

Common Market for  
Eastern and Southern Africa



# COVID-19

in **COMESA**

**Situational Update N°17**

9<sup>th</sup> June 2020



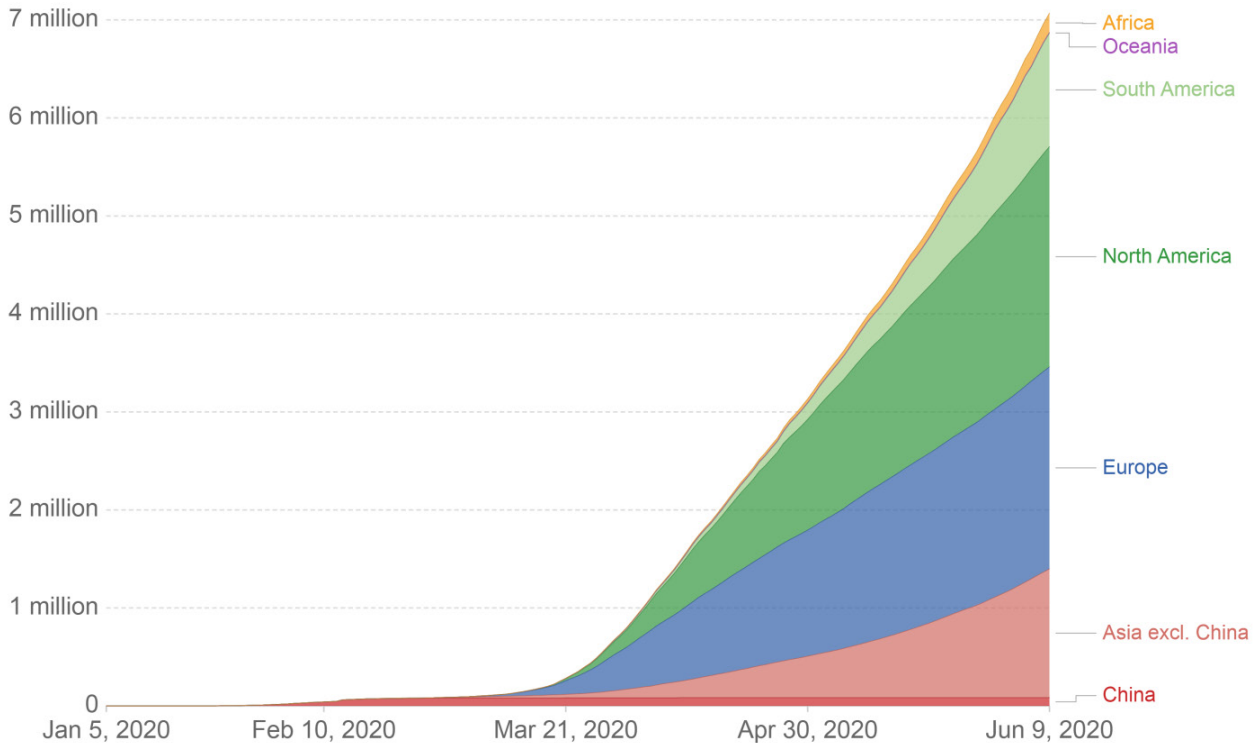
## CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### BACKGROUND

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic due to the alarming levels of its regional spread, infections and resultant deaths. Africa's first COVID-19 cases had been recorded in Egypt on 14<sup>th</sup> February. With over seven million cases recorded by 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the reported cases in Africa remain relatively low as compared to other highly affected regions being Asia, Europe, North America and South America. While it was projected that the number of deaths would be higher in Africa due to perceived weak health systems and the prevalence of other highly contagious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, Ebola, Measles, Cholera, among others, the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths have remained low as compared to the other regions mentioned above. To date the total number of reported cases and deaths in Africa stand at 199,410 and 5,395, respectively. The low rates can be attributed to early preparation and response by Member States.

## Total confirmed COVID-19 cases

The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of total cases. The main reason for this is limited testing.



