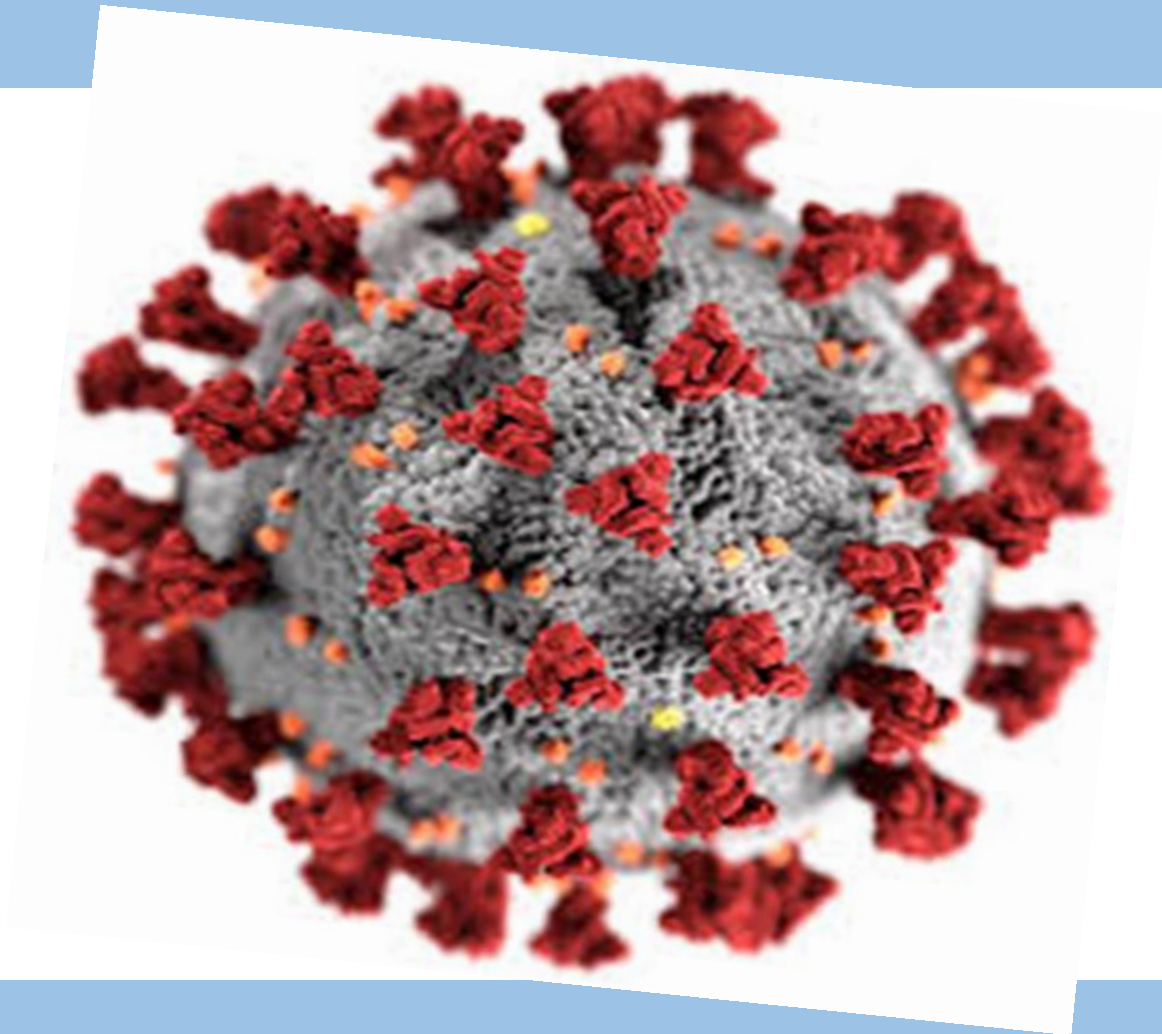




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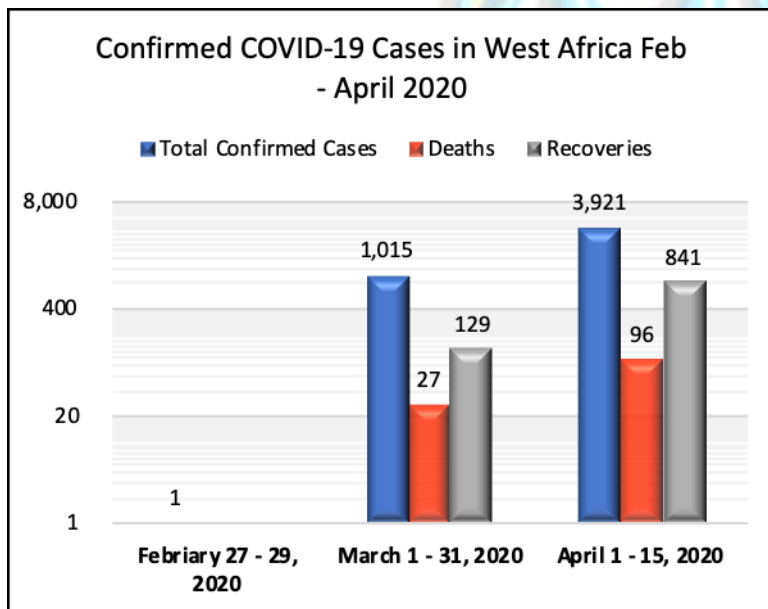


Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in West Africa: Vulnerabilities,
Threats, Risks and Scenarios

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Brief Background

Since the emergence of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Governments across the World have faced health, infrastructural and humanitarian challenges to contain the spread of the disease and mitigate its impact on human security. Current statistics indicate that confirmed cases of infections stand at **2,034,425** while the fatality figures currently stand at 133,261 (*as at April 15, 2020*)¹. According to a global projection by the Imperial College, COVID-19 Response Team, the infection rate of the pandemic is likely to cause the death of about 40 million people in 2020². However, mitigation strategies focusing on shielding the