

Monthly Briefing on Pandemic Development and Economic Effects in Africa

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This briefing tracks the development of SARS-COV-2 in the partner countries of the GIZ Africa department, surveys the progress of vaccination campaigns and highlights trends in the economic impact of the pandemic across the region. The briefing is a new version of the monthly *Pandemic Development Africa Briefing*, issued since mid-2020.

- ❖ COVID-19 cases reached record highs due to the spread of Delta and Omicron during Dec 2021, but hospitalisations and deaths remained significantly lower than in previous waves.
- ❖ Only seven African countries reached WHO's 40% vaccination target for 2021. The WHO warns that low vaccination rates across Africa increase the risk of new variants of concern emerging.
- ❖ Partial economic recoveries due to higher commodity prices and improved demand are dampened by the ongoing global shipping crisis and repercussions from the travel ban.

1. Highlights of current pandemic trends¹ in Africa

Trends in registered COVID-19 cases

As of 10 Jan 2022, the number of new registered [COVID-19-cases in Africa decreased](#) (-1% compared to previous week) after a rise at the end of 2021. Most new cases are reported in the Southern region (49%), followed by the Eastern (26%), Western (11%), Northern (10%) and Central (4%) regions. Eight countries account for 65% of total cases: ZAF (21%), ETH (10%), ZMB (9%), MOZ (7%), KEN (6%), UGA (4%), ZWE (4%), MAR (4%). Since the beginning of the pandemic, 52 (95%) AU Member States (MS) have experienced a third wave of infections, 42 MS have experienced a fourth wave, and 5 MS (DZA, KEN, MUS, COG, SOM) have experienced a fifth wave.

➤ For detailed information about COVID-19 cases in our partner countries see Chapter 4.

Trends in pandemic effects on health systems

The 55 MS, which account for about 16% of the world population, [reported 3.4% of all cases and 4.2%](#) of all deaths globally. 27 MS reported higher COVID-19 related fatality rates than the global rate of 2%. However, asymptomatic people might not get tested, which means that the number of milder cases may be under- and the case fatality rate overestimated. SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern reported to be in circulation are the Alpha variant in 48, Beta in 44, Delta in 46, Gamma in 6, and/or Omicron in 29 MS. Alpha, Beta, and Gamma generally led to less severe illness in Africa than in other world regions, and health effects of COVID-19 continue to be relatively mild in global comparison.

[Studies of the Omicron variant](#) from South Africa show a higher transmissibility and lower hospitalisation and death rates compared to previous waves. [Data from a large South African hospital](#) in the epicentre of the country's Omicron wave shows that death rates among hospitalized patients were less than a quarter than in the Delta wave (4.5% vs 21.3%). Kenya also reported [record infections](#)

¹ This briefing uses COVID data from WHO, African CDC, Johns Hopkins University and OurWorldInData. For consistency, we do not use potentially more recent data provided by governments. Note that data on infections and deaths in Africa is compromised by low testing rates and low death registration rates in many countries.

[but reduced hospitalisation and death rates](#). Some experts suggest that the [decoupling of cases from death rates](#) could be the end of the epidemic phase of the pandemic and the start of its endemic phase.

Despite these positive signs, [Dr Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa](#), notes that many deaths could have been prevented if Africa had reached the same vaccination levels as wealthy nations. [The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (ACDC) argues that strict lockdown measures are no longer the best response to rising infections. Instead, wearing masks in public places, social distancing and other public health and social measures as well as vaccination should be preferred.

Trends in the vaccination campaigns

The WHO aims at vaccinating 70% of the world population by June 2022, but at the current pace, Africa will only reach this goal by August 2024. [COVAX and the AU's African Vaccine Acquisition Trust \(AVAT\)](#) aim to introduce improved standards in the supply of vaccines to accelerate Africa's access. However, vaccine scepticism is a widespread challenge across the region, in some countries overtaking supply as a barrier to successful vaccine campaigns.

