

## AUDA-NEPAD SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER



# AUDA-NEPAD Launches Its COVID-19 Response Plan

The coronavirus pandemic is currently putting a lot of strain on Africa's health systems beyond its limits in curbing the exponential spread of the disease. In the face of the growing prohibition on the export of many medical technologies and priority medicines, the continent is already experiencing shortages of medical products required by medical staff to efficiently fight the spread of the virus.

This situation unfortunately, further highlights the consequences of Africa's reliance on imported finished generics and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs). For a long time, the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD has been raising awareness about this over-dependency and has deemed it necessary to set up initiatives such as the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

Plan for Africa and its associated business plan to alleviate the phenomenon.

At continental level, the African Union has acted swiftly to establish a Coronavirus Fund with commitments already totalling USD20 million. At national level, most African countries are implementing lockdowns, testing (of suspected cases) and contact tracing. The downside of these lockdowns, if prolonged, is their negative impact on socio-economic activities. In this regard, the AUDA-NEPAD short-term response and support to Members States is geared towards slowing down the pandemic, knowing more about how COVID-19 is spreading and lessening the socio-economic impact of the pandemic.

AUDA-NEPAD is in the process of launching its COVID-19 Response Plan of Action. It is a comprehensive, coherent and multidimensional plan aimed at mobilising the necessary human capacity and expertise of the Institution, under the leadership of Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer.

# A united Africa against the pandemic

By Dr Ibrahim Mayaki

Never before has the African Union borne its name so well. The pandemic continues its course, with new cases every day and our continent, hitherto spared, is seeing a surge in the number of infected people. It is no longer a question of whether we are ready to fight it, but rather of taking it on together, this virus that knows no borders or ethnicity.

## Scientific solidarity

Shortly after the first case of Covid-19 was reported, the African Union convened a meeting of health ministers on 22 February to develop a continent-wide strategy and set up a working group. Known as the Africa Coronavirus Task Force (AFCOR), it comprises six technical teams working closely with Member States, WHO and Africa CDC (Center for Disease Control). The AU's technical institution, which was established to support public health initiatives, is on the frontline in this race against time. In early February, only Senegal and South Africa were capable of screening for the virus. The African CDC assisted the 55 Member States in building capacity at the national level, providing training on key priorities such as point-of-entry disease surveillance, event-based surveillance (ESB) in community health facilities and laboratory diagnostics.

Now, thanks to the partnership between CDC and WHO, 43 countries are able to screen, proof that a coordinated strategy pays off. The Africa CDC has targeted three high-risk countries for the spread of the virus: Nigeria, Cameroon and Kenya. The institution has so far estimated that \$850,000 is needed to build Covid-19 response capacity in these countries. Albeit modest, this sum will make it possible to not only train and improve laboratory diagnostic capabilities, but to also support the target countries in acquiring both statistical tools and effective disease surveillance techniques. Although we do not have nearly the resources of

AUDA-NEPAD medium- to long-term responses are situated in six key priorities that are aimed at strengthening (1) Health Systems, (2) Food Systems (3) Skills Development and Employment, (4) Education (5) National Planning and Data Systems and (6) Sustainable Tourism

The AUDA-NEPAD COVID-19 Response Plan of Action is a proactive, efficient and a direct response in enhancing continental coverage and improving access to sustainable and resilient health services, while ensuring the protection of Africa's economic foundations.

Cognisant of the need to make provision for the ecosystem that would be affected by the crisis, the COVID-19 Response Plan of Action will mainly focus on the following seven thematic areas: Health Service Delivery; Human Resources for Health; Research, Development, Innovation and Local Manufacturing; Education and Training; Skills and Employability; Food and Nutrition Security; and Financing.

This comprehensive set of responses which if expected to reach their full potential, must be fully supported not only by institutional actors, but also by private sector and civil society, within the context of the principles of collective consciousness and shared responsibility.

