IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN AFRICA
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Executive summary

A. Overview

1. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a human disease that was reported to have first manifested itself at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China. Its impact on society was immediate; it quickly spread throughout the world through human transmission, and was formally classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020. The virus has had an impact on all aspects of society, the most directly affected being the health services and the economy. The role of the State or government is of key importance in managing that impact on those and all other aspects of society.

2. The logical initial response to the disease was therefore to focus on the medical dimension, since it threatened the very essence of life itself. Steps taken in this regard centred around cure (treatment), prevention (vaccination) and containment (quarantine and lockdowns). Global efforts were therefore mobilized to address the medical aspects as the first priority. After a short time, however, it became evident that the disease was exerting a growing constraint on economic activities. Measures taken by governments to slow the spread of the disease tended to affect key economic activities: public resources were directed to required health services; quarantine rules, travel restrictions and the lockdown of cities resulted in a significant reduction in the demand and supply of labour, goods and services; closures of international borders and related restrictions affected international trade, among many other effects. Thus, some of these measures to contain the spread of the disease have resulted in heavy blows to economic activities in transport, retail trade, leisure, hospitality and recreation.

3. One of the early lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is the importance of maintaining transport connectivity and the cross-border movement of essential goods, such as basic commodities, agricultural products, foodstuffs and medical supplies. Most countries took steps to maintain the freight transport operations in an endeavour to keep their trade channels active and ensure uninterrupted distribution of at least essential goods and medical supplies.

4. Similarly, the pandemic has forced African Governments to respond with travel restrictions and travel bans to minimize the spread of the disease from country to country within and outside the region. In many cases, all international borders – air, water and land – were initially closed. While freight transport – trucks, ships and aircraft – are exempted, the measures enacted have included the mandatory screening and disinfection of vehicles and vessels, and the testing
of their crews at entry points. At the domestic level, many countries have imposed total or partial lockdowns of most public and private offices. This has had inevitable consequences for trade volumes in services and goods, prices and, as a result, value added in intraregional trade.

5. While the pandemic is still developing, and its impact has yet to be fully realized, sectors that rely heavily on extended transport and supply chains are under stress due to supply shortages, in particular in the landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Africa, which face market access issues specific to their geography.

6. The report seeks to investigate the economic aspects, specifically transit transport and trade facilitation, in the countries of Africa, with a particular emphasis on landlocked and small island developing countries. It seeks to identify critical areas that would require immediate action by governments (policymakers, and customs and other border agencies), ports and other logistics operators, the business community and society at large. The proposed actions are aimed at mitigating the negative economic impact of the pandemic on transport and international trade in Africa.

7. The impact of COVID-19 on the economies in Africa may be assessed in a variety of ways. The present report focuses on the short-term impact of the virus on transport operations and trade in African countries. It considers policy level interventions (guidelines) for coordination at the level of the regional economic communities, and examines the impact of the application of these guidelines on transport connectivity in the East African countries that are members of the Northern Corridor Transit Transport Coordination Authority, as the most closely linked and integrated subregion in Africa.

B. Response by the regional economic communities

8. At the national level, countries responded in three ways: some put in place restrictive measures to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19; others adopted moderate restrictions; and still others opted to assess the situation first before taking response decisions. As these actions were uncoordinated, they would invariably have led to the disruption of cargo movements, with a negative impact on trade. Consequently, the major regional economic communities acted swiftly in response to the outbreak, and adopted guidelines for coordinated measures in their respective regions. There are, of course, broad similarities among the recommended actions in the various communities. The guidelines take into consideration the guidelines provided by the African Union, the World Customs Organization and WHO. The overriding principle of the guidelines is to apply common measures on trade corridors and border points, in order to maintain the safe flow of goods and services within each subregion.
9. Since the effects of the pandemic on the economy are still unclear, measures taken by regional economic communities, banks, development finance institutions and governments are likely to evolve as more light is shed on the possible trade financing gaps. At the same time, as international finance institutions and governments set up financial facilities to support businesses and critical sectors, part of the solution should entail setting up rapid emergency facilities such as trade finance lines and risk mitigation instruments designed to support banks, small and medium-sized enterprises and other local companies.

10. Fast-tracking elements of the negotiations for the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area that have already been completed would reshape and go a long way towards overcoming existing border disruptions induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, and facilitating the movement of essential goods that are needed to save lives and facilitate sustainable recovery beyond the pandemic.

C. Impact of COVID-19 on transit transport

11. Landlocked developing countries are particularly vulnerable to cross-border restrictions and border closures, given their dependency on transit transport to reach international markets. Whereas most of the transport measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have exempted the movement of essential commodities, while introducing necessary sanitary and health requirements, this does not mean that cargo has been able to move freely across borders. Border closures, travel restrictions and heightened screening procedures have resulted in long queues at land borders and congestion at ports and airports across the world.

12. In some countries, infrastructure at inland border-crossing points is extremely precarious, not only posing additional challenges to the processes at borders, but also exposing staff to higher contagion risks. The COVID-19 pandemic has also already begun to generate negative impacts on imports from landlocked developing countries.

13. Regarding transport corridors, six key issues were identified, which form the basis for data collection for analysing the impact on the Corridor, from port to destination. These are: trade and trade-related measures, port operations, transport logistics, border controls, customs control and highway operations.

14. The COVID-19 impact on transport and trade along the Northern Corridor may be categorized according to the key stakeholders on the corridor as follows: (a) transport operators – owners and drivers of cargo transportation vehicles (trucks, railways and ships); (b) transport users – customers (passengers and traders), shipping and forwarding agencies; (c) transport regulators – weighbridge operators; (d) border agencies – immigration, health and security officials; and (e) customs agents – inspectors and assessors.
D. Policy recommendations

15. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, African countries generally reacted promptly to contain and effectively manage its spread, individually as well as collectively, through the respective regional economic communities, and transit transport and trade corridors. The COVID-19 experience provides valuable lessons on how regional cooperation could help with coordinated and timely responses to future disruptions similar to the current pandemic. Listed below are some of the policy recommendations arising from the responses from the above organizations. Appropriate briefs have been developed as policy options for future post-pandemic actions, or against the future adverse effects of any regional shocks related to food crisis and climate change, such as the locust outbreak earlier in 2020 in the Horn of Africa.

1. Increased use of information and communications technology capabilities in Africa

16. COVID-19 has demonstrated the critical need for smart digital technologies and solutions. Looking ahead, digitalization offers immense potential to improve trade facilitation implementation guidelines and further reduce trade costs. In this regard, member States are urged to invest in enhancing their information and communications technology capabilities to ensure business continuity, which will also have a positive ripple effect on economic growth, through such developments as the Smart Corridor Initiative. This will enable landlocked developing countries and transit countries to make use of trade facilitation standards and digital technologies, such as the electronic exchange of information, and paperless solutions that limit physical checks in transit and physical contact at borders and protect the health of workers. For that reason, regulators should work with banks to put in place temporary measures to allow digital processing and transmission of trade finance transactions.

2. Diversification of sources of sustainable energy

17. To support information and communications technology infrastructure and other critical sectors in different settings, low-carbon alternative sources of energy may be required, such as the installation of solar grids in communities where electricity is in short supply. Moreover, limited access in the continent to electricity, in particular in health centres and facilities, increases vulnerability to COVID-19. Thus, through strategic investment in sustainable energy and resilient power systems, stimulus packages and policy measures for quick economic recovery will strengthen the foundation of sustainable development through local value chain linkages and employment creation.

3. Development of intermodal transport systems in Africa

18. Drivers of heavy goods vehicles have been identified as the principal inter-State carriers of COVID-19. This has prompted actions by member
States such as the mandatory screening of all drivers at their borders. In turn, however, this has led to delays and congestion at the borders, subsequently increasing the risk of further contamination of the border community. An appropriate multimodal mix with the increased use of railways and inland waterways would reduce dependence on road transport. The reduced transborder movement of drivers will also reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS along the transit corridors.

4. Development of roadside truck stops in transport corridors in Africa

19. Special roadside stations and wellness centres should be developed at selected locations to accommodate truck drivers along the Corridor. These should take the form of multipurpose facilities designed to promote a safe and efficient transportation system; and provide food, rest and accommodation, vehicle servicing and refuelling operations, medical emergency facilities and other functions. They should also be equipped with health facilities for the control of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola, HIV/AIDS and others. Furthermore, the stations should be designed to minimize possible interaction between truck drivers and the local communities along the route. In addition, they will also act as checkpoints for tracing drivers whose COVID-19 test results at the previous border points may subsequently be positive.

5. Development of corridor observatories in Africa

20. The experience of the Northern Corridor Observatory provides a good model, which could be replicated in the management of the major corridors in Africa. It provides both historical and up-to-date information on corridor performance. The Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard provides weekly updates on selected corridor performance indicators, enabling a rapid assessment of progress on the various dimensions.

6. Development of pharmaceutical industries in Africa

21. The demand for and shortage of certain critical drugs and medical equipment – in particular personal protective equipment such as gowns, gloves, facemasks, face shields, sanitizers and other essential products – during the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated both the need and the potential for the development of pharmaceutical industries in Africa as part of the strategy of industrial development through import substitution. The regional economic communities, together with the pharmaceutical initiative of the African Continental Free Trade Area, provide suitable regional integration frameworks for coordination of the development of this sector. While the African pharmaceutical industry is mostly composed of small, privately owned companies that serve their national markets, regional cooperation is essential for expanding the sector and boosting intra-African trade.
7. Enhanced role of the private sector in Africa

22. African Governments must provide and sustain a conducive environment for the private sector to expand production capacities, enhance competitiveness and reduce overreliance on extra-African imports, even for basic commodities. Private stakeholders are urged to work closely with the public institutions to facilitate transit, trade and transport, and maintain the functioning of supply chains and cross-border freight operations. Public–private partnerships should be promoted to develop facilities for truck operators, such as truck stops, hygiene requirements, resting facilities and other amenities. Public security arrangements, notably the police, should be engaged to protect drivers and property.

23. African Governments should engage the private sector in facilitating the local production of supplies such as personal protective equipment and other essential products. The COVID-19 crisis calls for emergency facilities such as trade finance lines of credit and risk-mitigation instruments, with a view, among other aims, to attracting non-traditional investors to invest in trade finance asset classes earmarked for trade-related transactions, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises.
I

Introduction

A. Background

1. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a human disease which was reported to have first manifested itself at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China. Its impact on society was immediate; it quickly spread throughout the world through human transmission and was formally classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020. The virus has had an impact on all aspects of society, those most directly affected being the health services and the economy. The role of the State or government is of key importance in managing that impact on those and all other aspects of society.

2. The logical initial response to the disease was therefore to focus on the medical dimension, since it threatened the very essence of life itself. Steps taken in this regard centred around cure (treatment), prevention (vaccination) and containment (quarantine and lockdowns). Global efforts were therefore mobilized to address the medical aspects as the first priority.

3. With time, however, it became evident that the disease was exerting a growing constraint on economic activities. Measures taken by governments to slow the spread of the disease tended to affect key economic activities: public resources were directed to required health services; quarantine rules, travel restrictions and the lockdown of cities have resulted in a significant reduction in the demand and supply of labour, goods and services; closures of international borders and related restrictions had affected international trade, among many other effects. Thus, some of these measures to contain the spread of the disease have resulted in heavy blows to economic activities in transport, retail trade, leisure, hospitality and recreation.
B. Context: current status of transport connectivity and trade in Africa

4. One of the early lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is the importance of maintaining transport connectivity and the cross-border movement of essential goods, such as basic commodities, agricultural products, foodstuffs and medical supplies (United Nations and others, 2020). Most countries took steps to maintain the freight transport operations in an endeavour to keep their trade channels active and to ensure uninterrupted distribution of at least essential goods and medical supplies. Preserving transport and trade connectivity is indispensable not only for the immediate response to the pandemic, but also for the subsequent recovery efforts underpinned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, with the aim of building resilience to future pandemics and crises.

5. Such endeavours notwithstanding, the transport and trade sector finds itself in the middle of an unprecedented crisis, the full extent of which is yet to be revealed. By mid-March 2020, when the imposition of restrictive transport measures worldwide was still in the early stages, the world services trade index declined by 3.2 percentage points. Among its subcomponents, container shipping recorded the sharpest decline (by 5.7 percentage points) after passenger air travel (6.5 percentage points). A contraction in maritime transport, the mode of carriage of more than 80 per cent of world merchandise trade volume, is also indicative of the ripple effects that the crisis has also caused along the inland transport chains (road and rail), which provide the first and last-mile links.

