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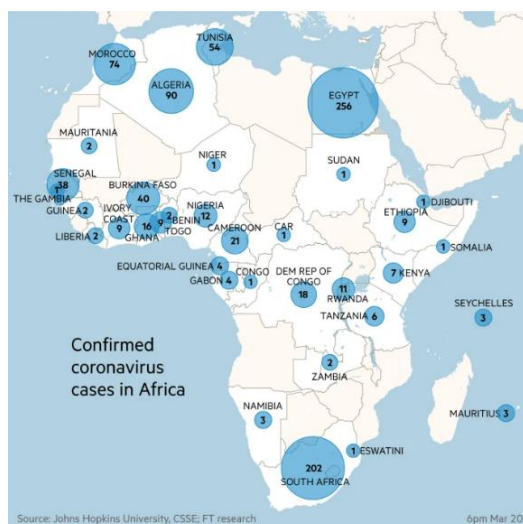
Corona has taught us that we must respect and work with each other

Coming from Africa, I did not believe that a pandemic can infect and affect the world the way Corona has done. Let me say the truth “I thought that this was only possible in Africa” where our health systems are rudimentary, not well funded and lacking in all the basic human resources and equipment. That a disease can affect the developed and developing world on the scale that Corona has done got me off guard. Coming from where I come from, I knew that problems of this nature would have been resolved by our brothers and sisters in Europe, America and such other developed countries. I am therefore humbled and sympathetic to see the scale and destruction that this disease has brought to the world. From the look of things, the infection

rates are still climbing, and we don't know for how long. Clearly the world, much still Africa, was not prepared for this serious calamity, whose effects will surpass those of the first and second world war combined. I have taken time to reflect and learnt the following about this disease.

The Virus enter Africa

Earlier in the year, when reports of the coronavirus started to emerge from China, global health officials and analysts on Africa issues stated that they were very worried about what would happen if the virus started spreading in Africa, where many health systems are already struggling. From mid-February, 2020, several countries in Africa started reporting



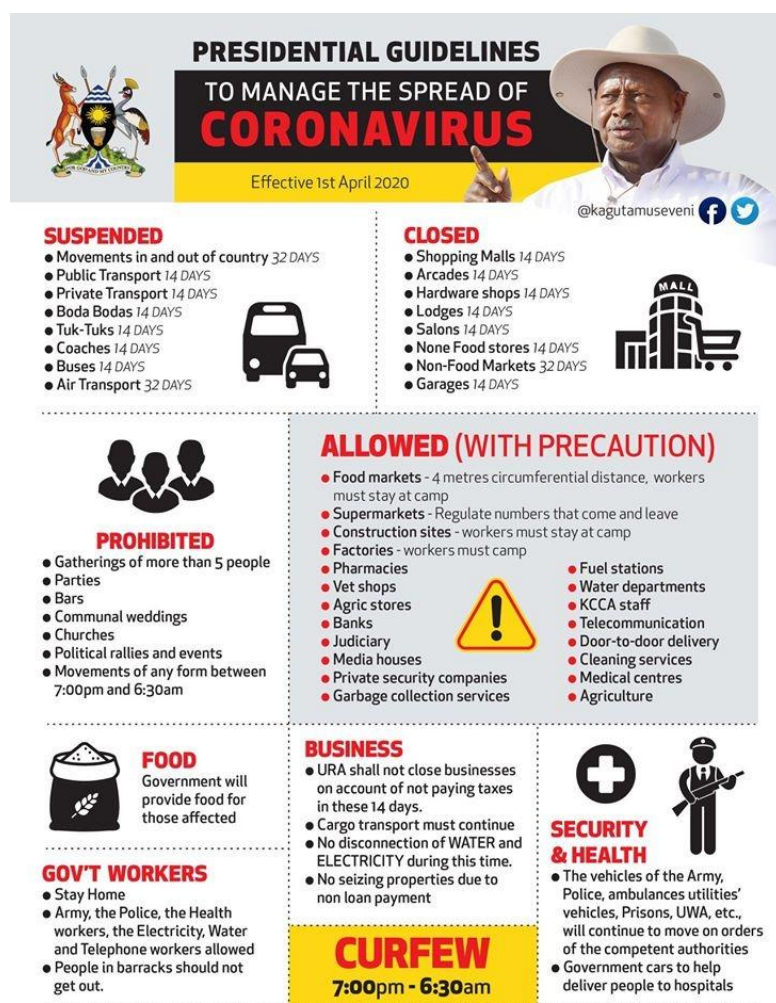
infections with corona virus. So far (end of March) the number of reported cases remains relatively low. As at now significant numbers have been reported in South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya; and all indications are that it is still spreading. At the start of April, 2020 there are more than over 5,250 confirmed cases of coronavirus across the continent, with 210 confirmed deaths from the virus. According to the latest data by the Africa Center for Disease Control on COVID-19 in Africa, the breakdown remains fluid as some countries lack diagnostic capacity and even communication

