

Common Market for
Eastern and Southern Africa



EMERGING CHALLENGES IN CONTAINING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19

in **COMESA**

Situational Update N°26

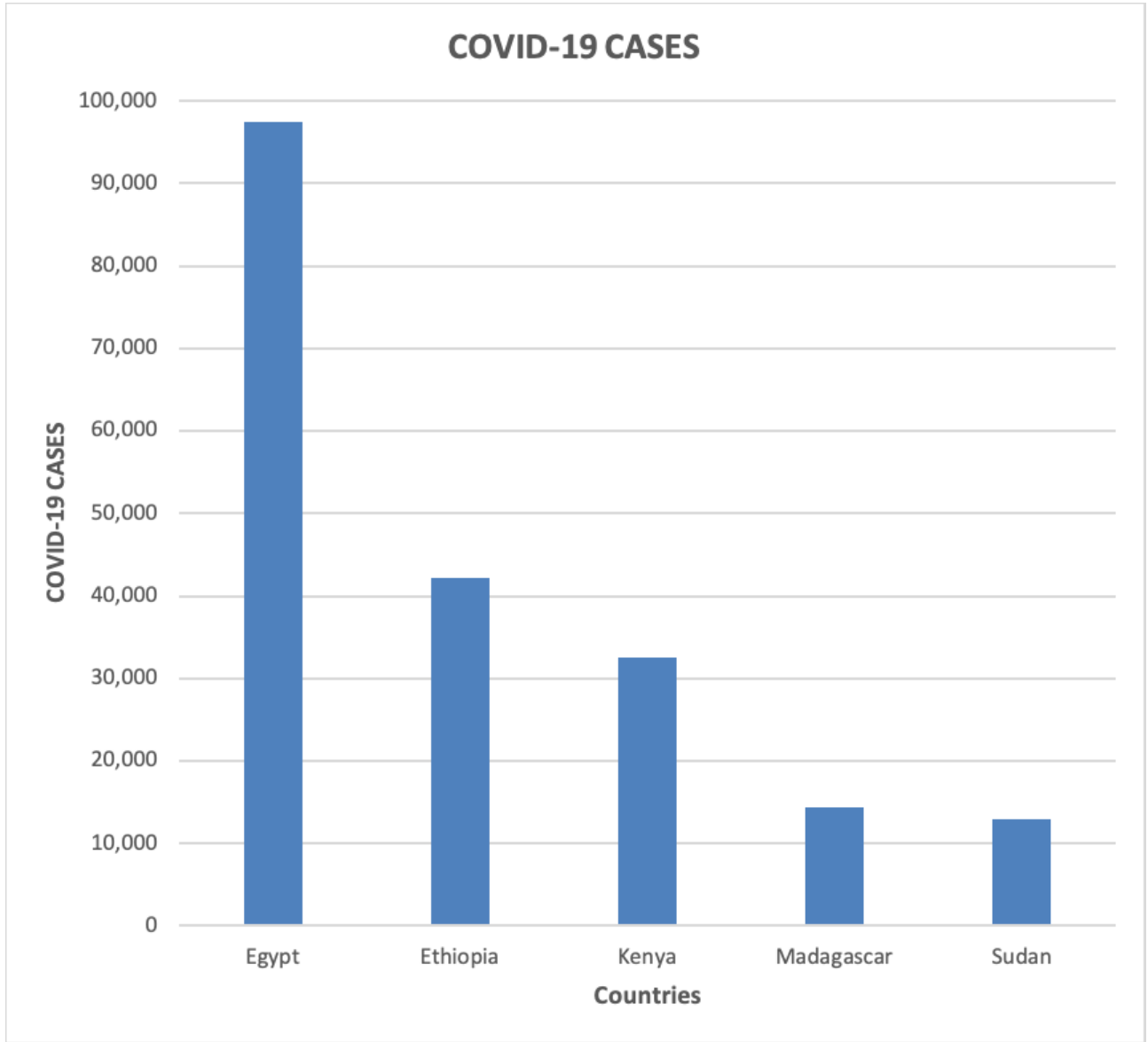
25th August 2020



EMERGING CHALLENGES IN CONTAINING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COMESA region is witnessing emerging challenges in containing the corona virus, a situation which has contributed to the escalation of new cases. As countries in the region continue to strengthen COVID-19 prevention measures, issues of low levels of testing, non-adherence to health guidelines, inadequate testing facilities and corruption are coming up as threats to the fight against the virus.

