



The Africa Research and Impact Network International Conference on Africa in the Post Covid-19 World: Lessons for Research and Policy

Dates: 18th – 20th November 2020

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to devastating outcomes across the world. Currently, more than 700,000 have succumbed to the virus, [with close to 20 million infections recorded globally](#)¹.

The African continent accounts for about 3 percent and 5 percent of these deaths and infections respectively. Although the death toll across the continent is still below the previously predicted levels by the WHO and [other sources](#), the unraveling socioeconomic disruptions are enormous. These are characterized by domestic and continental supply shocks with adverse impacts on local and international trade: reduced foreign driven investments; weak external demand associated with lockdowns in major export markets like Europe and USA; and disruptions in key service sectors such as tourism, transport, and communication that have led to massive layoffs.

[Recent estimates by the World Bank](#) show that COVID-19 could push 40 to 60 million people globally into extreme poverty, 27 million of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa. The impact will continue to be felt the hardest in urban areas and in the informal sector, which employs around 80% of the population in low-income countries. Despite these statistics, the overall and actual COVID-19 impact on the African continent remains speculative.

A clear understanding of the pandemic in terms of its triggers, spread, health impacts, socio-economic implications, and the effectiveness of current responses is crucial if countries are to adequately harness lessons to inform a response to future pandemics.

A clear understanding of the pandemic in terms of its triggers, spread, health impacts, socio-economic implications, and the effectiveness of current responses is crucial if countries are to adequately harness lessons to inform a response to future pandemics. This is particularly important for the African continent: despite the continent being the least developed and with limited capacity to handle the pandemic, it is also extremely exposed and vulnerable to other disaster risks, both natural and anthropogenic. Evidence shows that the outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 into Africa have exacerbated existing disaster risks of both climatic and anthropogenic nature. The pandemic is also shaping and reshaping various segments of the society including knowledge systems, disaster risk management, and preparedness, community response, behaviors, and cultures. The impacts on the economy, governance, and social norms of the society cannot be underestimated.

¹ This is as at 7th of August 2020 as reported by the John Hopkins University <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>



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The unfolding of the COVID-19 episodes and the efforts by African governments and stakeholders to save lives, secure livelihoods, and prepare for the future can be harnessed as lessons to help build resilience in Africa beyond the pandemic. The response to the pandemic at the continental level gives valuable lessons that can benefit Africa not only in terms of risk preparedness, but also in terms of continental research focus, knowledge management, policy, and practice. This is crucial to achieving the continent's development goals and aspirations as envisioned in Agenda 2063 and the global SDGs. [The Africa Research and Impact Network \(ARIN\)](#) conference provides a platform for stakeholders to share lessons learned and best practices from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conference Objective and Sub-themes

The conference focus will be on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that could inform practice, policy, and research to help the African continent build resilience towards its Agenda 2063 aspirations and sustainable development. The conference explores the following themes

Theme 1: Climate and natural resource Dependent Societies and COVID-19

Theme2: Cities and COVID-19

Theme 3: Science Technology Policy and COVID-19

Envisaged Conference Outcomes

The conference will culminate in a book whose content is informed by the conference theme and subthemes. Part of the book chapters will be presented at the conference.

Side Events Sessions

Day1: Gender Lens in Disaster Risk Reduction in the Context of Covid 19

Day2: The Status of Research Collaborations and Partnerships Beyond Covid 19.

Day3: Impacts of STI Indicators in Policymaking and Uptake.



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PARTNERS

The conference will be hosted by the Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN) in collaboration with its diverse partners that include:

Tomorrow's Cities- Nairobi Risk Hub Partners

- Slum Dwellers International (SDI),
- University of Nairobi (UoN),
- Nairobi City County Government (NCCG),
- Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT)

Africa Sustainability Hub Partners

- Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI)-Africa
- African Centre for Technology Studies

Strengthening Non-state Climate Action in the Global South (Climate South) Partners

- Oxford University
- German Development Institute (DIE)
- The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI),
- Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) partners – Loughborough University, Gamos, University of Sussex

The Governance of Social-Technical Transformations (GOST) project

- Program on Science Technology and Society (STS) (Harvard Kennedy School),
- The Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ Leipzig), SPRU-Science Policy Research Unit (University of Sussex),
- UBA- Germany Environment Agency (Dessau-Rosslau)

Knowledge Systems Innovations (KSI) Project

- Natural Resource Institute (NRI), University of Greenwich,
- Common Wealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO),
- Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex

STI Metrics project

- SPRU



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