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Covid-19: Kagera records first case, Arusha second as total rises to 13

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

KAGERA Region has recorded its first case of coronavirus and Arusha the second one as the total confirmed cases increased slightly from 12 late last week to 13 as of yesterday.

Figures released yesterday by the Health ministry in Dodoma said Dar es Salaam region has eight cases, Zanzibar two cases, Arusha two cases and Kagera one case.

This is the first time the novel virus has been confirmed in the Lake Zone Region as previous cases were in the commercial capital of Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Zanzibar.

However, on a positive note, Minister Ummu Mwalimu told reporters that Tanzania's first patient based in Arusha who was diagnosed with the disease on March 16 is now free of the virus and was about to be released from quarantine.

Out of the 13 confirmed cases, eight are Tanzanians while five are foreigners and all of them arrived in the country on diverse dates from Covid-19-affected countries except one.

"After taking the three tests that proved negative, we are now sure that the lady is free of corona virus and the process to allow her get back home is underway," she said, calling on the public to treat her just like any other person not having the virus.

About 1,890,532 people had been screened in some 27 centres, including border points,



We do isolate people because the virus takes at least 14 days to show signs of infection but unfortunately some people think the government is out to torture them

airports and ports since the start of the year. Minister Ummu noted that about 3,471 travelers had been screened in the past 24 hours to early morning yesterday.

The ministry has continued with testing people who came near the travelers, with a total of 273 samples, 243 from the Mainland and 30 from Zanzibar taken to the Government Laboratory Agency as of yesterday. Out of these 260 tested negative.

In an effort to contain the situation, the minister said that from Monday this week all passengers from countries badly hit by the disease have to undergo 14 days mandatory isolation at special hotels and areas designated by the government.

Since then, a total of 111 passengers have been isolated at different places, with regional authorities directed to set aside places for isolation in each region. Zanzibar Health minister Hamad Rashid Mohamed as the same event that Tanzanians need to take precautions to avoid the spread of the disease.

He said there are many people coming into the country and thus failure to adhere to government directives would land people in

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CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN TANZANIA



...UN in \$2bn aid plans for poor states hit by virus

NEW YORK

THE United Nations yesterday launched a USD2 billion (4.6trn/-) global humanitarian response plan to fund the fight against Covid-19 in the world's poorest countries as global cases surpassed 488,000.

Organised by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the interagency plan brings together existing appeals from the World Health Organization and other UN partners, and identifies new needs as well.

Speaking during the launch in New York, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (pictured) said if properly funded, the initiative will save many lives and arm humanitarian agencies and NGOs with laboratory supplies for testing, and with medical equipment to treat the sick while protecting health care workers.

The plan also includes additional measures to support host communities that continue to generously open their homes and towns to refugees and displaced persons.

"We need to act now to stem the impact of Covid-19 in already vulnerable humanitarian contexts. And we need to maintain support for existing humanitarian response plans on which 100 million people depend," he said.



Let us do everything we can to prevent Covid-19 from wreaking havoc in places with limited healthcare capacity and resilience

The remarks were detailed in a statement released by the UN information Centre in Dar es Salaam yesterday, where Dr Guterres said that there are dangers of such funding being diverted.

The consequences could be catastrophic: the further spread of cholera, measles and meningitis; greater levels of child malnutrition and a blow to the ability of these countries to combat the virus.

"Let us do everything we can to prevent Covid-19 from wreaking havoc in places with limited healthcare capacity and resilience."

"At the same time, we are doing our utmost to plan for and respond to early recovery in the countries around the globe that will need it most so that we achieve a new sustainable and inclusive economy that leaves no-one behind," he emphasised.

"I have asked United Nations resident coordinators and UN country teams to support countries around the world in addressing the socio-economic implications of this pandemic, as it will require an adequate funding mechanism."

He appealed to UN partners to support the humanitarian response plan, which he termed as necessary for global health security.

"It is a moral imperative and in everyone's

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CAG lists billions lost in local deals, dubious rents abroad

By Henry Mwangonde

ACCOUNTING officers in local government authorities, ministries, parastatals and embassies abroad have been put on the spot after the report by the Controller and Auditor

General (CAG) for financial year 2018/2019 unveiled misappropriation of billions of shillings.

The report, which CAG Charles Kichere presented to President John Magufuli at State House Chamwino in Dodoma

yesterday, revealed massive misappropriation of funds - with more than 14bn/- allocated to local governments not spent on the intended projects.

The CAG said at the televised event that some

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EAC health ministers in joint containment plans

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

EAST African Community (EAC) member states have intensified the war against Covid-19 with ministers responsible for health issuing a joint communiqué after a video conference on measures to take to reduce the spread of the



virus in the region.

In a joint statement on Wednesday on the preparedness and response in the EAC region, the six ministers from the member states directed all partner states to continue implementing mandatory quarantine for 14 days for all travelers to the region and avoid implementing strict screening procedures at all border points.

This came after health ministers of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania conferred in multiplex arrangement, to share existing knowledge and

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...UN in \$2bn aid plan for poorest virus-hit states

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interests."

As of yesterday, globally confirmed cases surpassed 488,000 with over 22,000 deaths and over 117,000 recoveries.

Deaths surged by 655 in Spain, taking the total to nearly 4,100 while in the

UK deaths rose to 465, out of 9,500 confirmed cases.

In the US cases neared 70,000 with at least 1,050 deaths. The US Senate passed a sweeping USD2 trillion measure to aid workers, businesses and the healthcare system which was subsequently approved by the House of Representatives.

CAG: Billions lost in local deals, dubious rents abroad

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L13bn/- was swindled by dishonest officials during the period and about 1.52bn/- was used in various districts without approval from procurement boards.

The report also indicates Tanzania's diplomatic missions abroad have been spending huge amounts of money paying rent to accommodate envoys.

In the year under review, Tanzanian embassies in Stockholm (Sweden), Brazil and Algeria spent a total of 1.56bn/- on rent, an amount which would have been enough to renovate their respective buildings.

According to the report, some 14 buildings bought by the government for its international missions have been abandoned.

These are in Geneva, Kinshasa, Washington, DC, Nairobi, Khartoum, Harare, Lusaka, Kigali, Nairobi, Maputo, Bujumbura and New York.

The report also points to misappropriation of funds by political parties, saying 300m/- out of 389.68m/- given to the Civic United Front (CUF) as a grant was transferred to a private account.

Of those funds, 69m/- was withdrawn from the party's account without the knowledge of the party's secretary general as required.

Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) meanwhile was reported to have spent 60m/- in refund to a tenant after

terminating his contract, but without observing the law and laid-down guidelines.

The CAG also pointed out that, as of June 2019, the national debt stood at 53.11trn/- where internal debt was 14.86trn/- and external debt was 38.24trn/-, which comes to an increase of four per cent from the previous financial year.

A progress report by the Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) was also presented at the event, at which the president confirmed PCCB acting Director General Brigadier General John Mbungu as director general for a job well done.

Magufuli said the bureau and the National Audit Office had done a commendable job which called for support from the government.

The CAG's report will be presented to the National Assembly for debate, but President Magufuli also directed Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa to lead a team of government officials to deliberate on the findings of the report as well as the actions to be taken.

President Magufuli also used the opportunity to insist that the General Elections lined up for this October would be held as scheduled despite the coronavirus disease outbreak.

"There are those who think I would reschedule the elections. The polls will take place as planned," he said, adding that he expects to win a second and final term of office.



President John Magufuli receives copies of the National Audit Office of Tanzania's audit reports for financial year 2018/2019 from Controller and Auditor General Charles Kichere (L) at Chamwino State House in Dodoma yesterday. Photo: State House

Dr Shein vows to cement brotherly links with SADR

By Guardian Reporter

ZANZIBAR President Ali Mohamed Shein has assured the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) that the United Republic of Tanzania including Zanzibar will continue cooperation with the West African nation and its people.

Dr Shein expressed this yesterday at Zanzibar State House when he met and held talks with SADR Ambassador in Tanzania.

Mahayub Buyema Mahafud, who went to present his credentials.

In the talks Dr Shein told the ambassador that Tanzania values brotherly relations that exist between the two sides and promised they will be more strengthened.

He said in ensuring the ties are strengthened, the Tanzania government will continue giving cooperation to the ambassador.

He said the Zanzibar government will continue cooperating with the ambassador recognising the people of both countries were brothers with one aim of seeing Africa develop economically, democratically and socially. He also praised SADR for its commitment in the maintenance of peace in the country, the region and the continent as a whole, saying peace is the basis for development.

For his part, SADR Ambassador Mahayub Buyema Mahafud praised Tanzania for supporting his country.

Amb Mahafud told Dr Shein that the Zanzibar government through the United Republic of Tanzania also has great contribution to the West African nation as through its support his country was able to get membership in both the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU).

He said SADR values Tanzania's efforts in supporting his nation and deliberate efforts will be made by his country to ensure the ties are strengthened even more.

Amb Mahafud also hailed the cooperation he is accorded in the country since his arrival and congratulated Zanzibar and union leaders for the cooperation.



Primary school head teachers in Kahama District are supplied with copies of new curriculum books and teachers' guides for kindergarten, Standard Two and Standard Six classes on Wednesday. Photo: Correspondent Shabani Njia

EAC health ministers in joint containment plans

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information on Covid-19 outbreaks.

They also intended to deliberate on the Covid-19 pandemic, map out containment strategies to stem its further spread in the region.

The ministers noted that of Tuesday this week the region had reported a total of 91 confirmed cases with Rwanda having 40 cases, Kenya with 25 cases, Uganda (14) and Tanzania (13). South Sudan and Burundi had no confirmed cases of the disease.

They resolved to maintain the suspension of EAC regional meetings and urged EAC organs and institutions to use video-conferences, webinars and skype calls for holding such meetings until the pandemic is contained.

They directed the partner states to scrupulously implement exit and entry screenings via a multilayer mechanism to close loopholes such as in transit traffic or passengers.

Umyy Mwalimu, the Minister for Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, said at a press conference here that the ministers resolved to facilitate the free movement of goods and services in the region.

Partner states were asked to ensure that trucks/vehicles carrying goods have just two or three crew members, to facilitate smooth border crossing.

Crew members must be in good health, be screened and if found to be at high risk of positive for Covid-19, the truck will be

decontaminated before it is allowed to continue to its final destination and crew members will be quarantined for 14 days, in line with the set national guidelines.

In the event that the crew is quarantined while on transit, truck owners will make necessary arrangements to backup crew to ensure that goods are delivered to the intended destination.

Truck drivers are required to declare final destination and are urged to stop only at designated points along the transport corridors so as to limit chances of spreading Covid-19 during transit.

The crew for cargo planes and vessels will be tied to specifications of the aircraft or ship and set international guidelines, and the crew

will be quarantined at a government designated hotel for the period of their stay.

"The ministers have also directed the partner states to establish a surveillance system to monitor crew health and enable contact tracing," she said.

The EAC ministers resolved to strengthen information sharing by press conferences and linkage of national taskforces to facilitate quick response, continuous reporting and facilitating contacts on potential Covid-19 exposed persons.

Partner states will identify a focal person with the national taskforce to facilitate communication between the partner states, between partner states and the EAC secretariat for Covid-19 responses, she added.

Covid-19: Kagera records first case, Arusha second as total rises to 13

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danger. There are close to 6000 people that enter the country through Pemba ports alone, of whom around 2500 enter the country each week through Wete, he stated.

Since the Kenyan government closed the country's borders recently, about 1500 people have entered Micheweni, with the Isles authorities placing 134 people under quarantine.

"We do isolate people because the

virus takes at least 14 days to show signs of infection but unfortunately some people think the government is out to torture them," he said, appealing to those undergoing isolation to understand that the government is doing everything possible to protect people.

There was a case of a person who entered the country who tested negative at the time of entry only to turn positive within the 14 days of quarantine, he pointed out.

Kenya's Covid-19 cases rise to 31

NAIROBI

KENYA confirmed three more cases of coronavirus yesterday, raising the national tally to 31.

In a briefing, Health Chief Administrative Secretary Dr Mercy Mwangangi said the latest cases were all Kenyans and close contacts of previously reported cases.

Dr Mwangangi said 906 persons had been traced and were being monitored and that 18 of them were being isolated at the Mbagathi Hospital.

However, as of yesterday, Kenya had not recorded any deaths since the first case was announced on March 13

On Wednesday, the country stepped up its efforts against the coronavirus pandemic which has left more than 20,000 people dead worldwide.

President Uhuru Kenyatta (pictured) unveiled double-edged measures giving the economy, businesses and consumers various percentages of tax relief.

At the same time, he took away the freedom to move at night with an indefinite 7pm to 5am curfew.

In his first economic stimulus package to shield the economy

from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the President ordered the national treasury to give employees earning less than KSh24,000 a 100 per cent tax relief.

Those earning more than this will pay a maximum of 25 per cent, down from the current 30 per cent.

In a presidential address on State interventions to cushion Kenyans against economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, he also announced pay cuts for the Executive.

He said his Deputy William Ruto and himself would take 80 per cent pay cuts, the highest reductions.

Cabinet secretaries and chief administrative secretaries will take 30 per cent cuts, while principal secretaries will have their salaries reduced by 20 per cent.



By Guardian Reporter, Dodoma

Ultramodern girls' 'model' school built by Bunge reserved for A-level

THE ultramodern girls' secondary school being built by Parliament in the capital Dodoma is reserved for form five and six only, Speaker Job Ndugai said yesterday.

Speaking during the inspection tour in the company of the minister for education, science and technology Prof Joyce Ndalichako, Ndugai said the facility—the first of its kind in the country—is designed to accommodate 320 A-level students once complete.

"The school has world-class infrastructure including classrooms, dormitories, dining hall, staff room, administration block, a library equipped with information and communication technology and a dispensary," he said.

Because the facility sits on an expansive plot at Kikombo area with more space still idle, minister Ndalichako said the ministry's contribution to the

project would be additional infrastructure so that the school admits more learners.

"If we (the ministry) add more infrastructures, I hope this school will be able to admit more learners than you initially planned," she said.

The minister directed the ministry's commissioner for education Dr Lyabwene Mtabwa and education quality assurance controller Euphrasia Buchuma to start inspecting the school so that it immediately admits students upon completion.

The model school is to be named Bunge Girls' Secondary School and is set to be completed

in June this year upon which it will be handed over by the Speaker's Office to the relevant government ministries.

"Initially we planned to build model toilets for girls in every constituency but later folded the plan and instead settled on one institution that will serve as a legacy of the 11th parliament when its term elapses," Ndugai said in another visit last month in the company of the Minister of State in the President's Office (Regional Administration and Local Governments), Selemani Jafu.

Around 1.2bn/- collected during fundraiser

events staged by parliament in 2018 has been allocated for its construction, the Speaker said.

Reports released at that time indicated that the first event staged in June 2018 raised 1.45bn/- while the second exercise in September collected 800m/- bringing the

total to 2.25bn/-, with both events being staged in Dodoma.

Organised by the Tanzania Women's Parliamentary Group (TWPG) led by Urambo East MP Margaret Sitta, the events were part of the group's drive to secure a total of 3.5bn/- for the construction of modern toilets in schools across the country during the 2018/19 financial year.

The group was looking to build model restrooms in all 264 parliamentary constituencies in a pioneer project aimed at solving sanitation problems facing schoolchildren, especially girls.



Kinondoni municipality workers make good on a promise by government authorities in Dar es Salaam Region on plans for the widespread fumigation of streets as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19 infections. This scene was captured at the Dar es Salaam Rapid Transport bus stop yesterday. Photo: Correspondent Jumanne Juma



The bank that listens

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

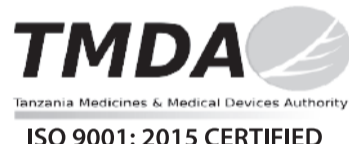
POSTPONEMENT OF PUBLIC AWARENESS SEMINARS (PAS)

The Public awareness seminars scheduled to be held throughout the country on **Saturday 04/04/2020** have been postponed until further notice.

The postponement is made to comply with government's directives to halt all public gatherings due to **COVID-19** to contain the spread of the virus and ensure safety of the public. Any inconvenience is highly regretted.

Issued by Company Secretary,
By order of the Board

MAMLAKA YA DAWA NA VIFAA TIBA



TAARIFA KWA UMMA

24 Machi, 2020

TAARIFA KWA UMMA KUHUSU HUDUMA ZITOLEWAZO NA MAMLAKA YA DAWA NA VIFAA TIBA WAKATI WA TISHIO LA UGONJWA WA COVID-19

- Mamlaka ya Dawa na Vifaa Tiba (TMDA) inapenda kuwatangazia wadau wake kwamba kutokana na tishio la ugonjwa wa homa kali ya mapafu ujulikanao kwa jina la Covid-19 ambao unasababishwa na virusi vya Corona, hatua mbalimbali zinaendelea kuchukuliwa na Serikali pamoja na Taasisi zake kama tahadhari dhidi ya maambukizi ya virusi vya ugonjwa huu ambao umeingia nchini.
- Hivyo kuanzia tarehe 25 Machi, 2020 huduma za TMDA zitatolewa kwa utaratibu ufuatao:
 - Vibali vya uingizaji na utoaji wa dawa, vifaa tiba na vitendanishi vitatolewa kwa kupitia mfumo wa kielektroniki na kutumwa kwa waombaji moja kwa moja.
 - Maombi ya usajili wa bidhaa yawasilishwe kwa mfumo wa kielektroniki na ufuatiliaji wake ufanywe kwa mawasiliano ya simu na barua pepe kupitia kwa Mameneja wa sehemu husika.
 - Kwa huduma nyingine ambazo hazitolewi kwa mifumo ya kielektroniki, wateja wanaombwa wafike katika ofisi za TMDA katika maeneo mbalimbali ya nchi endapo tu kuna ulazima huo na wanashauriwa watumie zaidi mawasiliano ya simu na mitandao kupata huduma kupitia maofisa wafuatao:

No.	Jina la Afisa	Cheo	Na. ya simu	Barua pepe
1.	Bw. Emmanuel Alphonse	Meneja, Ukaguzi na Udhhibiti wa Dawa na Bidhaa Nyongeza, Ofisi Ndogo TMDA, Dar es Salaam	0754 284367	emmanuel.nkili@tmda.go.tz
2.	Bw. Sunday Kisoma	Meneja, Udhhibiti wa Vifaa Tiba na Vitendanishi, Ofisi Ndogo TMDA, Dar es Salaam	0713 278977	sunday.kisoma@tmda.go.tz
3.	Bw. Felchism Apolnary	Meneja, Usajili wa Dawa, Ofisi Ndogo TMDA, Dar es Salaam	0713 477536	felchism.apolnary@tmda.go.tz
4.	Dr. Alex Nkayamba	Kaimu Meneja, Udhhibiti na Majaribio ya Dawa, Ofisi Ndogo TMDA, Dar es Salaam	0713 868890	alex.nkayamba@tmda.go.tz
5.	Bi. Sophia Ally	Kaimu Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Ziwa, Mwanza	0652565605	sophia.mziray@tmda.go.tz
6.	Bi. Anita Mshighati	Kaimu Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Nyanda za Juu Kusini, Mbeeya	0687 239387	anita.mshighati@tmda.go.tz
7.	Bw. Proches Patrick	Kaimu Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Kaskazini, Arusha	0714 836725	proches.kimario@tmda.go.tz
8.	Dr. Edgar Mahundi	Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Magharibi, Tabora	0654 817849	edgar.mahundi@tmda.go.tz
9.	Bi. Sonia Mkumbwa	Kaimu Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Kati, Dodoma	0715 302440	sonia.mkumbwa@tmda.go.tz
10.	Dr. Engelbert Bilashoboka	Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Kusini, Mtwara	0766 729416	engelbert.mbekenga@tmda.go.tz
11.	Bw. Adonis Bitegeko	Meneja, TMDA Kanda ya Mashariki, Dar es Salaam	0655 222662	adonis.bitegeko@tmda.go.tz
12.	Bw. Ambele Mwafufula	Meneja, Teknolojia ya Habari na Mawasiliano	0713 305193	ambele.mwafufula@tmda.go.tz
13.	Bw. Moses Magoma	Meneja, Rasilimali Watu na Utawala	0655 888831	moses.magoma@tmda.go.tz

(d) Mamlaka inawaomba radhi kwa usumbufu wowote utakaojitokeza katika kipindi hiki cha mpito.

Inetolewa na:
Kaimu Mkurugenzi Mkuu,
Mamlaka ya Dawa na Vifaa Tiba
S.L.P 1253, Dodoma Au
S.L.P 77150, Dar es Salaam
Simu: +255 22 2452108/2450512/2450751
Barua Pepe: info@tmda.go.tz
Simu bila malipo: 0800110084

STRATEGIS INSURANCE (TANZANIA) LIMITED



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

POSITION: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Expected appointment date: **Immediately**

Type of Employment Contract: **Fixed Term Contract**

Division: **Non-Medical Insurance**

Location: **Dar-es-Salaam**

Job Purpose:

Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Non-Medical Insurance) will oversee the Company's ongoing Non-Medical Insurance operations and procedures. The Deputy CEO is a key member of the senior management team reporting to the Board of Directors.

Main tasks:

- Oversee the Operations of the Non-Medical Insurance Division of Company
- Lead employees to encourage maximum performance and dedication and foster a corporate culture that promotes ethical practices, customer focus and establish policies that promote Company culture and vision.
- Evaluate performance by analyzing and interpreting data and metrics, write and submit reports to the board in all matters of importance on the Operations.
- Develop, in collaboration with the Executive Management an annual operating plan that supports the Corporation's long term business strategies and maintenance of a satisfactory competitive position within the insurance industry.
- Keep the Board of Directors fully informed in a timely and candid manner of the conduct of the day-to-day operations of the Non-Medical Insurance division towards the achievement of its established goals.
- Attend meetings of the Board and its Committees and present the information necessary or relevant to the Board or such Committee for discharging its duties.

Attributes required for the Job:

- Outstanding organizational and leadership abilities.
- Demonstrable competency in strategic planning and business development.
- Working knowledge of data analysis and performance/operation metrics, decision making and problem solving.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

Key Qualifications:

- Academic Qualifications: At least a University Degree in a business related field.
- Professional Qualifications: ACII or equivalent.
- Work Experience: At least 7 years' experience in a Senior Position in the Insurance Industry.

Mode of application:

All applications should have names of three official referees with their contact details. Applications accompanied by professionally prepared CVs, copies of all supporting documents along with a recent passport size photograph should be submitted not later than 7th April 2020 to the following address.

Head of Human Resources and Administration
Strategis Insurance Tanzania Limited
P. O. Box 7893
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

E-mail: hr@strategis.co.tz
Or delivered to:
Strategis Insurance Tanzania Limited
1st Floor, Masaki Ikon Building
Plot no. 1520, Bains Avenue
Masaki, Msasani Peninsular

Note: Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Mtwara sugar investor to be given alternative land

By Guardian Correspondent, Mtwara

SUGAR-GROWING—SJ Sugar Distillery & Power Private Company has been assured by the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC) that it will be given a substitute land for growing sugar cane and shift from the current tract that has been flooded.

The TIC Director General, Geoffrey Mwambe, after visiting the flooded tract, told the company's Chief Executive Officer, Kamel Abdullah Saleem, that the centre would find alternative land to allow the investor to continue with investment plans.

"This investor had already planted sugar cane seedlings in 500 hectares out of the 3,000 given to him in Kilambo area. But the entire land has

been flooded by the on-going rains, destroying all the property. We have contacted Mtwara District Council for alternative land to be given to the investor," he told reporters.

The director general said the sugar factory would be the first one in the southern regions and would produce 10,000 tonnes of sugar annually for an ever-increasing local market. "We shall support the company in getting suitable land to continue with production but at

"We are thankful for the immediate response of the leaders in the regional administration. They have visited our flooded area, consoled us and pledged to give us alternative land to continue with our investment plans"

the same time ensure no harm is done to the environment," he said, adding that investment was an important element in promoting the national industrialisation agenda.

Mtwara District Commissioner Evod Mmamba also said that all necessary ground work would be done by district experts before land was given to the investor.

Saleem thanked the TIC and the Regional Administration for urgent solution to ensure the company's investment plans did not fail.

