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ILO support to the African Member States and the AUC to effectively respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy [March-May 2020]

Sections

✚ Introduction.....	2
✚ Developing evidence-based policy solutions.....	3
✚ Awareness raising and advocacy.....	4
✚ Knowledge sharing and virtual training.....	6
✚ Technical assistance.....	7
✚ Supporting enterprises to shift production and access public procurement plans.....	9
✚ Providing income and food support for informal economy workers.....	10
✚ Mitigating the pandemic's impact on enterprises.....	11
✚ Social Dialogue.....	12
✚ Strengthening the capacity and resilience of employers' and workers' organizations.....	13
✚ Means of Action.....	14
✚ From response to recovery in informal economy.....	16
✚ ILO resources.....	17

Introduction

▀▀ In these most difficult times, I recall a principle set out in the ILO Constitution: *Poverty anywhere remains a threat to prosperity everywhere*. It reminds us that, in years to come, the effectiveness of our response to this existential threat may be judged not just by the scale and speed of cash injections, or whether the recovery curve is flat or steep, but by what we did for the most vulnerable among us.

▶ **Guy Rider / Director General International Labour Organization**

The 3rd edition of the *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* makes it apparent that COVID-19 pandemic and the prominent recommended or required workplace closures have disproportionately, and more detrimentally, affected members of most vulnerable social groups—including informal economy workers and micro-enterprises. ILO estimates show that, in the absence of income support measures, earnings are expected to decline in the first month of the crisis by 60 per cent globally, and 81 per cent in Africa. Assuming a situation without any alternative income, lost earnings would result in an increase in relative poverty for informal workers and their families by almost 34 percentage points globally; more than 21 percentage points in upper-middle-income countries, around 52 percentage points in high-income countries and 56 percentage points among lower-middle- and low-income countries.

Although the pandemic itself is new, the social and economic inequalities exacerbating COVID-19's impact on informal economy actors are not new. The COVID-19 response and recovery process provides us with a chance to work on existing inequities to ensure that no one is left behind. The ILO is cognizant of the fact that economic recovery alone will not suffice where the drivers of informality are not sufficiently addressed. Just as the importance of addressing decent work deficits in the informal economy precedes the ongoing crisis, the response must be both backward and forward-looking.

In Africa, this entails unrelenting pursuit of the relevant targets of the AU Agenda 2063 and its Social Agenda and UN Agenda 2030. For the ILO, it also entails reenergizing governments, workers and employer' organizations in implementing international labour standard instruments like the ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy as essential to achieve inclusive development and to realize decent work for all. The Abidjan Declaration of 2019 and the AUC/ILO Joint programme on Decent Work for the Transformation of the Informal Economy will remain important as countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This collection of examples of the concrete support the ILO is providing its Member States and the African Union Commission (AUC) to effectively respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy reaffirms this pursuit.

Developing Evidence-based Policy Solutions

In line with the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21, the ILO in Africa seeks to deepen the organization's position as an authoritative source of knowledge on world of work issues and to ensure that this knowledge influences policy frameworks and national strategies, including by enabling the social partners to participate in policy formulation processes.

Although the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis have been indiscriminate, existing structural inequalities necessitate that specific action be taken to protect at-risk populations experiencing the highest degree of socioeconomic marginalization including workers and economic units in the informal economy. Such actions can only be meaningful if conceived with a deeper understanding of the extent and nature of the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 on the informal economy. In developing this understanding, the ILO is putting at the service of its Member States and the African Union Commission (AUC) its expertise on harnessing diagnostic data and knowledge of informality to bring voices of the women and men in the informal economy to the forefront of action and policy responses. Towards that end, the ILO is supporting Member States in:

(i) Analysing Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19

ILO has worked in collaboration with UNDP and other UN agencies, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators, to assess the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on economies and communities. In Algeria, the ILO incorporated a comprehensive module of questions about the impact on the informal economy in the UNDP survey. Similarly, the ILO is contributing to UN surveys in **Angola, Cameroon, The Gambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, South Africa, Eswatini, Botswana Sudan, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Uganda**. ILO's key role is to ensure that these nationwide surveys adequately address the informal economy.

For information on findings:

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus/socio-economic-impact-of-covid-19.html>

(ii) Rapid Assessments of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Informal Economy

Using recently developed guidelines, the ILO is conducting rapid assessments in the informal economy with a view to identify opportunities to ensure the continuity of activities, to prevent closure of enterprises and job losses, and to ensure an income for the people depending on it by offering realistic options. The rapid assessment provide information on the situation of workers and economic units in the informal economy. With technical and/or financial support from the ILO, national institutions in **Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Niger, Nigeria, Mozambique, Tunisia and Angola** are all in different stages of conducting rapid assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy. In **Burkina Faso** and **Senegal**, the assessments focuses on the most affected sectors including the food value chain (production, processing and marketing), accommodation and restaurants, transport and associated activities, textile and clothing, beauty salons and hairdressers. Construction and fishing are also included in **Senegal** and **Burkina Faso**, respectively. The rapid assessments, designed for lockdown situations, will increase understanding on heterogeneity of the informal economy actors, their situation, challenges, opportunities, needs and perceptions in order to guide government, social partners, informal sector organizations and any other non-governmental support initiative for the development and implementation of immediate and medium-term measures. In addition, the ILO IGAD regional project on labour migration (FMPT) based in **Djibouti** is supporting a rapid impact assessment of COVID 19 on migrant workers but in the IGAD region (including Djibouti).

