

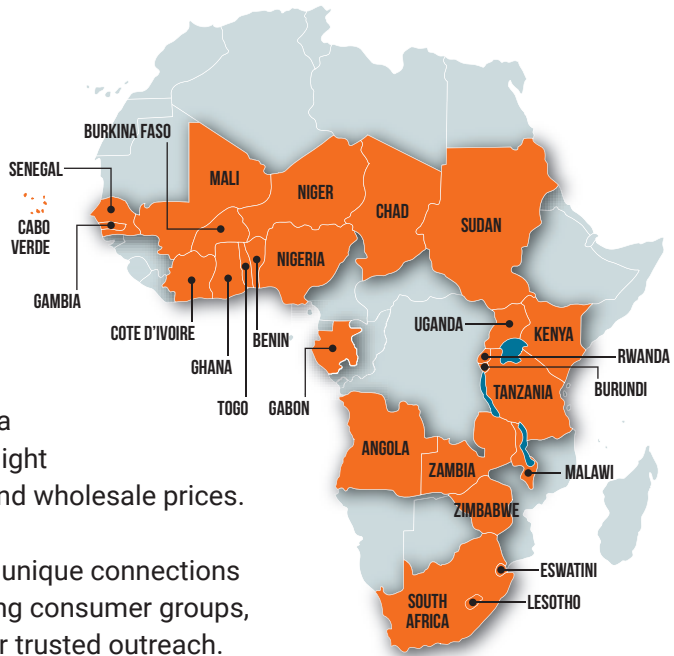
GOOD FOOD FOR ALL:

ACHIEVING AFFORDABILITY IN AFRICAN FOOD SYSTEMS

In 2023, Consumers International launched a new initiative with its Members – the leading consumer associations in more than 20 African countries – and in collaboration with The Rockefeller Foundation, to tackle the widespread unaffordability of healthy, sustainable, locally-produced foods.

To address this issue, we:

- Brought together leading consumer associations in **20+ countries in Africa** with national policymakers to map the state of affordability for healthy and sustainable foods. This revealed a systemic need for stronger data, public buy-in for change, and a greater role for competition and consumer policy.
- Developed the **Fair Food Price Monitor** – a price data analysis mechanism for civil society. In Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria this allowed marketplace actors to highlight increasing divergences between retail and wholesale prices.
- **Fair Food Prices Coalitions** established unique connections between over 200 organisations including consumer groups, farmers, businesses and government for trusted outreach.
- Reached **30+ million people** through a media campaign across major print, TV, and radio channels.
- Worked with consumer groups and farmer associations to **develop a low cost, grassroots methodology for food price data collection** across farmgate, wholesale and retail levels. This included difficult-to-track products such as fruits, vegetables, and legumes.
- Have seen **regulatory responses across Nigeria, Kenya, and Zambia**, and we expect more to follow. All the authorities we worked with expressed a strong desire to continue our collaboration.



THE CHALLENGE

Over **90% of the population** of sub-Saharan Africa cannot afford a healthy diet. The high price of locally-produced fruits, vegetables, and legumes, especially compared to imported grains, is one of the key barriers to healthy and sustainable consumption. This challenge has only intensified **since 2022**, as food prices have soared for consumers worldwide.

As international trade faltered following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, locally-produced foods should have provided welcome relief. Yet reports from consumer advocates – in the absence of substantive data on key commodities for healthy and sustainable diets – suggested that these were often equally affected by surging prices. Climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to this phenomenon, but there was also a clear risk that inefficiencies and distortions in national markets were making good food less affordable.

THE SOLUTION

Consumer organisations are uniquely placed to support governments on this topic.



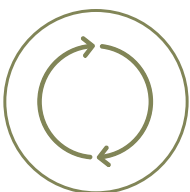
1. Around the world, they **drive campaigns** on healthy and sustainable diets, gather price data to support cost-of-living responses, and provide direct insights on how these rises affect consumers day in and out.



2. They have strong connections to grassroots communities and local and national media – which they used for the **Fair Food Prices** initiative to share findings and spotlight key issues across rural and urban contexts.



3. They are trusted advisers to government with an expert track record on food issues – and they have often helped establish connections across government, between different ministries.



4. Being part of a global consumer movement allows them to bring in lessons and innovations shared by their peers, including the policy interventions that have made an impact.