elderly (60% reduction of social contacts) and slowing but not interrupting community transmission (40% reduction in social contacts for wider population) could reduce this burden by half, saving 20 million lives and overwhelmed health systems across the world³. Apart from this, the effect is also likely to be most severe in lower-income communities where capacity is palpably low⁴.



In the West Africa region, the pandemic has spread across the 15 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Since the confirmation of the first case on February 27, 2020, in Nigeria, the number of confirmed

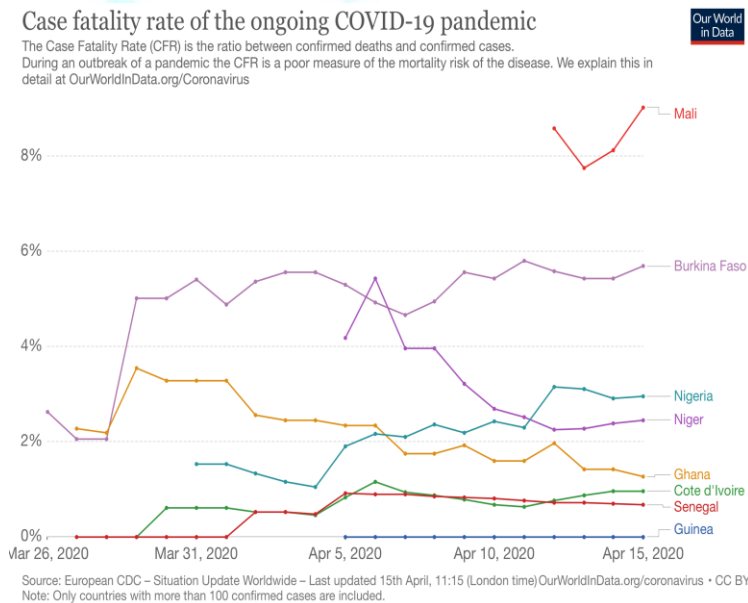
¹ See: <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6> (Accessed 15/04/2020 at 12.53 GMT).

² Patrick GT Walker, Charles Whittaker, Oliver Watson et al. The Global Impact of COVID-19 and Strategies for mitigation and suppression. Imperial College London (2020), doi: <http://doi.org/10.25561/777735> (Accessed 10/04/2020).