By launching the COVID-19 Response Plan of Action, AUDA-NEPAD aims to set up, along with other African Union competent institutions, a coordinated and effective plan in addressing this exceptional health crisis. ■

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developed countries, themselves overwhelmed by the scale of the crisis, our salvation lies in our ability to prevent and isolate outbreaks of contamination. We must therefore work together to find solutions by mobilising our internal resources.

#### **Economic solidarity**

All pan-African financial institutions are being called upon to support this war effort. The West African Development Bank (WADB) has already released 120 billion CFA francs in the form of 15 billion CFA franc loans (€23 billion) to each of its eight member states. The bank has undertaken to freeze part of these countries' debt, estimated at 76.6 billion CFA francs. The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) has earmarked \$100 million to support sub-Saharan African countries in their efforts to prevent and contain the spread of the pandemic. The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) announced a \$3 billion Pandemic Trade Impact Mitigation Facility to help central banks in African countries deal with the economic impacts, including trade defaults, of the Covid-19 pandemic. This fund will also serve to support and stabilise the foreign exchange resources of member countries' central banks, enabling them to back critical imports under emergency conditions.

#### **Military solidarity**

Throughout this health crisis, we continue to bear in mind our Agenda 2063 objective: to silence the

guns. And because, sometimes, seeking peace means preparing for war, a joint AU-ECOWAS-G5 Sahel meeting on the deployment of 3,000 African troops in the Sahel was held on 16 March in Niamey, Niger. The AU will deploy an additional 3,000 troops to reinforce G5 Sahel countries' actions. Once again, the Chadian army was alone in dealing with deadly and nearly simultaneous attacks by Boko Haram against its positions at Boma in Lake Chad and a Nigerian army convoy at Konduga in Borno State.

It is our hope that the urgent appeal to Africa and the international community by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, for operational solidarity in the fight against terrorism will be heard.

This global pandemic must serve to remind us of the very essence of our institutions and AUDA-NEPAD's *raison d'être*: the pooling of our strengths to overcome adversity, for our survival. We have a long-established sense of family and community solidarity. By caring for and supporting our parents, our families, our neighbours, our allies, we do as our ancestors did, protect humanity. So in these troubled times, let us set an example and continue to keep this solidarity, our most noble heritage, alive within us. ■

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# African Union Smart Safety Surveillance (AU-3S) and Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The safety of vaccines, medicines, medical devices, and other medical products are monitored and managed to ensure their safety. The detection, assessment, understanding, and prevention of adverse effects or any other medicine-related effect are to ensure that the medical products and other health technologies are safe throughout the product life cycle. It is an essential public health activity designed to ensure that interventions, including medical products and other health technologies, retain a favourable benefit-risk profile throughout their entire life cycle.

Clinical trials are undertaken in well-controlled environments, for short periods, and do not generally include special populations (such as pregnant women, children and the elderly) and often exclude participants with co-morbidities. Therefore, at the time of granting marketing authorization for real-world use of products, information on their safety and efficacy is limited, and post-market surveillance becomes key in collecting point of application data on any medical product and other health technology.

Hitherto, high-income countries (HICs) did the trials, collected the safety data, and LMICs relied on them, but this has changed. Increasingly, new medical products and other health technologies are being launched for the first time in Africa and many Lower/Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) to manage diseases that are endemic in these regions which are not of concern in the HICs. Safety data for Africa to rely on is significantly reduced, and Africa has the responsibility of collecting and managing her safety data. COVID-19 pandemic, like many emergencies, brings an additional dimension to this difficulty. The shortening of the time and path to market for many interventions become even more justifiable. In the specific case of COVID-19, products like alcohol-based sanitizers, test kits, vaccines, medications, and ancillary health products are needed to save human

lives. The urgency, therefore, necessitates that processes, regulations will be relaxed or abridged to allow for products to be made available promptly. These flexibilities have their inherent risks that may worsen the safety of the citizens of Africa.

