

Continental guidelines

on trade and transport facilitation
for the movement of persons, goods
and services across Africa during the
COVID-19 pandemic



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



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CONTINENTAL GUIDELINES ON TRADE AND TRANSPORT FACILITATION FOR THE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, GOODS AND SERVICES ACROSS AFRICA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DEFINITIONS

- a. "Abuja Treaty" means the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community of 1991;
- b. "Africa CDC" means the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention of the African Union;
- c. "AfCFTA" means the African Continental Free Trade Area;
- d. "AfCFTA Agreement" means the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;
- e. "Annex" means an instrument attached to these guidelines that forms an integral part of the guidelines;
- f. "AU" means the African Union;
- g. "CART" means the Aviation Recovery Task Force of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization;
- h. "COVID-19" means the coronavirus disease, the contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, or SARS-CoV-2;
- i. "CTTFC" means continental transport and trade facilitation committee;
- j. "ECA" means the Economic Commission for Africa of the United Nations;
- k. "GEWE" means the Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of the African Union;
- l. "IATA" means the International Air Transport Association;
- m. "ICAO" means the International Civil Aviation Organization;
- n. "ICT" means information and communications technology;
- o. "IMO" means the International Maritime Organization;
- p. "IOM" means the International Organization for Migration;
- q. "IPC" means infection prevention and control products;
- r. "NTTFC" means national transport and trade facilitation committee;
- s. "OCHA" means the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations;

- t. "PCR test" means real-time polymerase chain reaction test, which is used to detect COVID-19 infection;
- u. "PPE" means personal protective equipment, such as face masks and gloves, which are used to slow the spread of disease;
- v. "REC" means one of the eight regional economic communities that are recognized by the African Union;
- w. "REC guidelines" means a currently existing set of trade facilitation guidelines issued by one of the regional economic communities;
- x. "SAATM" means single African air transport market;
- y. "SMART corridor" means the concept of a "safety, mobility, automated, real-time traffic-management corridor", developed by the African Union;
- z. "SOPs" means standard operating procedures;
- aa. "STR" means simplified trade regime;
- ab. "UNCTAD" means the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;
- ac. "WCO" means the World Customs Organization;
- ad. "WHO" means the World Health Organization;
- ae. "WTO" means the World Trade Organization.

The Member States of the African Union,

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. Taking cognizance of several statements by ministers responsible for health and other relevant ministers in Africa in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 1.2. Aware that Member States are taking a number of measures at the national and REC levels to contain the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 1.3. Recognizing that WHO, WCO, WTO, UNCTAD, and other international organizations continue to provide guidance on measures that need to be taken during the pandemic period and to facilitate the movement of goods to contain the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 1.4. Noting that domestic, inter-State and international travel by persons and the movement of goods have proved to be some of the main ways that COVID-19 is spreading among communities, nations and globally, and noting also the need to facilitate safe trade and transport for economic growth while containing the spread of COVID-19;
- 1.5. Aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the usual movement of persons, goods and services in Africa;
- 1.6. Acknowledging that, to sustain lives of Africa's peoples, the movement of persons, goods and services has to continue uninterrupted;

- 1.7. Considering the need to facilitate the inter-State movement of persons, goods and services in Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic period;
- 1.8. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic is a serious global crisis affecting Member States that has brought to the fore the challenge of protecting the health of population, while avoiding undue disruption to the inter-State movement of persons and the delivery of goods and services across Africa;
- 1.9. Recognizing also that, despite the incidence of the pandemic, the implementation of regional and continental regimes for the movement of goods, services and persons, including AfCFTA and SAATM, should continue to be governed by the principles of market integration and regional cooperation among Member States;
- 1.10. Acknowledging that, in their responses to combat COVID-19, Member States should continue to be guided by a collective commitment to maintaining open and connected supply chains and to working collaboratively to identify and address trade disruptions that have ramifications for the flow of goods and services within Africa;
- 1.11. Recognizing that it is in the collective interest of all Member States to ensure that all trade routes (road, rail, air and sea) remain open to facilitate the flow of persons, goods and services, including but not limited to essential supplies, to support economic recovery and the transition to a new "safe" trading environment;
- 1.12. Noting that, to mitigate any negative impact from COVID-19 on the movement of goods and services within Africa under AfCFTA, it is important that Member States adopt common measures to safely and efficiently maintain the flow of goods and services within Africa, taking into account the guidelines issued by Africa CDC, the African high-level task force on the recovery of air transport, ICAO, IMO, IOM, UNCTAD, OCHA, WCO, WHO and WTO on measures to be taken during the COVID-19 pandemic period;
- 1.13. Recognizing the unique situations of island States and landlocked States in terms of facilitating the movement of goods and services;
- 1.14. Noting the need for Member States to conform to minimum uniform procedures, regulations and standards in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to minimize disruptions in the supply chains for goods and services across Africa;
- 1.15. Recognizing the importance of small-scale, cross-border trade in supporting the attainment of food security, gender equality, income generation and poverty reduction goals in Africa;
- 1.16. Recognizing also that gender equality is a fundamental human right and an integral part of regional integration, economic growth and social development, in line with the Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of the African Union (GEWE);
- 1.17. Acknowledging that the pandemic has magnified challenges related to border operations, customs cooperation and trade facilitation, and the urgency to implement annex 3 (on customs cooperation and mutual administrative assistance), annex 4 (on trade facilitation) and annex 8 (on transit) of the AfCFTA Agreement, to ensure that Member States are prepared to manage cross-border operations during any future crisis in a safe and efficient way, with minimal disruption to cross-border trade;
- 1.18. Continuing to keep human rights and privacy laws at the forefront, while conducting surveillance and tracing contacts in an effort to manage the public health crisis.

Hereby adopt the following guidelines as minimum uniform regulations, procedures and standards in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, minimize disruptions in the supply chain, and facilitate the movement of goods and services across the continent during the COVID-19 pandemic period.¹

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

- 2.1. The main objectives of the guidelines are to:
 - 2.1.1. Mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other such threats from a public health perspective, by containing the spread of such threats until a treatment or a vaccine is made widely available;
 - 2.1.2. Mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic from an economic perspective, through the safe facilitation of cross-border trade in goods and services amid the public health crisis, while not exacerbating the spread of the disease;
 - 2.1.3. Facilitate the movement of essential goods, such as food products, energy products, and medical supplies, and facilitate essential travel (including for the provision of essential goods), to guarantee the attainment of basic human rights amid any economic or public health crisis;
 - 2.1.3. Ensure a harmonized continental approach to facilitating trade during the COVID-19 pandemic and advance coordination and implementation of common guidelines.

Secondary objectives of the guidelines include:

- 2.1. Building on currently existing REC guidelines and expanding their scope to offer a harmonized approach to trade facilitation on the continent, while adopting “best practices” from within and outside the continent to optimize trade flow across borders, all while limiting the spread of COVID-19;
- 2.2. Encouraging local production and the creation of regional value chains in Africa, particularly for essential goods (e.g., personal protective equipment, medical equipment, and pharmaceutical products), to increase their availability in the region, with a view to managing future health crises and supporting local job creation;
- 2.3. Opening safe and sanitary pathways for cross-border travel and encouraging essential workers to implement “best practices”, to limit the spread of COVID-19 at ports of entry and exit and to preserve their health and well-being while transporting goods between Member States;
- 2.4. Promoting the efficient utilization of existing trans-African highways, by taking steps to adopt the SMART corridor concept and to operationalize the Africa Trade Corridor, to facilitate the movement of essential goods and services across the continent and support economic recovery from COVID-19;
- 2.5. Promoting information sharing among Member States to combat the pandemic, and enhancing awareness among Member States’ citizens and parties that engage in cross-border trade;
- 2.6. Recognizing the health and safety of front-line workers (including healthcare professionals, transport services workers, and customs and border workers) and providing adequate resources to mitigate public health risks for those at-risk workers.