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

cases has risen to more than 3,921 (**A 392,100% increase since February 2020**) with 96 deaths and 841 recoveries in the ECOWAS region⁵. The threat has led to various levels of actions by ECOWAS through the West Africa Health Organisation (WAHO) as well as individual efforts by the various Member States to contain the spread. Such mitigation efforts of States include contact tracing, testing and treatment of infected persons in line with international protocols, social distancing, state of public health emergency and lockdown measures – air, land and sea – with significant impact on socio-economic activities across the region.



Global statistics suggest a low mortality and infection rate in West Africa with an average confirmed fatality rate (CFR) value ranging from 0.25 per cent to 10 per cent⁶. **(Figure 2)** The graph shows the trajectory of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths in countries that have recorded more than 100

cases. It also indicates that Mali has 148 confirmed cases but with higher CFR of over 9 per cent (13 deaths reported) compared to Guinea with 404 confirmed cases but with lower CFR of about 0.00 per cent (no death reported as at April 15, 2020). This suggests that more people have died of COVID-19 in Mali compared to the number of confirmed cases in the country. Despite this trend, health experts indicate that the region faces a higher risk of spread and mortality due to poor and underequipped health infrastructure and limited personnel to enhance robust response to the spread of the pandemic.

⁵ Op. Cit. www.arcgis.com

⁶ See: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus#what-do-we-know-about-the-risk-of-dying-from-covid-19> (Accessed 10/04/2020).

Additionally, the dense urban population across most West African cities is likely to hamper enforcement of social distancing as a measure to curtail the spread of the pandemic among populations. This is also likely to be exacerbated by the acute economic impact of the pandemic on West African economies as a result of the global economic recession associated with the coronavirus. The risk of food insecurity, job cuts coupled with the increase in prices of goods and service is likely to result in citizens protests, with potential threats to peace and security within the region.

Demographic Analysis

The population of West Africa has increased significantly with an estimated 396million inhabitants reported in 2019 compared to 100million in 1960⁷. The median age in the region is 18.2 and 66 per cent of the population under the age of 25⁸.

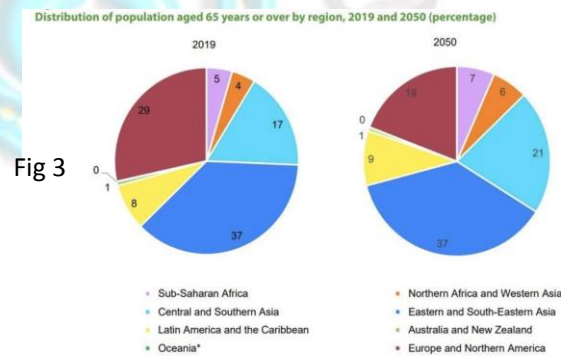


Fig 3

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019*. *Excluding Australia and New Zealand.
Distributions of over the over 65s by region. Image: UN World Population Ageing 2019

In terms of population density, Nigeria holds more than half of the regional population (about 200 million people) followed by Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Cabo Verde⁹. The demographic analysis of the age structure underlines an increase in young people in most of these countries with a much smaller proportion of the population who are above 65 years. The low statistics of aged

⁷ See: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/western-africa-population/> (Accessed 10-04-2020)

⁸ Ibid

⁹ See: <https://countryeconomy.com/countries/groups/economic-community-west-african-states> (Accessed 10-04-2020).

population could suggest the reason for low mortality rate in West Africa in view of the global death rate from the disease that have claimed the lives of over 60% of older population above 65 years.

However, the young population in West Africa with underlying health conditions predominant in the region such as such as diabetis, tuberculosis, lassa fever, cholera, HIV/AIDS, high cholesterol levels, drug addiction, respiratory tract infections and other opportunistic infections, could face higher risk of mortality in the region as the community spread of the infection increases

