# COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN ETHIOPIA

LITERATURE REVIEW

ETHIOPIAN REPORT

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## LITREATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the corona virus pandemic, is a highly expanding global pandemic first emerged in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019. This global pandemic was declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and then announced a pandemic on 11 March. As of early September 2020, more than 25.9 million cases of COVID-19 had been reported in more than 188 countries, resulting in more than 860,000 deaths and over 18.1 million recoveries worldwide.

The COVID-19 pandemic was reported to spread to Africa on 14 February 2020. The first confirmed case being in Egypt. Ethiopia reported the first case on 13 March 2020. The national government of the country led by Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed declared a five-month state of emergency in April 2020 by still allowing economic activities to continue during this public health crisis. As of 26 August, there has been over 45,000 confirmed cases with over 700 deaths and over 16,000 recoveries in the country.

This global pandemic had caused many negative economic, political and educational impacts in Ethiopia. The pandemic has affected flower export after Europe was hit with the corona virus, the demand for flower has plummeted and the price dropped by more than 80% putting 150,000 employees at risk of losing their jobs. The country's flag carrier Ethiopian Airlines is working at only 10% of its capacity reporting a loss of $550 million from January to April 2020. And more than 26 million students are affected by school closures due to corona virus. Politically the general election that was set to be held on 29 August 2020 won't be held and any activities related to the election has been

ceased according to a statement released by National Electoral Board of Ethiopia on 31 March.

## What has been done to contain the spread?

However, instead of implementing a national lockdown like most other governments, including in Africa, Ethiopia initiated other essential measures in January. The government then scaled up its response in mid-march, when the first case was reported in the country, and declared a state of emergency only on early April. Moreover, it has encouraged production and other economic activities to continue during the crisis, thus considerably easing the pressure on vulnerable social groups and the informal sector. The government has come up with different kind of policies, strategies and programs to be implemented to combat this global pandemic. These are

## International Travels

Ethiopia is home to one of Africa's busiest international airline hubs. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the Ethiopian flag carrier Ethiopian Airlines has been actively carrying out the recommendations set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other Global Health and Travel regulators. The Ethiopian government has decided to quarantine all arriving passengers entering Ethiopia at selected hotels including the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel for 7 days at the expenses of the passengers or will be placed at different quarantine centers. After 7 days, traveler will be tested and then self-isolated for an additional 7 days at home, except travelers who can bring certificate of negative RT-PCR SAR-CoV test done up to 5 days before arrival to Ethiopia.

Travelers arriving at Bole International airport who can bring a certificate of negative RT-PCR SAR-CoV test done up to five days before arrival

to Ethiopia, they will be required mandatory 14-days self-quarantine at home after giving a sample upon arrival.

Diplomats will be quarantined at their respective Embassies and are required to give swap sample upon arrival.

## Closures of Gathering places

In order to minimize the spread of corona virus the closure of different gathering places has been one of the immediate activities taken by the government. Following the first reported case in Ethiopia all schools and universities were announced to stay closed until further notice. Public gathering places like night clubs and bars were also restrained from giving public services. Religious places were closed and prayers were being held and delivered to the public through different television media. Recreational places such as gym, cinemas, stadium, and game zones are banned.

## Avoiding Overcrowding (Social Distancing)

Social distancing is one of the major prevention methods of this great global pandemic. The Ethiopian government has set out methods to take place at different parts of the country to keep social distancing in crowded environments. This action has been carried out by reducing the number of passengers in public and personal transportation like trains, taxis and buses to half of their capacities. Restaurants, bars and cafes are serving reduced number of customers per table. Every governmental and non-governmental service providing companies and organizations are making sure peoples seeking services should keep their distance. While social activities like wedding, concerts, graduation ceremonies and other festivities are prohibited.

## Proper use of protection materials

Preventing social contact in a tactile country such as Ethiopia is a very difficult action to exercise. Ethiopian social and religious practices and daily

culture entail physical contact, embodied for example in communal eating habits, in the way off greeting, and celebrating of different holidays. The importance of community, both culturally and in the country's development strategy make it hard to respect social distancing. Even if there are efforts to implement 'social distancing' and to encourage 'stay at home' principles, these are most apparently only in Addis Ababa. Therefore, according to the above reasons, the government has made wearing of masks and using of sanitizer mandatory at every places of the country.