6. Despite the steep decline in carriage loads and volumes of freight movement, many ports and inland trans-shipment hubs across the world are still facing severe traffic congestion. General lockdown measures have had a crippling effect on the operating capacity of transport systems and logistical services. Internationally, under the impact of staff shortages, additional quarantine measures and resultant delays in loading, inspection and clearance, freight carriage by road is estimated to have declined by at least 30–40 per cent, with implications for the carriage efficiency of backward and forward links along international transport corridors (ESCAP, 2020).

7. Similarly, the pandemic has forced African Governments to respond with travel restrictions and travel bans to minimize the spread of the disease from country to country within and outside the region. In many cases, all international borders – air, water

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1 African countries have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, incurring at least $100 billion in economic costs (approximately 5 per cent of their gross domestic product) in 2020 as a direct result. Similarly, 2020 trade volumes in
I. Introduction

and land – were initially closed. While freight transport – trucks, ships and aircraft – are exempted, the measures enacted have included the mandatory screening and disinfection of vehicles and vessels and the testing of their crew at the entry point (EAC, 2020).

At the domestic level, many countries have imposed the total or partial lockdowns of most public and private offices. This has had inevitable consequences for trade volumes in services and goods, prices and, as a result, value added in intraregional trade (WTO and others, 2020).

8. While the pandemic is still developing and its impact has yet to be fully realized, sectors which rely heavily on extended transport and supply chains are under stress due to supply shortages, in particular in the landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in Africa, which face market access issues specific to their geography.

9. Efficient and effective coordination and cooperation among all the relevant agencies are crucial for the facilitation of trade and transport in the region, in order to ensure an effective response to this unprecedented outbreak. Hence, fallouts from exposure to COVID-19 should be converted into an opportunity for the trade and transport corridors to reassess and devise appropriate revival strategies.

C. Objective and scope of the report

10. The main objectives of the present report are to collect and analyse data on the impact of COVID19 on transport and trade, to document responses at ports and strategic checkpoints along trade and transport routes, to assess the impact of these measures on trade and transport, and to design policy recommendations that support regional collaboration.2

11. The report seeks to investigate the economic aspects, specifically transit transport and trade facilitation, in the countries of Africa, with a particular emphasis on landlocked and small island developing countries. It seeks to identify critical areas that would require immediate action by governments (policymakers, and customs and other border agencies), ports and other logistics operators, the business community and society at large. The proposed actions are aimed at mitigating the negative economic impact of the pandemic on transport and international trade in Africa.

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2 As spelled out in the terms of reference for the present study: “The objective of the task, which this specific Terms of Reference (ToR) contributes to, is as follows: implement UN solutions, including standards, guidelines, tools, and methodologies to immediately help African governments (LLDCs/SIDS in particular), including customs and other border agencies, port authorities, regional economic communities and corridors management institutions, to keep transport networks and borders operational to facilitate the flow of goods and services, while containing the further spread of the COVID-19 virus.”
D. Approach and methodology

12. Trade and transport in Africa are best analysed through the mechanisms established for regional integration, namely transit transport corridor management institutions and regional economic communities. The transit transport corridors provide data on traffic and trade flows, while the regional economic communities provide a framework for the coordination of trade and transport policies. This process comprises three segments: data collection and analysis, policy recommendations and advisory services.

1. Data collection

13. The impact of COVID-19 on the economies in Africa may be assessed in a variety of ways. It can be inferred from an analysis of economic and financial data of the country, such as changes in economic growth, trade flows, employment levels and other effects. Such impacts at the macro level would often only be manifested after a significant lag in time. The impact can also be derived from an analysis of operational data, such as traffic flows and volumes (by air, sea and land), which provide a more immediate and direct indication of the impact on the population.

14. The present report focuses on the short-term impact of the virus on transport operations and trade in African countries. It considers policy level interventions (guidelines) for coordination at the levels of the regional economic communities. In particular, it looks at the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) to study the impact on selected countries in the COMESA region, namely, Malawi and Zambia (from Southern Africa), Rwanda and Uganda (East Africa) and the island country of Madagascar.

15. The impact of the application of these guidelines on transport and trade connectivity is examined in the East African countries which are members of the Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor, considered to be the most closely linked and integrated region in Africa. The assessment of the direct impact on the key stakeholders was based on their responses to a set of questionnaires.

2. Literature review

16. In parallel with consultations across the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the regional economic communities and the transit transport corridor management institutions, a literature review was undertaken to inform the assignment. As specified in the terms of reference, the reference materials to be reviewed within the scope of this assignment include, but are not limited to, documents from regional economic communities, transit transport corridor management institutions and related African regional organizations. These sources were supplemented by other key documents, available from a range of online and offline sources. These include:

(a) Sector papers from development partners (European Union, African Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF),
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Development Bank of Asia, World Trade Organization (WTO) and others);

(b) Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, the African Union Development Agency, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and other initiatives with a transport and trade focus;

(c) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other United Nations bodies;

(d) Communiqués and declarations;

(e) Academic and research publications.

3. **Policy recommendations**

17. Based on an analysis of the data and subsequent assessment, recommendations were drawn up on specific regional actions designed to preserve trade and transport connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic that encourage regional collaboration. These include:

(a) More efficient and effective policy responses to COVID-19 through enhanced coordination and the brokering of collective actions in the region and with other regions;

(b) Inputs into the comprehensive project proposal for phase 2 on regional and sectoral cooperation, with a view to enhancing the impact and efficiency of policy measures through collaborative solutions for transport and trade operations;

(c) Support for the provision of advisory services by arranging one or two webinars for regional economic communities on topics relevant to supporting and improving trade and transport, including cashless cross-border payments. This undertaking may involve collaboration with other regional commissions.

4. **Content of the report**

18. Following the introduction, Chapter II sets out an overview of the actions taken by African countries in response to COVID-19, individually as well as through the various regional economic communities. Chapter III presents the impact of the pandemic on international trade in the COMESA region. Chapter IV presents the impact of the pandemic on the major transit transport corridors in Africa. The results of a direct assessment of the impact on key stakeholders in transport and trade in Africa is presented in Chapter V. The recommended policy responses are presented in chapter VI.
Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

A. Background

19. Regional and local authorities are responsible for delivering critical short-term containment measures and longer-term recovery activities – from health and social care to economic development and public investment in transport and trade. Meeting these demands calls for proactive initiatives and flexibility at all levels of government, ranging from the delivery of trade and transport services, to adjustments to the regulations framing such activity. The negative impact of COVID-19 on the economies and peoples of Africa as a whole could be minimized through a coordinated response by all regional economic communities and African Governments.

20. The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on international and regional trade is not yet fully visible in most trade data, but some timely and leading indicators may already yield clues about the extent of the slowdown. The medium-term economic impact will also differ across the region, depending on such factors as exposure to tradable sectors, global value chains and type of specialization – for example, trade in services such as air transport and tourism, commodity trade such as oil, and others. This is especially critical for the continent’s 16 landlocked developing countries and its small island developing States. The implementation of measures to address the virus is placing increased pressure on national spending.

3 According to the World Bank biannual Africa’s Pulse report, as a result of the pandemic, economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa will decline from 2.4 per cent in 2019 to between -2.1 and -5.1 per cent in 2020, depending on the success of measures taken to mitigate the pandemic’s effects. This means that the region will experience its first recession in 25 years.
II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

Table 1: Key areas of response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa: facilitation of transit transport and trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of policy action</th>
<th>Regional economic community</th>
<th>EAC</th>
<th>COMESA</th>
<th>SADC</th>
<th>ECCAS</th>
<th>ECOWAS</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closure or near closure of all international borders to passenger transport (air, sea, land, inland water)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping all borders open to cargo transport, and facilitating the movement of goods and services</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designation of relevant internal border-crossing points on international routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation, approval or revision of regional guidelines to ease cross-border trade and transport operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonization and gradual reopening of land, air and sea borders to restore cross-border trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of regional or sectoral coordination committee and establishment of a joint task force</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring the right of transit and improved transit terms for landlocked and island countries</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction or enhancement of pre-clearance of goods and single window processing at ports and border crossings</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of recommended route maps for cross-border trucks, including the location of checkpoints, quarantine and isolation centres, designated safe and secure parking facilities and designated refuelling stations</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of existing customs systems to support the electronic submission and handling of documentation required for customs declarations (paperless trade transactions) to mitigate and minimize risks of human interaction as experienced during COVID-19</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic cargo tracking system (registration of all cross-border trips through an approved regional platform and geotracking solutions system)</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The major regional economic communities acted swiftly in response to the outbreak and adopted guidelines for coordinated measures in their respective regions. There are, of course, broad similarities between the recommended actions in the various communities, as summarized in table 1, and salient features of these actions are highlighted under each community.
II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

B. East African Community subregion

22. The East African Community (EAC) is responding fervently to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the light of their specific vulnerabilities, all six partner States have a major stake in managing the pandemic and contributing significantly to mitigating its impact in the subregion. In addition to the member States’ own initiatives, EAC has unveiled a comprehensive COVID-19 response plan to reinforce measures to protect against and prevent further spread of the pandemic within the region, in line with the provisions of the EAC Common Market Protocol. The response plan was developed in response to a directive by the Joint Meeting of Ministers responsible for Health, Trade, Transport and EAC Affairs, which coordinates the Community response to the pandemic at the highest level.

23. According to the African Centres for Disease Control, the situation in the EAC subregion is changing very fast, and increased numbers of infections are being registered, as indicated on the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Dashboard. The subregion has also been on high alert because of the ever-present danger of Ebola and, in this regard, the countries’ various preparedness and response mechanisms are fairly well developed. As the diagnostic landscape of this outbreak is changing so quickly, however, the EAC partner States should be well equipped with all the necessary supplies, equipment and capacity to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent any further spread in the individual States and in the subregion as a whole. In addition, there is need for a well-coordinated and harmonized response and measures to ensure the availability of the essential goods and services in the subregion. Initial attempts by the Community to coordinate action by its member States were not very effective and there are continued fears that certain groups, in particular truck drivers, might be spreading the virus.

24. To date, the response has been predominantly managed at the partner State level with a limited number of subregional interventions coordinated by the EAC Regional Ad Hoc Coordination Committee. Key interventions and actions taken in the short term to contain the spread of the virus to promote mitigation regimes include the following:

(a) National guidelines issued by all EAC partner States specifying measures to curb the spread of the pandemic and facilitate the flow of goods and services;

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4 Available at https://africacdc.org/covid-19/.


6 The EAC Regional Ad Hoc Coordination Committee (renamed the Regional Taskforce on COVID-19) is linked to the national task force of each partner State and works closely with implementing agencies, including the United Nations, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GIZ), Trade Mark East Africa, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United States Agency for International Development for Kenya and East Africa (USAID-KEA).
(b) EAC administrative guidelines, whose objectives are to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted movement of goods and services, through trade facilitation, measures to encourage the local production of essential goods, safe handling of cargo at ports of entry and internal borders, facilitation of cashless payments, enhanced sub-regional awareness of measures to combat the pandemic; and mitigate its negative impact on the movement of goods and services;

(c) Development of a comprehensive COVID-19 response plan to reinforce national measures to protect and prevent further spread of the pandemic, including such key steps as the strengthening of awareness-raising programmes; ensuring access to infection, prevention and control materials, laboratory supplies and equipment by EAC partner States and the Community’s organs and institutions; strengthening the subregion’s capacity for COVID-19 surveillance, resource mobilization, research and other measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on vital economic and social sectors, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and transporters and transporters’ associations, which have been directed to enforce the requirement that trucks should have only two or three operators, including the driver;

(d) Bilateral engagements between the partner States to assess the multi-agency cargo clearance procedures and their coordination, while combating the spread of COVID-19 across borders, to identify the challenges faced by the border agencies involved in the clearance of goods and crew and to agree on operational interventions, including the adoption of a harmonized system for the certification and sharing of COVID-19 test results;

(e) All the EAC partner States are also implementing guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO) on facilitating the movement of goods in such a way as to contain the spread of COVID-19;

(f) EAC is working with partner States and development partners to mobilize efforts by a range of stakeholders to achieve a broad coalition of strengthened preparedness against COVID-19 in the subregion. These include airport authorities in partner States’ points of entry, government regulatory agencies at border crossings and other regional and subregional organizations.

