



An Integrated, Prosperous
and Peaceful Africa

Continental Perspectives
on
COVID-19 Pandemic:
And Drug Demand
Reduction

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1. Introduction and Background
2. COVID-19 and Impact on DDR
3. COVID-19 Continental Institutional Measures
4. National Measures
5. National Measures: Case Study
6. Number of Prisoners Released in Africa
7. Continental Strategy
8. Conclusions

African Union African Union

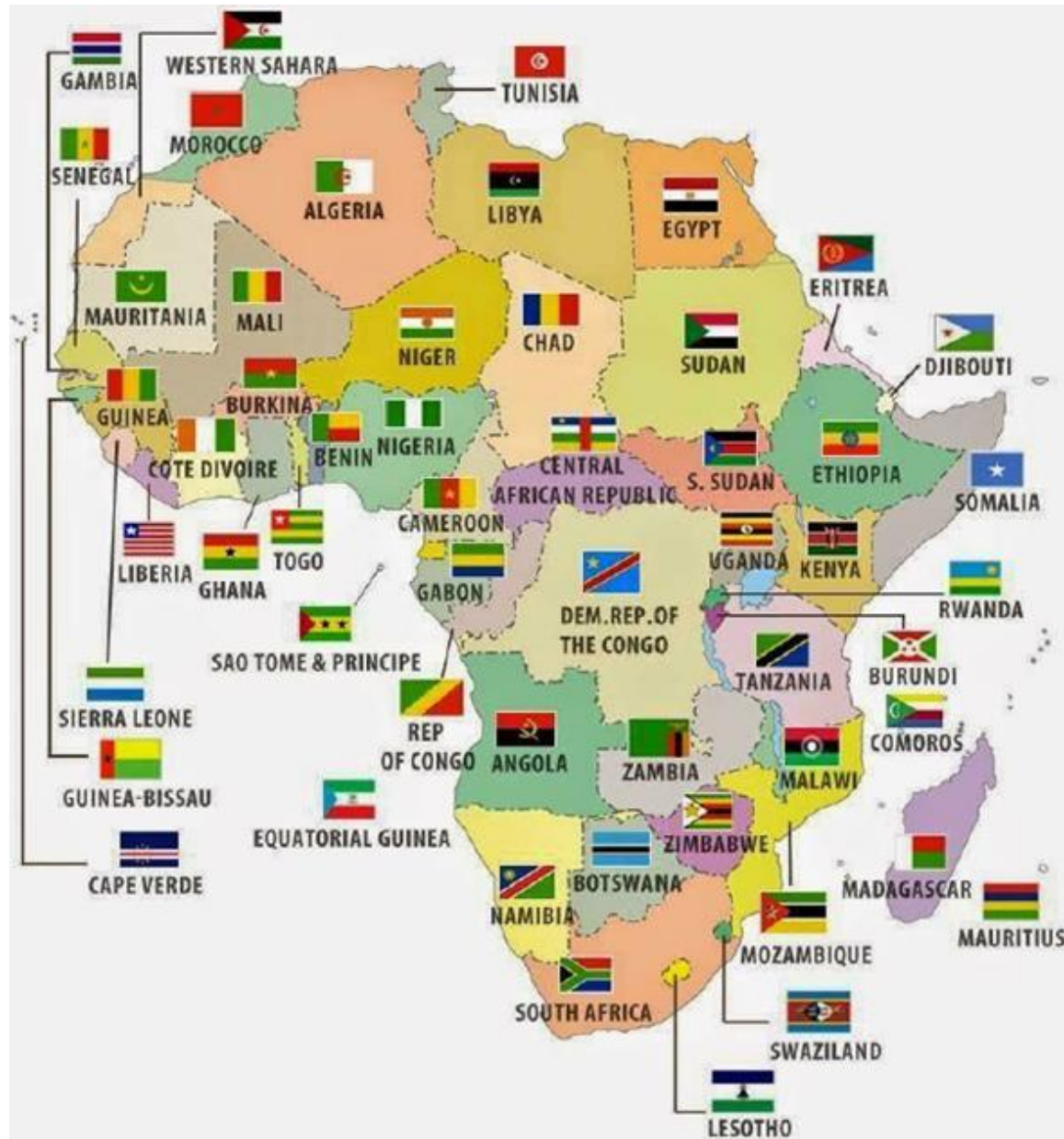
➤ An Inter-Governmental Organization comprising 55 African countries

Mission

Promoting Africa's growth & economic development by championing citizen inclusion and increased cooperation and integration of African states.

