

# COVID-19

Situation update for the WHO African Region  
14 October 2020

## External Situation Report 33



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## WHO AFRICAN REGION

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#### 1. Situation update



The number of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases in the WHO African Region is now at 1 232 030 with 27 684 deaths. During the last seven days (7 to 13 October 2020), a total of 29 618 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1 172 new deaths were reported from 45 countries, compared to 26 416 cases and 668 deaths registered during the previous seven days (30 September - 7 October 2020). Even though the daily incidence is still on the downward trend since the 24 July 2020, with an estimated 36 days of halving time, the number of new cases in the last seven days increased slightly by 12% compared to the prior seven days.

Because of an increase of 112% in new deaths in the past seven days in South Africa (925 deaths against 436 in the previous seven days), the number of new deaths in the African region increased by 75%. Of note, South Africa has accounted for 79% of deaths recorded in the region in the past seven days. However, South Africa is currently conducting a mortality audit and many of these deaths are retrospectively reported.

In the past seven days, 18 countries recorded a decrease in new cases by 20% or above: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uganda.

Ten countries have recorded an increase in new cases by 20% or above in the past seven days: Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zimbabwe.

The weekly incidence in the past seven days remained stable, increasing or decreasing by less than 20%, in 18 other countries: Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, and Zambia.

United Republic of Tanzania did not officially submit any reports indicating any new confirmed cases.

A total of 288 new health worker infections were reported from five countries: Ethiopia (205), Uganda (51), Namibia (18), Eswatini (13) and Zambia (1).

In the past seven days, 1 172 new COVID-19 related deaths occurred in 31 countries, with 925 (79%) of the deaths recorded in South Africa. This was followed by Ethiopia, with 67 (7%) deaths, Algeria with 45 (7%) and Kenya with 44 (6%). South Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya recorded an increase in deaths by over 20% compared to the previous seven days, while the number of deaths in Algeria decreased by 8%. The other countries that reported new deaths during the reporting period include; Angola (20), Zambia (9), Cabo Verde (8), Mozambique (6), South Sudan (5), Burkina Faso (4), Chad (4), Cameroon (3), Lesotho (3), Madagascar (3), Nigeria (3), Botswana (2), Congo (2), Democratic Republic of the Congo (2), Ghana (2), Guinea (2), Senegal (2), Uganda (2), Eswatini (1), Gambia (1), Guinea-Bissau (1), Malawi (1), Mali (1), Namibia (1), Rwanda (1), Togo (1) and Zimbabwe (1).

As of 13 October 2020, a cumulative total of 1 232 030 COVID-19 cases was reported in the region, including 1 232 029 confirmed, with one probable case reported in Democratic Republic of the Congo. South Africa has consistently registered more than half, 56% (694 537), of all reported confirmed cases in the region. The other countries that have reported large numbers of cases are Ethiopia (85 718), Nigeria (60 655), Algeria (53 399), Ghana (47 097), Kenya (41 939), Cameroon (21 441), Côte d'Ivoire (20 183), Madagascar (16 754) and Zambia (15 549). These 10 countries collectively account for 86% (1 057 272) of all reported cases.

Six countries are still reporting fewer than 1 000 cases: Sao Tome and Principe (929), Burundi (529), Comoros (496), Eritrea (414), Mauritius (404) and Seychelles (147). To date, a total of 1 043 969 (85%) case-patients reported from all the 47 countries have recovered.

The total number of deaths reported in the region is 27 684, reported in 45 countries, giving an overall case fatality ratio (CFR) of 2.3%. Two countries, including Eritrea and Seychelles, have not registered any COVID-19 related deaths since the beginning of the pandemic.

Since the beginning of the outbreak in the region, the majority of the deaths have been reported from: South Africa 65% (18 028), Algeria with 6.6% (1 818), Ethiopia 4.7% (1 305), Nigeria 4.0% (1 116), Kenya 2.8% (787), Cameroon 1.5% (423), Zambia 1.2% (344), Senegal 1.1% (315), Ghana 1.1% (308), Democratic Republic of the Congo 1.0% (276), and Madagascar 0.9% (237). The top five countries: South Africa, Algeria, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Kenya account for 83% (23 054) of the total deaths reported in the region. Chad (7.0%), Liberia (6.0%), Niger (5.7%), Mali (4.0%), Algeria (3.4%), Angola (3.3%), and Gambia (3.2%) have the highest country specific case fatality ratios.