25. In the medium to long term, the secretariat is developing a comprehensive COVID-19 recovery plan to direct efforts towards medium-term interventions (over a period of two—three years) that is aimed at mitigating the fundamental impacts of the pandemic on the various vital economic and social sectors of the subregion in a sustained and progressive manner. It is expected that the plan will assist in restoring the pre-crisis status of the subregion in terms of trade, transit facilitation and investment, with the aim of facilitating
the full recovery of its growth trajectory and simplifying the harmonized and coherent implementation of priority activities that will promote economic recovery and ensure the future prosperity of the subregion.

C. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa subregion

1. Country-level response

26. With the onset of COVID-19 in the subregion, countries responded in three ways: some put in place restrictive measures to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19; others adopted moderate restrictions; and others still opted to assess the situation first before taking response decisions.

27. In response to the threat of COVID-19, COMESA member States put in place a range of strict measures in order to prevent the spread of the disease in their individual countries. As these actions were uncoordinated, they would invariably have led to the disruption of cargo movements with a negative impact on trade. Consequently, COMESA ministers responsible for regional trade developed subregional guidelines on the movement of goods and services across the subregion, which were adopted by the Council of Ministers at the eighth extraordinary meeting on 14 May 2020.

28. The guidelines take into consideration the guidelines provided by the African Union, WCO and WHO, and also those prepared by EAC and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), whose memberships overlap with that of COMESA. The overriding principle of the guidelines is to apply common measures on trade corridors and border points in order to maintain the safe flow of goods and services within the subregion. The 21 member States were therefore expected to incorporate these guidelines into their national response measures to the COVID-19 outbreak.7

29. Member States are urged, where required, to impose restrictions in an objective and fair manner on the cross-border and local transport of goods and passengers, in accordance with article 50 of the COMESA treaty on the grounds of public health, where those restrictions are:

(a) Transparent, in other words, disclosed in public statements and documents;

(b) Directly linked to COVID-19 justifications;

(c) Proportionate – namely, do not go beyond what is strictly necessary;

(d) Relevant and mode-specific – in other words, restrictions on any of the different transport modes must be adapted to that mode;

(e) Non-discriminatory.

---

7 Guidelines for the Movement of Goods and Services Across COMESA Region During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total cases</th>
<th>New cases</th>
<th>Total tests</th>
<th>Tests per million inhabitants</th>
<th>Total cases per million inhabitants</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
<th>Deaths per million inhabitants</th>
<th>Total recovered</th>
<th>Total active cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>4 501</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>40 855</td>
<td>41 379</td>
<td>4 559</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>3 183</td>
<td>1 275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>4 837</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>4 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>46 289</td>
<td>10 845</td>
<td>135 000</td>
<td>1 320</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>1 672</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>12 329</td>
<td>32 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eswatini</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>6 551</td>
<td>5 649</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>3 521</td>
<td>1 365</td>
<td>186 985</td>
<td>1 629</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>2 841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>3 727</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>118 701</td>
<td>2 210</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1 286</td>
<td>2 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>14 029</td>
<td>2 043</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1 290</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>15 981</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>8 351</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>137 789</td>
<td>108 351</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>94 059</td>
<td>7 271</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>2 642</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>1 932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>7 435</td>
<td>1 193</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>2 720</td>
<td>4 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1 110</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60 872</td>
<td>5 153</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>148 442</td>
<td>3 251</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1 382</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>45 248</td>
<td>2 465</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1 142</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52 905</td>
<td>3 562</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>80 703</td>
<td>16 592</td>
<td>1 066 551</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 656</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25 541</td>
<td>52 506</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

30. The guidelines cover the following specific aspects of coordination:

- (a) Facilitating the cross-border movement of relief and essential supplies;
- (b) Transport of goods and cross-border freight transport operations;
- (c) Cross-border road passenger transport;
- (d) Air transport;
- (e) Other modes of cross-border transport;
- (f) Regulation and control of trucks and other road vehicles, aircraft and vessels carrying essential goods and services;
- (g) Handling of cargo at ports of entry;
- (h) Movement of goods in transit and inland deliveries;
- (i) Support for the economy by customs and revenue authorities, and ensuring the sustained supply chain continuity;
- (j) Trade in services;
- (k) Monitoring and evaluation mechanism and sharing of best practices.

31. A template was developed for reporting updates of COVID-19-related measures taken by member States and related information, covering the following elements:

- (a) COVID-19 cases – weekly national situational update (as of reported date);
- (b) Country measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (weekly report);
- (c) Monthly update on the trade flow of goods (import, export and cross-border transit) (value in United States dollars);
- (d) Monthly update on the trade flow of goods (import, export and cross-border transit) (top 20 goods by source and destination).

2. Post-COVID pandemic actions

32. Promotion of the private sector: African Governments must provide and sustain a conducive environment for the private sector to expand its production capacities, enhance competitiveness and reduce overreliance on extra-African imports, even for basic commodities.

33. Expanding the pharmaceuticals sector: The pharmaceuticals sector is a major component of intra-COMESA trade. Regional cooperation is essential for expanding its production and boosting intra-African trade.

34. Implementation of digital trade facilitation and other instruments: These instruments are key to mitigating vulnerability to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, implementation of the COMESA digital free trade area, designed to promote e-commerce, should now be hastened,
## Table 3: Response to COVID-19: COMESA subregion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of cases (latest date 19 June 2020)</th>
<th>First case</th>
<th>Borders open to cargo</th>
<th>Designated transit routes</th>
<th>Designated truck stops</th>
<th>Use of electronic systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>31 March</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>30 April</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>5 250</td>
<td>10 March</td>
<td>Air only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-payments; ASYCUDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>5 000</td>
<td>18 March</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Online payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>50 000</td>
<td>14 February</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-trading support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>21 March</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eswatini</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>13 March</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>13 March</td>
<td>Partial; Sudan border closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-payments; mobile banking; money transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4 500</td>
<td>13 March</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>E-payments;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3 April</td>
<td>Joint exports with Tunisia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-documents; e-payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>1 400</td>
<td>20 March</td>
<td>Air cargo; ports open</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>2 April</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>13 April</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>8 March</td>
<td>Yes; partial closure with Uganda</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rwanda electronic single window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14 March</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>2 750</td>
<td>16 March</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>8 000</td>
<td>13 March</td>
<td>Yes; closed with Ethiopia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>2 March</td>
<td>Joint exports with Libya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E-banking;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

together with the creation of an online platform for sharing information on the availability of essential products during the COVID-19 pandemic.

D. Southern African Development Community subregion

1. Country-level response

35. SADC member States have continued to implement control measures of varying intensity to suppress or minimize transmission, depending on the transmission scenario that each country is facing. Many countries in the region have also implemented additional large-scale public health and social measures, including movement restrictions, the closure of schools and businesses, quarantines across geographical areas and international travel restrictions.

36. Following the declaration by WHO of COVID-19 as a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, SADC recorded its first case of COVID-19 in early March and, since then, numbers have continued to increase. In addition to measures put in place by its member States, SADC has also adopted regional measures that are critical in responding to the pandemic.

37. Cross-border movement is one of the essential services that need to be sustained and facilitated during the COVID-19 period in order to ensure the timely delivery of essential supplies and commodities in member States. More than 80 per cent of imported and exported goods in the SADC subregion are transported via the road network. COVID-19-related lockdowns in member States and the associated public health measures resulted, however, in significant delays in the movement of cargo vehicles and subsequently in the delivery of essential supplies to the point of use.

38. These uncoordinated actions resulted in congestions at border posts, due in part to the lack of harmonization of public health measures, such as testing and quarantine policies. To remedy this shortcoming, SADC developed its guidelines on the harmonization and facilitation of cross-border transport operations across the subregion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Key dates</th>
<th>Trade facilitation measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of cases (latest date 19 June 2020)</td>
<td>First case 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>18 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1 400</td>
<td>13 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20 March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ compilation, 2020.

Note: ASYCUDA – UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data.
### Table 4: SADC COVID-19 status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Angola</th>
<th>Republic of Tanzania</th>
<th>Democratic Republic of the Congo</th>
<th>Zambia</th>
<th>Namibia</th>
<th>Botswana</th>
<th>Zimbabwe</th>
<th>Mozambique</th>
<th>Madagascar</th>
<th>Eswatini</th>
<th>Lesotho</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Mauritius</th>
<th>Comoros</th>
<th>Seychelles</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total confirmed</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>6 827</td>
<td>1 531</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>2 078</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1 38 134</td>
<td></td>
<td>341</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total recovered</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>1 233</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68 925</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total deaths</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2456</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active cases</td>
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<td>305</td>
<td>5 685</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>1 116</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>66 753</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>153 630</td>
<td>73 904</td>
<td>2 718</td>
<td>76 986</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Authors' calculation based on SADC COVID-19 status update.*

*Available at https://www.sadc.int/issues/covid-19/.*
II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial guidelines were approved by the SADC Council of Ministers on 6 April 2020, but were subsequently revised by the Council at its extraordinary meeting on 23 June 2020. The revised guidelines were supplemented with subregional standard operating procedures for the management and monitoring of cross-border road transport at designated points of entry and COVID-19 checkpoints. The stated objectives of the revised guidelines were to:

(a) Limit the spread of COVID-19 through transport across borders;

(b) Facilitate the implementation of transport-related national COVID-19 measures in cross-border transportation;

(c) Facilitate the inter-State flow of goods and services;

(d) Institute safe measures to allow movement of passengers across borders;

(e) Balance, align, harmonize and coordinate COVID-19 response measures with the requirements for trade and transport facilitation;

(f) Promote safe trade and transport facilitation for economic growth and poverty alleviation in the SADC subregion;

(g) Facilitate the adoption and implementation of harmonized standard operating procedures for management and monitoring of cross-border road transport at designated points of entry and COVID-19 checkpoints.

40. The guidelines facilitate and support member States in implementing policies and measures to combat COVID-19 recommended by WHO, WCO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and SADC, and are also designed to facilitate coordination with EAC and COMESA. They cover the following areas:

(a) Cross-border road freight transport operations, including the regulation of trade and transport; simplification and automation of trade and transport facilitation processes and documents; and information-sharing among member States;

(b) Cross-border road passenger transport;

(c) Regulation of other modes of cross-border transport, including air, rail, inland waterways and maritime transport, and actions by governments, transport operators and transport operators’ associations;

(d) Regulation and control of trucks and other vehicles carrying goods and services;


9 Ibid.
(e) Need for prior consultations and restraint from unilateral actions;

(f) Monitoring, review and sharing of best practices.

41. In order to ensure the proper implementation of the guidelines, member States have agreed to establish national transport and trade facilitation committees or to use similar structures comprising officials from the ministries responsible for transport, health, police, army and trade to coordinate the implementation of the guidelines and resolve operational issues at borders or roadblocks.

42. Member States are using the guidelines and aligning them with national laws and procedures. In addition, other stakeholders – such as the SADC Business Council, private sector transport operators and corridor management institutions, among others – are aligning the regional guidelines with their own internal procedures.

2. Post-COVID pandemic actions

43. SADC publishes a regular bulletin on the SADC response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which tracks progress in the implementation of the above guidelines. In the process, it has identified a number of issues which could constitute options for future policy action; key among these are the following:

(a) Increased use of information and communications technology (ICT) capabilities: SADC member States are urged to invest in enhancing ICT their capabilities to ensure business continuity, with a concomitant positive ripple effect on economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the critical need for smart digital technologies and solutions, sometimes referred to as “smart corridors”. Given the effects of the lockdown in the public offices of many countries, businesses such as supermarkets and pharmacies and also academic institutions have worked to enhance their digital and technological capabilities to enable telecommuting, online transactions, online shopping, online education and telemedicine during this time;

(b) Development and implementation of the Corridor Trip Monitoring System (CTMS) in East and Southern African regional transport corridors: CTMS is an electronic system that records driver health status, notably, COVID-19 test results, and enables public health officials to verify results, monitor and track the movement of drivers and crew members and, when necessary, perform contact tracing and thereby facilitate the management of safe transit in cross-border road transport operations. Accordingly, CTMS will assist member States in the implementation of standard operating procedures for safe transport and trade in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

(c) Diversification of energy sources: To support ICT infrastructure in different settings, alternative ener-
gy sources may be required, such as the installation of solar grids in communities where electricity is in short supply. Experts have projected that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue into the foreseeable future: the role of ICT cannot therefore be overstated;

(d) **Collaboration among member States:** This may include such measures as joint border clearance of goods;

(e) **Designated truck stops and checkpoints:** These should be developed to provide services to truck drivers;

(f) **Public-private partnerships:** Facilities should be provided for truck operators, such as truck stops, hygiene requirements, resting facilities and others, and public security should be assured by the police, to protect drivers and property;

(g) **Local manufacturing:** The private sector should be engaged in efforts to facilitate the local production of supplies such as personal protective equipment and other essential products.