¹ Member States are also encouraged to adopt the guidelines to assist in rapidly responding to any future calamity that may occur outside the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. GUIDELINES

The guidelines facilitate and support the efforts of Member States to implement the policies and measures to combat COVID-19 that have been recommended by Africa CDC, the African high-level task force on recovery of air transport, IATA, ICAO, IMO, IOM, UNCTAD, OCHA, WCO, WHO and WTO. Annexed to the guidelines are SOPs for the management and monitoring of cross-border road transport at designated points of entry and COVID-19 checkpoints.

3.1. Essential goods and services

Subject to national legislation, goods and services will be allowed to flow between Member States while observing public health measures on safe trade. However, subject to Member State COVID-19 restrictions, priority will be given to the following goods and services:

- 3.1.1. Food products and agricultural inputs and supplies; perishable products and veterinary supplies;
- 3.1.2. Medical equipment and medicines, including:
 - 3.1.3.1. Medical supplies, hospital supplies, and PPE;
 - 3.1.4.2. Supplies to prevent the spread of communicable diseases other than COVID-19, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis;
 - 3.1.5.3. Medical supplies aimed at preventing child and maternal mortality, including those used for ante-natal and post-natal care and during deliveries inside or outside health facilities (assisted by a medical professional or a skilled birth attendant), vaccines, and nutritional supplements;
- 3.1.3. Infection prevention and control products, including face masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, disinfectant, soap, alcohol for industrial use, household cleaning products and personal toiletries;
- 3.1.4. Chemicals, packaging, equipment, maintenance materials, raw materials and ancillary products used in the production and processing of food products, medicines and other essential goods and services;
- 3.1.5. Security, emergency and humanitarian relief supplies;
- 3.1.6. Fuel, including coal and gas;
- 3.1.7. Other goods and services that a Member State considers as critical during the COVID-19 pandemic will be allowed to move; however, it is incumbent on the Member State to inform other Member States and notify other stakeholders through the AUC and REC websites;
- 3.1.8. Where a Member State is unable to accept the flow of all goods and services from other Member States while observing public health measures on safe trade, the Member State must inform the AUC and REC secretariats, which will post such notifications on their respective websites to inform other Member States and stakeholders.

3.2. Trade and transport facilitation

Member States must continue to facilitate the safe movement of goods and services through land borders, maritime ports, and airports from and to other Member States by:

- 3.2.1. Providing adequate PPE, necessary supplies, and guidance on their use to conduct regular testing of frontline and at-risk workers at border crossings and checkpoints, such as those managed by public health, immigration, customs, and law enforcement agencies, among others;
- 3.2.2. Categorizing transport and logistics workers (e.g., drivers, pilots, and cabin and maritime crew members) who are transporting essential goods, as listed in section 3.1 above, as essential workers, and working to facilitate their movement;
- 3.2.3. Posting information on COVID-19 preventive measures in the languages of traders and travellers at major border crossings (where possible);
- 3.2.4. Directing transporters, transporters associations and logistics service providers to adhere to the limits determined in accordance with the specifications of the truck being used, as set by international guidelines (such as having a truck crew with a maximum of two to three people, including the driver);
- 3.2.5. Screening and testing all transport and logistics workers before departure at accredited testing facilities to ensure the continued safe movement of goods and services in Africa, while observing the measures recommended by WHO and local/regional health authorities, by doing the following:
 - 3.2.5.1. Immediately isolating anyone who exhibit symptoms or tests positive, in line with national guidelines currently in place, and treating those with symptoms in accordance with COVID-19 protocols, under the supervision of health authorities;
 - 3.2.5.2. If a transport or logistics worker is showing signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and tests positive, the vehicle must be decontaminated before it is allowed to continue to its final destination, and the worker must be referred to a treatment centre and quarantined at government-designated facilities at the vehicle operator's cost;
 - 3.2.5.3. In the event that crews are isolated or quarantined while in transit, truck owners/operators will make necessary arrangements for a backup crew to ensure that the goods are delivered to the intended destination. Member States will expedite the movement of backup crews after they have been cleared by health officials;
- 3.2.6. Treating transport and logistics workers who test positive for COVID-19 in the Member State where the test was carried out. Host Member States are urged not to repatriate the infected workers to the country of origin to avoid the spread of COVID-19, unless requested to do so by the country of origin of the workers. In the latter case, the countries concerned will ensure that such repatriation is handled with the utmost care to avoid contagion by the infected workers. All repatriation or treatment costs, as the case may be, will be borne by the operator (unless the costs are waived by the host Member State);
- 3.2.7. Providing gender-sensitive hygiene facilities at each transport node (including border posts, port facilities, and inland terminals), as recommended by WHO and national governments, and ensuring easy access to the facilities to all users;
- 3.2.8. Adopting joint inspections and a coordinated approach at all designated points of entry and exit of goods, and providing access and adequate personnel at these points;

- 3.2.9. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing to inspect for quality and safety goods that have a direct impact on human health, safety, security and environment:
 - 3.2.9.1 Inspection agencies in the Member States are urged to devise measures to expedite the inspection process;
 - 3.2.9.2 Priority should be given to the inspection of essential goods.
- 3.2.10. Promoting an appropriate multi-modal mix, including greater use of railways, inland waterways, and dry ports, to reduce dependence on road transport, and, in turn, increase cost-efficiency and reduce person-to-person contact;
- 3.2.11. Directing transport operators and their associations to:
 - 3.2.11.1. Collaborate with health officials to design and implement a sensitization programme for cross-border operators and their employees;
 - 3.2.11.2. Register all cross-border trips through government-approved national platforms and systems;
 - 3.2.11.3. Test drivers/crews/pilots prior to the commencement of their cross-border trips and allow only those who have tested negative for COVID-19 to proceed;
 - 3.2.11.4. Inform drivers and crew members who have negative COVID-19 test certificates that Member States may opt to perform random and/or pooled testing for quality assurance and to reduce the spread of COVID-19;
 - 3.2.11.5. Instruct drivers of cross-border trucks/vehicles to complete trip sheets/logbooks that show their destinations and the locations and times of any intermediate stops taken during their trips. The trip sheets/logbooks must be kept in the custody of the driver during the trip and shown to law enforcement and health officials on demand. Trip sheets/logbooks must be stored at the offices of the operator and should be made available to law enforcement and health officials when required to facilitate contact tracing and investigations;
 - 3.2.11.6. Collaborate with governments in exploring how vehicle tracking data can be used for contact tracing and investigations;
 - 3.2.11.7. Ensure that cross-border drivers carry sufficient face masks and shields, hand sanitizer, water and soap to maintain personal hygiene in accordance with WHO recommendations;
 - 3.2.11.8. Instruct drivers not to carry unauthorized persons such as hitchhikers;
 - 3.2.11.9. Instruct cross-border drivers to maintain at least one metre of physical distance between persons at all times throughout the trip;
 - 3.2.11.10. Provide isolation facilities for crews and employees who show signs and symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19;
 - 3.2.11.11. Train drivers/crews/pilots in personal measures that can be taken to prevent COVID-19, such as physical distancing of one meter at all times, wearing a mask and good hand hygiene.

3.3. Land borders

Given that cross-border trade in Africa happens mostly at inland border-crossings, Member States must work to safeguard trade at land borders from an economic and a public health perspective. Essential staff, transport workers, and small-scale traders must be allowed to move, while public health considerations must stay at the forefront.

