

The impact of COVID-19 in Africa

Author: Taurai Masunda . May 2020

The COVID-19 reached Africa later than other continent. Governments in Africa reacted faster to COVID-19, the most effective means available for suppressing transmission of the virus.

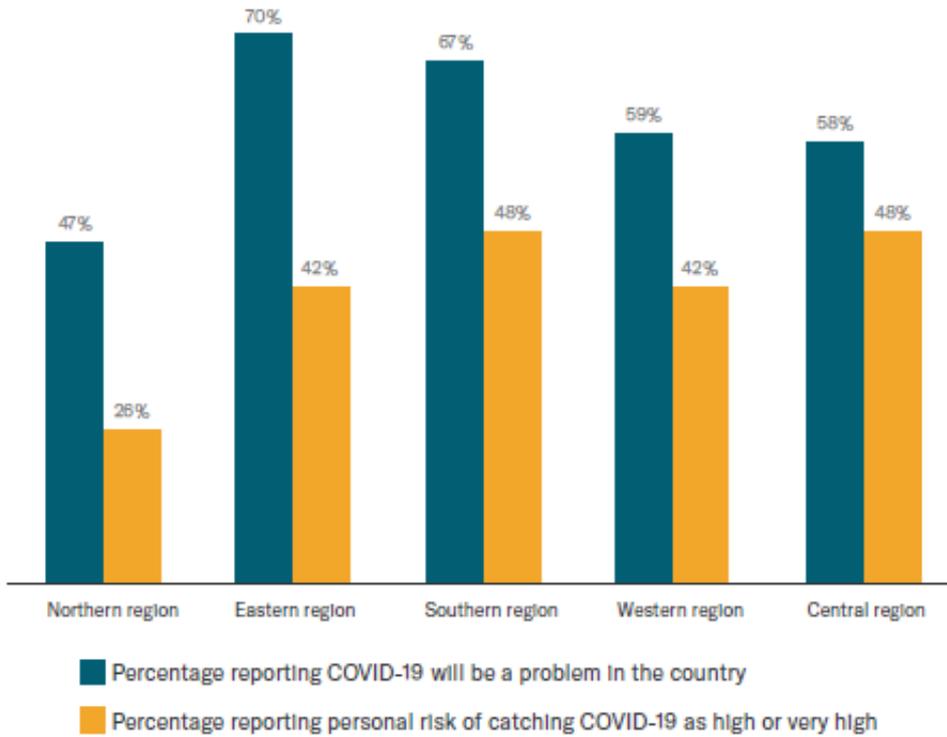
Almost every country in the world had confirmed cases of COVID-19 by May 2020, with more than 3 million reported globally. To suppress transmission of the virus, countries have adopted an array of public health and social measures, such as abstaining from handshakes and increased hand-washing, canceling religious gatherings, closing businesses and schools and stay at home policy.

These measures are a potent tool for curbing the spread of COVID-19 but have social and economic costs, requiring policymakers to weigh lives against livelihoods. Ultimately, choosing an optimal set of policies means finding a balance: measuring the rapidly evolving impact of the virus, adapting preventive measures to local needs and capacities, and mitigating the measures' most adverse effects. Low- and middle-income countries have limited resources for mitigating the pandemic and the social and economic disruption it creates.

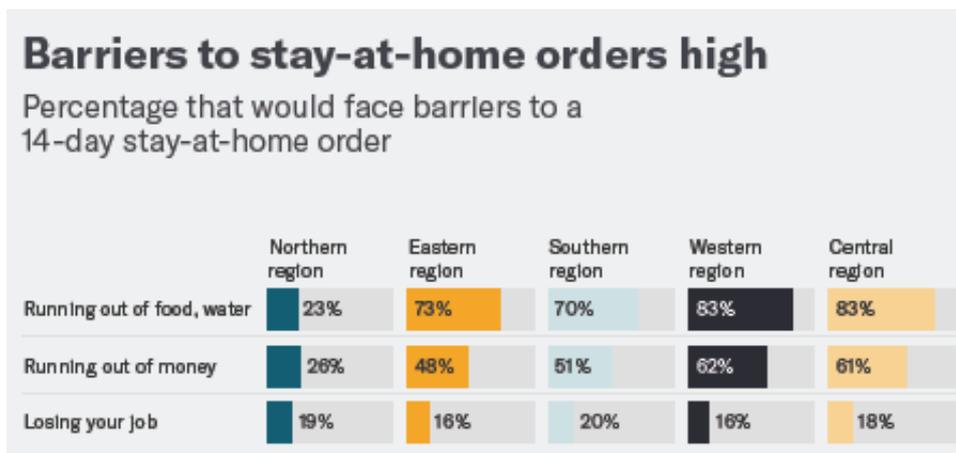
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect in Africa, particularly in the informal economy where 325 million workers make their living. Many women and men in the informal economy need to earn an income to feed themselves and their families, as most of them cannot rely on income replacement or savings. Not working and staying home means losing their jobs and their livelihoods. Lockdown measures have significantly impacted their lives, along with the many informal enterprises that are at risk of closure. No work means no income: contagion or starvation is the dilemma of informal economy of workers. Without income support lockdown measures cannot be implemented successfully. When sick, paying for health care will plunge many even more deeply into poverty. 9 out of 10 enterprises in Africa are informal and at risk of closure (International Labour Organization). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way people work and learn in unprecedented ways.