## Scaling up Testing

At the onset of the crisis, virus testing facilities in the country were limited. With the international support these have been rapidly ramped up. Currently there are about 24 testing laboratories in the country, capable of performing more than 5600 tests a day. The Ministry of Health and local and regional governments jointly conducted house to house screening of more than 1 million households containing 40 million peoples in the capital and provinces. And diagnostic testing was scaled up from zero in early March to over 5,000 per day by May, though it continues to be a major challenge.

## Spread of World Health Organization (WHO) recommended practices

Public awareness and education have been a major government effort to contain the spread of the virus. The prime minister makes regular public announcements regarding COVID-19 updates, while the health minister provides daily briefings. And also, as part of media campaign to reach the awareness to all citizens, state owned telecoms monopoly Ethio Telecom uses cell-phone ring tones to remind people of the importance of hygiene measures such as hand washing, social distancing and wearing facemasks which showed positive effects.

## Increasing Capacity of Quarantine

Furthermore, since February, the Ethiopian authorities have implemented a strict regime of rigorous contact tracing, isolation, compulsory quarantine, and treatment. The government converted public universities' dormitories to increase the capacity of quarantine centers to over 50,000 beds, established additional isolation centers with a total off 15,000 beds, and set up treatment centers with a 5,000-bed capacity one being the large exhibition hall in Addis Ababa (Millennium Hall). It also introduced a more comprehensive life insurance coverage to protect front-line health workers.

## Encouraging of Voluntary work

Because of the global pandemic economic activities are continuing albeit at a lower level and in a country with a large informal sector and reliance on a day to day income, a deliberate decision has been taken not to be heavy-handed with a view to restricting a sharp increase in vulnerability. However, the government has taken measures to mitigate the economic effects. Rents on government owned property have been reduced and business owners and individuals have also been asked to take similar measures. To ensure food security more than 1200 food banks have been set up for the urban poor in Addis Ababa. The government is pushing households who can afford it to provide one meal per day for a poor household so as to reduce the possibility of civil unrest.

The country's main social safety nets the PSNP which caters to rural areas is working actively to shield the vulnerable. In rural areas, guided by development agents, economic activities, especially farming and marketing of produce is continuing in a 'corona-cognizant' manner. Free provision of sanitary items such as soap and hand-washing gels to those who can't afford easily.

## Reaching the Rural area

While most measures are similar to those taken in other parts of the world, a key difference is that a majority of Ethiopians (79%) live in rural areas with weak transportation and communication links.

To reach these areas, risk communication and community engagement task forces have been established at a lowest administrative unit and at health facilities. These units involve the country's 42,000 health extension workers, two per village, who undertake the task of household and individual level sensitization and awareness creation

Other governmental programs implemented in order to combat these crises include postponing of the national election which was scheduled for August 2020. Release of around 4,000 prisoners who committed minor offences were released. The government has also disinfected road and other public places to ensure the safety of the peoples.

# BUDGETS RELEASED TO THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT TO CONTAIN COVID-19

Due to the ongoing global pandemic, numerous developing countries exhibit economic instability. Ethiopia being one of the developing nations in Africa is facing a pronounced economic slowdown. A number of funding organizations have the generosity to help the country during this time of crisis.

## IMF (INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND) April 30. 2020

In order to address this matter, the IMF approved US$411 million emergency assistance for Ethiopia under the Rapid Financing Instrument. The country will also benefit from IMF debt service relief under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust.

The authorities have taken swift and decisive action to contain the impact of COVID-19 by strengthening the health system, adopting a state of emergency to limit the spread of the virus, and implementing measures to support the economy.

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a purchase under the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) equivalent to SDR 300.7 million (about US$411 million, 100 percent of quota) to help Ethiopia meet the urgent balance of payment needs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, Ethiopia will benefit from the IMF Executive Board decision of April 13, 2020 to provide debt service relief to the poorest and most vulnerable countries that are eligible for grant assistance under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT). As a result, the Board approved Ethiopia's request for relief under the CCRT on debt service falling due to the IMF until October 13, 2020 of about US$12 million. This relief could be extended up to April 13, 2022, subject to the availability of resources under the CCRT.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created severe health risks and weighed heavily on the Ethiopian economy. If the pandemic is not contained, it will put severe pressure on the health system with divesting social consequences. On the economic front, a fall in demand for exports, combined with domestic containment measures will slow growth and weaken external and fiscal accounts.

