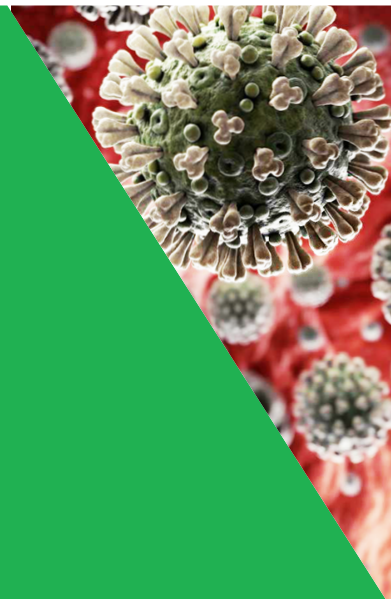




SADC REGIONAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With special focus on Energy
and Education Sectors as well
as developments in Traditional
Medicines Research in Africa

Bulletin No. 10



#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

This Bulletin No. 10 of the SADC regional response to COVID-19 provides highlights of the COVID-19 Partners and Supply portal, a platform which was launched by the United Nations (UN) to enable collaboration of stakeholders in the COVID-19 response. The portal features real time tracking to support the planning, implementation and resourcing of country preparedness and response activities. Tools and guides are included in the report to provide Member States with additional resources on the functioning of the portal. The report further provides the continental and regional COVID-19 situation. In this bulletin, we also bring noteworthy updates from the African Union (AU), in relation to COVID-19.

Joint efforts of the WHO and the Africa CDC on the COVID-19 Traditional Medicine Research that it at early stages is featured in the report. Another key aspect of the report is the survey results of an assessment on measures taken by Member States in the Education Sector to address COVID-19. As part of the study results we share best practices and recommendations of the study. The challenges related to border disruptions remain a critical focus of the report. Some of these disruptions have resulted from the continuous delays at border points as well as border closures due to border personnel being infected and transport having to be diverted to other routes

The Tripartite Guidelines on the Movement of Transport during COVID-19, developed by SADC, EAC and COMESA are an important milestone highlighted in the report. These guidelines were approved by the Tripartite Council of Ministers at their Extra-ordinary meeting on 29 July 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on a number of sectors has been extensive and one such sector is the energy sector, not only affecting industry and business but also domestic and household levels, resulting in consumers not having a reliable source of energy during this period which is further aggravated by load shedding in some countries. The report offers key recommendations as follows;

Health Sector

- Member States are urged to improve active surveillance, including alert management systems, case investigations and contact tracing as part of strengthening surveillance.

- Member States are urged to scale up the testing of health workers exposed to COVID-19 and develop protocols for health worker infection management.
- Member States are urged to provide high standard PPE, safer working environment etc. for frontline health workers to motivate them for their selfless commitment to their patients.
- (Member States are urged to utilise the Africa Medical Supplies Platform for the procurement of essential medical equipment, when it is fully rolled out

Education sector

- Member States are urged to adopted a blended learning approach to address educational inclusion.
- Member States are urged to reinforce Capacity Building Strategies for academic staff and students on distance and online teaching.
- Member States to consider investing in Technological Infrastructure.
- Member States to consider the setting up of an integrated and ready-made parallel system of online learning.

Transport and Trade Facilitation

- Member States are urged to implement the Tripartite Guidelines on the Movement of Transport during COVID19 Pandemic.

Energy Sector

- Member States are urged to put in place measures to ensure uninterrupted supply of energy for both domestic and commercial purposes.

1. GLOBAL OUTLOOK

COVID-19 Partners Platform and Supply Portal

The global COVID-19 outbreak is leading to an acute and drastic shortage of essential supplies, including personal protective equipment, diagnostics and clinical management– creating an unprecedented need for international solidarity and a coordinated global response. At the request of the UN Secretary-General and in support of the UN Crisis Management Team, this COVID-19 Partners Platform was launched to be an enabling tool for all countries, implementing partners, donors and contributors to collaborate in the global COVID-19 response. The Partners Platform features real-time tracking to support the planning, implementation and resourcing of country preparedness and response activities. Access to the Supply Portal is through signing up and logging in to the

COVID-19. Partners Platform. Refer to the guide below for more information on the process of requesting and receiving globally sourced COVID-19 critical supplies through the UN COVID-19 Supply Chain System (CSCS).

