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How is Asia as a region responding to the COVID-19 pandamic? Contrast this with the response in Africa.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an [infectious disease](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infectious_disease) caused by [severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severe_acute_respiratory_syndrome_coronavirus_2) (SARS-CoV-2). The disease was first identified in December 2019 in [Wuhan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan), the capital of China's [Hubei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubei) province, and has since spread globally, resulting in the ongoing [2019–20 coronavirus pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic). Common [symptoms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symptom) include [fever](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fever), [cough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cough), and [shortness of breath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shortness_of_breath). Other symptoms may include fatigue, [muscle pain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myalgia), [diarrhea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diarrhea), [sore throat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sore_throat), [loss of smell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loss_of_smell), and [abdominal pain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdominal_pain). The [time from exposure to onset of symptoms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incubation_period) is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days. While the majority of cases result in mild symptoms, some progress to viral [pneumonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pneumonia) and [multi-organ failure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-organ_failure). As of 17 April 2020, [more than 2.16 million cases](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic_cases/WHO_situation_reports) have been reported across 210 countries and territories, resulting in [more than 145,000 deaths](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_coronavirus_pandemic_deaths/WHO_situation_reports). More than 550,000 people have recovered.

Authorities shut down borders, canceled flights and imposed strict entry and quarantine regulations. Health staff wear protective equipment to help stop the spread of the coronavirus

Asia

Accounts of travellers in some ASEAN countries being denied entry if they possess any China visa history in their passport. While this may not be official policy, it appears to be implemented at certain border crossings in more remote areas. Intra-Asia travel may best be arranged through main exit-entry points where facilities are more advanced.

Africa

African countries are taking preventive measure even though the outbreak hasn’t reached the same scale as other regions. The toll in Africa stood at 1,000 cases and over 100 deaths. The regulations are aimed foremost at travellers from countries such

as Italy, Germany, China and the United States, among those most severely hit by COVID-19.

African Countries That Has Responded To The COVID-19 Pandemic.

Zimbabwe

The Ministry would like to report that today 12th day in April Zimbabwe has eleven confirmed cases of COVID-19. The National Microbiology Reference Laboratory tested 18 samples. All of them tested negative for COVID-19.

Somalia

Somalia confirmed its first case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Mogadishu on 16 March. As of 15 April, there are 80 confirmed cases in Somalia with five confirmed death case.

Kenya

The Kenyan government also shut down schools and universities. Authorities are encouraging citizens not to handle actual banknotes and coins a possible source of contamination and make all their transactions cashless. Kenya has recorded three cases, but there are fears of a rapid spread if strict measures are not taken right away. Neighbouring Tanzania, which has one confirmed case, cancelled flights to India and as a result of this; they stop movement to and fro.

Asian Countries That Has Responded To The COVID-19 Pandemic.

Japan

Japan managed to avoid the worst of the first wave of infections, to such an extent that up until mid-March officials were still talking about holding the Tokyo Olympics as scheduled. As of April 1, Japan had only reported 2,500 cases and 60 deaths, many of those stemming from a single cruise ship. And that low number came despite businesses and borders remaining open at the time.

North Korea

Pyongyang reacted very quickly, closing its border with China in January, before the new coronavirus had even been named. Those controls were later expanded to deny the entry of all foreigners. The swift response has been coupled by official rhetoric terming COVID-19 a threat to “national survival.” Clearly, North Korea is taking the disease seriously.

China

The Chinese government moved swiftly to prevent the spread of the disease, instituting an unprecedented quarantine in Wuhan, where the disease was discovered. Through a combination of high-tech scanning and tracking of its population, coupled with strict controls on people’s ability to leave their homes, much less travel, China made progress. Amazingly, the epidemic is now under control.

Differences between Asian and African countries in handling the Coronavirus

Several African countries announced new cases of coronavirus. African governments reacted with measures and have advised all their citizens to practise good personal hygiene and exercise social distancing and stay at home order by the government to keep the infection from spreading. We all know that African countries are not medically strong and are finding it difficult to cope with this unforeseen pandemic.

Asian countries:

Since the beginning of this pandemic, it is seen that testing is so poor in most of Asia. They have no visibility about how widespread infections are. Overcrowded cities where social distancing is challenging or impossible also have very poor public health infrastructure. There are very low ratios of doctors and nurses per capita, and very

poorly resourced hospitals and so has it resulted to an explosion of cases and death in much of the region.

African countries

Because this is not the first disease that African contries are encountering, as a result, the Pan-African authority on public health that was created to respond to Ebola as at that time has been putting effort to support countries with surveillance systems and isolation wards and now 43 countries can now test for the virus.

Asian countries

Dubai-based Emirates Airline announced it would suspend passenger flights from 25 March for a two-week period, which could be renewed. It came after the [United Arab Emirates stopped all inbound and outbound](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/22/emirates-airline-to-suspend-all-passenger-operations-by-march-25.html) and transit passenger flights - although cargo operations will continue.

Africa’s major problem compared to Asia

In many African countries, there are no proper career structures within medical schools or biomedical research institutions. Highly trained biomedical scientists find themselves doing routine administrative jobs, which have little or no bearing on their training. These scientists are unlikely to be productive in their research and this is a contributing factor to the never-ending brain-drain from Africa. At the same time, partly because of problems of infrastructure, the curricula for biomedical science courses in many African universities do not reflect recent advances in the field of medicine not the best way to inspire students to consider a career in medical research. The ability to treat severe forms of COVID-19 will depend on the availability of ventilators, electricity, and oxygen. A recent analysis of countries with the highest numbers of intensive care beds per capita does not include any country from Africa and there is very little room to absorb the COVID-19 pandemic.

Solution for African countries

Despite economic hardship, governments in Africa need to recognize the important role of medical research in the overall economic and social development of their respective countries, and thereby give special attention to increased allocation of funding, particularly for key basic research programmers. Governments can do so by part sponsorship and by sourcing funds from bilateral donors that are targeted specifically towards medical research and made open to competitive funding according to priority areas of research.

Although structures for funding exist on a limited basis, it would be helpful to strengthen further and expand funding in various categories to target scientists at different levels of career development. For example, there would be schemes targeting the training of scientists at Masters degree level, at PhD level, at post doctoral level and the more experienced scientist. Funding for research proposals should go hand in hand with the strengthening of government departments that deal with interpretation and implementation or research findings so that further funding may be justified.

Robust COVID-19 response for the continent will need to take these factors into account and include community engagement, health leadership, and involvement of youth and religious leaders to drive containment

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