

## SADC REGIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With focus on ICT, Economic Perspectives, Transport and Trade Facilitation Sectors

Bulletin No. 12

#COVID19SADC

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 12th Bulletin on SADC Response to COVID-19 is being published at a time when the WHO African region has just concluded the 70th Session of the Africa Regional Committee held virtually from Congo-Brazzaville. The meeting took stock of the wider situation on health on the continent but more importantly, the challenges that have been posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the measures that Member States have taken to contain the pandemic.

The report provides highlights of the global, continental and regional situation of COVID-19. The Bulletin also documents a case study on the COVID-19 home based care programme in Zambia and how the programme is assisting to alleviate the burden of care in health facilities.

The Bulletin goes on to provide a WHO Surveillance Guide which Member States can utilize. In view of

the impact of COVID-19 on economic growth, the report makes reference to World Bank and IMF Lending Facilities which have been availed to Member States as part of economic recovery initiatives that have been adopted by Member States. Finally, the bulletin provides highlights of the impact of COVID-19 on sectors such as Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), Meteorology and Transport among others.

Dana

#### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBER STATES**

- Adapt and implement home based care measures where feasible, in an effort to relieve overburdened health facilities;
- Train community health workers on the COVID-19 home based care management and continue to support community level health care structures through capacity building and training programmes;
- Implement the SADC/Tripartite Guidelines on Movement of Goods and Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic and notify Secretariat on new revised national guidelines;
- Increase COVID-19 testing capacity to reduce the delays at the borders;
- Procure devices e.g (PADs etc.)to allow the pilot to be undertaken as planned;
- Appoint CTMS National Coordinating Teams with a Coordinator and notify Secretariat;
- Continue registering on CTMS and uploading vehicle and driver information.

#### 1.GLOBAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

Over 1.7 million new COVID-19 cases and 39 000 new deaths were reported to WHO for the week ending 23 August, a 5% decline in the number of cases and 12% decline in the number of deaths compared to the previous week (10 to 16 August) A cumulative total of over 23 million cases and 800 000 deaths have been reported so far.

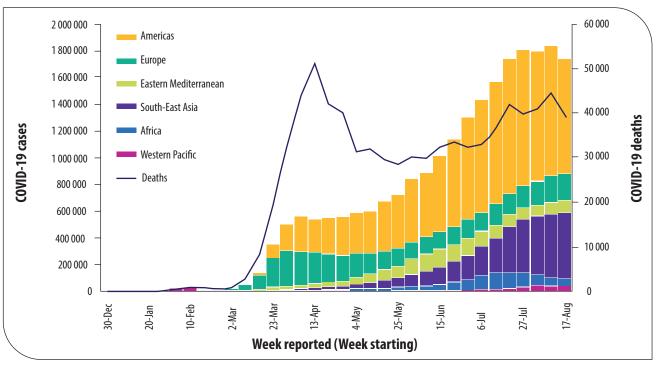
Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by WHO region, 30 December to 23 August 2020

## 2.1 Epidemiological situation on the African Continent

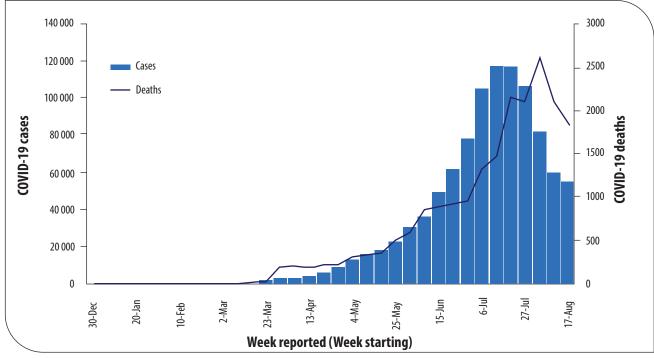
The number of cases and deaths reported in the African Region decreased by **8%** and **11%** respectively in the past seven days, primarily due to a decrease in cases reported in Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and South Africa Despite the overall decline in the number of cases across the region, Uganda reported

an increase of over 300%. Intensive community transmission has been reported in the capital, Kampala.

Ethiopia has continued to report an increase in cases and deaths; and similarly, Namibia and Nigeria reported a **55%** and **19%** increase in the number of cases respectively. After 22 days of no cases, Mauritius reported two new cases in returnees who were repatriated from a neighboring country.



Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by WHO region, 30 December to 23 August 2020



Number of COVID-19 cases and deaths reported weekly by African Region, data as of 23 August 2020

#### 2. SITUATION IN THE SADC REGION

Table 1: Below shows the situation of COVID-19 in the SADC region

Country	Confirmed Cases	Total death	Recoveries	Active	Cases per 1M
Angola	2654	108	1071	1475	80
Botswana	1724	6	493	202	731
Comoros	423	7	399	17	485
DRC	10097	258	133	706	112
Eswatini	4577	91	3529	957	3938
Lesotho	1085	31	528	526	506
Madagascar	14863	192	13832	839	535
Malawi	5566	175	3160	2231	290
Mauritius	355	10	335	10	279
Mozambique	3916	23	2170	1721	125
Namibia	7550	75	3327	4148	2963
Seychelles	136	0	127	9	1382
South Africa	627041	14149	540923	71969	10551
Tanzania	509	21	183	305	9
Zambia	12097	288	11469	340	655
Zimbabwe	6497	202	5221	1074	436
SADC	699090	15636	586900	86529	2137

Source: Worldometer: September 2020

### 2.1 Case Study: Nakonde District home-based care programme in Zambia

(Situation, Measures, Impact) Shortly after Zambia reported its first cases of COVID-19 in March 2020, the country's National Public Health Institute intensive, launched targeted screenings for cases in high-risk populations and locations. Zambia was recording increasing numbers of cases and the government was already anticipating that in some parts of the country, hospital capacity would not be able to cope and would not be able to handle large numbers of patients at the same time.

When the northern Nakonde town, a bustling commercial hub with cross-border movement of people and trucks, experienced a spike in COVID-19 cases the health authorities expanded testing, but infections rose,

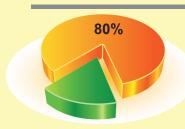
threatening to overwhelm the health system, Zambia then developed and implemented a new strategy for home based management of patients to take the burden off the health system.

Under the home-based care system, asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic COVID-19 patients under 50 years without underlying conditions or co-morbidities are cared for at home by families with the support of community-based volunteers. Patients with moderate or severe symptoms are admitted to a health facility.

The home-based care was being implemented as part of the national response plan. There are around 20 rotating clinicians in Nakonde district

who oversee the community volunteers. To ensure effective care at home, an environmental health official assesses key aspects such as the number of people sharing a house, whether the patient can have a room to self-isolate and whether there is anyone with co-morbidities who could be at risk.

Once the right conditions are met, a community health worker is assigned to provide care, making frequent visits to check progress. "If there are no symptoms, the patient stays at home. If they develop symptoms, the community volunteer communicates with a trained health care worker who then decides if a clinician should be sent in to assess if this person must go to a facility.



80%

ABOUT 75%-80% OF CONFIRMED CASES IN ZAMBIA ARE ASYMPTOMATIC. OF THE 941 ACTIVE CASES



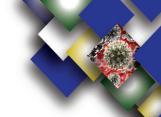
83.5%

786 (83.5%) WERE BEING CARED FOR AT HOME AND THE REST IN ISOLATION CENTRES

The World Health Organization (WHO) has supported the training of community health workers now helping to ease the burden of COVID-19 in Zambia's health facilities. The home-based care pioneered in Muchinga province that includes Nakonde has now been adopted across the country's eight provinces. The home based care system has proven beneficial for both patients and facilities and has eased the overburdening of facilities.

Source: WHO/AFRO August 2020

AS OF 17 AUGUST 2020



#### 3. WHO REVISED COVID-19 SURVEILLANCE GUIDANCE

The WHO has released COVID-19 Surveillance Guidelines found on the link: file:///C:/Users/Downloads/WHO-2019-nCoV-SurveillanceGuidance-2020.7-eng.pdf

The following highlights some key definitions which are contained in the guidance, for ease of reference for Member States

## Definition of a contact

A contact is a person who has experienced any one for the following **exposures** during the **2 days before** and the **14 days after** the onset of symptoms of a probable or confirmed case:

- Face-to contact with a probable or confirmed case within 1 metre and for at least 15 minutes.
- Direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case.
- Direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease.
- Other situations as indicated by local risk assessments.

## Suspected COVID-19 case

A person who meets the clinical AND epidemiological criteria: (a) Clinical criteria:

1. Acute onset of fever AND cough;

2. Acute onset of ANY THREE OR MORE of the following signs or symptoms: fever, cough, general weakness/fatigue, headache, myalgia, sore throat, coryza, dyspnoea, /nausea/vomiting, diarrhoea, altered mental status.