According to a report by the Partnership for Evidence Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC), respondents believe that COVID-19 poses a significant national challenge than it did to them as individuals. Close to two-third (62%) of respondents anticipate that the coronavirus will be a “big problem” in their country, but only 44% think that they will be at high risk of catching it. This low perception of personal risk could affect adherence to public health and social measures, particularly those that are maintained for long periods of time, or that require personal sacrifices.

Across the 5 African regions, respondents said they thought the virus posed a bigger risk to the Member States than it did to them as individuals

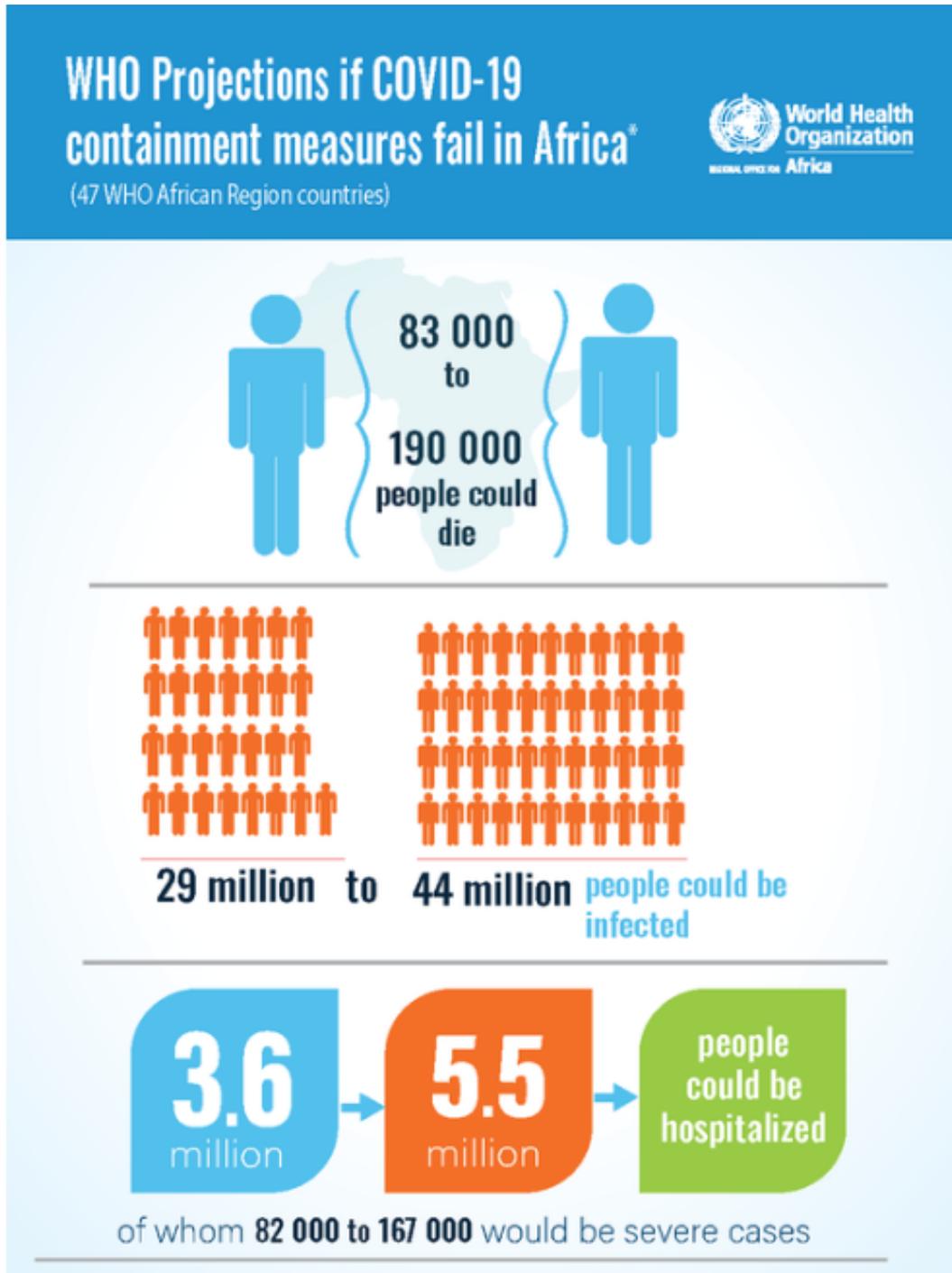


Half of respondents to the survey by PERC said they would run out of money if they had to stay home for 14 days. The lowest-income households expected to run out of food and money in less than a week. In Nigeria and Kenya, social media users have admitted that hunger has forced them to violate stay-at-home orders in order to search for food.



WHO estimates that (7 May 2020 report) up to 190 000 people could die of COVID-19 in Africa if not

controlled.



The COVID-19 outbreak has also placed heavy burdens on both employers and employees. An employer may be concerned about keeping their business running during the economic downturn, while an employee may be concerned about receiving the paychecks on which they rely to support their family.

To restrict the spread of COVID-19 in African countries there is need to build public health capacity to

test, trace, isolate, and treat cases which is the the necessary foundation for reopening society.

Taurai Masunda is a Business Analytics Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd a management and human resources consulting firm. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/taurai-masunda-b3726110b/> Phone +263 4 481946-48/481950/2900276/2900966 or cell number +263 779 320 189 or email: taurai@ipcconsultants.com or visit our website at www.ipcconsultants.com

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