The current figures in the region represent 3.3% of confirmed COVID-19 cases and 2.6% of deaths reported worldwide. South Africa remains the hardest hit country on the African continent and is ranked tenth globally, although with relatively low numbers of deaths. **Table 1** shows the affected countries and their corresponding number of cases and deaths. The daily and weekly distribution of cases by date and week of reporting are presented in Figures 1 and 2, respectively. **Figures 3 and 4** show the distribution of cases and deaths with case fatality ratio by reporting date in South Africa and in the other top six countries.

The number of health worker infections continue to increase gradually with 43 984 (3.6%) infections reported in 43 countries since the beginning of the outbreak. South Africa remains the most affected, with 27 360 (62%) health workers infected, followed by Algeria (2 300), Nigeria (2 175), Ghana (2 065), Ethiopia (1 711), Kenya (1 029), Cameroon (808), Uganda (659), Guinea (513), Mozambique (484), Namibia (478), Equatorial Guinea (363), Senegal (349), Eswatini (299), Guinea-Bissau (282) and Malawi (280). The other 28 countries that have recorded health worker infections are shown in **Table 1**. Liberia 15.7% (215/1 372), Niger 15.3% (184/1 201), Guinea Bissau 12.0% (282/2 385), Sierra Leone 10.2% (236/2 309), Sao Tome and Principe 9.6% (89/929), Mauritius 7.4% (30/404) and Equatorial Guinea 7.2% (363/5 066) have the highest country specific proportion of health worker infections among confirmed cases.

Considering the available data 1.0% (11 877) on age and gender distribution, males (61%) 7 241 in the 31-39 and 40-49 age groups are more affected than females (39%) 4 636 across the same age groups in the African region. The male to female ratio among confirmed cases is 1.6, and the median age is 37 years (range: 0 - 105).

Diverse transmission patterns continue to be observed across the region, with established community transmission seen in 39 (83%) countries, five (11%) countries have clusters of cases and three (6%) with sporadic cases.

As of 13 October 2020, the seven African countries in the WHO EMRO Region reported a total of 362 257 confirmed COVID-19 cases: Morocco (104 787), Egypt (104 787), Libya (44 985), Tunisia (32 556), Sudan (13 691), Djibouti (5 428), and Somalia (3 864). Additionally, a total of 10 886 deaths has been recorded from Egypt (6 071), Morocco (2 685), Sudan (836), Libya (656), Tunisia (478), Somalia (99) and Djibouti (61).

A cumulative total of 1 594 287 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 38 570 deaths (case fatality ratio 2.4%) with 1 316 035 cases that have recovered have been reported in the African continent.

**Table 1. Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the WHO African Region, 25 February – 13 October 2020**  
(n =1 232 030)