(b) Epidemiological criteria:

- Residing or working in an area with high risk of transmission of the virus: for example; closed residential settings and humanitarian settings, such as camp and camp-like settings for displaced persons, any time within the 14 days prior to symptom onset; OR
- Residing in or travel to an area with community transmission anytime within the 14 days prior to symptom onset;
   OR
- Working in health setting, including within health facilities and within households, anytime within the 14 days prior to symptom onset.

A patient with severe acute respiratory illness (SARI: acute respiratory infection with history of fever or measured fever of  $\geq$  38 C°; and cough; with onset within the last 10 days; and who requires hospitalisation).

## Probable COVID-19 case:

- A patient who meets clinical criteria above AND is a contact of a probable or confirmed case, or epidemiologically linked to a cluster or cases which has had at least one confirmed case identified within that cluster.
- Suspected case (described above) with chest imaging showing findings suggestive of COVID-19 disease
- A person with recent onset of loss of smell or loss of taste in the absence of any other identified cause.

## Confirmed COVID-19 case:

• A person with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs and symptoms.

#### 4. ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sharp slump in the global economy. The progressive spread of the virus prompted authorities around the world to implement restrictions on mobility and public health measures in a bid to flatten the curve of infections and prevent healthcare systems from being overloaded. As a result, the adverse economic impact of COVID-19 was more pronounced in the second quarter of 2020 than in the first quarter.

The significant global economic downturn in the second quarter of 2020 was depicted by GDP contraction in the biggest global economies except for China which recorded GDP growth of 3.2% in the second quarter of 2020 from a contraction of 6.8% in the first quarter. The economic rebound of China is attributed to policy measures that include spending, tax relief, lending rates cut and lowering of reserve requirements to shore up the economy against the ravages of the pandemic.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) projects a GDP contraction of **31.7** % in the second quarter of 2020 worse than the contraction of 5% the preceding quarter. The decrease in real GDP reflected decreases in personal consumption expenditures (PCE), exports, nonresidential fixed investment, private inventory residential investment. fixed investment, and state and local government spending that were partly offset by an increase in federal government spending.

Notable quarterly economic contractions in major economies;

United Kingdom - 20.4 %
France - 13.8 %
Italy - 12.4 %
Canada - 12 %
Germany - 9.7 %
United States - 9.5%
Japan - 7.8%

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)

Consequently, real gross domestic product (GDP) in the OECD area is estimated to have contracted by 9.8 percent, in the second quarter of 2020 compared to a decline of **1.8%** in the previous quarter.

On an annual basis, GDP contraction for the OECD area was **10.9** % in the second quarter of 2020, worse than a decline of **0.9**% in the previous quarter. On the other hand, the European Union recorded a **14.1**%

"In June 2020 economic downturn was more pronounced in the second quarter than in the first as extreme social distancing measures were instituted during from mid-March to May 2020 -

Source: OECD

contraction in GDP compared to a decline of **2.5** % in the quarter ending March 2020.

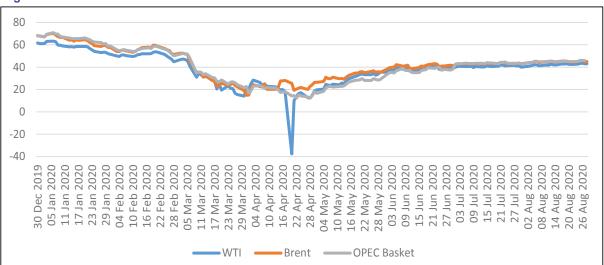
The downturn in the services sector was particularly severe in tourism, transport and recreation sectors. Manufacturing output was also severely affected, though not to the extent of the services sector. However, a moderate improvement in global activity followed in May 2020 as governments began relaxing containment measures to varying degrees and implemented unprecedented fiscal and monetary policy support measures. Activity in China has been recovering particularly swiftly since the relaxation of lockdown measures. Businesses have restarted operations, although capacity utilisation rates remain lower than usual, particularly among SMEs.

