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## The COVID-19 pandemic and structural transformation in Africa: Evidence for action

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# The Covid-19 Pandemic and Structural Transformation in Africa

## Evidence for Action

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Florian Gitt*

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## Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only upended daily routines and work plans but also changed research agendas. Even 11 months after the first hints, great uncertainty persists about the “right” measures to counter its causes and effects. For that, we clearly need empirical evidence. Calls for increased collaboration between research, policy and society are growing louder. As in other fields, policy-makers and practitioners in the fields of global development and international cooperation have begun to consider how strategies and work plans can be adapted to respond to the short- and long-term consequences of the pandemic. Against this background, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the study, “The COVID-19 Pandemic and Structural Transformation in Africa: Evidence for Action” in September 2020. This represents the joint efforts by researchers at the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at Addis Ababa University and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in Nairobi. We thank Christian von Haldenwang, Anna Pegels and Christine Hackenesch for their constructive comments regarding an earlier draft. Our research assistants Anna Hörter, Christopher Rohles, Stefan Wunderlich provided tireless support. We thank you so much!

No final answer has been found about how to best address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in different societies around the globe. Therefore, we invite readers to take this study as a *starting point* to better understand the reforms and structural transformations needed for a more sustainable future.

Bonn, November 2020

Julia Leininger and Christoph Strupat

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## Abbreviations

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank Group
Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
AFTCOR	Africa Taskforce for Coronavirus
AMSP	African Medical Suppliers Platform
AU	African Union
BMZ	German Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation
CAR	Central African Republic
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
CFR	case fatality ratio
CONCVACT	Consortium for Covid-19 Vaccine Clinical Trials
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSSI	Debt Service Suspension Initiative
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GHG	greenhouse gas
GVC	global value chain
IDP	internally displaced person
IHR	International Health Regulations
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDC	least developed country
MFI	microfinance institutions
LMIC	low-to-middle-income country
MIC	middle-income country
MSME	micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NCDC	Nigerian Centre for Disease Control
PACT	Partnership to Accelerate Covid-19 Testing (Africa CDC)
PPP	purchasing power parity
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPAR	State Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting

UHC	universal health coverage
UMIC	upper-middle-income countries
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
VAT	value added tax
WASH	access to safe water for sanitation and hygiene
WDI	World Development Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization

## Executive summary

This study analyses how economic, societal, political and environmental structural strengths and weaknesses have played out in Africa during the COVID-19 crisis that began in March 2020. Its main aim is to present better evidence of how the pandemic has directly and indirectly affected African countries. It is based on the assumption that economic and other structures determine the magnitude and direction of a pandemic's short- and long-term impacts and that the pandemic accelerates trends that had begun long before. The study analyses the pandemic's direct health impacts and policy responses such as lockdowns and their potential determinants. It also looks at how lockdowns and other policy responses impact economics, society, politics and the environment.

**This study enhances current evidence of the pandemic's impacts in Africa.** It is the first comprehensive study of economic, social, political and environmental factors and does not focus on one single policy domain. It is also the first study that examines the pandemic's effects across countries with structural commonalities (least developed countries, LDCs, middle-income countries, MICs and conflict-affected countries). A comparative analysis uses these clusters to identify patterns in the pandemic's direct and indirect impacts.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still in full swing and the coming months will be full of uncertainties. That said, this analysis reveals areas where **action is clearly needed to make societies and economies more resilient, inclusive and sustainable**. Key findings with regard to the structural strengths and weaknesses identified here have implications for policy, as discussed in Chapter 4. This empirical evidence can help policy-makers reshape German and European cooperation with Africa in light of the new realities. Given the unpredictability about how the pandemic will develop around the world, we address only expected impacts of the pandemic on Africa up to 2021.

One of the most important insights of the empirical analysis is the **key role that social cohesion plays in a society's resilience to the pandemic and its sustainable development**, as well as how MICs and LDCs differ in this regard. Social cohesion results from good and trustful relationships within a society and between the society and the state, as well as from individuals cooperating for the common good. High inequalities and social tensions in MICs have led to more severe lockdown policies and negative consequences. In contrast, LDCs exhibit higher levels of social cohesion: Greater cooperation between social actors in these countries resulted in milder lockdowns.

### *Direct effects and structural strengths and weaknesses*

In the three country groups, the **magnitude of the pandemic's direct impacts and state responses vary according to their structural differences**. MICs have had the highest numbers of cases of infection/deaths and have implemented the most stringent lockdown policies, although their health system capacities can better respond to the pandemic's direct effects in the long run. Some LDCs are less seriously affected by the pandemic's direct effects and have implemented effective tracing and surveillance systems – and less stringent lockdowns. The health emergency preparedness that LDCs developed during epidemics such as Ebola make them less likely to suffer from the COVID-19 pandemic's negative direct effects than MICs. Although conflict-affected countries have lower numbers of

cases/deaths, they have the highest case fatality ratios (CFRs) because of their health sectors' low structural capacities. These countries are expected to face the largest long-term negative direct effects of the pandemic.

#### *Structural strengths of MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected countries*

**Transnational action and standardisation were crucial** for all three country groups to be able to swiftly react to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Africa CDC provided effective responses and helped many countries deal with the pandemic's health effects.

In many ways, **structural strengths of MICs turned out to be safeguards**. Although their greater connectivity to the global economy made them more vulnerable to the pandemic's effects at first, their more diversified economies have better prospects for macroeconomic recovery. MICs will have their share of difficulties countering the pandemic's negative social effects, but higher levels of health security and functioning food markets can help to cushion the worst of them. More established, albeit relatively low-level, revenue collection systems will help MICs cope with the long-term effects of the pandemic. The higher levels of **social cohesion in LDCs** are obvious in a health crisis, when solidarity and social action become important sources of immediate and intermediate responses. Although in LDCs GDP growth is low, it is more stable and less dependent on the global economy than in other country groups. By definition, **conflict-affected countries have the fewest structural strengths for coping with a pandemic**. Where there is no basic state infrastructure, societal self-organisation and subsistence agriculture serve as safety nets.

#### *Structural weaknesses of MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected countries*

Structural weaknesses in MICs are likely to amplify negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the three country groups, MICs exhibit the highest levels of economic inequality, with inadequate social protection for informal sectors, which makes **MICs likely to experience the largest relative increase in poverty**.<sup>1</sup> Poverty profiles will change because more informal workers in urban areas will become impoverished than agricultural workers. An economy's structure is key: The degree of resource-dependence or diversification determines the magnitude of a country's negative economic effects and fiscal contractions. In the wake of economic downturns, tax collection is likely to become more aggressive and impact the most vulnerable social groups. Lockdown policies in many MICs have turned peaceful protests for better living conditions into violent riots. While democratic MICs have relaxed their lockdowns as soon as the health situation allowed, authoritarian regimes have used the pandemic to expand executive powers and repression.

In LDCs, structural weaknesses mean low capacities and few economic resources for green and inclusive economic recovery programmes. Most current account deficits are worsening because LDCs depend on commodity exports. Negative GDP estimates (-3.3% in 2021), widening fiscal deficits (10.6% of GDP), rising inflation and generally low revenue collection capacities (less than 20% of GDP) present severe challenges. Since access to essential health services is limited, particularly in rural areas, and social protection is scarce

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1 The main reason for these estimates is the MICs' low poverty rate at the outset of the pandemic.

and ineffective, the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt in LDCs for a long time. High dependence on remittances is another structural problem. Some countries show signs of declining democracy. At the same time, post-conflict LDCs are highly vulnerable to renewed violent conflict.<sup>2</sup> Although all three country groups tend to have environmental problems, LDCs have specific challenges that could cause increased suffering, especially in vulnerable groups. Livelihoods are endangered by low investments in and limited access to safe water for sanitation and hygiene (WASH) as well as inadequate responses to the overexploitation of natural resources.

The structural weaknesses in conflict-affected countries make it difficult for them to even begin to recover from the COVID-19 health crisis. They have the worst growth projections (-7.6%), are highly dependent on natural resources and have extremely low revenue collection capacities. Social structures amplify the pandemic's effects and are likely to cause poverty rates and inequality to explode in 2021, with an estimated 60 per cent of the population food insecure. Conflict-affected countries have very limited access to health services and social protection; in some areas, they do not exist. With institutional capacities and capabilities extremely low or absent in these countries, the state plays a limited role. As calls for ceasefires go unheeded and international mediation efforts are interrupted, it has become more difficult to contain violent conflict. The lack of regulation and enforcement is also likely to see conflicts over natural resources increase.

*General policy implications: What to address and how for a “better recovery”?*

Structural weaknesses prevent easy solutions for a “better recovery”. At the same time, the COVID-19 health crisis provides an opportunity to undertake economic and political structural transformations that have long been on the agendas of African and international policy-makers, in particular with regard to the 2030 Agenda. **Analysing structural strengths and weaknesses allows the authors of this study to identify strategies and institutional reforms for better recoveries.** We first describe the *necessary* policy priorities and then outline how development policy can address the priorities for structural transformations and their implications.

*a) Policy priorities to ensure a better recovery with structural transformations*

- *The “societal turn”.* Our findings reveal how important *social cohesion* is – both for coping with the pandemic and for sustainable development. Material and immaterial investments in good and trustful relationships within societies and between society and the state, and incentives to encourage individuals to cooperate for the common good must be central to development strategies. This is particularly important for MICs, where high inequalities and social tensions have not only led to more severe lockdowns but also to more negative consequences of the pandemic. In LDCs, greater cooperation between social actors has meant that stringent lockdowns were not needed and the pandemic's direct effects have been less severe.

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2 Prior violent conflict is one of the main predictors of the outbreak of violent conflict, including civil wars.

- *There is a triad of equally important and urgent priorities:* (i) inclusive and green economic development linked to (ii) universal social systems and services (including health, education and social protection) and (iii) political institutions that are inclusive and capable of collecting revenues and providing public goods. However, none of these steps will be effective if ecosystems remain unprotected. Specific policy recommendations are found in Section 4.3.

*b) Addressing priorities for a better recovery and structural transformation*

- *Recover and redesign – there is no longer any alternative to integrated and systemic policy approaches.* Our findings on structural weaknesses indicate that structural transformation requires both recovery policies and the redesign of institutions and systems. Mounting financial constraints make it necessary to prioritise the most important reforms by using integrated approaches to help identify the priorities and create synergies between policy goals.
- *Ensure peaceful structural transformations.* Social and political tensions are increasing in African societies and around the world. Economic and political reforms often challenge vested interests and create power struggles. High economic and social uncertainties for individuals as well as governments will probably exacerbate conflicts during and after the COVID-19 health crisis. This points to the need to create and promote inclusive democratic institutions that can peacefully resolve societal conflicts. The unintended effects that various measures can have on conflicts should be considered when designing policy.
- *Change cooperation modalities.* The pandemic has strengthened calls for changing the modalities of global development cooperation. Although a “paradigm shift” in cooperation between Africa and other international actors has long been on the agenda, there has been no shift by most OECD countries or the European Union. Change must include at least: (i) multi-directional and open-ended exchanges for developing joint solutions to global problems; (ii) multilateral fora for effective multi-stakeholder dialogue with Africa (the G20 could be one); and (c) people-to-people formats involving social movements, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and municipalities such as the “*Deutsche Städtetag*”. Policy-makers should encourage German civil society to “think globally” and support transnational exchange. Finally, German engagement for global development must not shy away from considering geostrategic aspects.

*c) Specific recommendations for German and European Africa policy*

Cooperation with Africa is a substantial part of German and European development cooperation. Following Germany’s G20 presidency in 2017, cooperation strategies were strengthened and financial resources increased. G20 cooperation with Africa was placed high on the agenda and Germany and Europe focused on economic cooperation and private sector development. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that while private sector investments are important, business alone neither makes societies more resilient and cohesive nor does it necessarily foster structural transformation. We first analyse structural strengths and weaknesses in three African country groups and then make specific

recommendations for each of the priorities named above and for German and European development cooperation.

- Our recommendations regarding *inclusive economic development* are related to African countries' positioning in global value chains (GVCs), debt sustainability and economic diversification through regional integration in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Recovery also requires support for macroeconomic stability and domestic resource mobilisation, improved taxation and ensuring that vulnerable groups do not suffer from new financial constraints.
- From a social perspective, we recommend the creation of *universal social systems* that cover universal health, education and social protection policies. This requires increasing fiscal capacities, broadening social policies and improving quick crisis adaptation by changing benefit levels, operations and coverage. One-Health activities and social protection for informal workers are also needed; supporting smallholder agriculture as a fallback option for many households in time of crisis is wise.
- *Capable and inclusive institutions for peaceful, dignified transformations* must address the risks the pandemic poses for conflicts. The international community must remain alert and engaged and invest more in crisis prevention in all countries. Democracy presents possibilities to peacefully solve societal conflicts. Therefore, supporting and protecting democratic institutions must be included in pandemic support measures. Regulating migration should be kept high on international agendas.
- *Saving ecosystems and livelihoods through green recoveries* is essential for our other recommendations to succeed and protecting the environment and natural resources is key to any green recovery. We also recommend funding WASH and renewable energies, which promote low-carbon development, and conservation activities.
- With regard to *cooperation*, we recommend reframing Africa policies and reforming aid modalities, for example, by creating dialogue fora for joint knowledge creation.

Detailed descriptions of specific policy recommendations are found in Section 4.3.





## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 COVID-19's impact on Africa

The coronavirus pandemic is a *global* development problem (Oldekop et al., 2020). Not just a global health risk, it is also an economic and social shock that affects virtually all societies simultaneously. The health crisis is creating development problems for all countries – not just those in the Global South. Whereas the United States and Western Europe account for some of the highest infection and fatality rates, the situation in the Global South is mixed. Most African governments reacted swiftly and effectively to the spreading pandemic, and direct health impacts have been more limited in Africa than in other world regions. However, the continent has been hit at least as hard by the indirect social, economic, political and environmental effects of national lockdown measures introduced around the world (York, 2020). As many as 60 million jobs could be lost across Africa because of broken value chains, while food insecurity could claim more victims than COVID-19. The pandemic has not only been a major setback for the substantial development achievements of the last decade but is also sure to deepen existing global inequalities (Bauer et al., 2020).

Effective state policies and social cohesion have been crucial for withstanding and mitigating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak in early 2020. Fiscal stimulus packages provide an opportunity to transform economies socio-ecologically. However, as the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic unfold, political decision-makers in Africa and around the world are facing great difficulties in making evidence-based and effective policies.

First, policy-makers and societies have to deal with uncertainty. The total costs of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot yet be estimated because cascading risks are unfolding unpredictable non-linear effects. Knowledge about the nature and spread of the virus is still limited (Koffman, Gross, Etkind, & Selman, 2020). Second, during pandemics policy-makers always face a dilemma. Responses must protect human health and save lives as well as mitigate the indirect socio-economic effects of containment policies such as lockdowns. Third, states and societies will have more limited resources in the future. External shocks like a pandemic exacerbate tensions that arise from these limitations. Financial and administrative resources must be increased to address effects at the same time that the pandemic is causing medium- to long-term resources to shrink substantially.

Despite all the uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to reconceive development strategies and policy designs. Development cooperation must adapt to the current situation and its consequences. This study identifies possible entry points for (post-)pandemic development policy in the face of challenges to political decision-making.

- The behaviour and actions of social and political actors must be considered. Their agency is crucial for countering immediate effects of the pandemic, coping with its long-term negative consequences and working towards structural change. Knowing about the various political and social responses to the pandemic is key for global development.
- (Post-)pandemic development policy must promote structural transformation. Social, economic and political structures – as well as the Earth system – have created persistent path dependencies that determine the pandemic's short- and long-term impacts. For example, countries dependent on fossil fuel exports suffer more from global lockdowns

and declining commodity prices than diversified economies. It is likely that path dependencies will deepen during the pandemic. Structural strengths and weaknesses also shape political responses and human behaviour during the pandemic.

- Obvious negative trends must be countered. The pandemic accelerates trends that were already unfolding before its outbreak. For instance, growing social inequality is likely to further deepen poverty (Bauer et al., 2020; Brown, Ravallion, & van de Walle, 2020).

Against this backdrop, development cooperation with Africa must address the structural factors that influence long-term trends and create opportunities for African countries to develop inclusive and sustainable societal and economic systems.

This study aims to analyse the **structural strengths and weaknesses of economic, societal, political and ecological systems that played out in Africa during the COVID-19 health crisis**. It focuses on the pandemic's direct and indirect effects and identifies similarities and differences in a variety of policy domains. Although the pandemic remains a moving target and the coming months will be full of uncertainty, it has already exposed areas that must be addressed in order to make societies and economies more resilient, inclusive and sustainable. This empirical evidence provides policy-makers with a basis for adapting German and European cooperation to the “new” realities in Africa. There is a great variety of situations and structures, and no solution can fit them all. However, some similarities, such as income level, human development and conflict intensity, are found. Grouping countries by **structural similarities is one starting point for identifying priorities** for future development cooperation.

Our empirical analysis was guided by three questions:

- What are the direct and indirect economic, social, political and environmental impacts of COVID-19 on Africa?
- What structural strengths and weaknesses exist and what do they imply for the future resilience of African societies and economies?
- What differences and similarities exist between the three country clusters – LDCs, MICs and conflict-affected countries?

Answers to these questions will enhance the studies already made of the pandemic's impacts in Africa. This study is unique in a few ways: It is the first comprehensive study of economic, social, political and environmental factors to focus on more than one policy domain. It is also the first analysis that clusters countries according to their structural commonalities – MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected countries. A comparative analysis uses this clustering to identify patterns in the direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

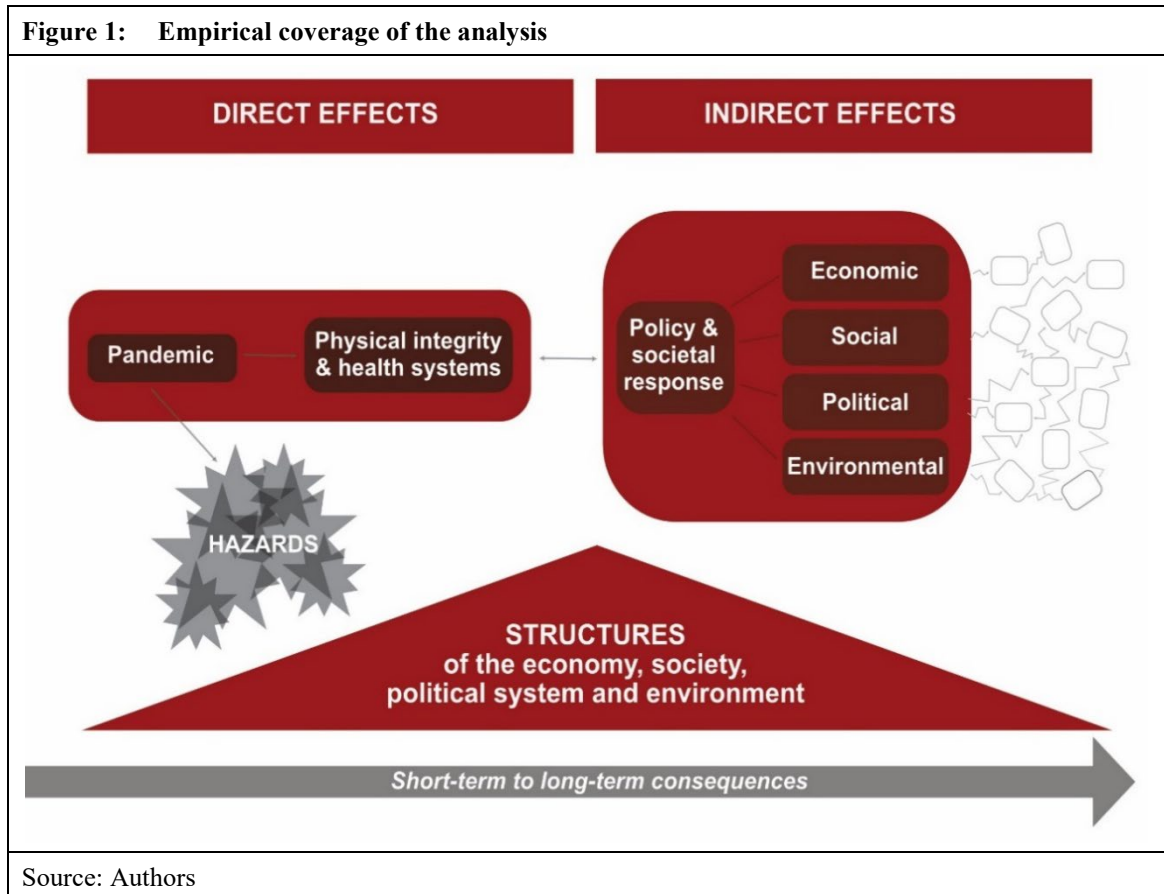
The German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) commissioned this study in late June 2020. German development cooperation concentrates on Africa – as defined in the “Marshall Plan with Africa”, which includes a “pact on the future” (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2017, p. 12). This pact comprises three pillars with broadly defined core areas of cooperation: economic activity, trade and employment, and peace and security – along with democracy and the rule of law. However, the Marshall Plan with Africa has concentrated on implementing the first

pillar, according special attention to private sector investment. This study shows where German and European development approaches must be adapted to the “new realities” in Africa in order to collaboratively create a better recovery. While the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are not yet clear, this study is a starting point in the process of enhancing Germany’s Africa policy.

## 1.2 Analytical approach

This study focuses on the direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, an external shock with a global scope. Although pandemics have commonalities with other external shocks, they are distinct because they affect all parts of society, spread transnationally and have long-term implications. Pandemics can also create cascading risks that escalate in a non-linear process and create a complex web of interactions with spatial and temporal dimensions (Pescaroli & Alexander, 2018, p. 2253). The pandemic’s transnational spread calls for more comprehensive inter- and transnational strategies (Gill & Malamud, 2016). Recent scholarship foresees major external shocks – for example, extreme weather events due to climate change – increasing in frequency (Pescaroli & Alexander, 2018, p. 2246; Sornette, 2009). The scholarly and policy interest in building resilient societies of recent years (Linkov & Trump, 2019) has grown with the COVID-19 pandemic (Trump & Linkov, 2020). Analysing the pandemic’s effects is not only a wise investment in proper crisis response but also a first step to building a better future (Trump & Linkov, 2020).

Although immediate policy decisions and the pandemic’s long-term consequences have serious implications for all humanity, this study focuses on its linear short-term direct and indirect impacts – in 2020 and 2021. It is premature to consider longer-term perspectives (Bauer et al., 2020). The empirical analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 discusses the elements in Figure 1.



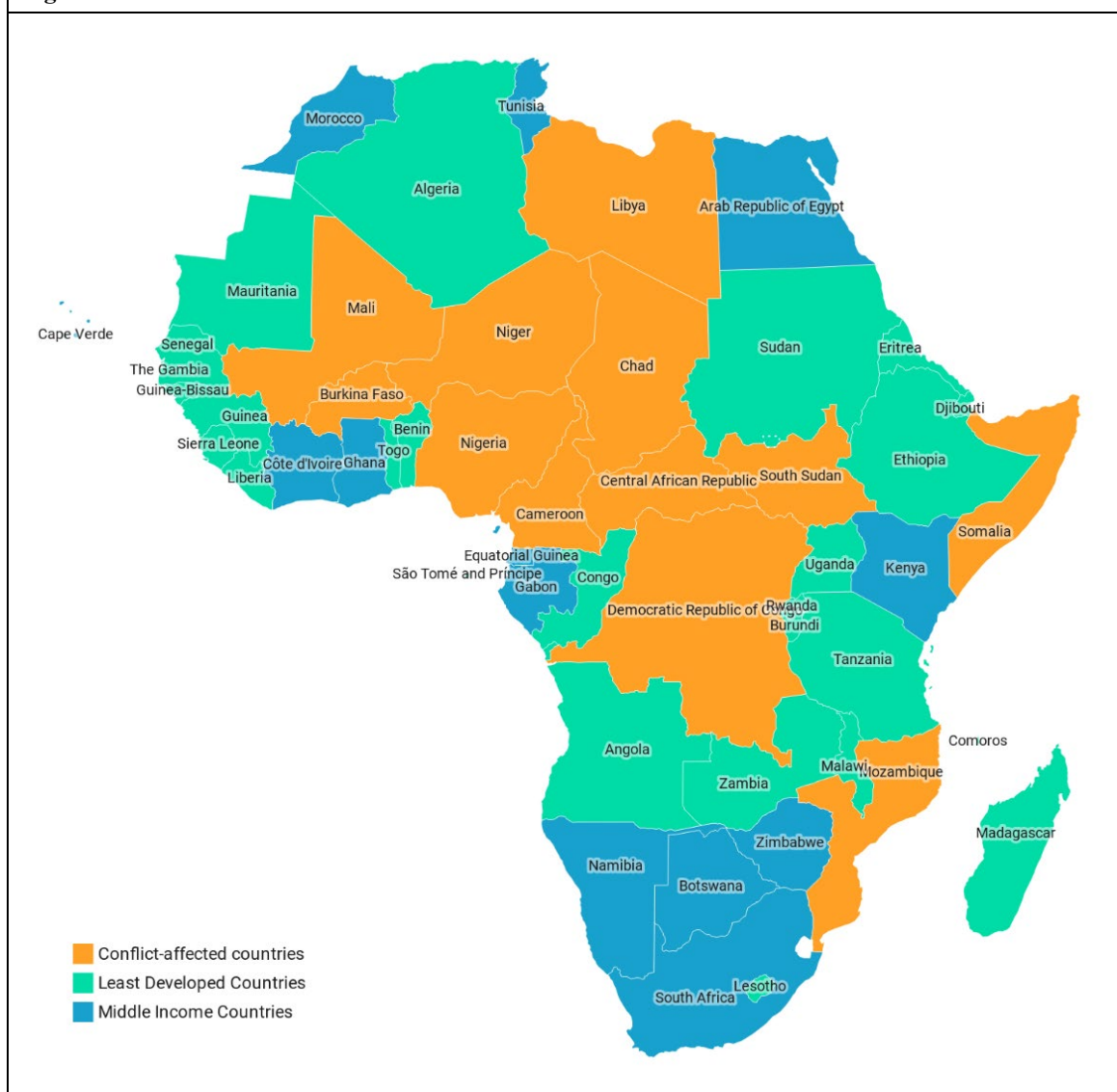
We assume that the economic and societal structures and political and environmental systems are important. We thus distinguish three country groups that share structural commonalities (see Appendix 1).

- *Least developed countries (LDCs)* are “low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development [...] and have low levels of human assets” according to the UN classification as of 2018.
- *Middle-income countries (MICs)* range from lower-middle-income or LMIC (USD 996 - 3,895 annual per capita income) to upper-middle-income or UMIC (USD 3,896 - 12,055 annual per capita income) (World Bank, 2020g).
- *Conflict-affected countries* are defined using the World Bank’s concept of “conflict-affected situations” (World Bank, 2021). Libya and Nigeria are the only African middle-income countries in this group.

The study’s empirical analysis also gives special attention to resource-rich countries, classifying African countries as depicted in Figure 2.

Country groups can overlap empirically, that is, a country may be classified as “middle-income” but have a low level of human development (e.g., Angola and Senegal).

**Figure 2: Classification of African countries\***



\*All countries with medium-intensity conflicts are LDCs except for DRC and Nigeria.

Source: Based on World Bank 2020, 2021 and the UN LDC list. Map created with Datawrapper.

### 1.3 What's in the study

This study presents an empirical analysis of direct and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa and their implications for global development policy-making.

**Chapter 2 focuses on the direct impacts of the pandemic, and policy responses and their potential determinants.** It shows COVID-19's current spread throughout Africa and structural factors of health systems that explain how it impacts physical health directly. The chapter examines containment policy responses, such as lockdowns, which tend to set off escalating indirect effects. We identify potential lockdown determinants like social cohesion, and explore why most African countries have been less affected than other countries worldwide.

**Chapter 3 addresses indirect effects of African policy responses to the pandemic and structural strengths and weaknesses** of their economic, social, political and ecological systems. This chapter provides empirical evidence about the pandemic's (potential) linear effects. It is divided into four thematic sections. The economic section addresses COVID-19 impacts on macroeconomics, fiscal policies and domestic resource mobilisation. The section on societal aspects analyses impacts on health systems, employment, poverty, inequality and food security. The politics section focuses on violent conflicts, administrative capacities, protests, regime changes and migration. The section on environmental issues addresses the impacts on climate, water and biodiversity. Each thematic section presents evidence about indirect effects of the pandemic and the structural strengths and weaknesses that shape their magnitude. They also discuss domestic policy responses. Because structural factors differ markedly across the country clusters, a short case study for each country group illustrates how individual societies and economies are dealing with the effects.

**Chapter 4 summarises key findings regarding structural strengths and weaknesses, discusses policy implications and presents recommendations.** The latter take into account the need for African policy-makers and their international partners to take decisions under high levels of uncertainty, as well as the non-linearity of effects and the urgent need for sustainable transformations. The authors propose changing priorities and approaches to global development cooperation and conclude with recommendations for German and European Africa policies.

## 2 Direct effects: health, lockdowns and their determinants

### Highlights

- The pandemic's direct health effects have not been hitting African countries as badly as other world regions, especially countries of the Global North.
- High levels of health emergency preparedness in the wake of the Ebola epidemic, especially in LDCs, limited the spread of the coronavirus and its direct health effects.
- Swift state responses with strict containment measures across all country groups also limited the spread of the virus and its direct health effects.
- Cohesive societies are a structural strength that limits lockdown measures and reduces the severity of indirect effects.
- Conflict-affected countries experience the highest case fatality ratios (CFRs) due to their very weak health systems; MICs and LDCs fare significantly better.

This chapter describes Africa's current health situation and analyses the structural strengths and weaknesses of various health systems and societies. It presents an overview of how lockdowns have been implemented in the three country groups, explores the relationship between direct health impacts and lockdown policies and identifies their potential determinants (see also Section 1.1, Figure 1). It is also helpful to analyse the long-term effects of lockdowns.