### E. Economic Community of West African States subregion

#### 1. Country-level response

44. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) continues to support its member States in their efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. The Commission is closely monitoring the evolution of the pandemic in the world and, in particular, in West Africa. The WHO declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic resulted in instant responses by all countries of the world. Measures taken by individual ECOWAS member States included the closure of land borders and airports to block ingress of the virus into the subregion, the establishment of high-level COVID-19 response committees, regular inter-agency coordination and collaboration, and the streamlining of procedures, reducing the time needed to clear essential goods and the provision of temporary duty relief for such goods.

45. The Authority of ECOWAS held an extraordinary summit on 23 April 2020 and directed the Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Transport, Logistics and Trade to develop a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the ECOWAS subregion. In order to ensure high-level coordination of all the subregional efforts to contain the pandemic, participants at the summit designated the President of Nigeria as the ECOWAS Champion President of the COVID-19 response and eradication process.

46. At their meetings on 12. and 16 June 2020, the ministers agreed on draft guidelines for the harmonization and facilitation of cross-border trade and transport in the ECOWAS subregion and on COVID-19 pandemic and related post-recovery actions. The guidelines provide a framework for a harmonized approach to curb the spread
Table 5: ECOWAS COVID-19 status

COVID-19 ECOWAS regional update
30 June 2020
- New confirmed cases: 1,484
- New deaths: 31
- New recovered: 1,112

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benin</th>
<th>Burkina Faso</th>
<th>Cabo Verde</th>
<th>Côte d’Ivoire</th>
<th>The Gambia</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Guinea</th>
<th>Guinea-Bissau</th>
<th>Liberia</th>
<th>Mali</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
<th>Sierra Leone</th>
<th>Togo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total confirmed</td>
<td>1,199</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>9,499</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>17,741</td>
<td>5,391</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>2,181</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>25,694</td>
<td>6,793</td>
<td>1,462</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total recovered</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>4,273</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13,268</td>
<td>4,326</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>9,746</td>
<td>4,431</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total deaths</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active cases</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>5,158</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4,361</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>15,358</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case fatality rate (CFR) 1.7%

Source: ECOWAS COVID-19 daily situation dashboard.*
* Available at https://www.ecowas.int/covid-19/the-status-within-ecowas-member-states/.
II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

of the pandemic and steer the reopening of cross-border trading and transportation.

47. The specific objectives of the guidelines are the following:

(a) To define immediate measures to ensure a seamless process and to facilitate the movement of personnel and the supply of medical equipment, essential goods and personnel in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic among ECOWAS member States;

(b) To facilitate the coordinated implementation of transport-related national COVID-19 measures in cross-border transport;

(c) To ensure the harmonization of operational guidelines for the reopening of air, land and sea borders in line with international industry best practices, in order to restore user confidence while preventing the spread of COVID-19 across borders.

48. The guidelines provide details on the following specific aspects:

(a) Safe and gradual restoration of passenger transport: All modes of transport services are to be gradually restored while taking into account, as a priority, the health of travellers and workers in the transport sector;

(b) Use of mobile apps to collect relevant information on passengers to strengthen contact tracing and warning measures;

(c) Practical guidance on specific measures to ensure passenger safety in all modes of transport in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak;

49. The guidelines spell out measures which take account of the specific characteristics and needs of each mode of transport:

(a) Air transport, covering aircraft and their crews and airports;

(b) Cross-border land transport and free movement, covering the cross-border mobility of persons, border formalities and transit formalities; the designation of specific points of entry; and the strengthening of their capacity according to the international health regulations. For this purpose, ECOWAS was to work with member States to designate target entry points based on the numbers of travellers, access to health care, connectivity to priority populations and locations, strength of the surveillance system and coordination with neighbouring countries;

(c) Sea ports: as ports provide essential services to international trade, these must therefore remain open, as far as possible, to ships and intermodal connections and port authorities and related services must function in line with IMO recommendations.

50. To facilitate the essential trade in COVID-19 pandemic-related goods and services and, in that context, to facilitate the movement of goods across
borders and the import of products and other emergency shipments in response to the pandemic, member States are encouraged:

(a) To treat COVID-19 medical supplies as relief goods that benefit from customs simplified procedures;

(b) To implement simplified customs procedures as stated in the ECOWAS Customs Code;

(c) To implement risk management measures to allow low-risk critical supplies to quickly pass clearance controls;

(d) To ensure the rapid deployment of the Interconnected System for the Management of Goods in Transit (SIGMAT) in all member States, to ensure the speedy and safe clearance of transit goods at the borders;

(e) To promote the use of ICT to support trade, such as single windows and trade information portals;

(f) To enhance border management coordination mechanisms, both at the policy level and at the operational level (ports, airports and border posts) to facilitate the import of critical supplies (including medical and food items);

(g) To adhere to provisions of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme;

(h) To ensure that the national administrative measures taken as part of the effort to combat the coronavirus do not have a negative impact on the free movement of goods within the territory of the Community;

(i) To ensure that market closures, the establishment of curfews and restrictions on the movement of persons and other such measures, although necessary, must not prevent the seamless movement of goods from production areas to consumption areas;

(j) To promote the development and implementation of e-commerce initiatives to limit physical interaction through such measures as providing adequate ICT infrastructure, adopting or revising relevant policies such as data privacy and cybersecurity laws, and promoting a cashless policy, including the use of mobile payment systems.

51. Where civil society, media and subregional stakeholders in transport, trade and logistics are concerned, and considering the need for both public and private sector stakeholders to join forces to fight the pandemic, the guidelines call on private sector entities:

(a) To support ECOWAS and related subregional agencies in monitoring the implementation of the guidelines;

(b) To support advocacy and awareness-raising efforts with all stakeholders, in particular at local levels of governance, municipalities and industry groups;
II. Response by the regional economic communities to COVID-19 in Africa

(c) To conduct regular studies to assess the impact of the pandemic on regional trade, transport and the free movement of persons;

(d) To report on the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions in the member States of the Community.

52. With regard to information sharing, the West African Health Organization (WAHO) continues to coordinate with member State health and disease control agencies to collate and share harmonized sets of data on the COVID-19 pandemic in the ECOWAS subregion. To this end, the ECOWAS Commission will work in collaboration with regional agencies and together with heads of ECOWAS national units to acquire information about the state of transport, logistics and trade in their respective countries.

53. Monitoring and evaluation are affected by ensuring that existing structures and committees at the national level responsible for trade facilitation, roll-out of the ECOWAS trade liberalization scheme, transport and free movement are fully engaged in monitoring the implementation of these guidelines in their respective countries. Member States should designate lead ministries to coordinate activities at the national level while ensuring compliance with these guidelines in harmony with neighbouring member States.

54. At the regional level, clear databases of passenger movements (passenger health data) are to be drawn up to enhance the traceability of COVID-19 cases across borders. The respective sector departments in the ECOWAS Commission, WAHO and related agencies and institutions will jointly monitor developments in member States and ensure a harmonized set of activities in the opening up process.

55. In the medium to long term, specific technical studies will be commissioned to compile empirical evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on regional transport and trade, which will inform decision-making in the ECOWAS subregion.

2. Post-COVID-19 pandemic actions

56. Measures undertaken in the subregion in preparation for the post-pandemic period include the following:

(a) Use of mobile apps to collect relevant information on passengers to strengthen contact tracing and warning measures;

(b) Ensuring the rapid deployment of SIGMAT in all member States to ensure the speedy and safer clearance of transit goods at the borders;

(c) Increased use of ICT to support trade, including single windows and trade information portals;

(d) Promoting the development and implementation of e-commerce initiatives to limit physical interaction by, among other measures, providing adequate ICT infrastructure, adopting or revising relevant policies such as data privacy and cybersecurity laws, and promoting a cashless policy, including the use of mobile payment systems.
F. Economic Community of Central African States subregion

57. According to United Nations sources, the first case of COVID-19 in the Central Africa subregion was reported on 6 March 2020, and the subregion caseload rose to a confirmed total of 22,000 cases across 11 countries by mid-June 2020. The pandemic has resulted in an economic crisis with new projections that the Central Africa region is likely to experience a 2.3 per cent contraction in growth. Ministers of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) held a high-level meeting on 3 and 4 June 2020 at which they adopted a four-pronged regional response strategy to combat COVID-19 and its implications in Central Africa, namely:

(a) Containment to prevent the spread of the virus;

(b) Limiting the death rate and managing positive cases;

(c) Tackling the socioeconomic impact;

(d) Responding to cross-border security issues resulting from the pandemic.

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Impact of COVID-19 on international trade

A. Case of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa member States

58. The present section provides a brief overview of trade flows prior to and after the COVID-19 pandemic through the borders of five COMESA member States – Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia – and forms part of an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on trade and transport in Africa. The five countries provide a representative sample of landlocked transit countries in Southern Africa (Malawi, Zimbabwe) and East Africa (Uganda, Rwanda), and of the continent’s island developing countries (Madagascar).

59. The section presents initial results of the tracking of trade flows in the COMESA subregion as a whole, as part of the assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade in Africa. This assessment is based on the returns of a survey conducted by the COMESA secretariat among its member States and will be updated on a country-by-country basis as data are made available by COMESA member States.¹²

60. It is evident from the data that all countries experienced a significant drop in all aspects of trade (imports, exports and customs duty receipts) between March and April 2020. This corresponds to the timeline of the pandemic: COVID-19 was first reported in Africa in mid-March, and most African countries instituted various forms of containment and prevention measures. The drop in trade in April was a logical consequence. The chart in figure 1 summarizes the key outcomes and measures taken by member States in response to the onset of COVID-19 in Africa.

¹² Available at https://comstat.comesa.int/.
Impact of COVID-19 on Transport and Trade in Africa

Figure 1: COVID-19 impact on selected member States, January–May 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key messages</th>
<th>Facilitation measures introduced</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports grew steadily from some $250 million in January to a peak of $270 million in March; they declined sharply by 32 per cent in the month of April to $175 million; a further 25 per cent decline to $125 million is forecast for May.</td>
<td>Introduction of a COVID-19 criterion in the ASYCUDA World system.</td>
<td>Time taken to clear consignments due to major checks on drivers and passengers by medical personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs duty receipts declined by 27 per cent in April compared to March. For the month of May 2020, customs receipts are forecast to decline by 9 per cent.</td>
<td>Introduction of CPC495, which eliminates taxes on essential goods for the management of the crisis.</td>
<td>Reduced customs receipts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports declined by 14 per cent in April compared to March.</td>
<td>Setting up a subsection within the centralized Declaration Processing Centre solely to track clearance of COVID-19 imports.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2020 Imports, US$
### III. Impact of COVID-19 on international trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key messages</th>
<th>Facilitation measures introduced</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volumes of import traffic declined overall by 25 per cent between April and March. In value terms, overall imports declined by 27 per cent.</td>
<td>Processing of exports at inland ports to reduce congestion at border posts.</td>
<td>Use of e-payments still low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export traffic volumes declined by 3 per cent.</td>
<td>Greater use of pre-arrival processing and use of e-payment systems available with all commercial banks.</td>
<td>Pre-arrival processing still not done by all importers and exporters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export and import volumes of traffic will decline by 17 per cent in May.</td>
<td>Pre-registration and lodgement of declarations to customs.</td>
<td>Relay system of drivers introduced at selected borders not operational owing to lack of relief drivers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs duty receipts declined by 36 per cent in April compared to March.</td>
<td>Extensions of working hours to clear increased traffic.</td>
<td>Suspension of some cargo flights into the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Escorting trucks carrying essential goods and medical supplies.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Imports, Millions US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHIRUNDU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact of COVID-19 on Transport and Trade in Africa

**Key messages**

**Rwanda**

Imports declined by 32 per cent in April compared to March.