## 4.1 Commodity Price Developments

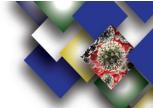
The easing of lockdown movement restrictions has seen the restoration of significant economic activity and the upholding of the production cut agreements by oil-producing countries has supported oil price of more than **US\$40** per barrel. Resultantly, between 31 July and 28 August 2020, oil prices of West Texas Intermediate (WTI), Brent Crude and OPEC Basket increased by **6.7** %, **4**% and **6.6**% to **US\$42.97**, **US\$45.05** and **US\$24.85**, respectively (see Fig 2 below).

Fig 2: Brent, OPEC basket, and WTI crude oil prices





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



Using the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) data, gold prices increased by 35.7% from US\$1523 per ounce on 31 December 2019 to the historic US\$ 2067.15 per ounce on 6 August 2020 before receding to **US\$1957.35 per ounce** on 28 August 2020. The strong gold prices are supported by uncertainties resulting capital in turbulences and a weakening US dollar, rising sovereign debt levels and low bond yields reflecting the accommodative monetary policy measures being implemented to mitigate the adverse economic impact of the pandemic.

#### 4.2 World Bank and IMF COVID-19 Funding between March to August 2020

In the period between April and June 2020, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international corporation partners committed huge amounts to both developed and developing countries

in a stride to curtail the spread of COVID-19. Details of the support in provided below:

#### (a) International Monetary Fund

Since late March 2020, the IMF's Executive Board under its various lending facilities and debt service relief financing has approved several financial assistance and debt service relief to member countries facing the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April the IMF tapped into its Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CRRT), to avail grants to cover the debt payments of 25 poor and vulnerable countries to the IMF for six months. Overall, the IMF is currently making about \$250 billion, a quarter of its \$1 trillion lending capacity. Table 2a provides SADC Member States who benefited from the support.

#### (b) World Bank Group

The World Bank initially made

available \$3.3 billion of grants as part of the total package of \$14 billion. It has since updated that envelope to \$160 billion over 15 months for 100 countries.

The Bank in its recent public statements announced that \$50 billion would be made available as grants or highly concessional loans. For the first disbursement, about \$1.9 billion is set aside for 25 low- and middle-income countries that includes grants and loans.

Of the 100 countries, 39 are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly one-third of the total projects are in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) have also fast-tracked support to businesses in developing countries, including trade finance and working capital to maintain private sector, jobs and livelihoods.

Table 2a: IMF Emergency Financing as of August 2020

Country	Emergency Financing	Amount Approved		Date Approved		
Comoros	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		US\$ 4.05 million	April 22, 2020		
	Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI)		US\$ 8.08 million	April 22, 2020		
DRC	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		US\$ 363.27 million	April 22, 2020		
Kingdom of Eswatini	Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI)		US\$ 110.4 million	July 29, 2020		
Lesotho	Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI)		SDR 11.66 million	July 29, 2020		
	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		US\$ 16.5 million	July 29, 2020		
Madagascar	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		SDR 122.2 million	April 3, 2020		
	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		US\$ 171.9 million	July 30, 2020		
Malawi	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		US\$ 91 million	May 1, 2020		
Mozambique	Rapid Credit Facility (RCF)		US\$ 91 million	May 1, 2020		
Seychelles	Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI)		US\$ 31.23 million	May 8, 2020		
South Africa	Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI)		US\$ 4,300 million	July 27, 2020		
Source: IMF Report August 2020						

Source. IIVII Report August 2020

The Bank Group's intervention through grants, loans and equity investments are being complemented by suspension of bilateral debt service, as endorsed by the Bank's governors. IDA-eligible countries that request forbearance on their official bilateral debt payments will have more financial resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and fund critical and lifesaving emergency responses.

## The World Bank Group's operational response aims to;

- Strengthen health systems, support the poorest households;
- Create supportive conditions to maintain livelihoods jobs for those hit hardest.

## World Bank Country operational response aims to;

- Assist poorest families through cash transfers and job support;
- Maintain food security, nutrition
   and continuity of essential services such as clean water and education;
- Target the most vulnerable
   groups, including women and forcibly displaced communities, who are most likely to be hit hard;
- Engage communities to support vulnerable households and foster social cohesion.

The scale and speed of the Bank Group's response is critical in helping countries mitigate the adverse impacts of the crisis and prioritize the human capital investments that can accelerate recovery.

## 4.3 World Bank Group/IMF Debt relief conditions

Going forward both the World Bank Group and IMF are introducing a more systematic approach to the debt challenges the world is facing, which include:

Providing debt relief in the form of reduction in the stock of debt to countries with high debt vulnerability. Debt relief could be informed by the World Bank Group/IMF Debt Sustainability Analysis as applied in the current low interest rate environment. To be effective, any such relief would require all other official creditors and private creditors to provide comparable treatment.

