

AATF in Realignment With COVID-19 Management



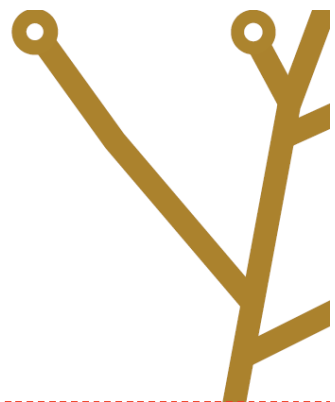
As the COVID-19 Pandemic enters its fourth month, countries, communities and organizations are hard pressed to transform their modes of operation to respond to its rapid spread that has seen 30,367 confirmed cases recorded in Africa with 1378 deaths reported to date¹. Similarly, different sectors of life ranging from social, economic and cultural aspects have been either severely affected or completely transformed.

Various countries and governments are applying different methods of managing the spread and impact of this Pandemic on its people, indicating the depth with which they value human life. Interventions such as restrictions on movement, group gatherings and cultural activities; controlled hours of work and curfews; introduction of new social habits; and continuous advice and knowledge sharing by government have defined the *new normal*. The necessary measures have proven effective in limiting the spread of the disease in addition to tracing and identifying new infections. We celebrate with all the African countries that are recording recoveries and full recuperation from the virus to the tune of 9,107 people as at April 26 2020². given the constrained health systems that we know is the reality of most African countries. Our prayers go to those affected as we encourage all of us to make it our personal mission to keep the Pandemic at bay.

During this period of uncertainty, we urge our stakeholders and partners to adhere to the communicated government directives and those of the World Health Organization. Covid-19 is a reality that needs concerted effort to overcome. The uncertainty it brings cannot be taken lightly. We thank the various governments for taking action for humanity.

¹ WHO situation report #97, April 26, 2020

² WHO Situation report #97, April 26, 2020



Stringent and restrictive as some of the measures may be, they will help reduce social, cultural and economic disruptions.

As an organization working with smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa to transform Africa's agriculture through technology, we thank African governments for considering seed and agricultural inputs as essential during this period allowing retailers to remain open for farmers to access inputs. We especially congratulate the governments for allowing movement and trading of farm produce amidst the various restrictions. This is encouraging to the continent's farmers as it will prevent their produce from going to waste and will help them generate income to meet some of their basic needs.

We remain committed to our mission, working with and for smallholder farmers, most of whom are vulnerable women and youth. Though the disruptive nature of the Pandemic has interfered with our planned work and engagements with partners and farmers, we join the world community in implementing measures towards controlling the spread of the virus. Specifically,

- We are changing and adapting our methods of work to include non-intrusive modes through virtual meetings with staff, partners and stakeholders as well collaboratively managing the situation within the international network systems. Additional measures to safeguard the health of our staff and their families include arrangements for working from home and a partial lockdown of the AATF offices in Nairobi, Kenya and Abuja, Nigeria.
- Where possible we are supporting seed production and multiplication efforts at partner institutions and seed companies that have essential service support in their system to ensure there is no gap when the seeds are needed by farmers. Activities around production of foundation seed that is key to ensuring there is quality certified seed are ongoing with minimal interruptions, while ensuring that quality assurance inspections take place within government guidelines.
- We are availing our scientific knowledge and experience through various communication and media platforms to support greater understanding of the virus and its impact through position papers on the impact of COV19 on farming systems in Africa.
- We have put in place plans to support resumption of project fieldwork upon easing of restrictions in countries of operation and based on public health developments and guidelines.

As a science-based organization, we affirm our absolute support to the scientific community as they intensify efforts towards finding a lasting solution to this Pandemic.





We believe that science and technology can help find a solution to this Pandemic and its ravaging consequences on people and economies..

Looming uncertainties remain and much needs to be done as the life of this Pandemic remains unknown. We cannot tell what and how the situation will be once the worst is over. What we know for certain however is that there will be some drastic changes in how we do business going forward. Food security concerns are likely to escalate in the foreseeable short to medium time frame for many countries given the disruptions of on-farm-operations and by extension other cascading activities in the agricultural value chains. A majority of African smallholders who make up 70% of the population rely on human labor to undertake their farm activities. The current situation indicates there is shortage of labor which will impact on planting. AATF is already considering different options including increased automation of processes to improve farming systems and will be rolling those out together with African Governments to help the continent manage, recover and build sustainable food systems.

We remain hopeful that concerted efforts will help each of us emerge out of this Pandemic successfully. Let us join hands and help control the spread of this virus!