"We are thankful for the immediate response of the leaders in the regional administration. They have visited our flooded area, consoled us and pledged to give us alternative land to continue with our investment plans," he said.



Zanzibar Youth, Culture, Arts and Sports minister Ali Abeid Karume (R) takes a temperature test before attending a Zanzibar Revolutionary Council meeting on Wednesday. It was all part of routine screening for Covid-19. Photo: Zanzibar State House

Dodoma traders ask for consideration in govt's economic projects in capital city

By Correspondent Valentine Oforo,

Dodoma

TRADERS in Dodoma region have requested the government to consider possibility of giving them first priority when it comes to benefits from strategic economic projects undertaken by the fifth phase government in capital city.

They observed it would be useful and patriotic for them to be at forefront to reap economic fortunes that the envisaged projects have to offer, ahead of traders from other regions and countries.

Their plea was made yesterday during a special tour of construction of two state-of-the-art projects of Dodoma Regional Ultramodern main bus terminal and a modern market in Nzuguni area, at the coast of at least 38.7billion/-.

It is anticipated that, completion of the projects which are now on final stages will offer profitable opportunities of doing businesses, a development which is projected to attract traders from different regions and countries within the continent.

The one-day tour was organised jointly by the office of Dodoma City Council (DCC) and Tanzania Chamber for Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (TCCIA) to purposefully create awareness among traders in capital city over numerous business opportunities the two projects will have to offer after start of operations.

"Always, a good father is he who

ensures his children eats the best food before visitors. We have for years been doing businesses in Dodoma, earning the government lucrative profit through taxes and other statutory charges."

"It would be of prudent for the government to treat us with a gloved hand so that we can stand a chance to benefit from these projects," they observed and requested.

Their worries raised after being informed by Senior Economist and Investment Officer at DCC, Abeid Msangi that to conduct businesses within the two areas, the traders will have to apply for renting business apartments, the exercise which will pass through professional vetting.

According to him, later on, the government will advertise leasing opportunities for doing different businesses within the two potential

trading venues.

"After advertising, we're anticipating that varied high profile traders from different regions and countries will also apply and thus, the process is likely going to be very competitive," he expressed.

But, however, he calmed fear gripped traders, saying: "You don't have any reason to be scared, that's why by knowing that your home (Dodoma) traders, the hosts, we have decided to give you this favour of a special orientation tour in order to understand available opportunities so that you can stand a better leg to prepare yourselves earlier and effectively to book for your places."

Moreover, apart from denying disclosing the relevant renting charges, he said the authority will impose reasonable amount, to be imposed in terms of square meters.

"These areas need traders who will manage to offer services at international standards due to the status of the capital city, so you better prepare effectively," he challenged the traders.

For his part, regional director for TCCIA, Iddy Senge hailed the fifth phase government for cementing a good tie of working closely with the private sector.

"We're appreciating the way the government is giving the private sector a deserved room to work together, considering the fact that we, the private sector is a key player in building the national economy," he appreciated.



It would be of prudent for the government to treat us with a gloved hand so that we can stand a chance to benefit from these projects

Call for debt moratorium for Africans to save countries from Covid-19 crisis

By Guardian Reporter

OXFAM has welcomed the decision by the G20 leaders to hold a virtual extra-ordinary summit to respond to the health crisis and an economic recession triggered by Covid-19 insisting it doesn't make sense for African countries to now transfer the much-needed resources to foreign banks.

A statement released by Oxfam yesterday highlighted that the G20 leaders cannot afford to ignore calls for a debt moratorium for African countries in order to save lives and give a lifeline to the many Africans whose livelihoods have been disrupted by the pandemic.

"This is the moment that Africa needs to use all its existing resources to cope with the emergency. It makes no sense for African countries to transfer much-needed resources to foreign banks, developed nations with capacity to cope with the pandemic or international institutions," said Peter Kamaligin, Oxfam Pan Africa Director when speaking ahead of the virtual summit.

Kamaligin added: "Decisions need to be taken now, any delay only serves to worsen the already fragile situation

and make the recovery process more expensive. Debt relief free from conditionalities is the best way to leave money in the hands of African governments to make decisions now."

It said Africa is facing the worst health and economic crisis in decades amidst declining tax revenues, diminishing official development assistance, and rising debt obligations and costs.

The slump in commodity prices and disruption of global supply chains, especially in China, as a result of the pandemic, is already hitting African economies hardest.

Calls for debt relief this week from the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) must be welcomed as a first step, but do not meet the needs of African people in this life-threatening crisis.

The proposal by the WB and IMF that "only bilateral debts need to be suspended" will guarantee much-needed money continues to flow out of the continent (multilateral and private lenders hold most of the debts).

Africa Finance Ministers make more sense requesting a coordinated waiver on all interest payments, amounting to US\$44bn for 2020, which could provide more fiscal space for governments as they respond to the pandemic.

Oxfam said in the statement that no African country can afford to make any debt repayments in 2020 - whether owed to bilateral creditors, multilateral institutions or private lenders without putting millions of African lives at risk.

New money will not be available for refinancing at least in the short term and most likely in the medium term. A universal debt repayment suspension needs to be put in place to allow African countries to focus in strengthening their public health systems to adequately respond to the COVID-19 crisis and provide social protection to the most vulnerable.

Suspending all debt payments is the fastest way to keep money in countries and free up resources to tackle the health and economic crises.

The measures that the G20 takes today must be those that ensure African governments have the resources needed to respond to the crisis.

The Covid-19 crisis is collapsing health systems and threatening economies in the developed world, and they are using unlimited monetary expansion, something never seen before, to address their own needs. Africa needs a global response the like of which our world has never seen.

Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition [THRDC]

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Website: www.thrdc.or.tz

CALL FOR APPLICATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

1.0 Introduction

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) is a membership organization working towards enhancing the security and protection of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in the country. It is registered and operates within the framework of Non-Governmental organizations Act (NGO Act) 2002. THRDC long term goals are to see a free and secured environment for human rights defenders in Tanzania, and to ensure HRDs in our country are able to carry out their essential work free from harm and repression, in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human rights defenders of 1998.

THRDC organizational structure comprises of General Assembly, Board of Directors and Secretariat. Article 9 of the THRDC Constitution of 2012 provides for the establishment of the Board of Directors to be comprised of nine (9) members based on the THRDC's stakeholders and thematic representation. According to the Constitution the tenure for Board members is for the term of three (3) years subject to a renewal of two consecutive terms.

THRDC believes in the Board that knows and understands the organization's beliefs, values, philosophy, mission and vision and ultimately reflects this understanding on key issues throughout the year. Moreover, for maintenance and sustainability of its current performance in NGOs sector, THRDC believes in the Board which devotes significant time and strategic thoughts to the organization's long-term objectives. Therefore, THRDC's Board membership requires time, energy and commitment that should not be underestimated.

Following completion of the tenure of three esteemed THRDC current Board members in accordance with the THRDC Constitution, THRDC is looking for three qualified persons to fill the vacancies. Among them, one should be a Certified Accountant with more than five years' experience working in a senior position in NGO Sector.

2.0 Qualifications/Conditions

This is an extraordinary opportunity for an individual who is passionate about THRDC's mission and who has a track record of board leadership, therefore aspiring individuals must have the following qualifications;

- Applicants should be matured, analytical, tolerant and of high moral integrity.
- Applicants must possess a minimum of Diploma level of education with specific field training and sound experience with management. Masters and PHD level will be an added advantage.
- Applicants must have fully paid all contributions and fees owed to THRDC.
- Applicants must have a background or be involved in any human rights work/ or a human rights defender in a way.
- Applicants must belong and apply to represent any of the following thematic groups; pastoralists, minority rights, people with disabilities, women, child rights, social rights and accountability, natural resources and economic rights, political rights and human rights in general, legal aid providers and freedom of expression.
- For applicants working in an NGO, his/her NGO must have all audited financial documents for at least three years consecutively.
- For applicants working in an NGO, his/her NGO must have complied with all laws and regulation governing the NGO sector since its existence.
- The Accountant must be vested with knowledge of interpreting final and financial accounts.
- The Accountant should be well knowledgeable with the application of IFRS and NGO accounting practices.

3.0 Experience

- Applicants must have at least 5 years' work experience in the field of human rights or a human rights defender.
- Applicants must have at least 5 years previous experience in NGO's operation in Tanzania
- Applicants must have a vast experience in NGOs dynamics and regimes in Tanzania

4.0 Skills

- Pro-active person, self-motivated, positive attitude, strategic thinking and multi-tasking ability;
- Curiosity and capacity to contribute to the development of the NGO
- Good communication and public presentation skills;
- Service-oriented;
- Excellent organizational and strong interpersonal skills;
- Ability to fundraise for the sustainability of the Coalition

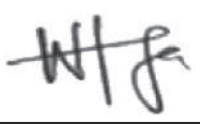
5.0 Duties:

- To attend all Board meeting as per the calendar and advice for the strategic Coalition's governance
- To be in the Policy making organ of the Coalition.
- To set strategies for financing and controlling the finances of the Coalition.
- To have powers to co-opt any person (s) who may be needed for specific purposes.
- To appoint technical committees and assign terms of reference and task forces to be set up for specific task.
- To stay well informed about the organization by carefully reading minutes of the Board Meeting, financial statements and other materials. Take seriously the legal, fiscal, and ethical responsibilities the Board carries.
- To be aware of and notice community activities and legal/political developments which may impact the organization and/or its programs and bring them to the attention of the Board.
- To be responsible for the recruitment and disciplining of the National Coordinator.
- To approve and monitor the progress of major capital expenditure (defined in THRDC's financial manual)
- To strategize and mobilize resources for sustainability of the Coalition.
- To encourage and build culture of good working relationship and mutual respect for each other at all times.
- To promote the good image of the Coalition.
- To exhibit ethical and exemplary standard of work.
- To value and respect staff contributions on a continuous basis
- To attend annual board retreat and other orientation meetings.

6.0 Mode of application

Interested and qualified persons for the post must send their application letter accompanied with a two (2) page motivation letter explaining his/her work in the thematic area he/she is applying from, CV and education certificates (credentials) electronically to info@thrdc.or.tz by 17/04/2020.

Only successfully applicants will be contacted. THRDC is an equal opportunity organization, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion or marital status.


Board Chairperson
16/03/2020

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By Guardian Correspondent

THE Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Green Reference Group in consultation with the government and private companies have published an Inclusive Green Growth (IGG) guiding tool to ensure agro-investments under SAGCOT Partnership are socially inclusive and environmentally friendly.

The target audience for this tool includes small, medium and large-scale processors and producers.

Speaking after launching the toolkit in Morogoro yesterday, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Vice President's Office, Ambassador Joseph Sokoine, said the IGG toolkit aims to integrate economic growth, environmental sustainability and social inclusiveness in executing commercial enterprises and it is the central operating principle of investments in the SAGCOT region.

Sokoine said the Green Reference Group is comprised of technical partners who participated to develop the IGG guiding tool including: The Nature Conservancy (TNC), World Wide Fund (WWF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and CARE International with guidance of the Vice Presidents' Office and consultation with the private sector companies working in the SAGCOT region.

SAGCOT inclusive guiding toolkit for agro-investments inaugurated

Commenting on the launch of the toolkit, Chief Executive Officer of the SAGCOT Centre, Geoffrey Kirenga, said among various initiatives established in the agricultural sector, the SAGCOT initiative is unique due to its approach of bringing together stakeholders from the government, private sector agribusiness companies, civil society organisations, financial institutions, farmers' associations, development partners and academia to develop a strong and focused partnership towards transformation of sustainable value chain development in southern highlands of Tanzania.

He reiterated that for the SAGCOT partnership to successfully achieve food and nutrition security, economic growth and ensure management of natural resources in the SAGCOT region, SCL and its partners developed three working principles to ensure sustainable investments namely principles of inclusivity, environmental management and sustainable business strategy.

"We promote responsible investment that is done in a sustainable way but also contributing to food security and

making sure that the communities especially the smallholder farmers and the livestock keepers as well as the fishermen are included in the agricultural development," he said.

He added: "The SAGCOT blueprint advocates environmental sustainability and we call it inclusive green growth. To effectively implement this, we needed to have a tool that would help us to measure compliance to environmental legislations and international good practices. This tool also aims to provide opportunities to the youth, women and disadvantaged people or groups".

Kirenga said preparation of IGG was championed by multiple partners of the SAGCOT Centre Ltd and other stakeholders in agricultural sector including TNC in collaboration with Sokoine University of Agriculture which implemented a two years' research project named Science for Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP) from which the idea of developing IGG guiding tool was incubated while WWF Tanzania, CARE International and IUCN have invested immense financial and human resource from drafting stage to validation of the IGG guiding tool.



TPB Bank CEO Sabasaba Moshingi (C) symbolically presents a consignment of ten tonnes of cement to Bugando Medical Centre director general Prof Abel Makubi in Mwanza city yesterday. The donation is in support of the construction of a ward for cancer patients at the referral hospital. Photo: Guardian Correspondent



THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
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TANZANIA SHIPPING AGENCIES CORPORATION
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Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation (TASAC) is established under section 4 of the Tanzania Shipping Agencies Act, Cap. 415 as maritime administration, regulator of maritime safety, security and protection of the marine environment, ports and shipping services. The Corporation is also mandated to exclusively conduct shipping business on clearing and forwarding of specified import and export shipments, ship tallying, document control and specified areas of shipping agency in accordance with section 7(1) of the Act.

TASAC commenced implementation of shipping agency on 3rd February, 2020 covering the areas of tanker ships, cruise ships, exploration vessels, military vessels and any vessel calling for discharging or loading military cargo.

The general public is thus informed that the Corporation will extend to one of pending areas shipping agency functions to cover all general cargo ships including dry bulk ships with effect from 20th April, 2020.

This Notice is issued to enable port terminal operators, ship owners/operators, shipping agents, shippers, consignees, clearing and forwarding agents and all stakeholders to prepare themselves accordingly and accord cooperation to TASAC to fulfill its legal obligations.

Please note that it is contrary to section 7(3) of the Tanzania Shipping Agencies Act, Cap. 415 for any party other than TASAC to carry out or facilitate the carrying out of exclusive mandate in shipping agency functions as mentioned above with effect from 20th April, 2020.

Issued by:

Director General
Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation

WECRP partners with authorities in Mufindi to curb violence against women, children

By Correspondent Friday Simbaya, Mufindi

THE Women Empowerment and Children Rights Project (WECRP) in collaboration with authorities in Mufindi district, Iringa region has been making a number of interventions that have resulted in reduced incidences of gender based violence including rape from 91 percent in 2017 to 58 percent in 2019.

SOS Children's Villages Programme Coordinator in Mufindi, Victor Mwaipungu told The Guardian that since its commencement, the project has raised public awareness on the impacts of gender based violence and child abuse compared to some few years back. SOS is supporting WECRP.

He also said that positive results recorded in the drop of early pregnancies in schools from 100 in 2018 to 80 in 2019, while other forms of GBV and VAC such as domestic violence, child abandonment and ban on women ownership of resources dropped by 26 percent from 260 cases in 2018 to 190 in 2019.

He said that in 2019 the project specifically had five (05) areas to work on which were male involvement, community mobilisation, sensitisation through radio programs, sexual reproductive health (SRH) as well as women participation.

"Essentially, the identified areas were targeted to drive changes to attain positive norms, attitudes and practices that affect women, girls and children in Mufindi," he said.

Mwaipungu explained that the achievement under this include through SRH education in 25 schools where the lives of over 16,000 adolescent girls and boys (8994 female and 7006 male) were positively impacted.

"SRH education geared towards increasing their understanding of risky factors that affect their wellbeing in schools and communities. We also had radio programmes which focused to promote community engagement initiatives," Mwaipungu said.

These programmes successfully reached 2,500 people (1,200 Male and 1,300 Female) who have now benefitted in knowledge on gender equality.

"These interventions also contributed to break the cycle of patriarchal practices in the community and reduced child abuse. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property," he noted.

He pointed out that SOS and Mufindi district council have started linking the 250 disadvantaged women to financial institutions, hence combating poverty among the women in the rural villages.

Iringa Regional Administrative Secretary Happiness Seneda said women are required to report all cases of gender based violence committed by their husbands to security organs and urged them to stop hiding the abusers at once.

Speaking during the climax of World Women's Day celebrations this year at Utosi village, Saadani ward in Mufindi, Seneda said that some of the women have been living a vulnerable life of being beaten by their husbands constantly with most of them failing to report the incidences. She encouraged women to report all the brutality done by their partners for them to get further help.

Seneda said that the elements of cruelty are outlined in the law and its punishment is understandable and that women should report men committing brutal acts rather than remain quiet.

She said that women are doing a lot of work including generating wealth and serving the family and society as a whole, so they should be respected.

One of the women who attended the ceremony, Damiana Mwhava said that since the SOS's programme entered the village, a number of women are now living a happier life and they are no longer facing violence challenges in the community.

She said that SOS has empowered disadvantaged women in entrepreneurship and business skills and helped them to establish economic groups.



Iringa regional administrative secretary Happiness Seneda views baskets and other handcraft made by one of the women's groups supported by SOS Children's Villages in Mufindi Programme at celebrations held recently at regional level at Utosi Village in Mufindi District. Photo: Correspondent Friday Simbaya

TICC planning to construct toilets in all primary schools in Tanga city

By Correspondent George Sembony, Tanga

THE Tanga International Competence Centre (TICC), a non-government organisation, has announced plans to embark on a project that will facilitate construction of toilets in all primary schools in the city.

The TICC Director, Ruth Nesje, told journalists that the organisation has already got the permission to implement the project from the Tanga district council.

The director said the project is useful because it protect the health of school children in the city because there is shortage of toilets in most of primary schools.

"We hope that we would get enough funds to implement it," Nesje said.

She said, TICC has already constructed toilets at Mwangombe Primary School in the city at the cost of 6.6/m.

According to information made available from the council's website, the schools in the city face a shortage of 1,621 toilets.

There are only 753 available toilet holes in a total of 100 Primary Schools (79 public and 21 private) with a total of 57,737 students.

City education officer, Enedy Mnzava revealed that the council is taking various measures to reduce the shortage of toilets.

Mnzava said that the council has already set aside funds to build six toilets at Mwangombe primary school.

The education officer said the city plans to build many more toilets in other schools in the city in order to address the shortage.

Mwangombe has two toilet rooms for girls and one room for boys.

The Mwangombe primary school Head Teacher, Rachel Temu said that the new toilets have reduced the problem by 0.03 per cent.

"There are a total of 1,411 pupils, 882 being girls and 729 boys, with eight toilet holes, two have collapsed and only four are in use," the head teacher explained.



We hope that we would get enough funds to implement it

By Guardian Correspondent, Kahama

KAHAMA Town Council in Shinyanga Region received and distributed to 72 primary schools 22,553 textbooks for various subjects including science for the new curricula.

The books were provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with 20,188 of them earmarked for Standard VI including teacher's guides. In the past teachers prepared lessons using the internet.

Handing over the books yesterday, Kahama District Education Officer (Supplies and Statistics) from Kahama Town Council Sadick Juma said every

Council distributes thousands of books to 72 primary schools in Kahama town

student will be provided with a book and whoever will lose it, his parent or guardian will be held accountable in replacing it before the end of the school term.

He said they have distributed books for the lessons' new curricula

for kiswahili, maths, science and technology, civics and english language subjects.

He further said for Std I they have distributed 242 books for each subject, i.e. maths, writing, reading and arts and sports while for Standard II they have

distributed 223 books each for health and environment, maths, writing, reading and arts and sports.

"If a student is provided with a Std I exercise book and keeps it up to Standard VII, then a student given the textbook can also keep it for that length

of time and whoever loses it his parent or guardian will be held accountable, he said.

Speaking on behalf of other teachers, the head teacher at Malunga Primary school Beatrice Katama said the books will help in reducing challenges over

books shortage for science for the new curricula especially for Standard II and VI.

She said in the past they were preparing lessons using online books at high cost whilst more than three students used one such book.

Maswa residents advised to refrain from unnecessary gatherings during Covid-19 crisis

By Guardian Correspondent, Maswa

RESIDENTS of Maswa District in Simiyu region have been advised to avoid unnecessary gatherings, practice self-isolation for them to remain safe during this time when the country and the world at large struggles to battle the spread of the highly flu-like COVID-19 outbreak.

District Commissioner Dr Seif Shekalaghe made the remarks during his impromptu visit to the town's bus terminal and markets.

He wanted authorities to ensure that they implement all the directives issued by the government which include supervising and monitoring gatherings and other unnecessary activities.

Dr Shekalaghe said that amid rapid spread of the disease in various parts, the district should ensure that all the key preventative measures are well observed by the public.

"We have strengthened public awareness programmes to reach different groups, our experts have also been trained and equipped with essentials for attending to patients of that nature," he said.

He directed bus operators and drivers to ensure that they sanitize their vehicles and put all essential cleanliness tolls in their cars for passengers to wash their hands before travel.

"I am happy to see people sanitizing their hands before entering into the transport vehicles, this should be sustained," he said.

For his part, the District Medical Officer Dr Jumanne Manyama said that COVID-19 is characterised by mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. Illness can be more severe for some people and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties.

He urged everyone to take precautions to avoid the virus "The biggest part of the precautions involves personal hygiene, washing hands with soap, avoiding physical contact with others and covering the mouth and nose when coughing."

"We should all respond to the government's directives on adherence to hygiene and sanitation as part of combating the spread of corona virus infection, this is very vital for all of us to stay safe and healthier," he added.

Rwanda confirms one new case of coronavirus

KIGALI

RWANDA has recorded one new coronavirus case, taking the total number of those infected to 41 in the country.

According to a statement released by the Ministry of Health on Wednesday evening, the new case is a traveller who arrived from Dubai, on a date that the officials did not specify.

In an optimistic note, the ministry yet again provided an update on all the patients, saying they "are under treatment in stable condition" and none of them is in critical situation.

The health officials also said that the tracing of the contacts of the infected have been conducted for further management.

The Ministry called upon the public to observe heightened vigilance and respect

for the enhanced prevention measures announced by the government.

Among the preventive measures in place, the government last week announced a 2 week country wide lockdown, in which non-essential movements of people outside their residences is prohibited, as well as travels between cities and districts.

The lockdown also saw businesses suspended, except for those selling essential

commodities like foodstuffs, fuel, and medicine.

The COVID19 pandemic has continued to menace nations, and as of Wednesday, statistics showed that a total of 454,000 people had been diagnosed with the disease globally, and of these, more than 113,000 have recovered, and about 20,500 people had died, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University.

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TAARIFA KWA UMMA

25 Machi, 2020

UTARATIBU WA KUSAJILI VIPUKUSI CHINI YA MPANGO WA DHARURA WA KUPAMBANA NA UGONJWA WA HOMA KALI YA MAFUA UJULIKANAO KWA JINA LA COVID-19

1. Kutokana na mlipuko wa homa ya Corona 2019 (COVID -19) uliokumba dunia, ikiwemo Tanzania, matumizi ya vipukusi (antiseptics) hususan vitakasa mikono (hand sanitizers) yameongezeka. Hii ni kutokana na vipukusi hivyo kushauriwa kutumika kama njia mojawapo ya kuzuia kusambaa kwa virusi vinavyosababisha homa ya Corona. Aidha vipukusi vinavyotumika ni pamoja na vitakasa mikono vilivyotengenezwa kwa mchanganyiko wa "alcohol" (alcohol-based sanitizers), Chloroxyfenol solution na Cetrimide + Chlorhexidine gluconate.