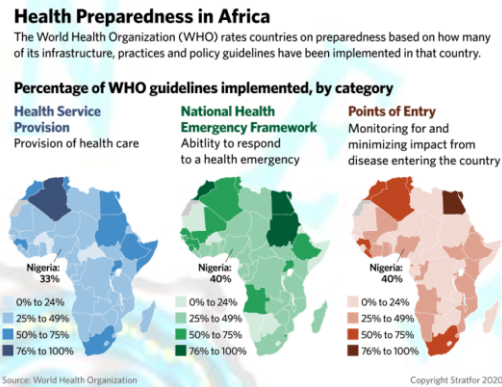


Fig 4

Also, prevailing weak disease surveillance systems and poor public health infrastructure in West Africa contribute to encumber containment of disease outbreaks and increase in morbidity. Such condition also limits mass screening, testing, tracing and medical management programmes developed to mitigate the spread of the infectious diseases like cholera, malaria, Lassa fever, Ebola, and even the current coronavirus pandemic. For instance, between January and August 2019, more than 40,000 confirmed cases of cholera with over 846 deaths were reported across the region, the most affected being Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia¹⁰. Malaria is also one of the leading causes of death in West Africa. Each year, between 395,000 and 620,000 people, especially children younger than five-years-old and pregnant women die from malaria¹¹. Such fragility in public health infrastructure and management could pose a higher risk of the spread and mortality of COVID-19 across the region.

¹⁰ See: WANEP Monthly Bulletins (January – August 2019). Available at www.wanep.org (Accessed 10-04-2020).

¹¹ See: <https://ourworldindata.org/malaria> (Accessed 11-04-2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic could have reaching consequences on the health, safety and security of women and children. A significant percentage of essential micro businesses such as food markets across major cities in West Africa are managed and operated by women who are inadequately equipped with requisite public health and safety standards. It therefore places them at higher infection rate as they are more exposed to social contacts in their daily businesses. At domestic level they constitute the primary care givers to their children as well and therefore can inadvertently increase the spread of the virus. In addition, reports from Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) estimates that over 70 per cent of Africa's food is produced by women¹². In West Africa, rural women are mostly engaged in subsistence farming and often responsible for children, the sick and elderly¹³. The potential risk faced by this population will increase community spread and also negatively impact food security across the region.

Conflict-affected communities are likely to suffer further heightened food insecurity, with the associated risk of tensions and violence due to competition over limited food, water and other resources. Lessons learned during the Ebola outbreak in West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia indicates high cases of sexual and gender-based violence during lockdowns and quarantine. According to the UN Population Fund, more than 18,000 girls experienced unwanted pregnancy in Sierra Leone as a result of ebola pandemic¹⁴. Therefore there is a potential risk of this occurrence in the region if concerted social and security efforts are not enforced to mitigate this threat during this pandemic.

Another possible condition for the spread of the virus in the region is the existing congestion of the major cities in the region as well as the population density of slums in these cities. A study report by UN Habitat (2010) reveals that most countries in Africa

¹²<http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/women.pdf> (30/03/2020).

¹³<http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/fsheets/women.pdf> (30/03/2020).

¹⁴<https://www.unfpa.org/news/one-year-after-ebolas-end-sierra-leones-midwives-help-mend-health-system> (Accessed 30/03/2020).

would have more than 50% of the population living in urban areas by 2030¹⁵. In West Africa, most rural-urban migrants live in slums (see graph below)¹⁶ and out of 20 notable slums in Africa, nine are found in West Africa¹⁷. These slums and communities are already over-crowded with poor sanitation, acute water shortage and other inadequacies in basic social services. These challenges make social distancing, handwashing and other restrictions on human movement ineffective and difficult to enforce.

Related to the above, is the challenge of weak border security management including the existence of porous borders and illegal crossing points in West Africa. Border closures and other lockdown measures have not reduced illegal migration across borders of the region. Such illegal crossings already



Source: UN-Habitat <http://www.unhabitat.org/stats/>
Fig 5: Shows the per centage of Urban Population living in slums in West Africa

exist in the borders of Nigeria with Niger, Benin, Chad and Cameroun. It also exists in the borders of Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire This could heighten exposure and complicate health screenings, testing and contact tracing. With the interconnectedness of States in the region due to the existing ECOWAS protocol of free movement of peoples, it is likely there will be spikes of inter-state transmission of the disease. For instance, Ghana reported 10 new confirmed COVID-19 cases on March 29, involving ten Nigeriens who travelled through Burkina Faso and Togo into Tamale, North of Ghana¹⁸. Also, Togo's index case crossed into the country using the land border with Benin¹⁹. This also applies to the index case reported in Benin.

¹⁵ See: UN-Habitat Report. Available at <http://www.unhabitat.org/stats/> (Accessed 10-04-2020).

¹⁶ See: <https://acetforafrica.org/publications/the-west-africa-trends-newsletter/the-future-of-slums-rethinking-their-place-in-west-african-cities/> (Accessed 11-04-2020).