## 2.1 The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic

Most African countries have not been hit as badly by direct effects as other world regions despite their health systems' low capacities and limited resources (Attiah, 2020). Empirical analyses identify reasons why African countries have performed better in the face of the pandemic (Nguimkeu & Tadadjeu, 2020):

- Many states implemented strict lockdown measures early and swiftly.
- Many states had already created more effective health-emergency frameworks after their experience with other infectious diseases.
- African states have active and cooperative societies with high community buy-in for lockdown measures.
- African countries are young; only 3 per cent of their populations are over 65.
- Many Africans live in rural areas.
- African countries are less connected to other world regions.

Some countries, such as South Africa and Egypt, are struggling to limit the spread of COVID-19 and also protect livelihoods. This is critical for limiting the direct health impacts and preventing already-stretched health systems from becoming overwhelmed by rising COVID-19 disease incidence and mortality. Most African health systems have limited capacities so even a relatively low number of cases of infection and deaths can overload systems and cause serious indirect effects like the discontinuation of essential health services (Section 3.1.1).

### Box 1: General challenges to collecting data on COVID-19

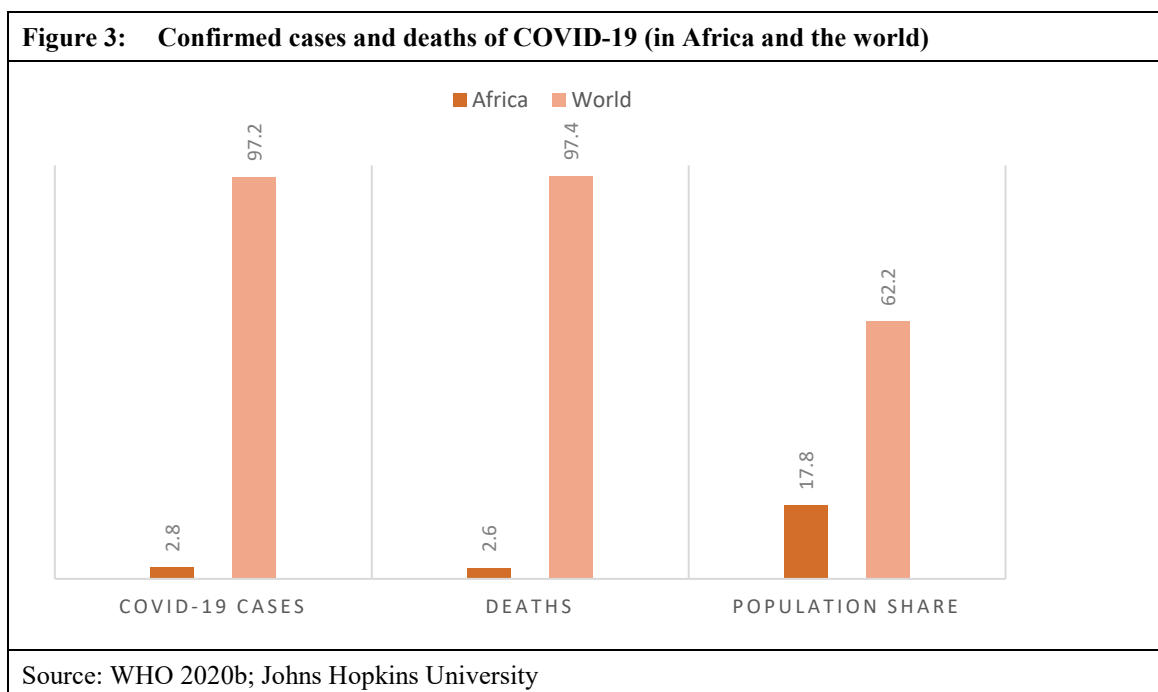
How accurate is data on the coronavirus disease? Reporting and comparing countries and regions is a challenge. Two main approaches are used to identify death rates. The first, the case fatality rate (CFR), indicates the number of deaths due to COVID-19. The second calculates a death toll by comparing the COVID-19 death rate with the country's universal mortality – the death rates from all causes – from previous years. Authorities and media overwhelmingly use the CFR method. Although based on similar government sources, death rates presented by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Johns Hopkins University vary by thousands. Disparities in reporting death rates show how problematic it can be to rely on the latest figures. *Capacity problems* severely affect the accuracy of death rates. Other major challenges to accurately reporting death rates include *political attempts to manipulate COVID-19 statistics* and *pressure on healthcare systems to alter data*.

More accurate COVID-19 death rates could be obtained by focusing on mortality as the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other researchers do. This approach is based on the premise that COVID-19 is the substantial factor for the rise in deaths that cannot be attributed to other causes.

Source: Lin et al. 2020

In October 2020, **Africa had 2.8 per cent of confirmed COVID-19 cases and 2.6 per cent of deaths reported worldwide**, which is far below the continent's 17.8 per cent share of global population (Figure 3). South Africa is the hardest hit African country with 42 per

cent (706,304) of all confirmed cases; it is ranked eighth in the world.<sup>3</sup> Ten countries account for 75 per cent of all COVID-19 cases on the continent. The pandemic is concentrated in the larger African MICs: Morocco (179,003), Egypt (105,405), Ethiopia (90,490), Nigeria (61,630), Algeria (54,839), Libya (50,906), Ghana (47,372), Kenya (45,647) and Tunisia (44,450). The remaining confirmed cases are from all the other African countries combined.



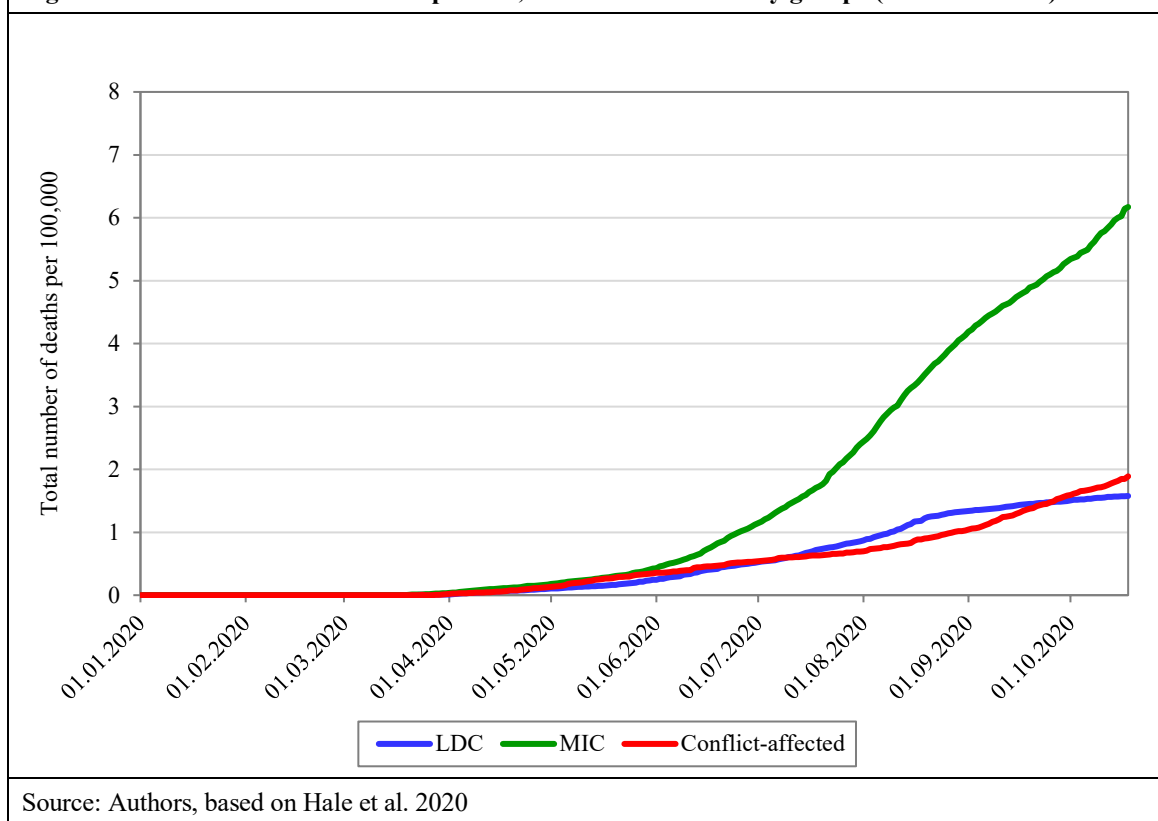
A similar pattern emerges in respect to reported deaths, with the total number put at 40,225, giving an overall CFR of 2.4 per cent (WHO, 2020a; 2020b).<sup>4</sup> **MICs report a high number of confirmed COVID-19 deaths**, led by South Africa (Figure 4). Seven MICs account for 82 per cent of total deaths reported in Africa: South Africa with 46 per cent (18,656), Egypt 15 per cent (6,142), Morocco 7 per cent (3,027), Algeria 5 per cent (1,873), Ethiopia 3 per cent (1,371), Nigeria 3 per cent (1,125) and Kenya 2 per cent (824). On average, MICs have 4.3 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants and LDCs just 1.2 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. Conflict-affected countries report even lower numbers, probably partly due to limited testing and problems reporting figures for confirmed deaths from COVID-19 (see Box 1 for a more detailed discussion of the challenges to data collection).

3 COVID-19 External Situation Report 32 of the World Health Organization from 7 Oct. 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020a)

4 *The Dictionary of Epidemiology* defines CFR as “the proportion of cases of a specified condition that are fatal within a specified time”. The COVID-19 CFR is calculated by the number of deaths defined as due to COVID-19. It does not predict the risk of death for someone infected with coronavirus.

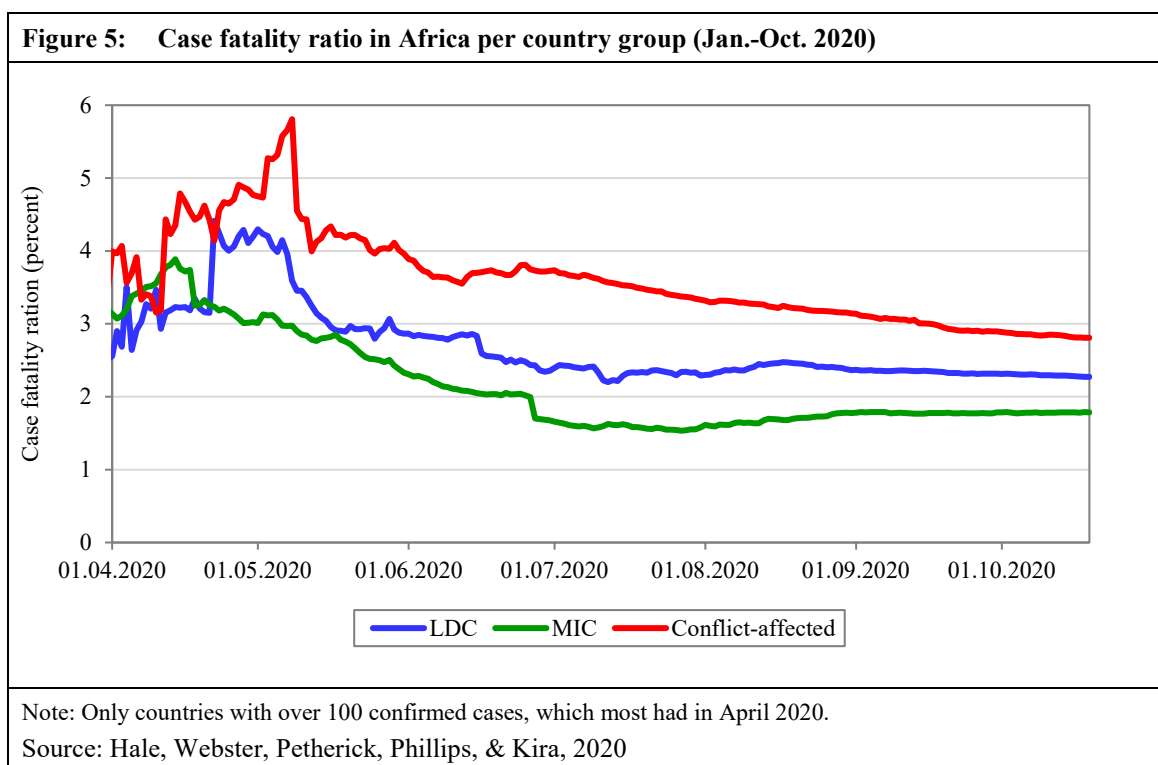


**Figure 4: Total number of deaths per 100,000 in African country groups (Jan.-Oct. 2020)**



Besides the total number of deaths weighted by population size, the CFR is critically important for understanding the severity of the disease in Africa and what should be done about it.<sup>5</sup> The CFR there changed between April and September 2020 (Figure 5). MICs have the lowest CFR (1.8%), LDCs have 2.3 per cent and conflict-affected countries 3 per cent. The early high CFRs in conflict-affected countries, such as Chad (8.0%), Niger (6.0%), Mali (4.9%) and Burkina Faso (4.5%), have decreased over time. A similar phenomenon appears in LDCs, where the CFR increased at the beginning of the pandemic but was substantially reduced through health system actions and increased testing, along with other measures outlined in Section 2.2.

5 COVID-19 is confirmed through testing. Because not everyone is being tested, we do not know the number of total COVID-19 cases or the total number of deaths due to disease, which are needed to calculate the CFR. The CFRs of African countries reflect their mortality rates and differences in testing efforts and health system capacities. Despite these limitations, CFRs do help to indicate the severity of the disease in Africa and what should be done about it.



## 2.2 African health systems: structural strengths and weaknesses in the pandemic

Overall, the direct effects of the pandemic in Africa have been limited. However, poor health systems in many African countries exacerbate the direct effects. Strengths and weaknesses of health systems partly explain the differences between the three country groups. The highly impacted conflict-affected countries have limited access to essential health services and are less prepared to provide direct public health responses to infectious diseases. A moderate COVID-19 disease pattern can translate into increased fatalities if a community lacks medical staff, equipment and adequate funding. For instance, only 41 per cent of African communities have access to essential healthcare services (Table 1); most have fewer than 10 physicians per 100,000 people and one hospital bed per 1,000 population. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger score lowest in the provision of essential health services. Conflict-affected countries were also less prepared to control and immediately respond to a pandemic. None of these countries had national health emergency frameworks or surveillance systems to ensure a timely response to a public health emergency (Kandel, Chungong, Omaar, & Xing, 2020).

MIC health systems have three structural strengths that explain their lower CFRs compared with LDCs and conflict-affected countries: Most communities have access to essential health services (see Table 1) and a higher share of financial protection (on average, 62%), which prevents catastrophic health expenditures for households (Wagstaff & Neelsen, 2020). Established health insurance schemes make health services more affordable than in other countries (Garcia-Mandicó, Reichert & Strupat, 2021), which can make a critical difference when it comes to treating COVID-19 symptoms. For example, wherever coronavirus tests are covered by health insurance schemes, demand for testing increases. MICs are also better prepared for public health emergencies because they have more national health emergency

frameworks, rapid response surveillance systems and greater laboratory capacities than LDCs and conflict-affected countries (Table 1).

<b>Table 1: Structural conditions of health systems in the three country groups (means)</b>			
	<b>Group</b>		
	<b>LDCs</b>	<b>MICs</b>	<b>Conflict-affected</b>
<b>Health services and financing</b>			
Access to essential health services (index points)	40.4	62.0	35.0
Financial health protection (%)	54.2	62.1	40.2
Total health expenditures (% of GDP)	6.3	6.5	4.8
<b>Health security (index points)</b>			
Emergency health framework	50.5	59.0	46.5
Prevalence of surveillance system	70.5	64.4	42.0
Laboratory capacities	70.0	75.0	40.0
<p>The International Health Response (IHR) of 2005 is an agreement between 196 countries to work together for global health security. The WHO's "States Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting" (SPAR) of 2019 represents country capacity levels for preventing, protecting against, controlling and providing public health responses to the spread of infectious diseases. IHR and SPAR inform about states parties' access to essential health services, national health emergency plans, surveillance systems and laboratory capacities.</p> <p>Source: WHO 2018; Wagstaff and Neelsen 2020</p>			

The various strengths and weaknesses in healthcare systems are obvious in LDCs. The CFR dynamic shows a steep rise followed by a sharp drop (Figure 5). This is mainly because right at the beginning, the limited healthcare systems were almost overwhelmed. Then, their preparedness for health emergencies – indicated by widespread surveillance systems – kicked in (Table 1). Countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea employed the same methods and surveillance measures that fended off the Ebola outbreak between 2014 and 2016: They tested extensively, isolated people who tested positive for the coronavirus and quarantined contact persons. These measures slowed the spread of the virus. The number of reported cases of COVID-19 in these three West African countries is one twelfth of that in South Africa. In recent months, however, the CFR has increased: It is now 4 per cent for both Sierra Leone and Liberia. Health systems are reaching capacity and will soon need substantial support.

Senegal, a least-developed MIC with 14,150 confirmed cases and a CFR of 2.1 per cent is another good example of how to limit the direct health impacts of COVID-19. The country's high degree of preparedness has attracted a lot of attention. Senegal's success also largely stems from its experience with the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa and its capacity-building with international partners since then. Preparedness training included mock outbreak response exercises and constructing and staffing an emergency-operations centre. Political will and community buy-in have greatly helped Senegal's current response, with evidence-based policies and transparent risk communication in daily briefings on the epidemiological situation essential elements of the government's response from the start. The development of a COVID-19 rapid testing kit costing just USD 1 makes it possible for

Senegal to undertake considerable testing (Kavanagh et al., 2020), and support from institutes like the Africa CDC has reduced negative health impacts (Box 2).

**Box 2: The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Despite the Africa CDC's brief institutional existence – it was only launched in 2016 – its response to COVID-19 has been strong. As an African Union (AU) agency, the Africa CDC's role is to collect data about diseases, support member state initiatives and strengthen their capacities to respond to diseases. Activities include training in risk communication and regularly briefing heads of state and relevant government sectors. When COVID-19 first hit Africa in February 2020, the continent's health ministers agreed on an Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak to be supported by the AU COVID-19 Response Fund.

From the start of the pandemic, the Africa CDC developed a joint African strategy for the coronavirus and launched a continental taskforce. It provides evidence and practical guidance, particularly for countries experiencing internal conflict like those at the Horn of Africa. The Africa Taskforce for Coronavirus (AFTCOR) was set up in collaboration with the WHO to provide technical assistance to countries. By March 2020, it had helped to increase the number of COVID-19 laboratories in Africa from two to 43. The Africa CDC also established the Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT): Test, Trace, Treat and the Africa Medical Supplies Platform (AMSP) for facilitating procurement of medical and laboratory supplies. The Africa CDC is also behind the Consortium for COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Trial (CONCVACT), which removes barriers to clinical trials of vaccines and the eventual roll-out of a vaccine on the continent. These initiatives demonstrate that African governments are willing and able to collaborate and lead the continent's fight against COVID-19 through the Africa CDC.

Source: Authors

### 2.3 Lockdown measures and their potential determinants

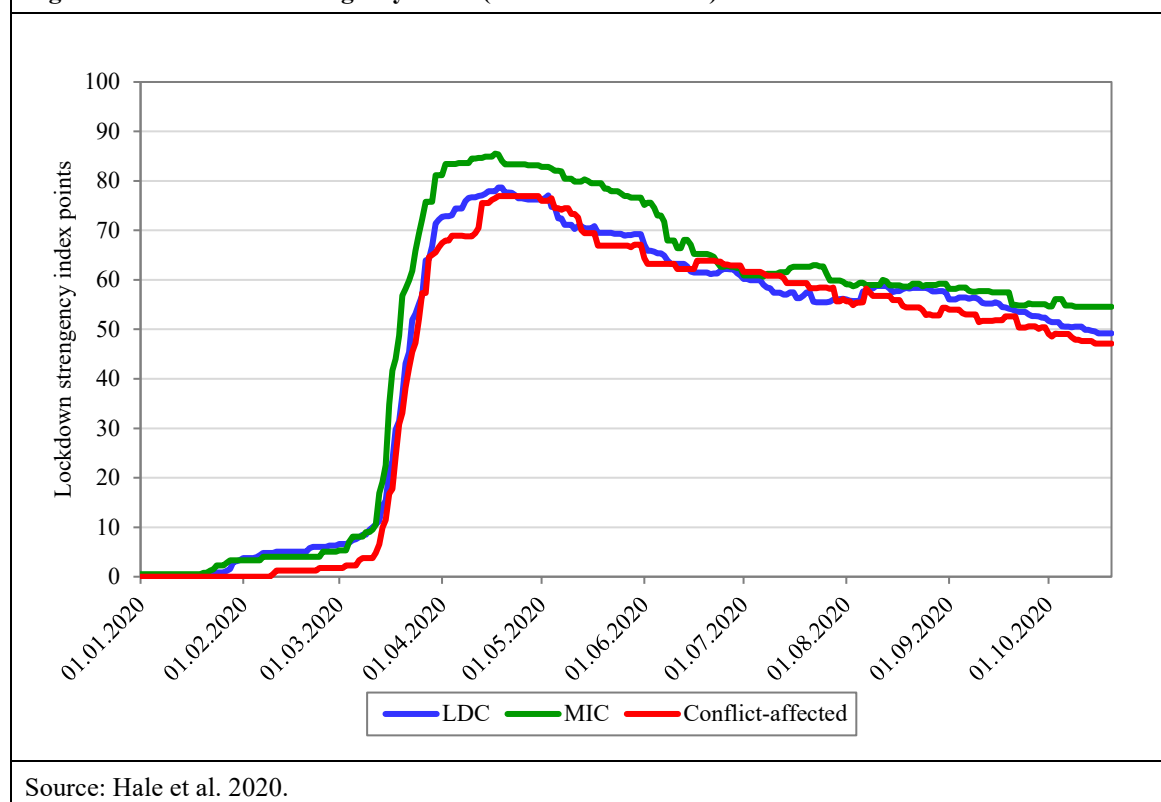
Following the COVID-19 outbreak, unprecedented policy measures restricting individual movement and behaviour were adopted across Africa. These “lockdown policies” – including school closures, travel restrictions, curfews and quarantines – were motivated by the need to slow the spread of the coronavirus through social distancing. Lockdown policies vary from country to country. Many Western democracies have introduced very restrictive measures (Cohen & Kupferschmidt, 2020); others, like Sweden (Henley, 2020), have pursued a “light approach”. Some countries have enforced lockdowns through repressive policing (Olewe, 2020). Timing lockdown policies is important but difficult due to the trade-offs between the pandemic's direct effects and the indirect effects of lockdowns. Waiting too long may cause the healthcare system to be overwhelmed, whereas introducing uniform interventions too early across an entire country can create significant and long-lasting socio-economic costs.

This section discusses three potential reasons for the varying stringencies of lockdowns in African societies: the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 deaths, health system capacities and social cohesion. The latter is based on the assumption that weak state capacities in many African countries force societies to become more active.

Most of the countries in the three groups instituted timely – early – responses. In the beginning of February 2020, they introduced containment measures (mostly travel restrictions and border closures) before any **cases or deaths of COVID-19** had been confirmed. Figure 6

depicts containment policies with low (0) to high (100) stringencies (Hale et al., 2020).<sup>6</sup> After their early responses, many African states implemented strict lockdown policies in early March 2020. MICs were a bit faster than others to implement policies. By the start of April 2020, almost all countries had implemented substantial lockdowns, with MIC lockdown policies the most stringent and those of conflict-affected countries and LDCs less stringent. MICs also eased lockdown policies earlier than the two other country groups. One reason for these differences were the quickly increasing confirmed cases of COVID-19 and related deaths in MICs. This could also be due to MICs' limited surveillance and tracing systems (Table 1), which make very severe lockdowns necessary. Some LDCs, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and Senegal, are better at tracing and surveilling confirmed cases, which can explain their generally milder lockdowns compared with most MICs.

**Figure 6: Lockdown stringency index (1 Jan.-22 Oct. 2020)**



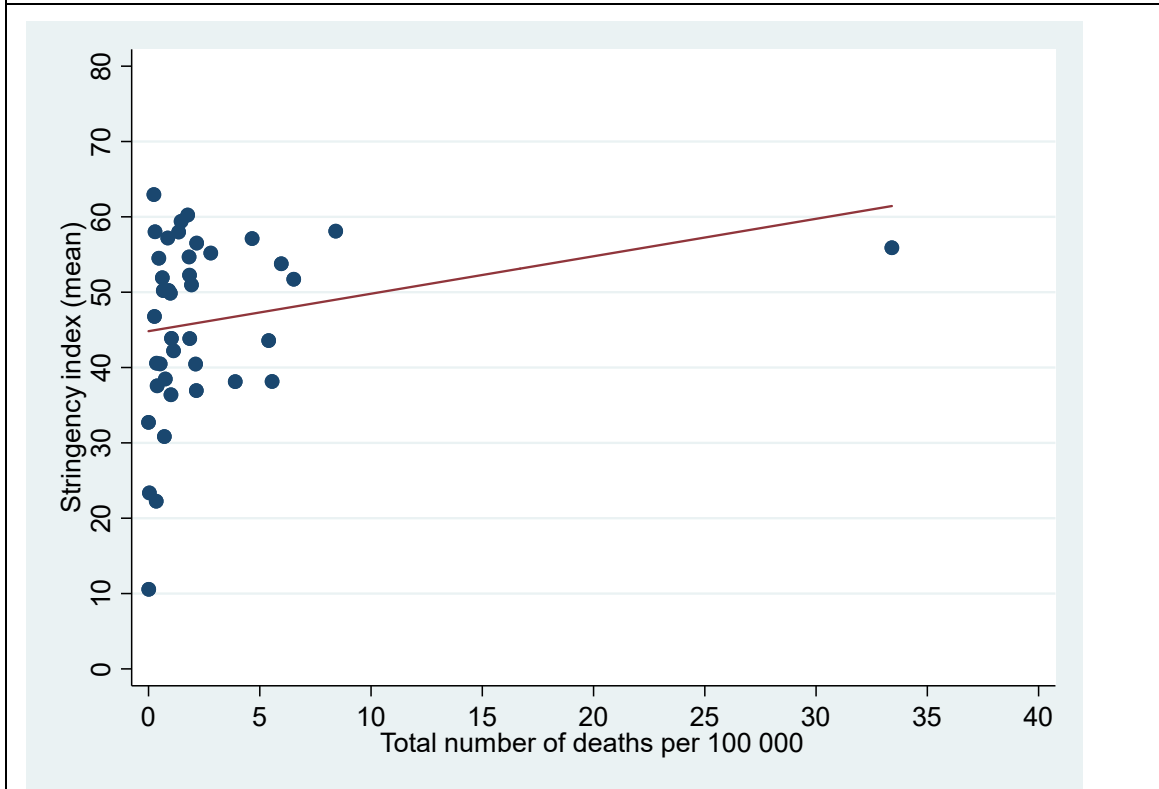
Another reason for the range in levels of stringency in government pandemic-containment policies is the **varying risks of deaths** (response-risk ratio).<sup>7</sup> The higher the risk of COVID-19 deaths, the more stringent the policy responses. The overall picture in Africa is very heterogeneous, with an almost equal number of countries above and below the average (red line) in Figure 7. While countries like Uganda and Kenya imposed very stringent lockdowns,

6 We use the Stringency Index of the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (Hale et al., 2020) to track lockdown policies over time. The Stringency Index aggregates eight containment indicators: school closings, workplace closings, cancelling public events, restrictions on gathering size, closing public transport, stay-at-home requirements, restrictions on internal movement and restrictions on international travel.

7 The response-risk ratio compares a government's response to the risk it faces. Risk is difficult to measure because the number of recorded cases is partly a function of how much testing is carried out. The number of deaths is less correlated with the testing regime than the number of cases.

beside their still small number of confirmed deaths, almost all conflict-affected countries are below average (red line) with higher response-risk ratios, while MICs and LDCs have lower response-risk ratios. This highlights the delicate trade-off in balancing the pandemic's direct health effects with the indirect impacts that lockdowns cause. Health systems of conflict-affected countries are weak and lack essential health security activities (Table 1). The countries with weak health systems who introduced lenient lockdown policies probably had no other way to avoid severe indirect impacts from the pandemic besides limiting the severity of their lockdowns.

**Figure 7: Response-risk ratio in Africa (1 Jan.-22 Oct. 2020)**



The response-risk ratio is operationalised as the mean level of government responses compared to the total number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants (red line). Countries above the red line can be interpreted as having generally more-than-average stringent measures. Conversely, countries below the line show a lower average for policy action because of the numbers of confirmed deaths. The closer a country is to the top-left corner, the higher its response level in face of the risk, and the closer a country is to the bottom-right corner, the lower its response.

Source: Hale et al. 2020

**Social cohesion** is another factor that needs to be considered with regard to lockdown measures that include appeals to the public to change its behaviour and respect the containment policies. Compliance comes from a sense of solidarity with persons at high risk of being infected. Evidence from the Ebola epidemic shows that trust and cooperation within a society permit less restrictive containment measures (Wilkinson et al. 2017). Besides compliance, external shocks like pandemics require societal solutions (Leach, 2015), particularly where state structures are weak. Societal trust in policy-makers prior to the crises has turned out to be important for individual compliance with lockdown policies during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bargain & Aminjonov, 2020; Harring et al., 2021).

Social cohesion refers to both horizontal and vertical relations amongst members of society and the state and is characterised by three elements: inclusive identities, trust and cooperation for the common good (Leininger et al., 2020).<sup>8</sup> Before the pandemic, MICs tended to have less social cohesion than LDCs and conflict-affected countries (Table 2). This is particularly pronounced in horizontal trust levels, with LDCs scoring highest, with conflict-affect countries below LDCs but higher than MICs.