A [preliminary study from South Africa](#) showed that a booster shot with the J&J vaccine reached an effectiveness of up to 85% in protecting against severe cases. This is encouraging, as this vaccine is easier to transport and store. [Aspen Pharmacare](#), a South African pharmaceutical company, has been manufacturing the vaccine under a "fill-and-finish" process since July 2021 and is [expected to distribute it](#) under its own brand "Aspenovax" in 2022. [Local production of vaccines](#) is expected to increase, with plans for 12 production facilities across six other countries (SEN, RWA, GHA, DZA, EGY, MAR).

➤ *For detailed information about vaccination campaigns in our partner countries see Chapter 3.*

2. Trends in the economic effects of the pandemic

Effects of the pandemic on the tourism sector

The tourism industry accounts for [7% of Africa's GDP in 2019](#), and makes up more than 5% of GDP in 12 partner countries (BWA, CMR, CIV, KEN, LSO, MDG, NAM, RWA, SEN, ZAF, TZA, GMB). [The pandemic severely impacted the industry](#): appr. half of the people working in tourism lost their jobs and it is expected that the industry will have lost \$170-253 bn. in 2021. [Some of the region's international tourism destinations](#) regained attraction in mid-2021 amid improved international and domestic travel, leading to signs of recovery in some countries (CPV, SYC). However, the [travel ban](#) imposed on Southern African countries by many countries worldwide due to Omicron interrupted the rebound. The ban has been lifted, but the damage to the industry has been done, as it led to significant revenue and job losses and reduced overall confidence in travelling to the region.

Effects of the pandemic on the mining sector

The mining industry accounts for more than 25% of total exports in fifteen partner countries of the GIZ Africa Department (BWA, BFA, CAF, COD, GHA, GIN, LBR, MLI, NAM, NIG, SLE, ZAF, TZA, ZMB, ZWE). Across the industry, a recovery is visible. [Recovery plans and less pandemic-related restrictions](#) in the production operations supported a resilient development. Moreover, high prices for precious metals and recovered Chinese demand increased the industry's outlook. But the [ongoing pandemic-induced shipping crisis](#) continues to disrupt the global supply chain: congested ports in high-income countries lead to shortages and higher container prices in lower-income countries, [which serious impacts for Africa's mining industry](#). Furthermore, economic recoveries that are mainly driven by strong natural

resource exports are fallacious because they tend to be job-less and environmentally unsustainable. As a result, building-back-better goals are likely to be missed (see e.g. [UNDP](#)).

Effects of the pandemic on the agricultural sector

The agricultural sector accounts for 17% of Africa's GDP and remains the region's most important source of employment. The pandemic significantly reduced Africa's agricultural and food trade, with staple foods less impacted than non-food commodities. [At the beginning of the pandemic](#), food imports were hampered by export restrictions in Asian countries. The current problem facing food imports are the ongoing disruptions of fragile global food supply chains, including the shipping crisis, and higher food prices. [Effects of the pandemic on agricultural production](#) were heterogenous. In countries where lockdown measures coincided with the harvesting season, parts of the harvests were lost due to labour shortages. In other countries, lockdown measures arrived early in the crop cycle, allowing time to prepare for harvesting. [Agricultural exports](#) are negatively impacted by increasing logistic costs for producers due to the shipping crisis. E.g. [South Africa's citrus exports](#), an important agricultural export product in the country, logged record export numbers, but revenues remained relatively low due to the high logistic costs.

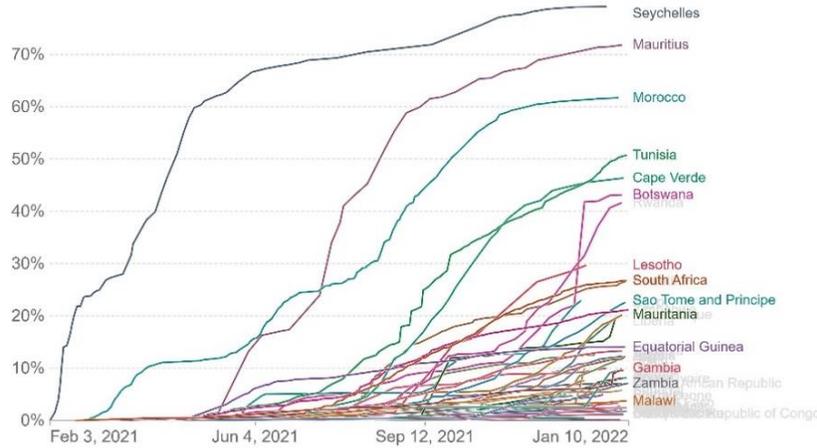
3. Status-quo of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in Africa

