



ECOWAS Covid-19 Ministerial Coordinating Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2 June 2020; 1000h GMT

Terms of Reference

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, which started in the Hubei province of China in 2019, and has now spread to all continents, is thought to be the defining global health crisis of our generation. The rapid spread of the pandemic and the difficulty countries are having in containing it, has led many experts to describe it as the greatest challenge the world has faced in recent memory.

COVID-19 is much more than a health crisis, with the potential to create devastating socio-economic and political crises in nearly every country in the ECOWAS region. In view of this, all the member states are making every effort to slow the spread of the virus by testing and treating patients, carrying out contact tracing, limiting travel, quarantining citizens, and cancelling large gatherings including sporting events, concerts, and schools. In addition, nearly all the major cities in the region, are under total or partial lockdown as people stay indoors, and shops, theatres, restaurants and bars are closed, although a few countries are gradually lifting their restrictions.

As at 13 May 2020, the ECOWAS region had a cumulative number of 19,499 confirmed cases consisting of 14,738 active cases, 5643 recoveries and 6,260 deaths. To date, all of the fifteen ECOWAS Member States have been affected with Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal and Cote D'Ivoire having over 1000 cases.

With the rise in cases, there is the need to review testing and case management strategies, and to adapt IPC measures to the regional context. It is also important to strengthen health systems as well as invest in a multisectoral approach (includes improving the built environment, trade, transportation and especially WASH, electricity, education and housing) to health security in the region.

In an attempt to support the ECOWAS Member States to deal with the pandemic, WAHO has leveraged on its experience with other outbreaks to initiate several interventions. For example, countries have been provided with vital medical supplies, including diagnostic test kits, transportation kits, personal protective equipment, and some essential medications. In addition, WAHO has provided technical assistance on laboratory testing; developed technical guidelines on the use of sterile tubes for sample collection, and organized key online training in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO) and Africa CDC. Furthermore, WAHO holds regular weekly online meetings with the heads of National Public Health Institutes of Member Countries for regular situation updates, and to discuss areas of specific support required by each country in the fight against COVID19.

This meeting therefore is being organised as an outcome of the summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held on 23 April 2020, which set up the Ministerial Coordination Committees on Health, Finance and Transport to support the Champion, H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in his coordination efforts.

It is expected that the Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Health will meet regularly, at least every month to perform their duties as directed by the Heads of State and Government.

Objective

To strengthen communication and review regional and national approaches to all major health issues particularly COVID-19. Specifically the meeting aims:

- To provide an update on the epidemiological situation across the region, and to discuss lessons learnt and challenges encountered;
- To enable the Ministers to have a common understanding of the approaches being used to support the Champion in his coordination efforts;
- To discuss post COVID-19 strategies and plans to mitigate impact of the pandemic on other areas such as Maternal Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Malaria, Mental Health etc.

Expected results

- Update on the epidemiological situation across the region provided, and the lessons learnt and challenges encountered discussed;
- Ministers are better informed about the approaches being used to support the Champion in his coordination efforts;
- Post COVID-19 strategies and plans to mitigate impact on other areas of health, e.g. Maternal and Child Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Mental Health, Malaria, etc., discussed
- A comprehensive report prepared for wide dissemination.

Participants

- Ministers of Health and two Experts per country, including Director of NPHI
- ECOWAS Commission President
- WHO Afro Director
- Africa CDC Director
- WAHO DG
- ECOWAS Commissioners- Macroeconomic Policy, Trade, Infrastructure
- Selected WAHO (& ECOWAS RCDC) Senior Management Staff
- Selected Invited Expert(s)

Method of work

Presentations and discussions

Date and venue: Online by zoom; Tuesday 2 June 2020, 1000h GMT

FINAL AGENDA (All times GMT)

Time	Programme	Responsible
10:00 – 10:30	Opening Remarks - Welcome Remarks by Chair of the Committee - Remarks by President of ECOWAS Commission - Brief Remarks - Brief Remarks: WHO Africa Region - Brief Remarks: Africa CDC	Dr O Ehanire Minister of Health of Nigeria HE Jean-Claude Kassi BROU, President Dr I Mainassara Minister of Health of Niger Dr M Moeti, Director Dr J Nkengasong, Director MOH, Nigeria
10:30 – 10:35	Review and adoption of the agenda	Chair of the Committee
10:35- 11:00	COVID-19 Epidemiological Situation in the ECOWAS region, including Modelling & Lessons from the Evolution in different Member States	Dr Carlos Brito, Ag Director of Public Health & Research, WAHO
11:00 – 12:30	Update on the ECOWAS Head of States and Government decisions: - Resource Mobilization for Covid-19 Response - Adoption of a public health response strategy - Lockdown and Easing Strategy - Transportation and Logistics channels - Cross-Border Framework	All Ministers & DG WAHO
12:30 – 12:45	Developments in Treatment of Covid-19	Prof Isiaka Sombie, PPO Research, WAHO
12:45 – 13:15	What direction for West Africa Testing Strategy Treatment Strategy	All Ministers & DG WAHO
13:15 - 14:00	Strategies and Plans to mitigate impact on other areas of health, e.g. Maternal and Child Health, Malaria, Mental Health etc	Dr Kofi Busia, Director of Healthcare Services, WAHO
14:00 – 14:30	Final Communique & Closing Remarks	Chair
14:30	CLOSE	