Awareness Raising and Advocacy

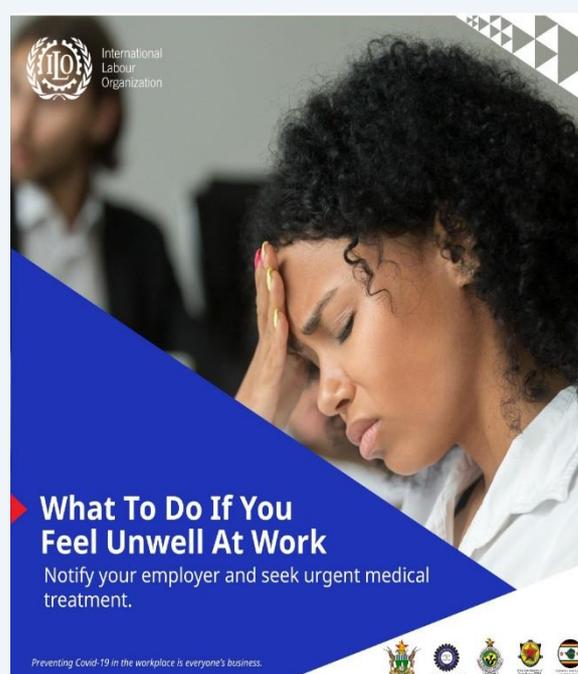
As countries struggle to combat the spread of coronavirus, misinformation on the spread of the coronavirus and safety measures has risen to alarming levels. Fears are growing that disinformation is putting lives at risk, prompting some with people to try unproven remedies in the hope of 'curing' themselves. When disinformation is repeated and amplified, there is a greater chance that reliable information ends up having only marginal impact. This includes the understanding of the contribution of the integrated approach to decent work in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this regard, the ILO has been working with its constituents to implement awareness raising campaigns focusing on how the virus spreads its health consequences, preventive measures, lockdown rules, and measures to mitigate the impact on the incomes of workers and economic units in the informal economy. In addition the ILO has supported the development of communication materials such as pamphlets, posters, videos, text messages, television and radio spots that can be easily understood and reach those who work in the informal economy.

In **Cameroon**, the Office not only organized a webinar on COVID-19 management in the work place for the benefit of all constituents, it also produced a TV program to raise awareness on the impact of COVID on the world of work and sent letters to constituents to show ILO compassion and encourage compliance with preventive measures. The awareness raising campaign in **Côte d'Ivoire**, implemented in collaboration with trade unions, targeted workers in large food distribution (supermarkets) and informal economy markets in Abidjan. In **Egypt, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe**, the ILO Offices worked hand in hand with constituents to produce and distribute Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to workers and employers, their organisations and their families on protection of workers in the workplace to minimize the direct effects of COVID-19. **Mali** worked with ITC-ILO in the production of its messages. ILO offices have also shared with constituents all the guideline materials produced by the ILO.

In addition to materials, ILO staff have continually participated in radio and other media interviews discussing the COVID-19 impact in the world of work. ILO **CO-Pretoria** has contributed resources towards a joint UN initiative for the production and airing of both Radio and TV Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on the Covid-19 pandemic. In **Zimbabwe**, staff participated in the COVID-19 Community Engagement through Mai Chisamba Show, to articulate the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market in general and informal economy in particular.

Training of Journalists



A two-day online workshop convened by the UN Communications Group in **Zimbabwe**, comprising all 25 UN entities, brought together 250 journalists from across the country with 50 government officials, youth leaders, and others on the frontlines of the response to COVID-19. Journalists in the training came from the country's 55 registered outlets in print, radio, digital, and other media, as well as from the corps of 'citizen journalists' that has arisen around the edges of official media. Working with other UN agencies, the ILO is also engaging local artists in creating public service announcements, songs and music videos as part of online campaigns.

In collaboration with the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the ILO hosted a virtual commemoration of World Day for Safety and Health on 28th April, under the theme “Saluting healthcare Workers in the Fight Against COVID-19”.

28 April 2020 | 13h00 - 15h00 (CAT)
Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/2VV9RKA>

World Day for Safety and Health at Work Commemoration
AFRICA WEBINAR

Stop the Pandemic: Occupational Safety and Health can Save Lives

Saluting health workers in the fight against COVID-19

For more info contact:
Ms Peneyambeko Alina Munkawa - munkawa@ilo.org
Ms Chimwemwe Chamdimba - Chimwemwe.Chamdimba@nepad.org

 AUDA-NEPAD
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

 International Labour Organization

Objectives were:

- to (virtually) bring together occupational safety and health stakeholders and partners to discuss innovations aimed at advancing safety and health at work in Africa
- to share knowledge and experience on the global strategies on the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases in health care settings and other sectors at high risk
- to share sub-regional experiences on response to impact of the current and past epidemics/pandemics on workforce, including in the informal economy

369 participants from 38 countries (11 countries from outside Africa) registered for the webinar. Women made up about 47% of total registrations. Among these were 129 OSH professionals, 94 individuals from governments, 38 from academia, 15 from employer's representatives and 15 from workers representatives. The webinar also received 5 registrations from media.