3.3.1. Cross-border road freight transport operations

- 3.3.1.1. To reduce face-to-face interaction and delays at ports and border crossings, Member States are encouraged to:
- 3.3.1.2. Simplify and automate trade and transport facilitation processes, while ensuring that all legal documents are in place and compliance with customs and other regulatory requirements;
- 3.3.1.3. Introduce or enhance pre-clearance of goods and single-window processing, in line with articles 7 and 18, respectively, of annex 4 to the AfCFTA Agreement;
- 3.3.1.4. Create new and implement existing online platforms for processing and clearing imports and exports; the application, issuance and renewal of licenses and permits; the registration of drivers, operators, vehicles and loads; the payment of fees; and disseminating information;
- 3.3.1.5. Implement and integrate the ICT building blocks of the SMART corridor to monitor the physical movement of drivers, vehicles and loads and the flow of documentation through ports, borders, weighbridges and COVID-19 testing, quarantine and isolation facilities;
- 3.3.1.6. To the extent possible, cargo clearance should be facilitated at all designated entry points by joint / multi-agency teams, including customs, standards bodies, health, immigration, security, police, port/border control, in a one-stop mode of operations to minimize the time taken to clear goods, drivers and crews;
- 3.3.1.7. Any controls instituted by individual Member States should be applied in a considerate and proportionate manner;
- 3.3.1.8. Allowing the wide use of warehousing customs procedures will address the liquidity challenges faced by importers and minimize the spread of COVID-19 by people who inspect cargo.

3.3.2. Gazetted transit route

- 3.3.2.1. All transporters should use gazetted transit routes along the transport corridors, as well as interconnecting routes;
- 3.3.2.2. Drivers are required to declare their final destination and are urged to stop only at designated points along the transport corridors;
- 3.3.2.3. Governments should designate specific points along the transit routes throughout the region where drivers and crew can recuperate while minimizing contact with the local communities, with such resting places being communicated to other Member States through the AUC and REC secretariats;

- 3.3.2.4. Governments should submit to the AUC and REC secretariats detailed corridor maps that include the following details: designated routes, check points, lists of designated safe and secure parking facilities, fuelling stations and quarantine centres for cross-border road transport vehicles that are in transit and doing deliveries/pick-ups;
- 3.3.2.5. To promote safe and efficient trade, governments should consider updating truck stops and rest stops to serve as multi-purpose facilities that include safe and secure parking areas, fuelling stations, quarantine centres, safe food and accommodation services, and health checkpoints and facilities;
- 3.3.2.6. All public and private parties (in particular truck stop owners and health-sector entities) should collaborate to facilitate the provision of health services through mobile clinics along gazetted transit routes.

3.3.3. Facilitating small-scale cross-border trade

Recognizing the importance of small-scale cross-border trade in supporting the attainment of food security, gender equality, income generation and poverty-reduction goals in Africa, Member States must facilitate the safe movement of goods and services provided by small-scale cross-border traders between Member States by:

- 3.3.3.1. Deploying the border patrol personnel (including gender focal points among border patrol officers or officers with gender-sensitivity training) necessary to increase border surveillance and the use of official border-crossing points;
- 3.3.3.2. Introducing and implementing short-term permits (and providing permit-issuance services at or near border points) that are mutually agreed and recognized by the country of origin, the country of destination and the country/countries of transit, to facilitate the safe movement of small-scale cross-border traders through official border crossings that have in place the necessary COVID-19 sanitary, testing and quarantine facilities;
- 3.3.3.3. Prioritizing the cross-border movement by foot of small-scale traders to provide essential goods and services;
- 3.3.3.4. Providing adequate PPE and testing infrastructure for small-scale cross-border traders and trade information desk officers;
- 3.3.3.5. Screening and testing all small-scale cross-border traders before departure at designated/accredited testing facilities;
- 3.3.3.6. Considering the delivery of free or subsidized testing and certification services to small-scale cross-border traders who may otherwise not be in a position to cover those costs;
- 3.3.3.7. Allowing small-scale traders who hold a valid negative COVID-19 clearance certificates issued by the country of departure within the past 14 days to proceed to deliver or collect goods in accordance with the provisions of annex 1, to these guidelines, while observing relevant national laws and regulations;
- 3.3.3.8. Considering and implementing a smartphone-based COVID-19 contact tracing application, as may be agreed by Member States and in accordance

with relevant human rights and privacy laws, that uses Bluetooth and geo-location services to track the locations of small-scale cross-border traders, along with their COVID-19 testing status, and stores said information on the device using self-sovereign identity systems;

- 3.3.3.9. Directing cross-border trade associations to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission through small-scale cross border trade by:
 - 3.3.3.9.1. Registering all cross-border trips taken by small-scale traders through an approved national platform and system;
 - 3.3.3.9.2. Designing and implementing affordable bulk-buying systems, whereby goods are procured and processed in large consignments, in collaboration with suppliers across the border;
 - 3.3.3.9.3. Ensuring that small-scale cross-border traders carry sufficient face masks and shields, hand sanitizer, water and soap to adhere to WHO-recommended hygiene protocols;
 - 3.3.3.9.4. Providing maps that show the recommended routes that small-scale cross-border traders should follow, including the locations of checkpoints, quarantine and isolation centres, and designated safe and secure lodging facilities;
 - 3.3.3.9.5. Collaborating with health and customs officials to design and implement a sensitization programme for small-scale cross border traders;
 - 3.3.3.9.6. Instructing small-scale cross-border traders to maintain at least one metre of physical distance between persons at all times when traveling across borders and selling goods and services;
- 3.3.3.10. Designing and/or implementing trade regimes to simplify cross-border trade procedures and requirements, to gradually incorporate small-scale traders into the official trading system, and to strengthen their resilience in the face of future shocks to cross-border trade, including pandemics;
- 3.3.3.11. Collaborating with other Member States to design and implement a continental simplified trade regime as part of the AfCFTA process;
- 3.3.3.12. Urging Member States not to securitize borders and employ migration practices that could compromise the human rights of migrants and mobile groups, such as by building border walls, militarizing border patrols and increasing deportations.

3.3.4. Cross-border road passenger transport

Subject to national laws and regulations, the inter-State mass movement of persons by vehicles will be allowed to resume through mutually agreed and recognized arrangements between the country of origin, the country of destination and country/countries of transit, prior to the development and adoption of continental guidelines for cross-border passenger transport:

- 3.3.4.1. Citizens and residents returning to home countries/places of residence will be subject to the regulations gazetted in the country of origin and the country of destination upon screening and testing, as well as to isolation or quarantine, if deemed necessary;

- 3.3.4.2. Inter-State movement of persons by all modes of transport will be allowed, subject to existing bilateral, multilateral and corridor agreements between and among Member States, once arrangements for safe travel have been made, such as testing all passengers before they travel, as is done for drivers and crew members in accordance with the SOPs in annex 1 to these guidelines.
- 3.3.4.3. The following conditions must be met by operators and stakeholders who wish to apply for the exemptions in 3.3.4:
 - 3.3.4.3.1 Operators reduce the number of passengers in all vehicles and enforce one metre of physical distance between passengers;
 - 3.3.4.3.2 Operators disseminate information on COVID-19 prevention measures to passengers, in the local language(s) where possible;
 - 3.3.4.3.3 Passengers complete travel history questionnaires, which are then submitted to port health officials.