Country	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Recovered Cases	Case fatality ratio (%)	Health Worker infections (n)	Date last case reported
South Africa	694 537	18 028	625 574	2.6	27 360	13-Oct-20
Ethiopia	85 718	1 305	39 307	1.5	1 711	13-Oct-20
Nigeria	60 655	1 116	52 006	1.8	2 175	13-Oct-20
Algeria	53 399	1 818	37 492	3.4	2 300	13-Oct-20
Ghana	47 097	308	46 452	0.7	2 065	9-Oct-20
Kenya	41 939	787	31 340	1.9	1 029	13-Oct-20
Cameroon	21 441	423	20 267	2.0	808	12-Oct-20
Côte d'Ivoire	20 183	120	19 860	0.6	187	13-Oct-20
Madagascar	16 754	237	16 124	1.4	70	13-Oct-20
Zambia	15 549	344	14 682	2.2	140	12-Oct-20
Senegal	15 307	315	13 508	2.1	349	13-Oct-20
Namibia	12 000	129	10 120	1.1	475	12-Oct-20
Guinea	11 134	70	10 347	0.6	513	12-Oct-20
Democratic Republic of the Congo	10 872	276	10 242	2.5	256	12-Oct-20
Mozambique	10 258	73	7 880	0.7	484	13-Oct-20
Uganda	9 945	95	6 347	1.0	659	12-Oct-20
Gabon	8 860	54	8 298	0.6	57	12-Oct-20
Zimbabwe	8 036	230	7 631	2.9	238	13-Oct-20
Mauritania	7 565	163	7 301	2.2	5	13-Oct-20
Cabo Verde	7 254	77	6 210	1.1	90	13-Oct-20
Angola	6 680	222	2 761	3.3	40	13-Oct-20
Malawi	5 827	181	4 688	3.1	280	13-Oct-20
Eswatini	5 696	114	5 337	2.0	298	13-Oct-20
Congo	5 156	92	4 400	1.8	166	10-Oct-20
Equatorial Guinea	5 066	83	4 954	1.6	363	10-Oct-20
Botswana	5 039	20	834	0.4	56	11-Oct-20
Rwanda	4 908	32	4 130	0.7	0	13-Oct-20
Central African Republic	4 855	62	1 924	1.3	1	8-Oct-20
Gambia	3 636	118	2 592	3.2	142	11-Oct-20
Mali	3 297	132	2 544	4.0	0	13-Oct-20
South Sudan	2 798	55	2 604	2.0	133	12-Oct-20
Benin	2 496	41	2 330	1.6	139	13-Oct-20
Guinea-Bissau	2 385	40	1 728	1.7	282	6-Oct-20
Sierra Leone	2 309	72	1 738	3.1	236	13-Oct-20
Burkina Faso	2 280	63	1 554	2.8	122	10-Oct-20
Togo	1 972	50	1 465	2.5	68	13-Oct-20
Lesotho	1 805	42	961	2.3	20	11-Oct-20
Liberia	1 372	82	1250	6.0	215	11-Oct-20
Chad	1 321	92	1120	7.0	75	13-Oct-20
Niger	1 201	69	1123	5.7	184	11-Oct-20
Sao Tome and Principe	929	15	895	1.6	89	11-Oct-20
Burundi	529	1	497	0.2	35	12-Oct-20
United Republic of Tanzania	509	21	180	4.1	1	7-May-20
Comoros	496	7	484	1.4	34	11-Oct-20
Eritrea	414	0	372	0.0	0	10-Oct-20

