

Niger Delta Weekly: Highlighting the Potential Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis

March 29-April 4, 2020

Description

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 11, 2020 after the virus has spread to more than 100 countries. COVID-19 reportedly originated in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. As of April 1, 2020, the virus has reportedly infected more than 800,000 persons and caused over 40,000 deaths globally. The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Nigeria was reported in February 27, 2020, when an Italian tested positive in Lagos state. According to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), there were over 170 confirmed cases and two deaths from COVID-19 in Nigeria, including 10 cases in the Niger Delta, as of April 1, 2020. The Federal and State governments have adopted broad measures to curb the spread of the virus, including full lockdowns, closure of borders, shutting down of airports, and other travel restrictions. While these measure are necessary to contain the virus, the long-term repercussions could extend beyond the sphere of public health - they could have indirect but potentially serious social, economic and political impacts.

Why it Matters

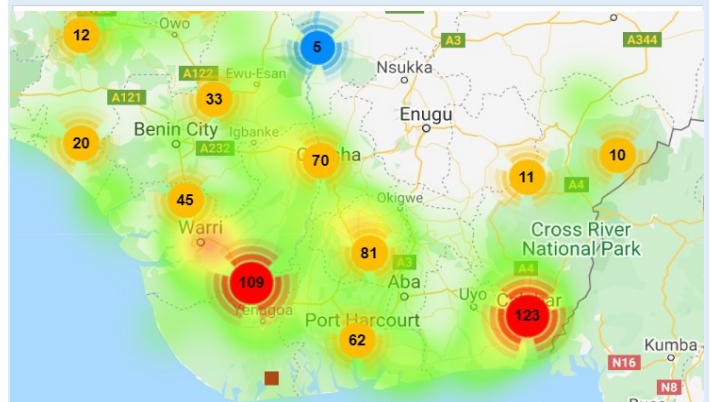
The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health concern as well as a governance challenge. How government respond to the pandemic may have consequences beyond the sphere of public health. Measures to contain the virus such as full lockdowns and travel restrictions could have social, economic and political repercussions in the Niger Delta.

Social: Although there are only 10 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Niger Delta so far, the virus is spreading rapidly with the potential to overwhelm healthcare facilities. This could result in far-reaching containment measures that can cause residents high levels of stress, anxiety, and a sense of isolation. This can also exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and result in the adoption of negative coping mechanisms such as drug abuse, theft, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

Economic: Disruptions associated with COVID-19 containment strategies have resulted in economic disruptions in the Niger Delta. Lockdowns and travel restrictions have disrupted production and supply chains, forcing factories and companies to shutdown operations, and causing residents to lose jobs, economic opportunities and sources of livelihood. Travel restrictions could also cause a fall in global demand for oil and a reduction in government revenues in the Niger Delta.

Political: Enforcement of compliance to lockdowns and curfews could result in human rights violations. Security forces could use disproportionate force while enforcing lockdowns and restriction of movements. Repressive measures can trigger public discontent and cause social unrest which could result in loss of trust in the government.

Heat Map of Public Health - Related Fatalities in the Niger Delta, Nigeria



Heat Map shows concentration of reported fatalities relating to Public Health in the Niger Delta from February 2010 – February 2020. Sources: All data sources formatted on the P4P Peace Map www.p4p-nigerdelta.org.

Prognosis

The COVID-19 pandemic is still evolving in the Niger Delta. The manner of stakeholders' response to the pandemic will have significant implications for resilience. While the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and state governments are making efforts to contain the virus, stakeholders must support state governments in the Niger Delta with appropriate strategies to sensitize the public about the virus, and manage the situation to minimize the risk of economic and human disruptions, and to prepare for recovery.

Contact Us

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Incident Details: Kindly include the State, LGA, Town, Date, and Brief Incident Description.



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