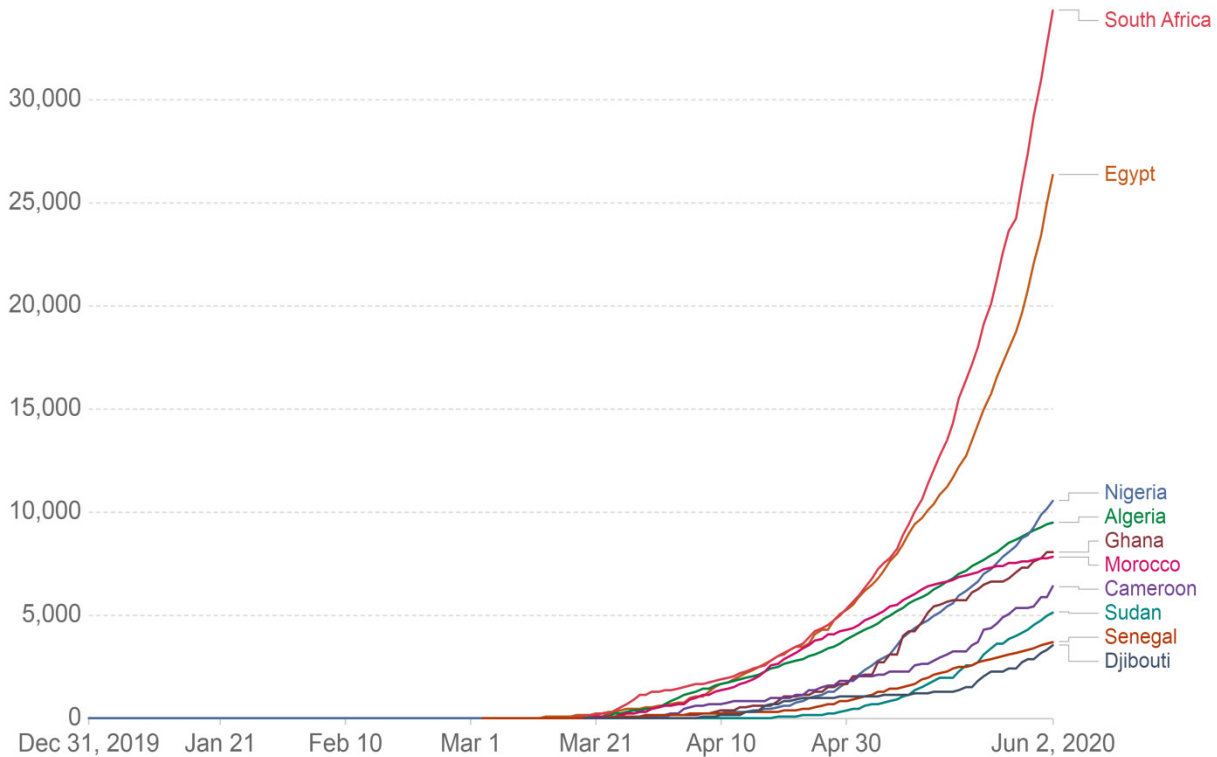
Source: European CDC – Situation Update Worldwide – Last updated 9th June, 10:45 (London time) [OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus](https://OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus) • CC BY

After the outbreak of COVID-19, majority of African countries put in place preventive measures to contain the spread of the pandemic. The measures included movement restrictions, quarantines, social distancing, curfews, suspension of international flights, closure of borders for all movement except for cargo and humanitarian supplies, closure of educational and religious institutions. Mass testing, treatment and testing have also been intensified. The top ten countries in Africa with the highest number of recorded COVID-19 cases include South Africa (50,879), Egypt (35,444), Nigeria (12,801), Algeria (10,265), Ghana (9,910), Morocco (8,408), Cameroon (8,060), Sudan (6,242), Senegal (4,516) and Djibouti (4,278). In this category, with the exception of Sudan, most countries have conducted the highest numbers of mass testing which explains the highest number of cases recorded. For example South Africa, Egypt,

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Our World  
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### CONTINENTAL RESPONSES TO COVID-19