As of 10 Jan 2022, 14.14% of the African population had received 1 dose, 9.47% had their vaccination completed and 0.35% had received booster shots. Of the 546,7 Mio doses delivered to the African continent, 58.70% have been administered ([Africa CDC](#)). The progress in vaccination campaigns differs among African countries, but Eritrea is the only country that has not started a vaccination program. [South Africa](#), [Kenya and Rwanda](#) started their booster shot campaigns, while [Rwanda](#) introduced the administration of booster shots in three instead of six months after the last dose. [Only seven countries](#) (SYC, MUS, MAR, TUN, CPV, BWA, RWA) in Africa reached the goal of fully vaccinating 40% of their population by the end of 2021. SYC, MUS, and MAR have the highest rates with more than 60% of their population vaccinated.

The low vaccination rates are due to on the one hand [vaccine supply challenges](#) and on the other hand slow demand due to vaccine hesitancy. Vaccine supply to Africa is characterized by unrealized promises as seen in the [discrepancy between promised and delivered vaccines](#). Donations made by European countries diverge in recipients, where France is the only donor whose top recipient is an African country. However, supply has increased recently and African countries need to [improve efforts to develop micro-plans](#) to reach as many of their populations as possible. [Vaccine hesitancy](#) is increasing globally, but especially so in the Global South, where misinformation seems to be particularly widespread. Salim Abdool Karim, a leading South African virologist, suggested the implementation of both incentives and government mandates to overcome vaccine hesitancy.

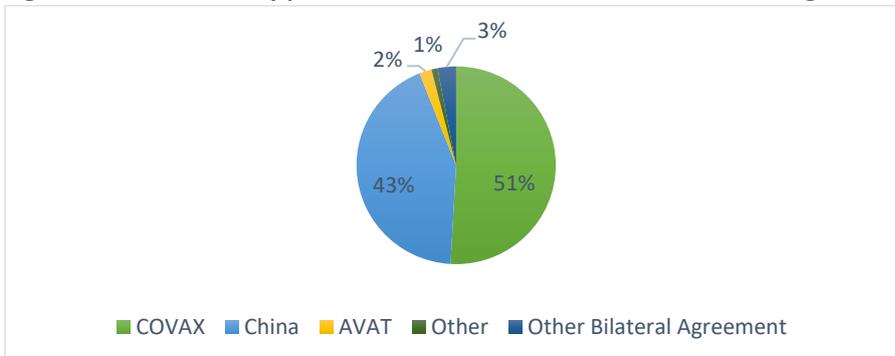
[Africa imports 99% of its vaccines](#), but local production is increasing. So far, South Africa already started partially [producing the J&J vaccine](#). Senegal and Ghana will also produce vaccines as part of "fill and finish" process in 2022. And, [Rwanda](#) will be the first African country to completely manufacture the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine starting this year.

Fig. 1: Share of population fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as of 10 Jan 2022



Source: [COVID-19 Data Explorer – Our World in Data](#)

Fig. 2: Procured doses by procurement mechanism to the WHO Africa region



Source: Based on [WHO Officially reported Covid-19 vaccination data](#)

4. New daily confirmed cases in the GIZ's Africa Department

The following graphs show the growth in daily new infections in the last 28 days (on a 7-day \emptyset). The scaling of new infections is adjusted to the number of cases reported in the region. This must be considered when comparing graphs.