<https://www.who.int/who-documents-detail/covid-19-supply-chain-system-requesting-and-receiving-supplies>

Download the guide here:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid-19-supply-chain-system-requesting-and-receiving-supplies.pdf?sfvrsn=cd25bbbc_4&download=true

Global epidemiological dashboard by 24 July 2020

As the possibility of a protracted pandemic becomes increasingly likely, countries are encouraged to conduct periodic reviews of their national and subnational COVID-19 response. This ensures that countries do not miss critical opportunities for learning and improvement to better respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. WHO has developed guidance and resources available in the link below, to assist in this exercise.

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Country_IAR-2020.1

2.SADC REGION OUTLOOK – DATA

Situation on the African Continent and the SADC Region

COVID-19 cases in Africa are gathering pace. There are now more than 750 000 cases of COVID-19, with over 15 000 deaths. As of 21 July 2020, the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in the region surpassed the 600 000 mark. The total number of deaths exceeded 10 000 and is now at 10 116, reported in 44 countries, giving an overall case fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.6%. Three countries, including Eritrea, Seychelles and Uganda have not registered any COVID-19 related deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. Countries in the region have also observed increased incidences of importation of cases from affected countries within the region, largely fueled by long-distance truck drivers and unregulated movement through porous borders. Below is summary of the COVID-19 situation in the SADC region as at 23 July 2020.

Figure 1: SADC COVID-19 Dashboard (bottom)

SADC COVID-19 Dashboard												
JULY 23, 2020 Snapshot												
Country	Total cases	New cases	Total deaths	New deaths	Total recovered	active cases	Serious. Critical	Total cases/1M popula.	Deaths/1 M pop	Total tests	Test/1 M pop.	Population
South Africa	408,052		6,093		236,26	165,699	539	6,875	103	2,632,106	44,347	59,352,965
DRC	8,767	47	201		5,109	3,457		98	2			89,697,561
Madagascar	8,741	360	76	6	5,522	3,143	87	315	3	36,773	1,326	27,728,389
Zambia	3,789		134		1,677	1,978	18	206	7	72,82	3,955	18,410,358
Malawi	3,386	84	79	3	1,328	1,979	4	177	4	25,756	1,345	19,155,868
Zimbabwe	2,124		28		510	1,586		143	2	110,56	7,432	14,875,523
Eswatini	2,021		28		882	1,111	5	1,741	24	20,784	17,904	1,160,889
Mozambique	1,582		11		528	1,043		51	0.4	50,121	1,601	31,300,337
Namibia	1,522		7		69	1,446	13	598	3	19,782	7,777	2,543,502
Tanzania	509		21		183	305	7	9	0.4			59,737,030
Angola	851		33		236	582	15	26	1	10	304	32,917,0
Mauritius	343		10		332	1		270	8	205,285	161,4	1,271,904
Comoros	340		7		324	9		391	8			870,616
Botswana	686	94	1		52	633	1	291	0.4	62,296	26,461	2,354,256
Seychelles	114	6			69	45		1,159				98,385
Lesotho	359		6		69	284		167	3	7,432	3,468	2,143,294

Source: Worldometer:23 July 2020

Recommendations on Surveillance

- The Surveillance Pillar of the WHO-AFRO continues to provide technical support to Member States to improve active surveillance, including alert management systems, case investigations and contact tracing and Member States are urged to use this facility.
- Expedite the establishment of a mechanism for tracking of cases in neighbouring countries in order to report confirmed cases during cross border screening to avoid missing cases from the country of origin or duplication of notifications in two countries.
- Conduct an analysis of the impact of the lockdown on the current epidemiological situation, noting that some Member States have done such analyses, while others are in the process of doing so.