2. Kwa kuzingatia ongezeko la mahitaji ya vipukusi hivyo, Mamlaka ya Dawa na Vifaa Tiba (TMDA) inapenda kuwafahamisha wale wote wanaojihusisha na utengenezaji wa vipukusi kufuata utaratibu ufuatao:

2.1 Watengenezaji wa vipukusi wanaomba kuwasilisha maombi ya usajili kwa mujibu wa taratibu za usajili wa vipukusi kama ambavyo zimeainishwa kwenye mwongozo wa usajili wa bidhaa hizo ujulikanao kama "Guidelines for Submission of Documentation for Marketing Authorization of Biocidal (Antiseptics and Disinfectants) Products, First Edition, February 2015" ambao unapatikana katika tovuti ya TMDA kupitia anuani ifuatayo: (<https://www.tmda.go.tz/publications/42>)

2.2 Maombi ya usajili yaambatana na nyaraka zote kama zilivyoainishwa katika mwongozo huo. Hata hivyo, iwapo baadhi ya nyaraka hazijaandaliwa au kukamilika wakati wa uwasilishaji wa maombi hayo, waombaji wawasilishe taarifa chache zifuatazo:

- Fomu ya maombi (Application form)
- Kanuni ya mchanganyiko wa kitakasa (Composition formula)
- Hati ya uchunguzi (Certificate of analysis) endapo ipo
- Lebo ya bidhaa (Labelling information)

Pamoja na nyaraka tajwa hapo juu, mwombaji atapaswa kuwasilisha barua ya ahadi yenye sahihi na tarehe kuthibitisha kwamba taarifa zilizozalwa zitawasilishwa hapo baadaye.

2.3 Kuhusu utengenezaji wa vitakasa mikono (hand sanitizers), wazalishaji ambao wamesajiliwa pamoja na mahospitali na famasi wafuate mwongozo wa utengenezaji wa vitakasa mikono uliondalwa na ujulikanao kama "Guidance for Production of Alcohol - Based Hand Sanitizers under Public Health Emergency Preparedness" unapatikana kwenye tovuti ya TMDA (www.tmda.go.tz).

2.4 Maombi ya usajili yawasilishe katika ofisi ndogo za makao makuu ya TMDA zilizoko barabara ya Mandela eneo la Mabibo External, Ubungo, Dar es Salaam au kwenye ofisi za Kanda.

3. Baada ya kupokea maombi ya usajili, TMDA itafanya tathmini ya haraka ya maombi hayo na kutoa majibu ya tathmini hiyo ndani ya siku tatu (3) za kazi tangu kuwasilishwa kwa nyaraka za maombi.

4. Kwa pamoja tushirikiane kupamba na ugonjwa huu hatari.

Imetolewa na:

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Mamlaka ya Dawa na Vifaa Tiba,
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Local, global solidarity vital during coronavirus challenge

THE government must be hugely relieved as it lines itself up to ensure Covid-19 infections do not spread across Tanzania, meanwhile as only a handful of 'imported' cases were reported in the country by mid-week.

Worry was also keenly registered as at least one case of local infection was registered at that time, indicating that the local environment isn't per se preventing Covid-19 spreading out. President John Magufuli has expressed cautious optimism over the development.

Part of what the government is doing in preparing for possible damage due to the pandemic is obtaining masks, testing kits and protective suits, which the Chinese authorities have delivered in substantial quantities.

The Chinese Embassy says the medical equipment or auxiliary requirements already delivered were donated by their country, which is noted for a wide array of investments in technology. The gesture ought to be taken as empathy for the difficulty that many countries in Africa risk to face in the event of a 'full-blown' Covid-19 outbreak.

The Chinese have shown the rest of the world how to combat an outbreak successfully, even if this ability has to do in part with the might of its socioeconomic and political structures.

Africa and many other middle ranking and poor countries lack the wherewithal to enable people to stay indoors while public authorities treat those affected and massively disinfect public places likely to be contaminated. That implies rather rapid spread, unless other factors prevent it.

So there is a sort of lull in the storm if one takes a worst-case scenario and a slow and hopefully abating penetration

of the Covid-19 plague in our midst.

The best we can say is that we hope that we shall never have to use the equipment and supplies as in that case they would have to be preliminary supplies to put in place the necessary framework for a cohesive response. It is aid we hope we may not have to use, with having to put it to fuller use by no means making a happy day.

But there is another parameter with respect to the Covid-19 pandemic - as some form of learning situation. The learning is not just for Africa, which is perennially learning from others on how to grow its economy. China has the paradoxical status of being the presumed "originator" of a global viral pandemic for the second time.

Yet its organised response during the coronavirus crisis, despite a defective whistle-blowing environment which stopped the problem from being recognized in early stages, has had mixed implications around the world.

In western countries it is easy to sound the alarm, and much less easy to organise a lockdown or voluntary home stay. China has also enough industrial capacity to supply the outside world with cheap but quality goods as well as systematic donations to Africa in times of need.

Still there is a lesson from Jack Ma that the business community and those with some cash to spare need to learn - as to how to assist the vulnerable.

So far, many public authorities have focused on genuinely helpful protection means, including regular sanitisation and air spewing or inhaling curbs which are still loosely applied as the pandemic is yet to really set in.

As widely recommended, there is need for readiness to help families with multivitamin supplies alongside routine fever and pneumonia drugs quite early.

Amidst school closures, e-learning programmes ought to be enhanced

GOOD and bad news is coming up as to what schools are doing in the aftermath of a month-long closure order to prevent schools being centres of spreading the coronavirus pandemic as the first case surfaced.

The good news is that a number of schools, especially private primary and secondary schools, are making efforts to permit e-learning programmes where pupils connect with teachers while at home. To the extent that the household has a desktop facility, plenty can be done that way.

This method is positive because it isn't altogether clear that by the middle of next month there will no longer be a corona threat in the country.

That could only happen if the coronavirus scare becomes just a passing wind, ending with putting in quarantine a few dozen people who visited foreign countries during a dangerous moment of the rise of a global pandemic.

If the cases widen, and the increase by two cases at midweek shows that there is potential for significant increase in cases, the closures are likely to remain in place for a while, thus e-learning becomes a vital addition to what pupils can do ad interim. All they couldn't do is sit their final exams.

The bad news is that not everyone is happy about this, some expressing the fear that with e-learning facilities available for some schools while other pupils play in the sand with their street neighbours at home, there will be clear differences upon return.

A Dar es Salaam resident who heard about e-learning programmes put up by some of the city's private schools recommended that the government ought to take measures so that when pupils return to school they are at same levels of learning. Apparently, he fell

short of saying what measures he had in mind - and whether they included stopping e-learning!

The difference between pupils having e-learning facilities and those who do not is similar to those who pay for tuition classes and those who do not, as it would ordinarily have a marginal effect in exams.

The drawback would be to come back from closure and sit exams without having fully run through the syllabus or conducting tuition while others "attend to" the syllabus via e-learning facilities.

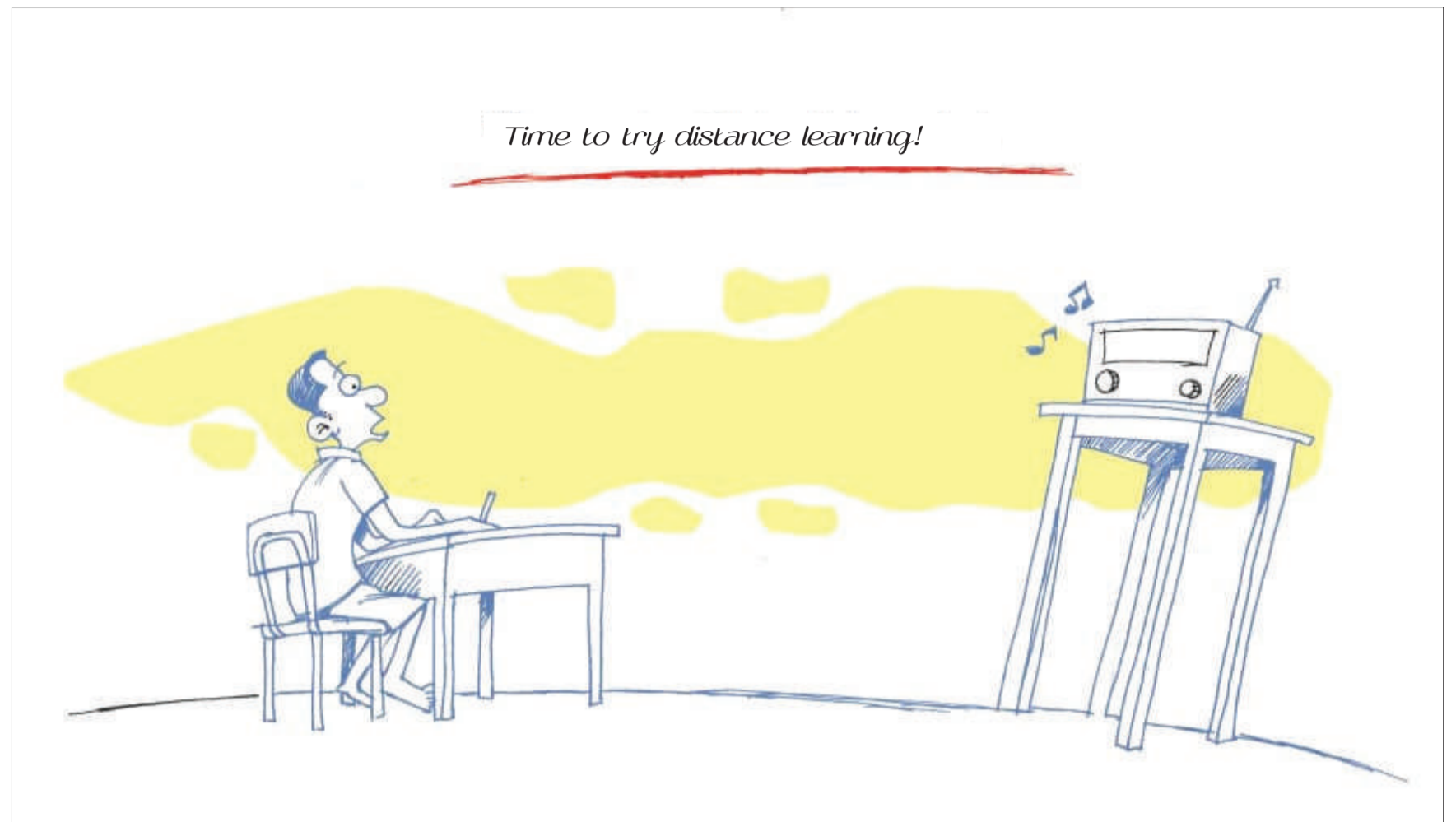
That marginal difference may not be cause for much concern on the part of other parents or pupils, as it is a routine aspect of social stratification that there is no strict equality as such about anything in life.

However, reforms are geared at ensuring that a regime of equal opportunities prevails, even with inequality, across social strata. So, the pupils will sit exams in generally similar situations.

If anything, parents who do not have access to e-learning facilities and are aware that gaps will likely open up with other pupils can at least access some auxiliary books for their children to read while at home.

Even on regular television there are useful programmes a parent can tune to for a pupil to pay attention at least for one hour. There are also programmes that can be downloaded from the internet if the parent can seek them out.

On the whole, though, learning while others play isn't necessarily undue advantage as the chances that pupils seek - to join secondary, high school or colleges - aren't too few for those with e-learning facilities to have such advantage. It is that simple, but debate can continue.



Covid-19 has exposed the fragility of our economies

By Guy Ryder

THE human dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic reach far beyond the critical health response. All aspects of our future will be affected - economic, social and developmental.

Accordingly, our response must be urgent, coordinated and on a global scale, and should immediately deliver help to those most in need.

From workplaces to enterprises, national and global economies, getting this right is predicated on social dialogue between governments and those on the front line - employers and workers so that the 2020s don't become a re-run of the 1930s.

Estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are that as many as 25 million people could become unemployed, with a loss of workers' income of as much as USD 3.4 trillion.

However, it is already becoming clear that these numbers may underestimate the magnitude of the impact.

This pandemic has mercilessly exposed the deep faultlines in our labour markets. Enterprises of all sizes have already stopped operations, cut working hours and laid off staff.

Many are teetering on the brink of collapse as shops and restaurants close, flights and hotel bookings are cancelled, and businesses shift to remote working.

Engaging persons with disability in fighting coronavirus pandemic

By Gamariel Mboya

IT is no longer deniable that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is real although there have been conflicting arguments on the matter.

It is extremely important to put an emphasis towards fighting this pandemic by addressing every race, groups, nation and community.

Despite all the efforts by the government and both national and international institutions to provide relevant information about this disease, underprivileged groups still lag behind and are insufficiently reached by relevant awareness initiatives.

One of underprivileged groups is that of persons with disabilities in general, meaning those who have special needs depending of the type of impairment they have.

People falling under this category are encountering various barriers that may compromise or in fact deny them opportunities to receive proper information on how they can prevent themselves from infection.

At this moment in time when there is a great tension and panic in the society, it is quiet easy to forget this group when fighting coronavirus disease infections.

Focusing on persons with disabilities,

Often the first to lose their jobs are those whose employment was already precarious - sales clerks, waiters, kitchen staff, baggage handlers and cleaners.

In a world where only one in five people are eligible for unemployment benefits, layoffs spell catastrophe for millions of families. Because paid sick leave is not available to many carers and delivery workers - those we all now rely on - they are often under pressure to continue working even if they are ill.

In the developing world, piece-rate workers, day labourers and informal traders may be similarly pressured by the need to put food on the table.

We will all suffer because of this. It will not only increase the spread of the virus but in the longer term dramatically amplify cycles of poverty and inequality.

We have a chance to save millions of jobs and enterprises, if governments act decisively to ensure business continuity, prevent layoffs and protect vulnerable workers. We should have no doubt that the decisions they take today will determine the health of our societies and economies for years to come.

Unprecedented, expansionary fiscal and monetary policies are essential if we are to prevent the current headlong downturn from becoming a prolonged recession. We must make sure that people have enough money in their pockets to make it to the end of the

week - and the next.

This means ensuring that enterprises - the source of income for millions of workers - can remain afloat during the sharp downturn and so are positioned to restart as soon as conditions allow.

In particular, tailored measures will be needed for the most vulnerable workers, including the self-employed, part-time workers and those in temporary employment, all of whom who may not qualify for unemployment or health insurance and who are harder to reach.

As governments try to flatten the upward curve of infection, we need special measures to protect the millions of health and care workers - most of them women - who risk their own health for us every day. Truckers and seafarers, who deliver medical equipment and other essentials, must be adequately protected.

Teleworking offers new opportunities for workers to keep working and employers to continue their businesses through the crisis. However, workers must be able to negotiate these arrangements so that they retain balance with other responsibilities, including caring for children, the sick or the elderly and, of course, themselves.

Many countries have already introduced unprecedented stimulus packages to protect their societies and economies and keep cash flowing to

workers and businesses. To maximise the effectiveness of those measures it is essential for governments to work with employers' organisations and trade unions to come up with practical solutions - to keep people safe and to protect jobs.

These measures include income support, wage subsidies and temporary layoff grants for those in more formal jobs, tax credits for the self-employed, and financial support for businesses.

But as well as strong domestic measures, decisive multilateral action must be a key stone of a global response to a global enemy. The G20's virtual Extraordinary Summit on the Covid-19 response this March 26 is an opportunity to get this coordinated response going.

In these most difficult of times, I recall a principle set out in the ILO's Constitution: Poverty anywhere remains a threat to prosperity everywhere.

The principle reminds us that, in years to come, the effectiveness of our response to this existential threat may be judged not just by the scale and speed of the cash injections, or whether the recovery curve is flat or steep, but by what we did for the most vulnerable among us.

Guy Ryder is Director General of the International Labour Organisation.

pandemic.

For example, persons without the upper limbs cannot use the armpit when coughing or sneezing, while those crawling or using a wheelchair are definitely at great risk of infections because they need people to help them out. Similarly, people with impaired eyesight need guides or they have it especially hard moving from one point to another.

Accordingly, I call upon the government to avail special opportunities for persons with disabilities to engage in fighting the coronavirus pandemic by contributing to the drawing up and execution of measures that can be used to reach out to this group when sensitising the public on the matter.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), at least one-tenth of the population in any community has a certain form of disability. In the circumstances, this group is not something to be ignored and proper measures are needed to protect them from the coronavirus pandemic by providing them with proper information in a timely manner.

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has long issued guidelines meant to protect persons with

disabilities in times of emergencies. It would pay if our Health ministry and other stakeholders prepared specific guidelines outlining prevention measures meant for persons with disabilities.

This is an ideal moment for our nation to unite and work together to stop the global spread of coronavirus infections particularly in that until now there is no confirmed vaccine or treatment for the pandemic.

There is also the other challenge inherent in the fact that the manner in which the particular virus spreads directly touches on the customs, traditions or cultural norms many nations have been following, observing or practicing for centuries upon centuries - for instance, exchanging greeting by shaking hands, attending social gatherings and engaging in all manner of interactions in society.

Waging a winning war on coronavirus infections demands mindset and lifestyle changes for our country and our nation to remain safe. This promises to be a tall order indeed, but there is no easier option.

The author is a self-declared advocate and commentator on disability rights reachable at e-mail: gamariel_mboya@yahoo.com.

By Correspondent Gerald Kitabu

DART sheds light on queries in CAG report

Government Executive Act No 30 of 1997, Sec. No 12 (2) (a) requires all Agencies to perform their functions in accordance with commercial principles and ensure that, as far as possible, its revenue is sufficient to meet its expenditure properly chargeable to revenue, and Reg. 12 (3) requires a portion of its revenue to be retained to the Agency and others be allocated to Exchequer Account as public Fund.

However, according to 2017/18 report of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) of the National Audit of Tanzania, there were several weaknesses facing some government Agencies.

In this first report, our reporter sheds light on one of the government Agencies - The Dar Rapid Transit (DART), a bus-based mass transit system that connects the suburbs of Dar es Salaam to the central business districts.

During the 2017/18 audit report, the CAG noted that, only one Service Provider was on site (operating the buses) despite the plan to have two Service Providers by June 2015. CAG further noted that, DART expected to have a total of 305 buses to be full-fledged by June 2015, however only 140 buses were still operating despite increased number of the passengers.

The CAG report also noted a loss of TZS 54,362,000 due to the abandoned leased land on 30 March 2011, Memorandum of Understanding between Tanzania China Friendship Textile Co. LTD and Dar Rapid Transit Agency (DART) was signed. The two parts agreed



Dar es Salaam residents catch one of the BRT buses at Kivukoni bus terminal. The government is working to get a new service provider by December this year. Photo by Gerald Kitabu

on the establishment and use of Feeder Bus Factory Plot at the Tanzania-China Friendship Textile site along Morogoro Road in Kinondoni District for purposes of facilitating the month operation of Dar es Salaam Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. The leased period was agreed to end on 30/03/2051 (40 years).

The CAG further noted that TZS 271,810,000 was paid in advance by DART since 2011. However, the piece of land had been abandoned for 8 years till conclusion of the audit in December 2018. CAG further noted that, the Agency

had incurred a loss of TZS 54,362,000 (TZS 6,795,250 rent per year in 8 years) for not using the leased land for 8 years.

In an interview with The Guardian to get clarification on these weaknesses and measures being taken, Public Relations Manager for Dar Rapid Transit Agency (DART), William Gatambi said that the decision to have only one Service Provider on site (the one operating the buses) was for "interim period" adding that the government is working out plans to get the new Service Provider by December this year. The new service provider will

make sure that the number of buses increases to 305 as per the earlier plan.

"The decision to have only one Service Provider on site (the one operating the buses) was for interim period, and in fact it was decided to start these operations to keep busy the newly constructed roads for BRT but the new operator will do the needful.

Clarifying on the TZS 271,810,000 that has been paid in advance by DART since 2011, Gatambi confirmed that the land was leased and the money paid but later on, the textile management decided to

re-use the land. Currently process and procedures are being made for the Textile management to pay back the money. According to him, the exercise of paying back the money was expected to start in September 2019.

Explaining the genesis of the project, Gatambi said that in the past, Dar es Salaam had transport system that was not well coordinated. Anyone who had financial muscles could buy commuter buses and put on the road. At that time, supervision was under SUMATRA (now LATRA). He further said that the commuter buses were small in size as could only afford to carry between 23 and 30 passengers. These buses were many and at times, could cause heavy traffic jam due to increased population in the city of Dar es Salaam. He said due to the uncoordinated transport system and traffic jam, Dar es Salaam residents were wasting a lot of time on the road before they could reach their at their workplaces, business centres and back to their homes.

Therefore, the government sought a new and better transport system. Early 2000's, the government conducted a survey to determine the best transport mode that could be useful and suitable. The survey was conducted for the train transport system and the BRT which was operating in the South American countries such as Brazil and Colombia where it had proved successful. It was found out that BRT system was better and cheaper.

That is when the government opted for the BRT system in Dar es Salaam. The

project was planned to be implemented in six phases starting with improving the roads infrastructures to the international standards of BRT. The government started construction of Morogoro road that has also lanes for the vehicles and pedestrians.

It was planned that after completion of the infrastructures for the first phase, a total of 305 buses and feeder buses would start immediately. But the construction of the infrastructures completed much earlier before getting the bus operator. To protect the infrastructures from dilapidation and damage, it was decided to start with the few 140 buses first for interim period and as a trial period to keep the infrastructures busy. This was also a trial period for the infrastructures to determine its utility.

The first phase started with routes from Kimara to Kivukoni, Mapipa to Morogoro, and from Fire through Msimbazi road to Karikoo. The routes would have inner buses such that when a passenger drops out of the bus, let say at Shekilango, he or she could catch the inner buses and proceed to their destinations.

Commenting on the achievements, he said that the fact that the BRT is operating and has never been stopped or suspended saying this is also one of the achievements.

He said the introduction of the BRT have saved time and cost for those who have own cars, instead of fueling their vehicles, one can simply leave or park his car and jump into the BRT. Citing an example, he said from Kimara to Kivukoni, the passengers used to take more than two hours but now they use only 40 to 45 minutes. The presence of the buses have also minimized traffic jam for the passengers.

The project has created more than 1,000 employments especially as drivers, cashiers, security guards, and cleaners. It has also helped school children from going late to school.

"The project attracted several investors such as African Development Bank and World Bank including some financial intuitions such as banks. These have financed the BRT in different phases and others will finance in the next phases.

"We have also seen other African countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Algeria and Burundi coming for the purpose of learning how we are implementing the project so that they can also implement it in their own countries," he said.

"For example this month, Nairobi Metropolitan Authority (NAMATA) have shown interest to visit the project for the purpose of learning.

Commenting on the challenges, he said there are some challenges and some are for the passenger themselves and the newest of the project to many people but so far all the challenges are being worked on.

Dar es Salaam bus rapid transit system began operations in 2016 in Dar es Salaam. The transit system consists of 6 phases and the construction of the first phase began in April 2012 by the Austrian construction company Strabag International.

ROME

Most developing countries have good policies, programmes and projects in place. Many of these have been prepared with assistance from development partners or international financing institutions such as the World Bank, the regional development banks, the UN agencies or bilateral aid agencies.

Most of these are of high quality and have gone through intensive review and quality control. The major challenge is to effectively implement these policies, programmes and projects. Unfortunately this does not often happen and leads to huge lost opportunities. This is particularly the case in the poorest countries, many of which are conflict affected.

To improve things, there are three major problems which need to be addressed: Political Will, Technical Efficiency and, what I call, Last Mile Issues.

Little is likely to improve unless there is Political Will at the highest levels of Government to raise incomes across the board, and not just for the few who have political power; address poverty and improve food and nutrition security.

The principal reason why this does not happen is capture of political and economic power by small groups of people, who then misappropriate funds meant for projects and programmes, or put in place policies which directly benefit them. Very often the money thus stolen is transferred to banks in developed countries.

Improving development impact



Getting the measure of water in a southern Indian village. File photo

Can anything be done in such a situation? Possibly very little. But there may be a few actions by the international community that might help.

More openness on the part of banks in developed countries about large deposits from developing countries - known for their lack of transparency - might help.

Another could be to better link international processes, such as prosecutions at the International Criminal Court, with financial sanctions such as blocking of bank accounts of

those under trial or sentenced. Yet another, which would be effective, but politically difficult, is to "name and shame" the worst offenders in international fora such as at the United Nations. Very often at international meetings and conferences it is often the delegates from the poorest countries that stay in the most expensive hotels, wear the most expensive clothes, and are driven to the meeting in the most expensive cars. Surely some "shaming" would be in order.

The next set of problems

relate to Technical Efficiency. Getting projects and programmes implemented requires effective and transparent management; good monitoring systems; and an accountability system that holds people responsible for reaching well-defined milestones.