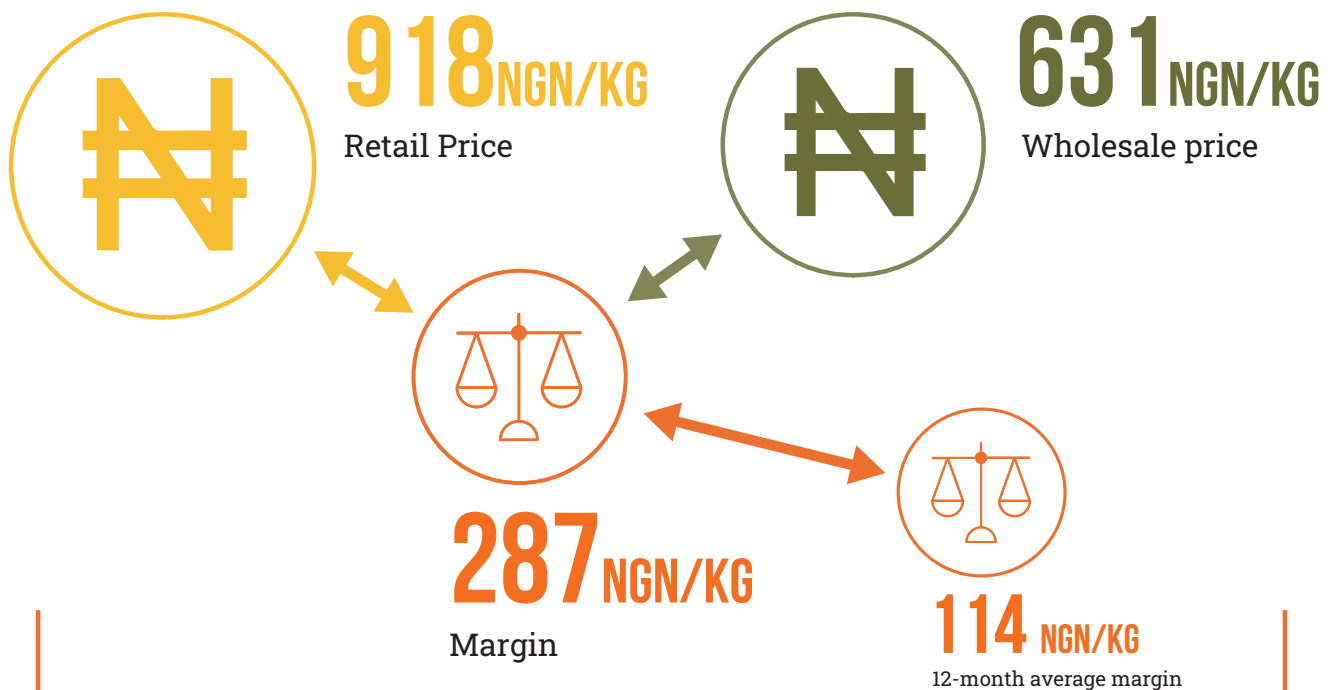
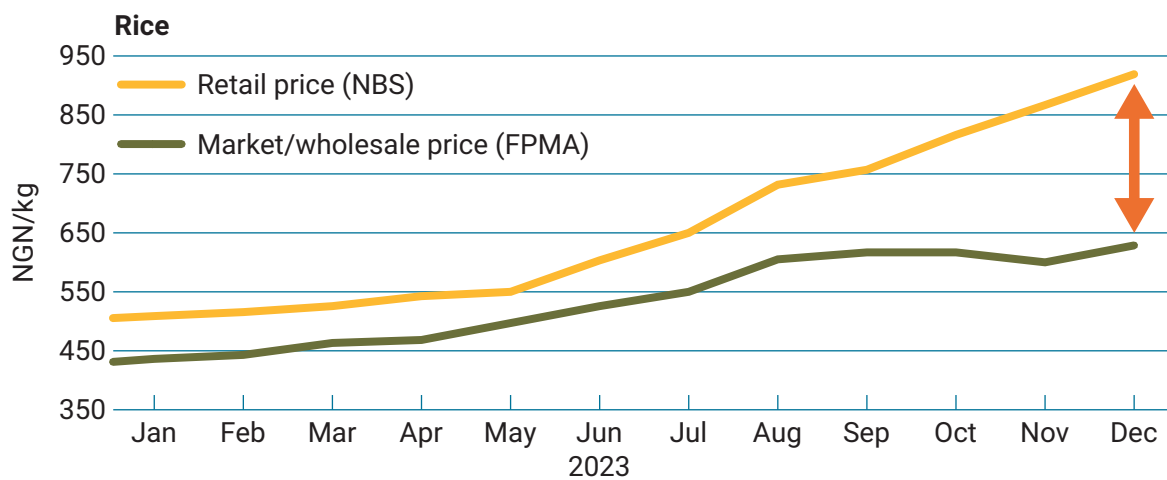
Consumers International, together with three members in Kenya, convened a cross-government meeting on fair food prices. Authorities responsible for agriculture, competition, standards and statistics heard our findings and mapped shared solutions

OUR ACTIONS

Building the evidence base:

To fill the crucial data gap on fair food prices, our [Fair Food Price Monitor](#) acts as an early warning mechanism, able to raise red flags on price divergences at retail, wholesale and farmgate levels. It is built on publicly available data on food prices at different stages of the value chain.