Speakers were drawn from ILO, African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD, International Organisation of Employers (IOE-Africa), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa), Africa Centre for Communicable Diseases (CDC) and OSHAfrica.

Knowledge Sharing and Virtual Training

With the widespread preference for lockdowns as a measure for curbing the spread of the Coronavirus, different forms of online learning and collaboration have become the focus of attention in an effort to ensure continuity of learning. ILO's support to its constituents is no exception. In **Zimbabwe**, the Green EnterPRIZE Programme led an E-Discussion inviting government representatives, employers' and workers' organizations, education and training providers, NGOs, and individuals, among others, to share and discuss how to maintain continued learning and skills building for students and workers in times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic which we all now face. It explored relevant and timely innovative practices in distance and online education and training.

In addition, the ILO provided support and availed expertise to **AUDA-NEPAD** towards the establishment of African Union Expert Advisory Group on Occupational Health and Safety for COVID-19 Response. Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Group developed and finalized. ILO its mobilized and supported constituents, particularly the involvement of Social Partners (Business Africa and ITUC-Africa) in the Expert Advisory Group. The ILO Decent Work Team for East and Southern Africa, particularly Occupational Safety and Health Specialist and HIV/AIDS Specialist continue providing support to the Group of Experts in development and delivery of virtual training courses and sector-specific guidelines to help member states respond to COVID-19. The virtual courses, that have so far received about 1200 registrations, commenced on 18th May 2020 and will run until mid-June 2020. The courses aim to enhance member states and participants' insight and capacity in:

1. Setting up COVID-19 coordination team and work streams
2. Epidemiology and management of COVID-19 in the formal and informal workplace
3. Return to work post COVID-19 illness& lock-down
4. Implications of COVID-19 in the workplace
5. COVID-19 Health Risk Assessment and workplace control measure
6. Use and rationale use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during COVID-19
7. How trade unions and informal economy associations can assist their members during COVID-19
8. Medical screening and testing for COVID-19 in different workplaces
9. Information management and utilisation including research
10. How media can contribute to dissemination of COVID-19 information

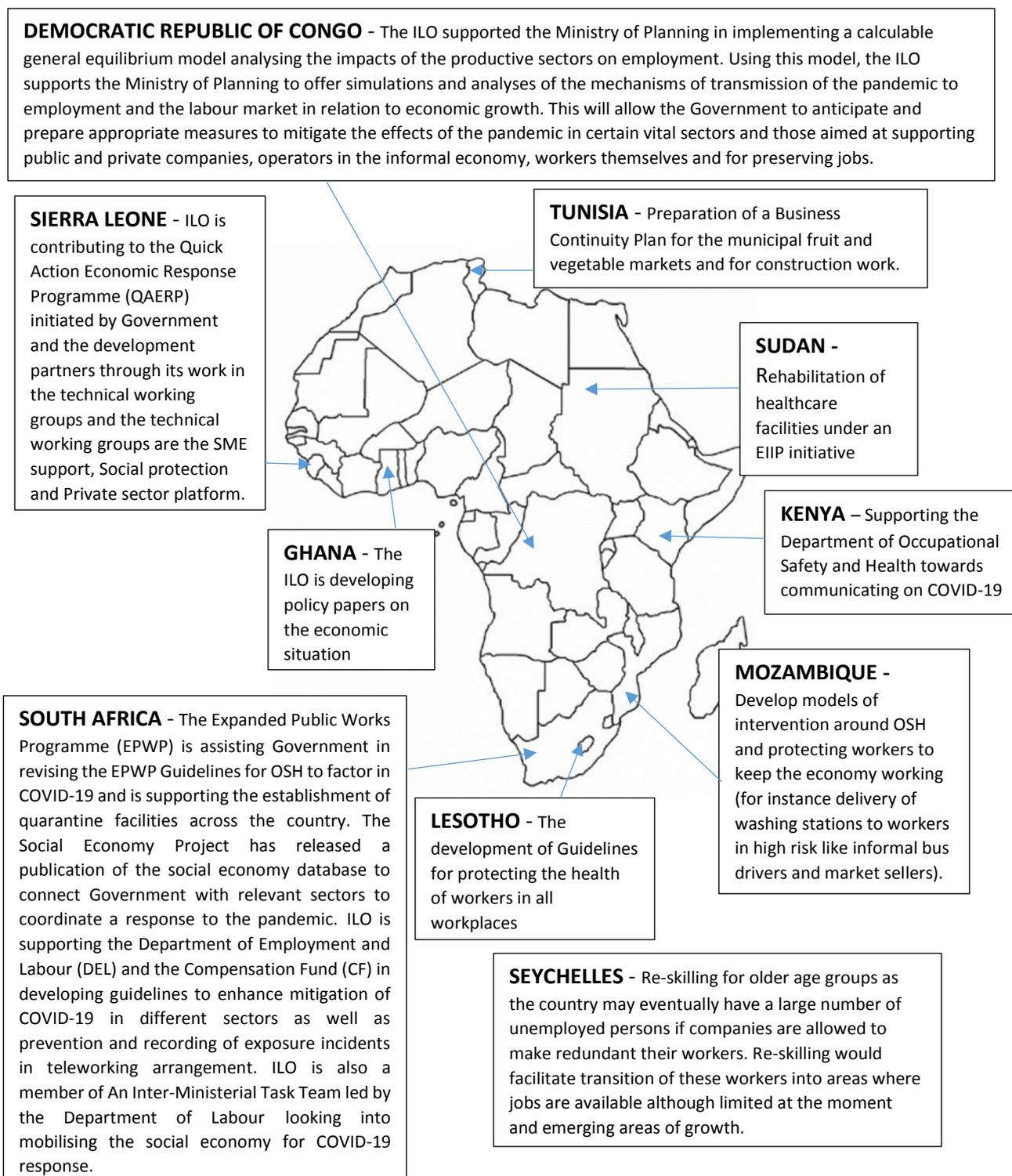
The ILO is also working with the International Training Centre in Turin, Italy to develop, pilot and offer a number of online training tools. **Egypt** and **Mozambique** have both developed distance learning modules on SME survival strategies. **Zimbabwe** is rolling out a number of enterprise development programmes on radio and online. These include GYB on Air, SYB on Air and SYB and IYB online. In addition, **Zimbabwe** is working with ITC/ILO on an online platform for offering a course on OSH for food markets.