to the national and international reporting centres. The whole of Africa has rising cases with a handful of countries holding out.

Figure1: Map showing cases of corona virus infection in Africa as at 21st February, 2020

How Africa is responding

Africa has been responding aggressively to the pandemic. All Schools were ordered closed in the Nigerian capital of Lagos after only eight cases were confirmed nationwide; while Kenya closed all schools once 7 confirmed cases were reported. South Africa banned visitors from high-risk countries, closed down schools and opened drive-through testing centers in the initial stages of the disease. Within weeks, it was clear that these measures were not containing the disease, and the country has now gone into total lockdown.



PRESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES TO MANAGE THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS
Effective 1st April 2020

SUSPENDED

- Movements in and out of country 32 DAYS
- Public Transport 14 DAYS
- Private Transport 14 DAYS
- Boda Boda 14 DAYS
- Tuk-Tuks 14 DAYS
- Coaches 14 DAYS
- Buses 14 DAYS
- Air Transport 32 DAYS

CLOSED

- Shopping Malls 14 DAYS
- Arcades 14 DAYS
- Hardware shops 14 DAYS
- Lodges 14 DAYS
- Salons 14 DAYS
- None Food stores 14 DAYS
- Non-Food Markets 32 DAYS
- Garages 14 DAYS

PROHIBITED

- Gatherings of more than 5 people
- Parties
- Bars
- Communal weddings
- Churches
- Political rallies and events
- Movements of any form between 7:00pm and 6:30am

ALLOWED (WITH PRECAUTION)

- Food markets - 4 metres circumferential distance, workers must stay at camp
- Supermarkets - Regulate numbers that come and leave
- Construction sites - workers must stay at camp
- Factories - workers must camp
- Pharmacies
- Vet shops
- Agric stores
- Banks
- Judiciary
- Media houses
- Private security companies
- Garbage collection services
- Fuel stations
- Water departments
- KCCA staff
- Telecommunication
- Door-to-door delivery
- Cleaning services
- Medical centres
- Agriculture

FOOD

Government will provide food for those affected

GOV'T WORKERS

- Stay Home
- Army, the Police, the Health workers, the Electricity, Water and Telephone workers allowed
- People in barracks should not get out.

BUSINESS

- URA shall not close businesses on account of not paying taxes in these 14 days.
- Cargo transport must continue
- No disconnection of WATER and ELECTRICITY during this time.
- No seizing properties due to non loan payment

CURFEW
7:00pm - 6:30am

SECURITY & HEALTH

- The vehicles of the Army, Police, ambulances utilities' vehicles, Prisons, UWA, etc., will continue to move on orders of the competent authorities
- Government cars to help deliver people to hospitals

also battling and are overwhelmed by their own outbreaks. As for now it is everyone for themselves in battling this dangerous and aggressive disease. It is a situation that we have never had before.

Figure 2: Measures that Uganda has put in place to manage COVID-19.

It is noteworthy that in Africa most of the cases have been imported from Europe and probably Asia; with relatively low community transmission of the virus. This later stage, when reached will be the most difficult and challenging for the continent to deal with. The main aim of many countries now is to try and avoid community transmission, although it is

RUFORUM THOUGHT PIECE ON COVID-19

becoming increasingly clear, that even with closed schools, lockdowns and closed airport, the cases of Corona virus infections are still going up in many parts of the continent.