3.3.5. Public health considerations at land borders

With public health at the forefront of considerations when deciding on possible actions to be taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, extra caution must be taken by Member States to ensure that the movement of goods, services and people can be done in a hygienic manner, to promote the safety of transport and logistics workers, customs officials, traders, and communities near land borders. As such, WHO has released interim guidance on controlling the spread of COVID-19 at ground crossings, in which it recommends that States do the following:²

- 3.3.5.1. Add adequate hand hygiene stations with alcohol-based sanitizer and/or soap and water at border crossings, as well as provide education on proper hand-hygiene practices;
- 3.3.5.2. Ensure adequate supplies of thermometers, cleaning materials/chemicals (including household cleaner that is 70 per cent ethanol or 0.1 per cent dilute aqueous chlorine solution), waste bins with liners and lids for the disposal of medical masks and tissues, isolation areas with chairs or beds (if possible to be made from plastic or another water-resistant material for easy cleaning), potable water and access to toilets;
- 3.3.5.3. Use appropriate channels, such as printed materials (posters and pamphlets) at ground crossings with high volumes of travellers, or use broadcasts, including public service announcements, to promote adherence to safety and hygiene measures at border crossings.

3.4. Airports

The following efforts to establish SAATM, with the objective to liberalize air transport markets in Africa, passenger and cargo transport via air has grown rapidly on the continent. However, with a sharp decline in passenger traffic as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the air transport sector has been severely impacted. As such, facilitating safe air transport is critical, and Member States must adhere to the following guidelines to promote safety and hygiene:

² Available at <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/332165>.

3.4.1. Air freight transport operations

3.4.1.1. In the process of handling cargo, transport and logistics workers as well as port workers should adhere to onsite safety principles and health protocols, which include:

3.4.1.1.1. Keeping physical distance at all times when operational safety is not compromised, and, when not possible (such as when multiple workers are required to lift objects), appropriate PPE should be worn by workers;

3.4.1.1.2. Maintaining 14-day crew rotations to avoid cross-infection, in accordance with CART recommendations;

3.4.1.1.3. Cleaning and disinfecting material-handling equipment and ground support equipment between uses to avoid cross-contamination;

3.4.1.1.4. Limiting physical interaction between workers by having truck drivers stay in vehicles during loading and unloading.

3.4.2. Air travel passenger transport

Action should be taken to promote safe and seamless air travel, restore travelers' confidence and allow freedom of movement of persons, subject to national legislation and bilaterally consistent, harmonized and agreed health protocols and practices, especially with respect to the use of COVID-19 testing in lieu of quarantine measures.

In line with the CART reports³ and take-off guidelines,⁴ the WHO guide to hygiene and sanitation in aviation,⁵ and relevant guidelines recommended by IATA,⁶ the Airports Council International,⁷ and the African Airlines Association,⁸ Member States should implement the following measures to promote the safe and seamless movement of persons, while mitigating the risk of COVID-19:

3.4.2.1. Establish and support national air transport facilitation committees by providing them the funds needed to closely coordinate in order to better prepare to respond to the spread of disease via air transport, and protect the health of the public and passengers and the interests of the aviation sector, while ensuring that safety and security are not compromised;

3.4.2.2. Ensure that the measures designed to safeguard against the spread of COVID-19 are applied to domestic operations to the extent practicable, based upon risk assessments carried out by the relevant national authorities, including public health authorities;

3.4.2.3. Require passengers to wear masks or other face coverings in accordance with applicable health guidelines;

3.4.2.4. Coordinate with various border regulatory authorities (e.g., customs, immigration, and health authorities) to implement measures to facilitate entry/arrival clearance, such as by enabling contactless processes (e.g., reading of passport chips, facial recognition, automated border control and e-gates) and possibly establishing green and red lanes for self-declaration;

3 Available at <https://www.icao.int/covid/cart/Pages/default.aspx>.

4 Available at <https://www.icao.int/covid/cart/Pages/CART-Take-off.aspx>.

5 Available at https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/aviation_guide/en/.

6 Available at <https://www.iata.org/en/programs/covid-19-resources-guidelines/>.

7 Available at <https://aci.aero/about-aci/priorities/health/covid-19/>.

8 Available at https://afraa.org/corona_news/.

- 3.4.2.5. Screen passengers through measures such as:
 - 3.4.2.5.1 Installing thermal cameras to scan the temperature of arriving and departing passengers rapidly and unobtrusively at points of entry to the terminal;
 - 3.4.2.5.2 During the initial stages of air transport recovery and if required, conducting secondary health assessments while maintaining the general flow of passengers;
 - 3.4.2.5.3 Conducting thermal screening before passengers arrive at the customs hall, but avoiding individual passenger health assessments, which would have a drastic impact on throughput and create longer queues;
 - 3.4.2.5.4 Requiring passengers to have a negative test result that was obtained within 72 hours before departure, from a real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, or any other molecular test (such as a quantitative reverse transcriptase PCR test, a reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification test, or a recombinase polymerase amplification test), taking into account the time of travel to the destination;
 - 3.4.2.5.5 Carrying out and evaluating pooled rapid COVID-19 testing upon arrival.
- 3.4.2.6. Agree to mutually recognize each other's COVID-19 test certificates;
- 3.4.2.7. Allow transfers of connecting passengers to continue, subject to national legislation and local airport regulations;
 - 3.4.2.7.1. Where required, transfer security screening during the departure process should follow appropriate sanitary requirements, as previously described.

3.4.3. Other public health considerations at air terminals

- 3.4.3.1. Member States should prepare a written plan for enhanced cleaning and disinfection, agreed among the airport health authority, airport operators and service providers, in accordance with the SOPS outlined in the WHO guide to hygiene and sanitation in aviation and the relevant guidelines issued by ICAO;
- 3.4.3.2. Member States must ensure that all cleaning and disinfection staff are aware of the cleaning and disinfection plan, and emphasize the cleaning and regular disinfection of certain high-risk areas and surfaces, such as:
 - 3.4.3.2.1. Airport information desks, desks for passengers with reduced mobility, check-in areas, immigration and customs areas, boarding areas, and security-screening areas, including screening equipment and trays used for screening carry-on items;
 - 3.4.3.2.2. Escalators, lifts and handrails;
 - 3.4.3.2.3. Washrooms and baby-changing areas;
 - 3.4.3.2.4. Luggage trolleys and collection points;

- 3.4.3.2.5. Seats in check-in, pre-security-screening and boarding areas;
- 3.4.3.2.6. Parking shuttle buses and airside shuttle buses;
- 3.4.3.3. Member States should increase the use of air conditioning and effective filtration systems to keep air clean, reduce re-circulation and increase the fresh-air ratio. Horizontal airflow should be limited;
- 3.4.3.4. Member States must limit access to airport terminals, subject to airport specificities and national legislation, allowing access only to workers, passengers, and those accompanying persons in special situations (such as, but not limited to, passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility, and unaccompanied minors);
- 3.4.3.5. Member States should enhance the protection of air terminal workers by:
 - 3.4.3.5.1. Conducting health-screening programmes for staff and scheduling staff to keep them in steady teams and on steady shifts;
 - 3.4.3.5.1. Implementing specific staff processes before and after completing a shift, such as contact-free handovers, i.e., via telephone, videoconference, electronic logs, or, at a minimum, through physical distancing;
 - 3.4.3.5.1. Prioritizing and adjusting the scheduling of all maintenance and repair work in public areas, and possibly postponing non-essential work.
- 3.4.3.6. Member States must install transparent physical barriers at counters and reception areas, and stationery that is shared should be limited or regularly disinfected to reduce risk of cross-contamination.