Southern Africa (Division 1300)

Fig. 3: New confirmed COVID-19 cases, 7-day \emptyset , as of 03 Jan, Southern Africa, excl. ZAF

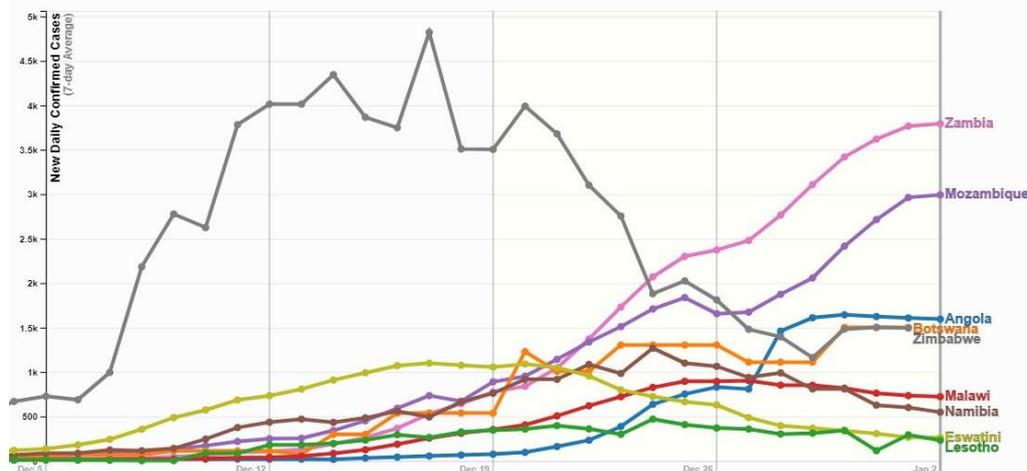
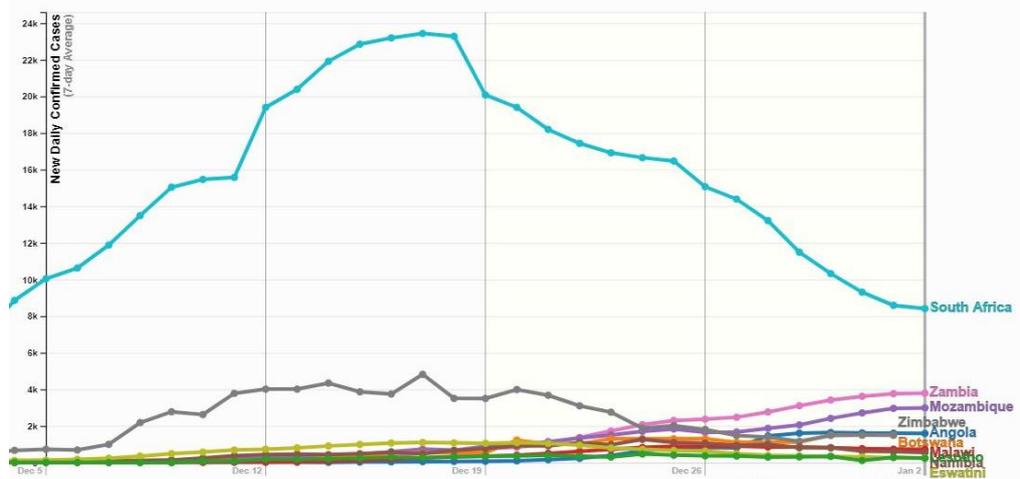


Fig. 4: New confirmed COVID-19 cases, 7-day $\bar{\phi}$, as of 03 Jan, Southern Africa, incl. ZAF

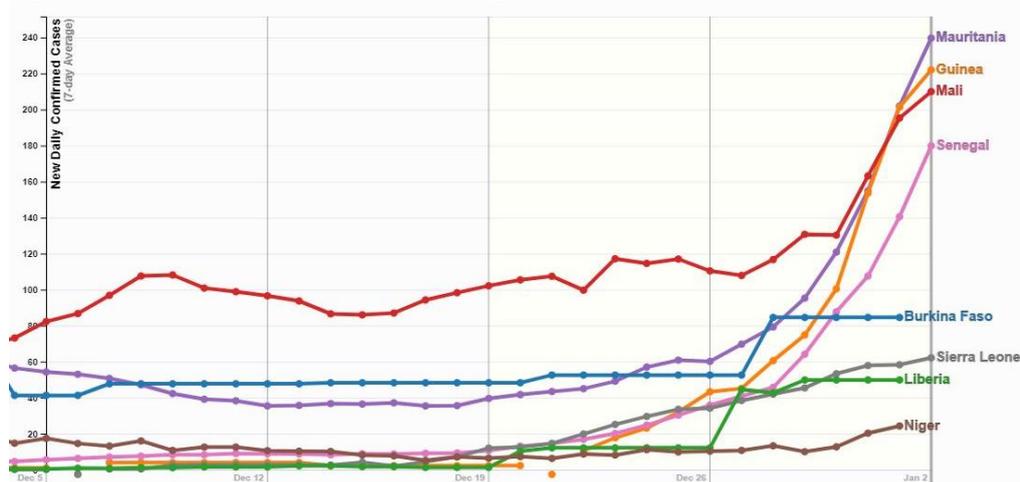


(Sources for both graphics: 91-DIVOC, based on data from Johns Hopkins University)

