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**A REPORT ON THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENTS ON NIGERIANS**

The new coronavirus (COVID-19) has spread to nearly every country in the world since it first emerged in China on the 31st of December, 2019. As of April 20, 2020 more than 2.41 million people are known to be infected across 185 countries and territories, resulting in more than 165,000 deaths. More than 632,000 people have recovered.

**What is Coronavirus?**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of China’s Hubei province, and has since spread globally, resulting in the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The coronavirus family causes illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), according to the WHO. They circulate in animals and some can be transmitted between animal and humans. The coronavirus was later declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

**Where did the virus originate from?**

The source of the coronavirus is believed to be a “wet market” in Wuhan, China which sold both dead and live animals including fish and birds. Such markets pose a heightened risk of viruses jumping from animals to humans because hygiene standards are difficult to maintain if live animals are being kept and butchered on site. Typically, they are also densely packed allowing disease to spread from species to species. The animal source of Covid-19 has not yet been identified, but the original host is thought to be bats. Bats were not sold at the Wuhan market but may have infected live chickens or other animals sold there. Bats are host to a wide range of zoonotic viruses including the Ebola, HIV, and rabies.

**What are the symptoms of coronavirus?**

The common symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include fatigue, muscle pain, diarrhoea, sore throat, loss of smell, and abdominal pain. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms 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 and multi-organ failure.

The virus is primarily spread between people during close contacts, often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, or talking. While these droplets are produced by breathing out they fall to the ground or onto surfaces rather than remain in the air over long distances. People may also become infected by touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. The virus can survive on surfaces for up to 72 hours. It is contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread may be possible before symptoms appear and in later stages of the disease.

Recommended measures to prevent infection include frequent hand washing, maintaining physical distance from others (especially from those with symptoms), covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or inner elbow, and keeping unwashed hands away from the face. The use of face masks is for those who suspect they have the virus and their caregivers. Currently, there is no vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19.

**Effects of lockdown and restriction of movement on Nigerians**

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two. Since its emergence in Asia late last year, the virus has spread to every continent except Antarctica. Cases are rising daily in Africa, America, and Europe. Countries are racing to slow the spread of the virus by testing and treating patients, carrying out contact tracing, limiting travel, quarantining citizens, and cancelling large gatherings such as sporting events, concerts, religious gatherings, and schools. Some major effects of the lockdown and restrictions of movement on Nigerians include:

* **It has caused survival of the fittest between people**: The lockdown has made living difficult due to restriction of movement especially people living from hand to mouth
* It has encouraged social vices like stealing, fighting etc.
* It has helped families get close to one another and to God.
* It has led to inflation of available goods.
* It has caused all schools (primary, secondary and tertiary) to shut-down and has disrupted all schools academic calendar for the year.
* **Depression**: This lockdown has major effects on extroverts (people who prefer outdoors to indoors, people who prefer going out and can’t stay in for too long). It has led some people into deep depressions.

The pandemic is moving like a wave-one that may yet crash on those least able to cope. But COVID-19 is much more than a health crisis. By stressing every one of the countries it touches, it has the potential to create devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars. We are in uncharted territory. Many of our communities are now unrecognizable. Dozens of the world’s greatest cities are deserted as people stay indoors, either by choice or by government order. Across Nigeria, shops, theatres, restaurants and bars are closing.

Every day, people are losing jobs and income, with no way of knowing when normality will return. Small island nations, heavily dependent on tourism, have empty hotels and deserted beaches. The International Labour Organization estimates that 195 million jobs could be lost.