Notably, there will be trials for new COVID-19 interventions and the registration of products that have gone through clinical trials elsewhere and urgency will be the prime focus. The safety of these products will be secondary. For African authorities to make informed decisions about the safety of these products, there is the need for an end-to-end system from clinical trials to post-registration and that this should be continental. Examples of products will include Alcohol-based sanitizers, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir, ritonavir, and other COVID-19 related products.

The African Union has called upon the AUDANEPAD to work with partners to ensure support for the acceleration of candidate drugs and vaccines so that African populations can access them in a timely manner and that they should be safe. This call was especially emphasized during the period when the continent was confronted with the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

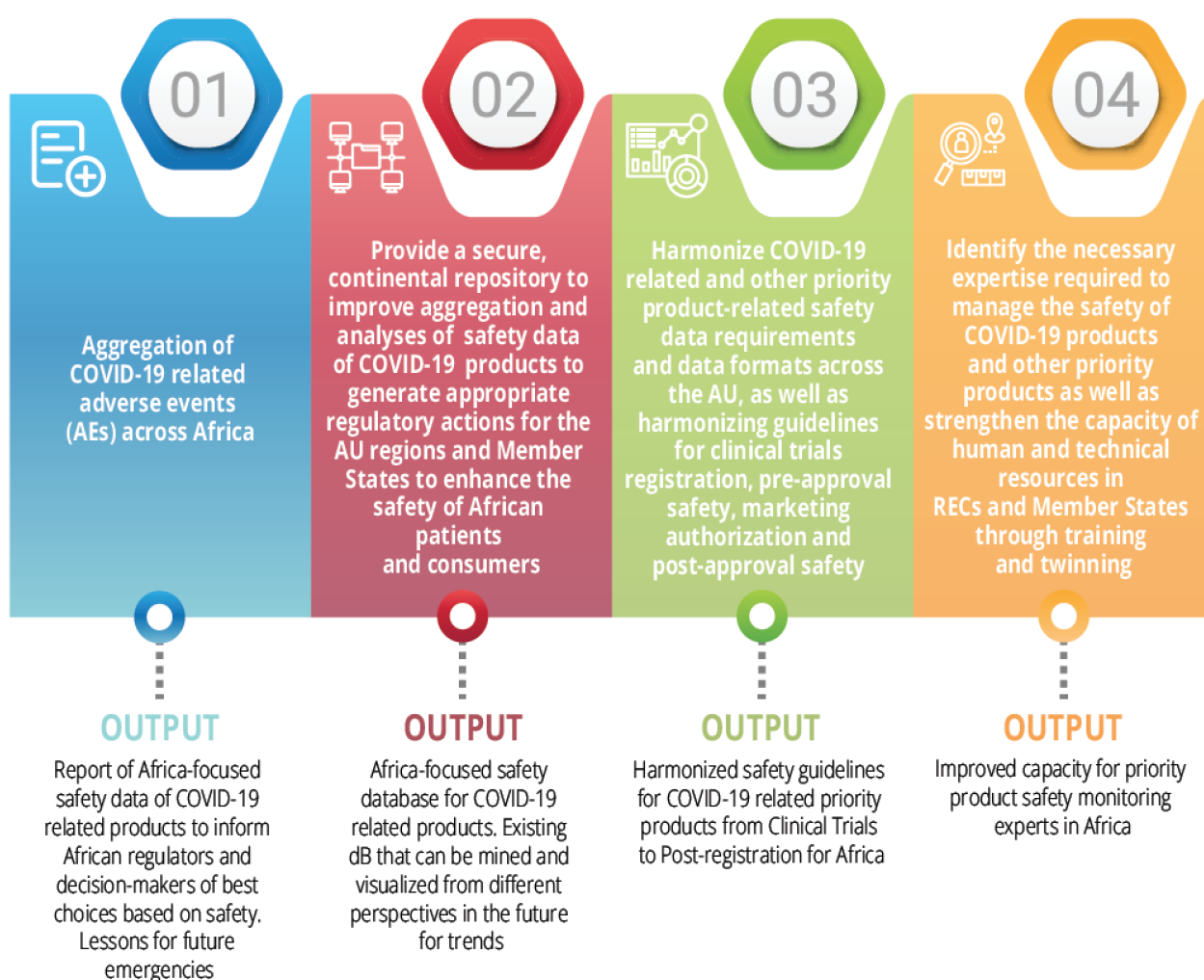
An Africa-wide effective and end-to-end safety surveillance system is necessary to support the safe launch of these products in Africa while tackling public health needs towards achieving the African Union Agenda 2063 Aspiration 13, Goals 1 & 3 and the Sustainable Development Goal 3[4] (SDGs). AU-3S fulfills this need by facilitating the introduction of innovation in a less risky environment for developers to invest in accelerated product development.

