

Common Market for
Eastern and Southern Africa



COPING WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE COMESA REGION

COVID-19

in **COMESA**

Situational Update N°24

5 August 2020



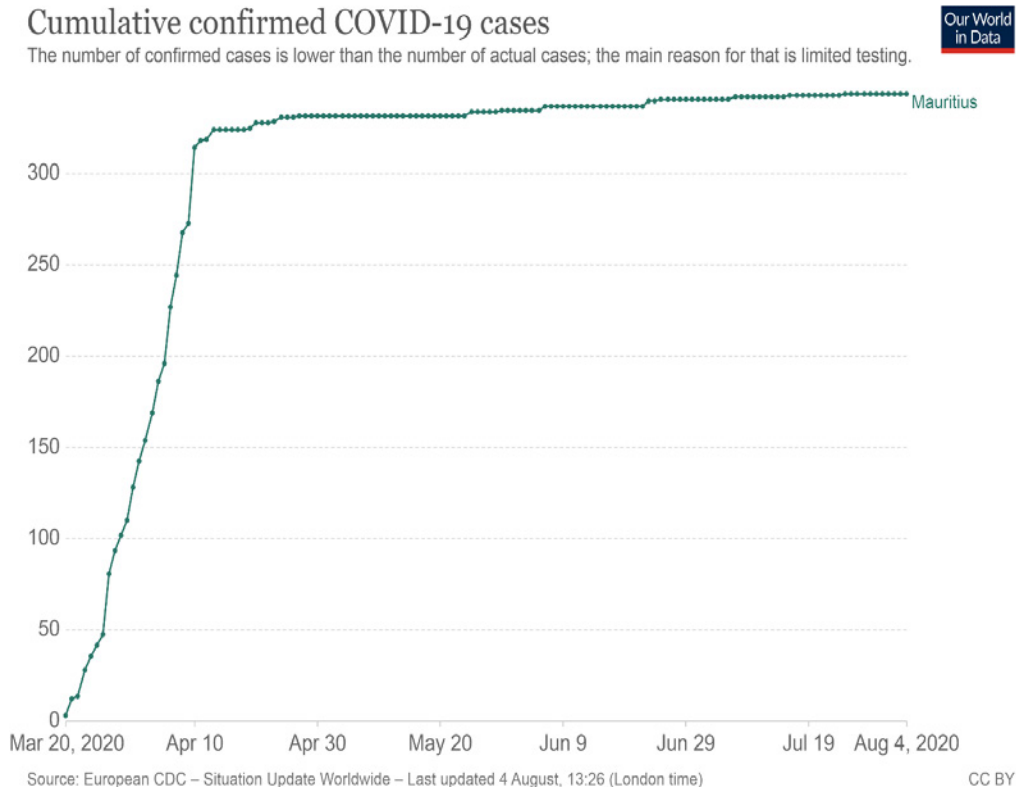
COPING WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN THE COMESA REGION

Since the first COVID-19 case was reported in the COMESA Region on 14th February 2020, Member States have continued to put in place measures to cope with the pandemic. In the initial stages, the focus was on prevention, in particular prevention of community transmissions. However, with the continued spread and increase in the numbers of new cases, Member States in the region have started adopting country-specific prevention frameworks to limit the spread of the virus and support businesses. The country-specific prevention frameworks have been informed by different factors that include state capacity to provide support to the health sector and business. This includes financial and human resources as well as tax exemptions, among others. Other factors include the level/ intensity of the spread of the virus, the available health infrastructure and societal configurations in terms of culture and demography.

Relatively stronger economies in the region have tended to provide economic stimulus to cushion the effects of COVID-19 on business activities. For instance, Egypt provided tax exemption of capital gains on securities listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange, extended a tenure of all bank loans for businesses for six months and provided debt relief for individuals. These measures in Egypt are geared towards protecting businesses from collapsing. To support local manufacturing industries, the Government of Egypt reduced tariffs of US\$4.50 per British Thermal Unit (mmBtu) for cement manufacturing companies, metallurgy and ceramic manufactures. The Government also reduced the price of electricity for heavy industries. To support vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the Government has provided social safety nets.

In Mauritius, the Government has continued to put measures to support local businesses. For instance, the

Government of Mauritius has waived municipal fees for about 13,000 market stakeholders. This has reduced overhead costs and ensured that local businesses continue to operate without financial hindrances brought about by COVID-19. In addition, the Government has also created a special relief fund to enable businesses access cashflow and working capital. Furthermore, Mauritius was among the first countries in the region to put preventive measures to contain the spread of the pandemic. Some of the preventive measures that were put in place included closure of borders, suspension of commercial flights, closure of schools and hotels, lockdown, among others. These initial preventive measures have been instrumental in flattening the curve of COVID-19 cases.