3.5. Sea and water ports

Pursuant to guidance issued by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Member States should normalize maritime transport and trade as much as possible, while ensuring the safety of workers and passengers and mitigating the public-health risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Member States should implement the following guidelines to ensure safe trade and transport at sea, which include:

- 3.5.1. Shipping freight transport operations
 - 3.5.1.1. In the process of handling cargo, transport and logistics workers as well as port workers should adhere to onsite safety principles, which include:
 - 3.5.1.2. Keeping physical distance at all times, provided that operational safety is not compromised, and, when not possible (such as when multiple workers are required to lift objects), appropriate PPE should be worn by workers;
 - 3.5.1.3. Adhering to the guidelines set forth in the IMO industry-recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic,⁹ when crew members join a ship, leave a ship, and upon repatriation, to ensure that crews can be changed in a safe and healthy manner;
 - 3.5.1.4. Cleaning and disinfecting material handling equipment and ground support equipment between uses to avoid cross-contamination;

3.5.2. Regulation of cross-border trade by fishers

3.5.2.1. In relation to the regulation of fishing vessels and fishers:

3.5.2.1.1. Issuing administrations are encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach to the extension of certificates and endorsements, as strictly necessary, in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel; and to notify fishing vessel personnel and the relevant administrations accordingly;

3.5.2.1.2. Port and coastal States are also encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach to the extension and acceptance of certificates and endorsements in the exercise of their respective responsibilities.

3.5.3 Passenger travel via waterway transport

Acknowledging that passenger ferry services go hand-in-hand with shore facilities, which need safeguards to ensure safe passenger transport, ship operators should:

3.5.3.1. Establish necessary safeguards and procedures as part of a documented safety management system, whereby shipping companies develop detailed plans and procedures for the various aspects and risks associated with their ship operations;

3.5.3.2. Leverage the preventive and screening measures used in other modes of transportation to inform the actions taken to ensure safe passenger transport via waterways.

3.5.4. Public health considerations at maritime ports

With maritime ports also posing COVID-19 contagion risks, action must be taken to ensure that public health is preserved and maintained at maritime ports. As such, in accordance with the COVID-19 guidance document for ports of the World Ports Sustainability Programme,¹⁰ port entities are advised to mitigate public health risks by:

3.5.4.1. Sending a detailed and unambiguous return-to-work memo to employees before they return in order to establish new policies and procedures. The memo should include guidance on COVID-19-related prevention, return conditions, hygiene and social distancing, as well as advice on what is expected from employees and how port protocols may change to adapt to new COVID-19 conditions;

3.5.4.2. Subject to local legislative guidance, requesting employees to fill out triage forms to be used to track employees in the case of infection;

3.5.4.3. As far as possible, where people are split into teams or shift groups, fixing those teams or shift groups so that, where contact is unavoidable, it is limited to the same group of people;

- 3.5.4.4. Identifying tasks where people have to directly pass things to each other (such as job information, spare parts, samples, raw materials) and find ways to remove direct contact (for example by using drop-off points or transfer zones). The assessment should actively involve the employees who normally engage in the tasks in question to increase likelihood of them buying in to the agreed solution;
- 3.5.4.5. Minimizing employee congregation at bottlenecks, such as time clocks, reception areas, entrances and exits, by staggering arrivals and maintaining strict social distancing during shift handovers by using floor markings and other signage;
- 3.5.4.6. Avoiding employees working face-to-face by, for example, working side-by-side or facing away from each other, to ensure that there is a minimum of one meter of physical space between employees;
- 3.5.4.7. If social distancing is not possible, using plexiglass screens to separate people from each other;
- 3.5.4.8. Using a consistent pairing system if people have to work in close proximity. This should be considered for two-person working, lifting or maintenance activities that cannot be redesigned, provided they meet local legislation requirements;
- 3.5.4.9. Increasing the number of cleaning staff to deep clean surfaces more frequently;
- 3.5.4.10. Requiring that extra attention be paid to the hygiene of flexible work spaces. It may be advisable to have a back-up third-party cleaning company in case infections reduce the ability of the main contractor to provide such services;
- 3.5.4.11. Maintaining adequate hygiene in offices with carpets or false ceilings, which may require hiring third-party companies that specialize in cleaning and decontamination;
- 3.5.4.12. Ensuring adequate airflow in office areas by keeping windows open or by adjusting air conditioners with air-filtration systems. Offices with permanent air conditioning should consult their suppliers or a company that specializes in heating, ventilation and cooling to ensure clean air flow.

3.6. Adoption of measures to facilitate trade and movement and to reduce contact

3.6.1. Facilitating trade through simplification of payments

- 3.6.1.1. Member States may waive port/border handling charges for essential goods during this period;
- 3.6.1.2. Member States are urged to facilitate the use of electronic payments, such as mobile money, to significantly reduce the use of cash and thereby curb the spread of COVID-19;
- 3.6.1.3. Member States should urge service providers, including banks and telecommunications companies, to lower transaction costs on money transfers, and data and roaming charges;

- 3.6.1.4. Member States are urged to facilitate the adoption and rollout, and to promote the use of, regional payments systems for border and port charges, where necessary.
- 3.6.2. Facilitating trade through the adoption of digital technology to reduce contact
 - 3.6.2.1. Customs and other agencies should facilitate the movement of goods by accepting scanned documents in lieu of original documents, which may take longer to be physically couriered, in order to minimize physical contact / interaction;
 - 3.6.2.2. Member States should create online applications and platforms to process and clear imports and exports, to issue and renew drivers licences and permits, to pay fees, and to disseminate information;
 - 3.6.2.3. Member States should establish and implement automated trade facilitation processes, including automated customs clearance systems, single-window systems, e-payments and electronic information exchanges;
 - 3.6.2.4. Member States should consider relaxing rules that require the presentation or submission of original hard-copy certificates and documents, and accept scanned copies and electronic versions as proof of compliance;
 - 3.6.2.5. Member States are encouraged to shift to paperless immigration solutions, including by introducing electronic passes and permits and enhanced e-visas, and to remove barriers to visa liberalization;
 - 3.6.2.6. Member States should consider and implement electronic surveillance monitoring systems, as may be agreed among them, for managing the registration of cross-border trips; recording, monitoring and surveillance of driver wellness, using the results of medical tests for specified communicable diseases such as COVID-19; tracking vehicles, loads and drivers; contact tracing; queue management at ports, border posts and other facilities; and statistical analysis and reporting;
 - 3.6.2.7. Member States should facilitate the interface between electronic cargo tracking systems and designated laboratories to enhance interception responses when necessary;
 - 3.6.2.8. Member States should consider using new technology to facilitate social distancing, such as digital bracelets that help wearers to maintain social distancing and that permit contact-tracing;
 - 3.6.2.9. Member States are encouraged to utilize the AUC and Africa CDC trusted travel platform,¹¹ which promotes safe travel across Africa by providing:
 - 3.6.2.9.1. Information about the latest travel restrictions and entry requirements applicable to the entire journey, which are supplied by Member States and validated by Africa CDC;
 - 3.6.2.9.2. A database of authorized laboratories and vaccination-compliance information;
 - 3.6.2.9.3. A mutual recognition protocol for COVID-19 testing and test results, and certificates to be used as proof of vaccination against yellow fever and COVID-19;

11 Available at <https://africacdc.org/trusted-travel/>.

3.6.2.9.4. Recommendations to simplify health-related immigration processing for travelers and immigration officials.

3.6.2.10. Member States should consider using advance passenger information and passenger name records to support health measures taken by border control agencies at ports of entry and exit by documenting a person's travel history, in accordance with human rights and privacy laws.

3.6.3. Facilitating safe movement of persons

3.6.3.1. Member States should allow transport and logistics workers who hold a valid negative COVID-19 clearance certificate issued by the country of departure within the preceding 14 days to deliver or collect goods in accordance with the provisions of annex 1 to these guidelines, subject to national laws and regulations.

