





SADC COVID-19 FLASH REPORT


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1. Public Health – COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthroughs

American company **Pfizer** and German's **BioNTech** have announced their mRNA-based vaccine candidate, BNT162b2, against SARS-CoV-2 has demonstrated evidence of efficacy against COVID-19 in participants without prior evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection, based on the first interim efficacy analysis conducted on **November 8, 2020** by an external, independent Data Monitoring Committee (DMC) from the **Phase 3** clinical study. Messenger Ribonucleic Acid (mRNA) is a single-stranded RNA molecule that is complementary to one of the DNA strands of a gene. The mRNA is an RNA version of the gene that leaves the cell nucleus and moves to cytoplasm where proteins are made.

 Vaccine candidate was found to be more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in participants without evidence of prior SARS-CoV-2 infection in the first interim efficacy analysis

 Analysis evaluated 94 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in trial participants

 Study enrolled 43,538 participants, with 42% having diverse backgrounds, and no serious safety concerns have been observed; Safety and additional efficacy data continue to be collected

 Submission for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) planned for soon after the required safety milestone is achieved, which is currently expected to occur in the first week of December

Clinical trial to continue through to final analysis at 164 confirmed cases in order to collect further data and characterise the vaccine candidate's performance against other study endpoints.

2. Tourism Industry Interventions to address Covid-19 Pandemic

SADC Member States have seriously considered the threats posed by the debilitating impacts of the COVID-19 virus in the tourism sector and have directed the Secretariat to facilitate mobilisation of appropriate resources to mitigate the negative consequences of the scourge.

As part of this intervention and through the support of the Federal Republic of Germany, a COVID-19 short term relief fund of **Euro 2 million** has been availed to assist tourism businesses within the region's Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). The funds will mainly be utilised to support implementation of health and safety protocols in the tourism sector, intensify marketing of TFCA destinations and facilitate harmonisation of tourism border post processes and services.

In addition, the SADC Secretariat has completed a COVID-19 Impact, Response and Recovery report in support of the development of a SADC Tourism Costed Action Plan.

The report specifically highlights the challenges of the pandemic and the proposed mitigations required to facilitate the revival of the tourism sector.

Among the proposed interventions are the need for;



Implementation of stimulus packages for the tourism sector



Creation of Regional travel corridors between countries to allow travellers to move across borders for non-essential trips with subject to mandatory quarantine.



Offering of economic relief to under-resourced Member States that are struggling to manage the economic fallout of Covid-19 across all sectors and society.



Simplifying visa and immigration requirements to remove barriers



Provision of public and private support mechanisms where possible, such as finance for working capital, cash contributions, interest-free loans, and payment and tax holidays.



Mobilisation of support to Small Medium and Micro Enterprises, the self-employed and vulnerable or marginalised groups



Enhancement of reputation management and capitalising on travel demand



Implementation of all health and safety protocols across the tourism value chain

While resources are being mobilised to address these interventions, there is recognition that funds are extremely limited and inadequate to support tourism recovery plans in the region, hence there is a need for prioritised implementation of proposed mitigations.

3. SADC Business and Investment Environment Achievement Report Situation updates

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Trends Monitor Report - January 2020:

- FDI to the SADC region increased by 37 per cent to US\$5.5 billion in 2019.
- SADC Region recorded an increase in total investments to 27.1 per cent of GDP in 2019 from 23.5 per cent of GDP in 2018. Only five Member States (Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia) recorded investments above the regional target.

According to the World Bank "Doing Business" report 2019:

- a total of 5 SADC Member States were ranked within the first 100 bracket for the past two years (Mauritius, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Seychelles)
- a total of 8 SADC Member States improved in their ranking (Angola, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe).
- SADC Region performed well in the areas of Getting Credit; Protecting Minority Investors; and Paying Taxes; 22 reforms have been implemented by 9 Member States in 2019 and top reformers comprise Zimbabwe with 5 reforms, Eswatini with 5 reforms and Mauritius with 4 reforms.

According to the World Economic Forum - Global Competitiveness Index 2018-19 Ranking:

- the SADC countries have achieved a relatively higher competitiveness performance (48.0) compared to East Africa (46.8) and West Africa (44.5).
- The score attained by the regional leaders (Mauritius, 63.7, and South Africa, 60.8) are almost twice as large as those of the two least competitive economies.