	Group		
	LDCs	MICs	Conflict-affected
<b>Trust (index points)</b>	39.1	28.1	32.3
Vertical	58.8	50.7	50.5
Horizontal	26.5	15.4	22.0
<b>Cooperation for the common good (index points)</b>	35.3	28.4	34.6
Vertical	42.2	36.3	42.0
Horizontal	28.8	23.7	24.3

The measurements are generated from the sixth (2016) and seventh (2019) rounds of Afrobarometer surveys, as well as data from the Varieties of Democracy Index of 2017 and 2020.  
Source: Leininger et al. 2020

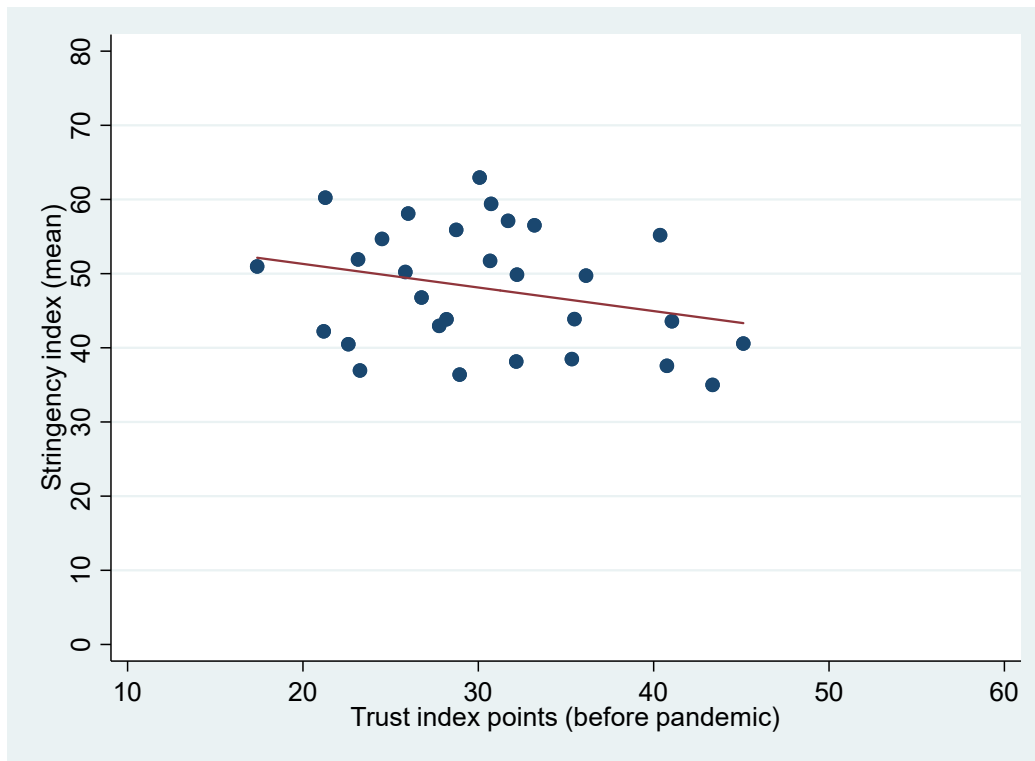
Our findings suggest that African governments may have chosen less restrictive measures (recommendations instead of restrictions) to attempt to limit the spread of the virus wherever there was greater social cohesion – more cooperation and trust between citizens and between the state and its citizens (Figure 8). Lower social cohesion is associated with more stringent lockdown policies: MICs with low levels of trust and cooperation, such as Kenya, Egypt and Algeria, imposed stricter lockdowns. LDCs like Senegal and Sierra Leone, which have higher levels of trust and cooperation, imposed looser lockdowns. More cohesive societies seem to exhibit a structural strength that can limit lockdown measures and the pandemic’s indirect effects.

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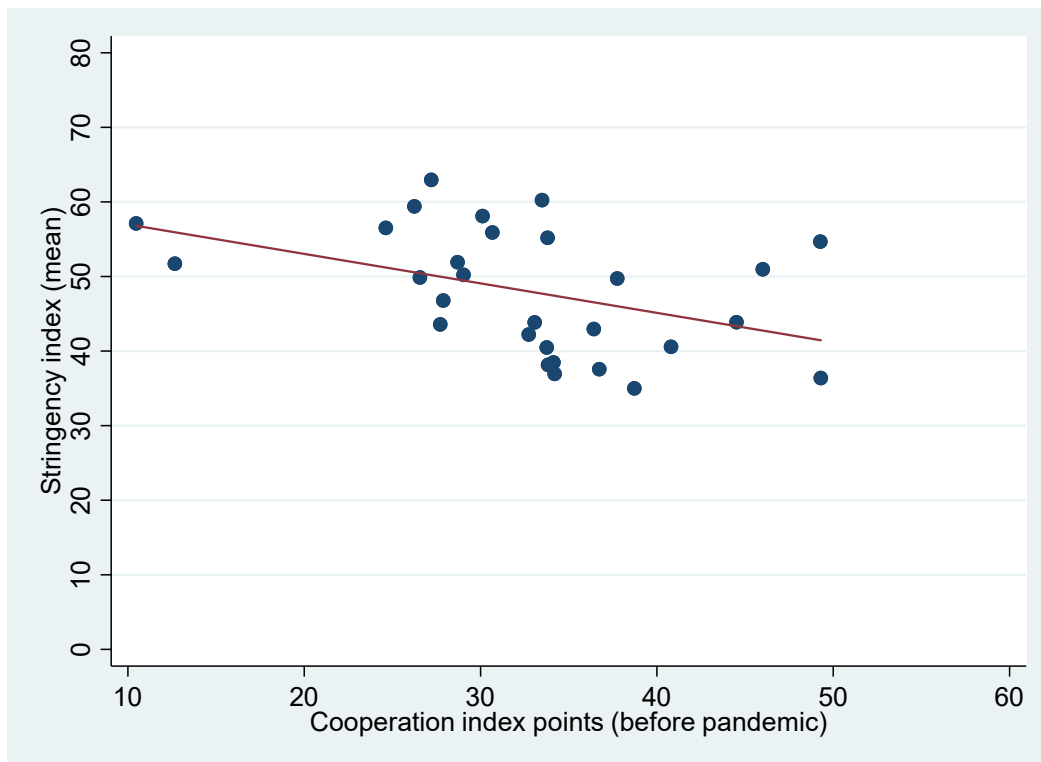
8 We measure two attributes of pre-pandemic social cohesion (trust and cooperation) and their two dimensions (vertical and horizontal). “Identity” is not depicted because there is no data for conflict-affected states.

**Figure 8: Social cohesion and lockdown stringency (country level)**

a) Trust and lockdown stringency



b) Cooperation and lockdown stringency



Source: Hale et al. 2020; Leininger et al. 2020.



### 3 Indirect effects due to structural strengths and weaknesses

Societal and economic structures influence how states cope with the impact of external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic and determine the magnitude of the negative consequences. The following analysis focuses on the pandemic's indirect consequences in economic (Section 3.1), social (Section 3.2), political (Section 3.3) and environmental (Section 3.4) fields and explains their underlying structures. Each section first introduces structural strengths and weaknesses then compares the pandemic's observable and probable consequences in each country group (MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected). To better understand the impact in individual countries, we provide country-specific examples for each policy domain in Appendix 2.

#### 3.1 Economic and fiscal impacts and state revenues

##### Highlights

##### *Economic and fiscal impacts*

- The economic prospects of African countries are strongly affected by COVID-19, with GDP growth forecasts decreasing by 7.3 per cent in 2020. LDCs should be least affected (-3.3%), followed by MICs (-3.6%) and conflict-affected (-7.6%).
- The COVID-19 pandemic aggravates the structural weaknesses of many economies, especially those that heavily depend on commodity exports and suffer from the knock-on effects of conflicts.
- Increased imports substantially raise inflation, particularly in LDCs (16.4%) and conflict-affected countries (13.6%), and much less in MICs (8.5%).
- Expansionary fiscal policies lead to growing fiscal deficits, especially in LDCs and to a slightly lesser extent, in MICs and conflict-affected economies.

##### *State revenues*

- The pandemic will cause state revenues to fall by 12 to 16 per cent in the next months.
- The current accounts of LDCs are especially affected by falling state revenues.
- Since formal tax systems in Africa reach relatively few individuals and businesses, tax relief measures will not be successful and would simply burden state budgets.
- It is likely that the need for revenues will lead to increasingly aggressive tax enforcement, with those worse off burdened by heavier taxes.

### 3.1.1 Macroeconomic impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused economic declines of unequal magnitudes in nearly all African countries. Although direct impacts on GDP growth may be less severe for African economies compared to OECD or Latin American and Caribbean economies (World Bank, 2020), in coming years, weak fiscal and external positions and large current account deficits, low levels of economic diversification, high vulnerability to climatic shocks and other natural disasters and difficulty accessing supply chains may delay African economic recovery. Nonetheless, some positive lessons can be drawn, particularly, that the overall macroeconomic situation of African economies proved to be resilient and good macroeconomic management was able to control debt levels in many countries.

#### *Economic growth projections*

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the structural weaknesses of many African economies, namely their strong dependence on commodity exports and the knock-on effects of conflicts. All three country groups include many oil- and resource-dependent countries, which account for 72 per cent of GDP in LDCs and MICs; in the conflict-affected country group, oil- and resource-dependent countries account for 96 per cent of GDP.<sup>9</sup>

An immediate economic contraction of 3.4 per cent is likely in 2020 (AfDB, 2020). That is 7.3 per cent less than the growth forecast before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 9),<sup>10</sup> which hit African countries differently. Given their different initial structural positions, macroeconomic fundamentals and policy responses to the crisis, this is not surprising. With regard to the three country groups, it appears that LDCs will be the least affected (-3.3%), followed by MICs (-3.6%) and conflict-affected countries (-7.6%).<sup>11</sup> Oil-exporting countries are projected to be hit heavily – Libya (-43.7%), Equatorial Guinea (-11.3%) and Nigeria (-7.5%) – along with tourism-dependent economies like São Tomé and Príncipe (-8.2%). The recession in Africa is mainly driven by a few large economies, with Nigeria (-7.2%) and South Africa (-7.5%) accounting for more than half of the economic contraction in 2020 (AfDB, 2020). More diversified economies such as Egypt (0.8%), Ghana (1.2%) and Rwanda (2.9%) are suffering less severe GDP slumps, but they too are expected to grow much less than pre-pandemic projections (AfDB, 2020).

In 2021, growth rates are expected to bounce back to 2.4 per cent, 1.7 per cent less than pre-pandemic expectations. In 2021, too, LDCs are predicted to grow more than MICs and conflict-affected countries (Figure 9). The hope for at least a partial V-shape economic recovery might be too optimistic considering the high internal and external uncertainties. Prolonged and worsening coronavirus infection rates that necessitate restrictions on human mobility – and thus economic activity – could stifle economic recovery.

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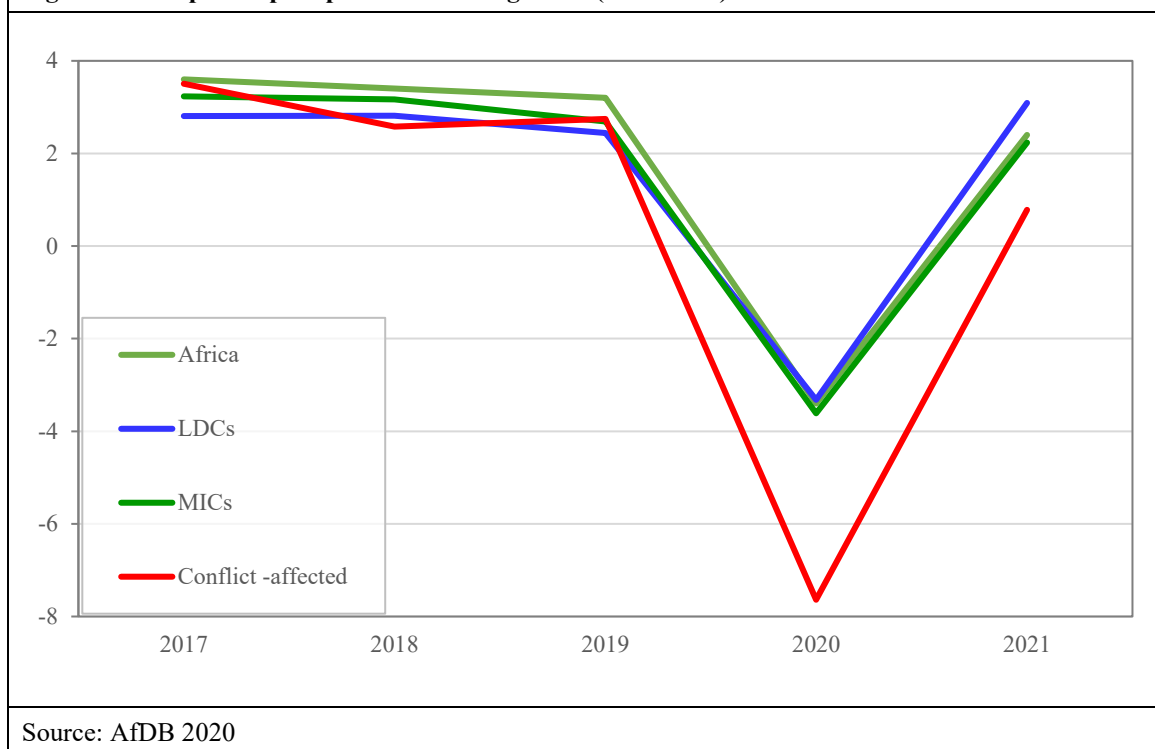
9 Excluding Algeria, the LDC group's weighted average fiscal deficit is -8.3%, slightly less than the MICs. The average fiscal deficits of the LDC and MIC groups are almost identical (-7.5%), which shows the weight of LDC oil exporters.

10 All data used in this section is based on the Worst-Case Scenario Projections of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB, 2020).

11 The strong negative impact in conflict-affected countries is driven by Libya, which is projected to hardly grow at all, and Nigeria, which is heavily dependent on oil exports. Together they account for 80 per cent of the group's GDP.

In the long term, negative consequences are expected from external shocks, such as lower global commodity prices, unfavourable global financial conditions, the decline in foreign direct investment (FDI), remittances and tourism activity, and a disruption of global supply chains and world trade (Ratha et al., 2020; WTO, 2020).

**Figure 9: Expected post-pandemic GDP growth (2017-2021)**



All three country groups have very low levels of economic and human development. LDCs have the best economic forecast: a slightly lower contraction of GDP (-3.3%) in 2020 and higher GDP growth in 2021 (+3.1%). The fact that LDCs are less integrated into the world economy means they are less affected by developments in other economies. Amongst LDCs, the biggest absolute contraction of GDP is projected for the Congo Republic (-9.1%), while Tanzania’s economy is expected to *grow* by 4 per cent. LDCs account for about 27 per cent of GDP on the African continent. LDCs generally have huge fiscal deficits and very large current account deficits.

For MICs, the economic outlook for 2020 and 2021– declining GDP (-3.6% in 2020) and rising inflation – is a little better than for the other groups. The GDP of African MICs amounts to about 48 per cent of the continent’s total GDP. In terms of their GDP shares, South Africa (36%), Egypt (25%) and Morocco (10%) are the three largest MIC economies, accounting for more than half (71%) of the group’s GDP, while the three oil-exporting countries – Egypt, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon – account for 27 per cent of the group’s GDP. Other resource-intensive countries include Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, which account for 45 per cent of the group’s GDP. Of MICs, Namibia has the best forecast (+2.6%) and Equatorial Guinea the worst (-11.3%). Weighted by GDP, Egypt will grow most amongst the MICs, and South Africa least.

All in all, growth figures for MICs illustrate that in light of the pandemic, economic prospects are significantly shaped by how resource dependent or diversified an economy is and how

much it is integrated into the global economy. The MICs group includes one tourism-based economy, Cabo Verde, three oil-exporting countries and five other resource-based economies, which tend to be strongly affected by external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. They are also strongly integrated into the global economy, which means that they are severely affected by developments in other economies and contractions in global value chains (GVCs). However, integration into GVCs can also help speed recovery from the pandemic.

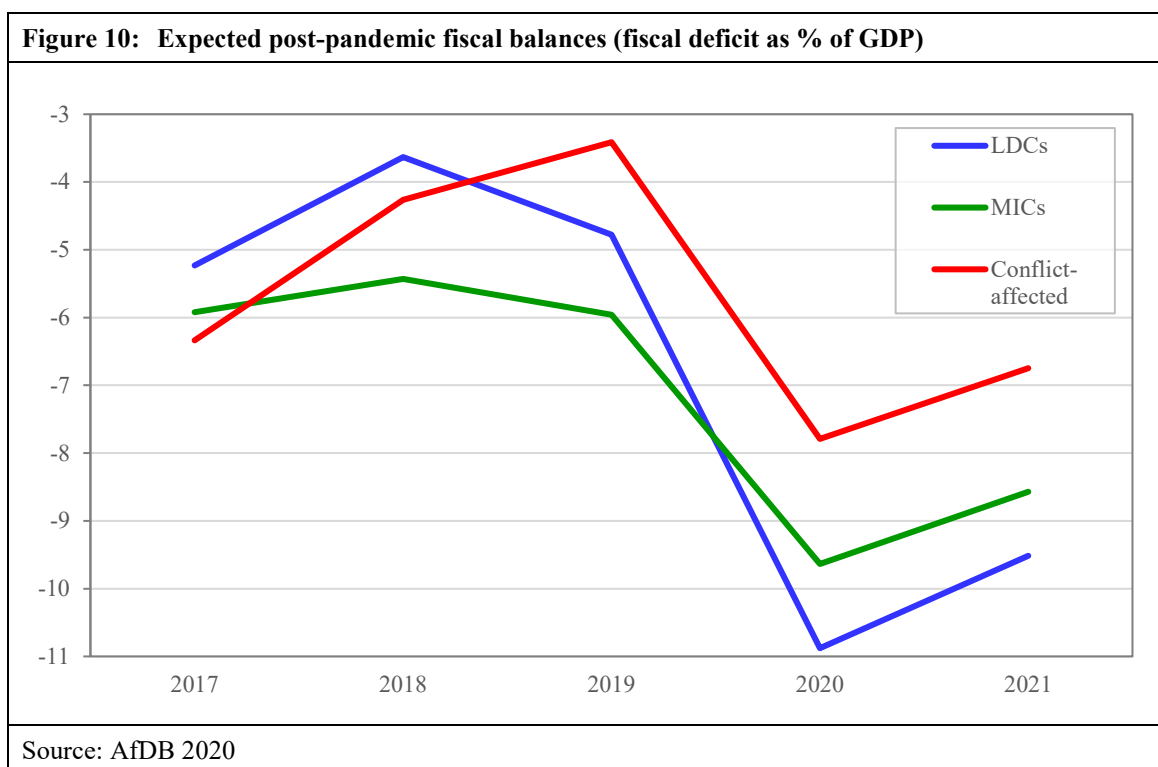
The pandemic creates bleak economic forecasts for the 12 conflict-affected countries in Africa. Conflict-affected countries account for around 24 per cent of African GDP and the group's projected GDP contraction (-7.6%) is by far the worst of any country group on the continent.<sup>12</sup> Resource-intensive countries account for 96 per cent of the group's GDP: Cameroon, Chad, Libya, Nigeria and South Sudan, which are dependent on oil exports, along with Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali and Niger. From a macroeconomic perspective, the pandemic's strong negative effects on this country group are largely explained by Nigeria's economy (-7.2%), which is very dependent on oil exports and accounts for 80 per cent of the group's GDP, and by Libya's GDP contraction (nearly -44%), the largest in the group. Somalia (-5.4%) has also been hit hard. Conflicts in these countries further undermine their economies' resilience to external shocks like the pandemic. The least affected country is the CAR, with a 1.1. per cent growth rate.

#### *Fiscal balance projections*

African countries have substantially increased public spending to fend off the consequences of their public policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including lockdowns and border restrictions (Chapter 2 and Section 3.1.2). Expansionary fiscal policies have caused fiscal deficits to swell from 4.7 per cent in 2019 to 9.0 per cent in 2020. They are projected to reduce slightly to 7.9 per cent in 2021 due to slowing economic activity and greater expenditures (AfDB, 2020). Increased fiscal spending during the COVID-19 pandemic may swell the already high debt levels of some African economies and create sovereign debt crises (Okonjo-Iweala, 2020). Pandemic effects are projected to increase the debt-to-GDP ratio by an average 7.3 per cent of GDP in 2020 – to 64.8 per cent of GDP in 2021 (IMF, 2020a). Widening yields of sovereign bonds make it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for African countries to access international financing for expansionary fiscal policies (AfDB, 2020, p. 18). Moreover, revenue mobilisation is projected to fall on average by 2.6 per cent of GDP in 2020 compared to 2019 (IMF, 2020). Declining fiscal balances in African countries will limit the fiscal leeway needed to help revive and modernise economies through green transformations.

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12 Excluding Libya, the weighted average GDP growth for 2021 is projected to be -6.24%.



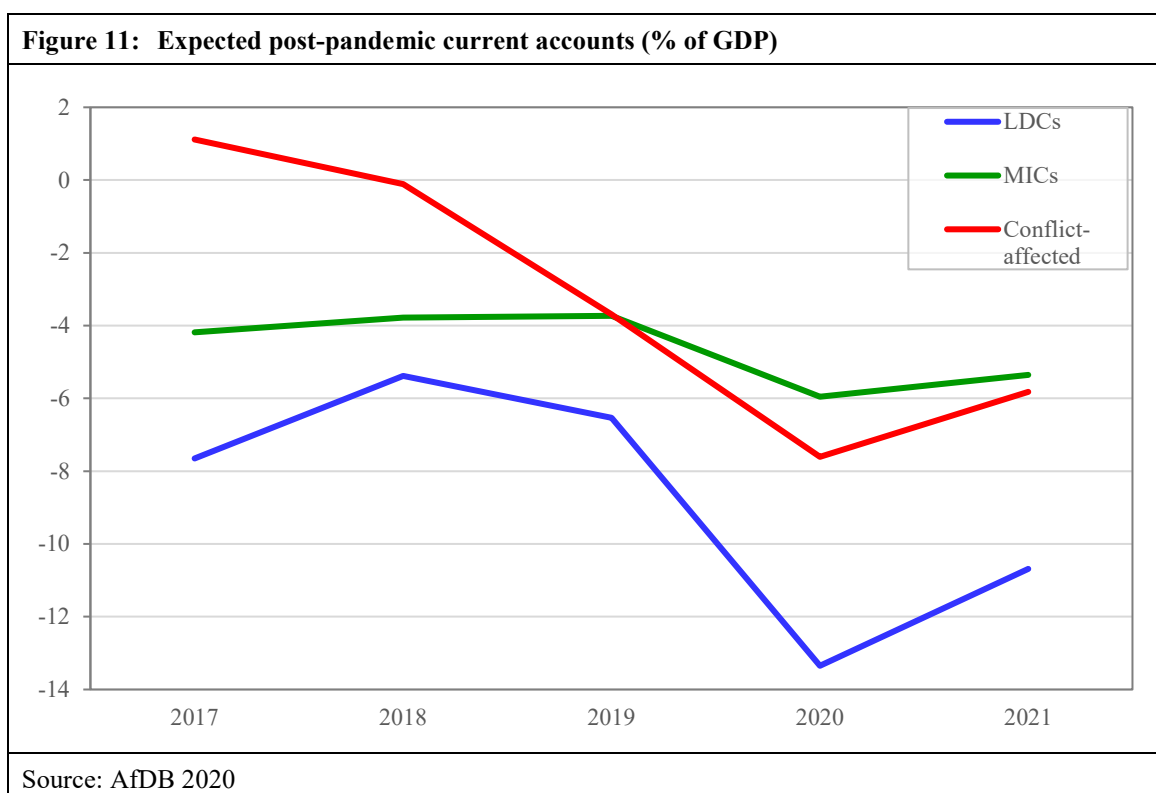
All three country groups face deteriorating fiscal balances (Figure 9) that are driven by higher spending for health and relief measures and lower tax and export revenues, especially in oil- and resource-dependent economies. Across the three country groups, the fiscal balance is the opposite of GDP growth: In 2020, LDC fiscal balances as percentage of GDP show a somewhat greater deficit (-10.9%) than those of MICs (-9.6%) and conflict-affected countries (-7.8%). LDC high fiscal deficits can largely be explained by the oil-exporting countries' declining oil revenues. The fiscal balances of Sudan, Algeria, Djibouti, Congo Republic and Zambia have dropped by 10 per cent. The LDC group's larger weighted average fiscal deficit – compared to the MIC group – is mainly driven by Algeria's fiscal deficit of more than 17 per cent that is due to plummeting oil revenues, which account for 93 per cent of its total exports.<sup>13</sup> However, the LDC group faced the pandemic with lower fiscal deficits compared to quite high deficits in MICs (Figure 10).

The MICs' deteriorating fiscal balance (-9.6%) in 2020 is driven by large deficits in oil-dependent countries like Egypt and resource-dependent countries like South Africa, which together account for 61 per cent of the group's GDP. Plummeting revenues in oil- and natural-resource-dependent countries and large fiscal stimulus packages (South Africa is spending approximately 10% of its GDP) are expanding MIC fiscal deficits. Projections from April 2020 forecast that the fiscal balances of South Africa, Cabo Verde, Egypt, Namibia and Kenya would drop below -8 per cent of GDP. Although not projected to return to pre-pandemic levels, in 2021, fiscal balances IN MICS are expected to improve somewhat – to -8.6 per cent – and the fiscal balance of the conflict-affected countries group to deteriorate (-7.6%).

13 Excluding Algeria, the LDC group's weighted average fiscal deficit is -8.3%, slightly less than the MICs. The average fiscal deficits of the LDC and MIC groups are almost identical (-7.5%), which shows the weight of LDC oil exporters.

### Current account projections

The COVID-19 pandemic will lead to worsening current account deficits in African countries, which are projected to swell from 4.3 per cent of GDP in 2019 to 8.1 per cent in 2020 (Figure 11). The main drivers of this trend are reductions in oil and other exports and falling remittances, FDI and foreign aid (AfDB, 2020, p. 19). A number of African economies have also experienced large capital outflows, with the highest in South Africa (1.25% of GDP), Côte d'Ivoire (0.75% of GDP) and Ghana (0.5% of GDP) (IMF, 2020).



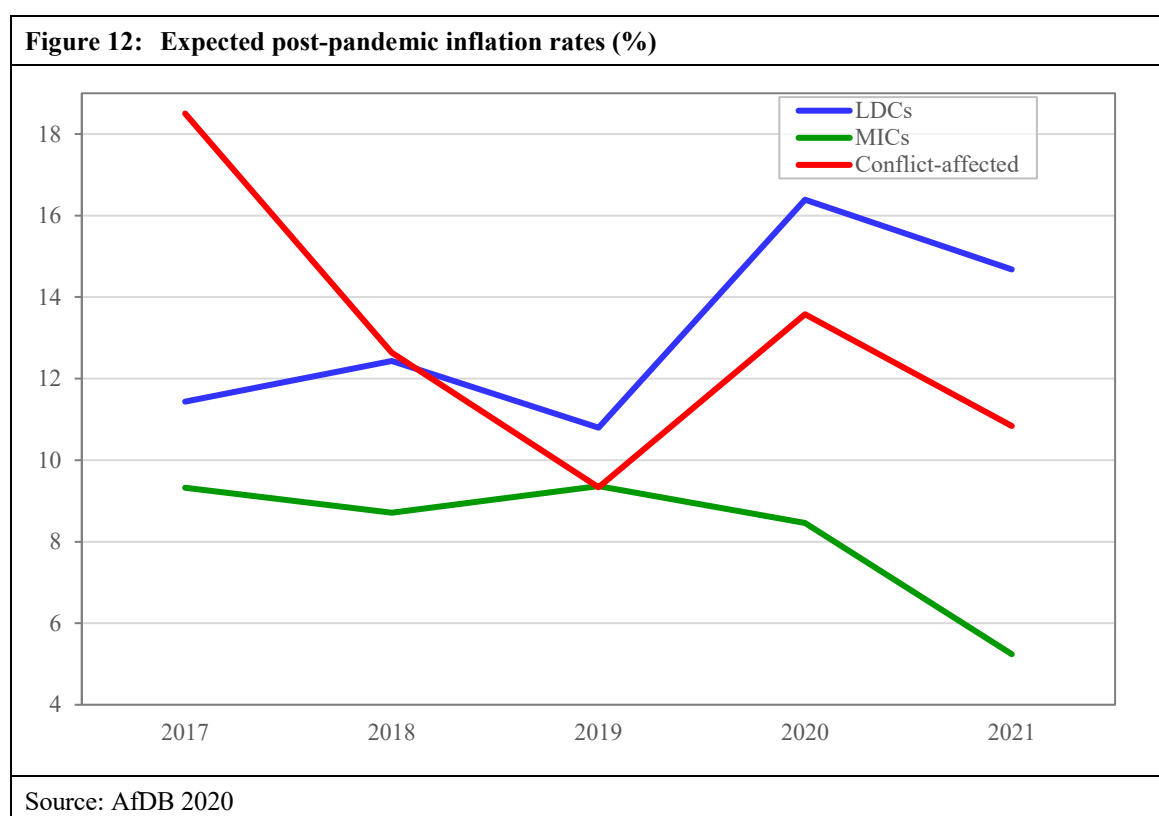
Current account deficits are much greater in LDCs (-13.3%) than in MICs (-6%) and in conflict-affected countries (-7.6%). The pandemic has exacerbated the downward trend in LDC current account deficits – from -5.4 per cent in 2018 to -6.5 per cent in 2019, with the grim forecast of -13.3% for 2020. The LDC group has a large proportion of oil-dependent economies whose current account deficits are distressed by plummeting oil exports.<sup>14</sup> The current account deficits of MICs are projected to grow from pre-pandemic levels to an average -6 per cent of GDP in 2020 and “improve” to -5.4 per cent in 2021. They are unlikely to resemble the large deficits of LDCs (-13.3% in 2020 and -10.7% in 2021) and conflict-affected countries (-7.6% in 2020 and -5.8% in 2021) (Figure 11).

### Projected inflation levels

The COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on inflation varies starkly across the countries. It is strongly driven by sky-rocketing prices for imports and supply chain disruptions, which are greater than reductions in demand. In 2020, inflation is projected to increase dramatically in

14 The huge discrepancy between LDCs and MICs regarding the weighted average current account deficits partly results from the LDC oil-exporting countries.