Exports declined by 8 per cent in April compared to March 2020.

Customs duty receipts declined by 55 per cent in April compared to March.

- Establishment of a dry port near the border that operates round the clock and all customs services extended to facilitate faster clearance of essential and relief goods at the first point of entry.
- Immediate release of relief goods based on risk management and pre-clearance mechanism of essential goods.
- Use of online services available in the Rwanda electronic single window system.
- Engagement with private and public stakeholders (clearing and forwarding association, importers, exporters, warehouse operators and the general public) to facilitate clearance of essential goods.
- Flexibility in paying duties and taxes for essential goods by granting instalment facility.

**Facilitation measures introduced**

- Reduction in tax collection.
- Testing and management of drivers at entry points.
- Escorting of transit goods to exit borders to minimize contacts with local people.
- Time taken to clear consignments due to major checks on drivers and passengers by medical personnel.
- Reduced customs receipts.

**Challenges**

- Testing and management of drivers at entry points.
- Escorting of transit goods to exit borders to minimize contacts with local people.
- Time taken to clear consignments due to major checks on drivers and passengers by medical personnel.
- Reduced customs receipts.

---

**2020 Imports, Millions US$**

- **January**
- **February**
- **March**
- **April**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Borders</td>
<td>300.0</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>150.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rwanda</td>
<td>300.0</td>
<td>250.0</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>150.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Impact of COVID-19 on international trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key messages</th>
<th>Facilitation measures introduced</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>Testing of drivers prior to transiting through Uganda.</td>
<td>Lengthy testing of truck drivers thereby causing long queues at the border.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Online engagement with clients.</td>
<td>Insufficient personal protective equipment for other border agencies working closely with customs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borders closed to non-goods (travellers not permitted to cross).</td>
<td>Reduced customs receipts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs duty receipts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2020 Imports, Millions US$**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Other Borders</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Total</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key messages

**Madagascar**

- Imports declined by 26 per cent in April compared to March 2020. Provisional figures for May 2020 imports showed an increase of 36 per cent.
- Customs duty receipts declined by 27 per cent in April compared to March 2020.

### Facilitation measures introduced

- Prompt admission of goods into the country closely linked to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as basic necessities, drugs, medical materials and medical instruments.
- Exemption from duties and taxes on the importation of relief consignments.
- Other customs formalities processed electronically (authorizations, value requests, complaints, etc.).
- Closure of international airports.
- To promote trade balance, incentives for Malagasy operators to export more were introduced.
- Increased trade facilitation – reduction of customs clearance time.

### Challenges

- Reduction or suspension of transport activities and services (air, sea, land and rail).
- Reduced customs receipts.

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Customs Duty, Receipts, US$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>January</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamatave-Port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Authors' compilation, 2020.
B. Finance for trade facilitation measures

61. Trade finance has been a key catalyst in the expansion of international trade in the past. More specifically, trade finance provides the fluidity and security needed to allow for the movement of goods and services. Given its increasing importance in the international and regional trading system, trade finance has been incorporated as a group of measures into the study. The intention was to gauge the rate of implementation of trade finance and trade facilitation measures and also the range of financial services and products available in the region.

62. Coupled with the scarcity of financing in general and specifically trade financing, COVID19 is causing serious damage to the region. In 2019 alone, the trade finance gap in the continent was estimated by the African Development Bank at $82 billion.13 The cost of financial transactions is increasing, as working with financial institutions in the region is perceived to be riskier than before. The issuance of letters of credit and other trade finance instruments is becoming difficult, if they are available at all, and the appetite for correspondent banking is decreasing each day as the crisis unfolds.

63. According to our survey, measures aimed at introducing more flexibility to the terms and conditions of official support have been the most widespread across COMESA countries. Although many of the measures appear to be focused on existing transactions (such as deadline deferrals, flexibilities relating to claim policies and repayments), some are also directed towards new potential transactions,

Figure 2: Constraints on trade finance supply


such as increased cover and down payment flexibilities. In addition, measures designed to increase the availability of working capital financing, such as the implementation of new programmes and expansion of existing programmes, as a response to the observed shock on supply seem very popular among trade insurance and credit agencies.

64. Since the effects of the pandemic on the economy are still unclear, measures taken by regional economic communities, banks, development finance institutions and governments are likely to evolve as more light is shed on the possible trade financing gaps. At the same time, as international finance institutions and governments set up financial facilities to support businesses and critical sectors, part of the solution should entail setting up rapid emergency facilities such as trade finance lines and risk mitigation instruments designed to support banks, small and medium-sized enterprises and other local companies. In addition, the trade facilitation efforts which were intensified during the coronavirus crisis should be continued, to ensure that any new safety requirements do not become new trade barriers. For instance, the regional business community, under the umbrella of the COMESA Business Council, have urged member States to facilitate the movement of transit essential cargo across the region through pre-clearance or prompter clearance, thereby reducing the risk of infections at the border posts.

65. Fast-tracking elements of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area negotiations which have already been completed would reshape and go a long way towards overcoming existing border disruptions induced by the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitating the movement of essential goods that are needed to save lives and facilitate sustainable recovery beyond the pandemic. Accordingly, these continental mechanisms and provisions on trade facilitation, transit and customs cooperation offer a foundation for building greater coordination within and among the regional economic communities and at the national level to enable rapid recoveries, following the V-shaped economic recovery pattern, and a more inclusive path.14

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A. Overview

66. Landlocked developing countries are particularly vulnerable to cross-border restrictions and border closures, given their dependency on transit transport to reach international markets. Whereas most of the transport measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have exempted the movement of essential commodities, while introducing necessary sanitary and health requirements, this does not mean that cargo has been able to move freely across borders. Border closures, travel restrictions and heightened screening procedures have resulted in long queues at land borders and congestion at ports and airports across the world.

67. In some countries, infrastructure at inland border-crossing points is extremely precarious, not only posing additional challenges to the processes at borders, but also exposing staff to higher contagion risks. The COVID-19 pandemic has also already begun to generate negative impacts on imports from landlocked developing countries.

68. There are 16 landlocked developing countries in Africa, the majority of which are located in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregions (figure 3). The landlocked countries are connected to international trade by various transport transit routes developed jointly with the neighbouring transit and coastal countries through respective international agreements. These are termed “transit transport corridors”. Table 6 shows the major transit transport corridors in Africa.
Impact of COVID-19 on Transport and Trade in Africa

69. There are six small island developing States in Africa: Cabo Verde, the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, and Seychelles. Their economies rely heavily on tourism and the service industry, in particular in Cabo Verde, Mauritius and Seychelles and, to a lesser extent, the Comoros. Madagascar is largely an agricultural country, while Sao Tome and Principe is heavily reliant on oil exports.

70. The timely provision of support is helping landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in the region to avoid an immediate crisis, but a long-term rescue and comprehensive recovery plan will be needed to steer their economies towards meaningful structural changes. The cost of inaction or delayed action will be excessively high, as resulting economic crises, joblessness and hunger...
Impact of COVID-19 on transit transport in both groups of countries will inevitably fuel conflicts that will affect not only them but also their neighbours and the wider region beyond their immediate borders.

B. Northern Corridor

1. Introduction

71. Transit and transport operations in the Northern Corridor of East Africa are coordinated through the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority, which is made up of six member States: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. The Corridor is anchored in the port of Mombasa, traverses Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, and ends at various points on the borders of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan (figure 4).

72. Since the declaration by WHO of COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, the disease has continued to spread across the world, including in the Northern Corridor subregion,
where it has had a devastating effect on its population. The Northern Corridor subregion started registering cases in March 2020. Countries had put in place measures to prevent the spread before that date, however.

73. The COVID-19 pandemic struck when the Northern Corridor region was performing well. The overall share of intra-Northern Corridor trade had been increasing over the years. For instance, in 2018, intra-Northern Corridor trade grew by about 2 per cent for Burundi; 13 per cent for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 33 per cent for Kenya; 14 per cent for Rwanda; and 38 per cent for Uganda. Similarly, over the period January–December 2019, the port of Mombasa handled 34,439,264 tons of cargo, representing a growth of 3,515,976 tons or 11.4 per cent compared to the 30,923,288 tons registered in the corresponding period in 2018.

74. Before the pandemic, transit times had improved on most routes along the Northern Corridor, suggesting that interventions to facilitate cargo movement were bearing fruit. Weighbridge crossing times also improved following implementation of the high-speed weigh in motion system. There is still

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15Northern Corridor Digest, April 2020. Available at www.ttcanc.org/documents/NCTTCA_Newsletter_April%202020
IV. Impact of COVID-19 on transit transport

room for improvement, however; projects key to improvement are those to develop the road infrastructure around the port of Mombasa and in the Northern Corridor member States, the standard gauge railway and the regional electronic cargo tracking system along the Corridor.\textsuperscript{16}

75. The Northern Corridor Transport Observatory has been developed as a tool for monitoring operations at specific nodes in the Corridor. It is an online platform that currently tracks 49 performance indicators covering maritime, port, transit and border-crossing points. The indicators are defined in the Mombasa Port and Northern Corridor Community Charter.\textsuperscript{17} These nodes therefore provide a logical framework for collecting data and analysing corridor performance.

76. Available data show that the number of ships calling at the port of Mombasa has not significantly changed in the first few months of 2020 compared to 2019, averaging 43 ships per month. This number was expected to be higher in 2020, however, had it not been for the pandemic.

77. Cargo throughput measures the total volume of cargo discharged and loaded at the port. It includes breakbulk, liquid bulk, dry bulk, containerized cargo, transit cargo and trans-shipments. Overall port cargo volumes for the period January–March 2020 totalled 8,612,484 tons, only a slight increase over the 8,545,503 tons registered in the same period in 2019 (table 7).

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Throughput traffic January–March 2020 compared to same period in 2019}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Type of cargo & January–March 2019 & January–March 2020 & Volume change & Growth (percentage) & Share of total throughput of 2019 (percentage) & Share of total throughput of 2020 (percentage) \\
\hline
Non-container & & & & & & \\
\hline
Dry bulk & 2 090 844 & 2 242 463 & 151 619 & 7.3\% & 24.5\% & 26.0\% \\
\hline
Liquid bulk & 2 181 549 & 2 147 418 & -34 131 & -1.6\% & 25.5\% & 24.9\% \\
\hline
Conventional & 378 691 & 445 648 & 66 957 & 17.\% & 4.4\% & 5.2\% \\
\hline
Subtotal & 4 651 084 & 4 835 529 & 184 445 & 4.0\% & 54.4\% & 56.1\% \\
\hline
Containerized & 3 894 419 & 3 776 955 & -117 464 & -3.0\% & 45.6\% & 43.9\% \\
\hline
Total & 8 545 503 & 8 612 484 & 66 981 & 0.8\% & 100.0\% & 100.0\% \\
\hline
Import/export & & & & & & \\
\hline
Imports & 6 809 210 & 6 997 611 & 188 392 & 2.8\% & 79.7\% & 81.2\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17}Available at http://www.ttcanc.org/documents/Port_Comm_Charter_Final.pdf.
Impact of COVID-19 on Transport and Trade in Africa

78. Containerized cargo traffic declined from 348,204 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) to 340,812 TEU (2.1 per cent decline) over the same period, also as a result of COVID-19 effects that led to the cancellation of a few ships. It should be noted that the port received most of the notices of cancellation in March 2020 and this will affect the performance of the port in the coming months. Table 8 shows the total volume of container cargo discharged and loaded at the port and includes trans-shipment. It is noted that there has been some decline in container traffic in 2020, which may also be attributed in part to the effects of COVID-19.

79. As an essential service provider, the port of Mombasa has been operating round the clock during this period to ensure business continuity. Most of the agencies involved in the clearing of goods at the port have continued to work during this period.