¹⁷ <http://www.africanranking.com/20-worst-slums-in-africa/5/> (Assessed on 14 April 2020)

¹⁸ See: <https://www.ghanahealthservice.org/covid19/archive.php> (Accessed 12-04-2020).

¹⁹ See: <https://www.africanews.com/2020/03/17/coronavirus-south-africa-confirms-first-case/> (Accessed 12-04-2020).

Economic Vulnerabilities

The state of public health emergency and lockdown have socio-economic implications for countries in the region. Already, the pandemic is having a devastating effect on lives, disrupting small and large scale businesses, subsistence agriculture as well as other economic activities. Academic calendars across all levels of education have been disrupted due to school closures. Shut down of small and medium scale businesses have increased the risk of job cuts and losses, inflation, the slowdown in foreign direct investments, tourism, as well as unintended increases in health and security spending across member states in the region.

It has been indicated by global financial institutions such as World Bank and the International Monetary Funds that the global economy has entered into recession with projected growth less than 2.5 per cent in 2020 across all the regions²⁰. The analysis also suggests Africa's GDP would be hit by at least \$25 billion deficit²¹. This is likely to affect the informal sector as well as small and medium enterprises of West African economies. As such, job cuts, unemployment and other austerity measures could trigger protests, with significant threat to the stability of

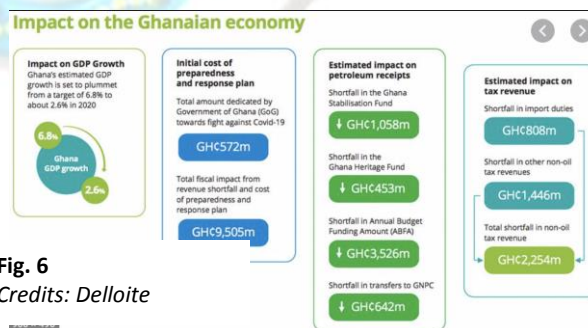


Fig. 6
Credits: Deloitte

states. With many lower-income countries in West Africa, this could cripple the economies and equally translate into dramatic losses in household income. Furthermore, various governments in the region have announced stimulus financial packages to cushion the effect of the pandemic on the economy. However, strategies to ensure transparent and equitable distribution of such packages have been challenged by its citizens in view of wide spread corruption as well as poor statistical data on

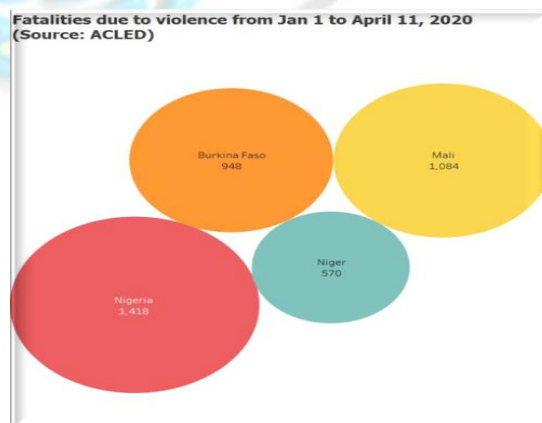
²⁰<https://www.odi.org/blogs/16764-economic-impact-coronavirus-five-lessons-and-challenges> (Accessed 30/03/2020).

²¹ibid.

population and income distribution. West Africa’s strongest economies such as Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire have been economically impacted by the pandemic. Nigeria for instance has been forced to readjust its projected 2020 revenue from crude oil downwards amid a steep decline in the global price of oil due to low demand caused by the pandemic. With over 90% economic dependence on oil revenue this is likely to worsen its capacity to manage its economy and makes it difficult for the Government to weather the crisis without external financial support²². In Ghana, the pandemic has led to the downgrade of its projected 2020 Gross Domestic Product from 6.8% to 2.6%.²³ The impact of these economies arising from the pandemic will further undermine the cross border trade as enshrined in the ECOWAS treaty of free movement of goods and services and limit the economic prospects of poorer countries with weaker economies in the region to actualize their revenue projections for 2020. It will also lead to the inability of the ECOWAS Commission to fully access the 0.5 community levy on Value Added Tax (VAT) applicable to all member states for 2020. This could pose a challenge for the Commission to actualise its projected regional goals for 2020/2021.