3. COVID-19 IMPACT ON HEALTH WORKFORCE

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned of the threat posed by COVID-19 to health workers across Africa. More than 10 000 health workers in the 40 countries which have reported on such infections have been infected with COVID-19 so far, a sign of the challenges medical staff on the frontlines of the outbreak face. Some countries are approaching a critical number of infections that can place stress on health systems. In order to address this situation, the following is recommended to Member States.

Recommendations:

- Scale up the testing of health workers exposed to COVID-19.
- Develop a protocol for health worker infection management.
- Provide high standard PPE, safer working environment etc. for frontline health workers to motivate them for their selfless commitment to their patients

4. WHO, AFRICA CDC JOINT PUSH FOR COVID-19 TRADITIONAL MEDICINE RESEARCH IN AFRICA

In a joint effort to enhance research and development of traditional medicines for COVID-19 in Africa, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) have launched an expert advisory committee/panel to provide independent scientific advice and support to countries on the safety, efficacy and quality of traditional medicine therapies.

The 25-member Regional Expert Committee on Traditional Medicine for COVID-19 will support

countries in collaborative efforts to conduct clinical trials of traditional medicines in compliance with international standards. By pooling expertise within the continent, the Regional Expert Committee will also accelerate the pace and elevate the standards of research, particularly clinical research on new therapies from traditional medicines against COVID-19. WHO recognizes that traditional, complementary and alternative medicine has many benefits and Africa has a long history of traditional medicine and practitioners that play an important role in providing care to populations.

5. THE IMPACT FROM THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

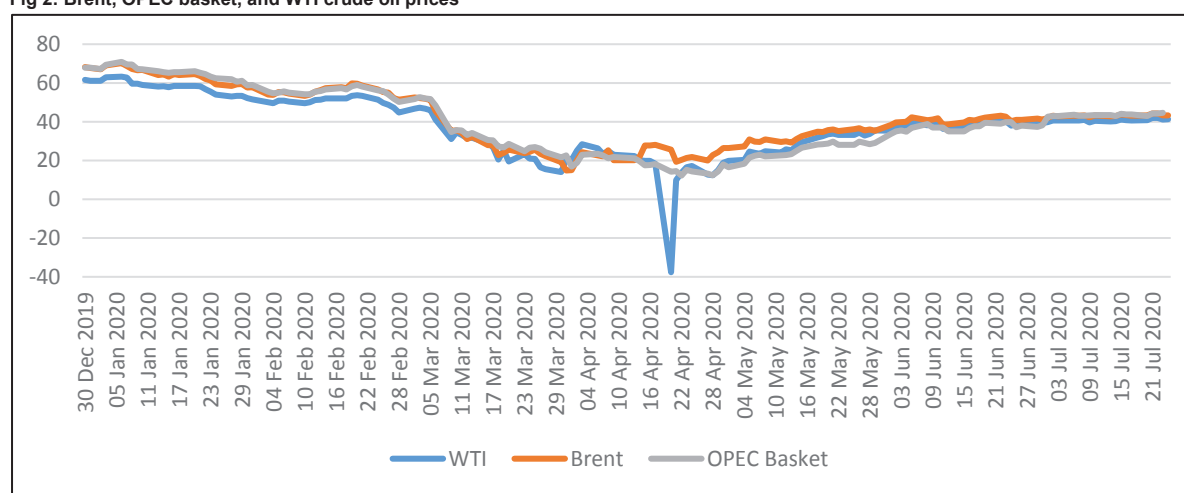
The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the deepest global recession since World War II. In a bid to save lives and limit the spread of the virus, economies were pushed into "Great Lockdowns" which triggered the worst recession since the Great Depression. Resultantly, economic outlook forecasts are now projecting a deeper recession in 2020 and a slower recovery in 2021 due to severity of the impact of the pandemic to the global and regional economies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised the global economic growth for 2020 to -4.9 per cent in June 2020 from -3 per cent projected in April 2020. The regional economy growth forecast of -3.1 per cent in April 2020 was revised downwards to -3.6 per cent in July 2020.

