



INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus also referred to as Covid-19 is an infectious disease that affects the respiratory system. Typically, transmission of the virus is through respiratory droplets spread by coughing and sneezing. A person can be infected when the virus lands on any mucus membrane. This could be in the mouth, the eyes or the nose. Currently, there is no known cure to this virus. COVID-19 surfaced in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and begun to spread rapidly, living thousands of people dead and more infected with the virus. Statics show that the Covid-19 Pandemic has since spread to 181 countries. Approximately 1,000,000 people have been infected with the virus and 53,000 people have died. The pandemic has had a direct effect on businesses in economies across the globe.

Different countries are responding differently to curb the spread of Covid-19. In China, where the first case was detected, the government initially restricted entry into the epicenter and then later imposed travel restrictions and a lockdown. Italy, the nation with the most deaths from the virus imposed a lockdown and restricted movement of the population except for necessity. The number of cases in Africa is on the rise and countries are effecting different measures.

MEASURES AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE PUT IN PLACE TO CURB THE SPREAD OF COVID 19



A total of 42 African countries have been affected by the corona virus as at 2nd April, 2020 according to the World Health Organization (WHO) bringing the total number of confirmed cases to approximately 7,000. In a bid to fight the spread of Covid-19, African countries have put in place strict measures to prevent its spread. Other countries around the world are also imposing severe restrictions on their populations. Measures that have been implemented include:

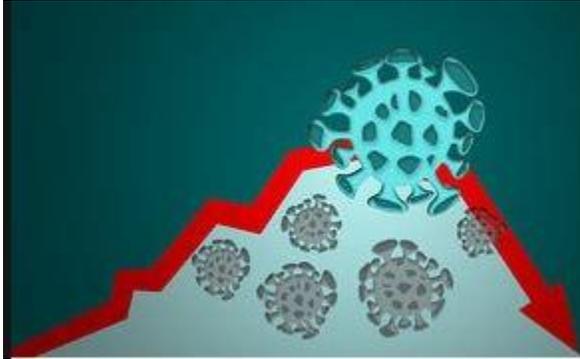
1. National lockdown. Presidents from various African countries have announced a national lockdown and the only services allowed to run are essential services, such as groceries, hospitals, pharmacies and banks. While In some countries Lockdown has been implemented in affected areas and curfew put in place.

2. Travel ban. Countries have imposed a ban on all travel from countries with high cases of the corona virus and have placed Restrictions on the issuance of entry visas into the countries. According to the Africa centers for diseases control and prevention (Africa CDC) 32 countries have full border closures and 9 have international air traffic closures though some countries are still allowing cargo, freight and emergency transport into and out of the countries. They have also shut down transportation services (internal and external). Some countries have put a ban on overloading taxis and public transportation as well as imposing restrictions on public transportation and movements between regions in the country.

3. Ban on all public gatherings including conferences, funerals, festivals, political rallies, sporting events, and religious activities. Citizens have been advised to practice social distancing and good hygiene to prevent the virus spread.
4. Shutting institutions of learning. In many African countries, schools and universities have been closed for extended Easter holiday until the current situation subsides. Learning institutions have been encouraged to utilize the online platform to ensure that learning continues.
5. Quarantine. As a control measure many countries have ordered that individuals coming into their country self-quarantine for a period of 14 days and strict quarantine for those tested positive.
6. Closure of restaurants, cafes, cafeterias, casinos, nightclubs, bars, shopping malls and local shops and markets. Whilst other countries have put limits on admittance to banks and restaurants to five customers kept six feet apart.
7. Mandatory washing with soap and clean water at all public and private establishments and Body temperature scans in airports have been installed and screening at ports of entry.
8. Governments are allocating funds from their budget to cover immediate expenses related to the pandemic.
9. Putting on mandatory leave half of civil servants and private workers with full compensation and suspension of missions of civil servants and parastatal's abroad. Other countries are suspending employee attendance at government and private workplaces (except for essential staff).
10. To help businesses during this period some countries have extended the period for tax payment, payment in installments for VAT and other withheld taxes.
11. Governments are encouraging the use of electronic communications and digital tools for meetings.