80. All performance measures have not shown major changes, with only a slight increase in container cargo dwell time. “Container dwell time” refers to the period from the moment that cargo is offloaded at the port of Mombasa to the moment it leaves the port premises after all clearances have been obtained. It includes the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cargo</th>
<th>January–March 2019</th>
<th>January–March 2020</th>
<th>Volume change</th>
<th>Growth (percentage)</th>
<th>Share of total throughput of 2019 (percentage)</th>
<th>Share of total throughput of 2020 (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>1 100 110</td>
<td>1 122 496</td>
<td>22 386</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-shipment</td>
<td>604 412</td>
<td>470 323</td>
<td>-134 089</td>
<td>-22.2%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restows</td>
<td>31 762</td>
<td>22 054</td>
<td>-9 708</td>
<td>-30.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8 545 503</td>
<td>8 612 484</td>
<td>66 981</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 8: Container traffic (in TEU)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>January–March 2019</th>
<th>January–March 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Imports     | Full               | 145 795            | 148 286   | 2 491 | 1.7 |
|             | Empty              | 2 901              | 3 712     | 811   | 28.0 |
|             | Total              | 148 696            | 151 988   | 3 302 | 2.2 |
| Exports     | Full               | 39 247             | 40 191    | 944   | 2.4 |
|             | Empty              | 112 064            | 105 858   | -6 206 | -5.5 |
|             | Total              | 151 311            | 146 049   | -5 262 | -3.5 |
IV. Impact of COVID-19 on transit transport

following intermediate stages: document processing centre; one-stop centre clearance; and delay after customs release.

81. Container dwell time hovered between 80 and 90 hours for most of the months until a major spike in October, when it reached 120 hours, then declined again in December 2019 to 102 hours, in January 2020 to 107 hours and in February 2020 to 92 hours, but remained above the target of 72 hours (figure 5).

82. Recent weekly data, however, show a significant drop in average dwell time in 2020, ranging between 40 and 80 hours and generally below the targeted 72 hours (figure 6). This in part reflects the increased evacuation of containers by rail, for which dwell time in 2019 averaged 40 hours, while that of road transport averaged 118 hours during the same period. The dwell time will further decline as a consequence of the expected increase in use of rail transport and use of inland container depots in Nairobi and Naivasha for transit traffic.

83. Recent protocols requiring that drivers be tested for COVID-19 before departure from the port is adding to the delay after customs release, thus contributing to the increase in cargo dwell time at the port of Mombasa. Lack of sufficient tests is reported as the main cause of delays, sometimes adding up to 10 days’ waiting time, thus leading to congestion at the port.\(^\text{18}\) This results in high freight costs, which have reportedly gone up by huge margins, with Kampala recording an increase of $1,000, Kigali $1,400, South Sudan $2,800, and Bujumbura $2,000.\(^\text{19}\)

\[\text{Indicator} \quad | \quad \text{January – March 2019} \quad | \quad \text{January – March 2020} \quad | \quad \text{Change} \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \]
\[\text{Trans-shipment} \quad | \quad \text{Full} \quad | \quad 36 \, 988 \quad | \quad 27 \, 703 \quad | \quad -9 \, 285 \quad | \quad -25.1 \quad | \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \text{Empty} \quad | \quad 9 \, 015 \quad | \quad 13 \, 660 \quad | \quad 4 \, 645 \quad | \quad 51.5 \quad | \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \text{Total} \quad | \quad 46 \, 003 \quad | \quad 41 \, 367 \quad | \quad -4 \, 640 \quad | \quad -10.1 \quad | \quad \]
\[\text{Restows} \quad | \quad \text{Full} \quad | \quad 1 \, 982 \quad | \quad 1 \, 391 \quad | \quad -584 \quad | \quad -29.5 \quad | \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \text{Empty} \quad | \quad 212 \quad | \quad 4 \quad | \quad -208 \quad | \quad -98.1 \quad | \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \text{Total} \quad | \quad 2 \, 194 \quad | \quad 1 \, 402 \quad | \quad -792 \quad | \quad -36.1 \quad | \quad \]
\[\text{Total} \quad | \quad \text{Full} \quad | \quad 224 \, 012 \quad | \quad 217 \, 578 \quad | \quad 6 \, 434 \quad | \quad -2.9 \quad | \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \text{Empty} \quad | \quad 124 \, 192 \quad | \quad 123 \, 234 \quad | \quad -958 \quad | \quad -0.8 \quad | \quad \]
\[\quad \quad \quad \quad \quad | \quad \text{Total} \quad | \quad 348 \, 204 \quad | \quad 340 \, 812 \quad | \quad -7 \, 392 \quad | \quad -2.3 \quad | \quad \]

\(\text{Source: Kenya Ports Authority, 2020.}\)
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84. Transit cargo through the port of Mombasa in 2019 accounted for 9,947,000 out of a total 34,440,000 tons, or 30 per cent of port throughput. The bulk of transit cargo in 2019 (82 per cent) was destined for Uganda. The other countries with cargo transiting through Uganda were South Sudan, accounting for the next largest share (7 per cent), Democratic Republic of the Congo (6 per cent) and Rwanda (2 per cent). Table 9 presents the breakdown of transit cargo through the port of Mombasa.

85. The traffic indicator measures the average number of trucks weighed per day at the various weighbridges along the Northern Corridor. Figure 7 below illustrates the average daily traffic at

---

**Figure 5: Monthly average containerized cargo dwell time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Average hrs</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan-19</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-19</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-19</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr-19</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-19</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-19</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-19</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-19</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-19</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-19</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-19</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-20</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-20</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-20</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.*

*Available at [http://kandalakaskazini.or.ke/](http://kandalakaskazini.or.ke/).

**Figure 6: Weekly average containerized cargo dwell time**

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**Figure 7: Average daily traffic at the various weighbridges along the Northern Corridor**
three weighbridges: Mariakani, the first for all the trucks; and Webuye and BUSIA, the last along the Corridor in Kenya. During the first three months of 2020, a total of 137,713 trucks were weighed at the Mariakani weighbridge. The average daily traffic heading for Malaba via Webuye was 821 trucks in April 2020.

Table 9: Volume of cargo transiting through Mombasa, by destination country (in tons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>5,977,332</td>
<td>6,346,715</td>
<td>7,112,971</td>
<td>7,889,119</td>
<td>8,132,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>702,531</td>
<td>597,852</td>
<td>673,752</td>
<td>734,132</td>
<td>769,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>396,132</td>
<td>376,935</td>
<td>360,123</td>
<td>470,968</td>
<td>546,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Republic of Tanzania</td>
<td>204,778</td>
<td>182,557</td>
<td>271,698</td>
<td>248,025</td>
<td>254,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>291,924</td>
<td>194,022</td>
<td>179,555</td>
<td>230,734</td>
<td>231,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>75,811</td>
<td>35,794</td>
<td>21,621</td>
<td>22,233</td>
<td>2,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>11,697</td>
<td>3,975</td>
<td>3,820</td>
<td>1,989</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6,973</td>
<td>10,687</td>
<td>13,065</td>
<td>7,361</td>
<td>8,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,667,178</td>
<td>7,748,537</td>
<td>8,636,606</td>
<td>9,604,562</td>
<td>9,947,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.

86. The number of trucks weighed at the weighbridges is an indicator of the volume of traffic and trade along the route. Trucks destined to Uganda and beyond Kenya are weighed at Webuye (for Malaba) and BUSIA weighbridges. From the figure above, it may be seen that, since the outbreak of the pan-

Figure 7: Weighbridge traffic through Mariakani, Busia and Webuye

Source: Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.
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During the pandemic, there has been a reduction in traffic from the port, as indicated by traffic weighed at Mariakani. Similarly, transit traffic at Webuye has declined drastically, from 1,817 trucks in December 2019 to about 821 in April 2020. This implies a similar reduction in trade during this period.

3. Transit time

87. Transit time is the period from the time goods are released up to their exit at the border and final destinations. It includes delays en route at the weighbridges, driver rests and border clearance.

(a) Transit time in Kenya

88. Figure 8 shows trends in transit time from the port of Mombasa to Malaba, a distance of 933 km. Transit time fluctuated between 60 and 80 hours during 2019, with a slight uptick in January and March 2020. Recent weekly data from January to June 2020 show a significant increase, however, rising from 77 hours at the beginning of January to a peak of 191 at the end of March, and a slight decline to 115 by the end of June (figure 9).

89. This increase is due mainly to the increased time spent at the border at Malaba (figure 10). Delays at Malaba border have been increasing since February 2020, with April registering eight hours, up from average of two hours prior to February 2020. This upward trend is likely to continue, given the new measures that have been put in place, including mandatory testing at entry points to Uganda. This increase is also reflected in the data on transit times from Mombasa to the border, and also those between Mombasa and Kampala (figure 11).

(b) Transit time in Uganda

90. Transit times in Uganda to the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan have not changed significantly since January 2019, with the possible exception of time from Kampala to Vura, which fluctuated significantly during the year (figure 12).

Figure 8: Transit time Mombasa–Malaba

Source: Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.
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This shows that, once vehicles leave the borders with Kenya for onward transit through Uganda, there is not much increase in transit times. Indeed, the experience in Uganda since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that truck drivers are discouraged from making unnecessary stops along the road. Local authorities and the community along the corridors actively look out for drivers who seek to make unauthorized stops or carry passengers in the trucks.

(c) Transit time in Rwanda

On the other hand, transit times in Rwanda spiked significantly in January 2020. Figure 13 below shows the transit times in Rwanda on various routes for the period from January to

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Figure 9: Transit time in Kenya in 2020 – Malaba

![Graph showing transit time in Kenya in 2020 – Malaba]

Source: Authors’ calculation based on Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.

Figure 10: Median stop duration at Malaba

![Graph showing median stop duration at Malaba]

Source: Northern Corridor Road Transport Mobile survey.
March 2020 using the Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System. The Kagitumba–Mururu route witnessed a tremendous improvement in transit time, which dropped from 64 hours in October to 48 hours in December 2019. The improved performance is partly attributed to such factors as the road condition, which is mostly good or fair, except for a few sections which are either under development or rehabilitation; implementation of one-stop border points; and implementation of the single customs territory initiative.
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92. All routes, however, saw an increase in transit time from January to June 2020, reaching a peak in April and settling at a higher plateau than the levels in March. This corresponds to the period when restrictions on movements were imposed within the country and region, which may be attributed to the increase in border procedures due to COVID-19 (figure 14).

(d) Transit time in Burundi
93. In Burundi, the transit times only spiked in February 2020, in particular on the routes to Gasenyi.

Figure 13: Transit time in Rwanda

![Graph showing transit time in Rwanda from March 2019 to March 2020, with peaks in April 2020.](image)

*Source: Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.*

Figure 14: Rwanda weekly transit data 2020

![Graph showing weekly transit data from January 2020 to June 2020, with peaks in April 2020.](image)

*Source: Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard.*
C. Actions taken to combat COVID-19

94. Member States agreed to institute specific measures to contain the spread of the virus along the Corridor. These actions were instituted at the port, along the transit routes and at the border points.

1. Situation at the port of Mombasa

95. Most of the agencies involved in the clearing of goods at the port have continued to work during this period. To ensure that operations are not interrupted, specific procedures were instituted by the port for the handling of vessels on their arrival. These procedures, which were carried out in conjunction with the port public health officers, included the following:

(a) Mandatory pre-arrival reporting on board: this must be undertaken at least 48 hours before the vessel’s arrival in Kenyan territorial waters. Masters of ships must therefore submit a duly completed and compulsory maritime declaration of health form to the Port Health Officer;

(b) All arriving vessels with crew members or passengers who have travelled to countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the previous 14 days must undergo special monitoring;

(c) Every ship entering Kenya from a country with confirmed cases of COVID-19 is subjected to rigorous inspection at the designated location, as directed by the harbour-master in consultation with the Port Health Office;

(d) Crew and passengers of vessels from countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 are not granted shore passes. Only Kenyans and foreigners with valid residence permits will be allowed to disembark after presentation of health
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declaration forms and clearance by the health authorities;

(e) All visitors (dockworkers, agents, surveyors, port state inspectors) to a ship from countries confirmed with COVID-19 cases must be informed about the precautionary measures while on board.

(f) Masters of all ships due to arrive in a Kenyan port are required to declare their last 10 ports of call or voyage memo for the last three months, whichever is higher, and confirm that there is no crew member showing symptoms of COVID-19 on board.

(g) Suspension of crew change and bagging services.