The lifting of lockdowns has seen the restoration of significant economic activity which has aided the strengthening of oil prices to over \$40 per barrel. The weak oil demand due to the pandemic coupled by the supply glut, from 30 December 2019 to 30 April 2020, prices plummeted by 69.4 per cent, 61.2 per cent and 73.4 per cent for West Texas Intermediate (WTI), Brent and OPEC Basket crude oil, respectively. On the back of increased economic activity, between 30 April and 24 July 2020, prices of WTI, Brent Crude and OPEC Basket crude oil increased by 5.1 per cent, 5.3 per cent and 16.7 per cent to \$41.29, \$43.34 and \$44.62, as at 29 May 2020 respectively (see Fig 2 below).

Fig 2: Brent, OPEC basket, and WTI crude oil prices (Page 6)

In the SADC region, the crisis has increased external vulnerabilities and has markedly reduced external buffers. Amid prospects for a protracted recovery in key sources of income for the region, international reserves could contract substantially across Member States. The crisis has also resulted in a significant erosion of fiscal space. Debt sustainability concerns are a growing challenge for Member States. Debt-to-GDP levels are now projected to breach the regional threshold of 60 percent for most Member States. Lowering debt and rebuilding buffers will be critical priorities once countries move beyond immediate pandemic-related recovery policies. Overall, the economic recovery is largely fragile due to significant downside risks associated with the uncertainties of a rise in infections as economies reopen. In the absence of a medical solution, the strength of the recovery is highly uncertain, and the impact on sectors and countries uneven.

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



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

With these uncertainties as we enter the next phase of the crisis, further supportive fiscal and monetary policy measures are required as well as increased international and regional cooperation. Member States are urged to support the economic recovery with supportive fiscal and monetary policies until we can secure a safe and durable exit from the crisis. Premature withdrawal of support could derail the recovery and permanently damage the economy.

6. IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR – SURVEY RESULTS

SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with UNESCO, launched a survey to collect information on measures taken by SADC Member States, including specific actions taken to ensure education continuity at all levels, during and after the crisis phase. The objectives of the survey were wide ranging and were related to gathering information on the following: measures adopted by Member States to ensure continuity of academic experience of students and the instructional resources used thereto; measures adopted to support disadvantaged students to ensure continuity of learning; funding sources for implementing the various measures which Member States are adopting or proposing to adopt in their response to the pandemic; and support provided to teachers and the instructional resources made available for their professional development during the pandemic amongst others.

6.1 Survey Findings

13 of the 16 Member States participated to the survey namely: Angola, Mauritius, United Republic of Tanzania, Eswatini, Mozambique, Zambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Seychelles, Malawi and South Africa and the main findings from the study are as follows:

- The average number of months of lost learning opportunity approximates 3 months (around 13 weeks) for most SADC Member States, following lockdown restrictions.
- A divergence on the policy directives to resume classes is noted although most Member States deferred the resumption of classes until

June/July 2020.

- Most Member States (8 countries out of 13) resumed classes after 5 weeks following the lifting of their lockdown restrictions and in general, there seemed to be a gradual and phased approach in most Member States for a late reopening of Schools/Universities.
- All Member States concur that government actions were focused on the development and use of online materials in ensuring continuity of academic activities during the pandemic. In addition, 92% of respondents highlighted the government actions towards alternative offline delivery of courses through TV, radios or print media in ensuring continuity of education.
- The use of existing online distance learning platforms has been prominent among most Member States in response to the shutdown of Schools and Universities due to the pandemic. To this effect, the professional support to teachers has been mainly geared towards training on the use of online distance learning platforms through Zoom.
- More than three quarters of the respondents claim that radio education and educational television has been the most utilized medium to ensure the continuity of academic learning for primary and secondary students while Universities and TVET colleges have focused their actions on the use of more online distance learning resources.
- The types of instructional resources used depend on the profile of learners and that radio and educational television will be less relevant and effective for learners in the higher education sector. In particular, no Member States referred to the use of radio and educational television for TVET and University students.
- The majority of the Member States have established policies to ensure continuity of learning for the disadvantaged students. In particular, more than 70% of the respondents indicated that their actions were mainly targeted towards the provision of offline and printed

materials to students with disabilities and in remote areas. The other initiatives are mainly free internet access, provision of tablets or PCs, maintaining school feeding programmes, distributing relief food to the vulnerable families in communities, provision of social grants amongst others during the pandemic.