The African Union (AU) through the Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa CDC), which is a specialised institution for disease control, has been in the forefront in putting in place continental measures to help Member States contain the spread and the potential impact of COVID-19. In anticipation of the outbreak of the disease in Africa, on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020, the Africa CDC established an Africa Task Force for Novel Corona Virus (AFTCOR) to put in place preparedness and response measures on the pandemic, prior to any cases being recorded on the continent. On 5<sup>th</sup> March, for instance, the AU issued a Joint Continental Strategy on dealing with COVID-19. The objectives of

the strategy are:

- Coordinate the efforts of Member States, AU agencies, WHO and other partners to ensure synergy and maximize the utilization of valuable resources and avoid duplication
- Promote evidence-based public health practices surveillance, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and control of COVID-19.

Africa CDC has focused its interventions towards containing the spread of COVID-19 in the following key areas:

- Surveillance and information sharing: given the fact that sharing of information is critical in containing the spread of the virus and also in developing measures, CDC has been in the forefront in coordinating and providing regular updates and guidance on managing the pandemic.
- Dissemination of information on the necessary measures to contain the pandemic
- Mobilisation of resources to strengthen the response to the pandemic: the AU has established a COVID-19 response fund.
- Strengthening testing capacities and training in Member States.
- Distribution and procurement of key medical equipment.

## **REGIONAL RESPONSES TO COVID-19**

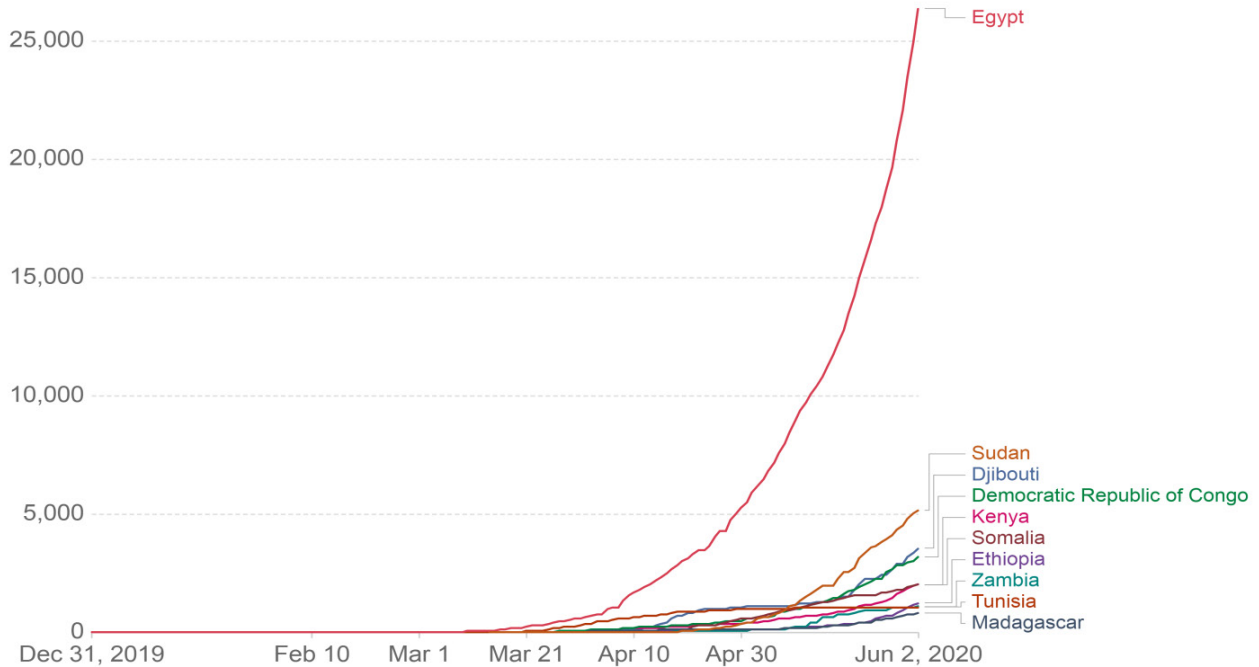
Given the fact that the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are the building blocs to the African, RECs have also undertaken various response measures at the regional level.