Compliance with hygiene measures recommended by the WHO such as systematic hand washing with soap and/or use of disinfectant hand gel in public offices, avoiding close contact such as shaking hands or hugging, and covering the nose when sneezing in public places.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ZAMBIAN ECONOMY



Stock prices have plummeted on the global market following the spread of the pandemic. The Dow and the FTSE recorded their biggest one day decline since 1987. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has downgraded its forecast of the world GDP to 2.4% from 2.9% and Over a 100 countries have imposed travel restrictions across the globe. These international challenges will have an effect on our local economy as well.

Currently Zambia is faced with the following economic challenges;

1. Reduced supply chain. The spread of the pandemic in China resulted in a shutdown of many factories and industries. China contributes 1/3 of the world's manufacturing sectors so the reduction in its total production resulted in the reduction in the supply of goods across the world. Africa as a whole is beginning to experience a reduction in its supply chain because of the restrictions on border movements that countries have put in place to safeguard their citizenry. This will have an effect on the trade we depend on with them as a nation.
2. Depreciation of the Kwacha. The disruptions in global trade have had an effect on demand for our largest export commodity in the country -copper. Lesser and lesser forex is trickling into the economy because of this and other factors like the reduction in demand in the tourism sector. The Kwacha has experienced a loss in value as a consequence of this. The closing of borders of neighboring countries will also have a negative effect on the performance of the local currency.
3. Increase in the general prices of goods and services are likely to go up as a result of the combined effect of the reduction in the supply chain and the depreciation of the Kwacha. The inflation rate has increased to 14% from 13% in March, 2020.

The ministry of finance in its address highlighted the economic challenges the nation is facing on a global and local scale and further put in place measures to safeguard the economy. The following is a summary of some of the measures they will/are implementing;

1. **Tax Relief.** The ministry has suspended import tax on ethanol used in the production of hand sanitizers and on concentrates in the mining sector to reduce strain on the sector. Also, they have suspended export duty on precious metals and crocodile skin.
2. **Ease Liquidity.** Government will inject 2.5 billion into the economy through; reducing outstanding arrears to domestic suppliers of goods and services, retirees under the PSPF and employee related commitments.
3. **Resource Availability from Multilateral Organizations.** The IMF and the World Bank have made available a total of \$64 billion to countries who have been affected by the pandemic by disbursing emergency facilities. The Ministry says they are already in the process of making applications.

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT



The Impact of Covid-19 in the African Continent and the world at large is one to be addressed with immediate concern to reduce the spread of the Pandemic. Different measures have been implemented across the globe depending on the magnitude of the virus in that region. Zambia has so far recorded 39 cumulative cases with one death since the outbreak. The President of the Republic of Zambia, his Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu addressed the nation to highlight the measures that would be effected in the country. The measures discussed in his address are underlined below;

1. The Zambian missions abroad and the department of immigration must be alert to review the issuance of Visas for people wanting to travel to Zambia, as well as at all ports of entry into the country for all travelers from countries affected by Covid-19.
2. Travelers will be allowed entry into Zambia, however, upon screening those who exhibit symptoms will be quarantined in a medical facility for treatment, while all other travelers without symptoms will be quarantined for at least 14 days at their own cost.
3. Government has suspended non-essential foreign travel particularly to countries which have confirmed Covid-19 cases.

4. Public gatherings such as conferences, weddings, funerals, and festivals are to be restricted to at least 50 people subject to them complying with public health authority guidelines.
5. Restaurants must operate only on a take-away and delivery basis.
6. All bars, night clubs, cinemas, gyms and casinos must close.
7. All International flights to and from Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe and Mfuwe International airports are suspended, instead, all International flights should land and depart from Kenneth Kaunda International airport only, to ensure efficient and effective screening of travelers, as well as following them up by our health authorities.

