



Press Release

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AFRICA DAY: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON COVID-19

The initial slow spread of Covid-19 through Africa helped some countries to start preparing for the inevitable, but – a little more than a year into the pandemic – many Africans report a rather devastating effect on their lives and livelihoods.

In many areas people experience a loss of income, and food security is under pressure. In addition, people who need medication for chronic or other illnesses can quite often not acquire the necessary medication, or find it impossible to get to hospitals or clinics.

According to recent calculations of the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#), Africa will need a total of US \$285 billion over the next four years to be able to overcome the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic, Ipsos conducted public opinion polls on behalf of the [Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 \(PERC\)](#), a consortium of global public health organisations and private sector firms.¹ PERC was created in March 2020 with the objective of providing [African Union member states](#) with real-time information and guidance to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on the continent.

Ipsos offices throughout Africa collected data for the different waves of the study by conducting 24,000 telephone surveys in 19 African Union member states for each wave. These interviews were supplemented with weekly social media scraping data.

The third survey in the series was conducted in February 2021² and questions probed the public's knowledge, risk perceptions, attitudes, access to information, reactions, behaviours and practices related to Covid-19. Findings show that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact societies, not only in terms of health, but also regarding the local social and economic conditions and day-to-day life.³

¹ PERC partners: Ipsos, Africa Centres of Disease Control and Prevention, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, Novetta Mission Analytics, the World Health Organisation, the World Economic Forum, and the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team.

² The next wave will be conducted in June/July 2021.

³ For more information and access to the datasets from the three different waves, go to <https://preventepidemics.org/covid19/perc/>. This information is useful for defining policies and strengthening a response to the virus outbreak and increase preparedness.

THE 19 COUNTRIES INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT SPANS ALL REGIONS OF THE CONTINENT



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Some Key Findings regarding healthcare, income and food security from the third report:

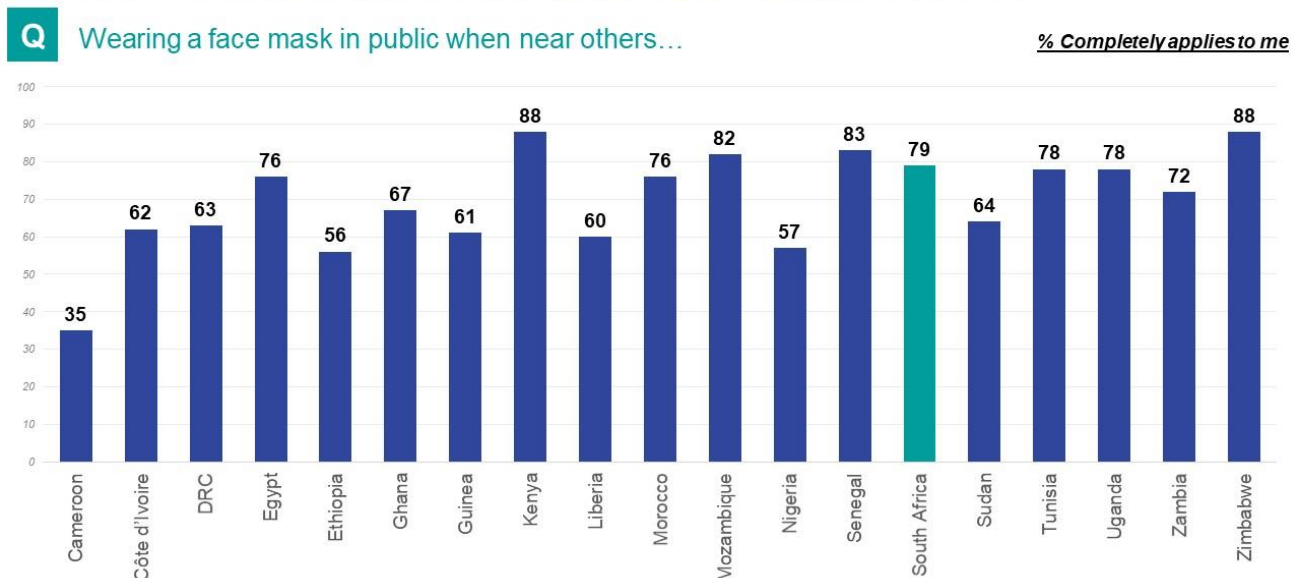
- More than four in every 10 (43%) respondents reported that Covid-19 had made it more difficult for them or someone in their household to obtain required medication in the previous three months (between November 2020 and February 2021).
- Among respondents that reported they, or someone in their household required a health care visit, almost a quarter (23%) reported missing or skipping services since November 2020 and more than four in 10 (42%) missed or skipped services since the start of the pandemic.
- Income loss has increased, exacerbating issues like accessing food and health care services – a crisis that is worsening as the pandemic continues. More than three quarters of all respondents (77%) reported losing some or all of their income since the start of the pandemic. And more than 80% of respondents reported challenges accessing food in the previous week, an increase of 8 percentage points since August 2020.