The system will cover the entire product life cycle from clinical trials through product approval to post-approval monitoring for safety and effectiveness.

Public confidence in medical products and other health technology safety is ensured, supporting the uptake of public health interventions and enabling access to innovative treatments, thereby tackling significant public health challenges. It will also boost developers' confidence to take the risk associated with accelerated product development for emergency responses.

AU-3S, therefore, serves as a safety net for the rapid development of intervention products for pandemics like COVID-19, epidemics like Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), and emergency response in the case of large-scale endemic diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis (TB), dengue fever and cholera. The reduction of development time during emergency response contributes to a limited safety data package. AU-3S, therefore, bridges this safety gap. These flexibilities underscore the need for a viable 3S programme in the continent as a critical contributor towards meeting emergency response needs as well as a confidence booster for developers to take the risk associated with accelerated product development.

AU-3S can provide the following for COVID-19:



**📄 DOWNLOAD THE AUDA-NEPAD COVID-19 SERIES ON AU SMART SAFETY SURVEILLANCE (AU-3S) AND CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**



# AUDA-NEPAD on Environmental Sustainability

## 1. What are the objectives of AUDA-NEPAD's Environmental Sustainability Division and what are its major projects?

The Environmental Sustainability Division's primary objective is to accelerate implementation of transformative projects towards sustainable and resilient pathways to development and coordinate interaction between natural, economic and social systems, and integrate the concept of environmental sustainability in the development cycle. The division has four priority programs (Agriculture, Food Security, Environment and Renewable Energy) and the work is centred around key developmental challenges facing the continent such as: climate change land water food and energy. Our priority areas include Land and forest and ecosystem restorations (AFR100); building climate resilience and sustainable urban places (Smart Places); sustainable agriculture productivity; Access to renewable energy to increase socio economic impacts, climate resilience and productivity and improved human wellbeing (access to clean water and sanitation, light up schools and health care facilitates and households); gender climate smart agriculture enterprise development; sustainable land and water management; land governance and territorial planning for rural transformation; food and nutrition insecurity risks management; building capacities of Member States to the implementation of multilateral environmental governance.

# Coordinating the interaction between natural, economic and social systems, and integrating the concept of environmental sustainability in the development cycle.

## 2. How will the current COVID-19 pandemic affect the implementation of these projects?

The division is finalising its position paper on responding to COVID-19 impacts on food and nutrition security. The team has engaged with key stakeholders at national, regional and continental spheres and developed immediate interventions that will be delivered in the next three months, these will look at:

- The vulnerability analysis of food and nutrition security under covid19. This work will cover entire continent and will identify and visualise vulnerability hotspots. This will enhance precision of the delivery and setting up warning mechanisms and prevention of food crisis.
- The deployment of food safety nets and coordination of regional food storage facilities
- The deployment of renewable energy driven food and feed production (using vertical farming tech) and access to clean water to the communities

## 3. Can COVID-19 create momentum for sustainable and resilient food systems?

Africa has a population of 1.288 billion in which 277 million are in severe food insecure, 676 million are in moderate or severe food insecure (FAO – State of Food Security and Nutrition 2019). This implies most Africans (74%) are in moderate or severe food insecure. Further the continent remains the highest prevalence of undernourishment, affecting 21% of the population.

