



SADC REGIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Report on the COVID-19 Pandemic in the SADC Region
with a Specific focus on its Impact on Fisheries
and Aquaculture Value Chains

Bulletin No. 6

#COVID19SADC

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ABOUT SADC

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an organisation founded and maintained by countries in southern Africa that aim to further the socio-economic, political and security cooperation among its Member States and foster regional integration in order to achieve peace, stability and wealth. The Member States are: Angola, Botswana, Union of Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bulletin 6 of the SADC Regional Response to COVID-19 provides highlights on recent tools and guidelines released by the World Health Organization (WHO). These include a case report form for a suspected case of Multi system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) as well as guidance in recommendations for mass gatherings, which is a resource to be used by Member States. The report further highlights the resolution adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA). The resolution seeks to establish the origins of the novel coronavirus as well as initiate an “impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation” on the response of the WHO to the coronavirus crisis.

The global, continental and regional situation of COVID-19 is also presented. The Bulletin also present the impact of COVID-19 on value chains, with emphasis on the fisheries and aquaculture value chain which was deliberated during the virtual meeting of Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security, and Fisheries and Aquaculture held on 22 May 2020. Further, the Bulletin provides updates on the implementation of the SADC Guidelines on the Harmonization and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the region, and on the Secretariat’s resource mobilization efforts towards COVID -19.

Key recommendations from the report include;

- The gradual resumption of economic activities to be conducted simultaneously with the scaling up of the testing capacity in areas where public health measures are being lifted.
- The testing policy should be informed by the epidemiological scenarios in the country and must follow WHO recommendations in terms of prioritization of populations and individuals and priority should be given to testing of health care workers, communities with clusters and exposed individuals in quarantine.
- Ensuring supply chain access with consideration of gender, and, for those operations exporting within the region, continent and overseas, ensuring continued access to and cooperation from officials at ports, rail and border crossings so they can maintain their sales.
- Continuous Implementation of the SADC guidelines on facilitation of cross-border transportation with emphasis on adopting harmonized test protocols including mutual recognition of test results and agreement on validity period of test result.

1. GLOBAL OUTLOOK

On 20 May 2020, WHO issued an alert on suspected cases of multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) in children. MIS is a condition where different body organs become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin eyes or gastrointestinal system. This inflammatory condition was first reported in children in the United States and it's now increasingly reported by other countries around the world. It has been established that many children with the multisystem inflammatory syndrome had the virus that cause COVID-19, or have been around someone with COVID-19. MIS-C can be serious, even deadly, but most children who were diagnosed with this condition get better with medical care.

WHO Member States are now encouraged to report suspected cases of MIC-C by using the case report form on this link:

[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/case-report-form-for-suspected-cases-of-multisystem-inflammatory-syndrome-\(mis\)-in-children-and-adolescents-temporally-related-to-covid-19](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/case-report-form-for-suspected-cases-of-multisystem-inflammatory-syndrome-(mis)-in-children-and-adolescents-temporally-related-to-covid-19)

WHO has also published guidance on key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19, The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to governments, health authorities and national or international organizers of mass gatherings on containing risks of COVID-19 transmission associated with mass gathering events.

<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/key-planning-recommendations-for-mass-gatherings-in-the-context-of-the-current-covid-19-outbreak>

2. COVID-19 GLOBAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SUMMARY BY 30 MAY 2020

Situation in numbers (by WHO Region)

Total (new cases in last 24 hours)

Globally	5 817 385 cases (116 048)	362 705 deaths (5 017)
Africa	96 902 cases (3 973)	2 482 deaths (55)
Americas	2 677 500 cases (64 408)	154 608 deaths (3 396)
Eastern Mediterranean	489 921 cases (14 502)	12 078 deaths (245)
Europe	2 122 350 cases (19 776)	179 353 deaths (975)
South-East Asia	249 525 cases (11 445)	7 157 deaths (313)
Western Pacific	180 446 cases (1 944)	7 014 deaths (33)

3. 73RD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Following a series of consultations with Member States on the holding of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly. World Health Assembly was held from 18-19 May 2020. The objective was to discuss and adopt a resolution to find a way to address the pandemic. The meeting was conducted virtually through a secured access to videoconference. WHO Member States had the opportunity to share their experiences on COVID-19 and the Director General of the WHO presented the global report on

COVID-19. The WHA adopted a Resolution on coronavirus response. The resolution seeks to establish the origins of the novel coronavirus as well as initiate an "impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation" on the response of the WHO to the coronavirus crisis.

