A REPORT ON CORONA VIRUS AND THE EFFECTS OF LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA BY OYELEKE FIYINFOLUWA (19/MHS01/375) ON THE 20TH OF APRIL, 2020

Since the outbreak of Corona virus (COVID-19), Nigeria has not been the same way and so is the world at large and it has been one month, 3 weeks and 3 days since this virus arrived into Nigeria. The coronavirus disease 19(COVID-19) is a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2(SARS-COV-2), which emerged in Wuhan, China and spread around the world. Genomic analysis revealed that SARS-COV-2 is phylogenetically related to severe acute respiratory syndrome-like bat viruses, therefore bats could be possible primary reservoir. The intermediate source of origin and transfer to humans is not known, however, the rapid human to human transfer has been confirmed widely. There is no clinically approved antiviral drug or vaccine available to be used against COVID-19. However, few broad-spectrum antiviral drugs have been evaluated against COVID-19 in clinical trials, resulted in clinical recovery.

In 2003, the Chinese population was infected with a virus causing Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Guangdong province. The virus was confirmed as a member of the Beta coronavirus subgroup and was named SARS-COV. The infected patients exhibited pneumonia symptoms with a diffused alveolar injury which lead to Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). SARS initially emerged in Guangdong, China and then spread rapidly around the globe with more than 8000 infected persons and 776 deceases. A decade later in 2012, a couple of Saudi Arabian nationals were diagnosed to be infected with another coronavirus. The detected virus was confirmed as a member of coronaviruses and named as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-COV). The World Health Organization reported that MERS-coronavirus infected more than 2428 individuals and 838 deaths. MERS-COV is member of beta-coronavirus subgroup and phylogenetically diverse from human-COV. The infection of MERS-COV initiates from a mild upper respiratory injury while progression leads to severe respiratory disease. Similar to SARS-coronavirus, patients infected with MERS-coronavirus suffer pneumonia, followed by ARDS and renal failure.

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate symptoms. The common symptoms are: fever, tiredness, dry cough while some people may experience: aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea. On average, it takes 5-6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however, it can take up to 14 days. Diagnosis may be difficult with only a physical exam because mild cases of COVID-19 may appear similar to the flu or a bad cold. A laboratory test can confirm the diagnosis. Thus, the preventions are:

* Clean your hands often. Use soap and a alcohol-based rub.
* Maintain a safe distance from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
* Don’t touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
* Cover your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.
* Stay at home if you feel unwell.
* If you have a fever, a cough and difficulty breathing.
* Seek medical attention and follow the directions of your local health authority.

Since the very first case of the pandemic of coronavirus disease 19 in Nigeria which was announced on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen tested positive for the virus, caused by SARS-COV in Lagos state the cases began to rise on a daily basis. On 9 March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun state, a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen. As of today, 20th April, 2020 there are 627 confirmed cases with 170 recovered and 21 deaths. Lagos state has recorded the highest number of cases in Nigeria with 376.

Since the cases have been rising rapidly, the president of Nigeria has announced a lockdown and restriction from movements in states with high rising cases of the COVID-19. The states include: Federal Capital Territory, Lagos state and Ogun state. Although, this decision was made with the intention of reducing the spread of the virus by minimizing the contact people have with one another in the environment. But it will also bring some disadvantages in the Nigerian society. Some of these disadvantages are:

* The Nigerians would have no source of income at hand as a lot of businesses have been put on hold.
* Nigerians will have to spend heavily on foods and various basic needs for their means of livelihood.
* It will greatly affect the Nigerian economy negatively.
* There will be high crime rate since not everyone has money to cater for their needs and that of their family members.
* Increase in cost of goods and services to cater for one’s survival.
* Investments by firms will be impeded.

The vast majority of people outside of the formal system are hit devastatingly by the lockdown. Any disruption to their daily livelihood has a huge and significant impact on their ability to meet their most basic needs. The lockdown has prevented those working in informal sectors from conducting their businesses and thus they have no source have income to provide for their needs and the needs of their family members. 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.