South Africa reported the highest 7-day average in the region, but it passed its peak of the fourth wave and the infections are continuously declining in the country. Zimbabwe continued its increase of the previous month and peaked with a record caseload in mid-December and declined steadily afterwards. Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Eswatini reported their highest caseload since the beginning of the pandemic. The infections rose continuously throughout the month in Zambia and Mozambique. Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, and Namibia reached their peak in mid-December and decreased after. Botswana’s caseload increased.

West Africa 1 (Division 1100)

Fig. 5: New confirmed COVID-19 cases, 7-day $\bar{\phi}$, as of 03 Jan, West Africa 1

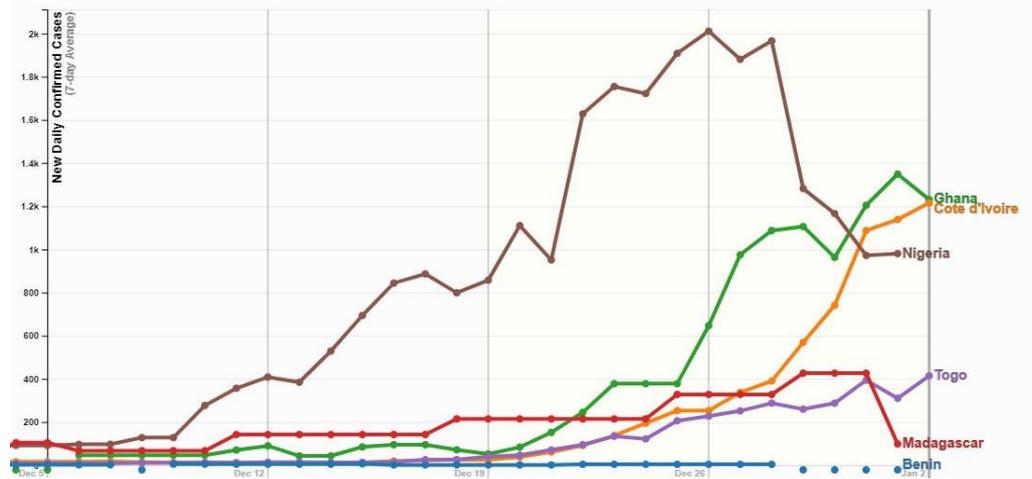


(Source: 91-DIVOC, based on data from Johns Hopkins University)

All countries show an increase in confirmed COVID-19 infections, specifically after the festive season. Guinea reported its highest caseload since the beginning of the pandemic. After not having reported any new cases for almost six months, Sierra Leone reported an increase in new cases since mid of December.

West Africa 2 (Division 1600)