LDCs (16.4%) – almost twice the level of MICs (8.5%) and somewhat more than in conflict-affected countries (13.6%) (Figure 12). Sudan (31.5%) and Libya (18.1%) were expected to experience high inflation from 2019 to 2020 mainly due to higher prices for imported food. Most countries, however, experienced only modest increases in inflation or even substantial drops from 2019 to 2020 (Liberia -12.3%, Zimbabwe -7.3% and Egypt -5.8%). But dropping demand due to containment measures has significantly eased MIC inflation, which is projected to decline slightly in 2020 compared to pre-pandemic levels and further drop to around 5.2 per cent in 2021 (Figure 12).



### 3.1.2 Fiscal consequences and resource mobilisation

Revenue is an issue for all governments: Without it, states have limited capacities to implement policies, provide security and meet citizens’ basic needs. Especially during crises, trustful relations between the state and citizens are crucial for legitimising revenue collection (Box 3). The COVID-19 pandemic will cause tax revenues to fall dramatically in the next months. The World Bank estimates that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) will see a 12 to 16 per cent drop in state revenues, depending on the extent of the health crisis (World Bank, 2020e). The pandemic’s long-term effects on the global economy will also decrease tax revenues in the medium and long term by narrowing tax bases. Revenue is dropping sharply just at the time spending needs – projected at around USD 100 billion – are increasing. The fiscal challenges are enormous. During the recent UN General Assembly, African leaders pleaded with international partners for fiscal support, including extension of the G20 debt moratorium to “avoid virus apocalypse” (Cara, 2020).

Although in the last three decades much revenue has been mobilised in Africa, clear structural weaknesses persist. Many African tax systems are unable to generate reasonable amounts of

funding for state actions even without a global pandemic. Compared with other regions, revenue collection remains low and highly concentrated in certain sources. Of the 39 countries that collect less than 20 per cent of their GDP through taxes – a benchmark for achieving the SDGs – 24 are African.<sup>15</sup> With respect to the impact of COVID-19, the lack of total revenue is critical. In developing countries, tax systems are not only key to mitigating the pandemic’s social and economic impacts, but they also promote rapid and sustainable economic recovery (ATAF, 2020). Indirect effects of the pandemic are likely to threaten earlier successes in domestic revenue mobilisation. In coming months and years, poorly implemented revenue policies will jeopardise future improvements.

Average revenue collection on the continent has consistently increased to a high point in 2010.<sup>16</sup> This development has led to observations that Africa has moved from the “aid” era to the “tax” era (Moore, Prichard, & Fjeldstad, 2018). However, much of this progress has come from the low-hanging fruits of indirect tax collection, particularly VAT (OECD/ATAF/AUC, 2019). Revenue collection must be improved by getting revenue from underexploited sources. Taxing the mining sector and property, reducing tax exemptions and more heavily taxing higher income groups are particularly attractive steps. However, the economic disruptions described in Section 3.1 mean that increases from these sources are improbable.

### *The pandemic’s impact on revenue collection*

The COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on revenue collection is expected to be huge, with pre-pandemic trends likely to continue. The three country groups exhibit no clear pattern due to their different income types. All three groups include countries with very low revenue collection – below 10 per cent of GDP. This very disturbing level results from two structural weaknesses: poor administrative capacity and political resistance (Moore et al., 2018). Africa’s huge informal labour sector leads to extremely low revenue collection via social contributions, which is a very important source of revenue in other parts of the world. Only MICs have been able to collect revenues in excess of 20 per cent of GDP.

Countries dependent on fuel exports and tourism are especially likely to have low tax revenues (UNECA, 2020). In Ghana, for example, revenue performance in the first six months of 2020 was 26 per cent below target (Republic of Ghana, 2020) and oil revenue was 55.4 per cent lower than projected. According to Mozambique’s Ministry of Economics and Finance (2020), the country’s estimated revenue losses for 2020 amount to USD 200 million, around 5 per cent, a figure some observers regard as extremely optimistic (Constantino, 2020).

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15 Based on ICTD/UNU-WIDER (2020) and data for the year 2017 that excludes high-income economies of the Bahamas, Panama and Singapore.

16 Average tax collection had been declining since 2015 (ECA, 2020,10).



**Box 3: Tax morale in Africa**

Before 2020, tax morale on the African continent had improved remarkably. It had to – because tax morale, understood as the intrinsic willingness to pay taxes, is vital for tax systems to function. Particularly where tax administrations are weak – commonly the case in Africa – the ability to collect revenues relies on the motivation to contribute. Afrobarometer data shows that between 2002 and 2018, the percentage of people who agree with the statement “People must pay taxes” increased from 62.9 to 73.4 per cent. Interestingly, conflict-affected countries show high tax morale, which might indicate that citizens are aware of the tax administration’s low capacity. Comparably high tax morale is found in LDCs and MICs, although LDCs start at a lower level. Since trust in state institutions is necessary for stringent policies to be successful, good tax morale can contribute to constructive state-society relations.

Generally, the idea of paying taxes is positively regarded. But the perception that rich people can avoid paying taxes is also evenly distributed across the continent. More than 55 per cent of respondents consider it very likely that a rich person can pay a bribe in order to avoid paying taxes, although only 15 per cent believe that an ordinary person can do that.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, around a third of respondents indicate that most or all tax *officials* are corrupt – in all country groups.<sup>18</sup>

Source: Authors

Countries are instituting fiscal programmes to support individuals and firms during the crisis – largely tax relief measures like deferring tax payments to create short-term liquidity for businesses.<sup>19</sup> When the crisis lets up, there will be a phase of easing, with tax relief to incentivise consumer spending and investment in order to revive the economy. Relief is often in the form of “tax expenditures” – taxes that the government forgoes. These numbers have to be considered when thinking about reducing revenue collection. Cameroon has passed a relief package estimated at 114 billion CFA-francs, approximately 3 per cent of its total projected 2020 revenue – in the pre-pandemic budget.<sup>20</sup>

The pertinence and effectiveness of these measures must be considered in the African context. With limited fiscal space and high levels of informality, many measures will not be successful but will heavily burden national budgets (Gallien & van den Boogaard, 2020). Formal tax systems in Africa have comparatively limited reach amongst individuals and businesses. Generalised tax relief for the formal sector will mostly benefit relatively wealthy individuals and better-off businesses.

Unanticipated but crucial effects must also be considered: If only certain groups are perceived to benefit from tax relief measures, tax morale is likely to be negatively affected. Tax relief is risky because it will cause revenue gaps to increase and very vulnerable groups could also be taxed. Limited capacity and political constraints in times of high revenue demand are likely to increase taxes on those less well-off and politically less able to resist – who also benefit the least from tax relief (Gallien & van den Boogaard, 2020). The need for tax revenue could increase aggressive (if not illegal) tax enforcement.

17 In MICs, more rich people can afford to avoid taxes, which might reflect citizens’ expectations of the state. Yet views of whether ordinary people can use bribes to avoid paying taxes is lower in MICs (around 10%) than in LICs (14%) and in conflict-affected countries (16%).

18 This is data for 2017, the first year the question was asked.

19 An overview is given in OECD (2020). ATAF (2020) presents an overview of various policy options in Africa with a list of measures adopted by different countries.

20 See <https://www.impots.cm/fr/document/mesures-fiscales-de-soutien-lactivite-economique> (accessed on September 22, 2020).

Public services will probably suffer a lot in years to come – which also could affect tax morale as people feel they aren't getting enough in return. Locally financed services have particular problems under shocks. The quality of public services for the lower-middle classes must be considered. In order to consolidate and improve the inclusiveness of fiscal contracts and develop more accountable and equitable tax systems, these people must pay taxes and receive services of reasonable value in exchange (see Bird and Zolt, 2015). If the health crisis leads them to not trust in a mutually beneficial exchange of services for taxes, public policy goals are unlikely to be met.

### 3.2 Social impacts

#### Highlights

##### *Poverty and employment*

- The COVID-19 pandemic could cause more than 40 million Africans to fall into extreme poverty, most of them in conflict-affected countries.
- Profiles of the “poor” are changing because the pandemic’s impact is greater in urban than in rural areas.
- In the second quarter of 2020, COVID-19-related job losses in Africa were equivalent to around 60 million full-time jobs, mostly in conflict-affected countries.
- Low coverage and underfunding of social protection schemes, along with large informal labour sectors, are responsible for the sharp increase in extreme poverty.

##### *Health*

- Essential health services (e.g., vaccination delivery, maternal and reproductive health and treatment of other infectious diseases) have been interrupted in all country groups.
- Highly effective responses by the Africa CDC have helped many countries deal with the pandemic’s health effects.
- Food security
- Some 10 per cent of the MICs, 38 per cent of the LDCs and 60 per cent of the conflict-affected countries are prone to severe food insecurity.
- Subsistence agriculture has emerged as a structural strength to buffer growing food insecurity and unemployment. But it does not shield people from shrinking incomes.

### 3.2.1 Employment and labour markets

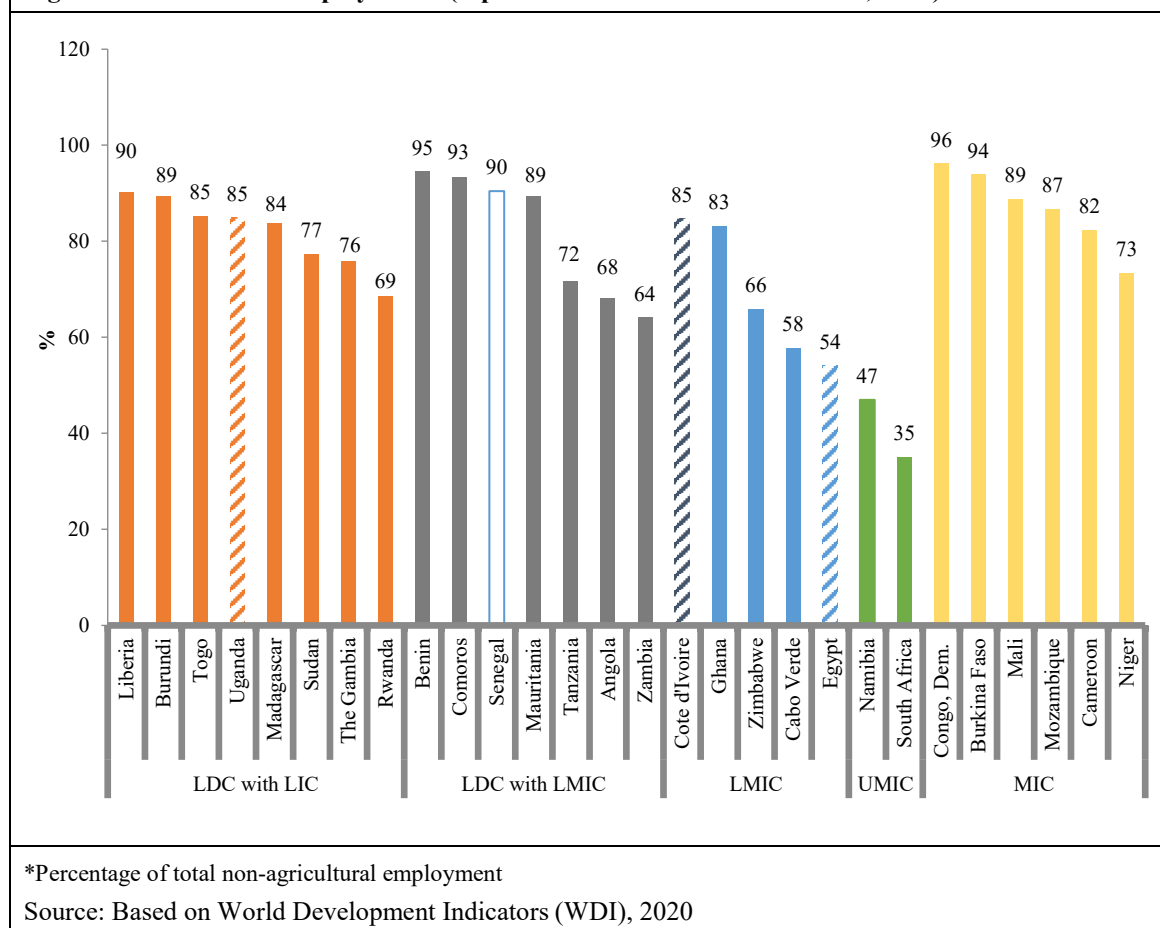
A number of structural imbalances had plagued African labour markets even before the COVID-19 outbreak. The first of these imbalances is substantial unemployment that is higher in Africa than in any other part of the world, although there are substantial variations. MICs' unemployment rates are nearly double those of LDCs, which have large proportions of informal labourers. Unemployment is low in LDCs. It is important to note that conflict-affected countries have very high unemployment rates: on average, 15 per cent. North Africa, with a high number of MICs, is the region with the world's *highest* unemployment rates (Table 3). Unemployment is especially high amongst youth (15.4%) and women (9.7%). Youth unemployment is the share of the labour force ages 15-24 that is without work but available for and seeking employment; female unemployment is the share of women without work but available for and seeking employment. As with overall unemployment, MICs have nearly double the youth and female unemployment rates of LDCs: 32% and 19% respectively (Table 3). Conflict-affected countries have staggering rates of female (18%) and youth (34%) unemployment.

<b>Table 3: Unemployment rates by region and income group (2019 and 2020)</b>						
	<b>Overall</b>		<b>Youth</b>		<b>Women</b>	
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020**</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020**</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020**</b>
<b>Africa and the world</b>						
North Africa	12.7	12.6	31.7	31.7	18.7	18.4
Sub-Saharan Africa*	6.2	6.2	11.6	11.6	6.7	6.6
Africa*	8.0	8.0	15.4	15.4	9.7	9.7
World	5.4	5.4	15.4	15.5	5.6	5.6
<b>Africa*</b>						
<b>Least developed (LDC)</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>8.0</b>
Low-income (LIC)	4.3	4.3	7.0	7.0	5.2	5.2
Lower-middle-income (LMIC)	9.3	9.2	17.0	17.0	11.5	11.3
<b>Middle-income (MIC)</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>14.7</b>
Lower-middle-income (LMIC)	7.9	7.9	18.4	18.3	10.5	10.4
Upper-middle-income (UMIC)	18.6	18.9	36.2	36.7	21.2	21.7
<b>Conflict-affected</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>
*High-income countries are excluded; figures are modelled on ILO estimates						
**Figures for 2020 are inaccurate because they are based on first quarter data before the lockdown in May 2020.						
Source: Based on World Development Indicators (WDI).						

The second structural imbalance is the huge informal sector, which ranges from 35 per cent in South Africa to 96 per cent in the DRC; in most countries it involves much more than two thirds of the workforce. The highest rates of informal employment are in conflict-affected countries (including Libya, not shown in Figure 13), with an average of 85 per cent

in LDCs and variations driven by Angola and Zambia, which have large formal-sector mining industries. The least amount of informal labour is in the region's two UMICs, Namibia and South Africa.

**Figure 13: Informal employment\* (representative selection of countries, 2019)**



The third structural imbalance in Africa is due to the dominance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that create large productivity gaps and limited private sector growth. This is mirrored in the “missing middle” phenomenon, the concentration of very old, mostly large firms at one extreme and large numbers of very small, mostly informal firms at the other. MSMEs are a major source of job creation, albeit often with precarious labour relations and without “decent jobs”. In SSA, 84 per cent of workers are either self-employed or work in micro enterprises (Table 4).

The fourth structural imbalance is low sectoral distribution due to largely agrarian and less industrialised economies in LDCs and in resource-rich economies. Despite some structural transformation in Africa, nearly half of all employment is in service (~45%), followed by agriculture (37.5%) and industry (18%) (Table 4). Nevertheless, there are nuances: Most agricultural employment is concentrated in lower-income LDCs (~57%) and MICs (with 34.2% in LMICs and 24.6% in UMICs). Conflict-affected countries, especially Somalia (83%), CAR (77%), Chad (77%) and Niger (75%) are predominantly agrarian (Table 4).

	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
<b>Africa total*</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>44.9</b>
<b>Least developed (LDC)</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>39.7</b>
Low-income (LIC)	56.8	56.4	9.5	9.5	33.7	34.1
Lower-middle-income (LMIC)	36.6	36.2	17.5	17.6	45.8	46.2
<b>Middle-income (MIC)</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>51.4</b>
Lower-middle-income (LMIC)	34.2	33.6	19.1	19.3	46.7	47.1
Upper-middle-income (UMIC)	24.6	24.4	17.4	17.3	58.0	58.3
<b>Conflict-affected</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>31.1</b>

Source: Based on WDI

Independent of these general patterns, some countries have specific sectoral employment structures like tourism which may account for a high share of overall employment and large foreign exchange earnings. Tourism can flourish independently from industrial development but is highly vulnerable to major health crises.

#### *Labour market effects due to the COVID-19 pandemic*

The global recession and uncertainties caused by lockdowns are causing firms to delay expansion plans, slash current employment and halt hiring. Job losses in Africa in the second quarter of 2020 were equivalent to around 60 million full-time jobs (ILO, 2020). Compared with 2019, MICs were hardest hit with job losses of 6.2 per cent on average in the first quarter of 2020 and 14.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 (Table 5). This is likely because LDCs are less integrated into the global economy and less dependent on tourism and have much larger informal sectors. In addition, their lockdown measures were looser than in MICs and rural dwellers in LDCs can grow their own food. The situation changed in the second quarter as MICs relaxed their lockdowns and allowed more domestic and international trade and some tourism.

	Job losses (1st quarter 2020)	Job losses (2nd quarter 2020)
<b>LDCs</b>	2.4	11.1
<b>LMICs</b>	3	16.1
<b>UMICs</b>	9.3	12.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>39.8</b>

Source: ILO 2020, nowcasting model 2020, 5th edition

#### *Sectoral and firm-size effects of the COVID-19 pandemic*

MSMEs and their employees, who make up the majority of workers in Africa, are typically employed in sectors heavily exposed to pandemic effects: tourism, transportation, logistics

and street vending. Other sectors such as accommodation, aviation, food services (restaurants), real estate, wholesale and retail trade and some labour-intensive manufacturing sectors like clothing<sup>21</sup> risk high disruptions. The ILO estimates that around one third of workers are employed in sectors that are suffering from severe declines in output and high risks of work displacement (ILO, 2020). About two thirds of people in high-risk occupations are informally employed. Rural households can “retreat into subsistence” – as they did during previous periods of economic hardship – but growing numbers of urban dwellers are increasingly vulnerable, especially those in the informal sector.

MSMEs are at particular risk because they have fewer assets and limited cash reserves. Mostly informal, they have no cushion against liquidity shortages caused by lockdowns. As a result, businesses with no financial cushioning in the form of savings or credit lines may be forced to use their business capital for consumption – which can result in firm failures and market exits. During the pandemic, firms in conflict-affected countries have been operating at low profit margins. Lockdowns and the global recession are expected to cause businesses to close, especially those in the informal sector.

Recent surveys show that enterprises in North Africa have been hard hit by production and sales reductions, liquidity constraints, increased costs of and interrupted access to raw materials – resulting in layoffs and declining salaries. Some workers stayed at home in accordance with lockdown restrictions. In Egypt, for example, 91 per cent of respondents of a survey of 196 firms<sup>22</sup> indicated disruptions in production due to disruptions in the supply of raw materials or intermediate products, volatile foreign and domestic trade, funding constraints, logistics and transportation problems, irregular employment or cuts in working hours.

### 3.2.2 Income poverty and inequality

The African continent had significant structural weaknesses related to poverty and inequality *before* the coronavirus pandemic: It is the continent with the highest poverty rates. According to pre-pandemic estimates, 42 per cent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa lived in extreme income poverty (an income below USD 1.90 per day in 2011 purchasing power parity or PPP). Moreover, poverty was not significantly reduced between 1990 and 2015, especially compared to other world regions. Even more alarming is the situation for multidimensional poverty, which remained substantially unchanged in SSA between 2000 and 2012 (Burchi, Malerba, Ripplin, & Montenegro, 2019). The level of inequality prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was also high: Only Latin American and the Caribbean are *more* unequal.

Other important structural weaknesses explain the previous levels of poverty and inequality and could affect the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact in the near future: the low coverage and underfunding of social protection systems and the highly informal labour market, as well as reliance on primary and low-productivity sectors (Section 3.2.1).

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21 Less labour-intensive sectors like household goods, electronics and automotive are likely to also have been strongly hit.

22 The survey was conducted by the Industrial Modernization Center of the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Egypt.

At the same time, economic growth in Africa has been high in the past two decades. This has not yet significantly reduced poverty, but good economic performance *can potentially* alleviate it. Lockdowns, however, slow GDP growth (Section 3.1). Lower revenue collection will make it difficult to achieve more inclusive policies in the near future. Another relative strength is that although average inequality is high in Africa, it has declined since the early 1990s (Cornia, Odusola, Borat, & Conceição, 2017). This happened mainly in Western African countries who made structural changes that benefitted the poorest segments of society. Unfortunately, the distributional impact of fiscal policies remains modest.

These structural issues are significant regarding welfare, and by extension, poverty and inequality, too. Increased poverty (and inequality) is likely to exacerbate the pandemic’s impacts (Brown, Ravallion, & van de Walle, 2020). COVID-19 may affect household welfare through losses in labour income (due to the death of an employed household member, the long-term illness of an infected household member, job loss, reduced working hours or reduction in demand), and non-labour income (remittances and transfers), effects on consumption (such as price changes) and service disruptions. High structural rates of poverty and inequality accompanied by the low coverage and effectiveness of social protection systems make crisis responses particularly difficult, especially in the short term. This is especially true for informal workers who were ineligible for social assistance before the pandemic and have no social insurance. Furthermore, many of these informal workers do tasks that cannot be performed from home, so they are particularly affected by lockdowns.

However, the huge differences across the three country groups could explain the pandemic’s divergent impacts on poverty in Africa (Table 6). Conflict-affected countries clearly have the worst indicators and higher structural weaknesses. They experienced the highest levels of pre-pandemic poverty and by far the lowest coverage of social protection and safety nets. In addition, 90 per cent of their labour force works informally (compared to 60% for MICs), with most employed in agriculture and the least in industry and services. Conversely, although the MICs perform best, they have the largest number of individuals in extreme poverty who remain trapped in cycles of poverty and growing inequality. In fact, in MICs, only inequality (based on the Gini index) is worse than in the other country groups. However, this result is determined by just a few outliers. If South Africa, which has the highest income inequality in the world, was excluded, the MIC group would have an average Gini coefficient of 42.4, only slightly lower than the LDC group.

	Country Group		
	LDCs	MICs	Conflict-affected
Population (%)			
Extreme poverty (< USD 1.90 per day PPP*)	39.4	14.3	50.2
Poverty (< USD 3.20 per day, PPP*)	63.6	32.0	74.2
Gini index	42.0	44.1	43.4
Coverage of social protection and labour policies	21.4	43.7	7.2
Safety net coverage	21.9	36.4	5.7
*Purchasing power parity			
Source: Based on WDI			

*How the COVID-19-pandemic could affect inequality and poverty*

It is extremely difficult to assess the pandemic's potential impacts on inequality because neither international organisations nor scholars have yet elaborated any projections.<sup>23</sup> A study by Furceri, Loungani and Ostry (2020) looked at the distributional effects of five epidemics: SARS (2003), H1N1 (2009), MERS (2012), Ebola (2014) and Zika (2016). They found that the epidemics caused the Gini coefficient to increase by 0.2 to 0.3 per cent after one year and by about 1.5 per cent after five years (Furceri et al., 2020) – mostly due to the deteriorating economic conditions of low-skilled workers. While evidence from these epidemics might give a hint about the COVID-19 pandemic's distributional impacts, it is too early to quantify them and, above all, to predict how the pandemic will affect countries in Africa.

It is easier to make projections regarding income poverty.<sup>24</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic could plunge between 26.6 and 40.7 million Africans into extreme poverty by the end of 2020, and the percentage of poor people could increase by 2 per cent. These figures are in line with our own simulations and estimates from other reports. The World Bank has pointed out that profiles of the new poor in Africa greatly differ from previous profiles (World Bank, 2020f). Impacts could be larger in urban areas, especially for low-income and informal workers in paid employment in non-agricultural sectors (manufacturing, service and commerce). The new poor also live in dwellings with better access to infrastructure, have a few more basic assets and are better educated.

As expected, the estimated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on poverty vary across the three country groups: The largest increases in poverty will be experienced by conflict-affected countries, followed by LDCs according to a scenario of baseline and dropping GDPs (Figure 14). Because they have the lowest initial poverty figures, MICs would experience the largest relative increase in poverty (in proportion to the pre-pandemic value).

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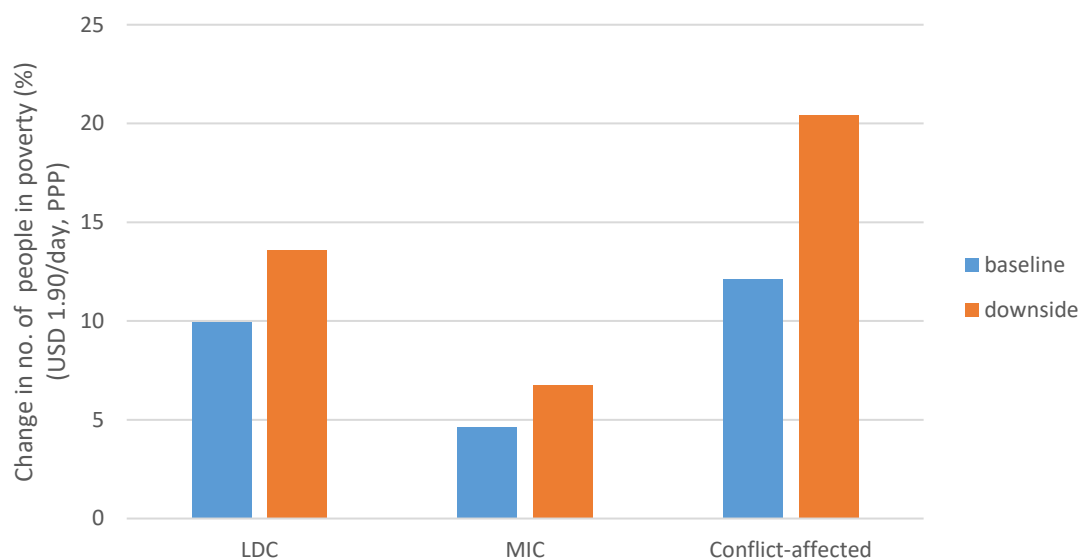
23 An in-depth analysis of household surveys for all African countries is needed, together with strong assumptions regarding the extent to which different segments of the population will be affected, for example, depending on their employment type.

24 To estimate the effects of Covid-19 on income poverty, simulations can be used in the absence of real-time data (Mahler et al. 2020; Summer 2020).

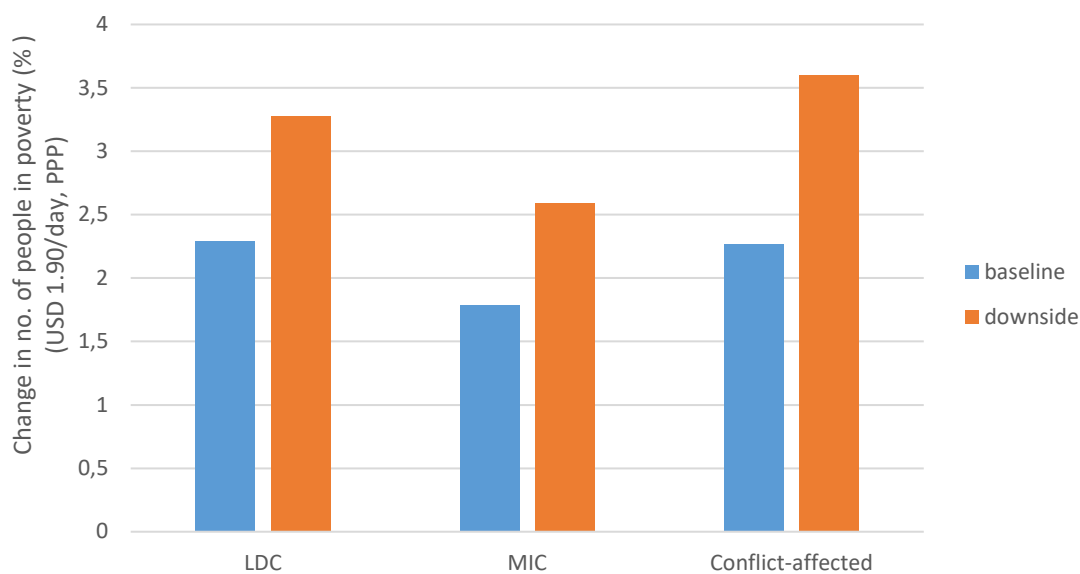


**Figure 14: Changes in extreme poverty (by scenario and group)**

a) Change in the *prevalence* of extreme poverty



b) Change in the number of poor (million)



The baseline and downward scenarios simulate changes in poverty by end of 2020 due to changes in country-specific economic growth rates as estimated by the report on Global Economic Prospects (World Bank 2020a). The downward scenario simulates a deeper and more protracted global recession.

Source: Based on Mahler et al. 2020

### 3.2.3 Health

As the coronavirus pandemic accelerates, governments must go beyond limiting direct health impacts and protect essential health services. The pandemic has created additional barriers for patients accessing essential care due to restrictions on movement, lack of services and

vaccinations, stigma and avoidance of care because of concerns about contracting the virus. More reports are emerging of the pandemic's indirect health impacts. The following analysis focuses on the structural strengths and weaknesses of health systems. We have seen that indirect health impacts can be limited by structural factors such as high baseline child immunisation rates, high service provisions of maternal and childcare, large-scale testing for other infectious and communicable diseases, and support from the Africa CDC.

