

COVID-19 in the African Continent

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COVID-19 in the African Continent: Sustainable Development and Socioeconomic Shocks

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Foreword

In the first quarter of the year 2020, most African countries experienced socio-economic and political lockdown and social distancing measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Consequently, many African countries and the African Union Commission (AUC) implemented the COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES) programme. CARES programme intervention focused on three result areas in Africa: (1) increase social transfers, essential services, and livelihood support to poor and vulnerable households; (2) increase food security and safe functioning of food supply chains for poor households and (3) facilitate the recovery and enhance capacities for micro and small enterprises.

For instance, the World Bank – Nigeria CARES Programme is a \$750 million state-driven initiative to alleviate the tumultuous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households, communities and businesses. The World Bank – Nigeria – Bank of Industry CARES Programme is to implement Result Area 3 as a targeted relief programme for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). A good understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the African economies requires a well-articulated compilation of studies that presents the copying strategies implemented by households, businesses and governments towards adjusting to the unprecedented shock. For instance, about four in five Africans suffered a reduction in income due to the inability to work or earn income. Furthermore, due to low demand and declining supply chains stemming from movement restrictions and financial closure, more than half of employers were unable to meet the salaries of their staff. Consequently, the insightful findings collated from this edited book will be disseminated to policymakers for tailoring appropriate and evidence-based programmatic support to Africans, especially, the vulnerable households and firms.

Consequently, the years 2021 and 2022 are critical for the socioeconomic and geopolitical recoveries for an equitable and resilient Africa. In this regard, this edited book presents an in-depth analysis of how COVID-19 scaled the pre-existing socioeconomic weaknesses in Africa. Based on available data and evidence, this book discusses the workable policy recommendations that lend themselves to re-positioning Africa for its sustainable development trajectory. At this crucial growth juncture, there is an increasing need for a systemic paradigm change. African national and continental experts, technocrats, and decision-makers should collaborate with the Socio-Economic Research

Applications and Projects (SERAP) towards optimising global resources, networks, innovations and best practices for unlocking Africa's socioeconomic potentials.

As African governments attempt to better their businesses and economies, it is essential to leverage technology to democratise access and reach the last mile. However, innovative technology needs to be combined with other interventions like awareness raising, education, inclusion, diversity and equity principles.

Based on the policy recommendations contained in this edited book, SERAP is interested in striking strategic alliances with African governments towards creating awareness programmes, and applying adaptation strategies for overcoming the impact of future socioeconomic shocks on Africa's vulnerable households and minority businesses.

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We wish to acknowledge the inflicting support of the providers on the various online platforms used to advertise the call for chapters for this project. We acknowledge the broad spread of the call for chapter proposals which resulted in massive turn in of chapter proposals from which the constituent chapters and sections of the current project were built.

While this edited book project took off during the COVID-19 lockdown and its challenges, the editors appreciate the support and responses to queries by Emerald publishers all through the development of this edited volume. Also, the editors gratefully acknowledge the support and encouragement from members of their family all through the development of this project.

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