These relatively simple and well understood management practices are spelt out in most project and programme documents. Usually ample financial provisions are made for these actions and for associated ICT systems.

However, in practice, getting effective implementation is very difficult. Good implementation means constantly making decisions, frequent mid-course corrections, and, above all, taking risks which range from financial to reputational to operational.

Most development projects and programmes are implemented by salaried public employees. For many of them working as a project or programme manager is only one step in a long career which tends to be highly competitive - not so much in terms of rank or salary, but in terms of getting prestigious assignments.

In such an environment reputation is critical and officers tend to be highly risk averse. Far better to miss a project milestone than break a bureaucratic rule, or take action against a non-performing but politically connected team member.

Solutions? Well it is difficult but there are a few. One is subcontract the entire work to a private company. At times this works well, especially in large infrastructure projects where performance and milestones are relatively easy to define; and where foreign funding and companies are involved, which make them less subject to political interference.

In other cases it may be possible to bring in managers from the private sector but often bureaucrats tend to obstruct, or at times even actively sabotage, their

work. A relatively recent innovation is to set up "Delivery Units" - a small dedicated group of highly-skilled people assigned to help a set of projects of programmes achieve their objectives.

Their focus is on data-led decision making and they typically report directly to senior management, proposing solutions to untangle barriers. Staff for these units is usually recruited from among mid-career professionals working in the private sector on a contract basis.

These units work best when reporting to a strong senior management team which has decision making powers and is above bureaucratic infighting.

Last, but by no means least, are the "Last Mile Issues". This refers to the challenge of making the connection between the lowest levels of project or programmes activities, and the individual households and communities who are the final targets of development work.

Thus a Government irrigation project may take water down to village level but then the water needs to get to individual fields. This requires farmers to invest in local water conveyance and control systems, and create and manage water distribution schedules.

Similarly, a credit programme may enhance the supply of funds to the local bank branch, which may be a district or commune level.

But then potential borrowers will need to be informed and, if they are unfamiliar with banking procedures, provided help to complete the necessary paperwork and chose the financing package best suited to their needs.

There have been many attempts to address such last mile issues. These include efforts by NGOs to build community organizations; efforts by Governments to extend the outreach of public institutions and initiatives; and, most recently, efforts by the corporate sector, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

All three approaches have had their success and failures. Their impact could be improved if NGOs, governments and the corporate sector talked more to each other about learning from these successes and failures and to seek synergies.

Government programmes would certainly benefit from the social capital built up by NGOs and the management systems of the corporate sector. NGOs would be more accountable if a greater proportion of their funding was channelled through Government and if they conducted the audits and financial and effectiveness reviews that are commonplace in large companies.

Similarly, the corporate sector's CSR efforts would be more leveraged if they were to draw on Government staff, buildings and other facilities already existing in the areas where they work and on the community organizations developed by the NGOs.

By Vishwas Satgar

Covid-19 has pushed an already weak and crisis-ridden global economy over the edge. Massive value has been erased from crashing stock market prices. Many commentators are talking about the return of economic conditions similar to the great financial crash of 2007-2009. The most powerful countries in the world from China to the US have ground to a halt.

This pathogen, possibly from delicate creatures like a pangolin or a bat, has engendered the worst global pandemic since the Spanish flu (1918-1920), which killed 100-million people. Death rates are going up globally. Right-wing nationalists in Europe and the USA have been confused as this virus has jumped racist border regimes, and infected all populations. Citizens are no longer concerned about their racist messages, but rather about how to survive.

Governments all across the world are seized with the challenge of protecting their populations, at least that is what it seems like given the people-centred rhetoric. The geo-politics of Covid-19, engulfing the entire globalised world in its rapid spread, is also a shot across the bow of carbon capitalism. Elite consumption of exotic animals, at high prices, in Wuhan, China unleashed the swift and lethal revenge of nature.

This does not mean that this is a "Chinese virus" as the racist Donald Trump has suggested. We are all susceptible and are trying to live through the fear, paralysis and risks brought by this pandemic. Overnight, jobs have disappeared, paycheques have shrunk, loved ones are in critical health situations fighting for their lives and hunger is knocking on the door of many. Healthcare systems, weakened and commodified through decades of marketisation, have or will be overwhelmed.

Yet the very same elites that caused the problem are not carrying the burden of the consequences of their actions. For climate justice politics, these injustices are not new. Elite use and consumption of fossil fuels is linked directly to extreme weather shocks such as heatwaves, droughts, floods and cyclones, for instance, which impact those most vulnerable the hardest. Yet there is no consequence for those responsible and the fossil fuel industry, carbon-addicted states, and the wealthy carbon-based consumers continue as though climate science does not exist.

'Black Swan' event, or worsening systemic crisis

In the business world, Covid-19 tends to be reduced to a "black swan event". A sudden or unforeseen happening, with great consequence and rationalised after the fact. The idea was initially popularised by Nassim Nicholas Taleb's five volumes on uncertainty including the famous Black Swan, which has been described as one of the most famous books since World War II. While in his work, the concept has a richer philosophical grounding, it has become part of everyday risk management discourse. Business risk analyses missed the likelihood of a Covid-19 pandemic and it certainly was not a concern. Its occurrence, however, cannot be explained as a black swan event.

From an ecological Marxist perspective, it has to do with the contradictory relationship between natural and social relations, has a historical genealogy within how eco-cidal capitalism works and can be causally attributed. Simply, for Covid 19, this means it's a dangerous problem that is engendered by capitalism's persistent domination of nature.

It spread from a "wet market" involving organised crime syndicates, linked to shadowy global poaching, and smuggling networks that steal wild creatures from their habitats and place them on elite menus. Avaricious Chinese capitalism, with its appetite for resources and capturing markets, like the West, understands nature as a site of extracting value; nature must serve the juggernaut of accumulation.



Covid-19: Climate crisis and lockdown an opportunity to end the war with nature

South Africans are now familiar with the appetites and reach of this capitalism due to the annihilation of our rhino population merely for their horns. Wet markets also exist in other parts of South and East Asia, and have not been restricted, leaving open the possibilities of new waves of pandemics.

For many years, epidemiologists and environmentalists have been concerned about the public health consequences of such markets, given that animal to human transmission of deadly viruses is a known fact and has been implicated in avian flu (from birds), MERS (from camels) and ebola (monkeys), for instance. These animals are also traumatised and kept in unsafe conditions.

In Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro has unleashed land grabs in the Amazon - one of the most biodiverse habitats on planet Earth. Industrial farming, mining, logging and wild animal poaching are ending the natural protective barriers between human society and ecosystems, heightening the risks of pathogens spreading, but in this case also contributing to climate change, given the role the Amazon plays in a planetary ecosystem to sequester carbon.

Climate scientists have already warned humanity that further warming of the Arctic, for instance, will not only release deadly greenhouse gases such as methane, but also pathogens that have been frozen into ice sheets. Like Covid-19, the worsening climate crisis and its global shocks, are not black swan events, but dangerous systemic crisis tendencies produced by a hard-wired logic based on the duality of capitalism versus nature. Science has provided us with understandings and warnings, and yet the global capitalist system persists in driving us towards harm and destruction.

Carbon capitalism and imposed collective suicide

A world led by those who place profit above human and non-human life, is placing us all in jeopardy. We are not given a choice as the eco-cidal logic of global capitalism destroys the conditions that sustain life. Our planetary commons - biosphere, oceans, forests, land and water sources - are all being commodified and destroyed to

make a few wealthy.

On a planetary scale, we are living through an imposed collective suicide. As neoliberalism becomes authoritarian and mutates into the second coming of fascism to defend the wealth of the few, it is revealing a simple fact: It's not learning lessons about the harm it is inflicting. Instead, it wants to defend at all costs a life-destroying system.

Karl Polanyi in the social science classic, *The Great Transformation* (1944), drew attention to such elite behaviour when the ship is sinking. In the late 19th century, based on marketisation through the gold standard, the world was driven into World War I. Lessons were not learned and the world was again locked into gold standard marketisation in the 1920s, and this gave rise also to fascism and World War 2.

This time, we are all dealing with the failure of capitalism's conquest of nature through treating it as capital through financialisation. The science on biodiversity loss, climate and water, for instance, are all unequivocal that we are breaching limits and surpassing boundaries that endanger everything. At the same time, the raw and infinite power of nature is gathering pace. The present generation of young people understand the dangers of this very well. One of my former students, an extremely intelligent and sensitive young person, placed this public post on his Facebook page in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak:

Tonight, for the first time in a long time, I cried. I felt everything inside of me: the depth and immensity of my pain, my sorrow, my grief, my lament, my worry, my confusion, my longing, my despair - I felt it all and wept, wept for the sadness I've kept hidden so long, wept for the loved ones I miss so dearly, wept for the suffering and uncertainty of the world, wept for reasons I don't even understand.

Many of us weep for the collective suicide we are living through. This is not about victimhood, but about understanding the depth of crisis and the urgency to overcome this universal challenge of our extinction. It is a conscious knowing rooted in deep wells of pain, anxiety and existential suffering growing in prevalence among the young because of the collec-

tive suicide being imposed by financialised carbon capitalism.

Greta Thunberg and many of the young climate activists in South Africa such as Raeesah Noor Mohamed, Nosintu Mcimeli, William Shoki, Awande Buthelezi, Jane Cherry and Courtney Morgan, to name a few, understand this. They carry their pain, their understanding of injustice as they protest.

But is the present resistance enough? The cry of 1 degree Celsius movements - Sunrise Movement, Extinction Rebellion, #FridaysForFuture and the Climate Justice Charter process in South Africa - are all coming up against power structures and ruling classes not willing to break with the imposed collective suicide of financialised ecological carbon capitalism. Yet in the context of Covid-19, not only are global populations shocked, but it has rocked, assailed and unhinged the very same power structure standing in the way of addressing the climate crisis. Covid-19 is forcing, even reluctantly, ruling classes to try to act with concern for life.

Lockdown and the ANC's epidemiological neoliberalism

Covid-19 has thrown us into a state of exception. From a climate justice perspective, this is a dress rehearsal for a world that breaches 2 and 3 degrees Celsius in which climate shocks on a global scale imperil life-supporting socio-ecological systems such as food, water and health systems through unbearable temperatures. Waking up then is too late.

This is the underlying premise of climate justice activism, given that climate science is telling us what is arriving with business as usual or low mitigation trajectories. With the Covid-19 crisis, our governments seem to be suddenly realising markets and corporations are not more important than human life. Is this the case?

The disaster capitalism of Covid-19, as Naomi Klein reminds us, brings forth profit-making opportunities even from the suffering of the people. Trump is leading the way. His first crucial move was to build up fossil fuel reserves thus keeping oil prices bolstered, then he unleashed the privatised healthcare system and is now keeping pharmaceutical companies "free" to manipulate the prices

of essential medical equipment instead of repurposing production through the Defense Production Act. However, this is not the end of the story and struggles inside US society will certainly determine if Trump's epidemiological neoliberalism will triumph or not.

In South Africa, we have been witness to a sea change from kleptocratic state and neoliberal austerity policies (including cutting billions of rands from health spending), announced by Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni, to cross-subsidise corrupted and failing parastatals, to the war on Covid-19.

The country is going into this government-declared war with a dualistic healthcare system, with the vast majority dependent on a public healthcare system gutted by corruption, mismanagement and austerity. This healthcare system, with these specific features, is what is going to be overwhelmed not just by Covid-19, but by over two decades of ANC misrule. The lockdown of South Africa has to be understood in this context.

Put more sharply, the warped rationalities of commodified healthcare for a few and failing healthcare for the many is clearly the frontline the government is trying to avoid in the country's Covid-19 response. For most South Africans, in a state of shock and panic, this lockdown crash-landing of the economy on the wretched lives of a precarious working class and poor seems like the best response.

Of course, this shock therapy has been administered repeatedly since neoliberal strictures informed the first democratic budget in 1994 and the macro-economic shift of 1996, kleptocratic neoliberalism of the Jacob Zuma project and now the new epidemiological neoliberalism of the ANC. In this context, the so-called China success story of shutting down Wuhan peppers government-speak.

But the other epidemiological success story of South Korea is not referenced. South Korea did not lock down its economy, but put the emphasis on: (1) intervening fast through test kits produced (100,000 a day), on a mass scale domestically; (2) test early, often and safely (it has conducted over 300,000 tests), such that detection hap-

pens quickly; (3) contact tracing, isolation and surveillance, which has used smart apps, mass messaging and has prevented an overload on the healthcare system; and (4) enlist the public's help. While not perfect and easily replicable, it's nonetheless an important alternative to lockdown.

South Africa's lockdown has not been preceded by mass testing despite the two-month lead time the South African government had since the outbreak in China. Even as the country goes into lockdown, the costs of tests are prohibitive, there has been no clear communication about international partnerships to get testing going on a mass scale, there is no clear messaging on testing details and grassroots civil society has not been mobilised, despite its enthusiasm to rise to the challenge.

Instead, the lockdown has shifted the focus to managing economic chaos, mitigation measures and privatised charity through a "solidarity fund". Deep anxiety, fear and insecurity is running through society. South Africa is going into the lockdown as one of the most unequal countries in the world.

The crisis of socio-ecological reproduction is deep as expressed through high levels of structural unemployment, intra-African income inequality, hunger and water inequalities (54% of South African households do not have access to clean water through a tap in their homes).

Lockdown means South Africa's precarious working class and poor are now responsible for solving the Covid-19 problem because they carry the burden. Lockdown is meant to save their lives while worsening their already wretched life worlds. Hence the ANC government is off the hook with this cunning move of epidemiological neoliberalism while taking Covid-19 disaster capitalism to a new level.

Ending the war with nature

Covid-19 is an expression of contradictory natural relations. On the one hand, it is devouring the most vulnerable in our society and, on the other hand, it is prompting humanity to slow down collective climate suicide. Carbon emission data is certainly going to register deep drops since the onset of Covid-19, with airlines, shipping, cars and other carbon-emitting technologies brought to a halt.

Covid-19 has achieved what almost three decades of UN multilateral negotiations have failed to achieve. If governments can take the Covid-19 emergency seriously, they can take the climate crisis seriously. The UN climate meeting in Glasgow this year has to open with lessons learned from Covid-19 to address the global climate emergency. In this context, South Africa will have to tell its story to the global public. However, there is a lot the South African government should consider as this pandemic unfolds, including its war-on-Covid-19 approach.

South Africa's government declared Covid-19 a disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act. It has unleashed an important coordination capacity in the state, preventative regulations, is disseminating information, has imposed a 21-day lockdown and introduced economic mitigation measures. The command structure is led by the president. The Disaster Management Act was not kicked into gear during the worst drought in South Africa's history (2014-till now), which ravaged numerous communities, collapsed part of the globalised food system and pushed up food prices. Many communities still have acute water needs and are being challenged to maintain basic hygiene.

As Covid-19 transmission spreads, water-stressed communities are going to be hotspots as these are poor communities and very likely to also have many with compromised immune systems. If the drought was handled properly by the ANC government, water issues would not have been a problem now.

Moreover, if the ANC government did not get caught up in the tides of populism around the land question and listened to the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign, including taking seriously their Peoples Food Sovereignty Act handed over to Parliament, we would be sitting in the midst of Covid 19 with more communities, villages, towns and cities having localised agro-ecological food sovereignty pathways to cope with the current situation. Instead, we are living the drama of a war-centred crisis management approach.

Agencies

Africa's lock-down likely to cause continental economic depression

By Mthokozisi Dube

NATIONAL shutdowns and closure of none essential services might be the best way to curb the rampant spread of the coronavirus. Governments worldwide are trying to implement measures to ensure they successfully flatten the curve of the spread of covid-19.

Some African countries including South Africa and Rwanda have implemented national shutdowns in which business will come to a close. The South African Shut down will run from Thursday 26th March 2020 for the ensuing 20 days (making it a 21-day Lockdown).

Implementation of Lockdowns is a very commendable move. In South Africa, the national army has been

deployed to ensure people's adherence to the guidelines of the shutdown.

The rainbow country has been experiencing a rampant upsurge of covid19 infections daily with a confirmed case standing at 554.

The pandemic has triggered the leadership of the country to resort to shutting down the country for 21 days. The government has ensured measures for the security of employment during the lockdown and has put in place measures for people to be paid.

Meanwhile, The Rupert and Oppenheimer families have donated 1 Billion Rands each to pay employees and help businesses in distress.

This is commendable leadership but what are the odds that such measures are airtight in ensuring the well-being of all South Africans where 3 million people are reported to be working in

the informal sector. More importantly, can the rest of Africa emulate the South African model in the Shutdown?

According to the International Labour Organization, 85.8% of employment on the continent is informal. In other continents, the percentage is relatively low Asia and The Pacific - 68.2%, Arab States - 68.6%, The Americas - 40%, Europe and Central Asia - 25.1%.

If then African states emulate the South African model what is going to happen to the 85.8% who basically lead a "hand to mouth" model of survival as they will not be allowed to trade. In the face of this global crisis, measures are in place to stop the continuous spread of covid19. However, people in the informal sector in the event of a lockdown are put in a precarious position.

The street trade which will pose a risk not only to themselves but their entire nations.

Informal trading in countries like Zimbabwe does not encourage saving because of rampant inflation, this leaves the informal traders exposed in the event of a national shut down similar to one implemented in South Africa.

There is a need to acknowledge that due to the continent's slow development not many people are formally employed. In times like these which are unfamiliar territory, there is a need for the governments to acknowledge the exposure of the informal traders.

The spread of covid19 has permeated all aspects of life for everyone. The government's reaction to the wellbeing of all of its citizens during this time is

important in rethinking inequality and access to proper healthcare. If handled without due care and attention it could further entrench already existent divides.

The implementation of national lockdowns is crucial if there is going to be a successful flattening of the curve. However African governments need to think around the best way to practically implement a policy that is safeguarded and ensures the well being of as many of their citizens as possible.

The informal traders' live-in high-density areas where social distancing is a myth, they stay in cramped spaces and travel to work in cramped modes of transport which makes them more vulnerable to infection. This further makes them possible carriers to spread the virus. Slums and informal structures are present across Africa

some with low to no access to water which is essential to practicing a high level of hygiene.

These conditions make the practical aspects of shutdowns extremely hard. The moment one person in these areas is infected the entire area can become a breeding ground of the virus.

Informal traders lack the luxury of a work from home option in most cases. Most of these traders sell vegetables, second-hand clothing, fruits amongst others and they cannot afford to do this from home.

African governments should consider all their citizens when implementing policies to curb the rampant spread of the virus. The flattening of the curve is a very crucial exercise that should be done to stop this global pandemic but it should also be done with all citizens in mind.



One of the fish ponds in Kisumu

Kenyans adopt climate-smart farm methods

KISUMU

IT might not be clear why a fish pond project should take root in a region surrounding the great Lake Victoria. After all, as the second largest freshwater lake in the world, it should be able to support the fish and the people that depend on its resources.

But the fact that fish farming is fast expanding here highlights a worrying trend - that the fish population in Lake Victoria has been in steady decline and the quality of what is being caught has been going down too, jeopardising the livelihoods of millions.

Overfishing, pollution and the invasive water hyacinth plant, among other factors, are to blame for the decline. The situation is so bad that cheap tilapia imports from China are now sold in the lake city of Kisumu, edging out local fishmongers.

The fishermen are finding it difficult to compete. These fish, from thousands of miles away, are cheaper than those caught just down the road in the lake.

Now villagers are turning to farming to address the shortages, something which would have been inconceivable only a few years ago.

"We are left with no choice but to farm fish in the ponds now," says John Obuom, from Kamulla village in the Store Pamba area of Kisumu county.

With his wife Pauline Achieng, Obuom has successfully reared catfish since 2018 in five ponds on their three-acre plot. They started with 1,000 fingerlings and have since harvested twice.

He has been trained by international development organisations including World Neighbors and Vi Agroforestry on simple, sustainable agricultural practices as well as water-harvesting techniques.

"I am now able to harvest and store water from surface run-off, which has made a big difference in my farm," he says. And it is not so difficult to see why.

Obuom is a successful farmer. He grows mangoes, tomatoes, citrus, bananas and cucumbers, in addition to popular Kenyan indigenous vegetables such as the black nightshade.

He is held up as a model farmer in the region. High

school and university students regularly visit his farm to learn about how sustainable agriculture works in practice.

Obuom is now part of a year-long, ongoing study on agricultural finance, through what is known as the financial diary tool.

"This tool will show how spending patterns influence climate-smart agricultural practices," says Anthony Musyimi, an agriculture masters student at the University of Nairobi.

The financial diary tool is a joint effort between the University of Nairobi, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Netherlands and CCAFS - a research programme on climate change, agriculture and food security.

This study is looking at the financial data of 122 households in the Nyando Basin, including Kisumu county.

Musyimi has been collecting data from Obuom for the past 48 weeks. He will conclude his findings this month, a year after he began.

Obuom uses nutrient-rich waste water from his fish ponds to irrigate his crops. The water has also enabled him to put up 10 beehives, each of which yields between eight and 10 litres of honey every three to four months.

"Bees cannot survive without water," he says.

And for women of the local Luo community, once banned from owning a boat or even entering the waters in the lake region, there are opportunities to get involved. They can now raise fish in a pond without breaking any cultural taboos, supplementing their household incomes.

Chris Macoloo, the Africa regional director for World Neighbors, maintains that using fish ponds has advantages over open-water artisanal fishing, because the latter "is more of a hunter-gatherer system, with no prior knowledge of the expected quantity of catch".

The development organisation has trained farmers in modern integrated farming techniques. Up to 20 farmers now have fish ponds only 20km from the lake.

"The fish ponds are very cheap to maintain, because you give the fish local feed," says catfish farmer Eddy Ouko.

UN sees coronavirus measures causing global food shortage

By Fiona Harvey

Protectionist measures by national governments during the coronavirus crisis could provoke food shortages around the world, the UN's food body has warned.

Harvests have been good and the outlook for staple crops is promising, but a shortage of field workers brought on by the virus crisis and a move towards protectionism - tariffs and export bans - mean problems could quickly appear in the coming weeks, Maximo Torero, chief economist of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, told the Guardian.

"The worst that can happen is that governments restrict the flow of food," he said. "All measures against free trade will be counter-productive. Now is not the time for restrictions or putting in place trade barriers. Now is the time to protect the flow of food around the world."

Governments must resist calls from some quarters to protect their own food supply by restricting exports, he said, as some have begun to do.

Kazakhstan, for instance, according to a report from Bloomberg, has banned exports of wheat flour, of which it is one of the world's biggest sources, as well as restrictions on buckwheat and vegetables including onions, carrots and potatoes. Vietnam, the world's third biggest rice exporter, has temporarily suspended rice export contracts. Russia, the world's biggest wheat exporter, may also threaten to restrict exports, as it has done before, and the posi-



tion of the US is in doubt given Donald Trump's eagerness for a trade war in other commodities.

"Trade barriers will create extreme volatility," warned Torero. "[They] will make the situation worse. That's what we observe in food crises."

While the supply of food is functioning well in most countries at present, problems could start to be seen within weeks and intensify over the following two months as key fruit and vegetables come into season. These types of produce often have short ripening times and are highly perishable, and need skilled pickers to work quickly at the right time.

"We need to be careful not to break the food value chain and the logistics or we will be looking at problems with fresh vegetables and fruits soon," said Torero. "Fruit and vegetables

are also very labour intensive, if the labour force is threatened because people can't move then you have a problem."

As governments impose lockdowns in countries across the world, recruiting seasonal workers will become impossible unless measures are taken to ensure vital workers can still move around, while preventing the virus from spreading.

"Coronavirus is affecting the labour force and the logistical problems are becoming very important," said Torero. "We need to have policies in place so the labour force can keep doing their job. Protect people too, but we need the labour force. Major countries have yet to implement these sorts of policies to ensure that food can keep moving."

Countries such as the UK, with a sinking currency

and high level of imports, are also likely to see food price rises unless the government takes action or retailers absorb some of the costs, he said.

The most important role governments can play is to keep the food supply chain operating, intervene to ensure there are enough workers, and keep the global food markets from packing, according to Torero.