4. OUTLOOK ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT AND SADC REGION

The past week marked 3 months since the COVID-19 hit the shores of the continent. In addition, this was the commemoration of Africa Week, which falls in this period of COVID-19. With around half of the countries on the continent having community transmission, concentrated mainly in major cities, Africa is the least-affected region globally in terms of the number of cases and deaths reported by WHO. Africa has just 1.5 percent of the world's reported cases of COVID-19, and less than 0.1 percent of the world's deaths. Testing capacity in Africa is still being ramped up and there is a likelihood that some cases may be missed. But even so, Africa appears to have so far been spared the scale of outbreaks we have seen in other regions of the world.

Many health experts including the WHO, attribute this apparent success in the control of Covid-19 at this point in time to some of the following factors;

- Countries across Africa have garnered a great deal of experience from tackling infectious diseases like polio, measles, Ebola, yellow fever, influenza and many more and as such have used that experience in addressing COVID-19.
- Africa's knowledge and experience of suppressing infectious diseases has been critical to rapidly scaling up an agile response to COVID-19.
- Countries also worked together with Africa CDC and WHO to extend training for laboratory technicians for detection of COVID-19 and to build up the national capacity across the region. Progress in epidemic response on the continent. All countries in Africa now have a preparedness and response plan in place, compared with less than a dozen in the first few weeks of the pandemic.
- 48 countries in the region have a community engagement plan in place, compared with only 25 countries 10 weeks ago
- 51 countries have laboratory-testing capacity for COVID-19, compared with forty (40) countries 10 weeks ago.

5. OUTLOOK IN THE SADC REGION

As at 31 May 2020, COVID-19 cases in the SADC region stood at **39,662**, with **817 deaths** and **19,150 recoveries**. Seychelles has become COVID-19 free with no active cases. Mauritius and South Africa have significantly increased testing which is an important aspect of managing COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

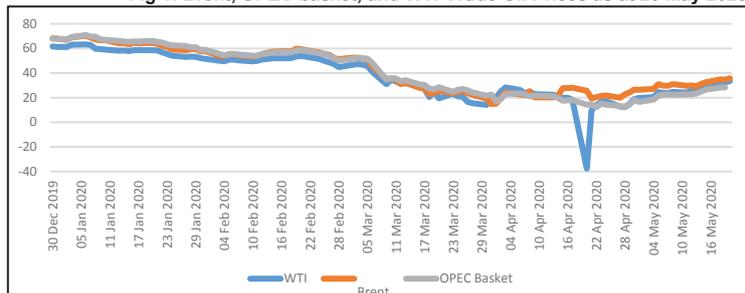
- The easing of lockdown measures should be conducted in a phased approach as advised in the last edition of this report.
- The gradual resumption of economic activities to be conducted simultaneously with the scaling up of the testing capacity in areas where public health measures are being lifted.
- The testing policy should be informed by the epidemiological scenarios in the country and must follow WHO recommendations in terms of prioritization of populations and individuals.
- The highest priority for testing should be given to localities with higher clusters of cases, healthcare workers and exposed individuals in quarantine.

6. IMPACT FROM THE ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

The reopening of economies and accompanying easing of lockdown restrictions has resulted in increased economic activity globally and regionally. However, there is an increase in human movements and interactions which can trigger an outbreak if not managed properly through continued adherence to strict health and safety protocols. Additionally, countries have made considerable progress in enhancing the preparedness of their health systems. However, more needs to be done as the reopening of economies is expected to accelerate the rate of infections thereby exerting more pressure on the health systems.