## EUROPEAN UNION

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major health, social and economic impact on countries and communities around the globe. For Ethiopia, already tackling outbreaks of cholera, measles and malaria, the pandemic risks overwhelming the country's already overstretched health system. As in all countries facing

this outbreak and its tragic consequences, Ethiopia's heroic healthcare staff have been put under increasing strain due to limited resources and inadequate facilities.

Recognizing Ethiopia's uphill challenge and the need for global solidarity in the face of the outbreak, the European Union rapidly mobilized €10 million to support the Government's Preparedness and Response Plan to the pandemic, together with another €15 million in health sector budget support to strengthen the country's health facilities and save lives.

This EU support for the Ministry of Health and the Ethiopian Public Health Institute aimed to increase the number of Covid-19 diagnostic laboratories and test kits, improve health facilities' readiness for Covid-19 case management, and strengthen resource mobilization efforts. In March, the Ministry of Health started testing with a single PCR machine. Now, thanks to EU and other partners' support, 27 Covid-19 diagnostic laboratories have been established with the necessary test kits, reagents and related supplies. This has allowed healthcare staff to work in improved conditions and provide the necessary care for their patients.

As a result, the testing capacity has increased to more than 5,000 per day, with a total of 116,309 laboratory tests conducted so far. Health facilities' capacity and readiness has increased and currently a total of 87 quarantine centers, 98 isolation centers, and 41 treatment centers have been established across the country, including the Millennium Hall conference center in Addis Ababa. With EU support, the Ministry of Health has also developed a Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, with an estimated budget of $430 million. Over half of that amount – around $235 million – has already been committed, both from domestic and external sources.

Covid-19 and its impact on communities, families and entire societies has shown that no one is safe unless everyone is safe. The European Union is

proud to work together with our international partners to take on the challenges that the pandemic has presented to us all.



## WORLD BANK GROUP

To help Ethiopia mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors approved $82.6 million ($41.3 million grant and $41.3 million credit) from the International Development Association*.

Although Ethiopia has achieved significant gains in improving health outcomes and strengthening its health system, the COVID 19 outbreak is expected to challenge the nation's public health preparedness and response systems and negatively impact the economy. The project will provide much needed

emergency funds to help Ethiopia to fill critical resource gaps in its public health emergency preparedness."

The new COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project is designed to help Ethiopia develop counter measures to lessen the devastating effects of COVID-19. The project will support Ethiopia's National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 by financing the procurement of medical supplies and equipment, building diagnostic capacity and training, improving the health screening of people entering into the country, and establishing quarantine, isolation and treatment centers. It will also support communications and information outreach activities to encourage behavioral change, such as social distancing, handwashing and sanitation. Furthermore, the project will help the country to reduce the potential impact of the epidemic on health systems, social services and economic activity.

The World Bank Group is rolling out a $14 billion fast-track package to strengthen the COVID-19 response in developing countries and shorten the time to recovery. The immediate response includes financing, policy advice and technical assistance to help countries cope with the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. The IFC is providing $8 billion in financing to help private companies affected by the pandemic and preserve jobs. IBRD and IDA are making an initial $6 billion available for the health-response.  As countries need broader support, the World Bank Group will deploy up to $160 billion over 15 months to protect the poor and vulnerable, support businesses, and bolster economic recovery.

## UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

The UK has just allocated 12m euro more than 450m ETB to UNICEF to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Ethiopia.

Another 7m euro (more than 270m ETB) has been agreed with UN OCHA coordinate the response to the virus and respond to other humanitarian needs in the country.

The UK is leading, with partners in effort to stop the global spread of COVID-19 and has acted quickly. This allocation of funding is in line with Prime Minister Abiy's call for global support to Africa as it faces this virus.

This allocation of 19m euro of funding in Ethiopia includes supporting work within refugee camps and settlements. Funding to partners working in these areas is vital, as social distancing and isolation may not be possible because of crowded conditions, and water and sanitation services are already stretched. UK support to partners will help people protect themselves and their families.

