workers' rights

Context

Côte d'Ivoire has a population of nearly 26^[1] million people, which is split almost evenly between rural and urban areas.^[2] As of 2019, 40% of the population is officially employed in the agricultural sector,^[3] a sector that accounts for 16% of the nation's GDP.^[4] Of the population employed in agriculture nearly 30% are women.^[5] In addition, around 85% of the labour force is employed in the informal sector in Côte d'Ivoire.^[6]

The agricultural sector of Côte d'Ivoire faces several major challenges, such as deforestation, rural to urban migration, land tenure insecurity, post-harvest losses, and climate change. The rate of deforestation is so high that the country is expected to lose all its national forest cover by 2034.^[7]

The top produced crops in Côte d'Ivoire are yams, cassava, cocoa beans, palm oil fruit and sugar cane.^[8] Côte d'Ivoire's top export commodities in terms of quantity are cocoa beans, natural dry rubber, shelled cashew nuts, bananas and palm oil.^[9]

Wages

Minimum wage

The government-mandated minimum wage for all professions in Côte d'Ivoire is 60,000 West African CFA franc (91 EUR) per month.^[10] A legal workweek is 40 hours and requires overtime payment. Labor unions in Côte d'Ivoire have been effective in enforcing that formal sector jobs comply with the minimum wage stated by the government. However, infractions regarding minimum wage payments are still reported. In addition, labour laws do not apply to millions of migrant workers nor to workers in the informal sector in Côte d'Ivoire.^[6]

Living wage

The **Global Living Wage Coalition** has developed a living wage reference value for rural Côte d'Ivoire, based on the Anker Methodology.

The estimated living wage is 100,590 West African CFA francs (153 EUR) per month. This value is comprised of a net living wage of 90,516 West African CFA francs (138 EUR) per month, plus 10,074 West African CFA francs (15 EUR) per month for social security expenses and tax. This is the wage required for workers in a typical rural area of Côte d'Ivoire to afford a basic but decent standard of living. The living wage estimate is 68% higher than the national minimum wage in Côte d'Ivoire and almost double the average agricultural wage in the country.^[11]

Living income

The Living Income Community of Practise has developed a **living income benchmark** for cocoa growing regions in rural Côte d'Ivoire. The estimated living income is 265,384 West African CFA francs (405 EUR) per month. This number is based on a family of 6 with 1.65 full time workers.^[12] For families in Côte d'Ivoire food procurement accounts for nearly half of monthly household spending. Rural poverty is common in Côte d'Ivoire, however it is typically lower in cocoa growing regions than elsewhere.^[13]

The production and sale of cocoa makes up a significant portion of the incomes of between 800,000 and 1.3 million farming households in Côte d'Ivoire. These households typically farm between 1.5 and 5 hectares of land. In addition, it is estimated that more than 8 million people live off the crop.^[14]

Working conditions

Informal labour

Informal labour accounts for nearly 60% of all paid jobs in Côte d'Ivoire. Workers in the informal sector do not work under contracts and are therefore unable to receive benefits or protections regarding their employment.^[15] Combatting informal labour and strengthening the formal sector is an important component in reducing poverty in Côte d'Ivoire.^[15]

Child labour

In recent years, there has been a strong effort by the Ivorian government to mitigate child labor, particularly within the cocoa sector. In this sector, the government has partnered with the International Labor Organization, UNICEF, and International Cocoa Initiative to eliminate child labour.^[6] Even so, in Côte d'Ivoire almost a third of children between the ages of 5 and 14 engage in child labour, with the worst forms of child labour witnessed in cocoa and coffee harvesting.^[16] In terms of agricultural labour, in addition to cocoa production children work in pineapple, banana and coffee plantations and engage in tasks such as clearing land, cutting down trees applying chemical fertilizer and pesticides.^[16]

Gender

Gender-based violence is prominent in Côte d'Ivoire. Although the Ivorian labour law prohibits discrimination regarding gender, women are largely discriminated against in employment.^[6] This can be seen within the Ivorian cocoa sector where women make up nearly 70% of the cocoa labour force but only acquire 21% of the income generated from production. Additionally, they account for only one quarter of cocoa plantation ownership. Women are significant contributors to the nation's cocoa sector and economy, yet the law is not effectively enforced to ensure equal rights such as equal access to employment and pay.^[17]

Freedom of association & collective bargaining

By law, workers can engage in collective bargaining and union formation, and it is illegal for workers to be dismissed for participating in such activities. However, collective bargaining can only start when a union consists of at least 30% of a company's workers. In addition, the labour code permits employers to refuse to negotiate with unions.^[6] In recent years unionists from various sectors including nurses, teachers, students and agricultural unions, have been arrested solely for their participation in legal strikes and demonstrations.^[18]

What's happening

RESOURCE

[Cocoa Farmer Income](#)

This comparative study shows that the average income of Fairtrade cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire has risen and highlight ways in which brands and retailers can contribute.

RESOURCE

[Living Wage Reference Value, Rural Côte d'Ivoire](#)

Living wage estimate for workers in a typical rural area of Côte d'Ivoire to afford a basic but decent living standard. Global Living Wage Coalition, 2020.

RESOURCE

[Living Income Benchmark, Rural Côte d'Ivoire](#)

Living income estimate for rural Côte d'Ivoire, focussing on cocoa-growing areas. Living Income Community of Practice, 2020.

INITIATIVE

[PRO-PLANTEURS](#)

Project from the German Initiative on Sustainable Cacao aimed at improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers and their families in Côte d'Ivoire.

RESOURCE

[Living Income Reference Prices for Cacao](#)

Fairtrade International has set Fairtrade Living Income Reference Prices for cocoa in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

RESOURCE

[Farm Gate Prices for a Living Income](#)

Consultation paper for minimum farm gate prices necessary to earn a living income in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Voice Network, 2020.

RESOURCE

[Demystifying the Cacao Sector](#)

Major study on the cocoa sector investigating more than a thousand socio-economic, agricultural and cocoa specific variables in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. KIT, 2018.

RESOURCE

[Tracking living and minimum wages in the banana sector](#)

A report commissioned by the World Banana Forum in May 2015 with information for 9 banana producing countries.

INITIATIVE

[Craving a change in chocolate](#)

An agenda for action enabling living incomes in cocoa supply chains. Fairtrade Foundation, 2018.

Footnotes

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