FAIR FOOD PRICE MONITOR -DEC 2023



Another critical gap is the availability of price data for healthy and sustainable foods. Information at the farmgate level is highly limited, given the research costs typically required to collect the large quantities of data needed. Even at retail and wholesale level, price information is often inconsistent due to the challenges of monitoring informal markets. It's generally limited to staple crops.

To address this, we developed a low-cost, grassroots data collection methodology, through which price information is provided by consumer and farmer associations. We collected data in Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria every week for four months, across six regions and for 10 commodities per country.

We shared our findings with stakeholders in each country. This complemented our findings from the Fair Food Price Monitor by introducing evidence on farmgate prices, and under-monitored crops such as fruit, vegetables, and legumes - which are key components of healthy diets.

HOW WE BUILD THE TOOL

we collected price data for:



Competition authorities are using this data to generate government action.

GENERATING DEMAND FOR ACTION

To build awareness and demand for action, Consumers International Members in Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria launched a wide-reaching campaign on Fair Food Prices.

Findings on unexplained price rises received widespread media attention and reached a total audience of more than 30 million people across the three focus countries. Our messages saw coverage across major national print publications, TV and radio.

Members and Fair Food Price Coalition partners used their network for direct outreach to communities and marketplace actors. The coalitions brought together more than 200 organisations in Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria – ranging from farmer and business associations to religious, youth and women's groups. Ultimately, this meant messages came from trusted sources across key communities.

Left: Coverage of our work makes headline news in Nigeria
Right: Executive Director, CADEF, Chiso Ndukwe-Okafor speaks on national television in Nigeria



SHAPING POLICY EFFORTS

Throughout the project we held a series of impact focused meetings which brought together unique partners to diagnose challenges and shape urgent solutions.

In July 2023, we partnered with the Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK), Nigeria's Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), and Ghana's International Trade Commission (GITC), to convene multi-stakeholder meetings to shape locally-specific solutions and launch the Fair Food Prices Coalitions.

And in February 2024, we brought together high-level government authorities in each of the three countries to review our findings and build on the coalitions' recommendations. For the first time, officials from competition authorities, statistics and standards agencies, and ministries of food, trade, finance, and more, explored cross-cutting solutions to the challenge of unaffordable local food systems.

GAINING GLOBAL ATTENTION

To build momentum at the global level, we shared our project findings at forums such as the UN Global Crisis Response Group, the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Intergovernmental Group of Experts, and the Committee on World Food Security in Rome. While discussion on the role of competition and consumer policy in ensuring affordability has been widespread in higher-income countries, our interventions have helped introduce an alternative perspective on this challenge.

We also mobilised action from the global consumer movement, shining a light on Fair Food Prices at our Global Congress, held in Nairobi in December 2023. A session featuring the directors of the Competition Authority of Kenya and the COMESA Competition Commission brought in global consumer perspectives to explore parallel challenges and share solutions. **Consumer organisations from around the world highlighted their own experiences of tackling rising prices, and issued a joint call to action for stronger competition and a fairer marketplace.**



*Panel discussion on fair prices for healthy
and sustainable diets at Consumers
International Global Congress 2023 in Kenya*

THE OUTCOME

As well as laying the foundations for systemic, longer-term change, our activities achieved a number of significant short-term wins across multiple countries.



Nigeria

As early as July 2023, Nigeria's FCCPC had publicly committed at our multi-stakeholder meeting to strengthen implementation of competition regulations in the food sector, and shared our findings directly with the President's National Food Security Council. By early 2024, FCCPC was highlighting collaboration with Consumers International as a key element of the government's response to rising prices. President Bola Tinubu was also publicly emphasising the need to ensure fair prices for locally-produced food, empowering the FCCPC to strengthen market monitoring.



Kenya

Kenya's Deputy President and Finance Minister, along with the Competition Authority of Kenya's Director General, all highlighted the importance of consumer protection for affordable prices in their contributions to the Consumers International Global Congress in December 2023. Meanwhile, CAK launched an investigation into the country's poultry sector in February 2024. In May they began co-leading a special project on competition in food markets at the International Competition Network (ICN).



Ghana

Competition and consumer protection is less established in Ghana. The country's first competition law has been pending but unapproved for over a decade, meaning there is no dedicated authority on this issue. However, multiple existing authorities – notably the Ghana International Trade Commission (GITC), the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), and finally the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI) – emphasised the clear need for competition legislation during our discussions. They are seeking further collaboration with consumer associations to establish a basis for future competition action.

