

COVID-19 in Africa: Few Comments

While prevalence of **COVID-19** in Asia has been widely covered, Africa has been relatively neglected. To ameliorate this gap, I attach the following:

- (i) An up-to-date (as of March 25) list of African Countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 incidence. The data is sourced from Center for Systems Science & Engineering at the John Hopkins University, regarded as the most authoritative source on this subject.
- (ii) A Map of Africa with the confirmed cases as of March 20 taken from The Financial Times today.
- (iii) An article published in TIME magazine titled “Africa Coronavirus Cases Over 2,000 as South Africa Rushes Into Lockdown” published yesterday.

2 In this regard, the following **comments** are deemed relevant:

- (a) In general, African countries have considerable health related challenges including poor health indicators, prevalence of a number of communicable and non-communicable diseases and inadequate health infrastructure in terms of inadequate facilities, low physician-to-patient ratio, dependence on imported medicines, prevalence of fake medicines, etc.
- (b) The numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cited in the datasets below are likely to be underestimates due to a number of factors such as inadequate reporting system, insufficient testing kits, porous international borders, etc .
- (c) For comparison, Africa’s last brush with a pandemic was with the **Ebola** virus in 2013-16. Though it was largely confined to three countries in West African sub-region, the final numbers of patients was 28,616 of which 11,310 died, giving a case-fatality rate of 40%.
- (d) Although the Ebola, like COVID-19, was also a zoonotic disease, there are significant differences between the two. In the main, Ebola was largely an African problem which was successfully contained in the continent. COVID-19 is an imported pandemic with over 422,000 cases all over the world. WHO and other international stakeholders and donors, which played a crucial role in successfully containing Ebola, have their hands full with COVID-19 right now to focus exclusively on Africa where 43 of 54 countries are at various stage of the affliction.



(e) Against this depressing narrative, the heroism of some African healthcare professionals stands out. It is they who battled considerable odds, to successfully contain and rolled-back Ebola epidemic. A special mention should be made here of Dr Ameyo Adadevoh, Lead Consultant Physician and Endocrinologist, First Consultants Medical Center in Lagos. She refused to lift the quarantine for a surreptitiously brought-in Liberian Ebola patient despite various pressures. Although she herself succumbed to Ebola later, her professionalism saved Lagos, Africa's largest city, being infected. Now that Africa is, once again, facing its moment of truth against COVID-19, hopes of the continent rest on her gritty healthcare professionals.

Wishing AACCI members, best of health, COVID-19 notwithstanding!

**Amb. Mahesh Sachdev,
India President, AACCI,
March 25, 2020**

+91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717

www.asianafrican.org

info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

Global Secretariat Hub

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079

Confirmed Cases In Africa by Country as of 25/3/2020)



554	South Africa
402	Egypt
264	Algeria
114	Burkina Faso
114	Tunisia
86	Senegal
73	Cote d'Ivoire
66	Cameroon
53	Ghana
45	Congo (Kinshasa)
44	Nigeria
42	Mauritius
40	Rwanda
25	Kenya
20	Togo
17	Madagascar
12	Ethiopia
12	Tanzania



ASIAN-AFRICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& INDUSTRY

- 9 Equatorial Guinea
- 9 Uganda
- 7 Namibia
- 7 Seychelles
- 6 Benin
- 6 Gabon
- 4 Congo (Brazzaville)
- 4 Eswatini
- 4 Guinea
- 3 Angola
- 3 Cabo Verde
- 3 Central African Republic
- 3 Chad
- 3 Djibouti
- 3 Gambia
- 3 Liberia
- 3 Mozambique
- 3 Niger
- 3 Sudan
- 3 Zambia

+91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717

www.asianafrican.org

info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

Global Secretariat Hub

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079



ASIAN-AFRICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& INDUSTRY

- 3 Zimbabwe
- 2 Mauritania
- 1 Eritrea
- 1 Libya
- 1 Somalia

Source: Center for Systems Science & Engineering at John Hopkins University.