Lessons from previous viruses, such as the 2015 West African Ebola crisis, show that without concerted efforts, essential health services suffer during epidemic responses. Balancing the direct response to COVID-19 with the need to continue to deliver other health services is a challenge for all policy-makers, particularly in Africa, where health systems already face enormous demands to address infectious diseases and suffer significant capacity and resource constraints. The complex reasons that health services and other indirect health effects are "crowded out" are linked to the health service context and reallocations of financial and monetary resources. We focus on the fields where we expected and observe the most indirect health impacts from the pandemic and discuss various countries.

### *Immunisation*

Childhood vaccination is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions. There is already evidence that the coronavirus pandemic is having a detrimental effect on all aspects of vaccination delivery. Countries have to consider which immunisation strategies should be sustained or paused and assess the gains in reducing transmission against the costs of leaving key populations unprotected from other vaccine-preventable disease threats. One recent study of the risks and benefits of sustaining routine immunisation services in Africa found that for each excess COVID-19 death attributable to infection at service delivery points, approximately 101 future deaths would be prevented in children up to five by continuing vaccination programmes (Abbas et al., 2020). The harms of pausing vaccination campaigns varies in function of the existing pockets of disease and baseline coverage rates of immunisation. On average, MICs have a higher share of full child immunisation (72%) compared to LDCs (60%) and conflict-affected countries (43%). It is not advisable to pause immunisation activities, particularly in conflict-affected countries.

### *Maternal and reproductive health*

In recent decades, tremendous progress has been made in expanding coverage of essential sexual and reproductive health services, with significant reductions in maternal and newborn mortality, as well as unintended pregnancies. Service disruptions during the COVID-19 response pose major threats to these gains. Uganda and Ethiopia have already reported deaths of women in labour who could not access hospitals because of lockdowns and limited transportation. A recent study estimated that a 10 per cent reduction in service coverage of essential pregnancy and neonatal care and the reduced use of contraceptives could result in additional 28,000 maternal deaths, 168,000 neonatal deaths and over 15 million unintended pregnancies (Riley, Sully, Ahmed, & Biddlecom, 2020). These estimates are in line with experiences from the Ebola epidemic, where deliveries in health facilities decreased by 30 per cent. Service coverage is already low in many African countries, particularly conflict-affected countries, where only 44 per cent of women gave birth in the presence of skilled birth attendants. A further decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic could have serious consequences and should be avoided. The situation in LDCs and MICs seems to be better

than in conflict-affected countries, with respective averages of 63 per cent and 75 per cent for all women who have skilled care during delivery (Wagstaff & Neelsen, 2020).

### *Communicable diseases*

In Africa, malaria-control activities including prevention, education, testing and treatment are likely to be significantly disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that the malaria burden for 2020 could more than double that of 2019 (Sherrard-Smith et al., 2020). The distribution of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets should be prioritised. Planning should be conducted for other malaria prevention activities alongside planning to ensure basic access to antimalarial treatment to minimise the risk of substantial additional malaria deaths. The COVID-19 pandemic is also likely to severely impact the estimated 37.9 million people living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa. A study by Jewell et al. (2020) suggests that a six-month interruption of the supply of antiretroviral drugs for all those living with HIV would probably double HIV-related deaths in a one-year period.

The exact numbers of deaths indirectly related to the novel coronavirus and lockdowns and how these may differ from country to country in Africa are unknown. Many figures are not yet available. However, substantial indirect health impacts can be identified in individual countries (see case studies in Appendix 2).

### 3.2.4 Food security

COVID-19 adds yet another threat to global food security, which had already been deteriorating over four years. In many poor countries, measures to forestall the COVID-19 pandemic could seriously threaten food security; it is feared that food insecurity will cause more victims than the disease (Sumner, Hoy, & Ortiz-Juarez, 2020; WFP 2020). This is because measures implemented to curb the spread of the coronavirus hinder economic activities and food markets, and countries have limited financial and logistic means to distribute cash and food and lack adequate social protection schemes. In these conditions, subsistence agriculture and local markets emerge as structural strengths to buffer against the consequences of COVID-19 lockdowns. The functioning of food markets and positive economic development are other structural strengths to consider.

Given these structural factors, 38 per cent of the LDCs, 10 per cent of the MICs and 60 per cent of the conflict-affected countries are likely to suffer severe food insecurity in the future (WFP 2020). Not only do conflict-affected countries and LDCs have less well-prepared health sectors (Chapter 2), but their food security is also seriously impacted by lockdowns. The abilities of these two groups to cushion these effects differ. Food insecurity particularly affects the weakest and youngest populations. In the short term, urban populations are hit harder than rural populations, and those who cannot turn to farming suffer more than those who can. These negative effects pose risks to nutrition status and food security, which could indeed exceed the impacts of COVID-19. A deeper analysis of the food security situation in individual countries is provided in Appendix 2.

**Box 4: Responding to COVID-19 in Ethiopia with *maed magarat* (“dish sharing”)**

Ethiopia has been devising its own way of building resilience to deal with the consequences of COVID-19. Lockdowns to contain and control the pandemic are de facto constrained in Ethiopia because most of the population lives from day to day. The government had declared a state of emergency (SoE) to make the society aware of the threat posed by the coronavirus (April to September 2020). It recommended keeping a physical not “social” distance (the notion of “social distancing” conflicts with communal lifestyles) of two metres, not shaking hands and wearing masks in public. From the very beginning, there was no lockdown, a measure that other African countries later emulated.

The COVID-19 outbreak has negatively impacted Ethiopia’s already structurally weak economy. Cases are rising every day; by early September 2020, over 65,000 infections and about 1,000 deaths had been reported. About 60 per cent of the estimated 110 million Ethiopians are under the age of 25 as of 2019. The maximum jobless rate was 26.4 per cent and the minimum 16.8 per cent in 2019. High population growth coupled with rural to urban migration has led to spiking youth unemployment, which in turn has constituted what is known as a Malthusian catastrophe: a geometric progression of a population combined with an arithmetic progression of food that causes the population to be limited by famine or war.

One of the government’s main responses to the pandemic has been to encourage *maed magarat* (“dish sharing”) – appealing to the moral principle of “I am my brother’s keeper”. This government appeal, which was neither a legal decree nor an example of draconian rule, was heeded by the population. The practice is simple: One hundred kilos of wheat are bought for the family for a month, and 25 of them are shared with another household. The same applies to other food stuffs like cooking oil, flour, cereals, and both perishable and non-perishable items. *Maed magarat* is based on lessons learnt from similar food-sharing programmes for elders, orphans, street children and displaced people that were established prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which temporary camps and shelters were prepared by the government and some civil society organisations, as well as by individual philanthropists. *Maed magarat* activities are centrally planned and organised by the federal government and the Addis Ababa city administration. Civil society organisations, individuals, religious institutions, philanthropic organisations and local cultural associations known as *equb*, *edir* and *mahber* independently raise funds to buy food. Volunteer youth also go from door to door, collecting food, clothes and household utensils for the needy. The activities are organised by the smallest administrative unit, the *kebele*.

Several lessons with short- and long-term consequences for Ethiopian society have been learnt. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the *maed magarat* feeding scheme is a success. The efforts in Addis Ababa since the outbreak of the pandemic can set an example for ensuring food security elsewhere in Ethiopia during crises. *Maed magarat* could also increase long-term food security in communities. It is expected to build societal resilience: Ordinary people bonding with each other fosters a sense of communality, increases willingness to cooperate for the common good and promotes community-based development plans and schemes with little or no government support. When a society becomes resilient, feeds itself and can pay taxes, the government is also strengthened. Social cohesion is created through “self-reliant” approaches for dealing with the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. Finally, *maed magarat* has activated the notion that we are each other’s keepers. This attitude can help to build more productive citizens for a better society.

Such resilience-building programmes can serve as entry points for international cooperation. For instance, the Ethiopian government can facilitate cooperation between international and local civil societies and Germans collaborating with Ethiopian grassroots projects by supporting *maed magarat*. Best practises could be transferred to other countries such as Libya or South Africa. By working with local NGOs and civil society, the international community can strengthen cooperation during the pandemic and beyond. The strategies will be further developed and enriched through training and education to build human and social capital that can withstand unexpected crises and strengthen peacebuilding efforts.

Source: Text provided by Yonas Adeto

### 3.3 Political impacts

#### Highlights

##### *Conflict and peace*

- The UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire had limited impact; instead, the lack of international attention to conflict areas was exploited.
- Excessive violence against civilians and violent clashes occurred under cover of COVID-19 measures.
- The pandemic exacerbates structural weaknesses that can create new or aggravate ongoing conflicts and eliminates institutions and actors that can help to mitigate conflict.

##### *Inclusive institutions, accountability and democracy*

- Current COVID-19 containment measures threaten the democratisation in some African states that was already faltering; some LDCs have become more autocratic.
- Liberal democracies reacted more stringently than autocracies at the start of the pandemic and were also quicker to lift restrictions.
- At the start of the pandemic, riots increased in MICs and conflict-affected countries.
- The pandemic seems to provide opportunities for increased corruption.

##### *Migration*

- The COVID-19 pandemic's long-term consequences for future migration flows are unclear.
- Measures to contain the pandemic, especially restrictions on mobility and social distancing, have created severe hardships for vulnerable migrants and their families.

#### 3.3.1 Conflict and peace

Conflict-affected countries have a number of structural weaknesses that render them particularly vulnerable to the pandemic. Countries in conflict like Somalia and Sudan and post-conflict states like Burundi and Mozambique generally suffer from very low state capacities. Populations in conflict-affected countries are particularly vulnerable due to their inadequate social systems, high numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and predominantly informal workforces. Conflict also reduces trust in state institutions, which have more difficulty implementing the measures necessary to contain the virus. Finally, ongoing conflict makes it difficult to reach the entire population, with some territories beyond governmental control inaccessible even to humanitarian organisations.

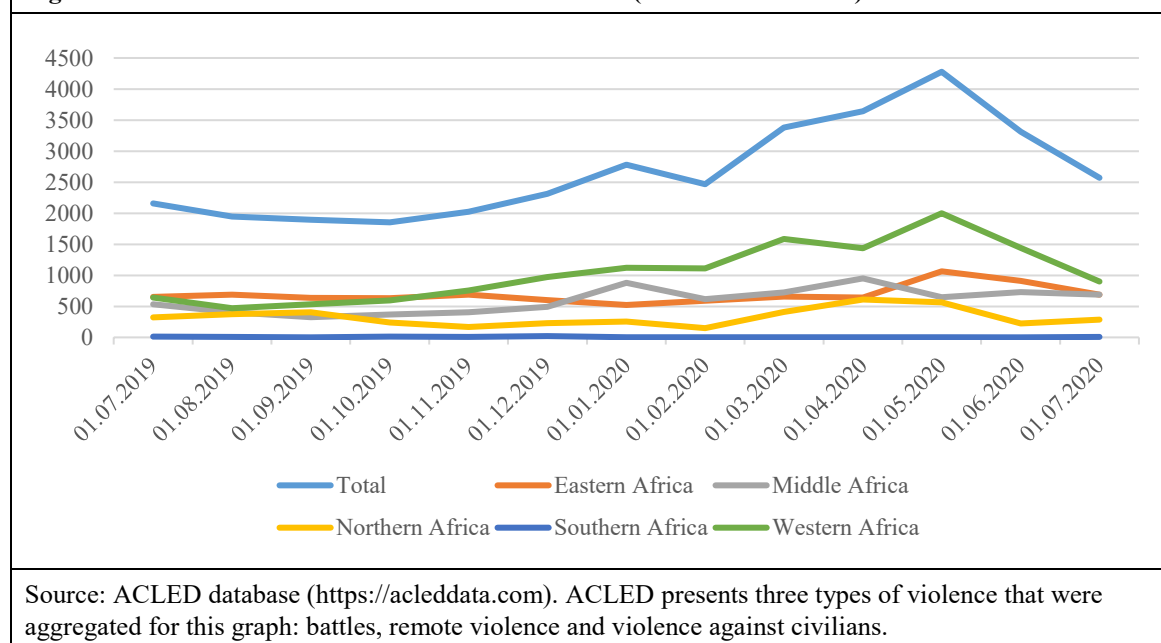
Not only does conflict increase societies' vulnerability to the coronavirus, but the COVID-19 pandemic also exacerbates structural weaknesses that can lead to new – or exacerbate ongoing – conflicts. In conflict-affected countries, the pandemic affects the dynamics of armed conflict – conflict levels, ceasefires and international mediation efforts. However, a conflict lens is also relevant to LDCs and MICs, where we see other types of political violence – primarily violent protests and excessive state repression – which are fuelled by the virus. The pandemic is particularly worrying for countries that have experienced civil war; Burundi, Uganda and Ivory Coast have experienced major armed conflicts quite recently. Even if post-conflict countries remain predominantly peaceful for several years, they still risk renewed violence – exacerbated by the pandemic.

So far, infection rates have been surprisingly low for conflict-affected countries. However, their CFRs are the highest of all African countries (Chapter 2). The coronavirus clearly poses a tremendous challenge for their particularly vulnerable societies.

### *Effects of the pandemic on conflict intensity*

The levels of violence in existing conflicts have increased during the pandemic, with a spike in both armed confrontations and the number of fatalities in March and April (Figure 15). They were mainly armed battles and attacks against civilians in Northern, Eastern and West Africa. A major violent conflict with historical roots broke out in November 2020 in Ethiopia's Tigray Region in which the pandemic has played a role.

**Figure 15: Conflict fatalities in all African countries (Jul. 2019-Jul. 2020)**



Of the countries with ongoing conflicts, clear increases in violence are seen in Libya, CAR, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Sudan. The numbers suggest that both governments and armed groups are tactically exploiting the pandemic, but it is too early to say for sure. Violence was clearly on the rise before the pandemic, which suggests that it might have occurred even without a health emergency. Furthermore, a recent analysis by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) reveals no correlation between the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and conflict levels (Ngubane & de

Coning, 2020). It seems that the pandemic might instead be indirectly affecting conflict: “[A]rmed groups and governments have taken the opportunities provided by little domestic and international attention to pursue competitors, opposition and territory” (Raleigh, 2020).

The UN Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire to contain the coronavirus has had limited impact (Gowan, 2020). It resulted in unilateral ceasefires in Angola, Cameroon, Libya, CAR, South Sudan and Sudan (University of Edinburgh et al., 2020) but brought no clear reduction in violence. “Coronavirus ceasefires” are mostly unilateral – for humanitarian purposes – and have been broken quickly or only involve a small portion of fighting factions, as in Cameroon (Olcay, 2020). While ceasefires can become the starting point for more serious peace negotiations – as in the frequently cited case of Aceh, Indonesia – the pandemic has not yet substantially altered the power relationship between conflict parties, which is needed to pave the way to peace.

With regard to the behaviour of armed groups, calls by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) for its affiliates to take advantage of the situation and step up attacks, has been heeded by the rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the DRC (ACLED, 2020). Several groups have used COVID-19 in their propaganda (Thurston, 2020), portraying the virus as punishment for Western infidels or using it to recruit (Brown & Blanc, 2020). Whether the pandemic will have a more profound effect on armed groups depends on how well they manage the pandemic should it hit areas under their control. Outside Africa, groups like the Taliban and Hezbollah have begun to increase their health services in an attempt to portray themselves as more capable alternatives to the state, but this dynamic is not seen in Africa (Columbo & Marielle, 2020). One reason for this is that the pandemic has mostly affected urban areas and not yet moved to rural conflict areas.

One short-term effect of the pandemic on political violence is the excessive use of force against civilians, especially in implementing lockdowns. This has occurred most in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe, followed by South Africa and Nigeria, with fatalities of 10 to 20 people. Such violence has principally occurred in MICs with comparatively high state capacities, according to ACLED (2020a) data. The clear spike in state violence in April 2020 indicates that it was an exceptional, direct reaction to the pandemic, which could be explained by the novel crisis overwhelming decision-makers (Figure 17). However, these short-lived incidents risk escalating into more severe conflict. They will negatively affect relationships between states and populations, especially their trust in security forces and governments. Particularly worrying is the frequent use of excessive force during lockdowns as a cover to target marginalised groups and political opponents according to the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL, 2020). This has triggered violent clashes between citizens and state forces, as in Uganda, which suffered “the highest disorder levels in close to 15 years” (Pavlik, 2020b). COVID-19-related election delays have caused friction in a number of countries, and commentators fear renewed violence (Peace and Security Council Report (PSC), 2020; Slim, 2020; Taylor, 2020).

### *Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on international peace efforts*

The pandemic has affected peacekeeping operations, albeit to a limited extent. In order to reduce the risk of peacekeepers spreading the coronavirus to the population (as happened with cholera in Haiti), rotations were suspended and contact with local populations minimised. Such preventive measures could reduce the effectiveness of peacekeeping if

peacekeepers suffer greater stress and fatigue and interact much less with local populations (Nagel & Verveer, 2020). In South Sudan and CAR, rumours that peacekeeping missions had brought the coronavirus into the country have circulated, threatening the missions' legitimacy and potential impact (Bell, Epple, & Pospisil, 2020). Thus far, fears that contributing countries would pull out their troops and leave peacekeeping missions critically understaffed seem to be largely unfounded (Desmidt & Neat, 2020). Instead, the biggest challenge for peacekeeping is the foreseeable post-pandemic economic recession in which contributors have fewer resources that they are likely to devote to domestic needs. Given peacekeeping's critical importance in preventing renewed warfare, this poses serious long-term challenges to peace.

The pandemic has delayed international peace mediation in Libya, Somalia and the Sahel (El Hacen Lebatt, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020) – partly because international travel has become impossible. Diplomatic initiatives and peace talks have also been suspended as international and national actors shift attention from these processes to the pandemic: “[T]he disease means that international leaders, focused as they are on dramatic domestic issues, have little or no time to devote to conflicts or peace processes” (International Crisis Group, 2020). While some negotiations like Sudan's “zoom diplomacy” have continued online, most analysts agree that the pandemic seriously endangers conflict prevention and mediation (Bell et al., 2020).

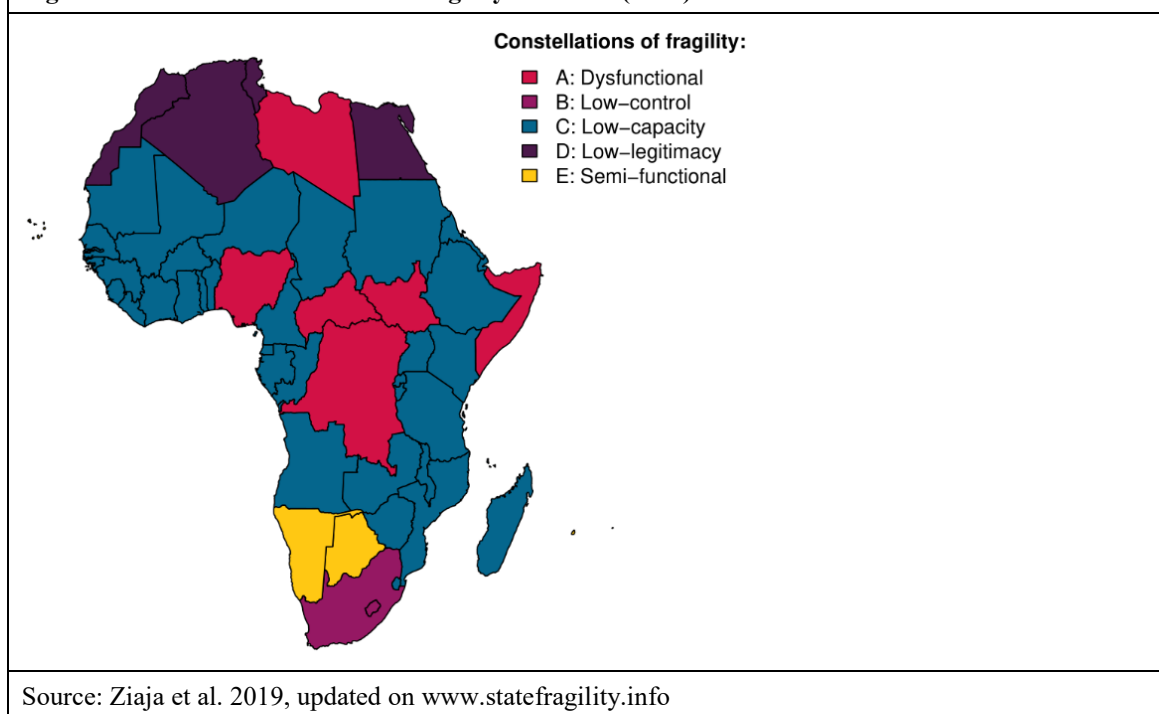
### 3.3.2 Inclusive state institutions, political mobilisation and democracy

Capable state institutions are required for effective policy-making, especially in extraordinary situations like a pandemic (Chindarkar et al. 2017; Fukuyama & Machlachlan, 2014). However, capability alone cannot address such complex and sudden challenges. Citizens' trust in the state and its ability to cope with a collective risk is equally relevant (Algan & Cahuc, 2014; Han et al., 2020). That is, the quality of the relationship between the state and society is important: Accountability is part of a mutually trustful relationship (Tsai, Morse, & Blair, 2020). Societies must hold states accountable and leverage their strengths to benefit populations and pre-empt abusive state power. As lockdown measures and other restrictions on civil liberties are implemented to contain the coronavirus, channels of accountability are closed – just when the public is demanding greater accountability. The COVID-19 pandemic thus constitutes a stress test of the state's ability to implement measures and society's ability to maintain or extend democratic control over the state.

The strengths and weaknesses of states and political regimes determine how societies cope with the pandemic's direct and indirect consequences. African states have been historically weak as a result of their size, low population densities and colonial heritages (Herbst, 2014). The “constellations of state fragility” (Figure 16) provide a rough proxy to assess countries' abilities to respond to crises and cope with their indirect effects (Ziaja, Grävingholt, & Kreibaum, 2019). Countries are classified by their ability to maintain a monopoly on the use of force (“violence control”), provide public goods (“implementation capacity”) and garner support from society (“empirical legitimacy”). Across Africa, countries either lack implementation capacity or are dysfunctional in all three dimensions. Conflict-affected countries are mostly categorised as “dysfunctional” and LDCs exclusively as “low-capacity”. MICs have low capabilities compared to global standards and have difficulties providing basic services to all citizens. South Africa struggles with systemic criminality; Nigeria, a resource-dependent MIC, cannot control its territory; Tunisia and Egypt suffer from limited legitimacy.

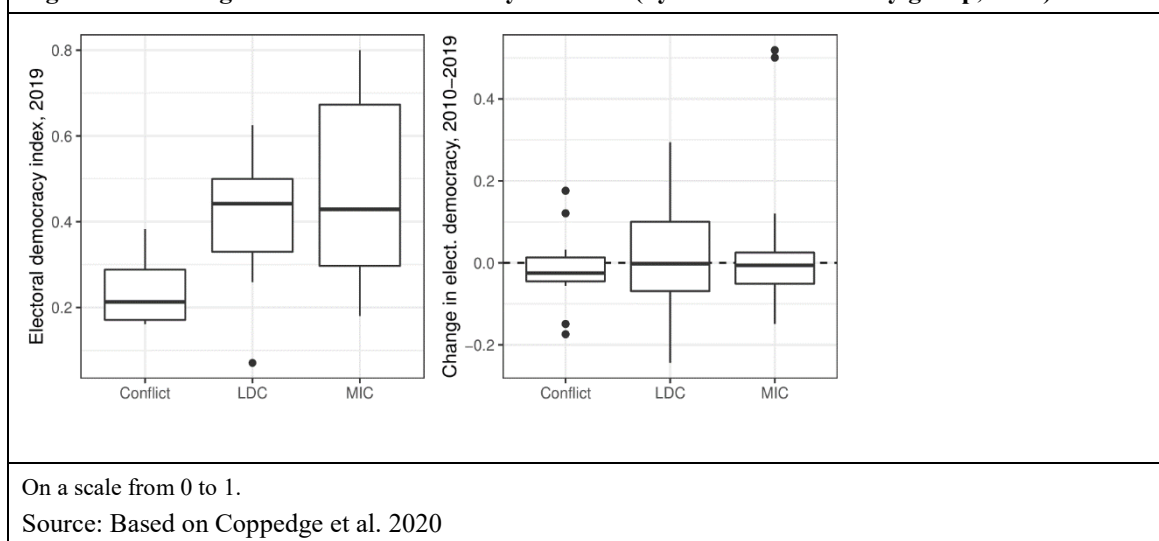


**Figure 16: Constellations of state fragility in Africa (2017)**



Building relationships of mutual accountability and trust between state and citizens is more difficult in contexts of low levels of – or no – democracy. Most African countries do not achieve high levels of democratic governance with respect to basic freedoms of expression and association and free and fair elections (Coppedge et al., 2020). Conflict-affected countries are the least democratic (0.2) while the median scores of LDCs and MICs are around 0.45. The figure of 0.5 divides democracies from autocracies (Lührmann, Tannenber, & Lindberg, 2018) (Figure 17). MICs, however, range from very autocratic Egypt to democratic Ghana. Although democratisation has stagnated in all three country groups in the past decade, some countries, especially the LDCs Ethiopia, The Gambia and Tunisia had significantly improved since 2010, while Mali, Mauritania and Zambia have deteriorated.

**Figure 17: Changes in electoral democracy in Africa (by decade and country group, 2019)**

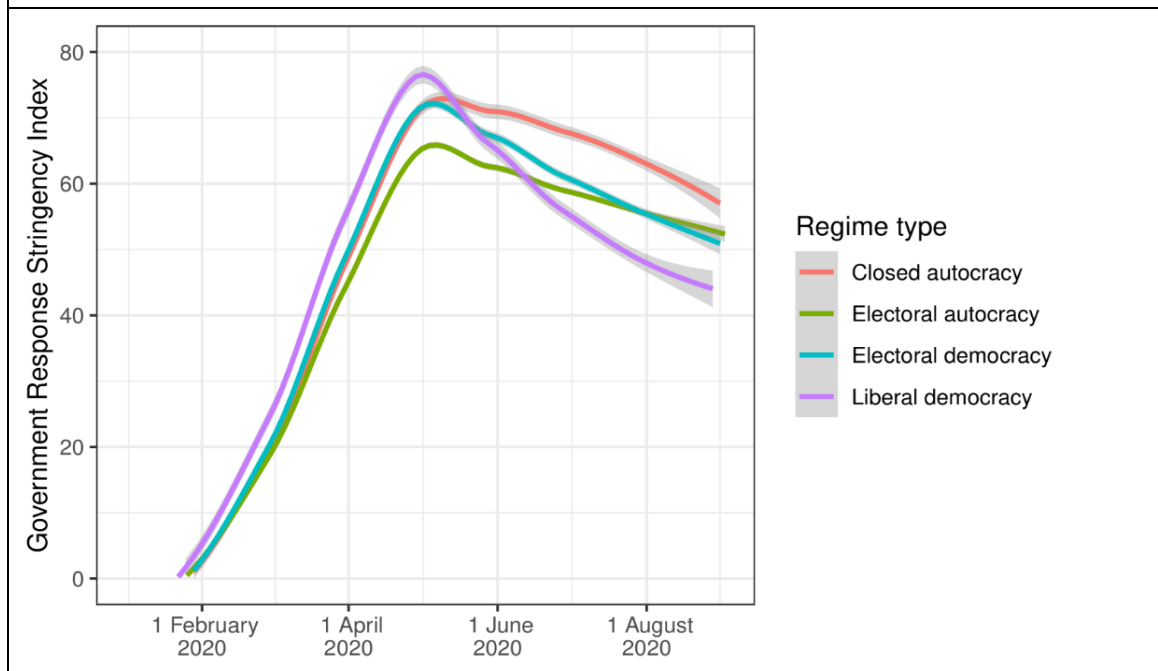


### *The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on state institutions and democracy*

Both government and citizen reactions to the pandemic and containment measures indicate the need to closely observe governance issues in coming months. The state capacities of MICs made them the countries most capable of adopting and implementing stringent policies. States with low legitimacy, such as Egypt, imposed more restrictive measures. LDCs were less stringent. The responses of conflict-affected countries varied greatly, with some incapable of intervening substantially. Liberal democracies in Africa introduced more restrictive policies in April that they soon loosened (Figure 18). In late August 2020, “closed” autocracies were maintaining the strictest measures.

Some lockdowns immediately impacted democracy and accelerated pre-pandemic autocratisation. First, they limited the exercise of civil and political rights.<sup>25</sup> All three country groups have experienced similar violations of democracy: derogations of non-derogable rights, restrictions to legislatures and arbitrary enforcement. On average, however, MICs have committed more violations of this type than other countries. Second, a few African governments spread misinformation about COVID-19 – both countries whose democracy scores had deteriorated in the past decade, such as Burundi and Tanzania, and those that had improved, such as The Gambia and Madagascar. Postponing elections was another reaction, with 20 to 30 per cent of all African countries postponing national, local and/or by-elections. Topping that, 50 per cent of dysfunctional and low-authority states – including Libya, Nigeria, Somalia and South Africa – postponed elections in 2020 (International IDEA 2020). While postponing elections may also be necessary in stable democracies, it is crucial to restore procedural normality as quickly as possible and prevent political actors from unconstitutionally benefitting from postponements.