The Implication for upcoming Elections

The spread of the pandemic and nature of its infection have also disrupted preparations towards the scheduled elections between October and December 2020 in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana and Niger. With the declarations of



public health emergencies and lockdown measures, the Electoral Management Bodies in the various affected countries are challenged to roll out their pre election action plans. The Electoral Commission (EC) and the National Identification Authority (NIA) in Ghana, for instance, have been forced to halt registration processes due to possible spread of

²² Chukwuka Onyekwena and Mma Amara Ekereuche, “Understanding the Impact of the Covid 19 Outbreak on the Nigeria Economy. Brooking Institute. April 8, 2020

²³ Deloitte, “The Economic Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Economy of Ghana

the disease. Also, Burkina Faso continues to experience daily attacks from extremist groups in the North and North-east amidst the nationwide threats of COVID-19. The borders have been closed and issuance of Voter ID cards have been put on hold. Political uncertainty has also deepened in Guinea, as a referendum and parliamentary elections were held against the backdrop of fatal opposition protests and the COVID-19 pandemic. If this trend continues, it may affect the entire electoral calendar in the affected countries as well as a possible escalation of tension and politically motivated violence in the immediate post-pandemic period. More importantly, measures introduced by Governments to curb the spread of the pandemic also have the potential to inhibit voter turnout in the upcoming elections of Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger and Cote d'Ivoire if the pandemic continues. There are also concerns among stakeholders as regards the possibility of re-scheduling elections if the pandemic continues to escalate. In Ghana, experts have commenced discussions around constitutional provisions to support a readjustment of the election calendar and preparation in the event of a worse case scenario.

COVID-19 and Human Security Implications

Other key fragilities that could accelerate the transmission of the virus include protracted low to high intensity conflicts, terrorism, internally displacements and refugee camps. Irrespective of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, violent extremist groups operating in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria continue to execute deadly attacks. Between January 1 and April 12, 2020, there has been 1,090 terrorist and armed attacks²⁴ with 4,020 fatalities in the region²⁵. The humanitarian situation in the affected countries continues to worsen. The civilian population is the worst casualty, causing more internal displacements, refugees and migrant flows. For instance, more than 765,000 people, particularly women and children have been displaced with 95 per cent in camps in host communities in Burkina Faso²⁶. Similarly, 25,000 people have fled

²⁴ See: WANEP Monthly Bulletins (January – April 2020). Available at www.wanep.org (Accessed 11-04-2020).

²⁵ See: <https://acleddata.com> (Accessed 11-04-2020).

²⁶ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/burkina-faso/> (Accessed 12/04/2020).

the country as refugees in neighbouring countries²⁷. Also, Niger is currently hosting over 246,000 refugees (mostly from Nigeria and Chad) and 186,000 displaced persons, primarily in Diffa, Tillabéri and Maradi who were forced to flee from violent extremist attacks²⁸. Over 174,000 displaced persons have also been reported in the Central region of Mopti in Mali²⁹. These IDPs and Refugee camps are ideal spaces for the transmission of the coronavirus disease. The camps are usually overcrowded and lack adequate health, water, sanitation and hygiene protocols and could increase the rapid spread and fatalities from Covid-19 in these countries. This situation continues to undermine response to COVID-19 transmission and the ability of the Governments of Nigeria, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso to protect its citizens from the pandemic in areas controlled by the extremist groups. In addition, increase in public insecurity has been reported in some major cities of the region caused by neighbourhood gangs and criminals who have capitalized on the lockdown to attack and rob homes with limited protection of citizens from security agencies. The security agencies have also been implicated in human rights abuses, violence and fatalities due to the application of extreme measures to enforce the lockdown orders in some major cities of the region including Nigeria and Senegal

Fear, Stigma and Discrimination

An emerging challenge that could undermine the entire COVID-19 pandemic response efforts is the increased fear, stigma and discrimination directed at victims, survivors and affected families, health workers and other frontline personnel. There have been breaches of privacy of individuals, survivors and health workers by members of their communities. This new wave of community reaction has the potential to explode into violence and public disorder. It could also serve as a major barrier to prevent the early access to testing and treatment centres as well as other support services which is counterproductive to limit the transmission of the virus. The social media propaganda, misinformation with religious connotations and conspiracies have led to various negative

²⁷ See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1054981> (Accessed on 12/04/2020).