- New debt instruments used to finance maturing debt could incorporate covenants and clauses that would make future debt resolution simpler, less litigious and less protracted.
- Lastly, lending countries can enact domestic legislation that prevents disruptive asset seizures (by litigating creditors) and constrains preferential recoveries.

## 5. IMPACT ON THE ICT SECTOR

#### **ICT Initiatives:**

### 5.1 Africa Innovations Challenge 2020: atu-uat.org

On the 20th August 2020 the Africa Telecommunications Union (ATU) launched the Africa Innovations Challenge 2020 which is a competition to support young African innovators and combat COVID-19. This innovative challenge runs up to the 14th October 2020, is anticipating innovations designed with the ability to respond to societal issues, and in particular, offer unique solutions to Africa during the COVID-19 era and beyond, as well as have the capacity to change Africa.

Despite the fact that COVID-19 pandemic that has left young Africans in a difficult socio-economic crisis, the innovation challenge seeks to create opportunities for Young Africans. Developments on this will be followed by the Secretariat to be shared with Youth Organisations in the region. The link containing this information can be accessed here

## 5.2 ITU Digital World SME Virtual Awards 2020

International munication Union (ITU) launched the call for applications for the ITU Digital World SME Virtual Awards 2020, which will take place online for the first time. The awards will assist innovative SMEs to pitch and showcase solutions, make connections, attract investment and gain valuable recognition. The award seeks out innovations in the thematic connectivity, of areas cities/smart living, e-health and digital finance. The deadline for applications is 5th October 2020. Additional information can be found in the link attached. ITU Digital

**World SME Virtual Awards 2020:** digital-world.itu.int/itu-digital-world-2020-sme-virtual-awards/

# 6. COVID-19 IMPACT ON METEOROLOGY SECTOR

Like all other sectors the Meteorology sector has been severely impacted. The implementation of Southern African Climate Information Services for Disaster Resilience development (SARCIS-DR) has fallen behind schedule. There has been a significant delay in deployment of meteorological equipment (High Computer server, Performance Automatic Message Switching Systems and Automatic Weather Stations) donated to Member States. Meteorology Sector has negotiated with the Suppliers to virtually inspect, eventually install and commission the equipment in the benefiting Member States to increase their capability in numerical weather prediction and climate modelling to support response to disaster risk reduction.

#### 7. TRANSPORT AND TRADE FACILITATION

6.1 Compliance and Implementation of SADC/Tripartite Guidelines on Movement of Goods and Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Some Member States have not yet aligned their laws, regulations and guidelines for the movement of goods and services to the SADC/Tripartite Guidelines resulting in long queues and delays at the borders and increasing the cost of transport.

These delays at the borders are exacerbated by inadequate testing capacity in some Member States, resulting drivers and crew members waiting at the borders for extended period of time. Although the SADC/Tripartite Guidelines stipulate that, inter alia, the negative test results are valid for 14 days from the day the swab was taken some Member States insist on validity period of only 3 days thereby increasing the need for testing and causing delays at the borders.

Cross border transport operators have had in some instances to divert the trucks from corridors with countries that insist on more frequent testing (every 3 days) to other corridors even if the chosen alternative is longer.

#### **6.2 New Non-Tariff Barriers**

The SADC Business Council, the German Development Corporation and the SADC Secretariat convened a workshop on Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), Logistics and Cross Border Trade to share information on measures being undertaken to remove NTBs on 17th August which was attended by manufacturers, retailers and logistics companies.

#### 6.3 Corridor Trip Monitoring System (CTMS) and the Regional Electronic Cargo and Driver Tracking System (RECDTS) Update

CTMS and RECDTS are systems for monitoring the movement of the vehicles, cargo, drivers and crew movements as well as the health of these personnel. The 1st Release of the CTMS was on 22nd June and the 2nd Release is expected be available by 21st September and will be

translated into other Tripartite official languages (Arabic, French and Portuguese). The 3rd Release is expected by 13th November and the 4th Release is expected to coincide with the commissioning of Tripartite Transport Registers Information Platform System (TRIPS) later in 2020/early 2021. However, piloting the CTMS on the Trans Kalahari Corridor, sections of the Walvis Bay Ndola Lubumbashi Corridor and the North South Corridor have been delayed mainly because Member States have not yet acquired the handheld devices such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and other equipment that enable officials to interface with CTMS. Operators in Botswana, Namibia and Zambia have already started registering on the CTMS but Member States are now expected to acquire the PDAs by 9th October after training of the use of the PDAs will be undertaken and piloting commence on 19th October on any section of the corridors that is ready to pilot. Once the piloting is completed the CTMS will be deployed in other corridors depending on the corridor countries' readiness for the deployment.