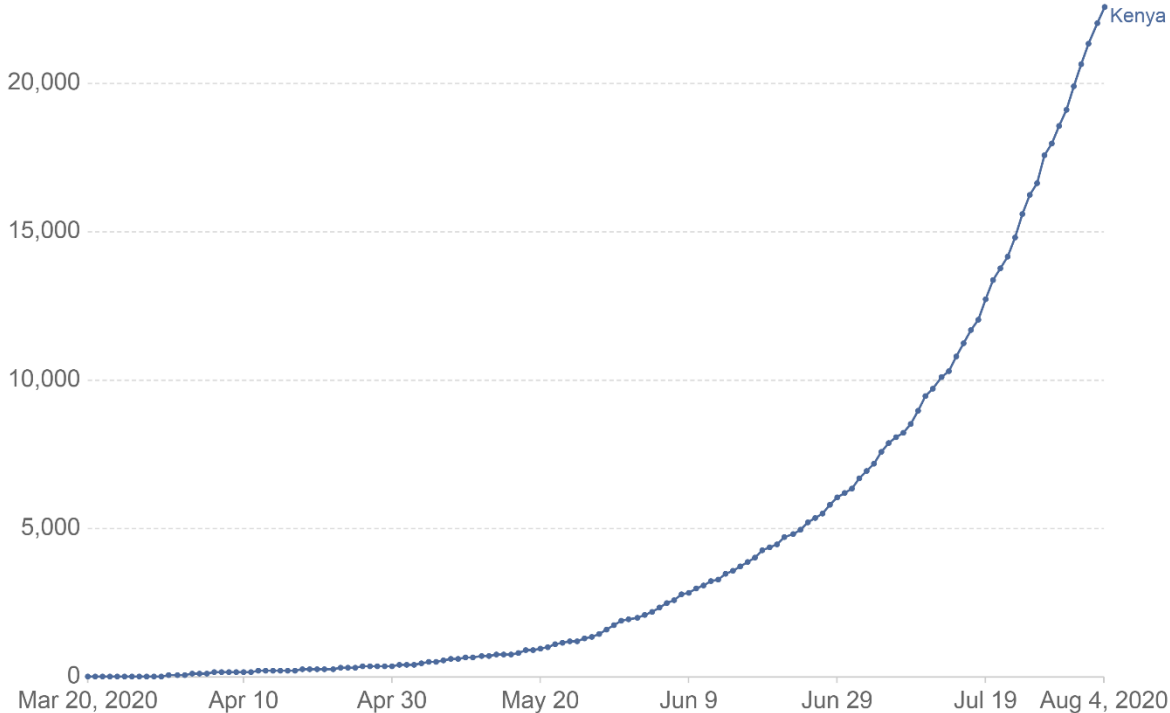
In terms of recoveries, Mauritius has a recovery rate of 97.09%, one of the highest in the region. As a result, Mauritius has successfully contained the spread of the virus among its population and currently does not have any active COVID-19 cases.

The Kenyan Government as part of its initiative to support the business sector has allocated US\$100 million to fast-track payment of outstanding Value-Added Tax (VAT) refunds and other pending payments to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In addition, the Government has provided US\$30 million as seed capital for the SME Credit Guarantee Scheme. Measures have also been put in place to support local motor industry assembly plants. For instance, the Government allocated US\$6 million for locally produced vehicles. While Kenya has also put in place preventive measures including wearing of masks in public, reinstated curfews, ban of sale and consumption of alcohol in social places, the numbers of new cases in the recent past have continued to surge. The surge is a result of community transmissions associated with non-adherence to preventive measures put in place.

Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases

The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.

Our World
in Data



Source: European CDC – Situation Update Worldwide – Last updated 4 August, 13:26 (London time)