South Africa is in the process of finalizing plans for the forthcoming South-South and triangular cooperation facility 2020-21: "Knowledge sharing among BRICS countries for building responsive, inclusive and comprehensive solutions towards transition to the formal economy"

Tunisia is supporting the labor inspectorate to continue offering its services online. In addition, the ILO has supported the development of a course and training of 3,500 workers from the municipalities on good OSH practices, including in crisis management. The office has also supported the preparation of Business Continuity Plan for the municipal fruit and vegetable markets, both formal and informal, and for construction work.

Technical Assistance

The ILO provides different forms of technical assistance, in which ILO officials or other experts help countries address specific labour market related challenges in view of promoting social justice. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILO has been hard pressed for practical solutions protecting workers and enterprises and support government to respond justly to the impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy. Apart from general support to the **AUC**, for example reviewing the AU Comprehensive Socio-economic Response to COVID-19 Pandemic, here are some of the ways in which the ILO is providing the technical assistance to its African Member States.



Working with the Private Sector

In Kenya, the ILO in collaboration with Sida, is working with both public as well as private sector to support informal businesses to respond to COVID-19. The partners include Akiira Geothermal Ltd, Kenya Electricity Generating Company Ltd, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Forum Syd, County Governments of Narok and Nakuru, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Federation of Kenya Employers, Central Organisation of Trade Unions, Micro and Small Enterprise Authority, National Industrial Training Authority. Public Private Development Partnerships (PPDP) encourage the private sector to proactively create business ventures that also improve conditions for people in poverty.

PPDP conducted a Rapid Impact Assessment to identify to what extent the informal sector has been affected in Raplands (Nakuru county) and Suswa (Narok county) by COVID-19 pandemic. This was targeting small-scale businesses, both formal and informal, in identifying corrective measures towards recovery post COVID-19. Some strong recommendations are coming out like the project ensuring that there is full participation of women and disadvantaged groups in decision-making on all responses to COVID-19, including economic recovery intervention plans and providing gender-sensitive support to informal women businesses at community level.

In addition, PPDP, through one of the project partner Akiira Ltd, distributed food to 467 households in Narok and Nakuru counties. To ensure that the affected communities have access to clean water for handwashing as well as sanitization, PPDP distributed 20 plastic water tanks, each 1500 liters capacity, and hand washing soaps to be placed in strategic points in the community, churches, schools and market areas. Lastly, PPDP brought on board the Narok Water & Sewerage Services Company Ltd to supply the community with water throughout the COVID-19 period.

Moreover, PPDP trained 100 Community Health Volunteers from 7 wards in Naivasha (Majority being youth), and supported 30 to undertake community sensitization in 3 wards (Kamere, Hell gate, Olkaria & Karagita) and from the sensitization the project reached 4,633 community members. The training was to empower the Community Health Volunteers with skills to create awareness in the community on Covid-19. The trainings were done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.



Supporting enterprises to shift production and access public procurement plans

In **Mauritania** and **Zimbabwe**, the ILO has supported informal businesses to reconvert their production lines to meet the needs for goods and services to protect the public and support health care providers, patients and other essential service workers through public procurement.



In Bulawayo City in Zimbabwe, individual businesses were also supported in carrying out risk assessments and to develop business continuity plans to minimize the disruption to their businesses, processes which were guided by the ILO's Improve Your Business (IYB) module, "Planning for Your Business". As of Friday 17 April 2020, thirty-one (31) micro-enterprises were operating with 25 producing masks, five focussing on detergents and sanitisers and one business producing hospital beds.