The UK has been a long-standing partner of government of Ethiopia working to strengthen health systems. Senior Health Advisors from the UK are now working with the Ethiopian Public Health Institute and the Ministry of Health to support their response to Covid-19. The advisors are also supporting the ongoing delivery of essential basic health services.

Ethiopia is home to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. 7 million people are targeted for humanitarian assistance in 2020, even before Covid-19 outbreak.

The UK recognizes that the fight against Covid-19 goes beyond a public health response. The UK is helping children in Ethiopia to continue their education while schools are closed as a result of Covid-19. The UK is also supporting schools to put in place Covid-19 prevention measures for when they re-open.

## ETHIO TELECOM



Ethio-telecom donated 100 million birrs to support the ongoing efforts combating the spread of COVID 19 in Ethiopia on April 15/2020. The company has been disseminating information to strengthen public awareness, which is vital in the fight against the pandemic and has been mobilizing more than 48 million mobile subscribers to fund for the national efforts to fight against COVID-19 epidemic.

Ethio-telecom has created a platform to raise funds both from domestic and abroad in order to help fight against the spread of COVID-19, which so far enabled the nation collect over 4.4 million birrs.

The company has also launched various technology supported programs including "Stay @ Home Mobile Package Service, Stay Connected Service and Stay Active Service" to help the ongoing efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

The Ethiopian government also have been acquiring different kinds of help from different organization for the combat of this pandemic. Some include

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has provided 15 metric tons of aid to Ethiopia to assist efforts to fight coronavirus (COVID-19).

The assistance would enable medical staff in the country to safely perform their professional duties in combating the virus' spread.

## Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundations Donate COVID-19 Medical Equipment

Africa's response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak received a boost today as the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the Government of Ethiopia received a consignment of medical equipment from the Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundations.

The shipment included over 1.5 million laboratory diagnostic test kits and over 100 tons of infection prevention and control commodities.

This relief initiative was launched by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr Abiy Ahmed, the Jack Ma Foundation, and Alibaba Foundation as part of actions towards implementation of the Africa joint continental strategy for COVID-19 led by the African Union through Africa CDC.

The COVID-19 outbreak continues to spread rapidly across the continents of the world claiming thousands of lives and huge resources. In just about three months it has caused over 12,000 deaths worldwide and impacted socioeconomic activities, particularly tourism and transport.

Ethiopian Airlines will help distribute the equipment, consisting 20,000 laboratory diagnostic test kits, 100,000 medical masks, and 1000 protective suits and face shields, to each of the Member States as part of their contribution to the fight against COVID-19 in Africa.

The Ethiopian Government has been funded by different national and international organization in order to contain the spread of the virus and provide support for the citizen at this time of global crisis. The authorities remain committed to the reform program. However, the covid-19 pandemic has had a significant adverse impact on the economy and created urgent fiscal and balance of payments needs. The authorities have moved decisively to contain the spread of the virus and manage the economic fallout from the global downturn and the needed health-related measures.

This fund and been used to increase spending on health care and provide emergency assistance, including food assistance. The authorities are committed to full transparency on the spending for the emergency response and aim to conduct an ex-post audit of crisis-related spending once the crisis

abates. Fiscal consolidation will need to resume after the crisis, with a focus on strengthening debt sustainability and domestic revenue mobilization.

# CIVIC ENGAGMENT OF THE YOUTH ON COVID-19

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented health crisis, disrupting the lives of thousands of individuals, as well as their societies. As this pandemic expands, young people have been amongst those mobilizing to shape new forms of solidarity, demonstrating humanism and creativity. Young people are amongst those impacted by the current crisis in terms of mental and physical health, learning and professional development, civic engagement and respect for their rights – on all these fronts young people are also facing important disruptions and changes.

## Youth volunteers take to the streets to mobilize against COVID- 19 in Ethiopia

## Health Care Workers



Door-to-door home visits are a key part of health extension workers' routine. They check on pregnant women, educate people about COVID-19 precautions, and promote routine medical check-ups and immunizations. During COVID-19, health extension workers are also conducting community-based temperature checks.

Ethiopia is among countries that have made notable progress in reducing maternal and child deaths, according to a 2019 situation analysis of children and women. But COVID-19 threatens to unravel much of this progress. Data from the Ministry of Health for March shows that there was a nine percent decrease in the number of children treated for pneumonia compared with the

previous eight-month average, suggesting a reluctance by parents to bring their children for treatment.