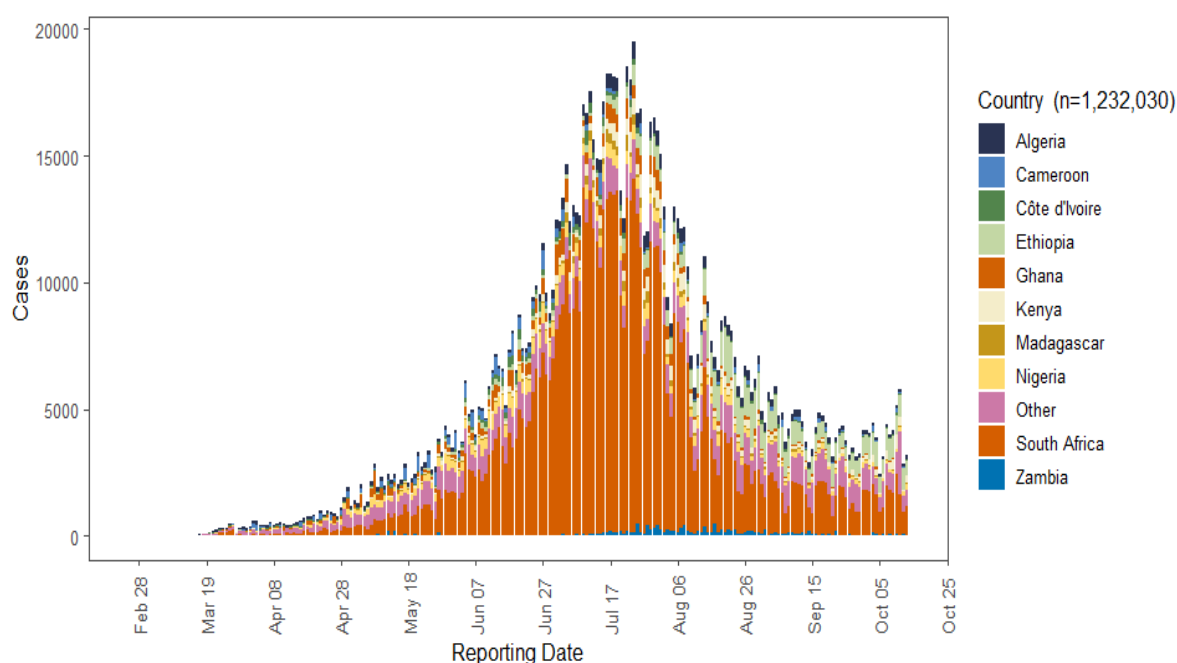


Mauritius	404	10	371	2.5	30	12-Oct-20
Seychelles	147	0	145	0.0	0	3-Oct-20
<b>Total (N=47)</b>	<b>1 232 030</b>	<b>27 684</b>	<b>1 043 969</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>43 980</b>	

\*Total cases include one probable case from Democratic Republic of the Congo

\* Chad and Liberia are implementing community mortality surveillance that could have attributed to high case fatality ratios.

**Figure 1. An epicurve of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the WHO African Region, 25 February – 13 October 2020 (n=1 232 030)**



**Figure 2. Weekly number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the WHO African Region by country, 25 February – 13 October 2020 (n=1 232 030)**

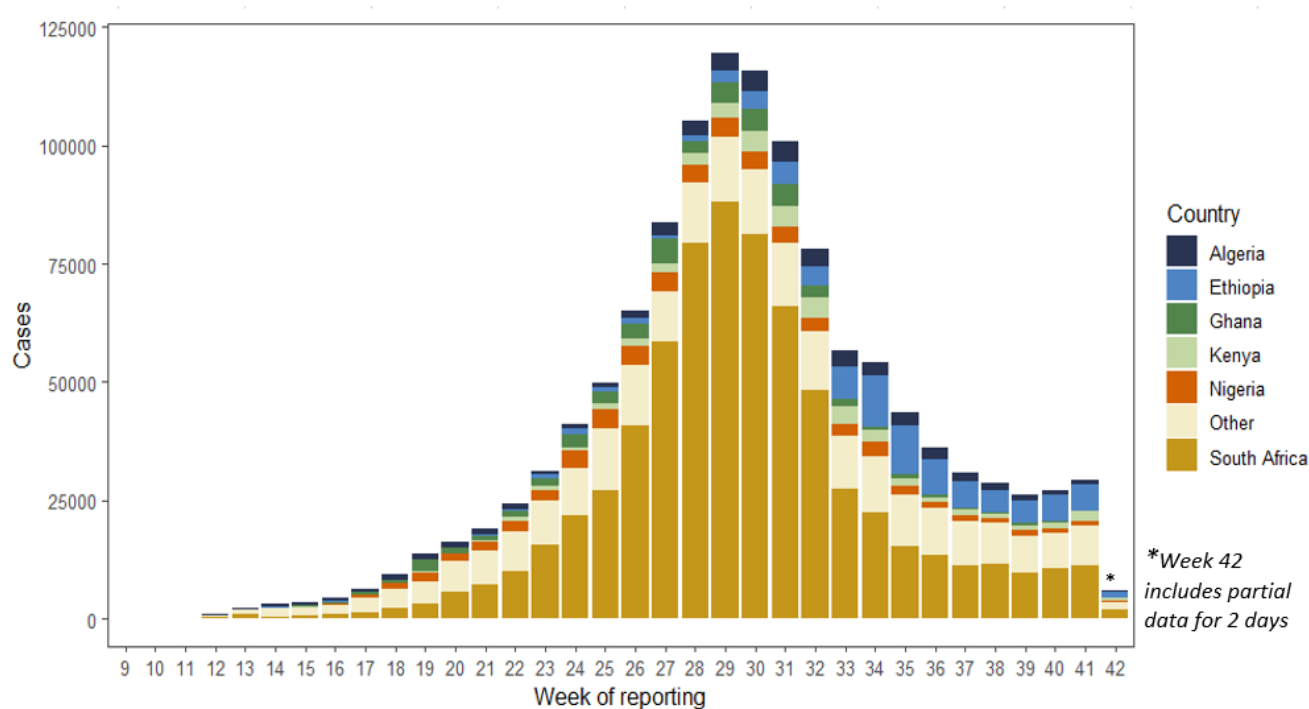


Figure 3. The distribution of confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths and 7-day moving average for South Africa by date of reporting, 5 March – 13 October 2020 (n= 694 537)