Mr. Maxwell Sibutha, an engineer, won a tender from a local hospital to make 200 beds. He is employing five workers to help him achieve this goal. Before COVID-19, he was into borehole drilling.

https://www.ilo.org/africa/countries-covered/zimbabwe/WCMS_743213/lang--en/index.htm

In **Mauritania**, through its Teampreneurship (Entrepreneurship as a team) concept, the ILO is working in collaboration with UNHCR, to support workers in Bassikounou and refugees from Mbera camp to remain in business by training them in new skills and using their abilities to create a product that helps prevent the spread of the virus. The objective is to produce 100,000 facemasks and handwashing systems for workplaces. The ILO went further to help the informal businesses to reach customers through ICT tools and platforms, consolidating their supply chains, and developing contingency plans to ensure business continuity.



https://www.ilo.org/africa/countries-covered/mauritania/WCMS_745499/lang--fr/index.htm



For the fishing sector in **Mauritania**, the ILO has planned to set up an activity to relaunch fish processing by making a choice of products aimed at marketing high-consumption products, improving the technical capacities of processors and to ensure a market for fishermen. This work follows an impact study by COVIDA in the fishing sector, which shows a drop in the production and income of professionals in the sector.

https://www.ilo.org/africa/countries-covered/mauritania/WCMS_745488/lang--fr/index.htm

Providing income and food support for informal economy workers to compensate for the loss of, or reduction in, economic activity

Many women and men in the informal economy need to earn an income to feed themselves and their families, as most of them cannot rely on income replacement or savings. Not working and staying home means losing their jobs and their livelihood. As such, countries are expanding and adapting social assistance measures in an attempt to provide at least a basic level of food and income security to the many households who rely on earnings from informal work. However, identifying and reaching out to informal economy workers is a daunting task for governments. As such, the ILO working in collaboration with other UN agencies is working towards linking informal economy actors to social protection schemes by pursuing innovative policies to reach them quickly through a combination of non-contributory and contributory schemes and facilitating their transition to the formal economy in the longer term.

► Cape Verde

The ILO is providing technical support in the implementation of the Solidarity Income, a new benefit created for informal workers. The Government of Cabo Verde extended its poverty-targeted social income for emergency inclusion programme (Rendimento Social de Inclusão Emergencial) from 4,500 households to 2,788 additional extremely poor households with at least one child aged 15 or older, providing 5,500 Cabo Verde escudos (US\$54). It includes support for workers in micro and small enterprises and self-employed in the informal sector, including sellers of informal commerce and municipal markets. These workers are guaranteed a value of 10,000 escudos (US\$100) for one month. 30,000 workers are expected to benefit.

► Egypt

The Government of Egypt is providing an exceptional, one-off payment of EGP 500 for informal workers registered in the workforce directorates databases of governorates. The ILO is working with informal economy associations to ensure their members are registered in the appropriate databases.

► Equatorial Guinea

The ILO in Equatorial Guinea is supporting the development of the Public Social Guarantees Program for vulnerable people, including those in the informal economy.

► Guinea Bissau

The ILO, through the Portuguese-funded 'Action' project, focuses on strengthening the social protection system, through technical support for the development of a social protection policy and strategy. The Action project also provides technical assistance to the National Institute for Social Security with the aim of extending coverage and adequate levels of social protection to all workers and improving the availability of statistics and other key performance indicators and governance.

► Malawi

The ILO is working with the Government of Malawi on setting up an emergency social protection programme for urban areas (COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention – CUCI), with the aim to offset the economic impacts of COVID-19 in the vulnerable population. To address the coverage gaps, a call centre has been established to monitor the conditions of the labour market (formal and informal), income security of workers and of SMEs. The idea is to have short surveys running weekly or biweekly, where workers, from the formal and informal sectors, union representatives, and employers/business owners would answer a few questions to allow the tracking of changes in the economy.

► Zimbabwe

The Office has facilitated the inclusion of informal economy workers in the national database of vulnerable populations by linking Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), an affiliate of the Zimbabwe Confederation of TRADE unions (ZCTU) with the government efforts to identify the most vulnerable informal economy actors in view of supporting their loss of incomes. ZCIEA shared a database of 15,000 informal economy actors under its membership.

Mitigating the pandemic's impact on enterprises

Without income protection small business owners (including self-employed) might be obliged to sell their assets to cope with the immediate household needs, which will reduce their capacity to engage in economic activities. By responding appropriately, enterprises can also play a key role to protect the occupational health and safety of their workers, including from the risks related to COVID-19. As countries move from containment to recovery, it will be essential to restore an environment that is conducive to business and to reinvigorate productivity growth in order to promote recovery and encourage the transition to formality.

As an example, the ILO is repurposing SCORE Programme by utilizing extensive global network to deliver relevant information and services to MSMEs. It includes SME support programmes, deployment of SME surveys, COVID specific Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) training, business continuity planning, entrepreneurship support, manager-worker dialogue and on-line delivery channels and training thereby enhancing sustainability and ensuring decent work. In Africa country programmes in **Ghana, Tunisia and Ethiopia** will benefit from this initiative. Other programmes to benefit include those in **Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa**.

Other interventions supporting informal enterprises include:

► Madagascar

Since the informal sector is the most affected, the ILO is partnering with Groupement des Entreprises de Madagascar (GEM) to set up a “Basket Fund” to support workers in companies in this sector who are hard hit by the health crisis. In collaboration with GEM, therefore, the funds will be managed to support small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the informal sector, in a situation of vulnerability to the impacts of this crisis.

► Cote d'Ivoire

Support for the request from the Directorate General for Employment relating to the operationalization of the specific support fund for businesses in the informal sector affected by the crisis. As part of the implementation of the economic response plan against Covid-19, the Ivorian government has created a fund worth 100 billion francs, called the Support Fund for Actors in the Informal Sector.