²⁸ See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/niger/overview> (Accessed 12/04/2020).

²⁹ See: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Mali%20Situation%20Regional%20Update%20-%20April%20-%20June%202019-.pdf> (Accessed 12/04/2020)

responses and violence from vulnerable communities who have opposed governments effort to contain the spread of the virus. Non compliance to announced protocols of prevention has been raised by experts as the greatest threat to the spread and impact of the pandemic in West Africa and the Continent. There are projections that in the light of limited testing kits as well as non compliance of social distancing orders could put the entire region and continent as the epicenter of the pandemic towards the end of the second quarter and early third quarter of 2020.³⁰

Ongoing Mitigating Factors

- Healthcare systems of the States including hospitals, clinics and public health units are on emergency alert and the personnel under tremendous stress to respond to the growing trends of the pandemic. Some ECOWAS Members States have declared a state of public health emergency, while others are on lockdown to slow the spread of the virus and provide care to infected persons.
- Member States have heightened preventive measures and ensured the maintenance of law and order by deploying security personnel to support and ensure compliance with the lockdown restrictions.
- Governments of member states have been providing daily updates on the epidemiological situation and national responses to address the spread of the pandemic. This has contributed to limit the spread of misinformation and rumour about the virus in social media spaces. In addition, member states have approved health and economic stimulus packages to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses; capacity building for health workers and ensured provision of critical health equipment to health facilities; delivered water supplies to hard-to-reach communities and handwashing facilities to maintain high levels of hygiene.
- ECOWAS through WAHO is providing support to the Member States in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 pandemic through the issuance of guidance and

³⁰ The East African, "450,000 Africans Projected to Contract COVID-19 by May 2020. April 2020

training of laboratory practitioners on diagnostic processes, test kits (provided 100 test kits to 14 countries and 200 test kits to Nigeria)³¹. Also, a regional strategic plan on preparedness and response to the pandemic was developed and adopted by the ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers.

- Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundation in collaboration with the African Union (AU) Centre for Disease Control and Prevention donated vital medical supplies to countries in all regions of the continent. The consignment included more than 1.5 million laboratory diagnostic test kits and over 100 tons of infection prevention and personal protective equipment³².
- State-private partnership and cooperation have also been an integral part of responses. Across the region, individual philanthropists, religious groups, Non Governmental Organisations and private companies have been donating health equipment, food and financial resources to support governments' efforts to curb the pandemic.
- The media, both traditional and social media have been playing a critical role in educating and sensitizing the public on safety measures and updating on the current state of the pandemic.
- The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the G20 and Africa Development Bank have endorsed financial stimulus supports, loans and grants to Africa countries that will alleviate the economic and social impact of the pandemic in the continent.

SCENARIOS

The Economy

Best case scenario: The economic stimulus packages as declared and implemented by the governments sustain and support small and medium scale businesses in the short-medium term of 2020. Despite a reduction on local revenue generation, governments

³¹ ECOWAS Statement issued on March 21, 2020, by the President, H.E Jean-Claude Kassi BROU, "ECOWAS Provides Support to Member States in the fight against the spread of Coronavirus Disesae 2019 (COVID-19). (Accessed 30/03/2020).

³²<https://www.africa-newsroom.com/press/jack-ma-and-alibaba-foundations-donate-covid19-medical-equipment-to-african-union-member-states> (Accessed 30/03/2020).

embark on rapid micro economic credits for small and medium scale businesses affected by the lockdown. Organised cooperatives become relevant and conduits for application, access and distribution of these stimulus packages. Governments minimize the negative economic projections as well as its impact on the GDP. African Development Bank, World Bank and International Monetary Fund provide economic stimulus with favorable repayment plans to Member States of ECOWAS. Also debt reliefs are provided to balance the shock on the regional economies. Member States such as Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire moderate policies on border restrictions for movement and trade of essential goods and services along the coast and within the region to shore up poor economies and also contain the overall economic impact in the region. This creates the pathway for business confidence and quick recovery of the economies post COVID 19 pandemic. Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire commit to completing their financial obligation to ECOWAS and also support favourable policies that reduce the deficit from community tax levies.