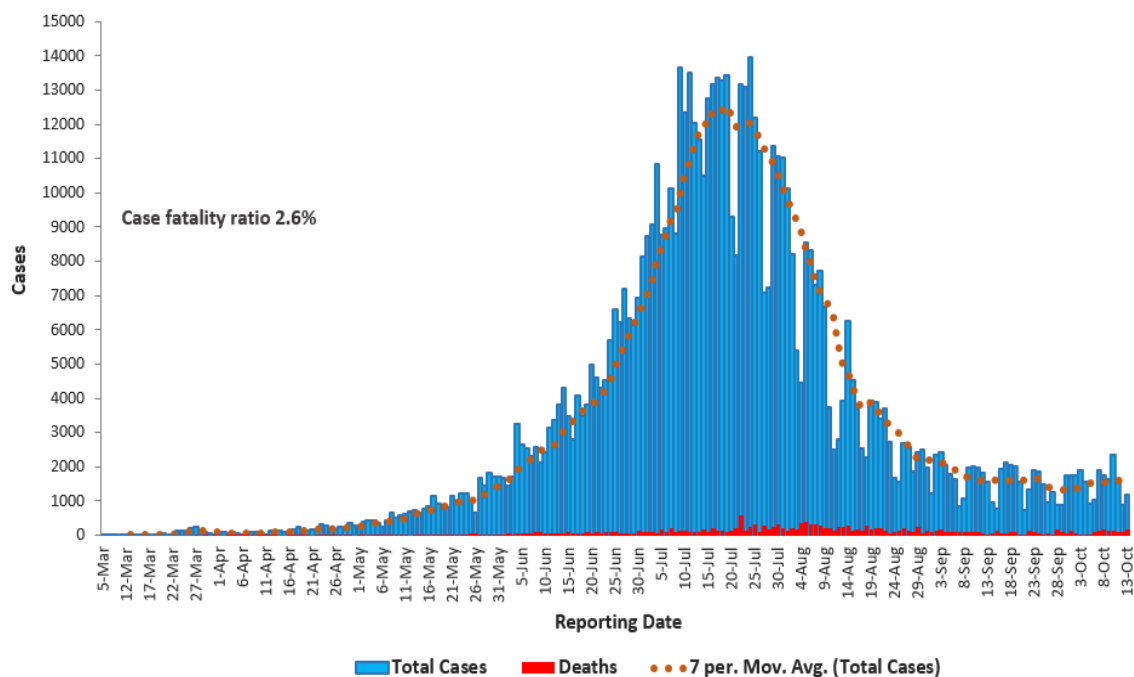
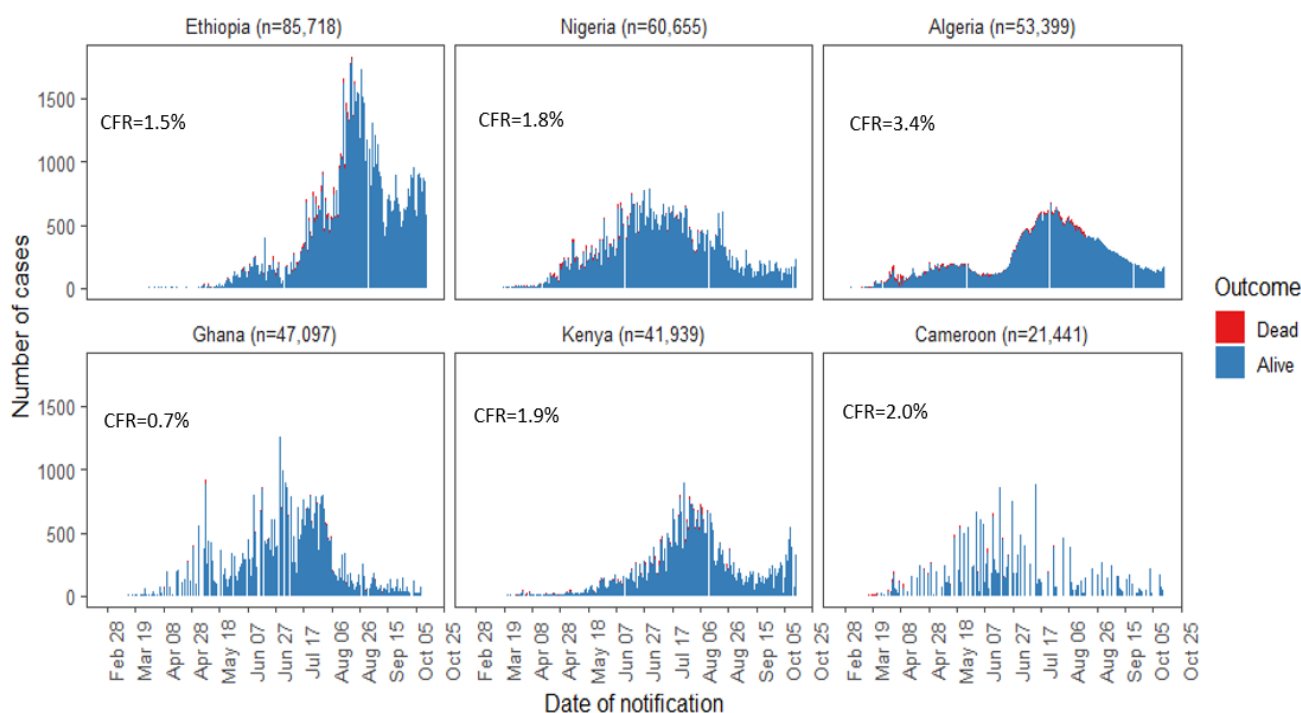