► South Africa

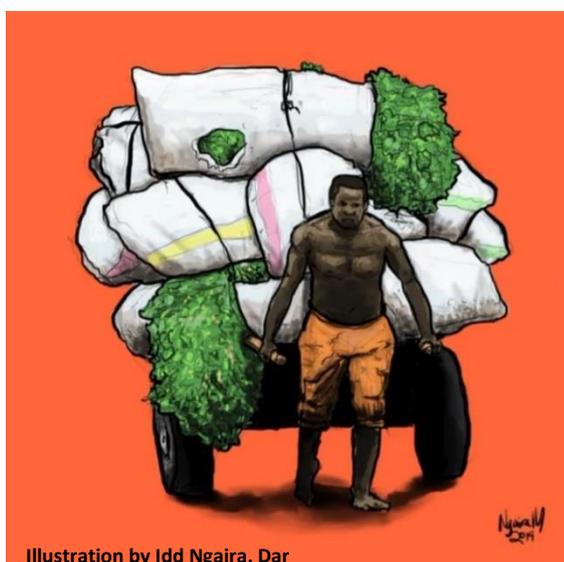
The Office is currently chairing a joint UN task team to coordinate UN support to SMEs and informal business in accessing government relief support.

► Zimbabwe

The ILO and UNDP are co-chairing a newly instituted UN Working Group on Informal Economy. Upon receiving the GoZ COVID-19 Recovery Plan for MSMEs, the ILO led the mapping of UN support to the priorities identified by the Government. Following ongoing dialogue with government, a joint Technical Working Group bringing together approximately 40 representatives of government, private sector, academia and research institutions, workers and employers organizations and informal economy associations has now been constituted. The TWG will be responsible for developing an integrated recovery plan for the informal economy in Zimbabwe.

Social Dialogue

The COVID-19 pandemic with its far-reaching socio-economic consequences calls for effective tripartite social dialogue and cooperation bringing together governments and employers' and workers' organizations to design effective strategies and policies to address its impacts. There is no doubt that the pandemic has disproportionately, and more detrimentally, affected informal economy workers and enterprises and hence calling for a dialogue that is inclusive and more responsive to the specific needs of informal economy operators.



In view of the significance of social dialogue, the **Regional Director** and **all Directors of ILO Office in Africa**, facilitated and participated in the videoconference meeting of African Ministers of Labour, convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) on 29 April 2020. Apart from raising awareness of the AU report on impact of COVID-19 on the Africa Economy to the Ministers of Labour and other stakeholders, the meeting discussed strategies and good practices to effectively respond to the effects of COVID-19 in Africa countries and post-pandemic medium- to long-term actions and strategies to cushion African economies in case of other health shocks. The ILO message emphasized the need for equitable and inclusive response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which takes into account the impact on the informal economy and the need for social protection.

At country level, the ILO continues to encourage consultations and consensus building in developing appropriate responses to the pandemic. In **Madagascar**, the ILO has advocated with workers' organizations, employers' organizations and the government, which organized the first meeting of the National Labor Council since the crisis to negotiate new labor measures to better meet the needs of hard-hit workers. In **Malawi**, the Office is supporting real-time social dialogue via the 'COVID-19 and the World of Work' Malawi WhatsApp virtual forum. In **Mozambique**, tripartite partners are working towards establishing a national pact on employment that includes informal employment. Engagements with the Labour, Economic and Social Council (LESCO) in **Tanzania** have been scaled up in the wake of the pandemic in view of sharing information, guidelines and briefs from reputable sources, including from the ILO, regarding Covid-19.

On April 15, 2020, on the initiative of the ACTRAV specialist's office and the support of the Social Dialogue specialist, the Dakar Office organized a videoconference for the High Council for Social Dialogue in **Senegal**. Similarly, ILO **CO-Lusaka** facilitated a social dialogue session for the tripartite partners through the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council (TCLC) to discuss the seeming suspension of the Employment Code especially in regards to annual leave during lockdowns. In **Zimbabwe**, the Office is responding to a request to support in the implementation of some of the recommendations adopted by the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) following the Technical Committee meeting held in Kadoma from 16-18 January 2020. Towards that end, a team of policy advisors has been engaged to undertake analytical work and develop guidance notes, which will be the basis for a tripartite response to the COVID-19 crisis. The team is also supporting efforts to lobby for greater reliance on dialogue during the crisis. A draft position paper of the TNF on ongoing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic is in place. Another expert is recruited to support the social dialogue institution online, to develop ancillary statutory instruments and Standard Operating Procedures to operationalization the TNF.

