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REPORT ON THE
CORONAVIRUS
PANDEMIC AND ITS
EFFECTS ON NIGERIANS.

A REPORT ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA.

The 2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December, 2019. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak to be a public health emergency of International concern on 30th January 2020 and recognised it as a pandemic on 11th March 2020. The common signs of the COVID-19 infection are similar to common cold and include respiratory symptoms such as dry cough, fever, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, kidney failure and death. The COVID-19 infection is spread from one person to others via droplets produced from the respiratory system of the infected person, often during coughing or sneezing. The virus is also said to have an incubation period of about 14 days.

The COVID-19 has succeeded in the global disruption of societies, economies, education and personal lives and has spread to about two hundred and ten countries and territories of the world such as Italy, United States of America, Spain, South Africa, Egypt, among others. The virus is most likely to spread to most, if not all countries.

The first confirmed case of the coronavirus disease in Nigeria was announced on 27th February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive to the virus and has an increasing number of 627 confirmed cases. While many national measures to contain the spread of the virus are being taken, there is a great uncertainty as to which measures are appropriate or not, varying from instructions of stringent hand hygiene, travel restrictions, social distancing and closure of schools, workplaces and markets to complete lockdown of large parts of the society. Also, it has led to the suspension of religious, social, family and public gatherings. It has also resulted in the placement of curfew in large parts of the country. These measures, particularly the lockdown and movement restrictions have left many Nigerians in unfavourable situations.

Indeed, the lockdown has had many effects on Nigerians so far, some of which are; the drawback in educational system due to the closing of schools, universities and colleges. People are unable to reach the market, marketers are unable to sell goods to help feed themselves and their families, soldiers seize the opportunity to extort, brutalize and even kill civilians who disobey the lockdown order.

Another effect of the lockdown on Nigeria is the economic retrogression. At the start of the pandemic, the price of oil which accounts for about 90% of the country's external revenue came down from a 2020 budget estimate of \$57 barrel per day to as low as \$20 barrel per day due to cessation of world trade. At the local scene, with the closure of international airports, seaports and borders as a measure to curtail the spread of the virus, internally generated revenue as well as revenue from foreign direct investments are also being lost. As it is, Nigeria has requested for a loan of \$6.9billion from International Monetary Fund, World Bank and African Development Bank, to combat the impact of coronavirus on Africa's biggest economy.

Apart from rate of death caused by the virus, the Nigeria Police Force in the bid to enforce the lock down as a measure to curtail the spread of the citizens, ended up killing more persons than the virus. Hoodlums have taken to the streets in Lagos stealing and molesting residents. With many Nigerian depending on daily wage for subsistence, starvation and social unrest is on the rise, notwithstanding the palliative of N20,000 introduced by the Federal Government for the poorest of its citizens.

To cushion the effect of the pandemic, on the citizens, the government is to put in place palliative measures such as direct income support, tax breaks and deferred interest payment on loans. These measures alone will not achieve the objective, if long term measures like industrialisation, increase in country's export portfolio, investment in small and medium term enterprises, agriculture, education and health care system are not implemented by the government. I also recommend that the Federal government should fund research on the production of anti-coronavirus vaccines instead of waiting for other countries and also keep the research institutions going, so that when problems like this arise we won't rely on others.