"If traders start to become nervous, conditions will get difficult," he said. "It just needs one big trader to make a decision [to disrupt the supply of staple crops] and that will affect everywhere. Governments must properly regulate, that is their biggest function in this situation. It's very important to keep alive the food value chain: intervene to protect the value chain [including the supply of workers] but not to distort the market."

Individuals can also play an important role, by avoiding panic buying and hoarding of food, and cutting down on food waste. Buying too much fresh farm produce that then goes off before it can be eaten will just exacerbate food supply problems, he said. "Individuals should only buy what they need to avoid food waste."

Animal welfare is also an issue as border delays caused by the Covid-19 lockdown measures are meaning that livestock journeys are lengthened.

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Animal welfare is also an issue as border delays caused by the Covid-19 lockdown measures are meaning that livestock journeys are lengthened.

In the UK, some farming leaders have called for a "land army" of workers to replace a shortfall of workers that could reach 80,000, according to one estimate, if the 60,000 seasonal workers recruited from abroad in normal years are prevented from coming, and if some British workers fall ill.

Organisations representing both wealthy landowners and agricultural workers have urged the government to intervene. The Landworkers' Alliance, representing more than 1,000 small and medium farmers and landworkers across the UK, wrote to the chancellor of the exchequer asking for a £9.3m package of support to pay a "land army" of workers to increase domestic fruit and vegetable production as the Covid-19 crisis bites.

The Country Land and Business Association (CLA), representing more than 30,000 UK landowners and rural firms, made a similar call last week, for the government to make it easier for people thrown out of work by the lockdown to find seasonal work

on farms. Mark Bridgeman, president of the CLA, said: "We need urgent government assistance to help source workers and advertise positions. Time is of the essence as many farmers will soon begin, or have already begun, planting or harvesting."

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has said its officials and ministers are in regular communication with representatives of the food industry to ensure the food supply chain remains resilient.

Andre Laperriere, executive director of Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition, which provides data on food and agriculture, said the government must make plans to ensure the food supply chain functioned smoothly.

"Empty shelves in supermarkets should not be much of a concern," he said. "It is not a supply problem - it is a logistics problem. There is enough supply for all, as long as everyone stays calm and stops hoarding. We may tend to waste food if we hoard more than required, and hoarding would also artificially increase food prices because of the pressure on the supply chain."

He called for borders between the UK and other countries to remain open for imports and exports, and for farm workers to be supplied with protective equipment to enable them to carry on with their jobs safely amid the coronavirus lockdown. "The food sector comes under the critical infrastructure sector, along with healthcare and emergency services," he said.

Tanzania's untapped potential in aquaculture calls for more investments for greater benefits

By Correspondent
James Kandoya

TANZANIA'S aquaculture sector offers vast potential for growth.

Its climate is ideal for fish farming and the demand for fish is rapidly rising due to population growth and rising incomes.

It is dominated by freshwater fish farming where small-scale farmers practice both extensive and semi-intensive.

Currently, there are estimated 14,100 freshwater fishponds scattered across the mainland.

However, despite the clear opportunity for local fish production, the sector has not yet unlocked its full potential.

The combined factors have been driving up fish prices, making fish less affordable for the lower- and middle-income segments of the population resulting in an estimated fish demand deficit of 480,000/- tonnes per annum.

Jerry Mang'ena, the Director and Co-Founder of Aqua-Farms Organisation in Coast Region is among young Tanzanians who own commercial ponds.

Having been registered in 2017, his pond farm is supervised by well-trained experts in aqua-farming to complement the demand for tilapia produced by freshwater.

Mang'ena says one recycling aquaculture systems uses at least 600 litres of water and can produce about 7.8 tonnes of tilapia annually," he says.

In his views, Aqua-Farms business is not a quick or fast moving business like any other business because it takes more time.

For instance, one tilapia fish takes 6 to 8 months to reach 350 to 500 grams.

"Shortage of fingerlings is one of major challenge we are currently facing in the country," he says.

Mang'ena points out that the target is to produce two

million fingerlings annually by 2025 where the demand will be reach 7 percent.

He says Tanzanian hatcheries have insufficient access to quality tilapia and catfish brood stock, as well as lack of expertise to develop own brood stock improvement programmes.

"In order to solve this issue, it requires a long-term improvement programme of the tilapia and catfish gene pools in which the quality is controlled," he says.

He mentions other challenges facing the sector as the existing knowledge gap within the sector and lack of practical skills, poor access to affordable quality fish feed and seed.

Others are inadequate sector coordination and market linkages and the challenging business environment due to imported fish, tax regimes, high cost of inputs and aquaculture policy.

Mang'ena notes that most of the foods are imported from Netherlands which are very expensive.

According to him, financing investments through fish sales revenues is often times not enough to finance up scaling.

In his views, he insists that aquaculture farms are both in need of investment capital as well as working capital, the latter being sometimes half of the total required capital but often overlooked by farmers.

Importing aquaculture farm equipment, such as tanks and water treatment systems, should be exempted from import duties and attract VAT.

Currently, there are several financial institutions with a focus on to the agricultural sector in the country, for example, the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank Limited.

Although no specific aquaculture financial products or services exist, the general agricultural finance instruments are also available to the aquaculture sector.

However, financial institu-



Jerry Magh'anya feeds tilapia in one of the ponds. Photo: Correspondent James Kandoya

tions have not yet provided much capital to the aquaculture sector. The main reason is the lack of established and profitable fish farmers in the country.

The lack of collateral for small scale farmers is also an issue. Grouping of small businesses into larger associations may solve this issue as they can then start a loan and savings group.

According to the Inception Study Aquaculture Sector Tanzania conducted last year by Larive international and Lattice Aqua, improving country's aquaculture sector requires a holistic approach, focused on increased domestic productivity in an environmentally and socially responsible way.

Furthermore, the demand deficit will also drive up fish market prices and make fish farming a more lucrative business.

The study was commissioned by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Tanzania and aimed at identifying commercial freshwater aquaculture development targets

of the Tanzanian government which are not or insufficiently met by existing development initiatives and programmes.

Subsequently, opportunities for Dutch public and private stakeholders to play a role in the development of the sector are identified and formulated.

The report recommends that enabling environment can be upgraded by providing a conducive regulatory framework, market oriented educational institutes and an established private sector organisation.

Also positive initiatives such as the development of a dedicated aquaculture law and investments in education and research were observed and provide confidence in a continued commitment by Tanzanian public stakeholders.

Besides that, several specific interventions are recommended to address the most pressing development opportunities which were identified by this study.

Practically all value chain actors can play an important

role in realising these recommendations and hence become drivers for growth and positive change.

Country situation Tanzania is currently mainly relying on inland fisheries from Lake Victoria (85 percent) and marine fisheries (14 percent) for its fish consumption.

Only around 1 percent or 3,942 tonnes is produced by aquaculture.

However, its domestic market for tilapia is estimated to reach U.S. \$ 380m/- by 2030, where 64 percent remains obtainable to new aquaculture production.

According to the report on Aquaculture Investment Opportunities, phase II (2018), conducted by the Darberg - a strategy and policy advisory firm in the country under the sponsorship of USAID, the initial review suggests freshwater tilapia farming has the highest potential.

The report entitled "Market Analysis and Value Chain Prioritisation in the Livestock & Fisheries Sector in Tanzania"

screened 18 sub-sectors to appraise commercial and social potential of which aquaculture was selected as a main priority based on commercial viability.

The report reveals that aquaculture has a strong domestic consumption trends, and was the most commonly farmed fish in Tanzania and East Africa.

"To unlock this potential, commercial aquaculture operation will need to be introduced at scale; options exist for cage, pond and re-circulation systems," it suggested.

The quality input supply is a key consideration for emerging aquaculture industries. Producers have make or buy decisions and typically start importing in quality of a consistent quality.

In addition, Tanzania will require up to 69 kg million tonnes of additional tilapia production, the supply could be either be fresh or frozen.

The report however notes that despite the clear opportunities for local fish productions, the sector has not yet

unlocked its full potential.

Currently, the potential opportunity is underpinned by strong domestic demand growth, constrained conventional supply, surmountable competition and strong regional precedents of technology application.

The report reveals that the population growth, urbanisation and income effects will increase domestic demand for tilapia. While pushing total fish consumption rates closer to global averages.

However, statistics show that Tanzania's commercial aquaculture production still remains under 5,000 per year tones, about 1 percent of fish production.

Currently, the population has been growing at 2.8 percent one of the highest rates in sub Saharan countries (SSA).

It is poised to reach 80 million in less than 10 years, which on a baseline scenario would increase current fish consumption by 50 percent.

At the same time, it is urbanising at a rate of 5.4 percent where urban populations will demand higher proportion of fish than rural, a trend clearer in coastal / lake regions.

Also over-fishing and poor fisheries management has significantly reduced fish stocks in most lakes.

While this domestic artisanal supply currently dominates the market, its share is set to reduce. Regional imports are starting while frozen Chinese imports represent significant competition and are steadily increasing.

The official Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) statistics for example show that a 7 percent decline in neighbouring Uganda, although unofficial figures range between 10 percent and 30 percent of output decline for Tilapia.

The reason behind is due to over-fishing, increasing pollution around urban areas, lack of fishing regulations (both on national and regional level) and lack of enforcement.

As a result, the growing demand gap will have to be filled by imports, local production in Tanzania, or substitutes of other protein sources such as poultry.

However, despite the clear opportunity for local fish production, the sector has not yet unlocked its full potential.

In Tanzania, the government has made significant efforts to build the aquaculture sector such as specific policy targets outlined in the country's economic development agenda which include a range of government interventions under different initiatives.

In view of the fact, it has actively supported the sector growth by developing a dedicated aquaculture development policy. A dedicated law to support the sector and an aquaculture working group testifies of the government's strong ambition and commitment to the sector.

Its main goal is to support commercial fish farms that will produce quality fish products in large quantities for both export and the domestic market.

Minister for Livestock and Fisheries, Luhaga Mpina notes that there are many good research studies with valuable suggestions on how to improve the livestock and fisheries sector in the country done by researchers and students at higher learning institutions.

However, they ended up being kept in shelves instead of reaching the target beneficiaries who are farmers to help them increase production.

"We will collect and analyse and implement all good recommendations made by researchers and students for the purpose of improving our sector, even if it may require amendment to some of our laws and regulations, we will do it.

The aim is to help our nation move forward plus making the works of our students and researchers useful to the community and the nation at large, he said.

UNITED NATIONS

Conflict experts are concerned the global ceasefire called for by the United Nations amid the coronavirus outbreak may not work and could lead to a rise in violence.

Coronavirus or COVID-19 continues spreading, having passed 400,000 cases globally and claiming more than 17,000 deaths. Countries around the world are putting in measures to ensure they can contain the disease. Many countries such as Canada, United States, and Kenya have closed their borders to non-citizens and/or non-essential travels.

On Monday, the U.N. secretary general António Guterres appealed for a global ceasefire.

"This is crucial," he said, "to help create corridors for life-saving aid, to open precious windows for diplomacy, to bring hope to places among the most vulnerable to COVID-19."

Last week, the U.N. Refugee Agency and the U.N. Migration Agency, the International Organisation of Migration or IOM, announced that they are "suspending resettlement departures for refugees."

This was especially of urgency as the disease continues to spread with people in transit, and would

What does UN Secretary General's call for ceasefire mean for countries in conflict?



Amnesty International expressed their concern, in light of the United Nations Secretary General's remarks, about the situation in Yemen, South Sudan, and Syria. A ceasefire would, at least to a limited extent, give countries in conflict a little more room to put aggressive efforts into preparing for the potentially devastating impact of the virus. This dated picture shows a photo of the sprawling settlement of Yida, South Sudan border. File photo

thus risk refugees in transit, according to the spokesperson's office.

Guterres further called attention to the fact that "the most vulnerable – women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalised and the displaced – pay the highest price"

in times of armed conflict, combined with a global health crisis. Experts have noted this concern as well.

Joanne Mariner, senior crisis response adviser at Amnesty International, says they're monitoring the gender aspect of the pandemic and how it can dis-

proportionately affect women and girls.

"Female-headed households, for example, often make up a sizeable proportion of refugee communities, and may be particularly hard hit," she told IPS. "Many women, including migrant domestic workers, face the possibility of being unprotected caregivers; they also may be at higher risk of losing their jobs."

It's thus crucial to encourage countries from further advancing any form of oppression upon others. But what would this kind of ceasefire mean for the countries ravaged by war and conflict as they deal with threats of coronavirus?

Professor Clionadh Raleigh, executive director of Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) says there are layers to this issue.

"The ceasefire is a great initiative and while I certainly hope it works, the data suggests otherwise," she told IPS. "I also expect that mob violence and xenophobia will rise."

She pointed out that there are some armed groups who are capitalising on this

opportunity, such as the Islamic State hoping to profit out of it.

"There are...other indications that some groups will try to deal with this through unorthodox means (like kidnapping doctors)," she said.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International expressed their concern, in light of the Secretary General's remarks, about the situation in Yemen, South Sudan, and Syria. A ceasefire would, at least to a limited extent, give countries in conflict a little more room to put aggressive efforts into preparing for the potentially devastating impact of the virus.

"Displaced persons, fleeing conflict, often live in crowded and unsanitary camps, in which social distancing is very difficult if not impossible, and which clean water may be in short supply," Mariner of Amnesty, told IPS.

Furthermore, many of these countries caught in conflict have healthcare systems that require a lot of improvement.

"The health care infrastructure in countries facing armed conflict is often extremely weak, particularly

when, as in Syria, hospitals have been bombed and doctors killed," says Amnesty's Mariner.

Meanwhile, there are different types of conflict that can arise as a result of the pandemic itself, according to a report by ACLED launched last week.

"Governments may also rely on alternative forces to impose restrictions, and in doing so, increase the use of repressive violence," reads a part of the report, which also includes other kinds of violence or conflict such as gang violence arising out of the financial instability that the world is witnessing.

"If income from these means is reduced, it is possible that crime and looting will increase in areas of Central and South America," says the report.

To halt a conflict or enforce a ceasefire can be a complicated process, so it's only a matter of time to see if it will be enforced. However, as per the experts' analyses, global leaders will likely need to also combat how to address the violence that is arising out of coronavirus.

EXPERT URGES PUBLIC TO CONSIDER INSURING LIFE, PROPERTY AS NECESSITY

By Property Watch Reporter

THE public has been urged to consider insuring their lives and property against risks as a necessity and not luxury to avoid sliding back into a poverty trench.

CRDB Insurance Broker Limited's General Manager, Arthur Mosha said in Dar es Salaam this week that many people don't consider insurance coverage as an important investment in their lives hence end up borrowing from loan sharks when disaster strikes.

"These ongoing rains recently washed away part of the house wall fencing and when I engaged contractors to repair it they told me the bill was 37m/-," Mosha said saying he was shocked to hear of the price but was relieved because his family home is insured.

He said if he had no insurance cover for his property he would have been forced to borrow from the quickest lender available so that the house should be secured because without the security wall the risk of being attacked by thugs was real.

"Many Tanzanians today don't consider insuring their home or lives as important which is very wrong," he argued while noting that insurance is an important investment which avoids any family or individual from going back to poverty in an event of being struck by disaster.

He said many people insure their cars and other vehicles because of legal requirements instead of taking it as a necessity. "Imagine you the family's breadwinner and suddenly you get dead or incapacitated to work, how will the children and their mother survive?" the CRDB Insurance Broker GM wondered.

Established in 2011 as an insurance



CRDB Bank House at Mikocheni in Dar es Salaam, where CRDB Insurance Broker Limited is located.

agency, CRDB Insurance Broker which is part of CRDB Group Plc rose from a company under CRDB Microfinance Bank then to a separate subsidiary of the conglomerate in 2016 when it was licensed as a broker.

Its annual revenue over the period also rose from between 700 and 800m/- in 2011 to over 44.2bn/- last year thanks to the

introduction of bancassurance by Tanzania Insurance Regulatory Authority and Bank of Tanzania.

Mosha said the insurance broker's main products include: life assurance, health and motor insurance covers while fire comes in fourth. "Bancassurance is certainly improving insurance penetration in the market but we

need to sensitize the public more on the importance of investing in insurance coverage," he stressed.

Bank of Tanzania published 'Bancassurance Guidelines for Banks and Financial Institutions, 2019,' under Section 71 of the Banking and Financial Institutions Act, 2006. Among other things, bancassurance regulations are expected to boost insur-

ance penetration into the market.

According to TIRA, bancassurance is a mechanism by which banks or financial institutions and insurers collaborate to distribute and market insurance products. A bancassurance agent is a bank or financial institution licensed by TIRA.

Pension assets boosting African economies - firm

LAGOS

Two of Africa's biggest economies have the lowest pension assets as a percentage of GDP on the continent, but pension reforms and technological improvements are expected to increase these numbers. The economies - Nigeria and Egypt - have pension assets as a percentage of GDP as low as 7% and 2%, respectively.

This is according to investment firm RisCura's latest Bright Africa research. The Bright Africa 2019 research looked at ten countries in Africa in this regard, representing approximately half of Africa's 2017/2018 GDP as measured by the IMF.

The ratio of pension assets to GDP is commonly used to determine the significance of a country's pension assets to its economy. "In Nigeria, confidence in the pension system is severely lacking, and a large proportion of the working population, especially in the informal market, is not contributing to pension assets," explains Claudio Achadinha, Alternative Investment Analyst at RisCura.

"This is slowly changing over time, thanks to pension reform measures initiated in 2004. Given that Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation, there is significant room for growth within the pensions industry," says Achadinha. Egypt's pension schemes, on the other hand, are considered to be inefficient and unsustainable.

"Egypt's pension schemes invest their reserves at low, sometimes negative real interest rates, and members can easily manipulate the level of their pensions. As a result, Egypt's pension schemes are spending more on pension payments than they generate from members' contributions." To rectify this, Egypt's new Social Security and Pensions Act was ratified by its parliament in July 2019, and this is expected to bring about much-needed change.

How does Southern Africa stack up?

South Africa's ratio of pension assets to GDP comes in at 57.44% - approaching the average of 60% per the Willis Towers Watson study, which covered 22 pension markets around the world. "Namibia outshines South Africa, with pension assets to GDP at approximately 80%. This is by far the highest ratio in Africa," says Achadinha. However, the Namibian economy is also much smaller than South Africa's. Botswana also has a healthy ratio of 41.44%.

A large portion of pension assets are concentrated in Southern Africa, where several large funds tend to dominate. These include the GEPF in South Africa, GIPF in Namibia and the Botswana Public Officers Pension Fund (BPOPF) in Botswana.

"When comparing the continent as a whole to other emerging markets, pension assets to GDP were quite similar," says Achadinha. For instance, the percentage of pension assets to GDP was 12.7%, 4.8%, and 15.4% for Brazil, India, and Mexico, respectively. "A potential factor for this similarity is the presence of larger informal sectors in emerging markets in comparison to their developed counterparts," explains Achadinha.

Pension fund asset allocation
 In both OECD and non-OECD countries, bonds and equities remain the two predominant asset classes for pension funds. While globally, there is a larger allocation to equities (around 40%), the picture in Africa is different.

"Asset allocation in sub-Saharan Africa has continued to favour equities, which have shown a steady increase enabled by the development of capital markets and regulatory change," says Achadinha. "In Nigeria and East Africa, however, asset allocation is dominated by fixed-income allocations, mainly comprising of local bonds."



New residential apartments in Lagos.

The city where you pay a year's rent up front

LAGOS

It took fashion designer Foyayemi Alade four months to find an apartment to rent in Nigeria's huge commercial capital, Lagos. The flat, reasonably spacious, is in the in-demand Mainland District. It's close to the 30-year-old's work and has good transport links via a major highway.

But Alade had to pay a steep price to secure her home: she paid a full year's rent up front before moving in. "I was told to pay the full year's rent and two years' [contract] agreement and commission fees. I paid approximately \$2,000 [including] security [and] water treatment," she says.

She's not alone. Lagos is currently home to 22 million people, most of whom are renters who

have travelled from different parts of Nigeria to find jobs. Many work in the financial services, technology and fashion sectors, and all face similar struggles - the high cost of living and a pricey rental market. Once people have paid a year's rent and fees up front, some have no money left. "Everyone becomes broke after paying for the first year's rent," says Alade, who earns \$2,700 a year.

'Psychologically draining'

The government currently allows landlords to collect rent up to 12 months in advance but bans them from exceeding the one-year mark. The law - changed in 2011 - is a hurried repair; before, many landlords asked for two years' rent before handing over the keys.

On Lagos Island, many professionals struggle

with the cost of living close to their workplace - something that is a huge advantage in this gridlocked city. Professionals in the high net income bracket find it easier to afford the expensive letting fees, but new starters and mid-level employees find themselves priced out of accommodation in coastal districts where multinationals and tech start-ups are based.

Fashion Designer Foyayemi Alade, who earns \$2,700 a year, has to pay about \$2,000 for a full year's rent and commission fees before moving in. (Credit: Ayodele Johnson). David Bankole Abel, a 30-year-old game developer, spent two years sleeping at his office in Lekki Peninsula, an eastern suburb of Lagos, while he scraped together money to rent his own place. "It was the most challenging time of my life because I had

to wrestle all forms of mosquitoes and to be sincere, it was psychologically draining," he says.

He's finally managed to rent a "boys' quarter," a tiny living space that is an extension of a large private house or block of flats, usually inside a compound, that is generally used to accommodate domestic staff. For an 18-square-metre space, Abel had to pay \$827 in rent for the year plus agency charges of \$275. He didn't buy any new clothes for months, yet struggled to save partly due to high food costs, because the local council has banned the roadside sheds that serve cheap meals.

"I couldn't understand the idea behind an area that pay its workers so little and expects one to use from [the amount] to buy food from [expensive restaurants]," he says. "If I don't have to pay

too much for rent, maybe what I'm paid at my job won't be that bad. We shouldn't have a poor salary base and expensive houses to live in - these don't go together."

Part of the problem is Nigeria's population growth combined with rapid urbanisation: in over a decade, the urban population has grown by 50%. Nationally, the population is expected to almost double by 2050, adding nearly 200 million more residents.

Lagos, which attained mega-city status in 2010, is already bursting at the seams. Flooding has driven people out of vulnerable coastal neighbourhoods, meaning prices have soared in other in-demand districts. More houses are being constructed, but investors are fixated on building luxury homes affordable to few.

COMPANY DEBUTS ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORM TARGETING THE COVID-19 LOCKED-DOWN

By Francis Kajubi

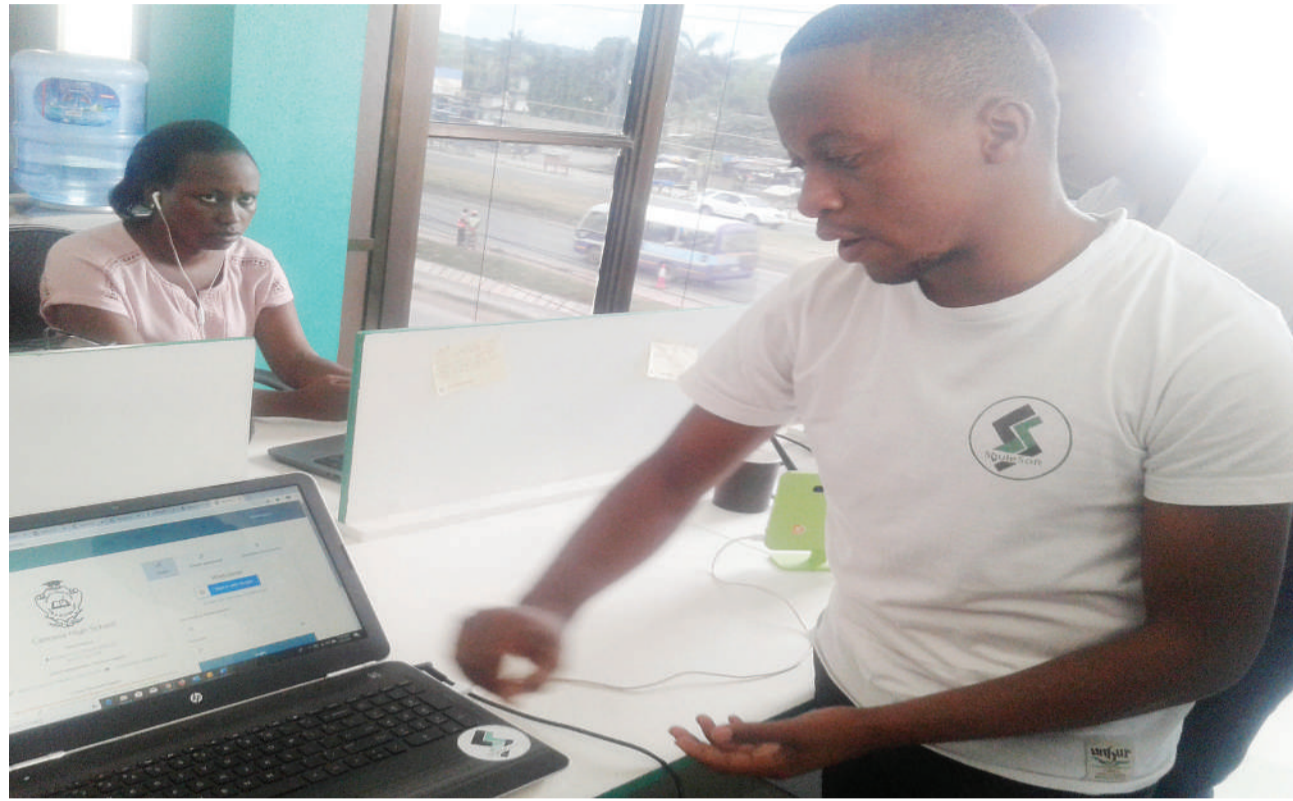
AS the countdown to mid April when schools and colleges may reopen if the coronavirus pandemic slows down, an information communication technology company has developed a 'Jifunze nyumbani' online learning platform.