	KENYA	ETHIOPIA	RWANDA	TANZANIA	UGANDA
					
POPULATION	52.2m	110.1m	12.8m	60.9m	45.7m
DATE OF FIRST CASE	12 March 2020	13 March 2020	14 March 2020	16 March 2020	None
NO. OF CASES	7	9	11	6	0
SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE ☒ = Closed ☑ = In Place					
PUBLIC EDUCATION: SANITISATION, WASHING HANDS, SOCIAL DISTANCE	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
PUBLIC INFO HOTLINE & UPDATES	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
SCHOOLS	☒	HIGHER LEARNING OPEN	☒	☒	☒
BUSINESSES	WORK FROM HOME ADVICE	?	WORK FROM HOME ADVICE	?	☑
BARS & RESTAURANTS	LIMITED HOURS	NIGHT CLUBS CLOSED	SAFE DISTANCE; 1M	?	NIGHT CLUBS CLOSED
SUPERMARKETS	1.5M APART	?	SAFE DISTANCE, 1M	?	PROVIDE SANITISER
SPORTING EVENTS	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
MASS GATHERING	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
OPEN AIR MARKET	SOME CLOSED	SOME CLOSED	?	?	?
PSVS / PUBLIC TRANSPORT	SANITISING OF PASSENGERS; CAPACITY LIMITS	FREE GOVT. BUSES	HAND WASHING UNITS	HAND WASHING UNITS	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES
PRISON VISITS	☒	?	?	☒	☒
TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS	☑ TRAVEL FROM COVID COUNTRIES BANNED UNLESS CITIZEN / RESIDENT	☑ BANNED FLIGHTS TO 30 COVID COUNTRIES	☑ TOTAL 30 DAY PASSENGER AIR TRAVEL BAN	NONE AS OF NOW; FLIGHT CANCELLATIONS AND PREPARE FOR RESTRICTIONS	☑ BANNED FLIGHTS TO 31 COVID COUNTRIES, ACCEPTING CITIZENS
FUMIGATION / SANITISATION	☑ FUMIGATION IN NAIROBI	GOVT. TO DISTRIBUTE SOAP / ALCOHOL	COMMUTER PARKS HAND WASHING UNITS	n/a	TO BEGIN SPRAYING

Figure 3: Safety measures taken to contain Covid-19 in East Africa ((courtesy of Maitri Capital, 2020)

This raises questions as to whether the measures being put in place can contain the diseases. But there is a more difficult question “can Africa deal with large numbers of this disease?”. Given our weak health systems, lack of health personal and equipment and without support from our traditional partners, this disease is a disaster in waiting.

Disaster in Waiting

Already the continent is experiencing economic difficulties arising from measures that it has taken to try and contain this disease. Figure 4 shows the Economic and financial measures that are being taken to contain the disease in East Africa.