The restoration of more than 20 percent of economic activity globally will see the surge in oil demand which will further support the oil price as which earlier responded positively to the production cuts effected by Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC+) on 1 May 2020. Additionally, massive production cuts from countries outside the OPEC+ agreement such as United States and Canada will help alleviate a global glut and rebalance a market stymied by months of low demand and a devastating rout that saw prices drop by as much as two-thirds this year. Between 13 and 20 May 2020, prices of the West Texas Intermediate (WTI), Brent and OPEC Basket crude oils increased by 32.4 per cent, 22.5 per cent and 22.3 per cent to \$33.49, \$35.75 and \$28.43, as at 20 May 2020 respectively (See Fig 1).

Fig 1: Brent, OPEC basket, and WTI Crude Oil Prices as at 20 May 2020

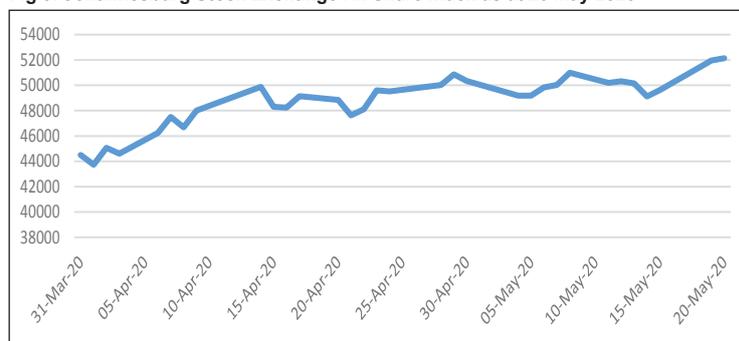


Source: US Energy Information Authority, OPEC and Wall Street Journal, 2020.

In the outlook, the increase in global economic activity and the additional voluntary cuts by OPEC+ countries that include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirate (UAE) in short to medium term is expected to support the oil price and ensure market stability.

As the economies open up, positive investor sentiments saw most equity markets recording gains. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange as a proxy of performance of capital markets in the SADC region, has seen the All Share Index surpassing 52 000 points on 20 May 2020, a level not seen since early March 2020 before the lockdown. Meanwhile, investors await the central bank's monetary policy meeting on Thursday during which policymakers are expected to cut the interest rate again to further support the economy.

Fig 3: Johannesburg Stock Exchange All Share Index as at 20 May 2020



Source: JSE, 2020

A number of the biggest stock exchanges in the world performed well on the back of positive investor sentiments as countries re-open their economies. In the US, Wall Street closed deeply in the green and the S&P closed at its highest level since early March, as investors' confidence over a recovering economy was boosted by a 5 percent rise in WTI oil prices on firmer demand and a surprise drop in US stockpile. The Dow Jones added 369 points or 1.5 percent to 24,576. The S&P 500 gained 49 points or 1.7 percent to 2972, whilst the Nasdaq climbed 191 points or 2.1 percent to 9376. In Britain, the FTSE 100 advanced 65 points or 1.1 percent to close at 6,067 on 20 May 2020, its highest level since 29 April 2020. The CAC 40 in France erased early losses to close 0.9 percent higher at 4,497 on Wednesday, booking its second straight day of gains amid a general improvement in investors' mood. Positive economic outlook and sentiments as economies reopen were reflected in oil price developments and performance of stock exchanges. However, a resurgence of COVID-19 remains a major risk factor for demand in the outlook.

7. THE DISRUPTION OF VALUE CHAINS DURING COVID-19; THE CASE OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

The fisheries sector is one of those that have been impacted by COVID-19 through changing consumer demands, market access or logistical problems related to transportation and border restrictions. This is already having damaging effects on fishers and fish farmers' livelihoods, as well as on food

security and nutrition for populations that rely heavily on fish for animal protein and essential micronutrients.

The fishing and fish farming industries, in many countries, are considered critical for food production and supply, hence a need to recognize the sector as essential, and also recognize the importance of this entire value chain.

