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DEPARTMENT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

MATRIC NO: 19/SMS09/022

LEVEL: 100L

COURSE CODE: GST122

TOPIC: CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIANS.

INTRODUCTION

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

The last time a pandemic occurred was in 2009 with swine flu, which experts think killed hundreds of thousands of people.

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 in this category. With no vaccine or treatment that can prevent it yet, containing its spread is vital.

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments. WHO will continue to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings become available.

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, do the following:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or clean them with alcohol-based hand rub.
- Maintain at least 1 metre distance between you and people coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs.
- Practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of people.

The COVID-19 virus affects different people in different ways. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease and most infected people will develop mild to moderate symptoms and recover without requiring special treatment. People who have underlying medical conditions and those over 60 years old have a higher risk of developing severe disease and death.

Common symptoms include:

- fever
- tiredness
- dry cough.

Other symptoms include:

- shortness of breath
- aches and pains
- sore throat
- and very few people will report diarrhoea, nausea or a runny nose.

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should self-isolate and contact their medical provider or a COVID-19 information line for advice on testing and referral.

People with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should call their doctor and seek medical attention.

EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION ON NIGERIANS

Nigeria's federal and state governments have acknowledged the devastating impact that COVID-19 will have on the food and livelihood sources of the most vulnerable Nigerians. The government needs to deploy more resources, creativity, and transparency to ensure the basic necessities of life for everyone.

The government said it is a matter of life and death. The repercussions of any premature end to the lockdown action are unimaginable.

Social and Economic hardship:

But the economic impact on the millions of Nigerians who rely on daily wages, has hit residents hard. The shutdown exempts only critical workers, including those selling food, water and medicine, but has left many without money to buy food and other essentials.

The vast majority of Nigerians depend on daily wages, they have to go out to get money and buy food to put it on the table for their families.

An increase in food prices as a result of the lockdown also means that many cannot stock up on necessities.

Nigeria is already feeling the pinch with oil prices plunging. The country is the world's eighth-largest oil exporter, and almost 90 percent of its export earnings are tied to oil. Shutting down the country's financial capital, Lagos, is expected to further add to an impending economic crisis.

There will be a slowdown in the country's GDP for the first quarter of the year. We have five key states in the country essentially grounded. That will lead to a loss of revenue for companies and individuals.

Meanwhile, electricity remains a major challenge in the country. Most people rely on costly diesel-powered generators to power their homes and keep businesses afloat.

An increase in food prices as a result of the lockdown also means that many cannot stock up on necessities.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria's federal government should urgently develop a plan to deliver social and economic assistance to the tens of millions of people who will lose income due to COVID-19, particularly informal workers who lack an adequate social safety net, Human Rights Watch said. Their exclusion from social protections violates their right to social security enshrined in international human rights law. This plan should be developed in consultation with community-based organizations with experience serving people living in poverty.

The government should also clearly communicate its economic relief plans to the public and clarify eligibility, timelines, and procedures.