2. Situation at transit points

96. The new measures to combat the spread of the virus require taking the temperatures of truck crews at the entry point and thereafter at designated weighbridges at Athi River, Busia, Gilgil and Mariakani. Testing for COVID-19 is also conducted before the crew commences its journey from Kenya. Furthermore, all truck crews entering Kenya are tested at the border post of entry.

97. The East African Community has adopted a digital COVID-19 surveillance tracker for drivers as an integral component of the regional electronic cargo and drivers tracking system that will be hosted at the Community headquarters in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. The system is designed to share information on truck drivers, drawing on the systems operated by revenue authorities in the region and the existing health information systems in partner States.

98. The system allows the users to share information across borders in a transparent manner, and the truck drivers will need to upload the system’s app on their phones. Continuous screening will be carried out at selected checkpoints along the transport corridors which have already been designated, and the information will be made available to all partner States. Verification of documents will be carried out by customs, immigration and law enforcement agencies and officials, who will confirm whether or not travellers are fit to proceed on their journeys. The digital surveillance tracker will interface and connect directly to designated laboratories in the partner States, thereby enabling those States, on the basis of the necessary laboratory results, to generate COVID-19 test certificates.

99. The National Logistics Platform, a private sector initiative, has also worked in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Works and Transport in Uganda to implement an initiative known as the Journey Management System and ensure that the initiative is adopted in the other Partner States of the East African Community. The proposed system addresses a number of issues, which include the tracking and tracing of truck crew members, monitoring their welfare and behaviour on and off the truck, issuing prompt risk alerts and, in general, promoting road safety. Once this system is put in place,
drivers will be accredited with a permit enabling them to move across the East African Community.

3. Situation at border entry points
100. Member States have instituted specific measures which affect transport and trade along the Corridor, and most of these are implemented at the border-crossing points. These are summarized by country below.20

(a) Burundi
- Anyone travelling into the country by air or road must undergo quarantine.
- Mandatory quarantine at government-designated facilities at own cost is imposed on all persons entering the country.
- To enter the country, passengers must prove that they have at least 50 per cent of the subsistence cost for the quarantine of 14 days.
- WHO measures to combat COVID-19 are enforced.
- Maritime transport boats and crew are not allowed to go beyond the beach or the port of entry.

(b) Democratic Republic of the Congo
- All borders of the country are closed to passengers and any person, except for cargo ships and other means of carrying goods. Their crews are, however, subject to the necessary public health checks.
- All flights from risk countries and transit countries are suspended.
- Systematic health control is carried out on all persons entering the national territory and those departing from cities.
- All river transport of passengers from Kinshasa to the provinces and vice versa is banned; only boats and crafts carrying goods with crews and conveyors will be allowed.
- The maritime, river, lake and land entry points of the national territory are to be equipped with surveillance devices to reinforce control of passengers coming from abroad.
- Anyone traveling into the country by air or road must undergo quarantine.
- Pharmaceutical products currently under customs control are subject to emergency removal.

(c) Kenya
- Trucks and cargo transport have been listed as essential services in the Curfew Notice and may therefore be cleared to travel at night.
- The cargo trucks clearing exercise will be facilitated by multi-agency teams comprising the Kenya Revenue Authority; the immigration, health and internal affairs authorities; the East African Community;
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- Immigration, customs and port health officials are exempted from the provisions of curfew and therefore required to work 24 hours.

- Temperature is to be taken at entry points and thereafter at designated weighbridges.

- All truck occupants must retain their health forms until they exit Kenya unless they are Kenyan residents.

- Only trucks entering Kenya at border points will be subjected to temperature testing requirements.

(d) Rwanda

- All cargo and conveyors shall be offloaded and trans-shipped at the customs point of entry, namely, the Rusumo and Kagitumba customs border posts.

- Where transporters have two drivers for a truck (one from the point of departure and a second based on Rwandan territory), the trucks shall be allowed to proceed to the final destination driven by the Rwanda driver after fulfilling the health guidelines.

- All services offered by customs offices in Kigali and other customs controlled areas shall also be made available at the entry borders.

- Warehousing facilities shall be available for loading, offloading and warehousing of cargo at the entry points.

- Inland cargo depots shall be made available for effective loading and trans-shipment exercises at the customs entry point.

- Clearing of goods should be done using the pre-clearance mechanisms currently in place, such as the single customs territory clearance framework and payment of duties and taxes before the arrival of the goods for quick release at the entry border posts.

- All declaration documents accompanying cargo must be submitted electronically to the customs administration to avoid the handling of paper.

- Clients with perishable goods and consignments that require special warehousing facilities such as petroleum products shall be allowed to proceed to their destinations after a change of crew members (truck drivers), in compliance with the current health guidelines in place.

- Clearing agents must declare the full detailed description of goods to expedite the clearance and release of such goods.

- All importers must use the electronic billing software EBM version 2 to facilitate the declaration and release of their goods.
• Transit cargo should be escorted upon entry to the final destination and truck drivers will only stop at designated points.

• Unnecessary movement and visits outside the home are not permitted.

• Borders remain closed except for goods and cargo, and also for returning Rwandan citizens and legal residents, who will be subject to a mandatory 14 day quarantine at designated locations.

(e) Uganda
• Anyone traveling into the country by air or road must undergo quarantine.

• There may only be one driver in the truck.

• Truck drivers are to be tested for COVID-19 before being allowed to enter, to proceed on transit through Uganda.

• Truck drivers are to stop only at designated places.

• No passengers may enter Uganda by air, land or water.

• The entry of pedestrians from neighbouring countries is prohibited.

• A curfew is effected from 7 p.m. to 6.30 a.m.

(f) South Sudan
• Anyone traveling into the country by air or road must undergo quarantine.

• All border crossings are closed to passenger buses and vehicles. Cargo trucks and fuel tankers are exempted.

• International flights are suspended (with a few exceptions for aircraft bringing in health-related cargo, such as medicine and medical equipment, and essential or critical food items).

• Land border restrictions are imposed.

• Evening curfews are in effect from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.

• Social distancing and a mandatory 14-day quarantine period shall be imposed on any traveller arriving from a virus-affected country.

D. Post-COVID-19 pandemic policy actions

101. The management and operations of the Northern Corridor provide a useful model for corridor management. The following measures instituted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be continued as permanent Corridor operations.

1. Shift in modal transport mix
102. Drivers of heavy goods vehicles have been identified as the principal inter-State carriers of COVID-19. This has resulted in such actions by member States as the mandatory screening of all drivers at the border. In turn, however, this has led to delays
and congestion at the border, and subsequently heightened the risk of further contamination of the border community. It was therefore deemed necessary to consider appropriate cross-border transportation modalities to reduce human traffic movement without having a negative impact on the transport of cargo across the borders.

103. In order to reduce the number of inter-State drivers, member States of the East African Community have therefore agreed to shift cargo transportation within Kenya to rail and lake services. Specifically:

(a) All transit cargo in the port of Mombasa destined for inland countries is to be transported by rail, either by the new standard gauge railway (SGR) to the new inland container depot in Naivasha, or using the old metre-gauge railway line from Mombasa to Tororo on the Ugandan border, for onward transport by transporters from those countries. All transit cargo at Naivasha will be transported by trucks through Busia or Malaba to their respective destinations;

(b) Fuel oil is to be transported by pipeline from Mombasa to the inland port of Kisumu and loaded onto lake ferries to the Ugandan ports of Jinja and Port Bell. Fuel trailers of inland countries are to pick up the fuel tankers for onward transportation.

104. In carrying out these measures, member States should capitalize on the strengths of different modes of transport and address the obstacles faced by landlocked developing countries along the supply chains. For example, the distinctive features of railway transport – such as its lower labour requirements over long distance, its efficiency and improved environmental performance – are working to its advantage in the current situation. In this regard, the use of regional railway transport should be further developed and facilitated. The long-term benefits are reduced transport costs, not only in terms of lower transportation costs, but also saving the road infrastructure from wear and tear by reducing heavy vehicle traffic.

2. Designated truck stops
105. Special roadside stations and wellness centres will be developed at selected locations to accommodate truck drivers along the Corridor. These will be equipped with health facilities for the control of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola, HIV/AIDS and others. They are also designed to minimize possible interaction between truck drivers and the local communities along the route. In addition, they will act as checkpoints for tracing drivers whose COVID-19 test results at the previous border points may show positive.

3. Limits on crew numbers on transit vehicles
106. A maximum of two crew members are permitted on each transit vehicle. This will reduce the number of persons traversing the corridor, and also the cost of vehicle operations.
4. Northern Corridor Observatory
107. The Observatory provides historical and also up-to-date information on corridor performance. The Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard provides weekly updates on selected corridor performance indicators, making possible a quick assessment of progress on the various dimensions.

5. Increased use of digital technology
108. A digital surveillance and tracking system is to be adopted for drivers operating in the transit corridor, which would enable health officials to locate any driver who may have contracted COVID-19. Landlocked developing countries and neighbouring countries are to make use of trade facilitation standards and digital technologies, such as the electronic exchange of information and paperless solutions, that limit physical checks in transit and physical contact at borders, and protect the health of workers. The use of e-commerce and electronic payments platforms, such as mobile money, is to be facilitated and encouraged, in order to reduce significantly the use of cash to curb the spread of COVID-19. Innovative tools such as the United Nations eTIR and electronic consignment note (eCMR) systems, and other tools that make it possible to exchange electronic information without physical contact and facilitate the flow of goods across borders, should be used.

6. Public-private partnerships
109. Private stakeholders are urged to work closely with public institutions to facilitate transit, trade and transport, and to maintain the functioning of supply chains and cross-border freight operations. This should include facilitating and encouraging local production and trading in essential goods and services within the region.
V. Assessment of impact on key stakeholders

A. Background

110. The impact of COVID-19 on the economies in Africa may be assessed in a variety of ways. It can be derived from an analysis of economic and financial data of the country, such as changes in economic growth, trade flows, employment levels and other elements. Such impact at the macro level would often show only after a significant lag in time. The impact can also be assessed from an analysis of operational data, such as traffic flows and volumes (by air, sea and land), which provide a more immediate and direct indication of the impact on the population.

111. The present report focuses on the short-term impact of the virus on transport operations and trade in African countries. It considers policy level interventions (guidelines) for coordination at the level of the regional economic communities. In particular, it presents the COMESA sub-region as a case study of the impact on trade in selected countries in that subregion, namely: Malawi and Zambia (from Southern Africa), Uganda and Rwanda (East Africa), and the island country of Madagascar.

112. The impact of the application of these guidelines on transport connectivity is examined in the East African countries that are members of the Northern Corridor Transit Transport Coordination Authority, as the most closely linked and integrated subregion in Africa.

113. Regarding transport corridors, six key issues were identified, which form the basis for data collection for analysing the impact on the Corridor, from port to destination. These are:

(a) Trade and trade-related measures;
(b) Port operations;
(c) Transport logistics;
(d) Border controls;
(e) Customs control;
(f) Highway operations.

B. Key stakeholders on the Corridor

114. A questionnaire was developed around each of the above issues, and this will be sent to the key stakeholders. The questionnaire is set out in the annex to the present report.

115. The COVID-19 impact on transport and trade along the Northern Corridor may be categorized according to the stakeholders on the corridor. These are:

(a) Transport operators: owners and drivers of cargo transportation vehicles (trucks, railways and ships);

(b) Transport users: customers (passengers, traders), shipping and forwarding agencies;

(c) Transport regulators: weighbridge operators;

(d) Border agencies: immigration, health and security officials;

(e) Customs agents: inspectors and assessors;

(f) Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Associations;[21] freight logistics; Federation of Clearing and Forwarding Association of Southern Africa; Federation of Eastern and Southern Africa Road Transporters Associations;

(g) Kenya Transporters Association;


116. Transport operators are the key stakeholders in transit transport in that they carry the cargo from the port to destination. Once cleared from the port, cargo along the Northern Corridor is transported by road, rail and inland waterways. Statistics on cargo movement by rail and inland waterways are collected regularly and well documented, and may be obtained from the few operators of these transport systems. Cargo transport by road, however, involves many operators and drivers.

117. As part of its functions in managing the operations in the Corridor, the Northern Corridor secretariat conducts regular road transport surveys among transporters in order to gather information relating to causes and reasons for delays along the transit route. The surveys are based on questionnaires which are filled in on mobile phones with Android applications using Survey 123 for ArcGIS from the Google play store.[22] The drivers are requested to fill in the information at the time when

[22] Road Transport Survey, 2019, NCTTCA.
they start their journeys, then at any stop point along the route, and lastly at the time when they reach their destinations.