In the past risks and threats of food and nutrition security were mainly from droughts, floods, volatility in market prices for inputs and, more commonly, for outputs as well as crop and livestock diseases (e.g. Avian flu), locust invasion and pests (fall armyworm). The current epidemic of COVID-19 outbreak has demonstrated its power to threaten both lives and livelihoods, and entire food circular economy from producers, inputs, processing, storage, distribution and consumption.

Therefore, indeed, this is the time to create momentum that food security is ground zero to achieve any meaningful development goals. Taking into consideration the sustainability aspect of food systems (land, water, energy labour, inputs, etc) and resilience aspects to mitigate and adapt externalities including climate shocks, pandemics and other related threats. ■

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# Globalisation linkage to COVID-19: How Africa's Economy is Impacted?

By Seleman Kitenge

Since the rise of globalisation, the world has now become like a small neighbourhood where people can easily interact with each other without facing any serious barriers. This has become both beneficial and detrimental to the social, political and economic sphere as far as the welfare of the people is concerned. Meaning despite the free movement of people, goods, and services led by globalisation being the stimulus to social-economic development, it has also become a source of spreading diseases. As a result, due to the technological development factor of globalisation, an outbreak such as COVID-19 has turned into a major pandemic disease that affected over million people around the world regardless of their geographical location differences. This is simply because technological advancement which is one of the main forces for globalisation made it easier for people to travel by land, sea and even air from one part to the other without facing any obstacles. In that case, if these people have contacted the disease such as COVID-19 in the city or country (A), they can easily transmit it to the city or country (B) which had no infections if proper healthcare measures are not in place to prevent the spread to the general public.

In the context of Africa in particular, WHO reported that the region had 7647 confirmed cases and 326 deaths of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by 8th April 2020. Therefore, since the cure is yet to be found, these numbers are expected to rise day by day until the spread of the COVID-19 is fully contained in Africa and other parts of the world. However, the measures used in the process of containing the transmission of the disease since was announced as a global pandemic by WHO and the first case being recorded in the continent up to date, is likely to create major economic shocks resulted by retardation of key economic sectors such as tourism, air transportation, manufacturing industries, and trade.

