

AUDA-NEPAD COVID-19/OSH regional response activities

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Abstract

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented with significant, extensive and far-reaching consequences for the health and safety of working populations. Africa has not been spared despite the pandemic shifting much later into the African space than most other continents. The pandemic has disrupted the working space and affected all workplace-related safety and health programmes. This includes activities such as workplace tuberculosis (TB) and HIV programmes, due to the shift of attention to the pandemic. As the pandemic gathers momentum in Africa, an urgent need has arisen to guide the continent in articulating strategic and intelligent responses to curtail the potentially devastating effects of COVID-19. As of 7 August 2020, the 55 African Union (AU) member states reported 976 208 confirmed cases, 21 050 deaths and more than 651 455 recoveries from COVID-19. To date, South Africa is heavily affected, with more than half (53%) of the cases on the continent; six nations in Africa account for 78% of the confirmed cases.¹ If the epidemiological and scientific predictions are correct, the continent is likely to see a drop in the number of cases as it moves out of the winter season. However, this might not be entirely true, primarily due to the implemented lockdown and use of masks that might have assisted to curb the spread of the normal flu virus as well as SARS-CoV-2.