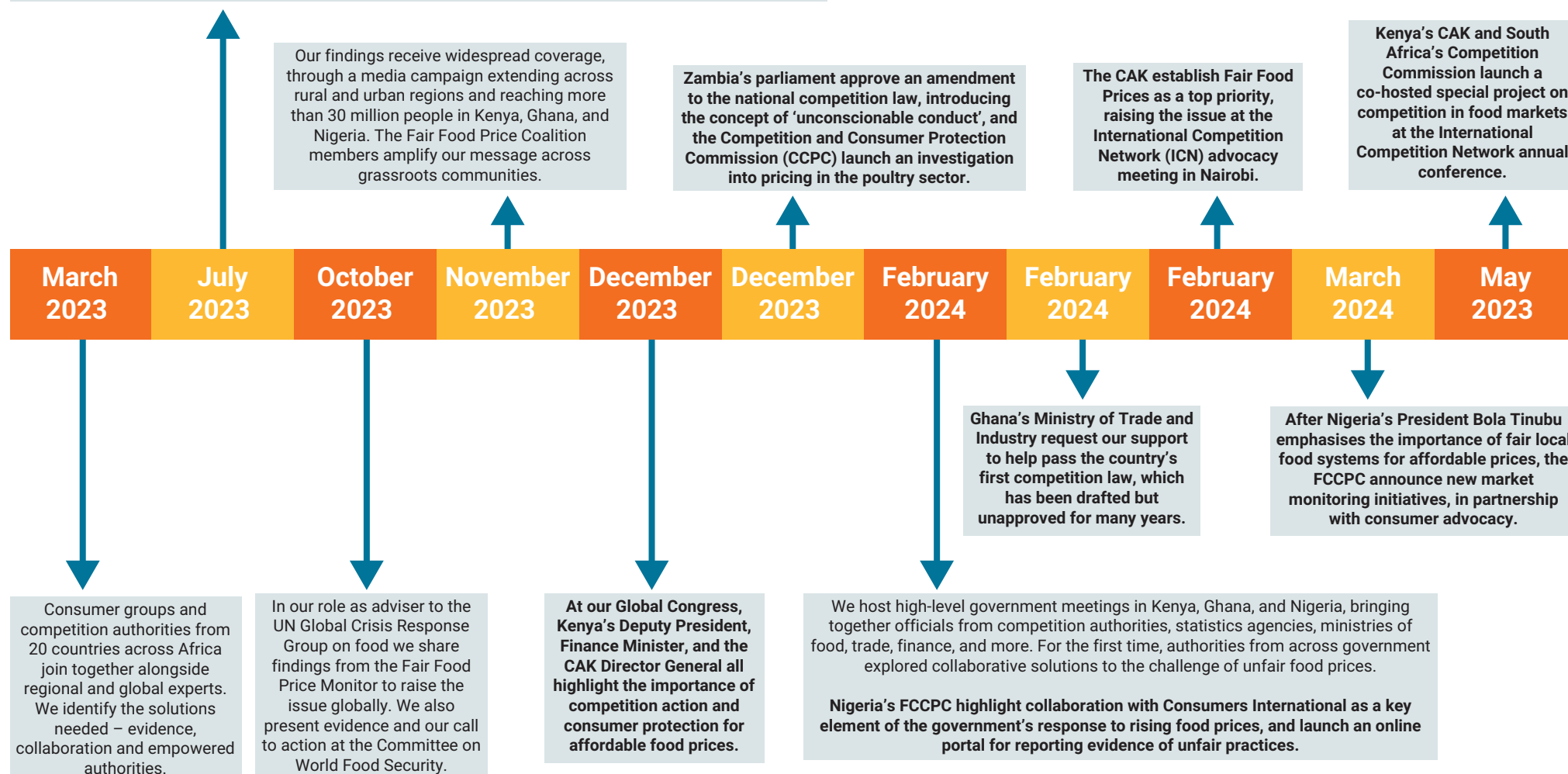
Regional support

In addition to Kenya, Ghana, and Nigeria, national authorities in South Africa and Zambia, and regional authorities from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) all expressed interest in continued partnership with Consumers International and Members on this topic.

OUR STORY OF CHANGE

Together with the Competition Authority of Kenya (CAK), Ghana's International Trade Commission (GITC), and Nigeria's Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), we launch Fair Food Prices Coalitions – unique networks of consumers, farmers and businesses to work on the solutions identified.

Nigeria's FCCPC publicly commits to take stronger action against unfair food pricing and accelerates our recommendations up to the National Food Security Council.



WHAT NEXT?

We are committed to making healthy and sustainable diets affordable for consumers everywhere, and to supporting our Members, civil society partners, and governments to understand and act. To build on this project, we aim to:

Deepen our impact, by continuing to work with our expert stakeholder network and shape innovative policy and practical solutions. We will respond to requests for technical and other support from governments in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, South Africa and elsewhere.

Widen our impact, by scaling up our efforts on healthy and sustainable diets to a broader range of countries.

Convene global actors, by using our trusted position with international organisations to advocate for co-ordinated competition and consumer action at the global level.

