**REPORT ON THE CURRENT PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE RESULTING LOCKDOWN ON NIGERIANS**

In recent months, the whole world has been in silent chaos. Countries are slowly reducing in human population, the economy has been suffering a great deal and the people are living in fear. These series of events are as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This disease is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered virus identified as coronavirus.

The COVID-19 is a respiratory disease which has proved to affect people of all ages but those who have underlying medical conditions and sixty years of age and above, are at a higher risk of death. Some of the symptoms of this disease include fever, fatigue, dry cough, shortness of breath, aches and pains, sore throat, sudden confusion, digestive issues, pink eye and loss of smell and taste. It has been stated by WHO that people who have mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should self-isolate and contact the COVID-19 information line for advice and reference.

The WHO has also suggested some preventive measures, which can also slow down the transmission of the virus. Some of which include washing of hands regularly, sneezing or coughing into a flexed elbow, refraining from smoking and other activities that could weaken the lungs, etc. One of the major preventive measures that has been enforced is the social distancing. This is one measure the whole world has taken very seriously and punishments are even meted out when not obeyed in certain countries. Social distancing resulted in the declaration of a lockdown worldwide to prevent a communal spread.

Nigeria has recorded a total of four hundred and seven cases, twelve deaths and one hundred and twenty eight recoveries and counting. Ever since the cases started increasing, the President, Mohammadu Buhari, issued a lockdown of two weeks. After the two weeks expired, he extended the lockdown for another two weeks. The nation was not exactly happy about this. Nigeria, with 200 million people, is Africa’s most populated nation. Out of this 200 million, 20 million people reside in the megacity of Lagos. The people are scared at the country’s unprepared and underfunded health care system and provision for contingencies that could easily be overwhelm the country.

Nigerians are getting it hard. They complain they can’t stay inside. There is no water, no electricity, no food and no money. As the lockdown restricts most activities, including sales, the people are complaining. If they can’t sell, how are they and their families going to survive? At this point, the people are getting agitated and more afraid of hunger than the virus itself. There were long queues at supermarkets after President Buhari announced the lockdown, with people rushing to stock up on essentials.

But many Nigerians live from hand-to-mouth, living on less than $1 per day and they cannot stock up on food or other essentials. Many workers are also yet to be paid salaries for the month of March, talk less of April. This causes great concern about the financial implications of a lockdown. When the citizens are poor and hungry, the country’s standard of living is reduced and this results in a negative effect on the general economy.

After these points were raised, Mr. President said he would provide a month advance payment of the monthly $13 given to the poorest of the poor, but this still neglects the self-employed and some of the employed, leaving them without financial aid. The president still extended the lockdown by another two weeks after all these complaints were made, effective from the 13th of April, 2020.

On that same day, the President addressed the whole nation where he said he is fully aware of the complaints of the people, but cannot change the restrictions as the repercussions of any premature end to the lockdown action are unimaginable. To soothe the people, he put some measures in place.

The healthcare systems will be properly financed and equipped and more workers would be recruited to safely carry out the care needed. Nigeria has a lot of confirmed cases to which Lagos and Abuja play a major part of over 71% of these cases. Because of this, most efforts will be directed to these two locations. Also, food distributions, cash transfers and loan repayments are to be made to ease the pain of the lockdown. An additional one million homes will be supported by social investment programs.

For our economy, he has asked the Ministers of the different sectors to develop a comprehensive policy for a “Nigerian economy functioning with COVID-19”. We, the citizens hope these measures take us through this time of distress.