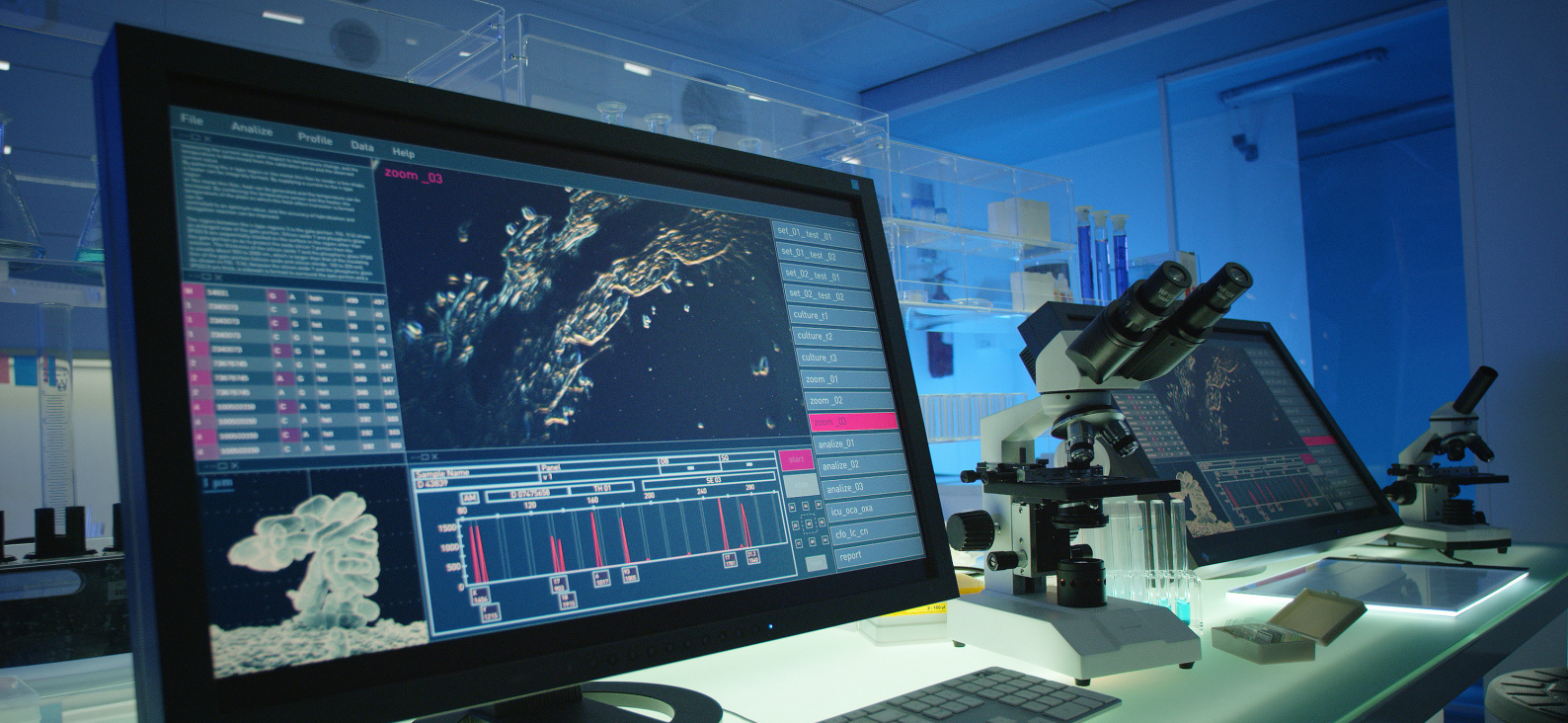
According to Brookings Institute, Africa is the world's

last frontier in the fight against extreme poverty where one in three Africans—422 million people—live below the global poverty line. Consequently, this fact signifies the bigger gap between the have and have not in the continent where the consequences of COVID-19 in the economic sectors will push the efforts to reduce the income gap backward rather than forward and increase the number of people living below the global poverty line. This fact is cemented by UNDP which stated that the COVID-19 crisis threatens to disproportionately hit developing countries—Income losses are expected to exceed \$220 billion, and nearly half of all jobs in Africa could be lost.

Therefore, measures such as national lockdown and many strict mitigation actions taken by governments within and outside Africa to limit gatherings and the mobility of people as a way to curb the spread of the virus will severe the production of goods, provision of services and trade activities. As a result, most countries across the continent will be economically affected by the paralysis of essential economic sectors.

As other parts of the world already started to experience the socio-economic shocks, Africa which has less recorded cases than other continents is also expected to face the same fate if this contagious disease is not fully managed on time to allow countries to go back to normal economic activities. Having fewer confirmed cases of COVID-19 compared to other regions does not mean that Africa is out of the risk of the disease itself and the aftermath, particularly economic shocks. Economic Commission for Africa projects that Coronavirus's new blow to economic growth expected to drop from 3.2% to 1.8%. According to ECA Executive Secretary, Vera Songwe, "the Continent's interconnectedness to affected economies of the European Union, China, and the United States was causing ripple effects."