Languages:

Eng., Fre., Arab., & Port.



Administrative organ and executive secretariat of the African Union, located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

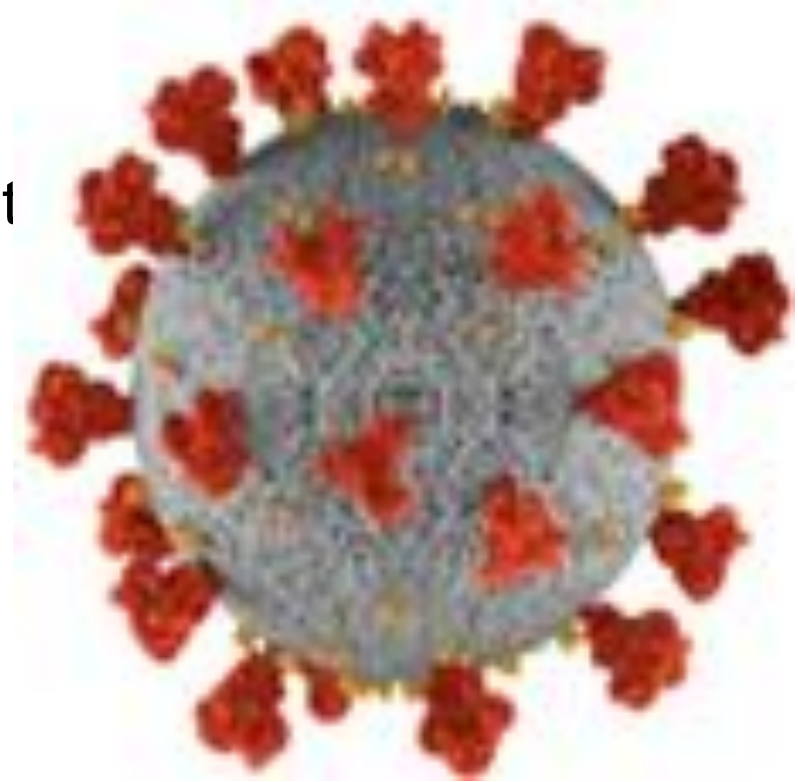
Primary role

- Formulation of strategic continental policies and Frameworks
- Coordination of implementation by Member States
- Monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation
- Capacity building & leveraging technical assistance to Member States



Country Containment Measures

- ❑ Country lockdowns with curtailment of visits to schools, shops, hospitals prisons and detention facilities
- ❑ Closure of land borders and air air space,
- ❑ Curfews and severe restrictions on movement of goods and people
- ❑ Physical distancing



Impact of Containment Measures

- Essential services and programmes severely restricted/stopped
- Quality of services generally deteriorated
- Loss of regular social support systems increased risks of relapse
- Job loss induced stress, increased vulnerability to alcohol abuse, drug use and misuse of pharmaceuticals.
- Rise in production of toxic illicit brews and use of cocktails and other alternatives.
- Rise in use of cannabis which is widely grown in Africa
- Spike in cases of homicide and gender-based violence especially among women some of whom use drugs.
- Prison settings remained at risk of explosive outbreaks of COVID-19

The Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa-CDC)

Supporting Member States to organize preventive measures and mount responses, in particular strengthening capacity of health workers to improve surveillance, early detection and track spread of the disease, disseminating materials to keep communities informed, providing regular updates to health care workers, facilitating transport of specimens to national testing laboratories & advising on workplace preparedness