118. In the latest report for 2019, a sample of drivers to the various destinations on the Corridor was surveyed, as summarized in tables 10 and 11.

**Table 10: Destinations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,199</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Road Transport Survey, 2019, Northern Corridor Transit Transport Coordination Authority.

**Table 11: Reasons for stoppage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for stoppage</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rest and meals</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighbridges</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and other security checks</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuelling and checking vehicle</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road conditions</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border post procedures</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs checks</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle breakdowns</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company check points</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Road Transport Survey, 2019, Northern Corridor Transit Transport Coordination Authority.
119. The frequency of stoppages by drivers along the Corridor is attributable to a number of factors. Rest stops, meals and weighbridge procedures account for the highest percentages (26 and 13.3 per cent, respectively) of all stoppages. Police and other security checks accounted for 9.5 per cent. The stoppages invariably translate into longer transit times and higher costs of doing business.

120. Roadside stations: Working in conjunction with member States, the Northern Corridor secretariat is in the process of establishing roadside stations with a variety of amenities and wellness centres for drivers along the Corridor. These will also include checks for COVID-19 status. Drivers will have access to a variety of amenities at one stop instead of making multiple stops along the Corridor, which will ultimately reduce the delays along the Corridor caused by unnecessary stops.

121. Transport users: Similar surveys to the above for transport operators should be carried out among the key transport users, namely passengers (for public transport), freight clearing and forwarding agents, and importers and exporters. The survey questions would cover such issues as satisfaction with service, time and cost factors.

122. Transport regulators: Statistics on weighbridge operations, such as time taken at the weighbridge and compliance with the weight limits and vehicle dimensions' requirements, should be collected at the weigh station. Automatic weigh-in-motion bridges should be installed at all points along the Corridor to reduce personnel interaction with truck drivers.

123. Border agencies: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the key border agencies are those responsible for health and security. Health officials check the status and keep records of all truck drivers and passengers entering the country.

124. Customs agents: Reports from five COMESA member States (Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia) showed a significant drop in international trade from March to April 2020; this is reflected in data for imports and exports, and also in customs receipts.

125. Service providers: These are private sector operators of various services along the route such as fuel and service stations, rest areas, restaurants and food vendors, lodges and other facilities.
VI. Response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: policy recommendations

126. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, African countries generally reacted promptly to contain and effectively manage its spread, individually as well as collectively, through the respective regional economic communities and transit transport and trade corridors. The COVID-19 experience provides valuable lessons on how regional cooperation could help with coordinated and timely responses to future disruptions similar to the current pandemic. Most of the regional economic communities (East African Community, COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC) developed guidelines for coordinated responses. The Northern Corridor Transit Transport Coordination Authority is taken as a model for transit transport corridor operations in the various regions of Africa. Listed below are some of the policy recommendations arising from the responses from the above organizations. Appropriate briefs have been developed as policy options for future post-pandemic actions or against the future adverse effects of any regional shocks related to food crisis and climate change, such as the locust outbreak earlier in 2020 in the Horn of Africa.

A. Increased use of information and communications technology capabilities in Africa

127. COVID-19 has demonstrated the critical need for smart digital technologies and solutions. Given the effects of the lockdown in many countries, public offices, businesses such as supermarkets and pharmacies, and also academic institutions, have resorted to enhancing their digital and technological capabilities to enable telecommuting, online transactions, online shopping, online education and provision of telemedicine during this time.
128. Looking ahead, digitalization offers immense potential to improve trade facilitation implementation guidelines and further reduce trade costs. In this regard, member States are urged to invest in enhancing their ICT capabilities to ensure business continuity, which will also have a positive ripple effect on economic growth, through such developments as the Smart Corridor Initiative. This will enable landlocked developing countries and transit countries to make use of trade facilitation standards and digital technologies such as the electronic exchange of information and paperless solutions that limit physical checks in transit and physical contact at borders and protect the health of workers.

129. Specifically, the following actions are recommended:

(a) Development and implementation of the Corridor Trip Monitoring System (CTMS) in the East and Southern African subregional transport corridors. CTMS is an electronic system that records driver health status, in particular COVID-19 test results, and allows public health officials to verify results, monitor and track the movement of the driver or crew member and, when necessary, perform contact tracing and thereby facilitate the management of safe transit in cross-border road transport operations. CTMS will assist member States in the implementation of standard operating procedures for safe transport and trade in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;

(b) Development of vehicle monitoring and tracking systems, namely: the Northern Corridor Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking Systems, ASYCUDA and the ECOWAS Interconnected Goods and Transit Management System (SIGMAT). This is an important step towards the establishment of smart corridors in Africa, offering faster expansion of integrated digital facilities and the use of e-payments;

(c) Implementation of the COMESA Digital Free Trade Area embracing e-commerce in trade: this project should now be hastened, along with the creation of an online platform for sharing information on the availability of essential products during the COVID-19 pandemic;

(d) Use of mobile apps to collect relevant information on passengers to strengthen contact tracing and warning measures;

(e) Rapid deployment of the ECOWAS SIGMAT system in all member States to ensure speedy and safer clearance of transit goods at the borders;

(f) Use of ICT to support trade, such as single windows and trade information portals;

(g) Development and implementation of e-commerce initiatives to limit physical interaction by, among other measures, providing adequate ICT infrastructure, adopting or revising relevant policies such as data privacy and cybersecurity
VI. Response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: policy recommendations

laws, and promoting cashless policies, including the use of mobile payments systems;

(h) Adoption of a digital surveillance and tracking system for drivers operating in the transit corridor, which would enable health officials to locate any driver who may have contracted COVID-19.

130. The pandemic also exposed one of the biggest weaknesses in trade finance supply in Africa – overreliance on paper-based transaction processes. Compared to the rest of the world, Africa has been slow to adopt digital and electronic business processes, including for trade finance. In the short term, the low digitization rate of trade finance transactions could slow down approval rates and therefore decrease supply of trade finance during the pandemic. For that reason, regulators should work with banks to put in place temporary measures to allow digital processing and transmission of trade finance transactions.

131. To support ICT infrastructure and other critical sectors in different settings, low-carbon alternative sources of energy may be required, such as the installation of solar grids in communities where electricity is in short supply. Moreover, limited access in the continent to electricity, in particular in health centres and facilities, increases vulnerability to COVID-19. As Africa strives to sustain gains in reducing the lack of access to electricity by more than 600 million people today, it is vital that priority be given on the health sector agenda to the issue of access to electricity. Thus, through strategic investment in sustainable energy and resilient power system, stimulus packages and policy measures for quick economic recovery will strengthen the foundation of sustainable development through local value chain linkages and employment creation.

132. As the pandemic recedes, maximum use should be made of so-called “avoid-shift-improve” techniques, of more environmentally-friendly modes of transport and of new technologies, such as renewables and ICT, avoiding a return to the unsustainable status quo ante.

B. Diversification of sources of sustainable energy

133. Drivers of heavy goods vehicles have been identified as the principal inter-State carriers of COVID-19. This has prompted actions by member States such as the mandatory screening of all drivers at their borders. In turn, however, this has led to delays and congestion at the border, subsequently increasing the risk of further contamination of the border community. For instance, in the East African Community area, it was deemed necessary to consider appropriate cross-border modes of

C. Development of intermodal transport systems in Africa

134. Drivers of heavy goods vehicles have been identified as the principal inter-State carriers of COVID-19. This has prompted actions by member States such as the mandatory screening of all drivers at their borders. In turn, however, this has led to delays and congestion at the border, subsequently increasing the risk of further contamination of the border community. For instance, in the East African Community area, it was deemed necessary to consider appropriate cross-border modes of
transport to reduce human traffic movement without having a negative impact on the transport of cargo across the borders.

134. An appropriate multimodal mix with the increased use of railways and inland waterways would reduce dependence on road transport. Road transport for heavy goods is expensive in terms of road maintenance. In addition, the reduced trans-border movement of drivers will also reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS along the transit corridors.

135. Looking to the future, multimodal logistics could become the new standard. In this scenario, efforts should be made to capitalize on the strengths of different modes of transport and surmount the obstacles faced by landlocked developing countries along the supply chains. For example, the distinctive features of railway transport – such as its lower labour requirements over long distances, efficiency and environmental performance – are working to its advantage in the current situation. In this regard, the use of regional railway transport should be further developed and facilitated. The long-term impact will be a reduction in overall transport costs, not only by lowering the actual transport costs, but also by saving the road infrastructure from wear and tear caused by heavy vehicle traffic. The recovery path for a specific freight carrier will also depend heavily on its particular mix of client and products.

136. For example, member States of the East African Community have agreed to shift cargo transport within Kenya to rail and lake services, in order to reduce the number of inter-State trucks and drivers. Specifically:

(a) All transit cargo in the port of Mombasa destined for inland countries is to be transported by rail, either by the new SGM railway to the new inland container depot in Naivasha, or using the old metre-gauge railway line from Mombasa to Tororo on the Uganda border, for onward transport by transporters from those countries. All transit cargo at Naivasha will be transported by trucks through Busia or Malaba to its respective destinations;

(b) Fuel oil will be transported by pipeline from Mombasa to the inland port of Kisumu, and loaded on to lake ferries to the Ugandan ports of Jinja and Port Bell. Fuel trailers of inland countries will then pick up the fuel tankers for onward transportation.

137. As is becoming increasingly evident, the transport-related response to the outbreak has a very strong environmental component – global carbon emissions have dropped by an unprecedented 17 per cent during the coronavirus lockdown. Accord-

23 Available at www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0797-x.
logistics practices, which bring environmental benefits by optimizing transport and logistics operations, should be further enhanced by their ability to reduce health-compromising human interventions in the transport chain.

**D. Development of roadside truck stops in transport corridors in Africa**

138. Special roadside stations and wellness centres should be developed at selected locations to accommodate truck drivers along the Corridor. These should take the form of multipurpose facilities designed to promote a safe and efficient transportation system; and provide food, rest and accommodation, vehicle servicing and refuelling operations, medical emergency facilities and other functions. They should also be equipped with health facilities for the control of communicable diseases such as COVID-19, Ebola, HIV/AIDS and others.

139. Furthermore, the stations should be designed to minimize possible interaction between truck drivers and the local communities along the route. In addition, they will also act as checkpoints for tracing drivers whose COVID-19 test results at the previous border points may subsequently show positive.

**E. Development of corridor observatories in Africa**

140. The experience of the Northern Corridor Observatory provides a good model, which could be replicated in the management of the major corridors in Africa. It provides both historical and up-to-date information on corridor performance. The Northern Corridor Performance Dashboard provides weekly updates on selected corridor performance indicators, enabling a rapid assessment of progress on the various dimensions.

**F. Development of pharmaceutical industries in Africa**

141. The demand for and shortage of certain critical drugs and medical equipment – in particular personal protective equipment such as gowns, gloves, facemasks, face shields, sanitizers and other essential products – during the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated both the need and the potential for the development of pharmaceutical industries in Africa as part of the strategy of industrial development through import substitution. The regional economic communities, together with the pharmaceutical initiative of the African Continental Free Trade Area, provide suitable regional integration frameworks for coordination of the development of this sector. While the African pharmaceutical industry is mostly composed of small, privately owned companies that
serve their national markets, regional cooperation is essential for expanding the sector and boosting intra-African trade.

**G. Enhanced role of the private sector in Africa**

142. African Governments must provide and sustain a conducive environment for the private sector to expand production capacities, enhance competitiveness and reduce overreliance on extra-African imports, even for basic commodities. Private stakeholders are urged to work closely with the public institutions to facilitate transit, trade and transport, and maintain the functioning of supply chains and cross-border freight operations.

143. Public-private partnerships should be promoted to develop facilities for truck operators, such as truck stops, hygiene requirements, resting facilities and other amenities. Public security arrangements, notably the police, should be engaged to protect drivers and property.

144. African Governments should engage the private sector in facilitating the local production of supplies such as personal protective equipment and other essential products. The COVID-19 crisis calls for emergency facilities such as trade finance lines of credit and risk-mitigation instruments, with a view, among other aims, to attracting non-traditional investors to invest in trade finance asset classes earmarked for trade related transactions, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises.
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