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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Good day and welcome to our inaugural Newsletter. This will be a monthly platform that AWAN Afrika will use to communicate developments within our network.



Beatrice Gakuba, Executive Director,
AWAN Afrika

In this issue, we will focus on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the impact it has had on our members.

COVID-19 has grounded or nearly grounded Small and Medium Enterprises in the continent including businesses owned by our members, who are women and the youth resulting in severe loss of income. Indeed, a recent research by UN Women indicates that women are spending up to 11 times more time on unpaid home responsibilities owing to school closures.

We cannot ignore evidence based information from food security experts. The Famine Early Warning System, FEWS NET estimates the total number of acutely food-insecure people in Crisis in the IGAD region, that is (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda) might reach between 28.1 and 33.5 million due to the effects of COVID-19. The region now faces a triple crisis flooding, an ongoing locust invasion and COVID-19. Other countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo are battling a new Ebola outbreak in the Northwest of the country and COVID-19.

At AWAN Afrika we began a tweet series on the effect of the Coronavirus on our members and their businesses across the regions. It is clear that they are the most affected by the measures taken by their governments to stop the spread of the pandemic.

We are now urgently calling on the governments and the International Community to provide women with accessible and affordable finance to rescue their businesses from total collapse in the coming months.

It is clear now that this is not just a health crisis it is a socio economic crisis that will require global solidarity for the common good.

What else can our partners do? You can follow us up-to to the end of this month on twitter @AWAN_Afrika as we continue profiling our members and how they have been affected or how they are adapting to different measures taken to stop the spread of the virus.

Happy New Month.

Remember to; wash your hands, sanitize, wear a mask, observe social distancing

TESTIMONIALS



KENYA



Mercy Mghanga

In Kenya, all sectors of the economy have been affected by measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19. We spoke to Mercy Mghanga, who sells fish to women fish mongers in Mombasa, she reminisced her past, when he sold tonnes of fish to five star hotels in

the tourist town and exported the rest to China. More than a month since Kenya announced that it has confirmed its first case of COVID-19, the consequences for fish trade have been far reaching. Kenya imposed a dawn to dusk curfew in April which means fishermen do not go out for their catch and so Mercy now has no stock to sell to over five hundred women fishmongers (mama karanga in Swahili) who deep fry the fish in the local market, the livelihoods of those women and their dependents have been affected. Hotels in Kenya are still closed and so is the export market, Mercy is among thousands of women along the African coastal belts who have depended on fisheries for their living but are now staring at destitution



DRC DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Solange Kwindja

COVID-19 has upset agribusiness value chains globally. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Heshima Coffee owned by AWAN Afrika Champion Solange Kwindja has for years exported coffee beans to Europe.

When international flights were grounded, she realized she had to think fast if her business was to stay afloat and so she started processing the coffee at home in the DRC.

That resilience and quick adaptation to change has now made her business more profitable.



MALAWI



Peggy

In Malawi, the government has not put a complete lockdown but businesses have been affected. For example, restaurants can only offer take-aways. Businesspeople like Peggy the proprietor of Mothers' Choice a butchery and outside catering operation says her operation has reported a 60% drop in production. Peggy who works with 100 smallholder farmers who supply beef, lam, poultry and pork to her business says, she has seen a reduction in supplies. Her catering business has been the worst hit forcing her to lay off her half of her workforce. Peggy hopes African governments will come up with ways to shelter them from losses accrued from the lockdown.



IVORY COAST



Yao Ndri

COVID-19 has seen a lot of our members think outside the box to adapt to job losses as well loss of business. In Ivory Coast, where 2,951 positive cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed, Yao Ndri Noel, a poultry farmer has had to change her business model and embraced digital marketing. She now delivers her products door to door to her customers. The switch has helped her recoup at least 30% of her business.



At AWAN AFRIKA we are working with agripreneurs through the eHub providing information on trading in different markets. We offer training content and materials to bridge the knowledge gaps that exist within the various continental trading blocs agreements. With the new African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), AWAN Afrika is leveraging on an innovative capacity building program to improve efficiency and gender sensitivity in trade on the continent.