**Figure 18: Average stringency of COVID-19 containment policies (by regime type)**



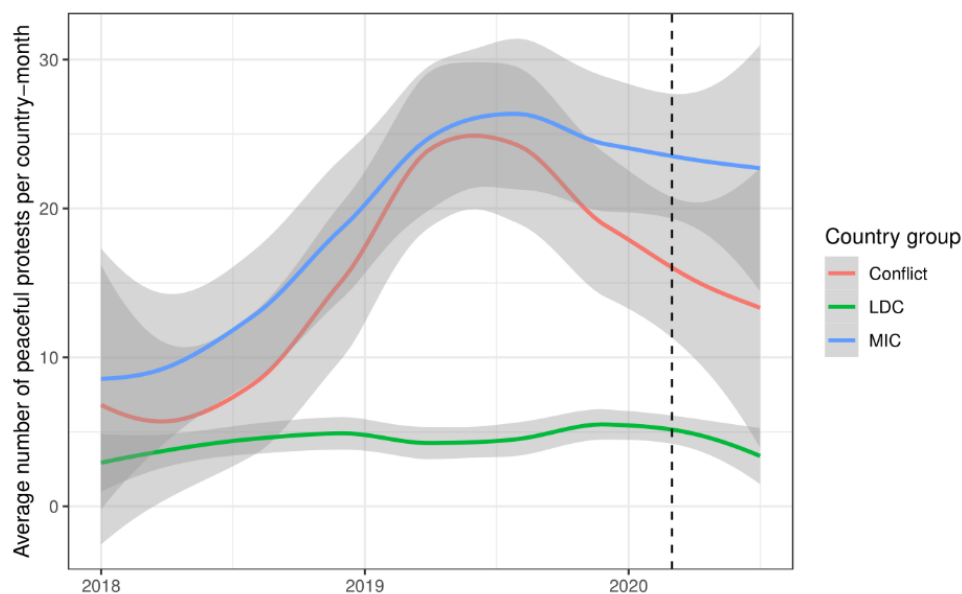
Source: Based on Coppedge et al. 2020 and Hale et al. 2020

25 The Pandemic Backsliding Project (2020) attempts to capture “the extent to which governments are violating democratic standards for emergency provisions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic”.

It is hard to tell whether people impacted by containment measures ever considered or continue to consider them justified. However, levels of protest indicate general reactions to COVID-19 emergency policies, with a variety of pandemic-related events observed across Africa.

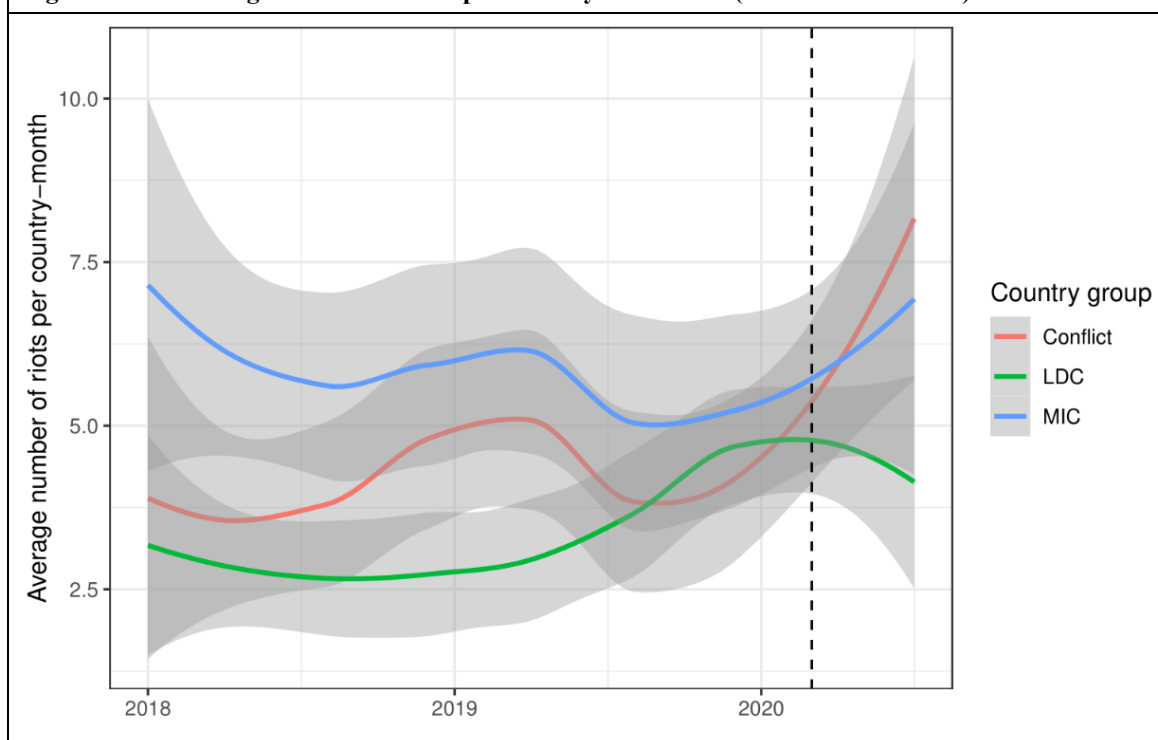
In MICs, where people tend to react to restrictions proactively, there were an average of 33 lockdown-related protests between March and July 2020, compared with an average of four protests in LDCs and seven in conflict-affected countries. Since 2019, MICs had been characterised by much more protest than in earlier years<sup>26</sup> – which could be explained by increased urbanisation. Although Figure 19 indicates a slight downward trend since March 2020 (marked by the vertical dashed line), lockdowns have made it more difficult to report on protests so we cannot be certain that they have actually decreased. The downturn is clearer in conflict-affected countries, while protests in LDCs remained negligible. That said, riots were on the rise before the pandemic and continued to multiply in 2020 in both MICs and conflict-related countries (Figure 20). These trends may reflect citizen disappointment with the performance of state institutions. However, not all mobilisations have a democratising effect: The conspiracy theories and xenophobia that have spread during the pandemic may be further polarising social and political groups (Bolsen, Palm, & Kingsland, 2020). We also observe protests and riots in the most established democracies of the industrialised world. In African societies, hopes that institutionalised channels of conflict resolution and a strong civil society can transform unrest into positive reforms are fainter than in consolidated OECD democracies. A case-based assessment of lockdown measures on democracy is found in Appendix 2.

**Figure 19: Average number of protests per country and month (Jan. 2018-Jul. 2020)**



Source: Based on ACLED data and Raleigh et al. 2010

26 To assess pandemic impacts on peaceful protest, we compare the average number of monthly protests per country from 2016 to 2019 with the average number of protests in each month of 2020, using ACLED’s curated dataset (Raleigh, Linke, Hegre, & Karlsen, 2010).

**Figure 20: Average number of riots per country and month (Jan. 2018-Jul. 2020)**

Source: Based on ACLED data and Raleigh et al. 2010

### 3.3.3 Migration

Migration and flight can be understood as individuals and households reacting to structural strengths and weaknesses of interconnected places, such as cities that are growing demographically and economically and rural areas that are declining. In almost all African countries, the COVID-19 crisis has pinpointed the precariousness of migrant livelihoods in reception and transit areas and the relevance of – albeit fragile – translocal informal social safety nets. Migrants, refugees and IDPs are amongst the most vulnerable when it comes to the risk of coronavirus infection due to the confined living spaces, poor sanitation and insufficient access to health facilities often found in refugee settlements and urban slums. Fortunately, despite the fears, there have been no massive outbreaks of COVID-19 in refugee camps. However, the economic and social effects of the coronavirus pandemic have had grave consequences for migration processes and mobile populations (Stange et al., 2020). Not only were migrants confronted with job losses, disappearing income opportunities and the inability to send remittances due to business and factory closures, but they also suffered from food shortages and rising prices.

In conflict-affected countries, the COVID-19 pandemic poses yet another risk for displaced persons in a context with multiple risks. Violent combat, natural disasters (especially droughts) and political conflicts have created great insecurity for Somalia's 2.6 million IDPs. Aid organisations are struggling to guarantee basic hygiene in order to forestall massive outbreaks in the camps (Slusarenka, 2020). Even in politically stable LDCs like Malawi (Deutsche Welle, 2020), the pandemic has exacerbated IDP vulnerabilities. Refugees running businesses or schools in camps have lost their jobs, and lockdowns

prevent them from seeking others. Refugee self-organisations have helped people adapt to the new situation and make donor organisations hear refugees.

It has been especially hard for migrant workers in cities to respect social distancing or wait for curfews to end. Many labour migrants are employed informally and have no social protection. Aside from the threat of joblessness, food price hikes up to 50 per cent have made surviving in cities a huge challenge. Migrant children and (young) women, who are vulnerable under “normal” conditions, have been deeply affected by lockdowns and restrictions on mobility: The Ghanaian *kayayeis* made headlines all over Africa (Box 5). Their case shows that multi-local households offer informal social protection to both migrants and their families. However, during COVID-19 lockdowns, this type of informal social safety net for migrants comes undone.

**Box 5: Lockdowns and their socio-economic effects on migrants: The Ghanaian *Kayayeis***

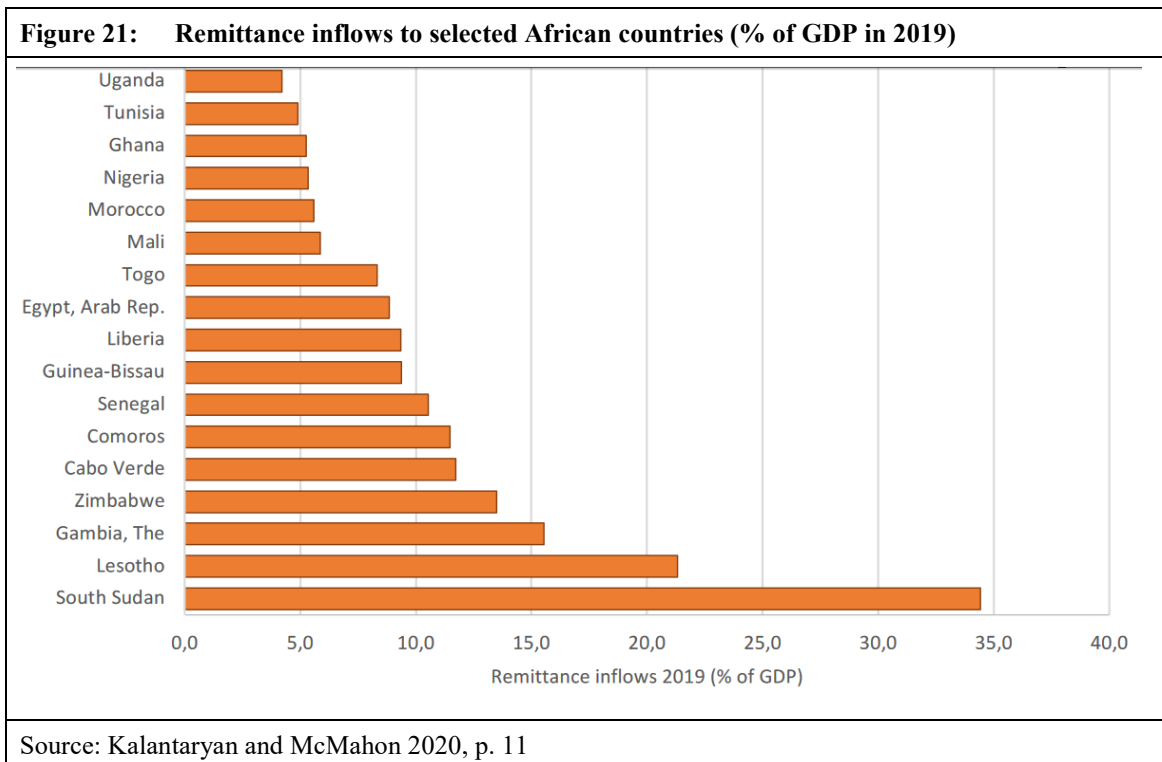
Since March 2020, the plight of young female porters (*kayayeis*) has been receiving a lot of media attention in Ghana and other African countries. In three days at the end of March – following the announcement of the partial lockdown for Accra, Tema and Kumasi that closed markets but before its implementation – large groups of *kayayeis* tried to leave the affected cities for their home villages in the North. A few were able to return but most could not. Some were intercepted by the police en route and sent back to the locked-down cities. Most restrictions were lifted in late April. While no systematic assessment is available yet, there are many indications of severe socio-economic effects on Ghana’s internal migrants: Months after the lockdown was lifted, many *kayayeis* are still dependent on food and other aid provided by political parties, NGOs and other groups. However, had presidential and parliamentary elections not been approaching, the government would have been less likely to help them out with food and accommodation.

Source: Authors

Not only does the COVID-19 crisis affect migrants, but it also affects their families and larger social environments. Circular labour migration is probably the most common form of migration within African countries and regions. Many people maintain multi-local livelihoods at two or more sites, creating flows of remittances and knowledge, and their relatives often depend on these transfers for educational, business and healthcare needs.

It is obvious that current containment measures are massively affecting people who had planned to work far from their homes or who were using multi-local strategies. This is demonstrated by a sharp decline in remittances, which for Sub-Saharan Africa are projected to decrease by 23 per cent (compared to 20% globally) – from USD 48 billion in 2019 to USD 37 billion in 2020 (World Bank, 2020c). Aside from migrants’ reduced earnings due to business closures and lockdowns, their access to remittance service providers has also been severely hampered by total business closures, shortened operating hours and social distancing. Electronic transfers have become an important alternative but are largely inaccessible for poorer and irregular migrant groups (World Bank, 2020c).

MICs like Egypt, Morocco and Ghana are amongst the 17 top recipients of remittances on the African continent, with the share of remittances in national GDPs especially high for conflict-affected countries such as South Sudan, Libya and CAR and for LDCs like The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia (Figure 21). Poorer countries challenged by security issues, such as Niger and Burkina Faso, and post-conflict countries like Liberia are expected to suffer very serious income losses due to sharp drops in remittances (Kalantaryan & McMahon, 2020).



African regional organisations have adopted measures to counter the negative impacts of the crisis. For example, in June 2020 the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) agreed guidelines for recovery actions, including resuming cross-border mobility and trading in an attempt to counteract the economic downturn (ECOWAS, 2020). As early as March 2020, members of the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) in Northeastern Africa agreed to enhance migrants' access to national health systems and underscored the need to protect large numbers of refugees and IDPs in particular (IGAD, 2020).

### 3.4 Environmental impacts

#### Highlights

##### *Climate*

- MICs and conflict-affected regions are at greatest risk of climate change and compound crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In some countries, the pandemic temporarily reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in key sectors, but recovery measures may create rebound effects.

##### *Water*

- The lack of WASH, especially in LDCs, conflict-affected countries and dense settlements, helps to spread the coronavirus.
- Women, children, refugees, medical staff and residents of densely populated areas and people who share water points face higher risks of infection.
- Weak protection of natural resources including water exacerbates overconsumption and pollution, causing environmental, socio-economic and health impacts.

##### *Biodiversity*

- The sharp drop in tourism revenues from protected areas underscores Africa's overreliance on such tourism.
- Lockdowns, and job and income losses are increasing subsistence pressures on resources in protected areas.

#### 3.4.1 Climate

All country groups are experiencing similar COVID-19 impacts on climate change resilience. The main structural weaknesses of LDCs and MICs that create vulnerability to climate change and hazards are poverty and inequality, low access to water and sanitation facilities and high dependence on natural capital. Post-conflict countries face similar challenges, but LDCs and MICs are especially beset by significant institutional limitations to effectively govern climate and disaster risk, and also lack long-term climate-change strategies. African countries' engagement in international and regional processes and initiatives on climate and disaster resilience is a distinct structural strength that opens space for making improvements after the pandemic.

##### *Climate risk and resilience*

The COVID-19 outbreak has revealed many African countries' fragility with respect to climate change and disasters that can be deepened by the pandemic's direct and indirect

impacts. The region is socio-economically vulnerable to climate change, environmental degradation and global economic shocks. Pre-pandemic projections had warned that without immediate action, climate change could push more than 100 million people worldwide into extreme poverty and food insecurity by 2030, most notably in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hallegatte et al., 2016). Asia and Africa are the regions most vulnerable to increasing land degradation and desertification, where climate pressures have already affected food security, including the productivity of crop and pastoral systems (IPCC, 2019). Common factors that make the poor vulnerable to economic shocks include price fluctuations, such as higher food prices due to crop loss, reduced consumption from increasing poverty, high dependence on agriculture and degrading ecosystems (Hallegatte et al., 2016; Zeufack et al., 2020). Furthermore, about half of Africa’s urban dwellers live in densely populated slums and lack basic sanitation (UN-Habitat, 2020). These factors, coupled with high dependence on informal and casual labour, exacerbate the risks of both climate change and pandemics in Africa’s urban areas (UN-Habitat & WFP, 2020).

Much of Africa is exposed to compound crises, with East African countries experiencing multiple disasters in spring 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic began as territories were recovering from prolonged drought (October 2018 - September 2019) and suffering severe floods and landslides (October 2019 – May 2020) and desert locusts (since October 2019) (FAO, 2020). This “triple crisis” has seriously impacted Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Somalia, which are amongst the 30 states in the world most vulnerable to climate change.<sup>27</sup>

These impacts highlight the importance of developing climate and disaster resilience in conflict-affected countries. Ethiopia, a drought-prone country with a predominantly rural population that is highly dependent on climate-sensitive agricultural production, battles chronic poverty and food insecurity – and now must face this new compound crisis. Exacerbated by recent conflicts, the pandemic has far-reaching socio-economic effects, including reduced demand for local labour, rising food prices and growing numbers of IDPs (FEWS Net, 2020). In Somalia, security concerns, lockdowns, and poor infrastructure and accessibility have impeded humanitarian responses to the triple threat (UN OCHA, 2020). Limited healthcare coverage and the lack of resilient healthcare and social protections limit countries’ capacity to respond to systemic risks. Climate change and environmental degradation can increase exposure to COVID-19 and further pressure health systems that were already challenged by shortages of health workers and financial deficits. About 80 per cent of Africa’s rural population and 60 per cent of city dwellers have no formal social health protection (Scheil-Adlung, 2015), let alone access to adequate medical services.

### *Low-carbon development*

Policy responses to the pandemic have also affected GHG emissions worldwide, including in some African countries. However, without green recovery policies and measures focussing on clean energy transitions, the temporary reduction of global emissions will likely be followed by a “large jump in emissions” (IEA, 2020b). Recent global estimates suggest that carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions dropped by 5 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in 2019 due to decreased energy demand (especially for coal, oil and gas) (IEA, 2020a). Worldwide, government policy responses to COVID-19

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27 This information is based on ND-GAIN country vulnerability ranking (2018) developed by the University of Notre Dame.



caused a daily decline in fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 11 to 25 per cent, nearly half of that due to reduced surface transportation (Le Quéré et al., 2020).

Similar trends have been observed in some African countries, although there is limited regional data on pandemic-induced changes in GHG emissions. Lower demand for domestic electricity has been observed in different timeframes in MICs (Kenya, Namibia and South Africa), LDCs (Zambia) and conflict-affected states (Mozambique and the DRC) (Di Castelnuovo et al., 2020). In cities, the level of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in large urban areas across Sub-Saharan Africa decreased by 11 per cent in April 2020 compared to the monthly values for the previous two years (Masaki, Nakamura, & Newhouse, 2020), a sign of emission reductions from motorised transport and reduced economic activity in cities. However, the results also reveal that NO<sub>2</sub> emissions did not fall in all countries with lockdowns. Furthermore, the decline in NO<sub>2</sub> levels in more developed urban centres, including Nairobi, Kigali and Lagos, appears to be greater in comparison with urban emissions in less developed urban areas like Juba in South Sudan, Antananarivo in Madagascar and Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, where no significant decline has been observed (Masaki et al., 2020).

These city- and country-specific effects can be explained by several factors. First, electricity on the continent is largely generated by gas, coal, oil and hydropower, and major MIC consumers include South Africa and North African countries (IEA, 2019a). More than 50 per cent of the electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa is used by South Africa, which has developed energy intensive industries (60% of national demand for electricity). Fuel combustion for producing electricity and heat and running transport account for nearly 70 per cent of South Africa's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (IEA, 2019b). Finally, just 54 per cent of all African households have access to electricity; great discrepancies persist between urban (79%) and rural areas (39%) (IEA, 2019c). Central and Southern African countries (except for South Africa) have the least developed energy grids: In 2018, only 24 and 35 per cent of their populations, respectively, had access to electricity.

### *Climate commitments and action*

Lockdown measures and travel restrictions have temporarily halted environmental protests everywhere, although several climate demonstrations have taken place online (Cwienk, 2020). Critical multilateral negotiations on climate change and biodiversity have also been postponed. Meanwhile, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has postponed the release of its Sixth Assessment Report. Implementation of local climate actions may also have been negatively affected by disruptions to operations, reduced capacities of local businesses to invest in green technologies and climate resilience, and smaller local budgets for climate-related activities.

These processes may undermine global climate action and slow preparations of national climate plans in developing countries, including updates of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) due in late 2020 and National Adaptation Plans. Furthermore, the shift to virtual consultations, knowledge exchange events and capacity-building activities may deepen the existing inequality of access to information and participation because the most vulnerable groups have limited technical capacities.

On the plus side, despite concerns about how the pandemic is negatively affecting the coordination, technical support and finance for enhancing developing countries' national climate plans, some African states have made progress in climate action: Angola, a leading oil producer, ratified the Paris Agreement in August 2020 and Rwanda was the first African country to submit an updated NDC in May 2020 (UNFCCC, 2020). Ghana recently announced its commitment to develop a 60-year National Adaptation Plan, which will aim at a climate-resilient post-COVID-19 recovery (UNEP, 2020).

### 3.4.2 Water

The COVID-19 pandemic has similarly affected water issues in all country groups. There's generally less WASH in LDCs and conflict-affected countries. Basic handwashing facilities are superior in most MICs and terrible in post-conflict settings. But in post-conflict Nigeria (MIC) and Tanzania and Angola (both LDCs) they are better than in other countries in their respective groups. Sub-Saharan Africa is probably the region most exposed to the potential transmission of the coronavirus via untreated wastewater (in most countries, less than 50% of wastewater is treated) or in queues for drinking water. While access to basic sanitation remains very low in LDCs in Sub-Saharan Africa (at most 50%) it is much higher in most MICs, particularly Morocco, South Africa and Botswana (50-75%). While Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed an improvement in access to basic water services over the past 20 years, very few households are connected to municipal water services. Sub-Saharan Africa also has the worst water quality monitoring, which complicates monitoring the spread of the coronavirus that is linked to inadequate WASH (Peletz, Kumpel, Bonham, Rahman, & Khush, 2016).

Although the pandemic may exacerbate structural problems in the water sector, it also reveals structural strengths that may make it possible to tackle new challenges. Structural weaknesses include insufficient infrastructure, funding and governance for sanitation, hygiene and water resources management. Weak political support for negotiating disputed transboundary or locally used water resources may also increase tensions. But institutions for water and environmental diplomacy could prove to be structural strengths for addressing new challenges created by the pandemic. The existing institutional infrastructure for environmental monitoring and enforcement, including by civil society, can also help create decentralised responses to current challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic sheds light on harsh inequalities in access to safe water and the resulting health risks. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is particularly difficult: Nearly 63 per cent of city dwellers live in areas severely affected by the pandemic and have no WASH. Regional sanitation coverage is the lowest worldwide; unimproved sanitation services and defecating in public are widespread (UNICEF & WHO, 2019). The lack of handwashing facilities<sup>28</sup> and contaminated drinking water put these populations at higher risk of contracting the coronavirus (Courage & Setsoafia, 2020). The case of Kenya illustrates the manifold challenges related to WASH coverage for poor and vulnerable population groups. Especially women and children risk getting infected while queuing at crowded boreholes or wells, where they also face higher levels of crime, especially at night

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28 According to the WHO, improving WASH would save at least 9 per cent of the global disease burden and over 6 per cent of all deaths.

when water stations are deserted (OHCHR, 2020). Residents of informal settlements in Kenya pay up to 50 times more for a litre of water than middle class households, and in many places, handwashing is an unaffordable luxury (OHCHR, 2020). In refugee camps there and elsewhere, and in (post-)conflict countries like Somalia and the DRC (Obiwulu & Abia, 2020; UNSOM, 2020), WASH infrastructure is particularly weak, even in health facilities (World Bank, 2020d). As a consequence, international pandemic support focuses on improving access to safe water and soap for medical staff and patients. Lack of WASH also multiplies the negative effects of lockdowns: Lockdowns of 14 days threaten the water and food security of nearly 70 per cent of Africans (see also Section 3.2.4) (Harrisberg & Lungelo, 2020).

In many African countries, the lack of wastewater treatment further amplifies the risks of COVID-19 spread because the coronavirus can survive for several days in untreated sewage (Bhowmick et al., 2020). Medical and single-use products and chemicals from hand sanitiser and drugs exacerbate environmental and water pollution due to inadequate waste management.

Chronic lack of funding for water infrastructure and services, as well as to expand them, rehabilitate assets and make other capital expenditures, along with greater delays in implementing these tasks, compound all the other problems. While these challenges are familiar to the WASH sector, they are just as relevant for water management yet attract less attention. The infrastructure for water mobilisation, storage and distribution, sewage and drainage, wastewater treatment and disposal cannot cope with growing populations and climate change. Current circumstances make it more difficult to maintain and expand this infrastructure – which can negatively affect water provision and wastewater treatment, as well as food and energy production.

Water utilities are also affected by the pandemic, which could seriously affect water supplies. According to the IFC (2020), water utilities will earn much less revenue due to declining water demand by large industrial and commercial users (an average 27%, which could significantly impact the whole supply chain) and the partial suspension of water charges in Ghana, the DRC, Burkina Faso and Morocco. However, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest people have no WASH to begin with. Water utilities have operational difficulties due to the reduced availability of chemicals for water treatment, fuel for water pumps and spare parts. The COVID-19 pandemic also increases costs for accessing water points and purchasing adequate protective equipment for staff.

The pandemic may also worsen already weak water governance and integrated water resources management and threaten water security. Climate change impacts and resource overuse in North Africa and many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa are already reducing water availability and are expected to escalate. Furthermore, bureaucratic water institutions with complicated institutional responsibilities and tariff regimes like those in Ghana thwart efforts to limit COVID-19 spread (Duti, 2020).

Finally, the pandemic will likely increase local and transboundary water conflicts. The lack of face-to-face consultations and highly sensitive negotiations on transboundary environmental issues may lead to arbitrary, unequal or unsustainable use of resources, which can create conflict. When economic decline increases pressure on national governments and local populations in transboundary areas, tension over resources can escalate. In Senegal,

new restrictions to water access during the pandemic have already created civil unrest (Africa Times, 2020). Difficulties in data provision for transboundary resource governance that are caused by lockdowns, along with limited technical and financial capacities, may negatively impact knowledge, decision-making and cooperation.

### 3.4.3 Biodiversity

Rich in biodiversity, Africa has several biodiversity hotspots and some of the world's most intact assemblages of large mammals. Yet the absence of adequate responses to the reasons for natural resource overexploitation constitute a key structural weakness regarding conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity in Africa. Increasing demand for natural resources due to high rates of population growth and unsustainable extraction creates enormous stress (UNEP, 2016). Deforestation and forest degradation are especially tough challenges as logging and mining companies increasingly encroach on remote areas (Edwards et al., 2014). Urbanisation, biofuel plantations and commercial and subsistence agriculture are other major causes (UNEP, 2016). In past decades, intensive bushmeat hunting has contributed to the “empty forest syndrome” that causes entire ecosystems to deteriorate, threatening the rural population's existence in the long run (Hance, 2009). Huge declines are occurring in all major species – particularly in West and Central Africa. Across Africa, habitats are disappearing, despite minor improvements in some regions: Since 2000, rates of deforestation have fallen in the Congo Basin and marginal gains in the extent of mangroves have been realised around the Gulf of Guinea and along the coast of Tanzania (UNEP, 2016).

One partial structural strength related to conservation can be observed in growing political support for protected areas. Since 1990, protected area coverage has steadily increased (UNEP, 2016). There are now 7,800 protected areas totalling 5.3 million km<sup>2</sup> – some 17 per cent of Africa's surface area (Lindsey et al., 2020). That meets the “protected area target” of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Considerable regional variations are found across the continent, with some countries like Morocco, Namibia, Congo Republic and Tanzania classifying more than a third of their territory as “protected” although little information is available regarding the ecological representativeness and management of protected areas. CBD country reports suggest that much more needs to be done, including beefing up financial and institutional capacities. It is also crucial to engage local communities living in and around protected areas whose rights and livelihoods should not be negatively affected by protected areas. Negative impacts include protected wild animals raiding crops and blocked access to traditional hunting and pasture grounds (UNEP, 2016). Finally, merely listing land and water as protected areas does not address the main drivers of overexploitation.

In reaction to COVID-19, countries across all groups generally tend to de-prioritise conservation efforts as they focus on interrupting transmission of the coronavirus (IDDRI, 2020), with very similar general patterns of pandemic effects in highly biodiverse African countries.<sup>29</sup> Still, countries' economic capacities affect their conservation efforts during the

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29 Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on biodiversity, nature conservation and related livelihoods in Africa are primarily due to a country's biodiversity and ecological sensitivity, which do not necessarily correlate with its socio-economic or conflict-related classifications. For instance, Mali and Madagascar are both LDCs, but Madagascar is much more biologically diverse than Mali.

pandemic. South Africa, for example, continues to deploy significantly more financial and technical resources for species conservation than Madagascar.

There are mixed indications about whether decreased industrial activity in response to COVID-19 gives nature some repose. For instance, in the first weeks of the pandemic, the South African government halted all mining operations (Ahmed, 2020). Several mines had to shut down due to government regulation and/or workers testing positive for the novel coronavirus (Laing, 2020). Disruptions in economic production and dramatic drops in the prices of natural resource commodities also caused mining operations to stop or downsize (Laing, 2020). But it cannot yet be ascertained if such interruptions open a window of opportunity for South Africa's biodiversity to recover. Chances are that there will be no major long-term effects as companies are eager to resume operation and alternatives like autonomous mining are likely to be introduced soon (Ahmed, 2020). Moreover, in the DRC, the world's largest cobalt producer and Africa's biggest copper exporter, operations in isolated mining areas continue despite major declines in revenues (Mining Review, 2020; Omondi, 2020).

There are also clear signs that the pandemic exacerbates the underfunding of protected areas (Waithaka, 2020) and their overreliance on tourism. In 2015, Africa earned USD 142 million in fees for visits to protected areas, which largely flowed into protected area management. The abrupt end to international tourism dramatically decreased funds (Thoumi & Waugh, 2020). Moreover, as African countries quickly imposed lockdowns, workplaces were shut, "non-essential" staff in protected areas were let go and important supply chains disrupted – severely impacting critical day-to-day maintenance and management of protected area operations. A survey of 19 African national protected area agencies reveals that 47 per cent expect to have to close for good if the lockdown lasts more than three months and only 21 per cent believe that they will be able to maintain operations for more than six months under lockdown (Waithaka, 2020).