Strengthen the capacity and resilience of employers' and workers' organizations

Employers and Workers' Organisations are being supported to remain engaged with governments and other stakeholders on the national response. In most cases, the ILO has been sharing guidelines and tools for policy response. For example, in **East and Southern African countries**, the ACTEMP tools developed to assist EBMOs to respond to the impact of COVID-19, have been shared and put to use. Other examples of support provided include:

- ▶ **ESWATINI** - A guide to assist Business Eswatini to develop Business propositions to influence policy responses to COVID – 19; a guidance note on relevant ILS for a COVID-10 response, and ILO convention 190 and its accompanying Recommendation shared with the tripartite constituents with a view to advocate for ratification.
- ▶ **GAMBIA** - Initiatives are being taken by the office to support Gambian constituents to respond to the COVID 19 outbreak throughout skype communications or new technologies means to support the constituents. In addition, relevant documents that could help constituents to prepare national responses through national social dialogue bodies, such as ILO Recommendation 205 and other documents from ACTRAV and ACTEMP are electronically distributed.
- ▶ **GUINEA-BISSAU** - The ILO has supported the Women's Business Association (AMAE) in enhancing its leadership skills and supporting its members in delivering business development services to women's enterprises and cooperatives.
- ▶ **LESOTHO** – The Office has engaged with the employers' organisation in Lesotho with respect to the implementation of the Employers' guide on COVID-19: The guide seeks to assist member organisations to manage their workplace during outbreak: running their business, protecting workers, and answering some of the workplace relations and occupational safety and health challenges encountered by the enterprises. The Office regularly shares international good practices by workers' responses to COVID-19 including sharing good practices on how trade unions have managed to save jobs during the pandemic.
- ▶ **LIBERIA** – The ILO is providing the tripartite partners with relevant information on the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work for effective engagement with the government in the response efforts and in preparation for recovery.
- ▶ **MALAWI** – The ILO supported ECAM to conduct a national COVID-19 labour market impact assessment. In addition, the Office facilitated drafting and dissemination of the 28 April 2020 tripartite joint press statement on COVID-19 and the world of work to mark World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020. During the event, the ILO announced the launch of new national COVID-19 Workplace Guidelines issued by the Honourable Minister of Labour, Skills and Innovation jointly with the leaders of ECAM and the MCTU.
- ▶ **SOUTH AFRICA** - To date the Office has engaged the representative employers' organization (Business Unity South Africa) to share a number of tools designed by ACTEMP to assist Employer and Business Membership organizations in their response to COVID-19.
- ▶ **ZIMBABWE** - The ILO is supporting workers and employers organizations with Information Communication and Technology equipment and internet connectivity to ensure they can continue to operate and particularly engage in virtual social dialogue meetings.

Means of Action



Repurposing Development Cooperation Projects

A number of ILO offices are working with bilateral donors to repurpose their ongoing projects to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with the support of Decent Work Teams, ILO country Offices have reviewed work plans and in some cases adjusted their strategies as well as reallocated resources to newly designed activities. In the process of doing so, the **MozTrabalha** in Mozambique and **GreenEnterprise** in Zimbabwe managed to mobilize additional resources from Sweden. In the same way, Mozambique's Social Protection project portfolio (4 different projects) is being adjusted in coordination with Development Partners, namely DFID, Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland and Portugal, in order to redefine work plans for 2020 and capture response to COVID-19 activities accordingly. Like most development projects in Africa, both projects either directly or indirectly target the informal economy workers and economic units.



Resource Mobilization

Considering the scope of work and resources required to achieve results, the ILO is actively engaged in resource mobilization efforts. ILO Offices in the region have been exploring a number of global funding mechanisms launched to support COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. These include the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund, the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, the EU COVID Response and the World Bank's COVID-19 Fast Track Facility. In addition, regional financial institutions, such as the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank have launched COVID-19 response facilities that are accessible at regional level.

While resource mobilization efforts continue, some countries have been able to register early results. For example € 1 million mobilized by **Tunisia** from the EU made it possible to initiate urgent logistics purchases for 109 municipalities and 12 regional councils (protective equipment for workers collecting household waste and those in charge of transport / burial of the deceased , disinfection kits for closed and public spaces and administrative premises, burial kits and disinfectant products). Meanwhile, **Democratic Republic of Congo** has managed to mobilize USD 800,000 through UNICEF for the support of the implementation of immediate responses to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on actors in the informal sector in Kinshasa.

Development Cooperation proposals are in place in **Madagascar**, **Ethiopia** and **Botswana**. Madagascar's DC proposal "Appui à la transition vers l'économie formelle (APTEF) – Phase II" is geared towards supporting immediate response to the impact of COVID-19 crisis on the informal economy and facilitate transition to formality after the crisis. Ethiopia's proposal is also aiming at mitigating the Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Ethiopia's Informal Economy. Botswana's proposal aims to promote jobs and sustainable livelihoods for women in the informal economy to mitigate the impact of COVID -19.



Building Partnerships

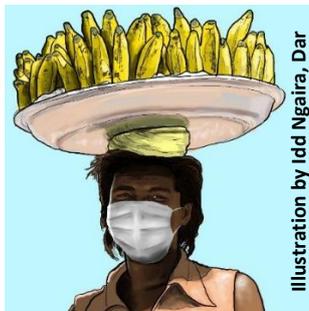
The ILO is cognizant of the key role that the United Nations framework for the immediate socioeconomic responses to the COVID-19 crisis, which sets out an integrated support package aimed at protecting the needs and rights of people affected by the pandemic, in forging partnerships to tackle the specific challenges related to the informal economy. In view of that recognition, a number of ILO Offices and development cooperation programmes are working hand in hand with other UN agencies, government institutions and bilateral donors to respond to the needs of the informal economy actors.

In **Benin, Cameroon, Core d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritius, Malawi, Sudan, Togo** and **Tanzania**, the ILO is participating in UN Country Team contingency plans, in the development of joint multi-sectoral intervention strategy of the United Nations and government as well as contributing to regular UN COVID-19 Situation Updates.