Mask wearing:

- The standard Covid-19 self-care messages of “*wear a mask covering your nose and mouth*”, “*maintain a safe distance from others*” and “*wash your hands often with soap and water*” were repeated so often since March 2020, that some might think measuring adherence to these (fairly) simple messages obsolete. However, these are still some of the best defence mechanisms for individuals, reiterated often by epidemiologists and the [WHO](https://www.who.int).

- Respondents were asked to self-report on some of their behaviour, like hand washing, keeping their distance and wearing a face mask in public when near others. Self-reported mask use remained high in Africa (looking at the previous studies) but varied a lot by country.
- Interestingly, it is definitely on the low side in the two most populous African countries, namely Nigeria (57%) and Ethiopia (56%).
- However, Nigeria's neighbouring country, Cameroon, is reporting the lowest compliance with mask wearing – as only a third (35%) of the population who can be reached by telephone indicated that they have worn a mask in the preceding seven days before the survey.
- Cameroon is an exception to the rule, as more than half in all the other countries indicated that they do wear masks in public. (It might be worthwhile probing the circumstances in Cameroon keeping mask-wearing at such a low level.)

OVER THE PAST SEVEN DAYS, TO WHAT EXTEND DOES EACH OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBE YOU PERSONALLY?



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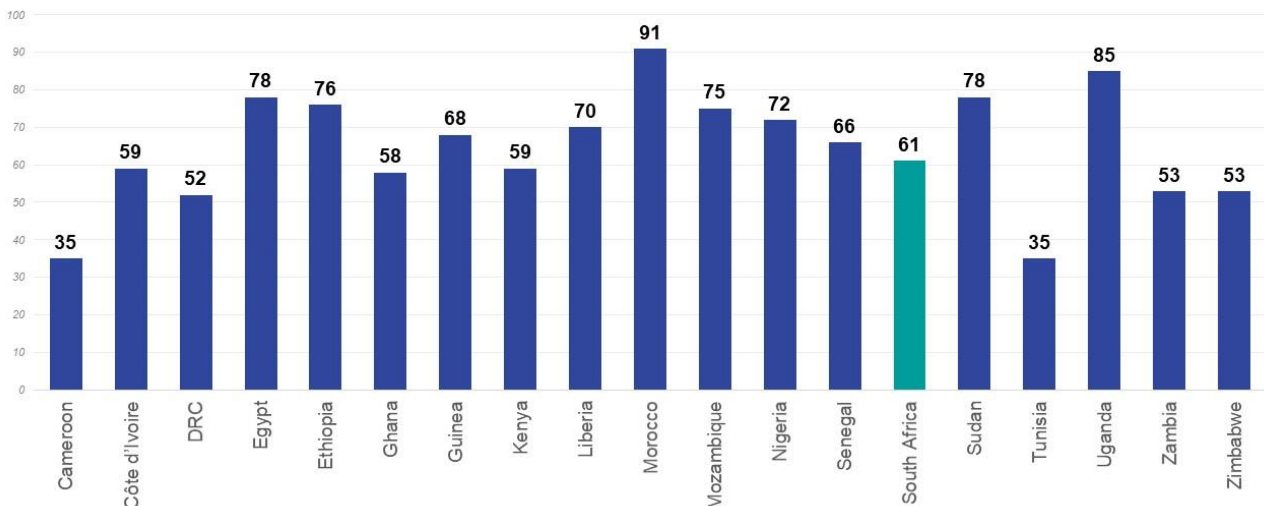
Possible vaccine acceptance

- Overall, two-thirds of respondents (67%) reported interest in taking a vaccine when it becomes available, with substantial variation among the countries included (ranging from 91% in Morocco to 35% in Tunisia and Cameroon).
- Interestingly, Cameroon is again one of the countries reporting the lowest vaccine acceptance figures on the continent.
- However, the African Health authorities and Governments still have a big job to do in most countries to disseminate information about being vaccinated against Covid-19.