Beyond the general lack of park management, there is not yet any conclusive evidence whether lockdowns have increased high-value poaching, such as for rhino horns and elephant tusks, and illegal wildlife trade. Rhinoceros poaching in South Africa, home to some 80 per cent of the world's rhino population, is a case in point (France24, 2020). According to some reports, poaching is on the rise due to lockdowns. Wilderness areas usually frequented by large numbers of tourists and their guides are now patrolled by just a few thousand rangers (Roth, 2020), giving poachers more freedom to operate (Knorovsky, 2020; Matthews, 2020; Roth, 2020). Yet South Africa's Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries highlighted a "significant decline" in rhino poaching after the introduction of lockdown measures (Tagziria, 2020). This is because anti-poaching rangers are identified as essential workers and continue to scout national parks (France24, 2020). Thermal drones are also being deployed to detect signs of illegal poaching and logging (Matthews, 2020) and dozens of rhinos have been dehorned to make them unattractive for poachers (Sishi & Cocks, 2020).

Finally, it is well documented that the COVID-19 health crisis tremendously increases pressure for poor people to overuse natural resources for their own consumption or sale to urban and international markets. As people across Africa lose their jobs and incomes and food markets are closed due to the pandemic, many turn to poaching bushmeat – especially informal day labourers and those employed in the nature-based tourism industry (Matthews,

2020; WEF, 2020). The illegal use of protected area resources is facilitated by the absence of rangers and tourists (Knorovsky, 2020; Vyawahare, 2020).

## 4 Conclusions: empirical evidence for sustainable and cohesive development

In Africa, the pandemic is likely to set back the substantial progress of the last decade, doubly challenging sustainable development in Africa and elsewhere. Policies must now focus on recovering previous achievements while also fostering structural transformations towards sustainable economies and societies. The task ahead is to reset policy-making and global development cooperation. This study provides empirical evidence for such policy-making. Below, we summarise the main findings regarding structural strengths and weaknesses (Section 4.1), identify policy implications of the empirical evidence (Section 4.2) and recommend specific policies for different domains (Section 4.3). Figure 1 summarises the distinction we make between direct and indirect effects of the pandemic and policy responses, and their relation to economic, social, political and environmental structures.

### 4.1 Summary of findings: structural strengths and weaknesses revealed by the pandemic

Overall, direct health impacts have been more limited in Africa than in other world regions. However, the continent has been badly hit by the indirect effects of lockdown measures there and worldwide. Social, economic, political and environmental structures magnify these effects: Inequalities that were high before the pandemic are likely to grow. Obviously, faulty structures already existed. But the health crisis has brought them to the fore.

Below, we summarise the most relevant structural strengths and weaknesses of the three country groups (LDCs, MICs and conflict-affected), with a rough overview presented in Tables 7a and 7b.<sup>30</sup> The cross-national perspective must not obscure the fact that country contexts are *specific*. Readers interested in such insights should read Appendix 2.

#### 4.1.1 Direct effects and structural strengths and weaknesses

The magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic's direct impacts and the state responses vary according to structural differences in the three country groups. MICs, with the highest numbers of cases and deaths, have implemented the most stringent policies. One reason for such restrictive responses could be the limited social cohesion in these countries.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, MICs have better health system capacities and capabilities in urban and rural areas that can deal with the pandemic's long-term direct effects. Some LDCs have deployed the effective contact tracing and surveillance systems introduced during the Ebola epidemic and thus have had less stringent lockdowns. Greater preparedness for health emergencies makes

30 The empirical evidence of these findings was detailed in Chapter 3, and main findings summed up in "Highlight" boxes scattered throughout the text.

31 Social cohesion influences policy responses, not deaths. Effective policies that take into account the needs of different population groups and their specific vulnerabilities mitigate death risks and rates.

LDCs less likely to suffer from the pandemic's negative direct effects than MICs. Conflict-affected countries have smaller numbers of cases and deaths. However, they have the highest CFRs and low healthcare capacities, and are expected to face the pandemic's largest long-term negative direct effects.

#### 4.1.2 Indirect effects due to structural strengths and weaknesses

Three country groups with typical but unlike socio-economic structures constituted our basis for empirically analysing economic, social, political and environmental fields in MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected countries. Not surprisingly, they were differently impacted. Except for Nigeria (Section 3.3.2), conflict-affected countries have very limited structural *capacities* while MICs and LDCs have greater structural *strengths*. We also found unexpected differences between MICs and LDCs. Social cohesion, an important structural factor for societal pandemic response, tends to be greater in LDCs; MICs cannot count on as much trust and cooperation.<sup>32</sup> A more cohesive society seems to be a structural strength that limits the need for the most stringent lockdown measures and moderates the pandemic's indirect effects.

##### *Structural strengths of MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected countries*

Transnational action and standardisation were crucial for swift, successful reactions to the pandemic in all three country groups. The CDC Africa provided effective responses and helped many countries deal with the health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Structural strengths of MICs served as safeguards in various ways. Although their greater connectedness to the global economy made them more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic in the short term, their more diversified economies present better prospects for macroeconomic recovery. While it will be hard for MICs to counter the pandemic's negative social effects, especially the increase in extremely poor people, they are able to provide greater health security and functioning food markets. Improved revenue collection systems help MICs balance trade-offs between short- and long-term measures for coping with the pandemic's effects. WASH infrastructures – in some urban areas – are also beneficial. Higher levels of citizen participation in MICs can create more inclusive institutions. Some MICs are likely to have green recoveries and pro-active climate policies because they are already engaged in climate resilience programmes and have political support for protected areas.

LDCs stand out because of their higher levels of social cohesion: Individuals and groups trust each other and the state and cooperate to counter the pandemic's effects. Although states, donors and the economy need more than solidarity and social action during crises, social cohesion is a critical source of immediate and medium-term help. GDP growth is more stable in LDCs than in the other country groups,<sup>33</sup> and although low, recoveries are still possible. LDCs have a variety of political regimes, some of which had become more

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32 Social cohesion refers to “the vertical and the horizontal relations amongst members of society and the state, which hold society together. Social cohesion is characterized by a set of attitudes and manifestations that includes trust, an inclusive identity, and cooperation for the common good. It is the glue that holds society together” (Leininger et al., 2020). For a more detailed discussion of social cohesion, see Section 2.3.

33 In a pandemic, low global market integration, which is normally viewed as slowing economic growth, plays out positively because lower connectedness implies lower risks of infection.

democratic before the pandemic and have implemented more relaxed lockdown measures. Countries in this group are working to build climate resilience.

By definition, conflict-affected countries have the fewest structural strengths for coping with a pandemic. Societal self-organisation and subsistence agriculture serve as safety nets in areas which lack basic infrastructure. In some countries in this group, internationally supported programmes to protect biodiversity and promote climate mitigation encourage political support for protected areas.

	<b>MICs</b>	<b>LDCs</b>	<b>Conflict-affected</b>
<b>Economic structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher levels of economic diversification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable GDP growth</li> </ul>	
<b>Social structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher levels of health security (surveillance, laboratories etc.)</li> <li>• Functioning food markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of health security (surveillance, laboratories)</li> <li>• Subsistence agriculture serves as a safety net</li> <li>• Higher levels of trust and cooperation within societies (social cohesion)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsistence agriculture serves as a safety net</li> </ul>
<b>Political structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher levels of political participation (in some countries)</li> <li>• Higher revenue collection capacities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some LDCs have improved democracy levels in the past 10 years</li> <li>• Higher levels of trust and cooperation within societies (social cohesion)</li> </ul>	
<b>Environmental structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some political support for protected areas</li> <li>• Engagement in climate-resilience programmes</li> <li>• WASH in urban areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some political support for protected areas</li> <li>• Engagement in climate-resilience programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some political support for protected areas</li> </ul>

Source: Authors

### *Structural weaknesses of MICs, LDCs and conflict-affected countries*

The structural weaknesses of MICs are likely to amplify the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The country group with the highest levels of economic inequality and low-quality and ineffective social protections in largely informal labour markets, MICs are likely to experience the largest relative increase in poverty.<sup>34</sup> It is important to highlight that poverty profiles will change because poverty will hit more urban dwellers who work in other (informal) sectors than agriculture. Pressure on natural resources has also been growing at the same time that the management and infrastructure to protect these resources and related livelihoods are being defunded. With expected contractions in GDP growth (-3.6%) and bigger budget deficits (-9.6% on average), MICs will also have difficulties collecting revenue to recover from the pandemic. That said, the most important determinant is the

<sup>34</sup> Mainly because of MICs' low poverty rate prior to the pandemic.



economic structure, which varies in this group: More diversified economies are less likely to have to struggle with macroeconomic and green recoveries. MICs' strong dependence on commodity exports, especially oil, and in some countries, tourism, dims prospects for a swift recovery that would allow the state to address pressing social issues such as wastewater infrastructure and regulating and monitoring water quality and quantity. Before the pandemic, there had been more and more protests demanding better living conditions; then, in reaction to lockdown policies, protests turned into riots in many places. While democratic MICs have lifted restrictions on freedoms as soon as permitted by the health situation, authoritarian regimes have used the pandemic to expand executive power and repress. Post-pandemic tax collection is likely to become more aggressive and hit the most vulnerable social groups. Finally, the pandemic appears to be creating more opportunities for corruption.

LDCs have low capacities and economic resources for inclusive and green recovery programmes. Their growing current account deficits are mostly due to dependence on commodity exports. Negative GDP estimates (-3.3% for 2021), widening fiscal deficits (10.6%), increasing inflation and generally weak revenue collection capacities (less than 20% of GDP) are severe challenges for LDCs. Pre-pandemic poverty was very high – with 63.6 per cent of the population “poor” and 39.4 per cent living in “extreme poverty”. Limited access to essential health services, particularly in rural areas, and scarce and ineffective social protections will make the COVID-19 pandemic's negative impacts long-lived. During pandemics, incomes become uncertain and unemployment increases worldwide – showing that high dependence on remittances is yet another structural problem. Some LDCs are experiencing increased autocratisation during the pandemic, while post-conflict LDCs are particularly vulnerable to renewed violence as a result of histories of prior violent conflict. Although environmental issues affect all three country groups, LDCs have particularly serious challenges, especially to the livelihoods of vulnerable groups due to the lack of WASH and overexploited natural resources.

Structural weaknesses of conflict-affected countries make it difficult for them to tackle recovery. This country group has the worst growth projections (-7.6%). Their extremely high dependence on natural resources and extremely low revenue collection capabilities lower their prospects for any recovery. The lack of social protection systems amplifies the COVID-19 pandemic's effects and explains the anticipated rise in poverty and inequality: In LDCs, 60 per cent of the population will suffer from food insecurity in 2021. With remittances further decreasing, LDCs will be unable to help the poor and vulnerable. State institutional capacities and capabilities are extremely low or inexistent in LDCs, where one of the main players that could be expected to tackle such a crisis – the state – plays a negligible role. Because people have very low trust in state institutions, it is difficult to effectively implement lockdown policies. Since the start of the pandemic, calls for ceasefires have gone unheeded and many international mediation efforts have been put on hold. This is especially worrying where violent conflicts erupted *during the pandemic* – as in Ethiopia in November 2020. Finally, a lack of conflict regulation efforts will likely increase conflicts over natural resources.

<b>Table 7b: Structural weaknesses</b>			
	<b>MICs</b>	<b>LDCs</b>	<b>Conflict-affected</b>
<b>Economic structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource-intensive MICs are less resilient</li> <li>• Oil-exporting MICs are vulnerable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer resources for recovery</li> <li>• Scant economic diversification</li> <li>• Low revenue-collection capacities and weak current accounts</li> <li>• High debt distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High dependence on natural resources</li> <li>• Extremely low revenue-collecting capacities</li> </ul>
<b>Social structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-quality, ineffective social protection</li> <li>• High horizontal and economic inequality</li> <li>• Very informal labour markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited access to health services</li> <li>• Low-quality, ineffective social protection</li> <li>• High horizontal and economic inequality</li> <li>• Very informal labour markets</li> <li>• High percentages of absolute poverty and food insecurity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited or no access to health services</li> <li>• Inexistent or low-quality, ineffective social protection</li> <li>• High horizontal income inequality</li> <li>• Very informal labour markets</li> <li>• High percentages of absolute poverty</li> </ul>
<b>Political structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authoritarian structures and repression in some MICs</li> <li>• More and more riots</li> <li>• Growing opportunities for corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some autocratisation over the past 10 years</li> <li>• High dependence on remittances</li> <li>• High risk of renewed violence in post-conflict societies</li> <li>• Growing opportunities for corruption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk of violent conflicts flaring up</li> <li>• Limited international efforts to contain conflicts</li> <li>• Very low institutional capacities and capabilities</li> <li>• Very little trust in state institutions</li> <li>• High dependence on remittances</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing pressure on natural resources linked to resource-dependent livelihoods</li> <li>• Inadequate waste-water infrastructure</li> <li>• Little water quality and quantity regulation and monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing pressure on natural resources linked to resource-dependent livelihoods</li> <li>• Low access to and investments in WASH</li> <li>• Little water quality and quantity regulation and monitoring</li> <li>• Insufficient responses to natural resource overexploitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing pressure on natural resources linked to resource-dependent livelihoods</li> <li>• Low access to and investments in WASH</li> <li>• Little water quality and quantity regulation and monitoring</li> <li>• Insufficient responses to natural resource overexploitation</li> </ul>
Source: Authors			

## 4.2 General policy implications: The right recovery policies

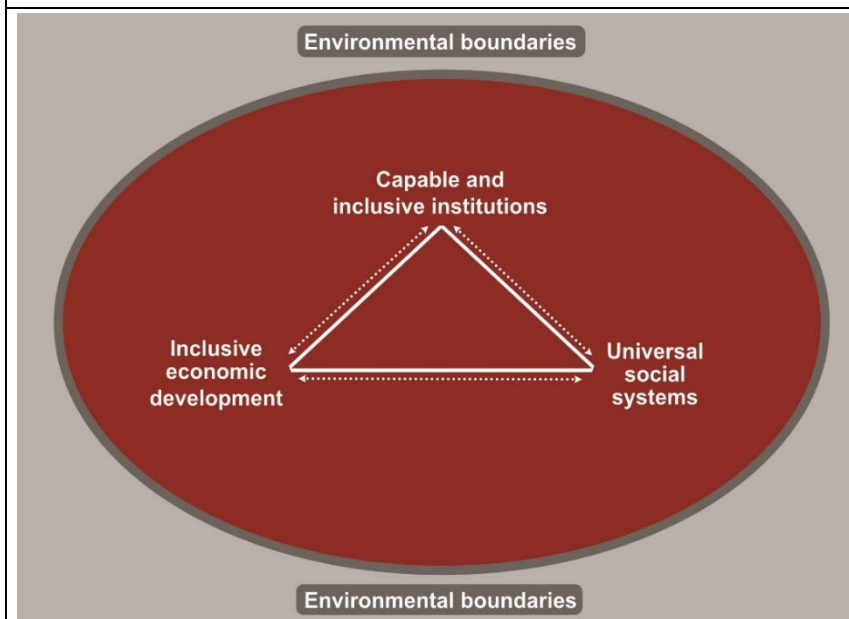
These descriptions of the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects in contexts with major structural weaknesses indicate that there are no easy solutions for recovery. Nonetheless, the pandemic constitutes an eventuality for African and international policy-makers to structurally transform economies and political and social systems. Identifying structural strengths and weaknesses leads us to make the following general policy implications regarding strategies and institutional reforms for better recovery. We first describe *what* policies and priorities are needed for structural transformations and then outline *how various development policy approaches* can address them.

### *Policy priorities for better recovery and structural transformations*

Our findings on the role social cohesion plays in effectively responding to the pandemic indicate that development strategies should focus on (i) material and immaterial investments in good and trustful relationships within a society and between it and the state as well as (ii) incentives to increase individual cooperation for the common good. This is particularly important for MICs, where rising inequality and social tensions have led to severe lockdown policies and very negative consequences of the pandemic. Higher levels of social cohesion in LDCs in states that rely on social actors’ increased cooperation resulted in less severe lockdowns and milder pandemic effects. These findings imply that uneven economic growth destroys social cohesion – which is vital for sustainable development.

The findings imply a triad of priorities that are all equally important and related (Figure 22). Inclusive and green economic development must be linked to creating and improving universal social systems (health, education, social protection). Capable and inclusive political institutions must be designed to collect revenue and provide public goods. None of these priorities will be effective without saving ecosystems: Green recovery is key to public policy. Specific policy recommendations for each of these priorities are found in Section 4.3.

**Figure 22: Priorities for an integrated and systemic approach**



Source: Authors

### *Addressing priorities for better recovery and structural transformation*

Structural transformations imply the need for both recovery policies and redesigned institutions and systems (Zusman 2020). Focusing on one sector or one specific reform project will not suffice. **There is no alternative to integrated and systemic approaches**, as both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 suggest. At the same time, mounting financial constraints due to the pandemic make it necessary to prioritise certain reforms. Although this might not be immediately obvious, integrated approaches are the proper starting point to design more effective policies (Breuer et al., 2019). Integrated approaches identify policy priorities and create synergies between them and other policy goals.

The socio-political tensions observed in African societies and internationally mean that **structural transformations are likely to be conflictual**. We are aware that many structural transformations have led to unrest and violence in recent history. Reforming economic and political systems in keeping with these three priorities will trigger power struggles over vested interests. Major economic and social uncertainties for many individuals and governments will likely aggravate conflicts. Inclusive democratic institutions and mechanisms for peacefully resolving societal conflict must be established and supported. Policies should consider the unintended effects that their measures may have on conflicts.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened calls to **change modalities of global development cooperation**. Although a “paradigm shift” in cooperation between Africa and other international actors has long been on the agenda, most OECD countries and the EU have made no structural changes (Brown, 2020). Financial asymmetries, donors’ accountability to their electorates and historical legacies make fundamental shifts difficult. However, the diversification of African countries’ international relations and the pressing needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic create a historical opportunity (Hackenesch and Leininger et al., 2019). The unavoidable paradigmatic change must include at least the following four elements:

- a) Multi-directional, open-ended exchanges to jointly develop solutions for global problems and share lessons learnt about tackling the COVID-19 pandemic’s direct and indirect effects.
- b) Multilateral fora for effective multi-stakeholder dialogue with Africa and also between African countries and other regions. The G20 could provide a forum for OECD countries, G20 members and African countries to begin this dialogue and prepare policy-making in more formal multilateral settings.
- c) People-to-people formats between social movements, NGOs and municipalities (like the “*Deutsche Städtetag*” that brings together officials from numerous German cities) are important. Policy-makers should encourage German civil society to “think globally” and support transnational exchange.
- d) German engagement for global development must consider geostrategy because non-OECD donors are also promoting their development and political models on the African continent. Open and transparent fora for inter-governmental dialogue and people-to-people discussions can help to foster models for inclusive sustainable development.

### 4.3 Specific recommendations for German and European Africa policies

A substantial part of German and European development cooperation concerns working with Africa. Strategies for cooperating with the continent were strengthened and financial resources increased after 2017, when the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) presented the “Marshall Plan with Africa” and the German G20 presidency focused on cooperation with Africa. Increasing geopolitical power shifts in global politics make cooperation with Africa critical. Germany and Europe began by focussing on economic cooperation and private-sector development. However, the coronavirus pandemic has clearly shown that although private sector investments are important, business alone neither makes societies more resilient and cohesive, nor does it foster the necessary structural transformations.

The following specific recommendations for African policy-makers and international development cooperation are based on the analysis of structural strengths and weaknesses and broader policy implications outlined in Section 4.2.

#### 4.3.1 Responding to the pandemic: political framing and dialogue

*Build a new political framing that takes the “societal turn” into account and shapes future cooperation with Africa.* The new realities created by the pandemic make it necessary to reconceptualise Africa policies. Political framing helps to create visions and define priorities and goals. Based on the policy implications identified above, Africa policies must consider the societal turn in global development policies. Emphasis on structural reforms, green recovery plans and peaceful transformation show that new Africa policies are for the long term.

*Create fora for dialoguing about policy and societal responses to the pandemic.* Amongst the countries that have most successfully countered the COVID-19 pandemic’s direct effects are African MICs like Ghana, Senegal and Morocco. Establishing virtual dialogues between policy-makers and practitioners and between civil society groups and business can create joint knowledge in the Global North and South. Sharing experiences informs all partners about lessons learnt and can improve relations between countries.

#### 4.3.2 Inclusive economic development

*Support African countries in global value chains.* Supply chains can be made more resilient by diversifying both production location as well as sourcing and selling strategies. Diversification can be supported through development policy that promotes education, training and productive capabilities in African countries – including sectors on the technological frontier, such as digital economies, which proved to be resilient during the pandemic. In the short term, governments can support private sector efforts to make value chains more resilient by publishing data on potential supply chain bottlenecks and creating stress tests for essential supply chains. Rebounding from the COVID-19 economic shock hinges on a global environment that fosters trade in global value chains. Their complicated web shows how detrimental pandemic-related trade barriers like export restrictions can be, especially for countries that depend on imports in order to be integrated into GVCs (Pahl, Brandi, Schwab, & Stender, 2020). To safeguard supplies of medical goods and limit trade

restrictions, one possibility is requesting governments to keep their import tariffs at current low levels in exchange for exporter states not arbitrarily restricting exports (Evenett & Winters, 2020).

*Support economic diversification and the AfCFTA.* The pandemic underscores the importance of supporting the diversification of economies to buffer the long-term indirect effects of external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. In Africa, diversification efforts focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which have generally suffered the most from pandemic shocks. Helping their liquidity positions will permit them to revive quickly. Continued support for the AfCFTA can also help to diversify African economies.

*Support debt sustainability in African countries.* The debt distress of many LICs in Africa (IMF, 2020d) will create a significant funding shortfall of some USD 890 billion between 2020 and 2023 (IMF, 2020a). International financial institutions have already provided a large volume of financial assistance and, with the G20 and the Paris Club, have initiated two processes for providing timely liquidity to developing countries: the “Debt Service Suspension Initiative” (DSSI) and the “Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI” (Paris Club / G20, 2020a und 2020b). To provide enough breathing space for developing countries, the G20 and Paris Club should prolong the DSSI by at least a year. The BMZ can lead by supporting an extended debt moratorium and accelerating implementation of the “Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI” for poor, highly indebted African countries. The EU and its member states should use their political clout to support African countries on debt relief and debt service suspensions and foster dialogue with key stakeholders, including China. The BMZ should also facilitate dialogue about ways to enhance the transparency of debt contracts through the adoption of uniform principles for responsible lending and borrowing and innovations like an international debt registry.

*Support macroeconomic stability and domestic resource mobilisation.* Very large current account deficits should be addressed because they make economies vulnerable, for example, due to changes in the price of imported goods after external shocks. Evidence suggests that African countries that utilise imports to improve productive capacities are likely to industrialise and reduce their current account deficits. Hence, supporting supply-side policies to improve the competitiveness of domestic industries and mobilising domestic resources, such as by limiting dependence on official development assistance and remittances, can help to reduce current account deficits.

*Improve tax systems and avoid pressure on vulnerable groups suffering from financial constraints.* Domestic tax systems need to be broadened and households and assets must be more effectively taxed. These goals cannot be met quickly under the current conditions, however. In this regard, it is crucial to “do no harm”: Aggressively taxing vulnerable groups must be avoided, and fossil fuel subsidies could be reduced.

#### 4.3.3 Universal social protection systems to overcome poverty and inequality

*Invest in universal social systems.* Systems covering universal health, education and social protection policies can be established and supported by prioritising three approaches (Strupat and Marschall, 2020a): (i) substantially increase fiscal capacities to fund social systems, (ii) broaden and combine existing social policies to include people left behind and

integrate instruments from different social policy fields into a comprehensive social system that also covers the informal sector; and (iii) make it possible for social systems to quickly adapt to new crises by changing benefit levels, operations and coverage. The pandemic could be the occasion to implement a universal basic income in many countries. For the poorest countries where this may not be financially feasible, international donors or a global fund could help to finance initiatives. Social protection systems that are resilient to systemic risks, including pandemics, must be built.

*Invest more in medical, surveillance, laboratory and testing capacities.* Shortfalls in medical protective equipment must be increased through regional and international efforts. In the medium to long term, African countries should more systematically strengthen their health systems and aim to provide universal health coverage: Access to quality essential healthcare services, including safe medicines, and social health protection for costly illnesses is key to enhancing health, social cohesion and sustainable human and economic development.

*Invest more in One-Health activities.* In order to prevent and better prepare for future epidemics and pandemics, three things must be prioritised (Strupat and Marschall, 2020b): (i) investments in robust and well-prepared health systems that are able to prevent, treat and systematically contain the spread of infectious diseases; (ii) support for countries to address potential sources of risk, such as informal animal markets (“wet markets”) where viruses and other pathogens are often transmitted; and (iii) establishing and managing conservation areas to provide refuge for wild animals.

*Recognize the importance of agriculture as a fallback option not only in the COVID-19 crisis but also in other epidemics and for other collective and individual risks.* The resilience of most households can be enhanced by promoting various types of sustainable agricultural systems such as kitchen gardening, low-input agriculture and semi-professional cultivation systems. In poor countries, the food industry is often the most important economic sector and is a suitable funding area for agricultural sector partners.

#### 4.3.4 Capable and inclusive institutions to enable dignified and peaceful transformations

*Stay engaged and alert.* If the international community continues to focus too narrowly on their own national rather than on global problems, conflicts will intensify and spread. The COVID-19 pandemic has pulled the plug on international peace efforts including peacebuilding initiatives and mediation. However, supporting these instruments is vital to fostering peace and preventing renewed violence.

*Do not only invest in conflict prevention in post-conflict countries.* The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic raise the risk of violent conflict in LDCs and MICS. Several pandemic-related trends, including rising unemployment and authoritarian backsliding, have already led to discontent and political violence. Post-conflict countries risk serious eruptions of violence, and in all country groups, the pandemic’s adverse effects on economic, social and political structures can provide breeding grounds for violence. Conflict prevention must include strengthening open and participative (democratic) processes to help societies peacefully resolve conflicts.

*Make support for democratic institutions integral to COVID-19 measures.* It is too early to say whether recent protests are harbingers of democratic evolution or demise. However, recent progress in democratic reforms seems to be at risk in MICs and in some LDCs. In their eagerness to contain the pandemic, some countries have endangered their institutional consolidation by introducing measures without appropriate democratic caution.<sup>35</sup> That democracies cannot act as unshackled as autocracies can is sometimes interpreted as a weakness. It is important to remember, however, that the long-term benefit of greater control in democracies is maintaining the rule of the people. International support for democracies must consider how to protect and improve democratic institutions and behaviour to help overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future crises. In all country groups, including (post-)conflict countries, participation must be increased and channelled in order to reform polities and design policies that cater to the needs of the population.

*Keep migration and displacement high on international agendas and commitments.* Global refugee norms, such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), should be maintained and monetary flows to hosting regions, countries and communities continued. National governments must enhance access to health services, sanitary measures and primary care for mobile populations – particularly those vulnerable to environmental risks throughout the Global South. Regional organisations can play important roles in sustaining these efforts both politically and financially. Local governments and administrations, along with community stakeholders, particularly in (urban) migrant and refugee “hotspots”, should familiarise the public with rules of conduct and promote them.

#### 4.3.5 Green recovery to save ecosystems and livelihoods

*Governments and development cooperation should invest in low-carbon, climate-resilient recovery measures.* More investments in resilience and adaptation were urgently required before the pandemic; the global health emergency must not be used to postpone implementing climate policies now. Countries must be helped to update national climate plans that incorporate the impacts and opportunities created by the pandemic. A long-term policy shift towards integrated and comprehensive risk management is needed to strengthen climate resilience and address other systemic risks.

*Safe, affordable and adequate water and wastewater services (WASH) are key to preventing COVID-19 spread and achieving food security, health and other SDGs.* Especially in informal settlements and refugee camps, urban areas and health facilities, access to safe water resources and preventing water pollution must be ensured so as to limit coronavirus transmission at collection, distribution and consumption points. Better analysis of wastewater from treatment plants and public toilets can help to detect and monitor the spread of the virus and make related measures more effective (Mallapaty, 2020). Full or partial funding to cover the water and sewerage bills of poor population groups should be extended to all households not connected to water supplies. Meanwhile, during the pandemic, investing in new technologies and accelerating their use can considerably improve the monitoring and managing of water quality and quantity and contribute to better modelling and forecasting systems (for water provision, food and energy production, flood and drought

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35 Autocratic Morocco has liberalised but not democratised its institutions (Houdret & Harnisch, 2019).



monitoring etc.). Sustainable management of water resources is key to WASH access and needs more political and financial support.

*Climate change observation and research need targeted support.* Interruptions of regular flows of data regarding the oceans, atmosphere and earth, and information on climate parameters and GHG concentrations may affect global and regional climate assessments (WHO, 2020; Heslop et al., 2020). Weather and climate observation systems in Africa critically need investments in technology and research to promote informed policy-making and resilient early warning systems.

*Renewable energy for low-carbon development and reliable energy sources are crucial during crises.* Investing in renewable energy in the region would not only boost green economic development but also strengthen resilience to global warming and future pandemics in key social sectors like health. Although Africa's renewable energy sector is likely to be negatively affected by supply chain disruptions, travel restrictions, regulatory and market uncertainties as well as by reduced financing, renewables have proved to be the energy sources that are most resilient to COVID-19 restrictions. Global demand is growing.