7.1 Protecting each stage of the fisheries and aquaculture supply chain

The full range of activities required to deliver fish and fishery products from production to the final consumer are complex. Technologies employed in the region vary from artisanal to highly industrial. Value chains include local, regional and global markets. Key activities in a fisheries or aquaculture supply chain are fishing, aquaculture production, processing, transport, and wholesale and retail marketing. Each link in the chain is susceptible to being disrupted or stopped by impacts arising from COVID-19. If one of these producer-buyer-seller links is broken by the disease or containment measures, the outcome will be a cascading chain of disruptions that will affect the sector's economy. The desired result, human consumption of fish and fishery products, can only be achieved by protecting the producer-buyer-seller links and each stage of the supply chain. Therefore, it is essential that each stage of the fisheries and aquaculture food chain be given all possible protection.

7.2 Proposed Measures

Ministers responsible for Food Security and Agriculture, and Fisheries and Aquaculture at their Joint Virtual Meeting held on 22 May 2020 approved response measures to COVID-19 for the fisheries and aquaculture sector. These measures include those to protect the most-vulnerable through social protection programmes in targeted fisher communities; supporting small and informal businesses through the fish value chains with grants/payroll and unemployment assistance; providing rapid COVID-19 testing, personal protective equipment (PPEs), and improving hygiene and sanitation, encouraging social distancing at farming, fishing, processing, distribution and marketing establishments; and keeping all players throughout the food value chains up to date with information related to coronavirus as well as promotion of, and adoption of nutrition-sensitive production policies and interventions which remains critical.

Other measures include those directed at maintaining operations and protecting production and income, where Member States are encouraged to enable accessing of labour for harvesting and storage; encourage local production of production inputs to fill the existing gap due to reduced importations caused by lockdowns).

Other measures to be taken are those intended to support the supply chains to ensure that trade flows continue to be as free as possible, in line with the SADC Free Trade Area established under the Protocol on Trade (1996), as amended in 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prevent border restrictions on trade in fish and fishery products to avoid food shortages in the region, emphasizing that the dissemination of information on food related trade measures is fundamental.
- Ensuring supply chain access with consideration of gender, and, for those operations exporting within the region, continent and overseas, ensuring continued access to and cooperation from officials at ports, rail and border crossings so they can maintain their sales.
- Ensuring adherence to the recently approved SADC Guidelines on Harmonization and Facilitation of Cross-Border Transport Operations across the Regional during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

8. DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING CROSS BORDER TRANSPORT MOVEMENT

The cross-border transport movement is one of the essential services that need to be sustained and facilitated during the COVID-19 period in order ensure timely delivery of essential supplies and commodities in Member States. More than 80% of imported and exported goods in the SADC region are transported through the road network.

The COVID-19 related lockdowns in Member States and the associated public health measures resulted in significant delays in the movement hauling vehicles and subsequently in the delivery of essential supplies to the point of use.

An analysis of the implementation of the SADC Guidelines on harmonization and facilitation of cross-border operations across the region revealed that Member States were implementing trade and transportation laws and regulation differently during the COVID-19 emergency. Congestions at border posts were the result of lack of harmonization of public health measures at border posts, such as testing and quarantine policies.

8.1 Good practices in cross-border transportation

Despite the challenges some few good practices have been noted and these include the following: -

- Botswana and Zambia cooperated to clear traffic which had built up at Kazungula during the first week that Member States implemented national COVID-19 measures by joint clearance and collaboration between border agencies and the use of the temporary construction bridge;
- DRC and Zambia collaborated in clearing traffic which had built up at Kasumbalesa by among others simulating One Stop Borders Post operational modalities by allowing Officials to operate jointly from each other's territory and opening an additional road connection between the two borders;

- Zimbabwe designated and published a map of truck stops and garages which could be used by trucks during COVID-19;
- Namibia-Public and Private partnership constructed a temporary quarantine facility for trucks in Walvis Bay. The Facility is fully equipped with COVID-19 hygiene requirements, resting facilities, ablution and is secured by the Police who protect drivers, cargo and vehicles; and
- Angola simplified and waived requirements for submission of stamped original hard copies of documentation and switched to accepting electronic submissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement the SADC guidelines on facilitation of cross-border transportation with emphasis on the relay system and COVID-19 testing policy.
- Incorporating the SMART Corridor building blocks that monitor through ICT physical movement of vehicles/drivers/loads and documentation flow through ports, borders weighbridges and COVID-19 test and quarantine facilities; and
- Encouraging interstate travelling of persons for economic growth and poverty alleviation while containing the spread of the virus once provisions for safe trade and transport facilitation are in place, which include greater use of ICT, electronic documents and more paperless operations