3.7. Customs administration and application of customs-related laws and regulations

Customs administrations and cross-border agencies provide essential services to guarantee and secure the cross-border movement of goods, especially essential products. Nonetheless, their staff and cross-border traders will be exposed to contamination and further spread COVID-19 if appropriate measures are not adopted. In this context, Member States should take steps to implement automated national customs clearance information systems, where applicable, to respond to COVID-19, by:

- 3.7.1. Minimizing requirements for the submission of documents in hard copy through the use of national customs clearance information systems, or other automated systems that allow one to upload scanned documents;
- 3.7.2. Promoting the use of electronic payments instead of in-person payments to reduce direct physical interaction;
- 3.7.3. Allowing cross-border traders to generate release orders within the automated systems once clearance is granted by customs and other government agencies, to avoid the physical interaction involved in obtaining a printed hard copy;
- 3.7.4. Preparing a list for the classification of COVID-19 emergency medical supplies, in line with WCO indicative list of COVID-19 emergency medical supplies,¹² to assist customs brokers and officers when preparing and verifying declarations that involve such goods;
- 3.7.5. Calling upon risk management units to create risk criteria for expediting shipments of COVID-19 emergency medical supplies. A reduced percentage of physical examinations (red lane) and document examinations (yellow lane) should be maintained to ensure adequate scrutiny, so as to detect and deter the circumvention of controls and/or abuse of this facilitation measure;
- 3.7.6. Establishing central processing units, in accordance with prevailing social distancing parameters, to centralize document examination by grouping together the multiple processing offices that are scattered across each port of entry;
- 3.7.7. Ensuring that critical units, such as the risk management, post clearance and examinations units, are adequately staffed and trained to facilitate legitimate trade and promote trade compliance;

- 3.7.8. Adjusting help-desk support capacity to efficiently address client queries and provide adequate support remotely;
- 3.7.9. Considering and implementing policies to reduce or remove tariffs and non-tariff measures that affect the import of essential medicines, medical equipment and related inputs, to facilitate the cross-border movement of essential products;
- 3.7.10. Ensuring that sufficient space is available for data storage to handle the additional load of scanned documentation;
- 3.7.11. Considering the re-issuance of mobile devices (e.g., tablets, laptops and similar devices) to customs personnel who are required to process transactions remotely from home;
- 3.7.12. Taking into consideration the mobility restrictions that may delay the communication of new customs policies to field officers, customs administrations are urged to delegate to field officers, subject to appropriate checks and balances, the authority to decide how to handle essential goods and services;
- 3.7.13. Subject to national laws and regulations, waiving fees, storage and handling charges, and warehouse rent relating to essential goods that are imported during the COVID-19 pandemic and are not transferred to the respective destination owing to COVID-19 restrictions;
- 3.7.14. Implementing the measures relating to relief consignments that are set out in chapter 5 of specific annex J to the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention;¹³
- 3.7.15. Implementing green lanes for essential goods and for goods cleared by authorized economic operators, to enable the rapid clearance of goods for accredited traders and catalyse manufacturing sectors in Africa;
- 3.7.16. Cooperating in the implementation of global standards for accreditation, such as the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards,¹⁴ to ease the movement of goods for accredited traders.

3.8. Treatment of essential workers

- 3.8.1. Member States are encouraged to recognize the following as essential workers and therefore subject to regulations on screening only, unless they show symptoms of COVID-19 during screening, at which point they will be required to isolate themselves or go into quarantine, if deemed necessary:
 - 3.8.1.1. Security, emergency and humanitarian-relief service workers, as may be agreed among Member States;
 - 3.8.1.2. Engineering and maintenance services workers (including engineers and support staff) who support the production of the goods mentioned in section 3.1 above;
 - 3.8.1.3. Work crews and teams that are transported under special arrangements between Member States (e.g. teams working on cross-border transport projects);
 - 3.8.1.4. Diplomatic personnel, in accordance with rules established by Member States.

¹³ Available at http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/conventions/pf_revised_kyoto_conv.aspx.

¹⁴ Available at http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/facilitation/instrument-and-tools/frameworks-of-standards/safe_package.aspx.

3.8.2 Transport workers

3.8.2.1. Seafarers

All Member States are urgently requested to implement the following measures to facilitate the work and health of seafarers:

- 3.8.2.1.1. Designate seafarers as essential workers who provide essential services, to facilitate their safe and unhindered embarkation and disembarkation from their vessels;
- 3.8.1.1.2. Undertake national consultations involving all relevant ministries, agencies and departments, to identify the obstacles faced during crew changes, and establish and implement time-bound plans with metrics to measure progress in increasing the rate of such crew changes;
- 3.8.1.1.3. Consult representative shipowner and seafarer organizations when developing and implementing measures related to, or that have an impact upon, seafarer crew changes. Those States that have ratified the Marine Labour Convention of 2006 in particular should consult said organizations on measures to achieve full compliance with the obligations enshrined in the Convention;
- 3.8.1.1.4. Implement protocols for crew changes, drawing upon the latest version of the IMO industry-recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic;
- 3.8.1.1.5. Refrain from authorizing any new extension of seafarers' employment agreements beyond the default maximum period of 11 months, in accordance with the Marine Labour Convention of 2006;
- 3.8.1.1.6. Facilitate the diversion of ships from their normal trading routes to ports where crew changes are permitted;
- 3.8.1.1.7. Accept internationally recognized documentation as evidence of their status as essential workers and that the purpose of their travel and movement is to undertake crew changes. Examples of such documentation include certificates issued in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers of 1978; seafarers' identity documents issued in accordance with the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention of 1958 (No. 108) and the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised) of 2003 (No. 185). Letters issued by the seafarers' company or as part of the seafarers' employment agreements (as carried by seafarers) should also be considered evidence that they are seafarers who are joining or leaving ships;
- 3.8.1.1.8. Provide seafarers immediate access to medical facilities in the port Member State. When the required medical care cannot be provided in the port of call, facilitate the medical evacuation of seafarers in need of urgent medical attention. Address the

situation of seafarers who, owing to the unforeseen extension of their periods on board, are facing the expiration of essential medical prescriptions;

3.8.1.1.9. Increase access for seafarers to commercial flights and other forms of transportation to and from their principal countries of origin, and to airports that are in reasonable proximity to seaports where crew changes are affected. Where scheduled commercial flights are not available, authorize landing slots for chartered flights, or include seafarers on repatriation flights for citizens and permanent residents;

3.8.1.2.10. Permit seafarers to disembark from ships in port and transit through the territory of the Member State for the purpose of crew changes and repatriation;

3.8.1.2.11. Allow seafarers who are citizens or permanent residents to return home, and take all actions necessary to expedite their return, including facilitating their clearance so that they can travel to join ship crews;

3.8.2.2 Port and border workers

3.8.2.2.1 Member States should provide information and training to port and border workers on best practices to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in their work;

3.8.2.2.2 Member States should provide to port and border workers adequate PPE, disinfectants, and instructions and training in sanitizing work spaces and areas;

3.8.2.2.3 Member States will cooperate and draft joint plans to address potential outbreaks at border crossings, and agree on joint quarantine and containment measures for port and border workers.

