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A REPORT ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND ITS EFFECTS ON NIGERIANS.

The Novel Coronavirus disease now known as “COVID-19” had its first confirmed case reported in Wuhan, China in the month of December 2019 and ever since then has spread across 185 countries and infected than 3 million individuals with more than 227,000 deaths reported.

It is an extremely contagious disease that is transmissible via air droplets that are aerosolized when infected individuals sneeze or cough. These droplets can then be inhaled by others causing its high infectivity. The disease is also spread by direct bodily contact with an infected person. It can also be contacted when we touch contaminated surfaces and then touch our mouth, nose or eyes. It causes symptoms such as cough, tiredness, and shortness of breath and can lead to death if not properly managed.

The first case of the condition in Nigeria was noticed on the 27th of February 2020, when an Italian citizen in the state of Lagos tested positive for the virus. On the 9th of March, Nigeria recorded its second case in Ewekoro, Ogun State, a Nigerian citizen who had been in contact with the Italian. On the 23rd of March, the first death caused by COVID-19 in Nigeria was recorded; Suleiman Achimugu, 67-year-old engineer and former managing director of Pipelines and Products Marketing Company, who returned from the United Kingdom with other medical conditions.

As of the 29th of April 2020, there are currently 1728 cases of the condition and 51 resultant deaths. Due to this rapid rate of spread and mortality, the Nigerian government working closely with the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has been forced to institute several measures to curb the spread of this infection and the death it brings with it.

One of these measures has been to restrict the movement of citizens. The aim of this is to prevent the number of people that come into contact with each other throughout the day and hopefully reduce the spread. This measure was advised by the World Health Organization and has also been instituted by most nations of the world.

The restriction has also had its negative impact on the life of the everyday Nigerian who needs to go to work in order to provide food for his or her family. Due to this reason, many people do not abide by

these restrictions and still move about and carry on with their business as staying at home would lead to hunger for thousands of Nigerian families. The restriction has also led to an increase in the price of food and other essential materials as people tend to buy a lot more than they need of these materials leaving the remaining of these materials too expensive for the poor to afford.

Another measure instituted was the restriction of large gatherings such as weddings, burials, sport events and religious outings also in an attempt to reduce the spread of the virus. This has led to serious disruption of the lifestyle of the average Nigerian. Many significant religious dates such as the Easter celebration and Ramadan prayers have had to be celebrated in ways less preferred to the norm. However, some people are not following the directives of the government strictly and therefore expose themselves and others to the disease. Even to this day, many Nigerians still attend social gatherings and religious functions without protective masks or social distancing.

The NCDC has also advised Nigerians to constantly wash their hands with soap and running water according to the World Health Organization (WHO) established guidelines. Or with hand sanitizers. They have also advised to keep surfaces in our environment clean and sanitized at all times.

The hope is that if these guidelines can be adhered to, we might be able to see this pandemic through not just in Nigeria but in the world at large. Wuhan, China has recorded no new case over the past few days due to the effort of their health workers and diligence of their citizens. This too can be achieved in Nigeria.