1. Africa Taskforce for Corona Virus (AFTCOR) Heads of State Level
2. AU-COVID-19 Response Fund (Medical Commodities, and mitigation of socio-economic and humanitarian impact)
3. Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT)
4. Deployment of Volunteers
5. Guidelines to Member States
6. Africa's Leadership role in COVID-19 Vaccine development and access conference
7. Comprehensive Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19

1. Innovation of services and programmes

- ✓ Treatment centers became innovative, initiated mobile dispensing services and channels for Methadone Assisted Treatment.
- ✓ Others established scheduled dispensing cohorts to reduce the number of clients in facilities.
- ✓ Governments provided temporary shelters for homeless drug users including street children.

2. Prisons decongestion and alternatives to incarceration

- ✓ Development of new guidelines, policies and legislation
- ✓ Application of discretionary powers within existing policy and legislation

- ❖ Amplified need to de congest prisons.

(Growing understanding prison not the right place to address SUDs)

- ❖ Many countries reduced prison

populations, to protect people in places of detention, prevent uncontrollable outbreaks to reduce vulnerability to COVID-19.

- ❖ Countries have provisions for alternatives to incarceration for for minor offenses in general - increasingly being used to divert drug users from the criminal justice system.



National Measures: Case Study

Zambia: New country guidelines to implement Alternatives to Incarceration for people with SUDs through guidelines for prevention of COVID-19 including decongesting prisons and police holding cells to promote social distancing.

- ❑ “Pilot Diversion Programme”- Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), which deals with young persons (juveniles) who come into conflict with the law.
- ❑ Law Enforcement agencies enhanced implementation of Alternatives to Incarceration measures in the time of COVID-19 - police bonds, warnings and referrals from courts to counselling and rehab service providers for drug users with minor offences & young offenders.
- ❑ This has enabled several people with drug use disorders to receive treatment and care in hospitals and counselling centers.

National Measures: Case Study

Zambia:

Number of people with Drug Use Disorders who received treatment countrywide (Jan – Aug 2020)

REFERRAL SOURCE	NO OF PEOPLE WITH DRUG USE DISORDERS	
	Male	Female
Police	20	0
Drug Enforcement Commission	116	07
Judiciary (Courts)	40	0
Subtotal	176	07
Grand Total (male+female)	183	

Number of prisoners released in Africa (Jan – 15 May 20) (after COVID 19 Pandemic)

Country	Number of prisoners to be released	Type of release
Algeria	5,037	Pardons
Burkina Faso	1,207	Pardons
Cameroon	1,000	Unclear
Cote d'Ivoire	2,004	Early releases and pardons
DR Congo	2,000	Pre-trial detainees and temporary releases
Ethiopia	4,011	Pardons
Egypt	4,001	Pardons and conditional releases
Ghana	808	Amnesties and first-time offenders
Kenya	4,800	Early release
Libya	466	Pre-trial detainees and conditional releases
Mali	1,200	Pardons
Morocco	5,654	Pardons

Number of prisoners released in Africa (Jan – 15 May 20) after COVID 19 Pandemic)

Mozambique	5,032	Amnesties
Niger	1,500	Early release
Nigeria	Up to 50,000	Pre-trial detainees
Senegal	1,846	Pardons
South Africa*	19,000	Conditional releases
Sudan	4,217	Early releases
Togo	1,048	Pardons
Tunisia	1,420	Amnesties
Uganda	2,000	Pardons
Zimbabwe	1,680	Pardons

The AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019 – 2023)

Improving the health, security and socio-economic well-being of the people of Africa by addressing drug trafficking and problematic drug use in all its forms and manifestations and preventing the onset of drug use.



9 Key Priority Areas/Pillars



Conclusions

- Intensify efforts now more than ever
- Mechanisms for continuum of care
- Emergency preparedness (for now and in future)
- Document impact, processes and outcomes
- Share learning

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