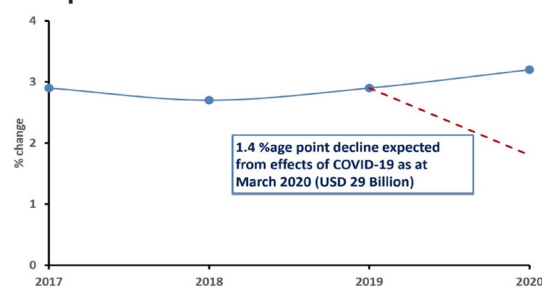
She reiterated that the continent would need up to US\$ 10.6 billion in unanticipated increases in health spending to curtail the virus from spreading, while on the other hand revenue losses could lead to unsustainable debt. The unbudgeted increases in health spending are likely to disrupt other planned development activities due to the rerouting of the funds to address the pandemic. As a consequence, this move may cause serious harm to economic growth and making the effort to end extreme poverty almost impossible. ECA states that COVID-19 could lead to Africa's export revenues from fuels falling at around US\$ 101 billion in 2020. ECA further states that remittances and tourism are also being affected as the virus continues to spread worldwide, resulting in a decline in FDI flows; capital flight; domestic financial market tightening; and a slow-down in investments - hence job losses.

Notably, unemployment is already a major concern in African countries since the public and the private sector does not produce adequate jobs to cover the majority population especially new graduates. This leads most people to be forced to create alternative employment for themselves by establishing small businesses as well as engaging in agriculture activities etc. Hence, if they are forced to close as a result of Coronavirus disease 2019, then losses of jobs are likely to escalate. On the other hand, most Africans who are based on rural settings depend on agriculture activities for subsistence. Hence if these majority farmers both small, medium and big along with their labourers cease to operate means another wave of job losses in the agricultural sector which employ

most Africans. Statistically, McKinsey & Company describes that more than 60% of populations in Sub Saharan Africa are smallholder farmers and about 23% of the GDP in the region comes from agriculture. Arguably, the ceasing of agricultural activities owing to COVID-19 pandemic means losses of 60% jobs of those involved in the sector in the Sub Saharan Africa region. Also, unmanaged farms may produce fewer crops than usual leading to the decline of the GDP affected by less production in the agriculture sector if the crisis is not contained soon enough.

These repercussions in key economic sectors in Africa will have severe damage to the prosperity of its people and hinder the efforts to achieve the continental development blueprint, Agenda 2063 as well as the global development blueprint, Agenda 2030 respectively. However, ECA advises that African governments could review and revise their budgets to reprioritise spending towards mitigating expected negative impacts from COVID-19 on their economies. This entails that if Africa plays its card correctly the chance of saving its economy from the aftermath of Coronavirus disease 2019 is still valid. ■

**Africa: Corona Virus new blow to economy Growth expected to drop from 3.2% to 1.8%**



Source: UNECA

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# AUDA-NEPAD in the News

On 8th April, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki spoke on the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD's Response Plan to COVID-19 on CNBC Africa. [WATCH THE INTERVIEW HERE](#)

Mrs Estherine Fotabong was interviewed by Peter Ndoro on SABC News on the AUDA-NEPAD's Response Plan to COVID-19. [WATCH THE INTERVIEW HERE](#)

In an interview conducted in French, Mr Amine Adoum spoke to DW on Africa mobilising against the coronavirus. [THE ARTICLE CAN BE READ HERE](#)

You may also listen to the podcast on 'Galvanising African industrial capacity towards critical pharmaceutical and medical supplies,' following Dr Janet Byaruhanga's radio interview with SABC Channel Africa. [THE PODCAST IS AVAILABLE HERE](#)

## AUDA-NEPAD COVID-19

### Response Plan of Action



#### 01 Health Systems

Accelerate containment measures against COVID-19



#### 02 Food Systems

Ensure food and nutrition security during and after the COVID-19 outbreak



#### 03 Skills Development & Employment

Accelerate priority programmes on entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation & innovation



#### 04 Education

Mitigate social & economic adverse effects of school closures during the COVID-19 outbreak



#### 05 National Planning & Data Systems

Use of innovation data & evidence for planning developmental programmes



#### 06 Sustainable Tourism

Provide systems to anticipate future risks and threats to the tourism sector



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