RUFORUM THOUGHT PIECE ON COVID-19











	 KENYA	 ETHIOPIA	 RWANDA	 TANZANIA	 UGANDA		 KENYA	 ETHIOPIA	 RWANDA	 TANZANIA	 UGANDA
MOBILE MONEY MEASURES	Transfer costs up to KES 3,000 (USD 19) will be waived off. Individual transaction limit increased from KES 70,000 (USD 700) to KES 150,000 (USD 1,500) and total transactions up from KES 150,000 (USD 1,500) to KES 300,000 (USD 3,000) per day	Ethiopia currently does not have mobile money transfers allowed	National Bank of Rwanda and mobile network service providers agreed to waive transaction costs. The limit for individual transfers using mobile money wallets has been increased from RWF 500,000 (USD 534) to RWF 1,500,000 (USD 1604) for Tier I customers and from RWF 1,000,000 (USD 1070) to RWF 4,000,000 (USD 4278) for Tier II customers	Bank of Tanzania (BOT) encouraged cashless transactions over cash; BOT also Advised banks to educate the public on ways to use alternative payment channels For 30-days, customers can send up to UGX 80,000 (USD 8) Mobile Money every day to other MTN MoMo customers free of charge. Customers will get 1GB of data at just UGX 2,000 (USD 0.5) valid between 8am and 5pm to encourage working from home		COURTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES	Business registration services suspended. Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning shut for 28 days. Court activities scaled down over 2 weeks	Courts and some government services have been suspended	Court operations suspended countrywide for two weeks from Monday 16th	None as yet	Court hearings and appearances suspended for at least 32 days with effect from March 20
GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO FIGHT COVID-19	Central Bank released KES 7.4b (USD 70m) to combat Covid-19 with KES 3b (USD 30m) to hire more health workers to boost the sector's capability to respond to the pandemic. KES 500m (USD 4.9m) is set aside to help tourism sector recovery	As first round financing, the government has announced that it has allocated BIRR 300 million (USD 10m) to fight Covid-19. Commercial Bank of Ethiopia donated USD 300k to the Ministry of Health for Covid-19. Prosperity Party has donated \$3m for the National preparedness and response efforts currently undergoing, especially targeting the vulnerable population with lack of access to hygiene supplies	Rwanda estimates to use about RWF 16 billion (USD 17m) in the response in a period of 6 months	TSHS 500m (USD 215k) set aside by Government to Ministry of Health to fight Covid-19	None as yet	COLLUSION AND UNFAIR PRICE HIKES	Competition Authority of Kenya has warned collusion increases of prices and/or hoarding, with the intention of subsequently increasing prices, will face harsh penalties of up to 15 per cent of turnover	Trade ministry to monitor and act against businesses engaging in price-gouging	Trade minister fixed food prices to prevent price hikes. Some of the foods include beans, maize, bananas, sugar, rice & cooking oil.	Fair Competition Authority warned manufacturers and retailers against hiking price of goods	None as yet
EXTERNAL FUNDING TO FIGHT COVID-19	World Bank has given the government KES 6.1b (USD 60m), with USD 10m from the Covid-19 Financing Facility while USD 10m is from the Contingency Emergency Response component of Transforming Health Systems for Universal Care Project	Jack Ma, China's richest man, has pledged to donate 20,000 testing kits, 100,000 masks and 1,000 medical use protective suits and face shields to each one of the 54 African nations to help the fight against coronavirus	Jack Ma, China's richest man, has pledged to donate 20,000 testing kits, 100,000 masks and 1,000 medical use protective suits and face shields to each one of the 54 African nations to help the fight against coronavirus	Jack Ma, China's richest man, has pledged to donate 20,000 testing kits, 100,000 masks and 1,000 medical use protective suits and face shields to each one of the 54 African nations to help the fight against coronavirus	To seek USD 100m concessional loan from the World Bank to cushion from economic blow of Covid-19 and deal with the financing gap in the national budget for the financial years 2019/2020 of USD 180m and USD 90m in 2020/2021	CENTRAL BANK MEASURES	All physical cash and coins will be quarantined for one week. Borrowers will get relief on personal loans based on individual circumstances for 1 year. Medium-sized enterprises loans can be assessed and restructured based on their individual circumstances arising from the pandemic. Banks will also waive all online costs for balance inquiry and cash transfers to mobile banking	None as yet	Local banks to ease loan repayment conditions to borrowers affected by COVID-19. National Bank of Rwanda (BNR) floated a liquidity support of RWF 50b (USD 535m) for banks to borrow at Central Bank Rate of 5%.	Bank of Tanzania is to declare special packages for the financial sector to enhance sector and monetary stability	Bank of Uganda (BOU) will provide exceptional liquidity assistance for one year to financial institutions and waive limitations on restructuring credit facilities of financial institutions that may be going into distress. BOU will intervene in forex market to smooth excess volatility. Ministry of Health to publish standard operating procedures governing the use of money in markets and banks, such as disinfecting coins

Figure 4: Economic and Financial measures put in place to contain the Corona Virus (courtesy of Maitri Capital, 2020)

Managing this outbreak in Africa is not going to be a walk-in park. This is especially so given that a large number of citizens in the continent live in informal settlements (slums) and are involved in informal trade. This makes recommended interventions such as social distancing and hand-washing difficult to implement and yet, total lockdowns cannot work given that many countries do not have the capacity to feed and provide other essential necessities when citizens are in isolation. In our setup, people go out every day as a means of being able to feed and sustain themselves and their families. So far looking at the crisis in Africa and how countries have responded, many people think that Africa was underestimated in its preparedness, fighting spirit, genetic strength and resilience of the people to fight corona. The continent seems to be off to a good start.