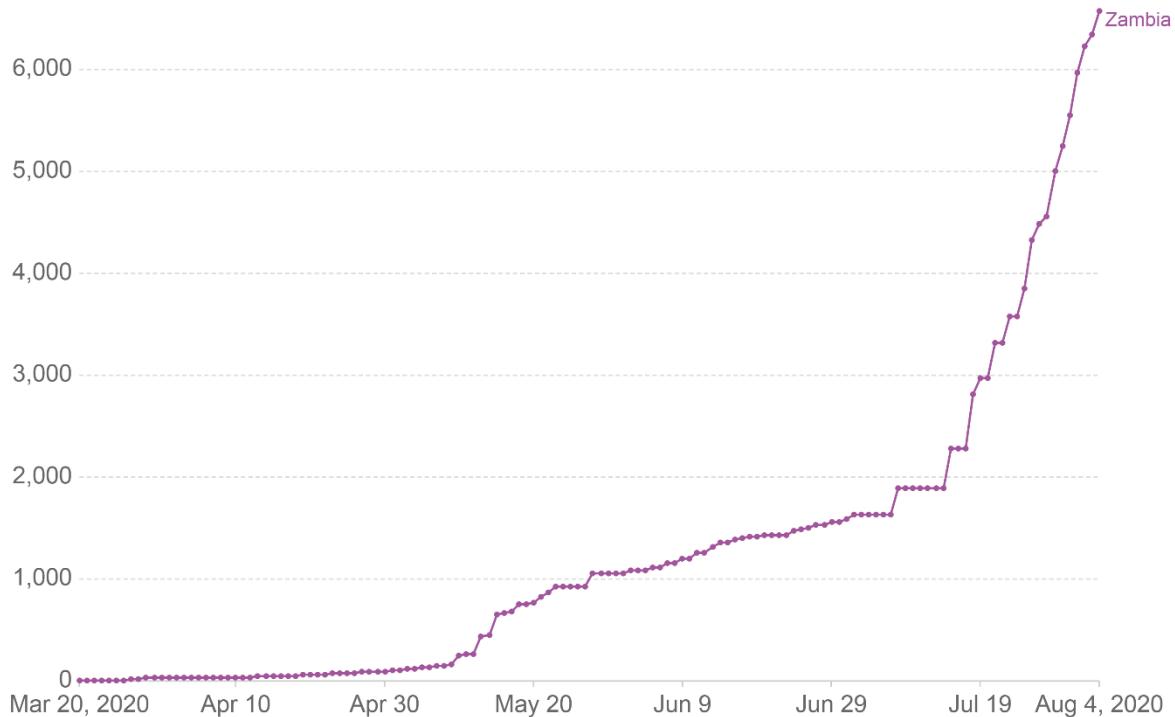
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As part of enhancing the resilience of the economy and alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Zambia released 2.5 billion Zambia Kwacha (US\$140 million) to increase liquidity. In addition, the Government released 140 million Kwacha (US\$7.8 million) to be paid to local contractors in the road sector. This has ensured that planned infrastructural developments projects that are key to economic development are completed.

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While the recorded COVID-19 cases were relatively low from March to early July 2020 (below 2,000), the current trend from mid-July to the present indicates a drastic increase in the numbers of new cases (over 6,000). This can be attributed to increased mass testing and non-adherence to stipulated preventive measures.

Summary of Regional Figures as of 5th August 2020

Country	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Tests	Tot Cases/ 1M pop	Tests/ 1M pop	Total Recovered	Total Deaths	Deaths/ 1M pop	Recovery Rate	Total Active Cases
Burundi	395	17	15,614	33	1,310	304	1	0.08	77.0%	90
Comoros	388	34		445		340	7	8	87.63%	41
Djibouti	5,248	189	58,445	5,305	59,077	5,044	59	60	96.11%	145
DR Congo	9,178	334		102		7,727	215	2	84.19%	1,236
Egypt	94,752	2,270	135,000	924	1,317	45,569	4,912	48	48.09%	44,271
Eritrea	282	17		79		225			79.79%	57
Eswatini	2,856	540	20,784	2,459	17,897	1,258	49	42	44.05%	1,549
Ethiopia	19,877	5,330	452,427	173	3,927	8,240	343	3	41.45%	11,294
Kenya	23,202	5,227	322,923	431	5,994	9,327	388	7	40.20%	13,487
Libya	4,224	1,397	55,899	614	8,125	633	96	14	14.99%	3,495
Madagascar	11,895	2,205	44,805	429	1,614	9,286	123	4	78.07%	2,486
Malawi	4,361	652	32,144	227	1,677	2,047	128	7	46.94%	2,186
Mauritius	344	0	205,285	270	161,391	334	10	8	97.09%	0
Rwanda	2,099	220	278,457	162	21,453	1,222	5	0.4	58.22%	872
Seychelles	114	0		1,158		113			99.12%	1
Somalia	3,220	24		202		1,598	93	6	49.63%	1,529
Sudan	11,780	356	401	268	9	6,194	763	17	52.58%	4,823
Tunisia	1,584	129	97,245	134	8,220	1,227	51	4	77.46%	306
Uganda	1,203	68	282,512	26	6,160	1,073	5	0.1	89.19%	125
Zambia	6,793	2,241	88,471	369	4,801	5,109	173	9	75.21%	1,511
Zimbabwe	4,221	1,517	140,421	284	9,435	1,238	81	5	29.33%	2,902
TOTALS	208,016	22,767	2,230,833			108,108	7,502			92,406

Source: World Health Organisation, Worldometer, Johns Hopkins University (compiled by COMWARN)



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