Figure 4. Epicurves showing distribution of confirmed cases and deaths with case fatality ratios of COVID-19 in the other top six reporting countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, and Cameroon, 25 February – 13 October 2020 (n= 310 249)



## 2. Global update

As of 13 October 2020, at 10:38 CET, a total of 37 704 153 confirmed cases, including 1 079 029 deaths (CFR 2.9%), was reported globally. Both the global number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths have continued to increase significantly during the past weeks.

To date, 215 countries/territories/areas and one international conveyance have reported laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases. The 10 countries with the highest number of cumulative cases are: United States of America (7 682 128), India (7 175 880), Brazil (5 094 979), the Russian Federation (5 094 979), Colombia (5 094 979), Argentina (894 206), Spain (894 206), Peru (849 371), Mexico (817 503) and France (715 764).

All affected countries have reported new confirmed cases in the past week. Please refer to the WHO Daily Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) situation reports for further information:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>.

## 3. Current risk assessment

**On 11 March 2020, the WHO Director-General characterized the COVID-19 as a pandemic.**

Chinese authorities identified a new type of coronavirus (novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2) from a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China, on 7 January 2020. SARS-CoV-2 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. According to the information provided, the initial cases described in Wuhan were linked to Hunan seafood market in Wuhan (the market was closed on 1 January 2020). The possible source of the outbreak is still under investigation by the Chinese authorities and it may have emerged from an animal species, as has been the case for other coronaviruses. The exact extent of the outbreak remains unknown.

On 30 January 2020, the WHO Director-General declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), with temporary recommendations issued for all countries. On 28 February 2020, WHO raised the risk assessment for the COVID-19 outbreak internationally from “high” to “very high”.

## 4. Actions to date

The WHO Regional Office for Africa continues to work closely with its 47 Member States, as well as partners, in order to implement several outbreak preparedness and response interventions.

