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DEPARTMENT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

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TOPIC: 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.

The corona virus belongs to a family of viruses that may cause various symptoms such as pneumonia, fever, breathing difficulty, and lung infection. The World Health Organization (WHO) used the term 2019 novel corona virus to refer to a corona virus that affected the lower respiratory tract of patients with pneumonia in Wuhan, China on 29 December 2019. China was the first country to experience the full force of the disease, with confirmed active cases at over 60,000 by mid-February. European countries such as Italy, Spain, and France are now in acute phases of the epidemic, followed by the United States where the number of active cases is growing rapidly. In many emerging market and developing economies, the epidemic appears to be just beginning. In Italy, the first country in Europe to be severely hit, the government imposed a national lockdown on March 9 to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, attendance in public places and electricity use have declined dramatically, especially in the northern regions where infection rates have been considerably higher.

These high standard developed countries are struggling to manage and contain the spread of the virus and this brings us to the fate of underdeveloped African countries having the covid-19 case as well.  Almost all countries in Africa are unfavorable in many areas, from basic hygiene needs to health infrastructure. Other important and alarming factors are the presence of people living in unfavorable conditions in major cities, as well as communities of people displaced in sub-Saharan African countries, forced to migrate to other countries and living in non-sterile environments in camps. If the virus spreads to these areas where these people in the camps are struggling for life, what both the host countries and the international community can do may require serious restrictions and drastic measures.

These restrictions of movement have produced mass effect Nigerians. The extension of the lockdown as expected has added to the hardship of millions of Nigerians living from hand-to-mouth, an uptick in crime rate and domestic violence, the fall in household consumption, the restrictions on movement of people and border closures foreshadow a decline in exports.

The economic consequences of the pandemic are already impacting Nigerians with unprecedented speed and severity. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the world into a recession. For 2020 it will be worse than the global financial crisis. The economic damage is mounting across all countries, tracking the sharp rise in new infections and containment measures put in place by governments. Tumbling oil prices will disrupt the economies of big oil producing countries notably Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, and Congo Brazzaville.

 “We are hopeful that this pandemic will be limited in time. If it is an average of three months, we should be able to close the year with positive growth. But if it goes longer than that six months, one year; we will go into recession,” said the finance minister.