As of 25th August 2020, the COMESA region had recorded a total 266,392 COVID-19 cases, including 165,845 recoveries and 8,943 deaths. Since the last situational update of 18th August 2020, there has been a 9.3% increase in COVID-19 cases. The countries which have recorded the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases include Egypt (97,478), Ethiopia (42,143), Kenya (32,557), Madagascar (14,402) and Sudan (12,903).



Low Levels of Testing

With the continued spread of the pandemic, most Member States in the region intensified COVID-19 testing to enhance tracing, isolation and treatment. The main areas where Governments have been keen to conduct testing include various hotspots such as border points, markets, shopping malls and main highways, among others. In the region, Mauritius (161,376), Djibouti (65,629), Rwanda (28,612) and Eswatini (24,695) have conducted the highest numbers of tests per one million population. However, in some cases Member States have faced challenges in conducting COVID-19 tests. The low level of testing is attributed to inadequate capacities, including shortages of medical staff and equipment. Other reasons for low levels of testing are associated with stigma.

According to available data, low levels of testing per million population have been recorded in Sudan (9), Egypt (1,316), Burundi (1,850) Madagascar (1,993) and Malawi (2,230). While these numbers are indicated as low, in some countries the data has not been updated on a regular basis whilst in some countries like Comoros, DR Congo, Eritrea, Seychelles and Somalia there is no data on testing.

Non-Adherence to Health Guidelines

The continued increase in COVID-19 cases in some countries has been associated with non-adherence to health guidelines such as social distancing, wearing of masks in public, basic hygiene and holding of social events. In some cases, the non-adherence to health guidelines has been linked to cultural practices and religious beliefs. The continued non-adherence to health guidelines has led to a review by a number of countries on the existing measures. For instance, in Rwanda, measures were reviewed and tightened, including closing of crowded markets in Kigali in mid-August. In Kenya, the continued non-adherence led to the ban on the sale of alcohol in restaurants and extension of night curfew in July 2020.

Corruption

Corruption is one of the emerging challenges that is hampering efforts towards containing the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues related to the misappropriation of COVID-19 funds, selling of PPEs to private business groups, inflation of tenders, flouting of tender rules and regulations, non-payment of medical staff, mismanagement of isolation centres have hindered the effective management of the pandemic in some countries in the region.

Summary of Regional Figures as of 25th August 2020

Country	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Tests	Total Cases/ 1M pop	Total Tests/ 1M pop	Total Recovered	Total Deaths	Deaths/ 1M pop	Recovery Rate	Total Active Cases
Burundi	430	17	22,093	36	1,850	345	1	0.08	80.2%	84
Comoros	417	12		478		396	7	8	94.96%	14
Djibouti	5,383	11	64,979	5,437	65,629	5,273	60	61	97.96%	50
DR Congo	9,842	136		109		8,953	251	3	90.97%	638
Egypt	97,478	888	135,000	950	1,316	66,817	5,280	51	68.55%	25,381
Eritrea	306	21		86		274			89.54%	32
Eswatini	4,304	410	28,694	3,704	24,695	2,936	85	73	68.22%	1,283
Ethiopia	42,143	10,807	775,908	365	6,726	15,262	692	6	36.21%	26,189
Kenya	32,557	2,192	425,364	604	7,886	18,895	554	10	58.04%	13,108
Libya	11,281	2,702	96,524	1,639	14,020	1,112	203	29	9.86%	9,966
Madagascar	14,402	393	55,375	518	1,993	13,436	178	6	93.29%	788
Malawi	5,419	294	42,821	282	2,230	3,059	169	9	56.45%	2,191
Mauritius	347	1	205,285	273	161,376	335	10	8	96.54%	2
Rwanda	3,306	766	371,886	254	28,612	1,785	14	1	53.99%	1,507
Seychelles	132	5		1,341		126			95.45%	6
Somalia	3,269	12		205		2,443	93	6	74.73%	733
Sudan	12,903	418	401	293	9	6,538	818	19	50.67%	5,547
Tunisia	2,893	708	126,596	244	10,695	1,454	71	6	50.26%	1,368
Uganda	2,362	802	351,845	51	7,659	1,248	22	0.5	52.84%	1,092
Zambia	11,148	1,309	106,795	604	5,787	10,208	280	15	91.57%	660
Zimbabwe	6,070	762	149,748	408	10,054	4,950	155	10	81.55%	965
TOTALS	266,392	22,666	2,959,314			165,845	8,943			91,604

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



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