- Various other studies conducted by Ipsos and other agencies pointed to the fact that many people are scared of the possible side-effects of the Covid-19 vaccine. These should be openly discussed by authorities.
- Another issue might be the spread of bogus information and scare tactics – especially on social media. Again, widespread, and honest information is the best way to deal with fake news.
- Other Ipsos projects have pointed out that, as soon as a vaccine becomes available in a country, and populations are being vaccinated in growing numbers, vaccine hesitancy becomes less pronounced. This was the case in both the UK and the USA and it would be very interesting to see if Africa follows this trend. One of the biggest issues, however, is that vaccine availability in most African countries is still very low.

IF A SAFE AND APPROVED VACCINE AGAINST COVID-19 WERE TO BECOME AVAILABLE, HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO GET VACCINATED?

% Definitely / Probably get vaccinated



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Perceptions of the role of government

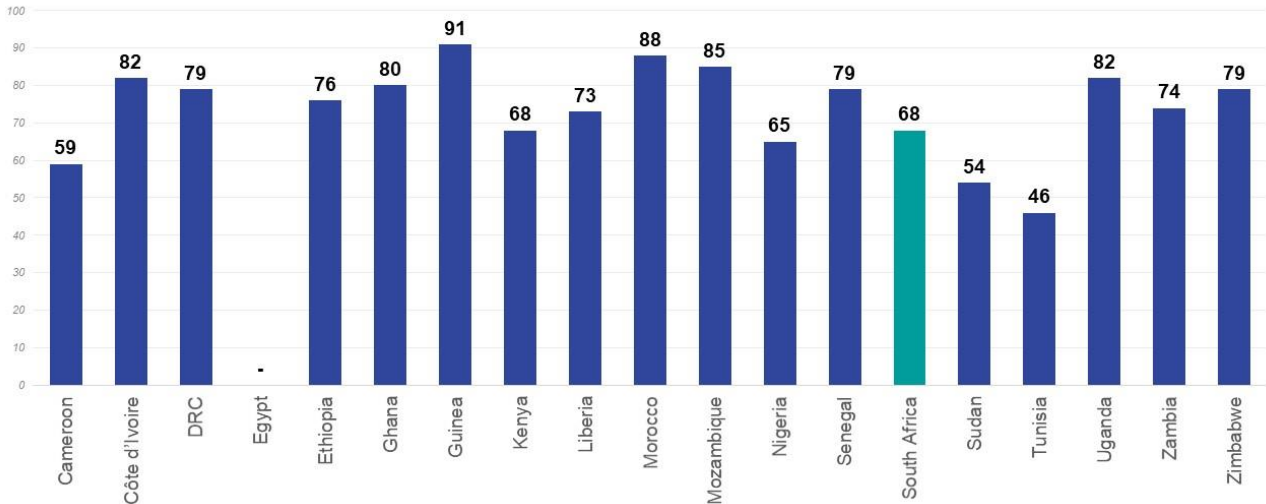
- There is speculation and some empirical evidence that Covid-19 risk perception and satisfaction with the government's Covid-19 response are important factors influencing a respondent's intent to get vaccinated.
- Although this is true in Morocco where 88% are satisfied with their government's response to Covid-19 pandemic and 91% want to be vaccinated. In Tunisia, only 46% are happy with their government's response and only 35% want to be vaccinated. But a lot more work needs to be done in this area.



Press Release - Continued

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS OR COVID-19?

% Very / Somewhat satisfied



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Technical Detail:

- This third wave of the Covid-19 project for PERC was conducted from 12-23 February 2021.
- All polling was conducted by telephone/CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews).
- A total of 24,000 interviews were conducted.
- In each country the samples were drawn to be nationally representative of the population with access to landline and/or mobile phones in each of the countries.
- In the final analysis data were weighted by gender and region – to reflect this universe.

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