Member States are still to appoint

National CTMS Coordinating Teams with a Coordinator to coordinate the piloting and implementation of the CTMS and these should be communicated to the SADC Secretariat to facilitate regional coordination piloting and implementation of the CTMS.

The RECDTS is used in the East African Community (EAC) and has already been piloted on the Northern Corridor and is ready for roll out to other corridors in the EAC, as the donor funding the RECDTS is also funding the PDAs and other accessory equipment and therefore there is no need for Member States to look for funds to acquire these items as is the case with the CTMS. The CTMS will be interfaced with the REDTS to ensure interoperability of the two systems.

Transport operators in the pilot countries continue to register participation on the CTMS and to upload driver and vehicle information in readiness for the pilot and subsequent. The uptake of the CTMS by operators is significant and encouraging as they see the benefits and advantages to both driver welfare and the companies

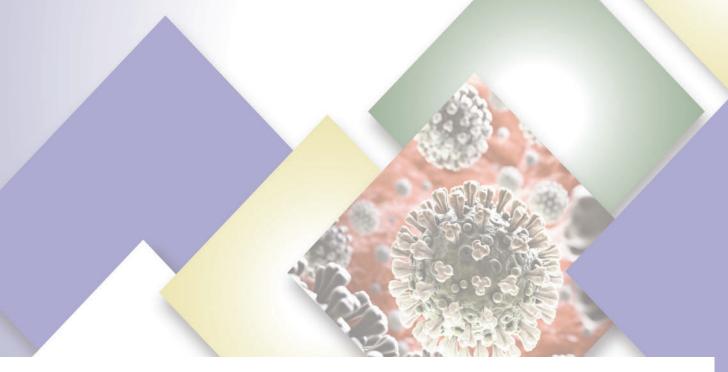
Table 2: Recent developments on Country Lockdowns and impact on transport facilitation

Angola	Angola is under a State of Public Calamity until further notice. Most shops and services are now allowed to operate with some restrictions.				
Botswana	Two-week lockdown in greater Gaborone lifted on 16th August but authorities maintained some restrictions. Gatherings of more than two people remain restricted, while Gaborone schools have opened in a phased manner starting Tuesday 18th August, 2020 Schools remain open elsewhere in Botswana, meanwhile, travel between zones within the country requires a permit.				
Lesotho	Through an Extraordinary Gazette of 24th August the lockdown was relaxed with more business and social activities allowed as long as they comply with WHO advised hygiene practice.				
Mozambique	On 5 August, the Republic of Mozambique declared a new State of Emergency which will be in effect from 8th August through 6th September 2020 and enables continued enforcement of restrictive measures to prevent and control the pandemic including mandatory wearing of face masks in public spaces, social distancing measures, and limits on social gatherings and recreational activities. A phased approach to resuming economic and social activity has been announced, low risk activities e.g. opening of vocational schools starting 18th August; medium risk activities e.g. opening of cinemas, casinos starting 1st September and high risk activities e.g. opening of primary and secondary schools starting 1st October.				
Namibia	On 12th August Namibia reverted to stricter level three of lockdown from level 4 following rising cases of COVID-19. This will be in force until 28th August.				
South Africa	South Africa moved to level 2 from level 3 of its five-stage coronavirus alert system which means removal of nearly all of the restrictions on the resumption of economic activity across most industries. Travel between provinces is now permitted, but restrictions on international travel remain in place as well as a ban on gatherings of more than fifty (50) people and crowds at sporting events. Domestic tourism has re-opened. Long distance travel by all modes air, road and rail based on WHO Public Health restrictions has resumed within the country.				
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe continues on Level 2 lockdown for an indefinite period but this shall be reviewed every two-week interval to assess progress. Businesses such as manufacturers, supermarkets and banks, which have been allowed to continue operating, will see their operating hours extended from a maximum of six (6) hours to more than eight hours between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.				



#### 1 REGION, 16 NATIONS WORKING TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE





#### **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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