- Less than 25% of the respondents indicated they requested for financial and technical support of the private sector and UN Agencies in response to the pandemic. In particular, the majority of respondents indicated that government stimulus packages and support from donors were the most frequent sources of funding.
- The issues identified as very challenging by most respondents are the continuity of assessments and learning as well as the well-being of students and teachers. Essentially, the majority of the respondents indicated that ensuring continuity of academic learning was obviously more challenging for early and young learners than adult learners.
- Challenges encountered by Member States in their response to COVID-19 related to: underdeveloped technological infrastructure (63% response rate), the management of students' emotional health (29% response rate), the low capacity of parents/guardians to support learning at home (25% response rate) and the management of IT infrastructure (20% response rate).
- Major measures in relation to curriculum recovery plan relate to: extension of teaching and learning time, re-scheduling/postponement and accelerated learning programmes (more than 60%). Very few respondents (less than 15%) have considered the option of mass promotion and scrapping of examinations as a viable option.
- Sanitary and hygiene standards such as hand washing, personal protective equipment and reviewing class sizes so as to comply with social distancing (more than 70% of the responses) were identified as the main support measures mainstreamed in the national plan to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

6.2 Best Practices

- The majority of the Member States (for example Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe Tanzania, Mauritius amongst others) have developed radio lessons and collaborated with national TV Channels to ensure continuity of academic learning of the students.
- Provision of a platform for online teaching and learning to ensure the continuity of learning (Malawi, Namibia, Angola, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia are few examples).
- Some Teachers and lecturers are also conducting Virtual Classrooms while others are using various conferencing applications and Student Portals in delivering education (for example Zambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Mauritius).

- Developing and using own online platform. For example, Namibia provided a customized ICT resource aimed at providing learning materials, equipment and capacity development through KOPANO and NAMCOL (Namibian College of Open Learning).
- Dealing with the emotional health of students. For example, recruiting more teachers, lecturers, psychologists and laboratory assistants to meet the COVID 19 requirements (Zimbabwe) and providing guidance and counselling to students so as to adapt to the changes (Tanzania).
- Reinforcement of hygiene, sanitary and social distancing measures at schools across the majority of Member States
- Collaborating with international partners: In late March 2020, the UNICEF office in Lesotho received a GPE grant of US\$70,000 to support the Ministry of Education with producing lessons for the radio and TV, as well as learner packs.

6.3 Recommendations

Education Policies

- Adoption of a blended learning approach to address educational inclusion;
- Policy Reform of the education sector to cope with future crises.

Training

- Reinforcing Capacity Building Strategies for academic staff and students on distance and online teaching.
- Reinforcing the role of parents and caregivers at home

Technology and Innovation

- Member States to consider investing in Technological Infrastructure.
- Member States to consider the setting up of an integrated and ready-made parallel system of online learning.

7. TRANSPORT AND TRADE FACILITATION

7.1 Border disruptions and closures

Cross border road transport continues to be disrupted by a number of COVID19 related challenges. The following disruptions were observed during the period under review;

- Several border posts (Lebombo, Oshoek, Kopfontein, Groblersbrugge) were temporarily closed for varying periods ranging from 1-3 days following the exposure of or after some of the border officials had tested positive for the COVID-19. In line with regulations the border facilities had to be fumigated for the safety of staff members and travelers.

- During such closures, traffic diverted to alternate routes and border posts creating congestion due to increased and unanticipated traffic when staff levels at such border posts have not been increased.
- A few border posts (Mamuno/TransKalahari; Katima Mulio/Sesheke) continue to be challenged with intermittent shortages of testing equipment and supplies which results in testing backlog and queues.
- Transport Operators and Drivers are reportedly avoiding some corridor routes (North South Corridor through Botswana) due to differences in COVID-19 testing regimes. The diversion to alternative routes and border posts is putting pressure on the alternative border posts (Chirundu and Beit Bridge). Consequentially, border posts like Chirundu have temporarily moved to 24-hour operations in order to facilitate the increased traffic.
- Some countries are experiencing shortages of essential supplies such as fuel and cooking gas due in part to disruptions arising from implementation of increased COVID-19 related health regulatory measures.
- Transport Operators are reporting increasing numbers of drivers and crews testing positive for COVID-19. This development is affecting productivity and labour relations as evidenced by public demonstrations that took place in one country. The net effect of the foregoing disruptions are protracted times for trips, increased transport costs and underutilization of transport fleets and crews. These resultant increased transport costs are eventually borne by the end users.

7.2 Draft Tripartite Guidelines on the Movement of Transport during COVID-19 Pandemic

The Draft Tripartite Guidelines on the Movement of Transport during COVID-19 Pandemic were reviewed and validated by an Expanded Technical Committee of Experts from COMESA, EAC and SADC Member / Partner States from Public Health, Trade, Transport and Public Security on 16 July 2020. Consensus was reached on the following key issues;

- The type of COVID-19 tests to be performed on drivers and crew before commencement of a cross border trip and at borders;
- Only drivers with negative COVID-19 test results will be allowed to undertake cross border trips;
- The validity period of negative COVID-19 test results;
- Mutual recognition of the COVID-19 test results between and among all Member/Partner States and RECs; and
- Implementation of integrated and harmonised electronic surveillance and monitoring system to monitor driver health, track drivers and vehicles and for contact tracing.

The guidelines were developed following an analysis of REC guidelines and in order to address the

challenges of shared traffic and overlapping REC membership in Member/Partner States and they seek to harmonize COVID-19 testing protocols, regulatory measures and establish an institutional framework to coordinate and monitor implementation. The guidelines were approved by the Tripartite Council of Ministers at its Extraordinary meeting on 29 July, 2020.

7.3 Development of surveillance and monitoring systems for Drivers and Vehicles

Progress has been made on the development of the Corridor Trip Monitoring System (CTMS) that would be deployed in conjunction with the Tripartite Transport Registers and Information Platform System (TRIPS) to all tripartite corridors. TRIPS is a platform which will be availed to road transport policy makers, regulators and law enforcement agents to facilitate sharing of data and information on drivers, vehicles, loads and road transport transgressions in COMESA, EAC and SADC.

CTMS is being developed and deployed in a phased manner. It was first released on 22 June 2020 and provides the means for managing the cross-border road transport during the COVID-19 pandemic in a safe manner and ultimately a management tool for management of inter-state road transport and trade facilitation across the Tripartite region will be developed. The CTMS is to be piloted on the Trans Kalahari Corridor (Botswana, Namibia and South Africa) and on the Namibia-Zambia sections of the Walvis Bay -Ndola -Lubumbashi Corridor before rollout to other Tripartite corridors. The following actions have been undertaken;

- CTMS presented to all SADC Member States.
- Formal letters sent Botswana, Namibia, RSA and Zambia on detailed CTMS Pilot Implementation Plan and resource requirements.
- Presentation to COMESA Member States on 18 June 2020.
- Presentation of CTMS made to Botswana Ministry of Transport and National COVID19 Task Team.
- Presentation made to Namibia on 6 July.
- Presentation to EAC Partner States confirmed on 14 July 2020.
- Presentation to Namibian Transport Operators-23 July 2020

Future presentations are being scheduled with other Member States and Stakeholders.

8.THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN THE REGIONAL ENERGY SECTOR

8.1 The Situational Analysis on the Emerging Issues in the Energy Sector

The majority of SADC Member States allowed resumption of some economic activities by easing lockdown regulations that were aimed to control the spreading of COVID-19.

As a result, all sectors of economy from primary level covering mining and farming; secondary such as manufacturing, production and construction; tertiary level covering services, transport, retail, financial and hospitality; as well as quaternary level comprising education and training institutions have resumed their operations. It is evident that all these sectors are driven by availability of reliable energy services and products despite not operating at their full capacity.