Inet Company Limited's Managing Director, Ephraim Swilla said in Dar es Salaam this week that students need only to visit the website and register to enjoy live streaming of teaching sessions.

"The system is free and we are targeting students from public schools because we have been working with private schools since our inception in 2016. The free system will be active for the whole quarantine period," said Swilla.

He said the company has since 2016, been running the online learning platform known as ShuleSoft Management System which is currently being used by 355 private schools across the country of which more than 100,000 users are parents, researchers and teachers.

"Our system allows over 100,000 users at one time to access the platform and deliver live streams both in



Inet Company Limited's Managing Director, Ephraim Swilla explaining how ShuleSoft system which incorporates 'Jifunze nyumbani' platform works in Dar es Salaam earlier this week. Photo: Francis Kajubi.

English and Kiswahili," he stated.

The 'Jifunze nyumbani' platform thus enables students, teachers and

parents to interact at real time hence discuss issues to improve delivery of lessons during the 30 days lock-

down period announced by President John Magufuli last week.

The Inet Managing Director fur-

ther noted that with ShuleSoft, the platform also allows continuous assessment reports, consolidated sheets, position, average, ranks and gives streams reports at real time.

"It enables sending message and reminders to parents and teachers with just one click, thus making it easier for parents and guardians to monitor their children's progress," he added.

Apart from being a learning system, ShuleSoft is integrated with NMB Bank Plc to enable respective schools know which students have paid school fees while allowing parents and guardians to pay digitally using mobile handsets. "Our clients which are basically schools have tasted and enjoy using this system as it has reduced costs and improved efficiency," Swilla added.

Backing Swilla's arguments, Atlas Pre and Primary School Chief Accountant, Jabry Kakene said his school has improved management of cash and education services a lot since adopting the system.

"At my school there are almost 3,000 students, it is hard to send text messages to parents of all of them regarding payment of fees," Kakene said noting in the past year, efficiency and accuracy have improved at the school.

US company plans \$11bn railway from Zambia to Mozambique

LUSAKA

Florida-based rail developer Railnet International is aiming to arrange an \$11bn investment in a medium-speed rail line between Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, its chief executive said on Sunday.

Donald Kress said in an interview with Reuters that the company was in talks with governments in the three countries and had, on 21 March, signed an agreement to start feasibility studies in Zambia. "We have a group known as Magcor International and their chief executive has arranged financing through a group of investors," he said.

He added: "Until we have signed a contract with the investors, they have requested to remain anonymous." The idea is to build a link between Zambia's Copperbelt province to the port of Beira in Mozambique via Harare in Zimbabwe.

Feasibility studies are expected to begin in the next six weeks and would be followed by detailed engineering design for the project on the Zambian side. Railnet expects to begin construction in January 2021.

If built, the line would allow freight trains to travel at 120 km/h and passenger trains at 160 km/h. Misheck Lungu, Zambia's permanent secretary for transport, said Railnet would build its line parallel to the existing one.

Railnet, which was set up by a group of rail professionals to develop, design, build and operate rail systems, is also planning an 18,000km railway network that would link the West African nations of Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Côte D'Ivoire, Liberia, and Nigeria.

It said this ambitious rail system would boost countries' economies, increase regional trade and improve the countries' access to world markets. The proposed rail system would be aimed at freight transport, and would connect mining, agriculture and manufacturing areas, which Railnet says will boost trade-based industrialisation that "will have an effect on the region of 300 million that has never before been possible."

In addition to upgraded and newly constructed railways, Railnet also intends to develop complementary infrastructure along rail routes, including communications, power, and water. The West African scheme is one of a number that the company has planned for Africa. Its other projects include:

The G Rail system for Ghana: This will be a combined passenger and freight service linking mining and agricultural areas. The system would cover over 2,000km route miles with over 4,000km of track.

The Dakar-to-Bamako project envisages the upgrading of a 1,228km railway to standard gauge between Senegal and Mali, and is aimed at facilitating the export of Mali's estimated 2 billion tonnes of bauxite; and Upgrading some 5,000km of rail in the Democratic Republic of Congo from narrow to standard gauge.

New software to solve property management

NAIROBI

A local software firm has launched a solution that will ease the process of property management.

Verus Global Systems, says the software, Electronic Property Management Systems (EPMAS), will meet most of the needs of the real estate market. The Web-based solution offers variety of features such as property accounting, tenant and supplier management, lease tracking, bank reconciliation, maintenance schedules and vendor management.

Speaking during the launch, Verus Global System Chairman Ken Wathome told the real estate industry stakeholders that the system will support property managers, enabling them to take control of every aspect of their business, including rent, vacancy, maintenance cycles, finances and accounting.

"The property market in Kenya needs a tool that allows maximum functionalities, so more time can be spent on work that matters such as building and managing well designed functional properties that meet the needs of the market," Mr Wathome said. "This tool would enable entrepreneurs who lack time or expertise to maintain the properties and deal with tenants."

The solution is also capable of generating monthly statements and exporting the rent records to integrated applications like QuickBooks and Excel. The solutions aim at streamlining processes in the real estate and property management sector in the country, said Verus Global System managing director Faith Kiithu.

"The Kenyan property market has grown tremendously over the years. However, the industry has been lagging behind in adopting technology. Our solution will let users access business metrics, track maintenance, and communicate with renters, owners and vendors," Ms Kiithu said.

Beluluane Industrial Park secures 14 new investments in last five years



Beluluane Industrial Park in Mozambique.

MAPUTO

With a total of US\$3 billion in investments and around 40 associated companies, Beluluane Industrial Park has been a shining example of how industrial free zones can benefit SMEs and the economy generally.

At a time when discussions on how to revitalise Mozambique's manufacturing industry are accelerating, Semanário Económico has been looking at successful examples, including Beluluane Industrial Park.

A public-private initiative between the Mozambican state represented by APIEX, with 40% of the shares, and the private sector represented by Chiefton, with 60% of the shares and comprising Mozambican and Swiss investors, Beluluane Industrial Park, created in the 2000s, housing light industries such as clothing, manufacturing, including automobile and general engineering, and aluminium processing industries.

Beluluane Industrial Park has re-

corded investments of around US\$3 billion, and over 40 companies participating, generating more than 5,000 jobs. "In the last five years, we have had about 14 new investors, of whom about 10 have already established themselves and are operating, with the remaining five in the project approval phase," general manager Onório Manuel reports.

Manuel explains that most of the companies in the park are linked to the metal processing industry. "Some provide services to Mozal; some of them are owned by Mozambicans and others by South Africans. Another sector is construction material," he says. "But we've also got a company that manufactures artificial hair, and another that recycles metals."

The government's commitment to the industrial zone was demonstrated by it making the Beluluane Free Zone a favoured location with the Southern African region for industrial and export-oriented activities. Enterprises operating there

benefit from significant exemptions in customs and tax duties, with the emphasis on the IRPC [Corporate Income Tax].

"The burden of IRPC in Mozambique is 32%. Companies operating under an industrial free zone regime enjoy exemption in the first 10 years, during which there is no IRPC to pay. From the 11th to the 15th year of activity, there is a 50% exemption, that is, instead of paying 32%, they pay 16%. And from the 15th year of activity to the remaining life of the project, there is a 25% reduction, that is, companies only pay 75% of the 32% IRPC tax rate, meaning that they pay 24%," Manuel explains.

Manuel stresses that the companies in Beluluane Industrial Park make the best use of an industrial umbrella that ranges from access to energy and water, good roads and modern information technologies.

This, combined with the Park's strategic location, means exporters enjoy a considerable advantage when competing in world markets.

"Investors compare all these factors when they are thinking about whether to settle in Mozambique or in another SADC country," Manuel points out.

The 2020-2030 Beluluane Development Master Plan foresees approximately US\$100 million being used to create infrastructure in the more-than 500 hectares of the area yet to be developed. Another important step is connected to the roll-out of the Park concept to other parts of the country, including Cabo Delgado, on account of its emerging oil and gas industry.

"We are attentive to these opportunities, and seeing if there may be industries willing to settle here that could leverage the complementary down-stream areas in the oil and gas industry," Onório Manuel concludes. Natural gas from the Rovuma basin is behind a 2,000 MW energy generation project already approved for the Beluluane Industrial Park.

CONSTRUCTION

HONG KONG SHOP GETS SOLD FOR OVER HALF OFF AS VIRUS HITS RETAIL

HONG KONG

Shoppers have disappeared from the streets of Hong Kong, and with retail sales dropping, some store owners in Asia's most expensive city have resorted to selling the shop.

A store along Nathan Road in Mongkok – normally one of Hong Kong's busiest shopping districts – was sold at a 54 per cent discount recently, according to government records, while another store in the city's priciest retail area was sold via public tender on Wednesday.

The fire sale of Hong Kong shops comes as one property consultant predicts that retail sales in the city will continue to fall off a cliff as the COVID-19 crisis follows months of protests in the city.

In Mongkok, a property owner registered as Marces Lee Tze Bun, who shares the same name as the founder of footwear and accessories retailer Le Saunda, sold a 5,314 square foot (494 square metre) unit in the Le Diamant building for HK\$52 million, after buying the property for H\$95 million in August 2013, according to Land Registry records.

The sale of the two-floor unit, which took place at a price per square foot of just HK\$9,785, represents a 54 per cent discount off of the purchase price, and notched the worst loss this year for a seller in the 20-storey Ginza-style commercial building.

Lee sold the fourth and fifth floor unit in the building at 703-705 Nathan Road to the Pun U District Association Of Hong Kong, according to government records. That sale in Mongkok took place just over 2 kilometres (1.24 miles) up Nathan Road from where, earlier this year, a Shenzhen developer had sold a shop in Tsim Sha Tsui at a 41 per cent mark-down.

The discounted Nathan Road deals may be a sign of Hong Kong's retail future as one international property agency predicts more hard times in the city. "We expect retail sales value in the coming months to continue to fall to a cliff," Knight Frank said in a report released this week.

The property consultancy added that, "with vacancy rates of street shops keep rising, shop rentals are expected to shrink further, which could be faster than the drop in retail sales." The overseas firm said that it expects the COVID-19 pandemic to have a long-term impact on Hong Kong's retail scene, which will require a lengthy recovery.

Knight Frank made its prediction after Hong Kong retail sales plummeted 21.4 per cent in value during January, compared to the same month a year earlier, according to the government's latest figures.

Causeway Bay property sold via tender. In another sign of pressure on Hong Kong landlords, a three-storey building near one of the city's poshest shopping



Le Diamant is located on what is normally one of Hong Kong's busiest shopping streets.

centres was sold via tender. Isle Noble Investments Ltd, an overseas registered firm described in a report in the Hong Kong Economic Times as representing an investment consortium, paid HK\$280 million to purchase the retail property at 6 Sharp Street East. The seller of the property, which is just two minutes' walk from Times Square, was a private

investor named Susie Lam Mo Chu, with the sale taking place through a private tender managed by CBRE.

The US-based brokerage had kicked off the tender for the 3,000 square foot property in January, with the sale of the property, which is said to be currently tenanted, taking place at a rate per square foot of just over HK\$93,333.

In November of last year US-based property consultancy Cushman & Wakefield had ranked Causeway Bay as the most expensive shopping street globally, with average retail rents in the district three stops east of Central standing at \$2,745 per square foot per year.

Since the research was conducted for that survey during the first

half of 2019, however, Hong Kong has been rocked by months of protest followed by a novel coronavirus that has shutdown visitors and kept local shoppers at home. Earlier this month, local real estate brokerage Midland IC&I predicted that retail rents could fall by as much as 40 per cent this year, according to a report in the South China Morning Post.

Saudi contract awards rise 95% in 2019 to 197bn riyals

RIYADH

Contract awards in Saudi Arabia hit their highest level in four years in 2019 as the sector's contribution to overall gross domestic product rebounded into positive territory for the first time in three years, according to a report by the US-Saudi Business Council.

In total, contracts worth 197.1 billion Saudi riyals were awarded last year, a 95 per cent year-on-year increase and the highest amount since 2015, when 253bn riyals of contracts were awarded. "The kingdom's drive to enhance both physical and social infrastructure capabilities through numerous Vision Realisation Programmes was evident this past year," the report said.

Contract awards in the oil and gas sector increased almost six-fold to 84.2bn riyals, up from 14.2bn riyals in 2018 – 43 per cent of the total and the most of any sector. Real estate contract awards increased by 39 per cent to

32.5bn riyals and water sector awards were up 55 per cent to 21.9bn riyals. The construction industry's contribution to GDP also increased to 4.6 per cent, supported by more private sector work.

Looking ahead, the construction sector is set to benefit from more contracts emerging from mega-projects. The Red Sea Development Company recently said it would more than double the amount of contracts it awards this year to 6.2bn riyals, while the Qiddiya Investment Company said it will increase the pace of activity to make sure it meets its 2023 opening date. The kingdom's new "entertainment capital" featuring theme parks, sports and cultural attractions, is expected to spend 8.5bn riyals on infrastructure alone.

However, the pace of contracts this year will probably be slow due to the lower oil price and the Covid-19 outbreak, according to the US-Saudi Business Council's econo-



Work in progress at a construction site in Riyadh

mist and the report's author, Albara'a Alwazir. "While the construction sector rebounded strongly in 2019, we expect to see a drop in economic growth for 2020," Mr Alwazir told The National.

"Given the impact Covid-19 and the drop in oil prices are having on global markets we

expect a downturn in Saudi Arabia's economic activities at least for the first half of 2020." Lower oil revenues usually precede cuts to government spending on construction projects, but he said that some of the slack could be taken up by the growing role of the kingdom's private

sector. "In 2019, we witnessed the highest private sector participation on record. This development is expected to continue as the government provides the private sector with numerous opportunities to positively contribute to the growth of the economy," Mr Alwazir said.

The two biggest awards of the year were both by Saudi Aramco, each with a value of \$11.25bn. The biggest non-energy sector contract was a 6.2bn riyal contract awarded to Nesma & Partners by Shomoul Holding to build The Avenues, Riyadh shopping mall.

Asian Infrastructure Bank plans health infrastructure to combat coronavirus

HONG KONG

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is aiming to bolster infrastructure investment in countries less able to cope with the Covid-19 outbreak, with funds targeted at areas that improve public health, healthcare and information and communications technology.

The AIIB says that low income countries are vulnerable due to the impact of infrastructure debt together with the coronavirus and economic downturn that is expected to accompany it. This will lead to many nations to struggle to find the investment needed to stimulate economic growth, which can be as high as 10% of GDP. Jin Liqun, the AIIB's president, said: "It is our duty to be flexible and responsive in a time of crisis so our members can continue investing in sanitation, healthcare and technology-enabled infrastructure."

"We will work with our board of directors, members and partners to adjust to this new reality, providing scaled up and targeted investment in critical sustainable infrastructure to protect the people we serve and the generations that follow." AIIB's research has pointed to a correlation between health security and infrastructure quality.

Abu Dhabi Ports to develop liquid bulk storage at Khalifa Port

ABU DHABI

Abu Dhabi Ports signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia-based Arabian Chemical Terminals to develop a greenfield commercial bulk liquids storage terminal at Khalifa Port.

The storage terminal will be the first to handle liquid products and gas at the deepwater port. "The project will benefit existing customers and attract new customers in the region seeking liquid bulk storage," the company said in a statement.

The project will be located

between Abu Dhabi and the emirate's western region of Ruwais and will allow "multi-modal connectivity with access to the sea" as well as to the UAE's road infrastructure and planned GCC railways network, said Rakan Alireza, managing director of Arabian Chemical Terminals.

The bulk liquid terminal will be developed on a 50,000 square metre plot of land adjacent to a 16 metre deepwater quay access. The development will have the option to use an additional

150,000 square metres of land.

The project will be completed in two phases, with the first stage - comprising 44 storage tanks set for completion in the second half of 2022. The storage tanks will have capacities of 1,250 and 3,000 tonnes each.

The second phase of expansion at the terminal will comprise a larger number of industrial storage tanks and spheres, Abu Dhabi Ports said. The facilities will handle a number of liquid bulk products and would offer customers the opportunity to reduce the costs

of outsourcing their liquid and gas expenditure, the company added.

"Providing technology-rich, end-to-end logistics solutions for customers of all sizes and industries is at the core of Abu Dhabi Ports' diversification strategy," said Abu Dhabi Ports chief executive Captain Mohamed Juma Al Shamisi. Abu Dhabi Ports last month announced plans to develop a Dh100 million cruise jetty at the Sir Bani Yas cruise beach to add more capacity to handle cruise passengers.



A heavy duty container handling crane at Khalifa Port in UAE.

WORLD

World food security at risk with export curbs, spike in import

SINGAPORE

GLOBAL food security concerns are mounting with around a fifth of the world's population already under lockdown to fight the widening coronavirus pandemic that has infected over 470,000 people across 200 countries, killing 21,000.

Panic buying of household staples like toilet paper and cleaning products have occurred in nearly every country hit by the virus, and empty shelves in supermarkets have been common.

Compounding the anxiety stemming from erratic consumer buying has been concern that some governments may move to restrict the flow of food staples to ensure their own populations have enough while supply chains get disrupted by the pandemic.

"People are starting to get worried,"

said Phin Ziebell, agribusiness economist at National Australia Bank.

"If major exporters start keeping grains at home, it will have the buyers really worried. It is panicking and not rational, as fundamentally the world is well supplied with food."

Vietnam, the third largest rice exporter, and Kazakhstan, the number nine wheat exporter, have already made moves to restrict sales of those staples amid concerns over domestic availability.

India, the top global rice exporter, has just entered a three-week lockdown that has brought several logistics channels to a halt.

On the importer side, Iraq announced it needs 1 million tonnes of wheat and 250,000 tonnes of rice after a "crisis committee" advised building up strategic food stocks.

Together, these moves have raised



Shoppers walk near empty shelves as they look for supplies at a Publix Supermarket, March 17, 2020, in Miami Shores, Fla. (PHOTO / AP)

concerns among agriculture traders about unnecessary food supply distortions.

NO SHORTAGE

Combined global production of rice and wheat - the most widely-traded food crops - is projected to be a record 1.26 billion tonnes this year, according to United States Department of Agriculture data.

That output tonnage should easily surpass total combined consumption of those crops, and should lead to a build in year-end inventories to a record 469.4 million tonnes, USDA data shows.

However, those projections assume normal crop flows from where they're produced to where they're consumed, as well as the usual availability of substitutes. Prices for rice are already rising due to expectations of a further squeeze on exports.

"It is a logistics issue. Vietnam has stopped exports, India is in a lockdown and Thailand could declare similar measures," said a senior Singapore-based trader at one of the world's top rice traders.

Benchmark rice prices in Thailand R1THBKN5-

P1 have climbed to the highest since August 2013 at US\$492.5 a ton.

The market had topped US\$1,000 a ton during the food crisis of 2008, when export restrictions and panic buying buoyed prices.

"We are unlikely to see a repeat of 2008," the Singapore rice trader said. "One thing is that the world has enough supplies, especially in India where inventories are very large."

Global rice stocks are estimated to surpass 180 million tonnes for the first time this year, up 28% since the 2015-16 season.

But those inventories are not distributed evenly. Big rice buyers such as the Philippines, the top importer, and others in Asia and Africa could be vulnerable if crop movements are curtailed for long.

"Our rice inventory is good for 65 days. We have enough rice for the next two months," said the Philippines Agriculture Secretary William Dar.

With additional supply coming from the dry season harvest, Dar told reporters the Philippines has enough rice for the next four months. **Agencies**

Experts explain why COVID-19 appears more fatal in men than women

WASHINGTON

EXISTING data show the novel coronavirus has caused higher mortality in men than women. Besides general poor health and habits like smoking and drinking for men that may cause damage to lungs, leading experts told Xinhua hormonal influences on the immune response may also play a key role in this phenomenon.

While addressing a White House daily briefing, Dr. Deborah Birx (pictured), White House COVID-19 task force director, said a report from Italy shows that men in nearly every age bracket were dying at higher rates than women.

She called it a "concerning trend." According to Italian health authorities, men accounted for 58 percent of all 13,882 COVID-19 cases in Italy between Feb. 21 and Mar. 12, and 72 percent of the 803 deaths. Hospitalized men with COVID-19 were 75 percent more likely to die than were hospitalized women.

Data from other countries also showed more men are dying of



COVID-19 than women.

A report of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention suggested that the mortality among men with confirmed coronavirus infections was roughly 65 percent higher than it was among women.

Unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking alcohol occur in more men than women, which may damage lungs and prime for inflammation when battling an infection, experts said.

Men tend to have more underlying health conditions such as hy-

pertension, cardiovascular disease and chronic lung disease, according to Global Health 50/50, a research institute examining gender inequality in global health.

"While other factors, that may promote severe infection such as history of smoking and heart disease, also differ between men and women, the immune system is known to function differently between the sexes," said Susan Kovats, an immunologist and microbiologist at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, in an interview

with Xinhua.

Gender differences in the incidence and severity of respiratory virus infection are well documented in humans and mouse models and correlate with differences in immune cell activity, she said.

Immune cells are capable of responding to estrogen and testosterone, suggesting the disparate levels of these hormones in men and women may play a role in their differential immune responses, Kovats explained.

In response to some viruses, compared to male cells, female cells produce higher levels of proteins termed "interferons" that are a crucial part of the early innate immune response. Interferons trigger a cascade of proteins that are directly anti-viral and act to attenuate viral spread, according to Kovats.

"Indeed, evidence shows that production of interferons is promoted by estrogens.

During a respiratory virus infection, a greater capacity for interferon production may help to reduce viral spread and lung damage in

females," she said.

Dr. Stanley Perlman, professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Iowa, has studied infected male and female mice with the coronaviruses that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

He found male mice were more susceptible to infection than females at every age. "Our experiments in mice suggest that this is in part hormonal.

If we removed estrogen from mice, they were now as sensitive as males to SARS-CoV," Perlman told Xinhua.

The immune response between males and females could be hormonally-related, but remain poorly understood, Kent Pinkerton, professor of the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine, told Xinhua.

If scientists can uncover how that works, they could identify better strategies for fighting coronavirus infections in general, experts said.

Xinhua

World Bank, IMF call on G20 to offer debt relief for poorest countries

WASHINGTON

THE World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Wednesday jointly called on the Group of Twenty (G20) to offer debt relief for the poorest countries in order to help them tackle challenges posed by COVID-19.

The coronavirus outbreak is "likely to have severe economic and social consequences" for the poorest countries, which draw on the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), the two multilateral lenders said in a statement, issued to the G20.