## Students Volunteering



Some volunteer students that are currently staying at home due to the closure of school in order to contain the spread of the virus. While in his time of crisis they are participating in creating awareness about the transmission and ways of containing the COVID-19 pandemic among the community they live in.

The students are working together with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society to helps their society. These group of young volunteers are going around taxi stations, bus stations, commercial buildings, train stations, and public markets where vendors sell different kind of vegetable. All these places are crowded and peoples move in mass which can be an easy way to transmit the virus to one another.

They create the awareness by going around the crowd and talking to peoples to wear their mask at all times, by telling them to keep their distance while

purchasing any good, waiting for transportation or to get any kinds of services. They even go door to door educating about COVID-19.

Some of the peoples they encounter are skeptical to accept what they are teaching but most of the crowd appreciates their work and understands that they are doing this for the safety of the community. Such an incautious response does not discourage them at all.

During the busy rush hour, the volunteers and their coordinators use the mobile speaker to amplify their messages. As the taxi queues begin to build up, the volunteers go around sanitizing people's hands.

The ERCS, in partnership with UNICEF, is training volunteers to work with communities in 134 targeted woredas (districts) in Ethiopia. People living in congested urban areas such as marketplaces, slums, and remote areas with low access to the media will be reached with COVID prevention messages. This will be done mainly through the deployment of 1,500 volunteers from the targeted communities. The partnership aims to reach nine million people.

The stay home policies that arouse due to the COVID-19 crisis in Ethiopia has bought negative impacts on small children and women. They have been a victim of sexual abuse by peoples that live with them at their home. As sexual abuse being one of the impact of COVID-19, nurses and health care workers are helping kids and woman that suffered from rape. They consult and give advice to patients that undergo these difficulties.

## Young Inventions helping Ethiopia in COVID- 19 crisis

Inventors in Ethiopia have been developing devices and gadgets to combat COVID-19. The pandemic has encouraged creative minds, though, including that of Ezedine Kamil, an 18-year-old natural science student from Welkite, a rural town 160 kilometres from the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.



Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, ventilators, face masks and gloves have become much-sought-after items around the globe. Sourcing medical and personal protection equipment is a huge problem for poorer countries such as Ethiopia.

## Contact-free hand washer

He first designed an contactless electrical soap dispenser with a built-in sensor, which could also be operated using a mechanical pedal during power blackouts — common occurrences in Ethiopia.

His invention has been embraced by the local community. Fifty dispensers have been produced by the local university and distributed in banks and hospitals across Welkite.

## Ventilator shortage

Ventilators, which help patients breathe, are in even greater demand. Ethiopia has only 557 ventilators, according to the country's health ministry, 214 of which belong to private hospitals. That leaves just 163 ventilators for COVID-19 patients — too few for Africa's second most populous nation.

Having never built a ventilator, he set off by searching open source manuals online. His invention used a plastic pouch known as an Ambu bag, a mechanical ventilator and a screen operated from a cellphone. After successfully testing a prototype, he started producing and delivering the new machines to the local community.

© Ezedin Kamil

## Warning Sensors

Next, the young inventor set about building a device to remind people not to touch their faces, one of the central massages of the global coronavirus awareness campaign. The device is like a watch with a sensor, every time the hand approaches the face, the device rings, reminding the wearer not to touch their face. The device is made out of easily available, discarded electrical appliances and plastic materials which cannot decay easily.

Also, you can equally apply the unit to monitor the 1.5-meter physical distancing required to fight off the virus by applying it on your belt.

Despite his best efforts, Ezedine's inventions are slow to reach the local community. Among his many innovations, only a fire alarm and the contactless soap dispenser have so far been implemented.

Mass production requires a big investment. It is beyond his capacity to start it alone. It requires a major capital injection. And the biggest problem in this

country is that inventors who wants to work on their own initiative never get financial support from the government.

> When Ethiopia's Ministry of Science and Innovation, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), recently launched a COVID-19 challenge, Ezedine was quick to submit his list of inventions. Last year he won a $8,000 prize for designing an electric and solar bicycle.

As the bright student impatiently waits for his inventions to garner financial support from either government or private investors, he has his eyes firmly set on turning his passion of innovation into a career path. His goal is to create jobs for the unemployed.