8.2 Electrical Energy Subsector

The electrical energy subsector in the Region continues to play a critical role in ensuring reliable and uninterrupted electricity supply for all the essential services such as hospitals and health facilities. Electricity continued to play an important role to ensure that majority of SADC citizens are able to work and study online through support of the soft and hard infrastructure of Information and Communication technologies (ICT).

The electricity demand in the Region has not yet recovered although there is a gradual reopening of the economic activities. On the regional competitive electricity markets, the easing of lockdown led to increase in traded electrical energy volumes in the Region increased from 89 GWh in March to 143 GWh at the beginning of July 2020. Similarly, the clearing prices increased from 4.1 US\$/ kWh to 4.8 US\$/ kWh for the Day Ahead Market as the main trading platform in the Competitive Electricity Market operated by SAPP, signaling an indicator in demand growth (SAPP Monthly Report June 2020).

In the short-term, the reopening of economic activities and businesses coupled with the cold winter season in the Region increased electricity demand in July 2020 and the situation is expected to increase marginally until the end of August 2020.

8.3 Petroleum and Gas Subsector

The lockdown also affected the oil industry, severely. Due to low demand of petroleum products, major oil refineries in South Africa reduced their production outputs while others undertook unplanned and prescheduled maintenance shutdowns. The majority of oil refineries including the Transnet pipeline transporting fuel from coastal based refineries were offline. The easing of lockdown implemented through phased opening of economic activities and movement of people increased demand of petroleum products within a short time such that some of the outlets could not cope with the rising demand within a short time especially petrol (mogas) which is predominantly used by the majority of motorists.

It has also been observed that the supply and distribution of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) which is used in domestic and commercial settings has also been affected and as a result of this short supply, consumers have had to resort to a costly and moderately reliable electricity, leaving users with limited options.

Crude oil prices are gradually increasing since April 2020 and are trading at US\$43 per barrel from the beginning of July 2020 for Brent and OPEC Basket while WTI is at US\$40.8 per barrel (Statista- Weekly Brent, OPEC basket, and WTI crude oil prices)

9.COVID-19 UPDATES FROM THE AFRICAN UNION

9.1 Early Measures

Much earlier in the response, the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 was developed to guide the response on the continent. Several coordination committees were established to coordinate the response at different levels. At the same time the Africa CDC activated its Incident Management System which is supported by the African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC), a continental resource for surge staffing during public health emergencies.

9.2 Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The Africa CDC, with its Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs), has been supporting Member States in their preparedness and response activities in collaboration with WHO and all other partners including research and academic institutions, private sectors, and various partners. Africa CDC also launched the initiative of the Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing: Trace, Test and Tract (known as the PACT Initiative) intended to accelerate and scale up testing of COVID-19 by African Member States.

Furthermore, the AU Bureau of Heads of State and Government has regularly convened bi-weekly meetings to discuss COVID-19 status in the continent, the Continental strategy to respond to COVID-19 pandemic, progress in the implementation, and challenges. The Africa CDC has also been engaged in the following;

- Conducting trainings to build the capacities of Member States on laboratory diagnosis, disease surveillance, infection prevention and control, risk communication and clinical care management, Public Health Emergency Operations Centres Management;
- Distribution of testing kits and other medical equipment and supplies, including PPEs, ventilators etc to Member States
- Deployment of rapid response team experts to provide technical support.
- Developed and disseminated policy guidance documents on different technical areas of COVID-19, including virtual trainings for Member States.

9.3 Africa Medical Supplies Platform

This platform is an initiative enabling access to critical medical supplies to African governments. The platform works in 5 simple steps:

- Critical Medical supplies are sourced,
- Buyers place orders on the platform,
- Buyers make payments,
- Seller prepares shipments and
- Delivery from seller to countries.

The SADC Secretariat will be following the developments on the full roll out of the platform and advise Member States so that they can utilize the platform.



1 REGION, 16 NATIONS WORKING TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE



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