### Cross-pillar country actions

- Kenya is developing, piloting and rolling out a surveillance system for schools, with the return of in-person classes.
- A joint Ministry of Health/WHO mission was held in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, from 27 September to 2 October 2020 to review risk communication and community engagement and external relations around the COVID-19 response. The island region of Equatorial Guinea has continued to develop its operational plan for infection prevention and control (IPC) activities until December 2021. Equatorial Guinea also held a laboratory training session for staff collecting COVID-19 samples.
- Ethiopia has completed its point of entry (POE) Communicable Disease Control Guidelines and a stakeholder workshop has been scheduled for 13-17 October 2020; a training package for IPC/WASH in schools and a draft of Health Sector Disaster Preparedness and Response Guide have been finalized and submitted to the emergency operations committee.
- Ethiopia has drafted mobile SMS messages on the newly prepared and approved COVID-19 prevention directives and has developed a checklist for joint assessment of school reopening readiness in rural communities.
- IPC activities in Angola included disinfection of the COVID-19 treatment centre in the municipality of Catumbela.

- Ghana is conducting ongoing IPC training sessions for health workers in the Greater Accra region and there is ongoing review of the IPC manual.
- The case management team in Ghana has completed training staff from regional hospitals, private hospitals and teaching hospitals in six regions with high disease burden (Greater Accra, Ashanti, Eastern, Western, Central and Volta regions), supported by the WCO; a guideline is being prepared on continuity of essential services, along with capacity building by partners on service continuity.
- Uganda held a joint surveillance pillar meeting with WHO on 12 October 2020 to discuss operationalization of the school-based surveillance strategy, mortality surveillance and implications of the new government strategy on surveillance; 'talking compounds' at school were discussed in the RCCE pillar meeting on 12 October 2020, as well as increased community engagement with schools as they prepare to reopen on 15 October 2020; pictorial IEC materials in 18 local languages and English are in print and ready for distribution; IPC assessments of schools have also been carried out.
- Togo is continuing with RCCE activities, particularly through community health workers and community relays, along with sensitization messages on COVID-19 on radio and television.
- In Kenya, UNICEF conducted a rapid IPC/WASH assessment for health care facilities in information settlements.
- The East and Southern African Hub reported that the GeneXpert use cartridge management standard operating procedures had been finalized and shared with countries; an RCCE factsheet on COVID-19 in children and young people has been finalized; a bilateral meeting was held with South Sudan on case management and on IPC with Mauritius and Zambia; an emergency management team is due in Uganda next week to support case management and capacity building; an experience sharing session was held with Kenya, Zambia and Namibia on IPC and POE; strategic approaches to the use of antigen RDTs were discussed for Kenya.
- One of the Universities in Cameroon (Dschang) included the COVID-19 test among the list of tests to be done as part of the enrolment process for the academic year. So far, 144 RDTs have been conducted in the Medical and Social Unit Section of the university. Acquisition and preparations to test all teachers in preschool, nursery and primary schools as the school year begins have started.

## 5. IHR travel measures and cross border health

- WHO recommendations for international traffic in relation to COVID-19 outbreak are available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/updated-who-recommendations-for-international-traffic-in-relation-to-covid-19-outbreak>

WHO continues to monitor IHR measures being implemented by countries in the region:

- All countries in the region are conducting entry screening at the Points of Entries (PoEs), mainly at the airports, with some doing so at seaports and ground crossings.
- Due to movement of goods through the ground crossing, countries have intensified screening at ground crossings, which has led to detection of COVID-19 cases among truck drivers.

## 6. Conclusion

The African Region has observed a levelling in both COVID-19 cases and deaths since mid-July, 2020. However, this is the second week that the region has seen an increase (12%) in case incidence. Botswana with the highest increase, reported an aggregate figure of 1 867 cases resulting from testing of 40 616 persons during a 10-day period.

At the same time, a very high increase in deaths (75%) was noted in the same period, the top two countries; South Africa and Ethiopia contributing 82% (992) of reported deaths during the past seven days and also recorded 112% and 46% increases in deaths respectively. The majority (95%) of the new deaths reported in South Africa are retrospective, as the country is conducting death audits.



WHO continues to advise Member States not to be complacent but rather observe all the preventive measures and also urges continued implementation of proven public health and social measures against the ongoing COVID-19 crisis through a multi-sectoral approach.

## Annex 1. Global and Regional time line for COVID-19 as of 23 August 2020