8.2 Testing Regimes Being Considered to address Transport/Trade Bottlenecks

The Secretariat has developed Revised Guidelines and Regional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Management and Monitoring of Cross Border Road Transport at Designated Points of Entry and COVID-19 Checkpoint. The SOP include recommended testing protocol, mutual recognition of test results and ad recommended test validity period. These are under review and will be discussed by the Expanded Technical Committee on the Monitoring of the Protocol on Health at its upcoming virtual meeting on 5 June 2020.

9. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Some International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) have made commitment to support the following areas in the COVID-19 response: -

- GIZ has confirmed a response package to support the provision of medical equipment and supplies, disaster risk management initiatives and digital infrastructure support, through existing programmes.
- The Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) has confirmed support towards PPEs.
- EU has committed additional resources to the Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme to support activities related to trade and transport during COVID-19, in particular, the development of an electronic surveillance system

for drivers and vehicles in interstate transport as part of COVID-19 response measures..

- GIZ African Union Border Programme has pledged support towards personal protective equipment; cross-border sensitization programmes; training on prevention of pandemics at border posts; and training of border staff on safety guidelines.
- African Development Bank (AfDB) has committed to support the procurement of PPEs and capacity building.

10. DECISIONS MADE BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING OF 29 MAY 2020

The SADC Council of Ministers meeting was held on 29 May 2020 and among others, Council considered progress and updates on COVID-19 in the SADC region and noted and directed as follows;

- The Expanded Technical Committee on Health to meet by 5th June 2020 to finalise the revised Regional Guidelines on Harmonisation and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the Region and the Regional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Management and Monitoring of Cross Border Road Transport at Designated Points of Entry and COVID-19 Checkpoints and report back to Council on 23rd June 2020.
- Secretariat to circulate the compiled list of regional manufacturers of medical equipment and supplies; and urged Member States to source Medical Equipment and Supplies from the region.
- Secretariat to expedite the development of a regional electronic tracking and monitoring system to support the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures;
- Secretariat to coordinate with COMESA and EAC in the context of the Tripartite arrangement, and the African Union Commission (AUC) to align and harmonize Guidelines to facilitate trade during the COVID-19 Pandemic; and establish an online platform which will allow easy access to information regarding the production and trade of Medical Equipment and Supplies.
- Secretariat to review the Preliminary report on the Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and its implications on the SADC Region, in light of the decisions and new data; and provide progress with concrete recommendations to Council at its next meeting in August 2020;
- Secretariat to explore the possibility of tapping into global resources to assist Member States in mitigating the Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.
- Secretariat was mandated to negotiate with manufacturing companies in India for a preferential dispensation for the SADC Region in the procurement of essential medicines and equipment required for the COVID-19 response and provide feedback to Member States.

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- The Peer Review Panel was requested to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the Macroeconomic Convergence (MEC) programme and report to Council in August 2020.
 - Secretariat to finalize the analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 situation on implementation of programmes of the 2020/21 Corporate Plan and the budgetary implications and report to Council in August 2020.

In the same meeting, Council also urged Member States to;

- Consider adopting a regional response approach by sharing information on COVID-19, and jointly manage the COVID-19 pandemic through National COVID-19 Response Centers, and the coordination by the SADC Secretariat;
- Conduct human resources, supplies and equipment needs projections to enable better planning for response to epidemics and resource mobilization;
- Strengthen collaboration in the area of innovation, research and coordination on issues related to the fight against COVID-19; and
- Implement coordinated and synchronised fiscal and monetary measures to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on the region's macroeconomic and financial stability.



1 REGION, 16 NATIONS WORKING TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE



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