"With immediate effect -- and consistent with national laws of the creditor countries -- the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund call on all official bilateral creditors to suspend debt payments from IDA countries that request forbearance," the statement read.

"This will help with IDA countries' immediate liquidity needs to tackle challenges posed by the coronavirus outbreak and allow time for an assessment of the crisis impact and financing needs for each country," the statement read.

Created in 1999, the G20 is a central forum for international

cooperation on financial and economic issues. It comprises 19 countries plus the European Union.

The countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and the United States.

The two multilateral lenders also invited G20 leaders to task the WBG and the IMF to make these assessments, including identifying the countries with unsustainable debt situations, and to prepare a proposal for comprehensive action by official

bilateral creditors to address both the financing and debt relief needs of IDA countries.

They said they will seek endorsement for the proposal at the Development Committee, the joint ministerial committee of the boards of governors of the World Bank and the IMF, during the Spring Meetings, scheduled for April 16-17.

The WBG and the IMF believe "it is imperative" at this moment to provide a global sense of relief for developing countries as well as a strong signal to financial markets, the statement read, adding that the international community would welcome G20

support for this call to action.

On a G20 finance ministers and central bank governors' conference call Monday, World Bank Group President David Malpass said the COVID-19 pandemic will likely hit the poorest countries the hardest, urging stepped-up international support for these countries.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told the conference call that "we are particularly concerned about low-income countries in debt distress -- an issue on which we are working closely with the World Bank."

Xinhua

CHINA, Japan and South Korea have well explained their profound friendship that enables them to work together to get through difficult times as they are making all-out efforts to combat the sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus with multiple measures to mitigate the negative impacts on the economy, said Cao Jing, Deputy Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS).

She made the remarks during a recent interview with People's Daily. "Their collaboration to combat the epidemic will inject new impetus to deepening their cooperation," Cao said.

Cao told People's Daily that the virus respects no borders, but neighboring countries care about each other. The heads of state and foreign ministers of the three countries have exchanged views on and pointed direction for en-

China, Japan, ROK join hands to combat coronavirus

hancing cooperation to fight the epidemic through phone calls, visits and meetings.

Japan and South Korea have lent a helping hand to China in the fight against the epidemic. Despite its own short supplies of emergency materials, China has offered nucleic acid test reagents and masks for Japan and South Korea, Cao introduced. "Though oceans apart, we're under the same moon" - the line that recently went viral is a highlight of the cooperation among the three countries, she said.

Cao believes that the cooperation and assistance in disasters are the sincerest. By offering timely assistance and extending the caring, the people of the three

countries have released a strong signal to join hands to defeat the virus, protect their health, and promote regional health security, she said.

She holds that global countries are a community with a shared future in the era of globalization where they co-exist and co-develop, adding that the viruses are a public enemy of the entire human race, and no one is able to resist them alone.

"We firmly believe that the epidemic is controllable and curable, and only by cooperation and mutual assistance can we finally defeat it," she said.

"This year marks the beginning of the third decade of China-Japan-ROK cooperation, and the three countries are

implementing the consensus reached at the China-Japan-ROK leaders' meeting last year, injecting more impetus to their cooperation," Cao told People's Daily.

She said the tri-lateral cooperation is not only promoting the development of the three countries and driving East Asian collaboration, but also making huge contribution to global development and prosperity.

Though the epidemic would to different extents exert impacts on the economic development, personnel exchange and cooperation models of the three countries, they are only temporary, limited and remedial, Cao said.

"The three countries see highly integrated interests and close connec-

tion among their supply and industrial chains. It is believed that their cooperation potential will embrace an accelerated release after the epidemic, which will further expand cooperation space," Cao said.

Cao introduced that China, Japan and South Korea shall deepen cooperation in three aspects. First, they should enhance health cooperation, including sharing information, conducting joint prevention and control, exchanging experiences, and strengthening epidemic prevention and quarantine at ports to jointly combat the virus and safeguard regional health security.

In addition, relying on the powerful scientific strength of the three coun-

China actively shares COVID-19 control experience, technologies with international community

BEIJING

CHINA has actively carried out international cooperation on fighting the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), sharing epidemic prevention and control experience and technologies with the world, a health official said Thursday.

The latest diagnosis and treatment plan, prevention and control plan and other technical documents have been compiled by the National Health Commission (NHC) and promptly shared with over 180 countries and more than 10 international and regional organizations, said Zeng Yixin, deputy director of the NHC, at a press conference in Beijing.

He said that a meeting to share China's epidemic prevention and control experience was jointly held by the NHC and the WHO, which was attended by representatives from 77 countries and seven international cooperations and was watched by over 100,000 people online.

China has also established an online knowledge center in the field of epidemic control and clinical treatment, as well as an expert database for international cooperation, Zeng said, adding that nearly 30 technical exchange meetings have been held with more than 100 countries and regions by video links.

"The video meetings can respond to the needs of foreign parties in a timely manner, as well as facilitate the accurate utilization of epidemic prevention and control technologies at home and abroad," Zeng said.

Xinhua



A Chinese team of health experts sent to provide assistance to contain the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq pose for a group photo outside the new PCR laboratory in Baghdad, Iraq, on Wednesday. (Xinhua)

Victims of hate swamp LA center with complaints

A NEW center for Asian Americans to report offensive behavior, including assaults, related to the novel coronavirus outbreak has received more than 500 submissions within four days, offering a glimpse into the extent of racism and bigotry affecting the community.

"We now have over 500 incident reports. They have been provided in English, simplified and traditional Chinese, Thai, Japanese and Korean. Just today, we added Vietnamese," said Manjusha Kulkarni, executive director of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, or A3PCON.

The Los Angeles-based community group and the San Francisco-based advocacy organization Chinese for Affirmative Action opened the reporting center yesterday to allow Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to report incidents of hate, which have been surging as the COVID-19 pandemic spreads.

Half of the cases are from outside California, ranging from shunning to verbal harassment, according to Kulkarni.

"Some of the more shocking ones are where somebody is throwing a bottle at someone. It looks like just in the last few hours we've gotten a case where somebody in New York was punched by another individual, so actually physically beaten," she said.

The cases will be used for assistance, advocacy and education purposes, she said.

Some US officials and lawmakers have repeatedly used the term "Chinese virus" or "Wuhan virus", even though the World Health Organization has a naming rule that prohibits linking a virus to a particular geographic location or group of people to avoid stigma.

As the terminology can falsely associate Asian Americans with the disease, Kulkarni said the labeling is putting people in harm's way.

While trying to stay safe and healthy, as other US citizens are doing, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are facing increasing anxieties and fears whenever they leave their homes to go to the grocery store, the pharmacy or even just to get outside for a walk, she said.

"This is a time that we need to come together to help each other out," Kulkarni said.

David Bernstein, president and CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, also opposed the use of what he called "this unfortunate term".

Xinhua

tries, they should steadfastly promote scientific innovation and cooperation on modern services to foster new growth points and have the trilateral cooperation always in the leading position in East Asian cooperation.

Besides, they should also accelerate the Japan-China-ROK Free Trade Agreement negotiations to lower trade and investment barriers, promote economic and trade cooperation, and realize stable economic growth of the three countries and the region.

"It is believed that after the epidemic, the three countries will regain their vitality; the friendship and mutual trust among the three peoples will be further enhanced; and their trilateral cooperation will be injected with new connotation and be brought onto a new level," Cao said. **People's Daily**

After Senate vote, massive US coronavirus bill moves to the House

WASHINGTON

THE U.S. Senate's unanimous passage of a \$2 trillion coronavirus relief bill sent the unprecedented economic legislation to the House of Representatives, whose Democratic leaders hope to pass it today.

The Republican-led Senate approved the massive bill - which would be the largest fiscal stimulus measure ever passed by Congress - by 96 votes to none late on Wednesday, overcoming bitter partisan negotiations and boosting its chances of passing the Democratic-majority House.

The unanimous vote, a rare departure from bitter partisanship in Washington, underscored how seriously members of Congress are taking the global pandemic as Americans suffer and the medical system reels.

"When there's a crisis of this magnitude, the private sector cannot solve it," said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer.

"Individuals even with bravery and valor are not powerful enough to beat it back. Government is the only force large enough to staunch the bleeding and begin the healing."

The package is intended to flood the country with cash in a bid to stem the crushing impact on the economy of an intensifying epidemic that has killed more than 900 people in the United States and infected at least 60,000.

It follows two others that became law this month. The money at stake amounts to nearly half of the total \$4.7 trillion the U.S. government spends annually.

Republican President Donald Trump, who has promised to sign the bill as soon as it passes the House, expressed his delight on Twitter. "96-0 in the United States Senate. Congratulations AMERICA!" he wrote.

Only two other nations, China and Italy, have more coronavirus cases than the United States. The World Health Organization has warned the



United States looks set to become the epicenter of the pandemic.

The House's Democratic leaders announced that they would have a voice vote on Friday. Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she backed the bill, and was open to passing more

legislation if needed to address the crisis in future.

The House Republican leadership is recommending a "yes" vote.

The massive bill, worth more than \$2 trillion, includes a \$500 billion fund to help hard-hit industries and a comparable amount for direct payments of up to \$3,000 apiece to millions of families.

The legislation will also provide \$350 billion for small-business loans, \$250 billion for expanded unemployment aid and at least \$100 billion for hospitals and related health systems.

There had been some debate about whether all 430 House members, most of whom have been out of Washington since March 14, would have to return to consider the bill.

That would have been difficult, given that at least two have tested positive for coronavirus, a handful of others are in self-quarantine and several states have issued stay-at-home orders.

There are five vacant House seats.

WHO urges countries to use 'a second window of opportunity' to stop COVID-19 transmission

GENEVA

CALLING it "a second window of opportunity", the chief of the World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday urged countries to use this critical window now to suppress and stop transmission of COVID-19.

This window of opportunity was created by those countries and regions which introduced unprecedented "lockdown" measures to contain COVID-19 pandemic, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noted at a daily briefing, reminding that these measures will not extinguish epidemics on their own.

Tedros recommended six key actions to enable the more precise and targeted measures.

Specifically, Tedros called on countries to expand, train and deploy health care and public health workforce, implement a system to find every suspected case at community level, and ramp up the production, capacity and availability of testing.

He also suggested identifying, adapting and equipping facilities for treating and isolating patients, developing a clear plan and process to quarantine contacts, as well as re-focusing the whole of government on suppressing and controlling COVID-19.

"These measures are the best way to suppress and stop transmission, so that when restrictions are lifted, the virus doesn't resurge," said Tedros.

Putin's visit to COVID-19 hospital in Moscow wasn't staged, Kremlin says

MOSCOW

THE visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to the medical facility for COVID-19 patients in Moscow's Kommunarka was not staged, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters yesterday when asked to comment on the rumors on social networks.

"99% of what you see on social networks right now is probably nonsense," he said. "The chief physician [of the hospital in Kommunarka Denis Protsenko] did not even know that Putin would visit. He saw Putin when he went out to meet [the delegation], he did not know that the president is coming there," Peskov said. "So it was not staged at

all."

On Tuesday, Putin visited the hospital in Kommunarka, inspecting the hospital for COVID-19 patients. He was given a tour of the hospital by the facility's chief physician Denis Protsenko.

Yesterday, Moscow officials informed that the total number of those infected with COVID-19 in the



Russian capital had reached 546, rising by 136 in the past 24 hours. Russia has identified 840 cases of the virus, two people have died, 38 have recovered.

In late December 2019, Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organization (WHO) about the outbreak of a previously unknown pneumonia in the city of

Wuhan, central China. Since then, cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have been reported in more than 150 countries, including Russia.

On March 11, WHO declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a global pandemic. As of now, over 450,000 people have been infected around the world and more than 21,000 have died.

Another 8 provinces, municipality in China shake off poverty

ANOTHER 8 provinces and municipality in China have lifted all of their impoverished counties out of poverty by the end of February this year, following Tibet Autonomous Region that removed its last impoverished areas from the poverty list last December, according to statistics released by the Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development under China's State Council.

The 8 provinces and municipality include Hebei, Shanxi, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hunan, Hainan, Chongqing and Shaanxi.

Among the impoverished counties applying to quit the poverty list in 2019, 165 from Hebei, Shanxi, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hunan, Hainan, Chongqing, Sichuan, Tibet Autonomous Region, Shaanxi and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have passed assessments and officially bid farewell to poverty by February.

For counties in central China to move off the poverty list, they must keep their incidence of poverty below 2 percent, and those in the western region must make it less than 3 percent.

After eradicating poverty in 53 impoverished counties, Henan province has lowered its poverty incidence from 8.79 percent in 2013 to 0.41 percent at present. A total of more than 6.51 million impoverished rural residents, as well as 9,484 impoverished counties in the province have shaken off the "poor" label.

In today's Shanxi province, regional poverty is generally eliminated as 58 impoverished counties and districts have shaken off



Villagers and impoverished people from Dongchang village who work for a nearby vineyard fix grape vine.

poverty after years of arduous efforts.

It is hard to imagine that 6 years ago, the province was home to 7,993 registered impoverished villages and an impoverished population of 3.29 million with a poverty incidence of 13.6 percent.

China must work even harder to ensure the final victory over poverty this year, given the impact from the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

A news conference held by south China's Hainan province on Feb. 29 announced that the city of Wuzhishan, Lingao county and Baisha Li Autonomous County in the province have been lifted out of poverty.

Meanwhile, the three places were also requested to actively respond to the risks and chal-

lenges of the COVID-19 and take effective measures to prevent the reoccurrence of poverty, so as to ensure solid outcomes of poverty alleviation.

At a video conference held on Feb. 26, Heilongjiang also called for stronger alert for risks and potential crisis to overcome the impacts from the epidemic and prevent reoccurrence of poverty caused by the epidemic or any other factors.

The State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development stressed that despite eradication of poverty in these counties, the country still needs to carry on high-standard and ceaseless poverty alleviation efforts for the remaining impoverished groups.

Hebei, Shanxi, Hainan and other provinces all requested

that relevant authorities continue rendering support, as well as strictly follow Chinese President Xi Jinping's instruction that Party and government leadership should remain stable with officials aware that they still bear responsibility, major poverty alleviation policies should remain in force so that they are followed through with, poverty alleviation teams should remain in place so that they continue to provide assistance, and oversight should be prioritized to prevent people from slipping back into poverty.

"At present, Henan still has 350,000 impoverished people and 52 impoverished villages. We will by no means slacken our efforts until our mission is accomplished," said an official with the Poverty Alleviation and Development Office of Henan province. **People's Daily**

Wuhan coronavirus - India's response

NEW DELHI

FIRSTLY, despite sharing a border of 3,488 kilometers with China, India has only reported 78 cases and 1 death - compare that with 596 cases and 8 deaths in the UK.

India is the only country in the world to evacuate its citizens 6 times (and counting) and evacuated the most number of foreign nationals.

The Indian Air Force evacuated a total of 723 Indians, 37 foreign nationals from Wuhan. India evacuated 119 Indians and 5 foreign nationals from Japan.

India is leading the fight against COVID-19 in the South Asian region, offering diplomatic, humanitarian and medical assistance to its neighbors.

A total of 56 Virus Research Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) has been set up in India to test its citizens as well as foreign citizens in a record time, with a plan to build 56 more VRDLs in the next month. This insane level of efficiency hasn't caught the eye of the media.

India currently has one of the world's most efficient and reliable testing systems, reducing the time taken to get test results back from 12-14 hours to four hours. US health officials have admitted that their system is failing and has testing been very sluggish as a result, from Iran, Afghanistan up to Timor Leste, countries in Asia have been requesting India to help set up testing facilities in their countries.

India has sent 6 top scientists to set up a makeshift lab and testing facility in Iran to test 6000



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

of its citizens because Iranian officials refused to test Indians due to their high load. India plans to send 3 more airplanes in the next week to airlift its citizens.

India has provided 15 tonnes of medical assistance comprising masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment to China.

India has sent Maldives a 14 member medical team comprising of pulmonologists, anesthesiologists, physicians & lab technicians and also a large composite of COVID-19 medical relief to assist Maldives health authorities.

India has screened 1,057,506 people from 30 airports and 77 seaports.

India has suspended all visas to India as well as visa-free travel facility for OCI cardholders. It has closed its border with Myanmar. The Indian nationals coming from COVID-19 hit nations after 15 February will be quarantined for 14 days. This in contrast with the UK with far more cases, but no quick action whatsoever.

India has the world's biggest

state-sponsored health assurance scheme, covering over 500 million beneficiaries (approximately 8 times the size of the UK).

Indian drug prices are among the cheapest in the world. Med-belle ranks India as one of the five countries with the lowest median prices for drugs around the world due to an elaborate price control mechanism for drugs and the government's Jan Aushadi project to provide cheap affordable medicines to the poor.

China has silenced the doctor who identified COVID-19 and he died 6 weeks later. China let this brew. On the other hand, when Nipah virus was found in India in 2018, 3 doctors identified it and authorities immediately reported it to the WHO. 2000 quarantined and 17 died in total.

India would have NEVER allowed it to become a pandemic.

The Indian civilization, being one of the most advanced in the world, has been way ahead of its time with gifting the world the Namaste - which is now propagated by every world leader. Ancient India idealised vegetarianism and expounded Ayurveda, and as a result, did not come in contact with any serious threat from plagues/ diseases in its millenniums of existence. India NEVER created any pandemic in the history of its existence.

Though India is known for its chaotic system, it works very well and quickly during emergency situations like this and natural calamity. In contrast, those countries having a strong system respond to calamities in a slow way thus affecting their people.

Agencies

Innovative technologies contribute to China's intelligent epidemic prevention

SCIENTIFIC innovation is lending a powerful hand to China's epidemic prevention and control efforts when the country is making everything it can to defeat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

In recent days, a color-coded QR system has been launched in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province which gives citizens colored QR codes indicating their health conditions. A green code shows the user is not infected and can move around the city freely, while those with yellow and red ones are requested to be quarantined.

The codes are generated through big data analysis after users submit applications on their mobile phones. Now in Hangzhou, the code is an essen-

tial for citizens to board subway trains, go to supermarkets and enter office buildings.

The system was firstly introduced by Hangzhou's Yuhang district on Feb. 9, and promoted citywide two days later. On Feb. 16, the E-government office of the General Office of the State Council started guiding the development of a unified national health code system, and the codes were applied in all 11 cities with subordinate districts in Hangzhou the next day, and soon promoted in other provinces including Sichuan and Hainan.

A total of 8.62 million health codes had been distributed in Hangzhou as of 9:00 a.m., Feb. 18, and over 15 million citizens in Zhejiang Province have applied



A citizen shows his QR health code in Beigan community, Xiaoshan district of Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, Feb. 13. Photo by People's Daily

for the codes in just a very short period of time.

The digital solution is designed to replace the original "paper pass" - various kinds of forms that citizens had to fill before entering residential com-

plexes and other congregated places amid the epidemic. It saves considerable human and material resources, and helps lower the social cost in fighting the epidemic. Besides, the codes refresh regularly according to

dynamic data, which enables administrators of cities to get the whole picture of the epidemic situation and thus improving targeted management and precise control.

Technologies are applied to not only prevent and control the epidemic, but also save the patients.

Diagnosis systems aided by medical images have reduced the time of evaluation from hours to seconds, largely lowering the risk of infection for medical staff. The remote medical consultation powered by 5G is also seamlessly connecting experts from metropolises and major hospitals with those in remote regions.

Besides, artificial intelligence (AI) is applied to sequence the

virus genome and develop new drugs through optimization algorithm, helping scientific institutions to find the optimized solutions.

Technologies are contributing to China's resumption of work as well. Cloud computing is making telecommuting possible; e-government services are powered by virtual service specialists; blockchain helps achieve unimpeded logistics and capital flow; and disinfecting robots are ensuring production and operational safety.

The new generation of information technologies have offered more targeted, convenient and effective approaches in coping with the epidemic, building a smart wall of defense and showcasing the strength of science.

China is transforming into an intelligent society. Currently, the new generation of information technologies such as AI and 5G are powering the smart lifestyles of the people, and also contributing a major part to the country's high-quality economic development and industrial upgrading.

In the fight against the COVID-19, technologies are emerging and explaining their potential.

Apart from propelling the expansion of new business models including unmanned retailing, virtual social interaction and online education, they have also demonstrated their potential in smart city construction, remote medical services and industrial internet.

People's Daily

SPORT

Time running out for Wimbledon



General view of the Wimbledon logo on the base of the handle of a tennis racquet. REUTERS

LONDON

THIS year's Wimbledon Championships have so far survived the cull of the world's most prestigious sporting events due to the coronavirus pandemic, but it seems only a matter of time before they are postponed or cancelled.

With London in its first week of lockdown, All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) officials are weighing up their limited options.

The 'build' for the June 29-July 12 championships is supposed to start in little over a month but it seems increasingly likely Wimbledon will be forced to miss a year for the first time since 1945.

"The AELTC has been contingency planning since January, working closely with the UK government and public health authorities to follow their advice and understand the likely impact of COVID-19 and the government's emergency measures on The Championships, and our thoughts are with all those affected by this crisis at this time," the club said in a statement on Wednesday.

"Based on the advice we have received from the public health authorities, the very short window available to us to stage The Championships due to the nature of our surface suggests that postponement is not without significant risk and difficulty," it added.

The AELTC said playing behind closed doors was not an option.

The Australian Open, the year's first Grand Slam, was completed before the coronavirus crisis exploded to virtually shut down world sport, including the men's ATP Tour and women's WTA Tour.

The French Open last week made the decision to move the claycourt tournament to Sept. 20-Oct. 4 from its May start because of the outbreak.

While the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday potentially opened a two-week slot in the calendar in July/August, it would appear unlikely Wimbledon would use it.

Switching to a later time in the year is even less likely as Wimbledon has only two covered courts and elite outdoor grasscourt tennis is not feasible past late summer.

Wimbledon said it is communicating closely with the LTA, and with the ATP, WTA, ITF and the other Grand Slams.

But a cancellation looks increasingly likely. "The unprecedented challenge presented by the COVID-19 crisis continues to affect our way of life in ways that we could not have imagined," AELTC chief executive Richard Lewis said.

"Our thoughts are with all those affected in the UK and around the world. The single most important consideration is one of public health, and we are determined to act responsibly through the decisions we make."

REUTERS

IOC working toward July-August Olympics in 2021 - Yomiuri

TOKYO

THE International Olympic Committee (IOC) is working with sports bodies to arrange a July-August window for the postponed Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and hopes to confirm the schedule within a month, Japan's Yomiuri newspaper reported on Thursday.

John Coates, the IOC's Coordination Commission chief for Tokyo, told the Yomiuri the Games would have to be held between the tennis Grand Slams of Wimbledon, slated to end in mid-July, and the U.S. Open, which starts in late August.

"We want to more or less finalise the dates in four weeks' time," the paper quoted Coates as saying.

Coates, who is also president of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), said the summer scheduling would be dependent on avoiding clashes with the world championships for swimming (July 16-Aug. 1) and athletics (Aug. 6-15).

World Athletics boss Sebastian Coe has said the world athletics championships in Eugene, Oregon could be moved back to 2022 if necessary.

Coates told the newspaper the hope was to follow the same arrangements next year that had been planned for 2020, including holding the marathon in the northern city of Sapporo instead of Tokyo to escape the heat.

The AOC confirmed the Yomiuri report's veracity and also told Reuters in a statement that Coates had "proffered a view but confirms a range of options are on the table for the IOC".

The IOC and Japanese government succumbed to intense pressure from athletes and sporting bodies around the world on Tuesday, agreeing to push back the Games by as much as a year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

On Thursday, the Tokyo 2020 organising committee launched a taskforce to resolve issues linked to the postponement, such as reviewing dates for the Games and securing venues.

No specifics have been discussed yet on the timing of the delayed Games, but a date needs to be decided as soon as possible, Hidemasa Nakamura, a senior official at Tokyo 2020, told reporters after the taskforce's first meeting.

IOC President Thomas Bach said on Wednesday "all options" were on the table for rescheduling, including holding the Games before the Japanese summer.

Meanwhile, World Athletics chief Sebastian Coe warned would-be dopers on Tuesday that the coronavirus pandemic and widespread suspension of



Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) attends an interview after the decision to postpone the Tokyo 2020 because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Lausanne, Switzerland, March 25, 2020. [Photo/Agencies]

competition will not shelter them from repercussions.