*A "better" recovery does not mean repurposing conservation funds for social causes.* Conservation protects livelihoods and must be supported, including through diversifying funding sources for protected areas. Ecotourism should be revived with broader structural reforms in Africa's tourism sector. While protected areas currently suffer from a lack of funds, evidence suggests that lucrative tourism reserves often displace local people and restrict their rightful access to their ancestral territories. A complete reconception of nature-based tourism would make human-rights-compatible ecotourism possible. Conservation policies should also not be limited to protected areas. For instance, interruptions in industrial activities like mining can provide the opportunity for designing greener post-crisis recoveries in sectors that destroy biodiversity. Such policies should strengthen rural people's resilience to future crises (including health emergencies and lockdowns) by building their capabilities to sustainably farm and manage livestock – and deflect pressure from endangered wild flora and fauna.



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**Appendix 1: List of countries per group**

<b>LDCs</b>	<b>MICs</b>	<b>Conflict-affected</b>
<i>Low-income</i>	<i>Lower-middle-income</i>	<i>High-intensity conflict</i>
Burundi	Cabo Verde	Libya*
Eritrea	Egypt, Arab Republic	Somalia
Ethiopia	Côte d'Ivoire	<i>Medium-intensity conflict</i>
Gambia, The	Ghana*	Burkina Faso
Guinea	Kenya	Cameroon
Guinea-Bissau	Morocco	Central African Republic (CAR)
Liberia	Tunisia	Chad
Madagascar	Zimbabwe	Congo, Democratic Republic of the (DRC)
Malawi	<i>Upper-middle-income</i>	Mali
Rwanda	Botswana*	Mozambique*
Sierra Leone*	Equatorial Guinea*	Niger
Sudan	Gabon*	Nigeria*
Togo	Namibia*	South Sudan
Uganda	South Africa**	
<i>Lower-middle-income</i>		
Algeria		
Angola*		
Benin		
Comoros		
Congo Republic		
Djibouti		
Lesotho		
Mauritania		
São Tome and Principe		
Senegal		
Tanzania*		
Zambia*		

*LDCs* stands for “least developed countries” according to the UN (2018); *MICs* refers to “middle-income countries” according to the World Bank (2020), which distinguishes between “lower-middle-income” or “LMIC” (USD 996 - 3,895 income per capita/per year) and “upper-middle-income” or “UMIC” (USD 3,896 - 12,055 income per capita/per year). *Conflict-affected countries* reflect the World Bank (2021) concept of a “conflict-affected situation”. Libya and Nigeria are the only MICs in this group.

\*Resource-rich countries.

## Appendix 2: Country-level structural strengths and weaknesses

This appendix provides case-based illustrations of specific structural strengths and weaknesses by country. One country per group (LDC, MIC and conflict-affected) is selected for more detailed analysis to enhance the discussions of the various groups in the main text.

### Economic and fiscal impacts (Section 3.1)

**Senegal (LDC)** is a non-resource-intensive and fairly diversified economy with a functioning health sector. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Senegal's macroeconomic prospects were positive; now the country is forecast to grow just 0.1 per cent in 2020, a 5.1 per cent drop from pre-pandemic forecasts due to tourism, transport and investment challenges (Figure 12). However, in contrast to most other African countries, Senegal is unlikely to suffer a recession. Contrary to earlier projections, Senegal's public deficit will nearly double – from -3.8 to -7.1 per cent, but limited monetary easing will keep inflation in check (AfDB, 2020, p. 95). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) rates Senegal's debt as sustainable with a moderate risk of debt distress (World Bank, 2020b). To ease the pandemic's social and economic effects, the government introduced one of the largest fiscal stimulus packages relative to GDP worldwide: about 7% of GDP (AfDB, 2020, p. 19). Like Rwanda, Senegal has been containing the spread of the coronavirus through early detection and good testing and treatment measures (Chapter 2) (AfDB, 2020, p. 38). Its e-commerce sector has also helped Senegal cope relatively well with the effects of the pandemic (UNCTAD, 2020). Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic's relatively limited indirect short-term impact on Senegal can be explained by structural factors such as the country's relatively limited economic vulnerability compared to resource-rich and less diversified economies. Sound policy responses in the economic and health sectors contribute to Senegal's good performance.

**Kenya (MIC)** was a non-resource-intensive economy with pre-pandemic sound macroeconomic fundamentals and one of Africa's most developed health sectors – ranked 55th in the world (GHSI, 2019). Kenya is less dependent on remittances than other African countries and has quite diversified global trade relations. In 2020, it was initially projected to enjoy 5.7 per cent GDP growth and to reduce its fiscal gap from 7.4 per cent of GDP in 2019 to 4.8 per cent. Things were looking good. Now Kenya has one of pandemic Africa's rosier economic forecasts: It is expected to grow by just 0.6 per cent in 2020 but to bounce back to 5.7 per cent in 2021. Like Senegal, Kenya implemented relatively stringent lockdown policies in response to the pandemic (Hale et al., 2020). Yet the pandemic exacerbated an existing vulnerability: one of the highest ratios of debt-servicing obligations to GDP in Africa. Kenya's fiscal deficit is now expected to widen to more than 8 per cent due to lower revenues and fiscal stimulus (AfDB, 2020). To finance its fiscal gap, Kenya has obtained assistance from the IMF's Rapid Credit Facility, which will bring its gross public debt close to 70 per cent of GDP (IMF, 2020c). The IMF updated Kenya's potential risk of debt distress as high but rated its debt as sustainable and expects the country's fiscal gap to narrow in the next years. Nevertheless, financial conditions have tightened for Kenya, which could only adopt small stimulus packages of 0.4 per cent of GDP in the fiscal year 2019/2020 and 0.5 per cent for 2020/2021 (AfDB, 2020, p.79).

**Chad (conflict-affected country)** is a resource-rich, oil-exporting, land-locked LDC characterised by political violence and repeated coup attempts. It is one of the world's

poorest countries and has a very weak health system, ranked 150 of 195 in the 2019 Global Health Index. While Chad's pre-pandemic prospects included projected growth of 5.5 per cent, a budget surplus of 2.2 per cent and a steadily decreasing current account deficit, the country was strongly impacted by the pandemic's economic consequences, especially due to its high dependence on oil (AfDB, 2020, p. 64). The pandemic's negative impact also comes from Chad's economic vulnerability due to its higher-than-African-average trade intensity with China, Europe and the United States: More than one third of its GDP results from trade with these partners (AfDB, 2020, p. 27). The country's GDP for 2020 is forecast to contract by 2.2 per cent and its current account deficit to reach 13.1 per cent of GDP (AfDB, 2020, p. 64). The IMF views Chad's current risk of overall debt distress as high, which makes it harder to use a fiscal gap to fund economic stimulus and health expenses (IMF, 2020b). This negative trend is further underscored by Chad's participation in the DSSI and its request for debt freezes from private creditors (Soto & Hojje, 2020). Chad's fiscal stimulus package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the smallest on the continent – less than 1 per cent of GDP (AfDB, 2020, p. 19). Overall, Chad illustrates the pattern identified above, namely that countries with constrained fiscal resources, debt sustainability challenges and resource dependencies are less economically resilient and more vulnerable to external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Employment and labour markets (Section 3.2.1)

**Ethiopia (LDC)** is known for its ambitious policies to modernise and promote structural transformation. Its government was one of the few to not implement major lockdown policies on the grounds that the indirect effect of economic recession would have a more negative impact than the COVID-19 pandemic. The government decided that since it could not provide economic support to all affected households and firms and the informal sector, it would prioritise modern revenue generators, especially manufacturing exporters and industrial parks. When global buyers stopped sourcing from Ethiopia, support packages were offered to avoid factory closures and protect jobs. For a few months, rail fares were reduced to zero and charges for dry ports and air freight reduced by half.

**Egypt (MIC)** is a moderately diversified economy with a large public sector that accounts for 25 per cent of all jobs, an even larger informal sector (54 per cent of all jobs) and a stunted private sector. Services account for half of total employment, with agriculture and industry each employing 25 per cent of Egyptian workers. In the second quarter of 2020, Egypt's unemployment rate surged to 9.6 per cent – from 7.5 per cent in the same quarter in 2019. The increase was mainly due to additional youth joblessness, which had previously been at 30 per cent. The government announced implementation of a support package of USD 6.329 million, equivalent to 2.5 per cent of GDP. Informal workers may not benefit from common support schemes implemented for the COVID-19 crisis, but a one-off grant of EGP 500 (~USD 32) was available for all seasonal workers who registered online with the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration. By 25 March 2020, around 130,000 workers – who largely worked informally in construction, agriculture, fishing and sanitation – had registered for the Irregular Employment Care Fund. In addition, the Labour Emergency Fund is disbursing emergency subsidies to workers in tourism, which employs 12.5 per cent of the labour force and is one of the hardest hit sectors. To help firms survive, the government has lowered electricity and gas prices for industry. Monetary measures include postponing instalments of bank loans, a debt relief initiative for individual borrowers and

two-year soft loans to tourism companies, hotels, tour operators, restaurants and tourism transport companies.

**Libya (conflict-affected)** has Africa's largest oil reserves and an economy almost entirely dependent on oil and gas exports. The country has been in a severe political crisis since civil war broke out in 2011. Libya now faces the triple shock of war, the COVID-19 pandemic and plummeting oil prices, which caused a 60 per cent drop in the value of its exports. Services account for 60 per cent of all employment, with industry and agriculture around 20 per cent each. Libya's services sector is almost entirely informal and includes a large smuggling economy that is dependent on relatively cheap domestic oil. Because of the security situation, Libya has the fifth highest unemployment rate in Africa (19%), with youth unemployment over 50 per cent. More and more people are reported to have lost their livelihoods and income and employees have been unpaid for months. Many small businesses have had to close and lay off employees. The government announced a stimulus package of USD 410 million (1% of GDP) but implementation is difficult and its policy for creating jobs, especially in the public sector, is showing limited effects.

#### Income poverty and inequality (Section 3.2.2)

In **Ethiopia (LDC)** 55 per cent of telephone survey respondents reported that their household incomes had been reduced or had evaporated, and 13 per cent had lost their jobs since COVID-19 appeared in the country. As Wieser, Ambel, Bundervoet and Haile (2020) show, effects were higher in urban areas, where 18 per cent reported losing their jobs against 10 per cent in rural areas.

For **South Africa (MIC)**, Jain, Budlender, Zizzamia and Bassier (2020) used data from a mobile-phone survey to produce one of the first detailed analyses of the COVID-19 pandemic economic impact. They note a 40 per cent net decline in active employment compared to pre-lockdown figures, mostly due to terminated working relationships, which may have long-term effects. They (indirectly) estimate that 15 to 30 per cent of the newly unemployed have become poor, or approximately 1 million individuals; when cohabiting family members are counted, the figure rises to 3 million. Social protection has provided insufficient coverage to mitigate the effects of unemployment. In April, nearly half (47%) of respondents said they could not afford enough food – more than twice the share of households who said they could not afford food at any period in 2017, according to a different survey. A recent United Nations Development Programme report forecast increases in poverty ranging from 44 to 66 per cent and inequality from 16 to 23 per cent (UNDP, 2020).

For the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (conflict-affected)** an increase of between 2.7 and 3.13 million extremely poor people has been predicted by the AfDB. Other studies report that the DRC will be amongst the four or five African countries who suffer most from the COVID-19 pandemic (Cilliers et al., 2020).

#### Case-based illustrations: Health (Section 3.2.3)

**South Africa (MIC)** is already showing the COVID-19 pandemic's detrimental effect on vaccination delivery. The South African Department of Health reports that national immunisation coverage in South Africa dropped from 82 per cent in April 2019 to 61 per

cent in April 2020, during the country's most severe lockdown. Most alarming is the sharp decrease in coverage of the second dose of the measles vaccine: from 77 per cent in April 2019 to 55 per cent in April 2020 (Baleta, 2020). South Africa's average child immunisation baseline (72%) is higher than other African countries, which is considered a structural strength with regard to indirect health impacts. However, it is not advisable to pause certain immunisation activities. Unlike other countries, South Africa does not face major shortages in medical treatments – partly because the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority has not endorsed using medicines to treat malaria or HIV for treating COVID-19.

**Nigeria (conflict-affected)** has plenty of experience with infectious diseases. One of the country's cornerstones is the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), which has efficiently provided relevant public health communication and helped to increase the number of COVID-19 testing laboratories and intensive care hospital beds to limit the pandemic's direct health impacts (Roll, 2020). However, Nigeria faces enormous challenges with respect to indirect health impacts, with the focus on COVID-19 resulting in limited resources for other infectious diseases that led to an outbreak of Lassa fever: 1,084 confirmed and 5,694 suspected cases as of 12 September 2020 in 27 of the 36 states, 225 deaths and a CFR of 20.8 per cent. Nigeria's limited testing capacities for COVID-19 with just 14 tests per million inhabitants – the lowest score in Africa – is a major challenge. Lessons learnt from other infectious diseases were helpful in the early phase of the pandemic, but the coronavirus is novel and Nigeria's laboratory and medical care capacities are incapable of coping with outbreaks of other infectious diseases or treating communicable diseases during the pandemic.

#### Food security (Section 3.2.4)

**Ghana (MIC)** had a satisfactory situation regarding poverty and food security prior to the COVID-19 health crisis. Profound economic transformations in recent decades have led to more than half of its population living in urban areas, where food constitutes a major share of total expenditures, even for the upper income quintile. Many households in cities and especially in rural areas depend on or earn a significant amount of income from agriculture – consuming and/or selling what they grow. To counter the coronavirus crisis, Ghana imposed typical lockdown measures that have created food insecurity. Microfinance institution debts were rescheduled and provisions for reporting bad loans eased in order to help smallholders and informal economic activities and boost food-purchasing power. Digital payments were also eased and fostered. A smaller programme was established to support procurement from farmers. In early April, a COVID-19 National Trust Fund was established to provide cash transfers to needy individuals and a food programme for 400,000 people has improved food security.

**Ethiopia (LDC)** has experienced swift socio-economic progress in recent decades, although it started much below Ghana and still lags far behind. Rural population remains very high, not least because of restrictive land transfer laws. Even before the coronavirus health crisis, about a third of the population was poor and undernourished. Subsistence agriculture predominates; there is little commercialised agriculture. Income from urban agriculture is also low. The COVID-19 pandemic variously affected food security: Street vendors were banned, and shops, formal and wet markets, restaurants and manufacturers were closed in the complete lockdown in late March of all but “essential goods” – which did not include food. Movement of people within states and social gatherings of more than four persons were forbidden in four cities until mid-April. To cushion the negative impacts on food

security, urban basic needs packages and Productive Safety Net Programme cash transfers were extended, and the Prime Minister launched a national solidarity challenge: “Each One Feed One” or “*maed magarat*” (Box 4). Food price controls were established with the lockdowns, and the government is importing large quantities of rice, wheat, sugar and edible oils while also relaxing minimum export price rules for horticultural exports to help the sector survive.

**Mali (conflict-affected)**, once viewed as a model in terms of development and governance, has experienced internal strife since January 2012. Although Mali’s economic growth rates are reasonably high, they can hardly keep pace with its 3 per cent population growth rate. Despite high rates of poverty (only data from 2009 is available), the rate reported for undernutrition is astonishingly low – possibly due to minimal inequalities and a significant amount of agriculture in a Sahel which has been re-greening since the mid-1980s. However, the figures could also be simple errors in measurement, since other indicators are less positive. For instance, more than 30 per cent of children in Mali are “stunted” (chronically undernourished) (WFP, 2020). IDPs from insecure regions in the north – 240,000 in March 2020 (WFP, 2020b) – mostly farm on borrowed land. Several measures to control the coronavirus crisis have been introduced: In late March, a public health emergency was declared, and a night curfew was imposed from mid-March to early May, with restricted attendance at public gatherings and curtailed opening hours. To stabilise the food supply, the Malian government recently revised its budget to promote health and social protections. The cotton sector, by far Mali’s most important and the government’s main source of revenue, will receive a large fertiliser subsidy; a remunerative farm-gate price has also been guaranteed. Consumers benefit from lower taxes on water, electricity and some food products such as milk, and businesses get various tax exemptions and postponements. A cash transfer scheme has been established to support the poorest households; food and some animal feed are distributed to particularly vulnerable families, but not enough to satisfy the need. Soon after the curfew was announced, price controls on staples were introduced and exports of key foods were banned.

### Conflict and Peace (Section 3.3.1)

In **Ethiopia (LDC)**, the impact of the corona virus is very visible.<sup>36</sup> Due to the coronavirus, the government postponed national and subnational elections scheduled for August 2020 “for the public good”. The Tigray Region defied the government, however, and held elections on 9 September 2020. Some observers link the postponed elections to the assassination of the famous singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa on 30 June 2020. Following that, a number of violent protests erupted throughout the large Oromia Region of southern, eastern and western Ethiopia, resulting in some 200 deaths, according to state media. The ongoing civil war in Tigray is causing large numbers of Ethiopians to flee to neighbouring Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Kenya, further destabilising an already conflict-ridden region. Ethiopia’s vulnerability is mainly due to a political culture that excluded most of the population and promoted ethnic sentiment and hatred. The country also shares structural weaknesses common to many LDCs that not only exacerbate the spread of COVID-19, but also pose significant risks to peace

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36 In September 2020, Ethiopia had had nearly 60,000 cases and about 900 deaths.

**South Africa (MIC)** was very hard hit by the pandemic and ensuing protests. The nationwide lockdown imposed on 26 March to contain the virus was enforced with excessive violence. Backed by the government, security forces have been brutal while trying to keep people off the streets and enforce an alcohol ban. Small shops have been demolished and at least one citizen was killed (Pavlik, 2020a). In South Africa, however, violent protest is not unusual: Similar levels were reached in the months before the pandemic. This shows that the political system is structurally unable to peacefully engage its citizens and respond to their needs. A second troubling trend observed in South Africa is the rampant xenophobia fuelled by the coronavirus health crisis and the resulting economic hardship. In many parts of the country, demonstrations, vandalism and violent actions have targeted foreigners, who are perceived as stealing the very rare jobs, especially during the pandemic. Such sentiments have been aroused by social media and government rhetoric – not just about which shops were permitted to remain open during the lockdown but also by the fence it hastily built on the border to Zimbabwe. Combined with ongoing violent unrest, the further erosion of social cohesion is very worrying (Bornman, 2020; Meyer, 2020; Mugabi, 2020; Pavlik, 2020a).

Conflict in **Libya (conflict-affected)** has intensified during the pandemic. From 2014, violence has pitted the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) against the Libyan National Army (LNA). Ground battles, aerial attacks and indiscriminate shelling accelerated between March and May 2020 (Piscitelli, 2020). In April, the LNA called for a COVID-19 ceasefire but distrusting it, the GNA did not follow suit (Wintour, 2020). Two factors account for the intensified conflict (Polo, 2020): First, military equipment and weapons that international allies provided to both sides in the months before the pandemic are now being used. Second, UN mediation attempts, which might have forestalled an escalation, have been put on hold by the pandemic. The conflict not only causes death and destruction but also exacerbates the challenges Libya faces in dealing with the pandemic. Hospitals, including those treating only COVID-19 cases, have been attacked and damaged, further weakening a health system about to collapse (Fitzgerald, 2020). As the conflict escalates and with it, the economic repercussions of lockdown measures, both the types and numbers of vulnerable people have grown to include daily wage workers and migrants, in addition to IDPs and refugees. Hostilities in recent months have displaced 24,000 more people. COVID-19 cases are rising, especially in the regional district capital, Sabha, and delivering humanitarian aid has become particularly difficult due to the conflict and national and international travel and security restrictions. Expectations for Libya – with regard to the conflict and the pandemic – are bleak.

### Inclusive institutions, accountability and democracy (Section 3.3.2)

**Ghana (MIC)**, one of the most vibrant democratic African MICs, instituted broadly respected democratic principles in its pandemic response, which was much less harsh than in most states on the continent.<sup>37</sup> There was no formal state of emergency but the April primary parliamentary elections were rescheduled for December. The Committee to Protect Journalists (2020) reported exceptions to Ghana's democratic response regarding media freedom: Journalists were harassed twice by soldiers in a series of clashes between security forces and the press. In 2019, the monthly average number of protests was 10, a level maintained in 2020. The number of riots has risen sharply, however, with 12 each in April, June and July 2020.

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37 <https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices> (accessed on October 3, 2020).

**Ethiopia (LDC)**, an unstable LDC transiting from decades of authoritarian rule, severely reacted to the pandemic, imposing restrictions on internal movement and closing schools, public transport and some workplaces. The federal government postponed general elections scheduled for August 2020 to at least May 2021. With the definite date to be announced by the government only nine to 12 months before the elections, political tensions have been increasing. Marks and Dahir (2020) reported that the opposition, in particular the northern Tigray Region, contested the postponement, arguing that the prime minister was trying to use the pandemic to buttress his political power. Public gatherings of more than four persons were prohibited. To stop the spread of disinformation about the pandemic, the government substantially curtailed free speech and arrested people who criticised the government's handling of the crisis, using the Emergency Measures Legal Instrument (V-Dem Institute, 2020). Both protests and riots have sharply decreased in Ethiopia since the pandemic began. At the same time, the situation in Tigray escalated into war. The state also flouted the principle of minority protection by closing a camp of Eritrean refugees, thus overcrowding the camps where its residents were relocated.

**Mali (conflict-affected)** has been experiencing severe political tension, which led to the military ousting President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta in August 2020 (BBC News, 2020). Tension and violent conflict had started before the COVID-19 pandemic. Mali held elections on 29 March 2020 despite having declared a national health emergency that imposed massive restrictions on political assembly a few days earlier. The de facto cessation of remittances due to the pandemic hit poor Malians very hard. Then, in June, protests against government and international actors' strategies to contain the insurgency in Northern Mali grew, resulting in at least 11 deaths (Aljazeera, 2020). Although the pandemic cannot be said to have caused regime change, the population's unwillingness to accept more suffering and restrictions certainly helped. While the number of protests has not changed since the pandemic started, the number of riots rose to 13 in May and eight in July.

#### Biodiversity (Section 3.4.3)

**Madagascar (LDC)** has experienced revenue losses of more than USD 500 million between the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and late July 2020 due to the collapse of international tourism (Thoumi & Waugh, 2020). Protected area management activities such as creating fire breaks are nearly impossible (Vyawahare, 2020). Conservation practitioners reported increased illegal natural-resource extraction in the first weeks of the lockdown when the government was preoccupied with the health crisis and had limited resources for patrolling forests (Vyawahare, 2020). In particular, rural people (75% of the population) have used protected areas for subsistence in reaction to social distancing and isolation measures (Ngounou, 2020). The negative environmental consequences include the overexploitation of natural resources in protected areas, hunting wildlife, clearing protected lands for agriculture, overfishing in coastal zones etc. (Rakotobe & Avo-Mihaja Radanielin, 2020; Thoumi & Waugh, 2020). As people turned to the forest to survive, satellite data showed an 81 per cent increase in forest fires in protected areas between 1 March and 17 May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019 (Vyawahare, 2020). The rise in illegal deforestation adds to the looming threat that Madagascar's last rainforest may be destroyed by 2080 (Knorovsky, 2020).

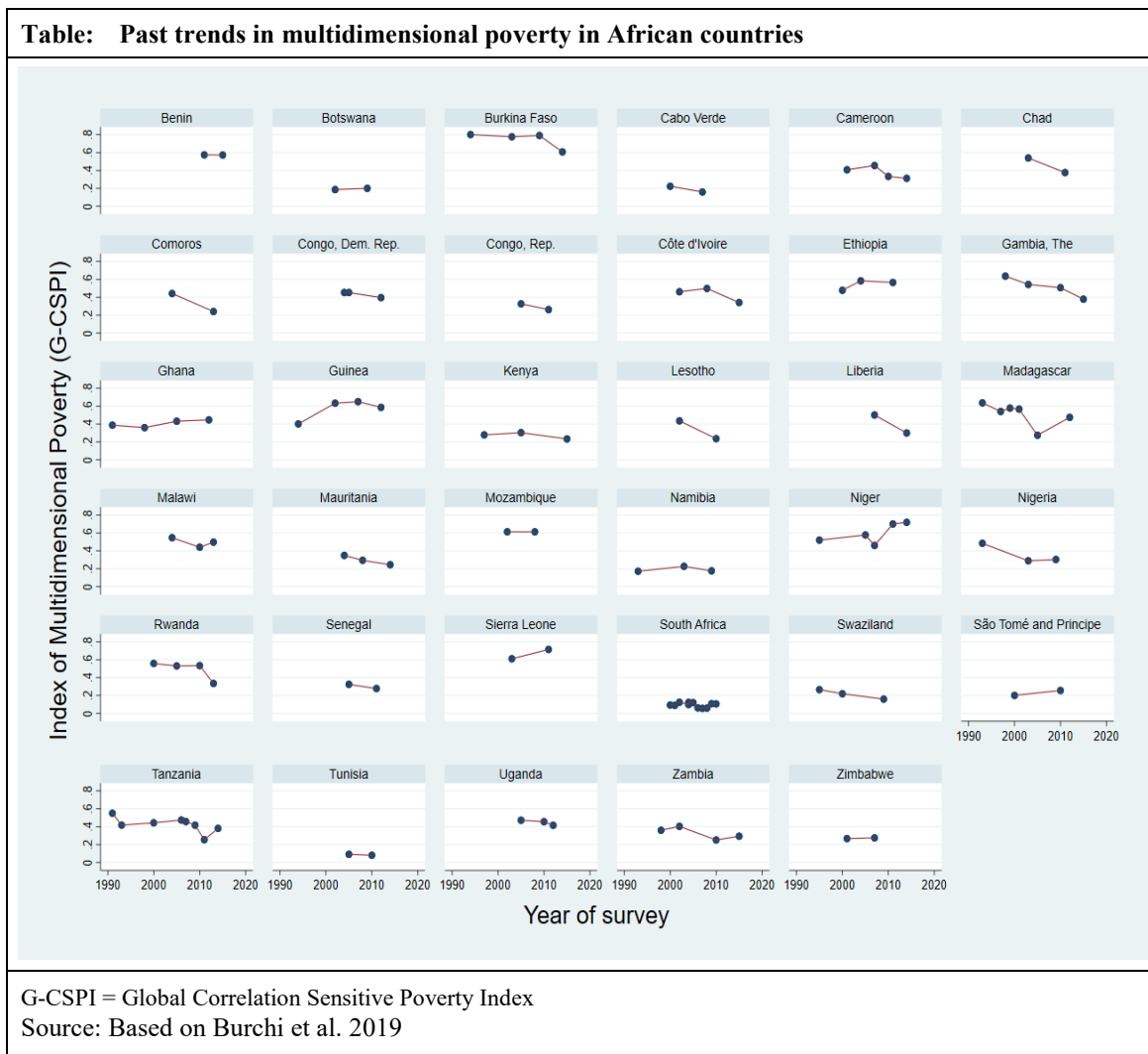
**South Africa (MIC)** is economically much more powerful than Madagascar or DRC but it shares similar structural challenges. With tourism supplying 85 per cent of the funds for its



national wildlife and land management authority, many protected area and land management staff are now unemployed (Roth, 2020). Poor rural people who have lost their jobs since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic are turning to ecosystems to meet their needs by hunting bushmeat (Matthews, 2020; Schaap, 2020). The biodiversity of protected areas is especially hard hit. The South African government has announced that it will not reopen the country for international visitors before February 2021. Most tourism enterprises predict that they will not survive the coming months.

In the **DRC (conflict-affected)**, nature-based tourism plays a minor role – apart from Virunga National Park, home to about a third of the world’s last mountain gorillas. Despite rebel groups and the Ebola epidemic, tourism had accounted for 40 per cent of the park’s revenues before it was closed in late February 2020 to protect the gorillas from the coronavirus. Park monitoring is at a standstill and the park’s 1,500 staff members as well as the local communities have lost their livelihoods (Mohammed & Bavier, 2020). On a more positive note, in the early 1990s, a coordinated collaborative programme of gorilla conservation and gorilla tourism was begun between Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC that continues during crises and conflicts (Plumptre, Kujirakwinja, Treves, Owiunji, & Rainer, 2007). Their long-standing cooperation, including an Ebola contingency plan, means that these three countries are now developing and regularly updating their joint coronavirus contingency plan. Here, even before the pandemic struck, pressure on bushmeat had been particularly intense because rural poverty makes hunting it a subsistence strategy and also an income source, given its popularity in urban centres, where it is considered a luxury and a cultural tradition (Goergen, 2020; Nicolon, 2020). Researchers believe that the DRC’s monkey and great ape populations could disappear within the next five to 10 years if hunting continues at present rates. In Virunga National Park, there had been no major reports of poaching as of April 2020, but its director said that could change quickly (Mohammed & Bavier, 2020). In addition, reduced patrolling due to lockdown restrictions explains the alarming increase in deforestation in the world’s sixth most forested country (Winter, 2020).

### Appendix 3: Past trends in multidimensional poverty in African countries



Publications of the German Development Institute /  
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Discussion Papers

- 10/2021 Pegels, Anna, Stefanie Heyer, David Ohlig, Felix Kurz, Lena Laux, & Prescott Morley. *¿Es sostenible el reciclaje? Propuestas para conciliar los aspectos sociales, ecológicos y económicos en Argentina* (48 pp.). ISBN 978-3-96021-147-1. DOI:10.23661/dp10.2021.
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- 23/2020 Pegels, Anna, Stefanie Heyer, David Ohlig, Felix Kurz, Lena Laux, & Prescott Morley. *How sustainable is recycling? Reconciling the social, ecological, and economic dimensions in Argentina* (47 pp.). ISBN: 978-3-96021-137-2. DOI: 10.23661/dp23.2020.
- 22/2020 Serraglio, Diogo Andreola. *The LFDD – human mobility nexus in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean: A review of national policy and legal frameworks* (56 pp.). ISBN 978-3-96021-136-5. DOI:10.23661/dp22.2020.
- 21/2020 Pahl, Stefan, Clara Brandi, Jakob Schwab, & Frederik Stender. *Cling together, swing together: The contagious effects of COVID-19 on developing countries through global value chains* (28 pp.). ISBN: 978-3-96021-133-4. DOI: 10.23661/dp21.2020.
- 20/2020 von Haldenwang, Christian. *Digitalising the fiscal contract: an interdisciplinary framework for empirical inquiry* (28 pp.). ISBN: 978-3-96021-132-7. DOI: 10.23661/dp20.2020.

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