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**QUESTION: Write a report, of not more than two pages, on the Corona virus pandemic and the effects of the lockdown and restriction of movement on Nigerians.**

**NIGERIA AND THE 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 World Health Organization (WHO). The organisation recently declared the new coronavirus outbreak, a pandemic, the viruses circulate in animals and some can be transmitted between animals and humans and in fact, several coronaviruses are circulating in animals and have not yet infected humans. The new coronavirus, the seventh known to affect humans, has been named **COVID-19**. Humans infected with the virus may experience certain symptoms include fever, coughing, and breathing difficulties. In severe cases, the virus can cause pneumonia, multiple organ failure and even death especially in older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer. The incubation period of COVID-19 is thought to be between one and fourteen days. It is contagious before symptoms appear which is why many people get infected. Also, some people may remain asymptomatic, meaning that they do not display any symptom despite having the virus in their systems. COVID-19 is thought to have originated in a seafood market in Wuhan; a town in China where wildlife was sold illegally, the virus remained an epidemic in China until January 2020 when it started spreading to other countries of the world. Scientists have pointed to bats or snakes as possible sources. The WHO declared the virus a pandemic on March 11 and said it was “deeply concerned by the alarming levels of spread and severity” of the outbreak. 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. The WHO recommends basic hygiene such as regularly washing hands with soap and water or sanitizing with an alcohol based hand sanitizer, and covering your mouth with your elbow when sneezing or coughing. Maintain “social distancing” keeping at least 1.8 meters between yourself and others, particularly if you are sneezing, avoid touching your face, eyes and mouth with unwashed hands. Avoid unnecessary, unprotected contact with animals and be sure to thoroughly wash hands after contact.

Across the world, the outbreak of the new coronavirus has strained healthcare systems and hit economies hard, Nigeria is already feeling the pinch, shutting down the country’s financial capital, Lagos, is expected to cause a further impending economic crisis. The first confirmed case of the pandemic in Nigeria was announced on the 27th of February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for COVID-19. On 9th march, 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State, and a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen. In a bid to slowdown the spread of the virus, the Nigerian government has joined a host of other countries in the world as the government recently imposed a lockdown in Lagos, Abuja and Ogun; initially, this lockdown lasted for two weeks from the 30th of March to the 13th of April and it disrupted the activities to mark the 2020 holy week as religious gatherings were put on hold during the lockdown period, some states however lifted the ban during the Easter weekend and just when Nigerians thought it was over, the federal government extended the lockdown for another two weeks with effect from 11:59pm on the 13th of April several state governments have also imposed lockdowns on their states and are punishing defaulters of the directive. All citizens in these states are to stay home with the exception of only essential workers such as doctors and security operatives. The announcement however triggered panic in many Nigerians, while many citizens flooded markets and stores to buy food and other items to stock up households others could not tell the same tale because the restriction caused an increase in the price of commodities and resulted in an additional financial pain for millions of informal labourers who rely heavily on their daily earnings to survive, such people now face a quarantine with no daily income and claim that “the hunger virus” is deadlier than the coronavirus . The president however announced a series of measures aimed at relieving some of the economic pains of some of the most vulnerable students in the society such as daily income earners, internally displaced persons and the unemployed. A lot of videos of how Nigerians are suffering have been trending on social media; a lot of people and families don’t have food and are struggling to have just one meal a day, celebrities on social media occasionally have giveaways to assist such individuals with items ranging from money to foodstuff, but still there has been a spike in the crime rate of certain areas as people have resorted to stealing and doing unthinkable things in order to fend for themselves and their families. As at 10:20pm on the 16th of April, there were 442 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus reported in Nigeria, 152 cases were discharged and 13 deaths. The active cases at the time were in FCT, Kano, Osun, Edo, Oyo, Ogun, Katsina, Bauchi, Kaduna, Akwa Ibom, Kwara, Delta, Ondo, Enugu, Ekiti, Rivers, Niger, Benue, Anambra and Lagos which has the highest number of cases. The lockdown has put a lot of activities, events and celebrations such as school semesters, weddings and church gatherings on hold but thanks to the internet, some of these activities can still go on virtually. With the efforts of the federal government coupled with the cooperation of the citizens, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control(NCDC); the country’s national public health institute is working hard to ensure the spread of the virus can be contained in due time. The NCDC is currently carrying out SARS-CoV 2 tests on Nigerians around the county to detect the virus. The organization also encourages Nigerians to get in touch with them via social media or on the hotlines for more information or to lodge complaints of suspected infections. As death tolls rise around the world, Nigerians hope for an end to the pandemic in order to return to their normal lives soon.

***REFERENCE(S)***

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