3.8.3. Aid and humanitarian workers

3.8.3.1. Where possible, member States should facilitate the movement of seafarers and aid and humanitarian workers, deeming them essential workers, to allow humanitarian work to continue;

3.8.3.2. Aid and humanitarian workers will remain subject to national legislation and testing protocols, as mandated by Member States and recommended by WHO and Africa CDC;

3.8.3.3. Member States should disseminate these guidelines to border and customs officers to facilitate the movement of aid and humanitarian workers;

3.9. Exchanging information

3.9.1. Border agencies are urged to collaborate and share information through coordinated border management to ensure the movement, clearance and release of goods, and to strengthen existing procedures for exchanging information between border posts;

- 3.9.2. Member States are urged to continuously share information on the COVID-19 pandemic with each other and with the AUC and REC secretariats, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - 3.9.2.1 Early-warning and risk assessments to inform cross-border coordination in the re-opening (or possible re-closure) of borders;
 - 3.9.2.2 Mobility-related restrictions (e.g., visas, permits and other travel restrictions) that have been put in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - 3.9.2.3 Information on changes in procedures and opening hours of border checkpoints, recognizing that some have reduced their operating hours, and that operating hours of border check points in some countries are not synchronized with those of their neighbors or with those along trade and transport corridors;
 - 3.9.2.4 Data on border and health operations that are collected and analysed to inform operational and policy responses, including the use of mechanisms to enable contact-tracing at border check points.
 - 3.9.2.4.1 Government agencies, traders, cross-border trade associations, and cargo handlers are urged to share information on the challenges they have encountered in the movement of goods and services during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to facilitate timely responses thereto;
 - 3.9.2.4.2 Member States and the AUC and REC secretariats are to designate contact persons who will facilitate the exchange of information in accordance with international health regulations;
 - 3.9.2.4.3 Member States and the AUC and REC secretariats will continuously conduct awareness-raising and training interventions to ensure capacity and readiness to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - 3.9.2.4.4 Member States are urged to submit to the AUC and REC secretariats documents on national COVID-19-related declarations, policies, laws, regulations and notifications; the AUC and REC secretariats will post such documents on their respective websites for information-sharing purposes.

3.10. Gender considerations

Recognizing that the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the structural inequalities that disadvantage women and girls, Member States must continue to promote gender equality and account for the asymmetric impact of COVID-19 on female versus male traders by:

- 3.10.1. Introducing and implementing measures that prevent and respond to increased violence against women and girls;
- 3.10.2. Maintaining the availability of, and equitable access to, sexual and reproductive health services;
- 3.10.3. Giving priority to cross-border trade in essential sexual and reproductive health-related goods and services; and providing adequate PPE and other medical supplies

and equipment for, and conducting regular screening and testing of, health personnel at border crossings and checkpoints, taking into account the specific needs of women, who constitute the majority of such personnel;

- 3.10.4. Establishing and operating gender desks at border crossings to serve as the first point of contact for female traders to report cases of discrimination;
- 3.10.5. Collaborating with associations of female cross-border traders to design and implement targeted sensitization programmes for women on COVID-19-related cross-border trade requirements and procedures;
- 3.10.6. Providing gender-sensitivity training to customs officers and other border officials at points of entry and exit;
- 3.10.7. Identifying a dedicated female officer as a gender champion within the customs offices at border post, whom female traders can comfortably interact with, seek assistance from, and report cases of discrimination to;
- 3.10.8. Considering and implementing relief schemes and/or care services programmes to reduce the burden of increased unpaid care responsibilities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, which are typically borne by women and girls;
- 3.10.9. Introducing and implementing targeted financial measures to support female traders in expanding and diversifying their operations, in order to recover from the economic impact of COVID-19;
- 3.10.10. Ensuring that the guidelines are implemented in a gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory manner.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, CAPACITY-BUILDING AND COOPERATION

- 4.1 Technical assistance will be provided to Member States by AUC in collaboration with partners, upon request by such Member States, in order to enhance their capacity to apply these guidelines and the annexes thereto;
- 4.2 AUC, in collaboration with partners, will facilitate training and capacity-building programmes to assist Member States in the implementation of these guidelines and the annexes thereto, including by providing training to government agencies, traders, cross-border trade associations, cargo handlers, and other stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of the guidelines;
- 4.3 Member States are encouraged to cooperate in the implementation of these guidelines and the annexes thereto, specifically in the dissemination of relevant information to other Member States, stakeholders and private parties;
- 4.4 Given the continued reliance on imports of PPE and pharmaceutical products during the pandemic, the development of African supply chains for essential goods and for COVID-19 vaccines (once they become available) will be critical to the immunization process and to mitigating future crises. Therefore, Member States are urged to:
 - 4.4.1 Promote local production of the items required to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, such as medications, sanitizer, protective gear, and ventilators;
 - 4.4.2 Facilitate intra-African exports/transfers of medical supplies and relief items (such as food products) among Member States, from areas of surplus to areas of deficit.

- 4.5 Member States are urged to ratify the creation of an African medicines agency, with a view to accelerating the harmonization of pharmaceutical regulations and standards on the continent, promoting information-sharing, and training customs officers in methods to counter the trade in illicit pharmaceutical products;
- 4.6 Member States are urged to emphasize gender sensitivity in all training related to these guidelines that they provide to customs agencies, border officers, and other focal points at border crossings, with a view to enhancing their awareness of gender issues in their work.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.1 AUC, in consultation with RECs, Member States and other key stakeholders and partners, should:

- 5.1.1 Review national trade and transport-related policies, regulations and response measures and identify inconsistencies, and, on that basis, select best practices and propose to Member States harmonized policies, regulations and measures;
- 5.1.2 Utilize available, up-to-date data (gender-disaggregated where available) on corridor performance indicators to assess progress in the implementation of these guidelines and the annexes thereto and to inform improvements in trade and transport measures at the REC and continental levels;
- 5.1.3 Put in place a mechanism to enable Member States to share information on COVID-19 response policies, regulations and guidelines, best practices, and experiences in the implementation of the various measures;
- 5.1.4 Urgently establish a continental transport and trade facilitation committee (CTTFC), comprising experts in transport, trade facilitation and logistics, customs, immigration, public health and security, to assist and coordinate the efforts of Member States, RECs and corridor groups in implementing the provisions of these guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 5.1.5 Mobilize resources to facilitate the effective and efficient operation of CTTFC to address the challenges of the current situation and coordinate the implementation of these guidelines;
- 5.1.6 Based on lessons learned, propose recommendations for revisions and updates to current policy instruments to ensure that they have adequate and comprehensive provisions for the continent to coordinate responses to future emergencies that might arise from epidemics and natural disasters;
- 5.1.7 Develop additional and/or updated guidelines as may be required to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate trade and transport as the crisis evolves;
- 5.1.8 Urge each Member State to expand the mandate of its national transport and trade facilitation committee (NTTFC) or establish a similar body comprising officials from the ministries responsible for transport, health, law enforcement, the military, customs, immigration and trade. That body should coordinate the implementation of these guidelines and resolve operational issues at borders or checkpoints arising from the interpretation of, or lack of consistent communication on, policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. NTTFC contact telephone numbers and emails should be

displayed at borders and checkpoints and shared with all Member States, for the speedy resolution of issues arising at borders and checkpoints relating to the misinterpretation of current policies;

- 5.1.9 Urge Member States to establish and implement single windows to coordinate border management and enhance cooperation among the various border agencies, for the efficient and timely clearance of essential consignments, in line with article 18 of annex 4 to the AfCFTA Agreement;
- 5.1.10 Review and update these guidelines to respond to any changes that may affect the implementation of the provisions herein;
- 5.1.11 Urge each Member State to delegate to its NTTFC the task of ensuring that related measures are implemented as minimum standards for facilitating the movement of goods.

ANNEX 1: CONTINENTAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF CROSS-BORDER TRANSPORT AT DESIGNATED POINTS OF ENTRY AND COVID-19 CHECKPOINTS

ANNEX 2: LIST OF ADDITIONAL RELEVANT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COVID-19 GUIDELINES

CONTINENTAL STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF CROSS- BORDER ROAD TRANSPORT AT DESIGNATED POINTS OF ENTRY AND COVID-19 CHECKPOINTS

I. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of these standard operating procedures (SOPs) is to facilitate the safe transport by road of all passengers, goods and services, and to promote business continuity and the resumption of cross-border activities across Africa, while preventing the spread of COVID-19.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The SOPs provide guidance on specific measures to be implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through cross-border road transport.

Member State implementation of the SOPs will be assisted by the Corridor Trip Monitoring System and the Enhanced Regional Electronic Cargo and Driver Tracking System, which have already been developed, and other systems as may be agreed by Member States, for managing the registration of cross-border trips; recording, monitoring and surveilling driver and crew wellness, including through the results of medical tests for specified communicable diseases such as COVID-19; tracking vehicles, loads, and drivers and crew; contact-tracing; queue management at ports, border posts and other facilities; and statistical analysis and reporting.