COMESA: To respond to the spread of COVID-19 and its impact in the 21 Member States, COMESA held an Extraordinary Council of Ministers Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Through this meeting, a Common Guideline for Safe Trade during COVID-19 was adopted. The Guideline provides common measures and practices to be applied across the region covering various sectors. This includes facilitation of cross-border movement of relief and essential supplies, transportation of goods and cross-border freight transport operations, air transport and movement of goods on transit/ inland deliveries. Other areas covered are regulation control of trucks/ vehicles, aircraft and vessels carrying essential goods and services, customs/ revenue authorities support to the economy and sustaining of supply chain continuity, among others. COMESA has also been providing regular updates on the COVID-19 situation in the region, preventive measures as well as measures to facilitate trade. Below are Member States with the highest recorded COVID-19 cases, above 1,000.

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ECOWAS: The Authority of the Heads of State and Government Summit was held on 23rd April 2020 to review the situation of COVID-19 in the region and the necessary measures to contain it. The Summit set up the Ministerial Coordination Committees on health, finance and transport in order to coordinate COVID-19 pandemic responses in the ECOWAS region. The ECOWAS Commission's West African Health Organisation (WAHO) that was established during the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak began issuing COVID-19 recommendations to Member States on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the region. In addition, WAHO began providing technical and financial support to Member States in the coordination, training of health personnel and provision of diagnostic test kits and critical medical supplies.

A part of their efforts, SADC, EAC and IGAD have continued to coordinate and share information among Member States on preventive and other measures to facilitate trade. For example, the EAC Secretariat has continued to issue alerts to all partner states to step up surveillance and establish control measures. Other additional measures by EAC include the setup of a Regional Coordination Committee highlighting risk communication and community engagement. SADC through an Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Health focusing on COVID-19 provided guidelines that member States need to put in place to containing the spread of COVID-19. They include, among others, establishment of national preparedness and responses plans as well as contingency and emergency funds to address gaps in prevention and impact mitigation.

## Summary of Regional Figures

Country	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Tests	Tests/1M pop	Total Cases/1M pop	Deaths	Deaths/1M pop	Total Recovered	Total Active Cases
Burundi	83	20	382	32	7	1	0	45	37
Comoros	141	35	-	-	162	2	2	67	72
Djibouti	4,278	709	36,497	36,975	4,334	31	31	2,013	2,234
DR Congo	4,259	933	-	-	48	90	1	539	3,630
Egypt	35,444	9,060	135,000	1,321	347	1,271	12	9,375	24,798
Eritrea	39	0	-	-	11	-	-	39	0
Eswatini	340	47	6,551	5,650	293	3	3	229	108
Ethiopia	2,156	899	147,735	1,287	19	27	0	361	1,768
Kenya	2,862	841	98,439	1,833	53	85	2	849	1,928
Libya	332	164	10,525	1,533	48	5	1	57	270
Madagascar	1,094	268	13,707	496	40	9	0	254	831
Malawi	443	107	6,542	343	23	4	0	55	384
Mauritius	337	2	133,883	105,283	265	10	8	324	3
Rwanda	451	74	78,259	6,053	35	2	0	297	152
Seychelles	11	0	-	-	112	-	-	11	0
Somalia	2,368	345	-	-	149	84	5	470	1,814
Sudan	6,242	1,069	401	9	143	372	8	2,059	3,811
Tunisia	1,087	3	55,419	4,692	92	49	4	982	56
Uganda	657	168	104,160	2,283	14	-	-	118	539
Zambia	1,200	111	28,236	1,539	65	10	1	912	278
Zimbabwe	287	84	52,905	3,563	19	4	0	46	237
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>64,111</b>	<b>14,939</b>	<b>908,641</b>			<b>2,059</b>		<b>19,102</b>	<b>42,950</b>

Source: World Health Organisation, Worldometer, Johns Hopkins University (compiled by COMWARN)







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