Nigeria, with 200 million people, is Africa's most populous nation. Some 20 million reside in the megacity of Lagos.

Health experts have raised alarms over the impact of a major outbreak, warning that the country's unprepared and underfunded healthcare system could quickly become overwhelmed.

The extension of the lockdown is expected to add to the hardship of millions of Nigerians living hand-to-mouth, often on less than one dollar a day.

Buhari said he was "fully aware of the great difficulties experienced especially by those who earn a daily wage".

"But despite these realities, we must not change the restrictions," he added.

The government has pledged a series of support measures to ease the financial pain for the most vulnerable, but there have been widespread complaints that not enough is being done for those facing hunger.

"The vast majority of Nigerians depend on daily wages, they have to go out to get money and buy food to put it on the table for their families," Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris, reporting from the capital, Abuja, said.

"For the next two weeks, they are going to stay at home with no work and no chance of getting money."

Meanwhile, police said on Monday that they were bolstering forces in Lagos and Ogun after almost 200 suspects were arrested amid fears of a spike in crime during the lockdown.

Buhari said compliance with the stay-at-home order and other restrictions introduced by state governors across the country had been "generally good".

But he cautioned that "a large proportion of new infections are now occurring in our communities".

One major support that has attracted commentary is the offer by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC). This company is building various railways in Nigeria, including one from Lagos to Ibadan, and another from Abuja to Kaduna.

The offer is to import about 1.3m medical masks, over 100,000 pieces of personal protection equipment as well as 50 ventilators. The company has also proposed, of its own accord, to sponsor public health experts in order to help strengthen public health capacity and advise on processes and procedure.

Although this has attracted controversy, the SGF assured the Nigerian people that this was not different from what all other countries of the world are doing. Countries across the world are seeking assistance and accepting help for the fight against COVID-19.

The professionals invited are public health specialists and medical engineers that will support Nigeria’s capacity to handle the pandemic on an advisory basis.

There will be no case management or interface with patients from them, as they are not cleared to practice medicine in Nigeria. Rather, the experts will simply train the manpower on ground and advice on procedures and methods.

In a suspected jab at the Nigerian Medical Association, who released a press statement condemning the federal government for accepting the offer of Chinese experts, the SGF urged Nigerians to devote more time to dealing with the pandemic and avoid any unnecessary controversy.