Worst case scenario: Preventive measures such as state of public health emergencies, lockdowns, restrictions of movements of persons, goods and services to limit the spread of the pandemic adversely affect the regional economy. It leads to shortages in essential supplies, worsening inflation on prices of basic commodities such as food and drinks as well as other good and services across the region. This creates a knock-on effect on the hospitality and tourism industry, trade, Foreign Direct Investment and regional integration. Governments sources of revenue are depleted, thereby weakening projected expenditures on capital and recurrent projects for 2020. Austerity measures are introduced by the Governments. Small scale businesses collapse and there is high deficit in the agricultural sector leading to food insecurity. There is increase in unemployment, job cuts and delay of payments of wages in the private sector. Continued frustration and anxiety among the population trigger industrial protests and demonstrations in some member states. There is increased legal cases against governments in Industrial dispute management courts and the ECOWAS Court of

Justice. These conditions heighten socio-economic and political tensions in countries with fragile communities such as Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Guinea Bissau. Criminal networks take advantage of the situation to increase their membership and operations. Funding of criminal activities such as violent extremism, drugs, arms and human trafficking increases in the region. ECOWAS as a Commission is challenged on many fronts to address the economic and security impact of the pandemic with limited resources and weak response.

Politics

Best case scenario: Some West African States including Ghana, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire preparing their elections in 2020 are constrained to adjust the electoral calendars to ensure the proper conduct of their elections. These rescheduled legal and technical timeframe are accepted by the citizens who appreciate the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Through multi-stakeholder dialogues and national conversations, member states agree on a new election timeframe. Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and political parties implement the new timeframe to complete voter registration, nominations, manifestos and campaigns ahead of the elections. Elections are conducted within the scheduled period leading to peaceful transitions.

Governments in the region publish the report of their expenditure of the stimulus package which is available to the public. The citizens are satisfied with the report and it increases public confidence and the voluntary obligation of citizens to comply and support post COVID 19 initiatives.

Worst case scenario: In view of the spread and fatalities from the pandemic in West Africa, Electoral Commissions in the region are forced to halt preparations as governments become financially incapacitated to fund election activities. It adversely affects political transitions leading to constitutional crises. Governments in affected

countries defer scheduled elections amid protests by opposition parties, civil society and citizens who challenge the unconstitutionality of ruling government's decision to extend its stay in office. Efforts to enact a law in parliament to support the decision fails. Civil society organisations and opposition political parties consider such actions a breach of the Constitution. Public protests and demonstrations are widespread in some member states such as Guinea, Ghana and Burkina Faso. As violence escalates, government declares a state of emergency in affected areas. Police and military are deployed to maintain law and order.

There are reports of corruption and embezzlement of funds of economic stimulus packages by government officials. It further compounds ongoing demonstrations and violent protests by the citizens. There are calls for removal of political actors and the destruction of government properties.

Socio-cultural

Best case scenario: Citizens fully comply with the lockdown directives issued by the governments as well as social distancing and health protocols. The number of confirmed cases and mortality rates remain low and community transmission is contained. Contact tracing and community testing continues. As the testing and tracing bends the curve of transmission in the region, member states gradually suspend lockdown orders with strict compliance to health protocols. Governments utilize all media channels to disseminate information, raise awareness and improve education and enlightenment on the pandemic. Citizens disregard social media misinformation and avoid actions that exposes them to violence and negative impact of the pandemic. Recovery rates improve and the infection rate declines. Survivors of the infection utilize the social and traditional media to enlighten their communities which reduces community stigma and fear. Governments response strategies are applauded while human rights is respected. Governments proactive action to set up helplines on domestic violence and SGBV yields results as security actions ensure that the levels of violence and number of cases reported are contained.

Worst case scenario: Affected countries fail to enforce lockdowns, social distancing and other COVID-19 preventive measures. This accelerates the number of confirmed cases in the affected countries, eventually overwhelming all medical facilities. The continuously increasing cases and the highly overwhelmed facilities accelerate the mortality rate. This eventually cripples all available resources leaving the affected member states even more vulnerable to the pandemic. There are increased reports of violent attacks, discrimination and rejection of COVID-19 victims, survivors and frontline workers in communities leading to violence. The clashes and fatalities between security agencies and the citizens increase as communities defy the lockdown orders and measures initiated by government.



Building Relationships for Peace