What needs to be done

So how does the continent deal with this pandemic given its weak position as indicated above?

1. We need effective isolation centres:

The continent needs working and effective isolation centres, ventilators and medical staff who can isolate and attend to coronavirus patients till the immune system develops antibodies naturally.

2. Information is critical

In this era of social media where misinformation travels like wild fire there is need for common communication centres that keep the citizens informed and misconceptions

corrected. Countries must urgently set up and manage national Corona information centres.

3. Research and Documentation

There is need for continuous analysis of case numbers, who is being affected, who is recovering and why; and what treatment is working. Given how everyone else is fumbling to deal with this problem Africa could just provide the leadership to the world on how to combat this disease.

On a wider society scale

On the wider society scale we are also learning and here are some lessons to take home

i. None of us is safe:

I have learnt with shock that none of us is safe. If one of us is affected, we are all bound to suffer. So, going forward we must aim to develop our whole human ecosystem (the world) and not our individual countries and regions. In other words, you cannot make progress if I am not making progress. We need vibrant and working health systems for everyone in the world.

ii. Our Health matters

I have had time to reflect on the investments that we have made to modernize our armies and police services, and the numbers of people that we have deployed in this sector. In many countries, little or no attention has been paid to training, deploying, and remuneration of health workers. We now can see right before our eyes that with corona, our armies and police are helpless. They cannot help us and cannot help themselves. There is need to re-think the way we manage and run our health system and make the right investments.

iii. Business must serve society needs

Those of us in Africa that got used to importing everything (clothes, food, medicine, phones, etc.) from China, Europe and the rest of the world, now realize how much we need our local farmers, our local bakeries, our small and nascent industries. It is now “everyone for himself” and God for all of us. We have killed our industries and businesses through lack of protection from our big brothers and sisters. Now in these lock downs, we realize that only local businesses and industries can respond to our needs. We need hand clothes, face masks, drugs, ventilators, sanitizers etc and our local industries are not able to produce enough. Let’s grow our local talents, businesses and industries... it is worthy it when the world stops being interconnected, the way Corona has done to us. Lastly, we must never treat health as a business. Health is a human right... that we all need to access.

iv. There must be a new beginning

Corona has and will continue to change the way we work, live and do business. None of us is safe. None of us matters more than another. We must support each other. We must respect the little things that we are all doing to support humanity. We must respect each other. Money matters, but we must preserve life. It is a humbling experience for me.

This is our first issue in a series of articles we are releasing as part of our RUFORUM Thought Pieces on the Corona Pandemic. You can get more information about RUFORUM at www.ruforum.org. You may also share your thought piece about the Pandemic with us by writing to e.adipala@ruforum.org and copying m.agenia@ruforum.org

About the Author:

Dr. Eusebius J. Mukhwana is an experienced Team Leader and Manager with a demonstrated history of working in the Agriculture and Higher Education Sectors in Africa. Strong Social and Business Development Professional with a Doctor of Philosophy - PhD focused on Soil Science and Economics from University of Wyoming, USA.

Dr Mukhwana serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (a network of 126 Universities in Africa), whose Secretariat is based in Kampala, Uganda; he is also the Vice Chair of the African Qualifications Verification network (AQVN), Co-chair of the Kenya Dual TVET Training Network (modelled on the Germany Systems) and member of the Competence Based Education and Training (CBET) Coordinating Committee in Kenya. He is a recipient of the Norman Borlaug Award for Leadership in Agriculture (2009) and Head of State Commendation (HSC) by the President of Kenya (2005) both for his pioneering role in igniting social transformation in Kenya and Africa. He is an ardent believer in the Capabilities of Africa and promotes the idea that the continent can produce more Economically and Socially to assure Prosperity for its people and the rest of the World. He currently serves as the Director General of the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA).