Initiative Africa

Initiative Africa - Covid-19 Rapid Situational Assessment Update No. 3

Last Update: March 24, 2019

This document aims to support public health preparedness planning and response activities to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Situation updates

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared "that the outbreak of a novel coronavirus (designated as 2019-nCoV) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern." Since then, the illness has spread to every corner of the globe leading to an outbreak that the WHO has now called a pandemic.

As of March 24, 2020, over 426,914 cases were reported around the world with 18,920 deaths. Africa reported a total of 2,298 cases and 62 deaths. Ethiopia reported 12 cases and no death.

The risk of severe disease associated with COVID-19 infection for people in Ethiopia is currently difficult to establish due numerous unknowns and the ever changing environment. The cases reported so far are very low, but there is fear that the unreported/undetected cases may be high. The consequent impact on social and work-related activity is, however, considered high.

Many institutions and news outlets are closely following and sharing updates about COVID-19 but due to the numerous sources out there, some might have different and outdated information. This is why we recommend that people use reliable and certified sources when it comes to getting the right information and updates.

The information is extracted from:

- WHO - https://www.who.int/
- Official Ethiopia COVID-19 Monitoring Platform - http://www.etwisdom.gov.et/covid-19

Targeted actions taken by the government

Given the current epidemiology and risk assessment, and the expected developments in the next days to few weeks, the following public health measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic are taken by the government:

- On Monday 16th March, 2020, Ethiopia closed all primary and secondary schools across the country and banned all public gatherings, including sports events, for 15 days.
- On March 20th, 2020, all passengers arriving to Ethiopia will be subjected to a 14-day quarantine period in designated hotel at their own cost.
- Ethiopian Airline will cease flights operations to 30 countries.
- Night clubs and bars to cease operations temporarily.
- Correction facilities to expand and utilize other holding spaces in order to avoid overcrowding.
- The first shipment of testing kits, masks and guidelines contributed by Jack Ma through Alibaba have arrived. In this regards the committee is working on the distribution within the country as well as intended African countries.