The SOPs cover the requirements that drivers and crew members must meet at each stage or phase of a cross-border trip, as follows:

- i. Before exiting the Member State of departure;
- ii. Upon entering the Member State(s) of transit or destination;
- iii. Upon arriving at the Member State of destination;
- iv. As part of the management of drivers, crew members and passengers while in the Member State of destination;
- v. Upon departing the Member State of destination;
- vi. At check points.

III. KEY CONSIDERATIONS: TESTING, QUARANTINE SITES, TRUCK STOPS, CATERING AND SANITATION

a. Testing of drivers, crew members and passengers

- i. Member States will use a real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, or any other molecular test (such as a quantitative reverse transcriptase PCR test, a reverse transcription loop-mediated isothermal amplification test, or a recombinase polymerase amplification test);
- ii. Drivers, crew members and passengers will be tested for COVID-19, either at a one-stop health post or at any other designated testing facility in the country of departure no less than 72 hours before departing;
- iii. Such test results will be valid for 14 days;
- iv. Member States agree to mutually recognize each other's COVID-19 test certificates;
- v. Crew members or passengers who enter the territory of another Member State's after the period of validity ends will be required to re-test;
- vi. Member States must screen drivers, crew members and passengers at entry points. Random testing for COVID-19, with a sample size not exceeding 5 per cent, can be performed, provided that, where screening also entails testing, drivers, crew members and passengers holding valid negative certificates are permitted to proceed with the trip without having to wait for test results at entry points;
- vii. Where the demand for test kits may exceed supply, Member States are urged to consider using pooled testing strategies;
- viii. Notwithstanding (vi) above, Member States can perform tests with sample sizes exceeding 5 per cent, if deemed necessary, depending on the prevailing pandemic circumstances.

b. Truck stops, catering and sanitation

- i. Member States will provide all drivers with information on the truck stops that they can use along the designated routes in trade corridors and the services that are available in such locations;
- ii. Catering, sanitation and fuelling services will be made available at specific truck stops and roadside stations along the routes/corridors that comply with public health measures prescribed by national authorities.

IV. REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

a. Requirements before exiting the Member State of departure

Member States will facilitate at their own cost the testing of drivers and crew members at designated testing points and expedite the release of test result reports to facilitate the movement of goods;

To ensure the safety of the public, drivers and crew members, the transport operator should ensure that:

- ii. All drivers and crew members are tested for COVID-19 before commencing each cross-border trip;
- iii. Only drivers and crew who test negative for COVID-19 are allowed to undertake a cross-border trip;
- iv. All drivers and crew members possess a valid COVID-19 certificate, issued no less than 72 hours prior to departure and valid for 14 days, issued in the Member State of departure, before starting their cross-border trip and leaving the country of departure;
- v. Drivers and crew members have an adequate supply of alcohol-based sanitizer, water, soap, and masks to maintain hygiene and protect themselves;
- vi. All drivers and crew members carry company identification cards, which should be shown together with any other official identification documents, to law enforcement agents and health officials upon request;
- vii. Drivers, crew members and ground staff adhere to infection prevention measures, including wearing protective clothing and masks, when loading cargo onto trucks;
- viii. All drivers and crew members are cleared by health officials after COVID-19 symptom-and-temperature screening the border posts when exiting the country of departure.

b. Requirements for entering the Member State(s) of transit or destination

- i. Health officials will complete the COVID-19 control forms and clear drivers and crew members, after symptom-and-temperature screening of all persons aboard a vehicle, using a thermal gun or thermal scanners;
- ii. All persons aboard a vehicle should be cleared and given duplicates of the control forms to carry with them until trip completion;
- iii. Health officials will provide drivers a trip/log sheet that indicates the designated stop points/truck stops, which drivers will complete as they travel along the route/corridor and present at the point of exit or at aquarantine facility;
- iv. Member States will provide drivers a map or a list of truck stops, roadside stations and other designated stops along corridors/routes that includes their GPS coordinates;
- v. Health officials will provide drivers and crew members materials to educate them on the prevention and control of COVID-19, including toll-free numbers to call for more information on COVID-19 and related support services;

- vi. Drivers and crew members should present the duplicates of the completed COVID-19 control forms to immigration, customs and security officers before leaving the point of entry and at any check point within the country of transit or destination;
- vii. Member States may opt to perform random testing of drivers and crew members presenting a negative test certificates for quality assurance purposes;
- viii. Any vehicle in which the driver or a crew member tests positive for COVID-19 or is assessed as having COVID-19 symptoms must be disinfected by health officials at the cost of the transport operator;
- ix. All drivers and crew members will observe infection prevention and control measures and wear face masks while in transit, as appropriate;
- x. Trucks must stop only at designated stops, as stated on the list / map of truck stops provided by the authorities upon entering the country;
- xi. Member States will provide toll-free numbers that drivers can call for assistance in case of an emergency vehicle breakdown or any other emergency;
- xii. Drivers are prohibited from picking up hitch-hikers at any point along their journeys.

c. *Requirements upon arrival at the Member State of destination*

- i. Member States will develop specific protocols for unloading trucks to ensure adherence to infection prevention and control measures;
- ii. Member States will designate or provide a quarantine facility or another specific location with adequate and suitable health services, accommodation, meals, sanitation and security for drivers and crew members while in the country;
- iii. Drivers and crew members must observe infection prevention and control measures while they are unloading or loading cargo;
- iv. Drivers and crew members must put on a new set of gloves and masks when unloading cargo;
- v. Ground staff must wear gloves and masks if unloading cargo;
- vi. When loading cargo, drivers, crew members and ground staff must adhere to infection prevention measures, including wearing PPE;
- vii. In case protective clothes are not available, the disinfection of ground staff who have loaded or unloaded trucks should be considered.

d. *Requirements for the management of drivers and crew members while in the Member State of destination*

- i. Member States will designate or provide a quarantine facility or another specific location with adequate and suitable health services, accommodation, meals, sanitation and security for drivers and crew members while in the country, where necessary, at the operators' cost;
- ii. Managers of quarantine facilities or other specific locations must ensure that drivers and crew members are safe and observe infection prevention and control measures;

- iii. During their stay in the country of destination, drivers and crew members must comply with public health measures, including using hand sanitizer, frequent hand-washing, wearing masks, and minimizing contact with the local community;
- iv. Upon arrival in the country of destination, health officials must cross check the information indicated in the electronic platform, to determine whether the driver adhered to the trip itinerary prescribed at the point of entry and to rule out any contact with the local community.

e. *Requirements upon departing the Member State of destination*

- i. Drivers and crew members bearing documents that certify their negative COVID-19 test results and that are no more than 14 days old must be allowed to return to the country of origin without re-testing unless they display signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
- ii. A new trip log sheet must be provided to the driver to ensure compliance with the COVID-19 control protocol during the return trip;
- iii. When exiting the country, officials will verify that drivers and crew members have valid negative COVID-19 test results for and have duly completed the log sheet.

d. *Requirements at checkpoints*

- i. Drivers will present the COVID-19 control protocol trip registration form at all check points along the journey;
- ii. Drivers will present their trip log sheets at every checkpoint along the journey; and
- iii. Drivers and crew members must comply with the rules and regulations as gazetted by the host Member State.

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RELEVANT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COVID-19 GUIDELINES

1. World Health Organization. "Overview of public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19". Available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/overview-of-public-health-and-social-measures-in-the-context-of-covid-19>.
 2. World Health Organization. "Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19: interim guidance, 5 June 2020". Available at <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/332293>.
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