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics postponed until 2021 and several other world championships needing to be rescheduled because of the crisis, athletes will face much less testing.

However Coe told Reuters in an interview that there was no chance of drug cheats slipping through the net.

"In reality, of course, there isn't much in the way of competition testing because frankly we've lost most of the competitions," said Coe.

"The only advice I would give every athlete is don't play roulette with the concept that intelligent testing is going to do anything other than track you down. Some years ago we moved away from the concept that it's just about numbers.

"The Athletics Integrity Unit is at the top of its game. No athlete should be seduced into thinking this is some sort of moratorium on our fight against drugs. It is not," he added.

"If they choose to step beyond the boundaries we have clearly set and the Athletic Integrity Unit and World Athletics is fearless about protecting, they will come undone."

The AIU was set up by the sport's governing body in 2017 to oversee integrity issues in athletics including doping.

QUALIFYING ISSUES

The question of whether athletes who had already qualified for the Olympics will have to do so again will also come under the microscope in the coming weeks, with 57% of 11,000 or so athletes set to appear in Tokyo having booked their spots.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has not clarified whether these places are assured, although the Australian Olympic Committee said on Wednesday that its qualified athletes can compete in the delayed Games.

"We have to be really clear that qualification will be an issue for athletes, our internal teams have looked at that," said Coe.

"Only two days ago I had 24 athletes from our Athletes Commission on a conference call with me and we discussed all sorts of things.

"We discussed when was it sensible, hopefully, to resurrect our Diamond League and our continental circuit and our One-Day meets, because this is very important for them. "They don't want to go into the winter months without some competition under their belt even though the Games have gone.

"We need to make sure we do that at a time that is safe and secure and (we're) not asking athletes to go back into

the world that we've just taken them out of.

"And again the cities that will be staging these events will have their own stresses and strains and we have to be respectful to municipalities, public authorities and cities that will have a lot of other things to be thinking about.

"Even when the virus, we hope, has subsided there will still be resource implications. All I'm saying is that this is very complicated and qualification is a part of that and that is what our competition teams are looking that very closely."

Coe, who welcomed the decision to postpone the Olympics, said it will be difficult to reschedule all the postponed events, including the Eugene world championships, which were set for 2021.

"This isn't going to happen overnight and nor should it, because it's too complicated for that to actually happen in reality," Coe added.

"We're going to have to figure out how we will get these back into our calendar without it causing a massive bottleneck..."

"Our sport has the added challenge of a world championship next year. I know our headquarter teams have already been in contact with the Oregon organising committee so this is the knock-on effect."

REUTERS

In coronavirus, Senegal rappers find a new enemy to fight

DAKAR

DRESSED in hooded medical suits and protective goggles, Senegal's activist hip-hop group Y'en a Marre rap about washing hands, disposing of used tissues and avoiding crowds in their latest release: 'Shield against Coronavirus.'

The new video here marks a sudden change for the collective, named 'Enough is Enough' in French slang, which has a history of challenging authority, fighting social injustice - and urging Senegal's youth to hit the streets to protest the government.

But when African countries confirmed their first coronavirus cases this month, the group offered to help the government persuade people to take the disease seriously, in an effort to stop it ripping through Africa as it has through China, Europe and America, killing thousands.

"As soon as we saw that things were going from bad to worse, we went to see the health ministry," said Y'en a Marre's Malal Talla, whose rapper alias translates as Sick Mad Man.

"We wanted to contribute how we could," Talla said at the group's headquarters in the crowded working class Dakar suburb of Guediawaye, where they work to support disadvantaged youth.

Senegal declared a state of emergency

on Monday and imposed a curfew in response to the pandemic. It has confirmed over 80 cases, making it the second-worst affected country in West Africa after Burkina Faso.

After hearing Y'en a Marre's song, the health ministry allowed the group to film its video in one of the capital's main hospitals, where they posed as laboratory technicians, rapping as they examined test tubes and peered down microscopes.

"Prevention is better than treatment. The world is in distress," the chorus intones, its plucked accompaniment giving the track a distinctive West African lilt.

The video has attracted thousands of views and likes on social media since its release last Thursday.

West Africa has long raised public health awareness through song. In 2014, musical heavyweights such as Salif Keita banded together to release 'Africa Stop Ebola' in the face of the epidemic that killed over 11,300.

Sitting in a courtyard painted with murals of black icons such as Nelson Mandela and Angela Davis, Talla said music had a vital role to play.

"In Africa, music is not the art of combining sounds," he said. "It's not just for dancing and jumping, it's also a way one can raise awareness with joy."

REUTERS



A girl washes her hands at the entrance of her parents' house in Pikine, on the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal, on March 9 2020. Senegal's activist hip-hop group Y'en a Marre has written a rap about washing hands, disposing of used tissues and avoiding crowds. REUTERS

Italian FA head refuses to write off the Serie A season

ROME

ITALIAN soccer boss Gabriele Gravina is refusing to write off the Serie A season due to the coronavirus outbreak, saying the league could extend into July and August if necessary.

Italy has seen more coronavirus fatalities than any other country, with latest figures showing that 7,503 people have died from the infection in barely a month.

The northern region of Lombardy, by far the hardest-hit, showed a steep decline in the number of deaths and new infections in the latest figures on Wednesday, raising hopes that the epidemic may be slowing at its original epicentre.

However, optimism was tempered by warnings from the south, where contagion and deaths are far less widespread but are rising steadily.

Serie A has been suspended since March 9 and players from several clubs have tested positive for the virus.

"I don't give up easily," Gravina, the president of the Italian Football

Federation (FIGC), said in an interview with Radio Marte.

"As long as there is a chance, I will keep alive the hope of restarting the championships. I am aware that it is premature to think about a date, but we must think positively, also for the health of the Italians, and hope that this situation ends as soon as possible."

There are 12 match days still to play, plus several outstanding matches, and Gravina estimated the league could be completed in 45 to 60 days. "If we are given the month of July and August, that could be the right period," he said.

He also stood by an earlier suggestion to use a playoff system to decide the league if there was not enough time to complete the original schedule, and said it could be an interesting idea for the future.

"I proposed it only as a lifeboat. But for the future we'll work on it because, for me, it remains an interesting idea and I hope one day it can be shared by the protagonists, so as to give even more interest to Serie A". **REUTERS**

Barca players reject wage reduction offer - sources

BARCELONA

BARCELONA's players have rejected a proposal to have their wages significantly reduced as the club seeks ways to minimise the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic, sources have told ESPN.

Negotiations between the club's captains and the board of directors are ongoing. Sources explained that the players are willing to take a hit to their salaries but they are not happy with the terms that have been suggested by the board so far.

There is friction between some of the players and some members of the board, which has made negotiations difficult. However, there remains optimism that an agreement will be reached.

ESPN first revealed that Barcelona hoped to agree on a temporary wage cut with the players last Friday following a video conference between the members of the board. The reduction will not only apply to the men's first team, but also to the club's other professional teams, including the women's first team and the basketball team, among others.

However, there is a particular focus on the men's team, given their salaries account for around half the club's annual budget. The players earn just over €500 million annually between them.

Barca, who are owned by their members and don't have the luxury of outside investment, fear the coronavirus crisis could have severe repercussions on their finances.

The club is already losing match-day revenue, as well as money from the club museum, which draws thousands of visitors every week. There is also now uncertainty about how much they will make in prize money and television money this season, with football across Europe suspended. Other clubs have already announced wage cuts for playing staff due to the spread of the coronavirus. Borussia Dortmund are among those to confirm that the club's players will forgo part of their salaries to ease the financial pressure on the club.

Premier League chief executives will also discuss the prospect of asking players to take pay deferrals when the 20 top-flight clubs stage their next video conference on April 3, sources have told ESPN.

Meanwhile, Lionel Messi has donated €1m to help overburdened health care systems deal with the coronavirus pandemic in Spain and Argentina.

Other Barca players have also given

to the cause, including goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who contributed part of the €2.5m given by the German national team last week.

Spain is one of the worst-hit countries. The health ministry revealed on Tuesday that there have now been more deaths in Spain (3,434) than anywhere else, excluding Italy. In total, there are nearly 50,000 confirmed cases.

Meanwhile, Eden Hazard has said his debut season at Real Madrid has been "bad" as he continues his recovery from surgery.

The Belgium international underwent surgery for a broken fibula earlier this month in Dallas and is now at home in Madrid.

"My first season at Real has been bad," Hazard told Belgian national broadcaster RTBF on Wednesday. "But you don't throw everything away. It was a season of adaptation. I will be judged on my second season. It is up to me to be in good shape next year."

Madrid players are training at home in self-isolation as a result of Spain's state of emergency due to the coronavirus outbreak. La Liga was suspended indefinitely on Monday in response to the crisis.

"I'm waiting," Hazard added. "I spoke to [Real Madrid coach Zinedine] Zidane on the phone, he doesn't know either. All we can do is keep fit. Will La Liga restart? We don't know. If we don't, everyone will be disappointed, but that's how it is."

Hazard has endured a difficult, injury-hit La Liga campaign since joining Madrid for €100 million last summer, making just nine league starts and scoring once.

He suffered a microfracture in his ankle in November and returned to the team in February, but his latest injury came just two starts later.

"It's better, we removed the stitches a week ago," Hazard added. "I'm working a little more. I can walk now, so it's going well."

The forward had been desperate to return to full fitness before the end of the season to be available to captain his country at Euro 2020 but UEFA have now delayed the competition until the summer of 2021.

"I expected to be there at the Euros, so I was disappointed that it was postponed," he added. "I had planned to be there, I had my surgery a few weeks ago, so for me, I was going to be fine at the Euros. We'll all be a year older, which is a shame, but for my ankle it will get me back in shape."

(Agencies)

Nigeria footballers released after 3-day ordeal

LAGOS

KIDNAPPED Enyimba midfielder Ekundayo Ojo and Abia Comets' Benjamin Ilyumade have been released, three days after their abduction.

An official statement from the Nigeria Professional Football League club said that both players "were released on Wednesday night following combined efforts of Enyimba

Football Club and families of the players".

Enyimba chairman Felix Anyansi-Agwu told ESPN that "we are extremely relieved".

"We were all traumatized by the incident," he said.

"This was something that nobody could predict, or wished for, and we are very relieved now that they are back safe." **(Agencies)**

Economic crisis from virus pandemic begins to bite in European football

BERLIN

EUROPE may be the financial powerhouse of global football, but the economic impact from the coronavirus pandemic is already beginning to hit and the consequences could be disastrous for clubs across the continent.

When players at Bayern Munich, one of the world's richest clubs, have reportedly agreed to take pay cuts, it is not difficult to imagine the troubles in store for the sport as a whole.

Many clubs lack sufficient cash reserves to get them through a sustained period without revenue coming in. For example in Scotland, where clubs rely heavily on gate receipts, the situation is "clearly unsustainable".

That is the view of Aberdeen chairman Dave Cormack, who forecasts facing five million pounds (\$5.9m) of costs without any money coming in over the next few months.

"No club, whatever their size, scale or level of investment, can withstand a total lack of income over a period of anything between three to six months," Cormack said.

Even the German league (DFL) -- which runs the Bundesliga and has annual turnover of more than four billion euros (\$4.3 billion) -- fears a catastrophe.

"If we don't play games behind closed doors as soon as possible, there is no point wondering if we should have a league of 18 or 20 teams," said DFL chief executive Christian Seifert. "We won't even have 20 professional clubs anymore."

- Eye-watering losses -
It is almost two weeks since leading leagues across Europe stopped. No matches means no money from gate receipts, and before long payments from broadcasters may stop too.

The sums set to be lost everywhere are eye-watering.

In England, according to reports, the Premier League faces losing 762 million pounds from domestic broadcast deals with Sky Sports and BT Sport.



The Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in north London, where Spurs were due to host Manchester United on March 15 before the season was suspended (AFP Photo)

Analysis by accounting firm KPMG suggests cancelling the rest of the season would cost the 'Big Five' leagues of England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France a combined total of over four billion euros.

It is therefore not difficult to see why leagues will consider restarting behind closed doors, to at least guarantee revenue from broadcasters.

After all, clubs must continue during the pandemic to pay hefty player salaries.

In France, several clubs, including Marseille and Lyon, have put their players on partial unemployment to save money.

It means clubs pay staff 70 percent of their salaries. The state pays the rest, albeit limited to 4,850 euros per employee, a drop in the ocean for most footballers.

In Germany, players at Borussia Mönchengladbach were the first in the Bundesliga to propose pay cuts, followed by others at Werder Bremen, Schalke and Borussia Dortmund. Bild

reported that Bayern players accepted a 20 percent pay cut.

- Collapse of the system -

The Spanish Football Federation has announced plans for a 500 million-euro package allowing clubs in the top two divisions to receive loans of up to 20 million euros "and pay it back in five or six years", according to president Luis Rubiales.

Barcelona have the biggest revenue in world football according to the most recent Deloitte Football Money League, but they are reportedly in discussions to bring in pay cuts for all players of up to 70 percent.

La Liga is considering reducing players' salaries on the whole by 20 percent if the season is not completed. Similar measures could be taken in Italy.

In England, some clubs are asking players to accept deferrals to wage payments.

On Wednesday the Professional Footballers' Association union said the crisis was having a "severe im-

pact", adding: "In order to deal with this situation, we have called for an urgent meeting with both the Premier League and the EFL (English Football League)."

Everywhere authorities are working to stop the whole system from collapsing.

In Italy the possibility of taxing betting companies to help subsidise clubs has been considered, while in Germany rules on how licenses are awarded to professional clubs could be relaxed.

The biggest uncertainty, though, surrounds when matches might be played again.

If a way is found to finish the season before the summer, then the damage will be limited.

However, if the shutdown continues until August or later, the financial impact could mean the footballing landscape across the continent is changed forever.

AFP

Spanish FA offers €500m bailout to La Liga clubs

MADRID

THE Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) has announced a €500 million bailout to the country's first and second division clubs to cope with the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

La Liga was suspended on March 12 and there is no date given to resume all competitions. The stoppage in play has prevented clubs from collecting TV revenue and brought a halt to match-day income.

"We are willing to lend a hand to professional football," Spanish FA president Luis Rubiales told a news conference on Wednesday.

"We want to offer La Liga the possibility to sit down and get the financing for first and second division clubs. We have spoken to several banks and are able to offer a credit line worth €500m to first and second division clubs that are struggling and that can be repaid in the next four, five or six years."

La Liga chief Javier Tebas had given May 18 as the last date La Liga can resume to be completed before June 30, however, Rubiales said it is highly unlikely the league will end by then.

"We think it's practically impossible to resume competitions at the beginning of May," Rubiales said. "We have temporary hospitals being put up in Madrid and the military emergency units [UME] are out on the streets."

"We've always stated that the competitions should be completed, whenever that's possible. First is health, then to complete the season."

Rubiales disagreeing with Tebas is nothing new. The two have been at odds since 2013, when Rubiales was at the helm of the Spanish Players' Union [AFE].

Since his election as RFEF chief on May 2018, every decision in Spanish football has been accompanied with a dispute, some which have had to be resolved in court.

Tebas has failed in his attempt to



Luis Rubiales

stage a La Liga game in the United States with Rubiales adamant that it will not happen. Tebas, meanwhile, cited the Federation's decision to have the Spanish Supercopa in Saudi Arabia as an act of "hypocrisy."

Rubiales recently labelled La Liga's move to give testing coronavirus kits to clubs as "irresponsible and unpatriotic."

Spain's death toll due to the coronavirus has reached 3,434 while the number of cases registered in the country rose to 47,610 as of March 25.

"We think it's practically impos-

sible to resume competitions at the beginning of May," Rubiales added. "We have temporary hospitals being put up in Madrid and the military emergency units UME are out on the streets."

"We've always stated that the competitions should be completed, whenever that's possible. First is health, then to complete the season."

There are 11 rounds of games remaining in La Liga and Rubiales believes it's most likely that when the competition resumes, it will go beyond June 30, the date when players'

contracts expires.

"Whether the contracts are extended [beyond June 30] or not, all the clubs will be in the same position," Rubiales said.

Rubiales has quashed speculation that teams will have to play every 48 hours once play resumes.

"It's not viable," he said. "We need to give clubs the necessary tools to recover those games when the time comes but not at all costs. Health is above everything. All those that have played football know that you cannot play every 48 hours, it's inhumane. Footballers are not machines."

The Spanish FA has requested its medical team to provide a detailed report of when and how teams can resume activity, including information on what would happen to a team if a player were to get infected with the coronavirus once the competitions resume.

"I honestly have no answer for that," Rubiales said. "We are very worried about this and that is why we are wary. It's very important to have all the scientific reports in order to decide as to when it would be possible to resume."

(Agencies)

Gwiji by David Chikoko

COMPUTER GAMES...



...OR BOARD GAMES?

SPORT

Economic crisis from virus pandemic begins to bite in European football

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT, PAGE 19



Tanzania Football Federation (TFF) Director of Communication and Marketing, Boniface Wambura.

TFF set to host seminar on marketing, sponsorship

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

TANZANIA Football Federation (TFF) has said it will host a seminar with local football clubs on marketing and sponsorship to help the latter be self-reliant.

Boniface Wambura, TFF Director of Communication and Marketing, released the statement yesterday.

Wambura said the seminar, which TFF is set to organize in collaboration with Spanish elite league, La Liga, was supposed to be held this month but has been postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak.

He said the seminar will help clubs be self-reliant financially and know how to either market the sport or manage the already existing sponsorship.

The TFF official said the other benefit of the seminar is that clubs will know how to explore ways to maximize revenue collection, how to market the game and how sponsors and other stakeholders can leverage the product that clubs have.

"At the seminar we are going to discuss how the sponsors are going to come into the game," he disclosed.

"We will as well look into how we are going to work around to improve revenue from other sources such as television and radio rights which the country has not fully tapped, we believe by the end of the day clubs will benefit a lot," he said.

Wambura issued the comments amid reports that some of domestic sides are lately on sale due to financial hiccups which they are facing in running everyday affairs of the respective teams.

Recently there have been reports that Mainland Premier League side, Mwanza's Mbao FC, First Division League club, Mawenzi Market FC of Morogoro, and Second Division League's Njombe Mji FC of Njombe are being sold due to financial problems.

He said many clubs lack knowledge on marketing and as a result they don't know how popular is their brand (team).

The official disclosed the clubs also do not know how to optimize the revenue they can get.

"Football is a biggest business in the world, but in many countries including here (Tanzania) we lack professionals who can run the teams," he noted.

"Due to this many teams face financial problems, with support from La Liga we arranged to organize a marketing seminar for clubs, but it has been postponed due to the Coronavirus, we will communicate on the new dates soon," he said.

He also said the marketing seminar is in line with Club Licensing requirements which want each club to be self-reliant financially.

The value of Tanzanian football is not yet known, but it is estimated to be more than 20bn/- while worldwide the sport's worth is estimated to be more than \$500 million.

Tanzania welcomes ICC Africa T20 World Cup Qualifiers postponement

By Guardian Reporter

SENIOR men's national cricket team's players have opted for doing exercises in their respective homes to shape up for Group A of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Sub-Regional Qualifiers-Africa, whose dates will be announced later by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The world cricket governing body yesterday issued a statement disclosing the competition, which had previously been scheduled for April 27-May 3 in South Africa, has been postponed because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The postponement, ICC said, has been reached after careful evaluation of the current situation and with the health and well-being of the global cricket family turning into priority.

The rest of ICC qualifying events due to take place before June 30 will be postponed subject to further review.

The decision has been taken in conjunction with ICC members and in line with the relevant government and public health authority advice.

In the senior national team players' new training method, as noted by Tanzania Cricket Association (TCA) information officer Atif Salim, the former will carry on doing regular cardio exercises in their respective homes.

The official disclosed the squad will as well take time to reflect on its performance in the international friendly series, which took place in Zimbabwe from March 14 to 21, and where the players can improve.

With all domestic cricket activities having been postponed, the official noted, TCA is still monitoring the situation.

Senior national team took on hosts Rhinos Club in the series, which had the latter winning 4-2.

Salim disclosed home practice is what each of the national team players is lately doing and the team's head coach, Steve Tikolo, is in touch with all players to keep the momentum alive until it is clear for the players to resume training.

Senior national team will come up against Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, St Helena, eSwatini and Uganda in the Group A of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Sub-Regional Qualifiers-Africa.

Tikolo disclosed ICC decision is a welcome move going by the health crisis caused globally by the Coronavirus disease.

The coach added: "We thank ICC for this move as the health and safety of the players and participants comes first."

"As a team our preparations for the tournament were on right track having just returned back from a practice

tour of Zimbabwe."

"We will now have to reassess the situation and come up with new preparation method once everything regarding the rescheduled dates of the tournament is clear."

ICC Head of Events, Chris Tetley said: "In light of the significant global health concerns at the current time and the restrictions on movement imposed by governments across the world, the ICC has taken the decision to postpone all events up until the end of June subject to further review."

"Our commitment to the health and safety of players, officials, staff and fans is our priority when taking these decisions and we must act responsibly in the best interests of all involved and be guided by official advice."

"We felt that now was the right time to take a prudent decision on these events before further planning is undertaken and to provide clarity to everyone involved."

"Work will continue on contingency plans and options for both men's qualification pathways. We will provide updates in due course on these plans and decisions on the staging of the remaining events this year. I would like to thank all hosts and participating Members for their support and understanding in reaching this position and we are unified in our hopes and intention to get cricket back on as soon as is safe and practical to do so."



Senior national cricket team's head coach, Steve Tikolo (5th R), speaks to his players when the latter came up against Zimbabwe club, Rhinos, in one of international friendly series' clashes between the two squads, played at Kwekwe Sports Club oval in Harare recently.

John Akhwari International Marathon thrown into uncertainty

By Correspondent Joseph Mchekadona

UNCERTAINTY surrounds this year's edition of John Stephen Akhwari International Marathon, which has been slated for June in Arusha, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The disease has led to the shutdown of almost all domestic and international sporting activities around the globe.

The John Stephen Akhwari International Marathon has been slated for June 7 at Sheikh Amri Abd Memorial Stadium.

The race organizer, Sylvester Orao, said the organizing committee will meet at the end of this month to discuss the future of the event.

He said up to know the organizers are keeping their fingers crossed that by June the Coronavirus disease will be contained in the world.

"We will meet at the end of this month, the aim is to discuss the Coronavirus pandemic, and after the meeting we will let the public know what we have agreed," he disclosed.

"June may seem to be far, but this Coronavirus disease is spreading very fast, our prayer is that by June it should be contained," he said.

Minister for Information, Culture, Arts and Sports Harrison Mwakymbe is expected to be the race's guest of honour.

The organizer disclosed there will be three events, 21km, 10km for both men and women and 2km for kids.

The main purpose of the race is to honour Mzee John Stephen Akhwari who contributed immensely in the history of athletics in the country as he is one of the very first young Tanzanian athletes to represent the country in international athletics competitions.

Orao said the John Stephen Akhwari International Marathon is duly registered with National Sports Council (NSC) and it is also recognized by the Athletics Tanzania (AT).

"The main purpose is to honor Mzee Akhwari who contributed immensely in the history of athletics in the country," he noted.

"He is one of the very first young Tanzanian athletes to represent the country in international athletics competitions. Akhwari is the most famous athlete in Mexico City Olympics in 1968 where he left a mark, bringing a new meaning to the word, never give up," he said.

In previous interview, Orao reported that they are hosting the event so as to work hand in hand with the government in its drive to identify and nurture young talents to pick up from the initiative of the nation's athletics legends.

He also disclosed that the organizing committee is preparing 7,360,000m/- prize budget for the winners, in which the top 10 winners in 21km and 10 km races will be presented with cash prize while kids will be presented with medals.

This is the second year in a row that the John Stephen Akhwari International Marathon is being held.

The race's first edition attracted 800 athletes from within the country and beyond and this year more than 1,200 athletes are expected to compete in the race.

Flexibles by David Chikoko

WAIT FOR ME DEAR I NEED MAKE UPS!

YOU DON'T NEED MAKE UPS...

... YOU NEED PLASTIC SURGERY

REALLY?