- ☎ +91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717
- 🌐 www.asianafrican.org
- ✉ info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

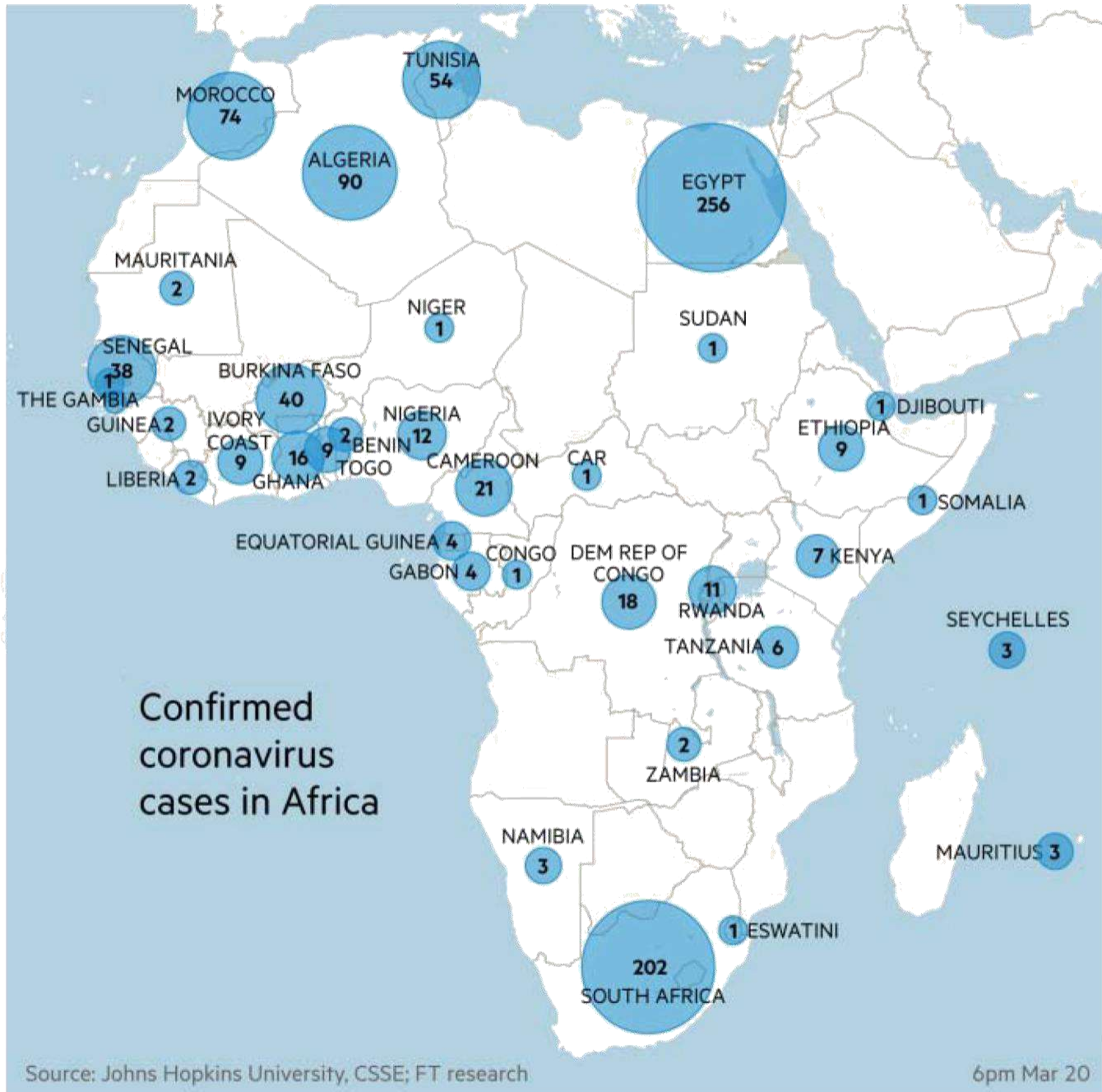
📍 **Global Secretariat Hub**

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079



ASIAN-AFRICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& INDUSTRY



- +91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717
- www.asianafrican.org
- info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

Global Secretariat Hub

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079

Africa Coronavirus Cases Over 2,000 as South Africa Rushes Into Lockdown



Municipal workers block streets as a bulldozer demolishes informal shops in an effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus in Dakar's popular Medina's neighborhood on March 22, 2020. Sylvain Cherkaoui—AP

By [MOGOMOTSI MAGOME / AP](#) March 24, 2020 6:03 PM EDT

JOHANNESBURG — Customers started behaving oddly about a week ago, visibly dejected street vendor Frank Mojapelo said. Some were wary to exchange cash. Some backed away, or refused to touch him.

