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COVID-19 Policy in Africa - Countries grapple with Virus containment and subsequent Economic consequences

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Abstracts

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SUMMARY

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, Africa was seen to be a disaster waiting to happen once the virus was to take a hold on the continent. Millions of deaths were predicted due to the underdevelopment of the region and with many countries ranking low on the United Nation's Human Development Index, based on health, education and standard of living. However, the number of cases reported and mortality remains low. There are issues surrounding testing capacity, reliable reporting and death registration but overall there has been a success in containment of the coronavirus so far.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

> African healthcare systems are significantly less equipped or prepared for a large scale outbreak than countries in other regions. As well as this population density is very high in numerous cities which aids virus transmission. Across the world COVID-19 deaths have predominantly occurred in older segments of the population which is likely to have benefited Africa.
>
> The median age for the whole of Africa is 19.7 with around 40% of the continent younger than 14, according to World Bank data. Although not conducted on a large scale there have been some antibody surveys which have suggested that a high number of the continents population have the sufficient antibodies for

protection. Either many more have been infected but have been asymptomatic or there is another currently unknown explanation

Experience from combatting epidemics such as Ebola and Lassa fever meant that the continent had more experience dealing with similar crises. Travel restrictions, school closure and curfews were implemented much earlier in Africa compared with other continents often before some countries had even detected a case. The African Centre for Disease Control (Africa CDC) has led the direction of the 54 countries of Africa into an alliance. The African Union has also had an important impact creating an online purchasing platform allowing governments to buy equipment such as testing kits, N95 masks and ventilators directly from manufacturers, some of which is now produced in Africa too.

Despite success in containment of COVID-19, lockdowns across the continent have created economic difficulty. The crash in oil prices impacted some nations, notably Angola as its economy is heavily reliant on the fossil fuels. Reports have suggested that lockdowns, with even moderate restrictions, can create huge economic difficulty in the poorest countries which have knock on effects on health and education. So far the African diaspora which extends across the globe has been hugely significant in quashing the economic damage of COVID-19 but the World Bank estimates remittances from migrant workers could fall by as much as 20% this year.

SCOPE

Learn how the virus has spread into Africa

Understand how the continent is dealing with its spread

What regions are coping and which are failing

See what can be learned from the African experience with the virus

REASONS TO BUY

What countries in Africa are coping better?

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Which strategies are being deploying?

How does it compare to the spread in Europe and North America?

Are there any lessons to be learned for the future?

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