In other countries, the ILO has taken on the leadership role in designing COVID-19 responses. For example, in **Mauritania**, the co-leads the component the private sector and business working group responsible for developing the post-COVID socio-economic recovery Plan. Private sector and business experts co-produced the World Bank report on the impact of COVID-19. In some countries, the ILO is a member of several working groups. In **Ethiopia**, the ILO participates in Task Forces aligned with ongoing CO-Addis interventions in the country. In **Ghana**, the ILO is part of the Medical Working Group, Psycho Social Working Group and UN Programme Working group. In **South Africa**, the ILO is part of broader UN support programme to the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Civil Society Forum COVID-9 response.

In **Zambia**, the ILO in partnership with other UN agencies, launched a Flash Appeal on COVID-19 response with a budget of U\$133 million needed to support 6 million vulnerable people from May to October. The component on Social Protection is intended mitigate the direct and indirect impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable households through shock-responsive social protection; and prevent potential disruptions to existing government social protection programs and ensure continued provision of social assistance and social security services.

The ILO is, through the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed with **AUDA-NEPAD** on 26 November 2018, collaborating with AUDA-NEPAD in area of occupational safety and health (OSH) as well as COVID-19 in workplace. Through this collaboration ILO provides technical support in establishment of panel of experts from around Africa, capacity building and development of COVID-19 related guidelines for selected sector and role players, including the informal economy.



- ▶ In designing, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes of relevance to the informal economy, including its formalization, Members should consult with and promote active participation of the most representative employers' and workers' organizations, which should include in their rank, according to national practice, representatives of membership-based representative organizations of workers and economic units in the informal economy.

▶ **ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the transition from informal to the formal economy**

From Response to Recovery

While many African countries are still in the process of moving from COVID-19 readiness to response, many others are now discussing recovery plans and the resilience of their economies. In this regards, the ILO continues to reiterate the significance of facilitating the transition from informal to formal economy. As outlined in the ILO Recommendation 204 concerning the same, the remains steadfast in supporting its Member States and the AUC in designing coherent and integrated strategies to facilitate the transition to the formal economy, taking into account the following:

- (a) the diversity of characteristics, circumstances and needs of workers and economic units in the informal economy, and the necessity to address such diversity with tailored approaches;
- (b) the specific national circumstances, legislation, policies, practices and priorities for the transition to the formal economy;
- (c) the fact that different and multiple strategies can be applied to facilitate the transition to the formal economy;
- (d) the need for coherence and coordination across a broad range of policy areas in facilitating the transition to the formal economy;
- (e) the effective promotion and protection of the human rights of all those operating in the informal economy;
- (f) the fulfilment of decent work for all through respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work, in law and practice;
- (g) the up-to-date international labour standards that provide guidance in specific policy areas (see Annex);
- (h) the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination;
- (i) the need to pay special attention to those who are especially vulnerable to the most serious decent work deficits in the informal economy, including but not limited to women, young people, migrants, older people, indigenous and tribal peoples, persons living with HIV or affected by HIV or AIDS, persons with disabilities, domestic workers and subsistence farmers;
- (j) the preservation and expansion, during the transition to the formal economy, of the entrepreneurial potential, creativity, dynamism, skills and innovative capacities of workers and economic units in the informal economy;
- (k) the need for a balanced approach combining incentives with compliance measures; and
- (l) the need to prevent and sanction deliberate avoidance of, or exit from, the formal economy for the purpose of evading taxation and the application of social and labour laws and regulations.

At its disposal, the ILO in Africa has 9 Country Offices, covering several countries each, and 4 Decent Work Technical Support Teams (DWTs) hosting approximately 130 technical specialists and national experts working in the region. In addition to global resources, ILO's unique tripartite mode of operation ensures its access to governments, workers and employers representatives, and where available to associations of informal economy workers and units.

ILO Resources pertaining to the Impact of COVID-19 on the Informal Economy

1. A brief: COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy: Immediate responses and policy challenges

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_743623/lang--en/index.htm

2. A brief: Impact of lockdown measures on the informal economy

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_743523/lang--it/index.htm

A fact sheet (shorter version) has been also produced and is available at:

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_743534/lang--en/index.htm

3. Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy in developing and emerging countries

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_743032/lang--en/index.htm

4. A brief: The impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy in Africa and the related policy responses

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/africa/information-resources/publications/WCMS_741864/lang--en/index.htm

6. A technical note: Short-term Policy Responses to COVID-19 in the World of Work, Special focus on state level and informal sector

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/whatwedo/publications/WCMS_739454/lang--en/index.htm

7. ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition ILO Standards and COVID-19

Available at:

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf

8. Social Protection Response to the COVID-19 Crisis

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/information-resources/publications-and-tools/others/WCMS_740858/lang--en/index.htm

9. Jobs for Peace and Resilience: A response to COVID-19 in fragile contexts

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/recovery-and-reconstruction/WCMS_742182/lang--en/index.htm

10. COVID-19: what role for workers' organisations?

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_739546.pdf

11. An Employer's Guide on Managing Your Workplace during COVID-19

Available at: https://www.ilo.org/actemp/publications/WCMS_740212/lang--en/index.htm