Now, an [unprecedented lockdown](#) looms in South Africa over the coronavirus, with a country of 57 million people told to stay home starting Friday. Virus cases leapt again to 554 on Tuesday, the most of any country in Africa. Forty-three of the continent's 54 countries now have cases, with the total at 2,046, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The next few weeks will be tough, Mojapelo said. Though people will be allowed to leave home under "strictly controlled circumstances" to access essential items, he doubts he can continue selling boiled eggs, candy and homemade pickles out of the trunk of the car that he pulls up onto the Johannesburg sidewalks.

Small businesses expect to suffer. And that pain could grow across Africa as more countries impose tougher measures. Economies are expected to take a severe hit as borders close and trade drops.

Africa needs a \$150 billion emergency financing package, Ethiopia's government said in a proposal to the G20 global forum for economic cooperation ahead of the G20 summit.

+91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717

www.asianafrican.org

info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

Global Secretariat Hub

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079

“COVID-19 poses an existential threat to the economies of African countries,” the proposal said. It also proposes that all interest payments to government loans, and part of the debt of low-income countries, should be written off.

Rwanda and Tunisia also have announced lockdowns. In South Africa, determined shoppers are making their last runs for supplies as authorities try to reassure the public that food will not run out.

Nelson Pombo, who runs his own supermarket in Johannesburg, said he hoped to make more sales during the lockdown as people try to avoid bigger supermarkets, where social distancing has been difficult.

“People will be too scared to go to bigger shops to avoid the virus,” he said. “I will also be spraying hands with sanitizers to make sure they are safe in the store.” Mixed with his confidence, however, was worry that some suppliers would increase their prices because of the high demand.

Workers across South Africa will be required to stay home except for those in essential services including health care and security as well as the production and distribution of food, utilities and medical products.

A significant number of last-minute customers and workers wore face masks or gloves as businesses such as hair salons seized the chance to make more money before the lockdown pinched wallets.

Fanuel Mamova, who was accompanied by his two children after schools were shut down last week, said he only bought the basic goods — flour, toilet paper, cooking oil — which will last for only a week.

“Even if we wanted to buy more, we cannot because we are only getting paid our salaries at the end of the month,” he said.

South Africa’s economic hub of Gauteng, which includes Johannesburg and the capital, Pretoria, has the country’s highest number of infections with 302, followed by the Western Cape, which includes the city of Cape Town, with 213.

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said officials expected the number of cases to continue to rise despite the lockdown, but changes might be seen around the end of the second or third week of the lockdown.

“We must not be shocked when we see the increase,” Mkhize said.

+91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717

www.asianafrican.org

info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

Global Secretariat Hub

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079

Elsewhere in Africa, the West African nation of Niger recorded its first virus-related death.

Authorities said a 63-year-old man who was brought to a hospital Monday tested positive for the virus after he died Tuesday. Niger's health minister also reported three new cases, bringing the country's total to six.

South Sudan closed its borders as the country struggling to rebuild from a five-year civil war tried to prevent the virus from arriving. Some senior government officials and others were not complying with orders to be checked for fever at the airport in the capital, Juba, said the undersecretary in the health ministry, Dr. Makur Matur Koriom.

Nigeria's [ban on international flights](#) began and Zimbabwe's president said the country was closing its borders to all but returning residents.

Elias Meseret in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Maura Ajak in Juba, South Sudan contributed.

☎ +91 79 40049259
+91 9717271717

🌐 www.asianafrican.org

✉ info@asianafrican.org

Asian-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AACCI) Foundation

📍 **Global Secretariat Hub**

G-26, Chandrodaya Society,
Opp. Golden Triangle, Stadium Road,
Navrangpura Ahmedabad- 380014 Gujarat, India

CIN No: U74995GJ2018NPL105079