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**CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION ON NIGERIANS.**

**What is a pandemic?**

A pandemic describes an infectious disease where we see significant and ongoing person-to-person spread in multiple counties around the world at the same time.

Pandemics are more likely if a virus is brand new, able to infect people easily and can spread from person-to-person in an efficient and sustained way.

Coronavirus appears to tick all of those boxes. With no vaccine or treatment that can prevent it yet, containing its spread is vital.

Covid-19 impacts the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions most severely. In a spirit of solidarity, we all have to be ready to contribute our part to protect those people at highest risk because more and more countries are experiencing clusters of cases or community transmission. We expect that in the days and weeks ahead the number of cases will continue to rise rapidly, and we must escalate our response in such a way as to take pre-emptive action wherever possible. Such actions may help to delay the pandemic, giving health-care systems time to prepare and assimilate the impact.

As individuals practicing good hygiene and prevention measures as well as applying measures of social distancing, including avoiding crowded places continue to be very important.

**Effects of the lockdown and restrictions on Nigerians**

Millions of Nigerians observing covid-19 lockdown lack the food and income that their families need to survive. The lockdown does not apply to those providing essential services, such as food distributors and retailers, including market stalls selling food and groceries, which the government has said can operate for 4 hours every 48 hours.

The lockdown, however, prevents many Nigerians working in informal sectors from traveling to work or conducting their business. Local food vendors and traders have expressed fears over their ability to feed their families during the lockdown, with their daily earnings their only source of sustenance. An increase in food prices as a result of the lockdown also means that many can not stock up on necessities. The vast majority of the people outside the formal system are hit devastatingly by the lockdown. Any disruption to their livelihood has a huge and significant impact on their ability to meet their most basic needs.

The government should combine public health measures with effort to prevent the pandemic from destroying the lives and livelihood of society’s poorest and most valuable people. The government should also clearly communicate its economic relief plans to the public and clarify eligibility, timeliness, and procedures.