

The coronavirus pandemic currently shocking the world gained entry into Nigeria with its first case confirmed on the 27th of February, 2020 in Lagos state. The discovery spiralled into a frenzy of misinformation as the NCDC and Federal Ministry of Health worked to allay citizens' fears and contain the outbreak. It is important that we all play a role in beating the virus by sharing only validated information and promoting effective preventive measures.

The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC) gathers rumours, concerns and questions from communities across Nigeria to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, NGOs and citizens. By providing the public with facts, the CCC ensures a better understanding of needs regarding the coronavirus and debunks rumours before they can do more harm. Information sharing will be critical to defeating the virus, due to the diverse cultural backgrounds and drawbacks in national education.

Coronavirus poses a serious threat to Nigeria's population of over 180 million people given the country's weak healthcare system, high level of poverty, crowded living conditions and deep-set corruption in government. Economic and insecurity conditions in Nigeria were already tenuous before this outbreak, and Nigeria already fares badly against any health indicators, with high mortality rates and poor life expectancy. When and if coronavirus hits the highly populated communities of Nigeria's cities, it could be a disaster.

It is absolutely critical that Nigeria deals with this pandemic in forward-thinking, open, transparent ways to ensure the well-being of citizens, build resilience and rapidly curb the potential for social conflict. In Nigeria, this is a huge challenge but also a real opportunity to reimagine public health systems, redefine the relationship between citizens and those in power, and reinvigorate governance.

COVID-19: One year later

February 28, 2021 marked one year since the first case of the coronavirus was discovered in Nigeria. The pandemic had some unfortunate impact, both direct and indirect, on the lives of Nigerians and our economy. However, it also created an opportunity to strengthen health security and awareness in the country.

Here are some milestones we reached during the COVID-19 fight in the past year:

27 February, 2020:

First case of COVID-19 is discovered in Nigeria since the beginning of the outbreak. The case is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria and returned from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria on the 25th of February 2020. He was confirmed by the Virology Laboratory of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, part of the Laboratory Network of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

23 March, 2020:

First COVID-19 death is announced in Nigeria. Honourable minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire discloses at a Press Briefing in Abuja that the case was a 67-year male who returned home following medical treatment in the United Kingdom. "Sadly, we recorded our first death from COVID-

19 in the country. This was a Nigerian who unfortunately, had underlying medical illnesses and died due to complications on the 22nd of March in Abuja.” He said.

29 March, 2020:

First Lockdown order in Nigeria is announced. In an effort to halt the spread of the Novel Coronavirus, the Federal Government orders the cessation of movements in Lagos state, Ogun state and the FCT for an initial period of 14 days from effect from 11pm on the 30th of March. Travel restrictions to and from other states are also put in place. The move was made based on the advice of the Federal Ministry of Health and the NCDC.

8 April, 2020:

Central Bank of Nigeria launches COVID-19 relief fund and announces call for donations.

13 April, 2020:

Stay-at-home order is extended in Lagos, Ogun state and the FCT for an additional 14 days to “sustain the gains achieved and reduce the risk of community transmission of the coronavirus” which had reached 323 confirmed cases in Nigeria as at the time of the order.

27 April, 2020:

President Muhammadu Buhari announces in a nationwide broadcast a phased and gradual easing of lockdown measures in the FCT, Lagos and Ogun states effective from 4th May. He explains that the impact of the previous lockdown, the economic situation and food security among others were factors that were considered in arriving at this decision. The use of facemasks is mandated during this broadcast.

1 May, 2020:

FDA approves its first anti-viral drug for COVID-19 treatment, Remdesivir, for emergency use for hospitalized COVID-19 patients, citing its ability to inhibit viral synthesis.

18 May, 2020:

Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 announces a continuation of the gradual ease of lockdown measures ordered by President Muhammadu Buhari on the 27th of April. Measures continue unabated for two more weeks.

1 June, 2020:

Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 announces a change in the restrictions for the ease of lockdown measures. Allowing the (restricted) opening of churches, mosques and hotels.

15 June, 2020:

FDA revokes its emergency use authorization for chloroquine phosphate and hydroxychloroquine sulfate, which it had initially granted on 28 March, 2020. This is done “in light of ongoing serious cardiac adverse events and other potential serious side effects”.

18 June, 2020:

NCDC updates COVID-19 symptoms to include “a sudden loss of taste and smell with fever, headache or runny nose”.

29 June, 2020:

President Muhammadu Buhari approves the extension of phase II of the ease of lockdown measures from the 30th of June to the 27th of July, 2020. He also approves the safe reopening of schools only for students in graduating classes including Primary 6, JS3 and SS3 to enable them prepare for exams.

27 July, 2020:

The Federal Ministry of Education directs secondary schools in Nigeria to reopen from the 4th of August, 2020 for exit classes only. Students are afforded two weeks to prepare for the West African Examinations (WAEC) scheduled to start on the 17th August, 2020

6 August, 2020:

Nigeria's Private Sector led Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID) announces the flag-off of a nationwide distribution of 23 billion Naira food palliatives to cover 1.7 million households amounting to about 10 million people across the 774 local governments in the country, including the FCT to mitigate the adverse effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic on vulnerable Nigerians.

27 August, 2020:

PTF schedules [resumption of international flights for the 5th of September, 2020](#)

6 September, 2020:

Federal Government of Nigeria discloses that it "spent N30,540,563,571.09, representing 84% of the N36.3 billion public funds and donations received to respond to COVID-19 between 1st April, 2020 and 31st July, 2020, leaving the balance of N5.9 billion."

19 October, 2020:

PTF announces the commencement of phase 3 of the eased lockdown with the opening of NYSC orientation camps, resumption of work for civil servants and re-commencement of sporting leagues.

22 October, 2020:

Warehouse containing COVID-19 palliatives in Mazamaza community in Lagos is raided, triggering the looting of warehouses all over the nation.

25 January, 2021:

PTF announces that the B117 COVID-19 variant has been discovered in multiple patients in Nigeria. The variant was first detected in the UK in September.

18 February, 2021:

NAFDAC approves the Oxford- Astrazeneca vaccine for use in Nigeria.

2 March, 2021:

Nigeria acknowledges receipt of about 4 million doses of the Oxford-Astrazeneca vaccine from COVAX.

RUMOURS



The vaccine contains a live virus and may infect me

The vaccine was not tested long enough

Reactions to the vaccine shots are deadly

I don't have to take the vaccine if others around me are vaccinated.

The COVID-19 vaccine does not seem safe to me.

VS



FACTS

The COVID-19 vaccines available and in clinical development do not contain live viruses, which means there is no risk of getting COVID-19 from them.

Due to need to develop new vaccines, developers began phase II and phase III trials of the COVID-19 vaccine simultaneously. They also began manufacturing preparation in tandem with the trials.

The most commonly reported side effects from the vaccine are pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle or joint pain, chills and sometimes fever. These types of reactions are normal with vaccines.

For herd immunity to work against COVID-19, a substantial proportion of a population needs to be vaccinated. It is uncertain how long natural immunity will last.

The COVID-19 vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in history. The clinical data was thoroughly reviewed by the FDA and the CDC.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE IN NIGERIA AT AS TODAY - 30/03/2021

162,641

CONFIRMED CASES

2,049

DEATHS

150,466

RECOVERED

1,767,694

TESTED