Fig. 6: New confirmed COVID-19 cases, 7-day ϕ , as of 03 Jan, West Africa 2

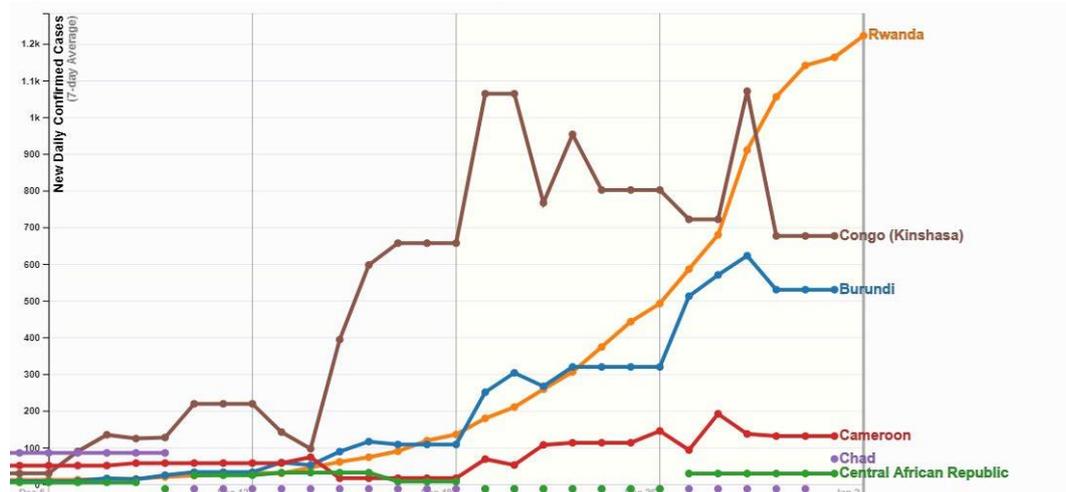


(Source: 91-DIVOC, based on data from Johns Hopkins University)

Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo reported an increase in confirmed cases, and their highest number in confirmed cases since the start of the pandemic. Nigeria's reported cases increased, peaked at its highest caseload in the pandemic, and then declined towards the end of the month. Nigeria entered its fourth wave in December 2021. Madagascar reported rising numbers, which decreased in the last days of December 2021. Data from Benin has been disrupted, the available data shows an incidence close to 0.

Central Africa (Division 1400)

Fig. 7: New confirmed COVID-19 cases, 7-day ϕ , as of 03 Jan, Central Africa

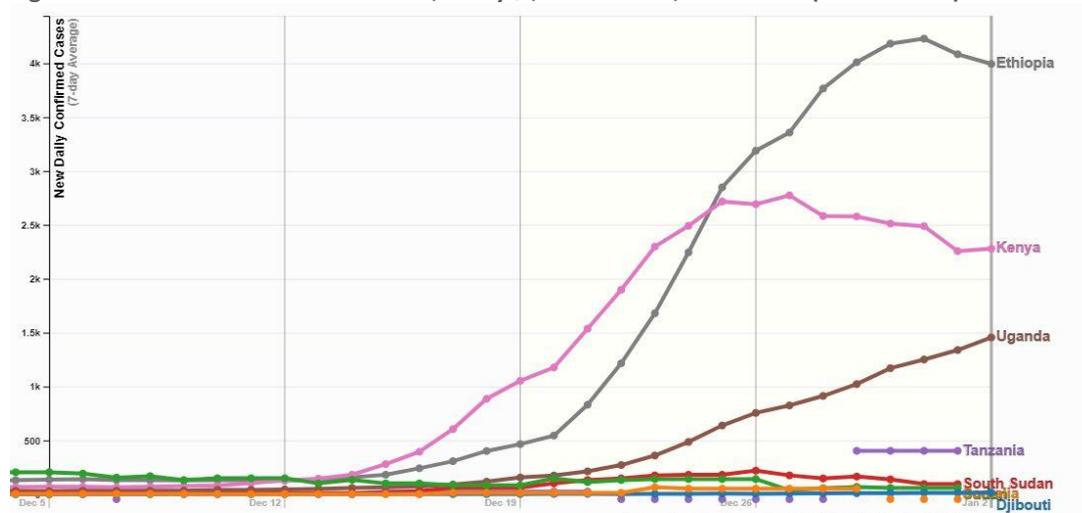


(Source: 91-DIVOC, based on data from Johns Hopkins University)

Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Cameroon reported increasing COVID-19 cases, with Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo reporting their highest caseload since the start of the pandemic. Data for Chad and Cameroon has been disrupted.

East Africa (Division 1500) + Ethiopia and Djibouti (Division 1700)

Fig. 8: New confirmed COVID-19 cases, 7-day $\bar{\phi}$, as of 03 Jan, East Africa (1500 + 1700)



(Source: 91-DIVOC, based on data from Johns Hopkins University)

Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda reported rising COVID-19 infections, whereas Ethiopia and Kenya reported their highest caseload since the beginning of the pandemic Kenya's and South Sudan's cases peaked towards the end of the month and declined since then. Sudan reported a decrease in infections, while data for Tanzania, Djibouti and Somalia has been disrupted.