



International  
Labour  
Organization

# FACTSHEET

Rapid Impact Assessment of COVID-19  
on Migrant Workers in SADC.

## #2 Findings: Government Policy Responses

### Summary of National Level Responses

All SADC Governments responded to the spread of COVID-19 in their territories although the severity & magnitude is clearly varied: These responses have included:

- ❖ Declaration of state of emergency/disaster.
- ❖ School closures.
- ❖ Workplace closures.
- ❖ Cancellation of public events.
- ❖ Restrictions on gatherings.
- ❖ Public Transport system closures.
- ❖ Stay-at-home requirement.
- ❖ Restrictions on internal movement.
- ❖ International travel controls or prohibitions.
- ❖ Income support to qualifying citizens.

However, Comoros, Malawi & Mozambique had not yet had implemented national lockdowns between March & April 2020

At the end of May, relaxation of lockdown conditions was occurring in some of these Member States. Other summary responses include (UNECA, 2020; [www.uneca.org](http://www.uneca.org)):

Member State	Fiscal Stimulus	Monetary Stimulus	Mass Testing	Quarantine
Angola	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Botswana	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Eswatini	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Lesotho	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Malawi	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Mauritius	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Mozambique	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
Namibia	Yes	Yes	No	14 days
South Africa	Yes	Yes	Yes	14 days
Zambia	Yes	Yes	Yes	14 days
Zimbabwe	Yes	Yes	No	21 days

### Other General Responses

- ❖ Establishing Emergency Committees/Bodies for COVID-19 Prevention to assess the situation & initiate relevant actions.
- ❖ Addressing urgent health needs, such as
  - Establishing testing labs, including at border crossings.
  - Setting up special wards to boost hospitalization & care capacity.
  - Procuring the most critical medical supplies.
- ❖ Coordinating repatriations of foreigners in bilateral arrangements.
- ❖ Adopting containment measures.
- ❖ Implementing a phased lifting of the lockdown began, allowing a few sectors to resume operation & others only partially.

### Model Responses by Member States

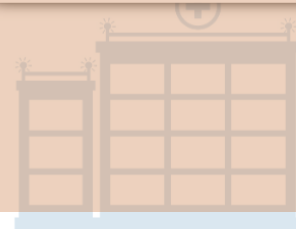
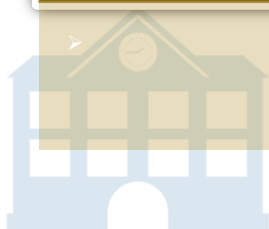
#### Fiscal Policy

- Additional health care spending.
- Grants (cash-transfers & in-kind necessities) to people in poverty & those unemployed.
- Wage subsidies.
- Tax relief, suspension of Government fees & waived social contributions.
- Packages of revenue & expenditure measures to fight the COVID-19 outbreak & minimize its negative socio-economic impact.
- Tax exemptions on humanitarian aid & donations & some delays on filing taxes for selected imports were granted.
- ☒ Suspension of tax audits for companies & grace periods for businesses on tax arrears.



#### Monetary Policy

- Reduced overnight funding costs.
- Broadening access to repo facilities.
- Freezing of interest on commercial loans impacted by the pandemic.
- Extension of collateral constraints for banks borrowing from the Central Bank to include corporate bonds & traded stocks.
- Increasing the minimum allocation of credit to promote the production of priority products; instructing banks to provide credit in the local currency to assist importers of essential goods.
- Banks & nonbanks offering loan restructuring.
- Rescheduling life insurance payment premiums & retirement fund contributions.
- Central banks relaxing rules to meet capital requirements & introducing measures to improve liquidity.





- ❖ Public & private institutions to ensure the conditions essential to the personal protection of employees & comply with the guidelines of health authorities (hygiene & biosecurity).
- ❖ All to follow the guidelines on distance between people.
- ❖ Creation of multi-sector working groups to ensure the implementation of safety, protection & occupational hygiene measures.
- ❖ Subsidies to safeguard jobs & ensure the payment of wages, companies with difficulty to pay.
- ❖ Establishment of campaigns to distribute basic goods to the most vulnerable populations to ensure the consumption of basic foodstuffs.
- ❖ Moratorium granted for electricity & water bills to ease the financial obligations of families in difficulty.
- ❖ Customs procedures simplification.
- ❖ Customs duties & taxes reduction for food, essential medicines & hygiene products & equipment.
- ❖ Extended deadline for filing tax.
- ❖ Major changes to immigration permit regime for foreign nationals seeking to work, live & invest in the country.
- ❖ Employment retention is being promoted through measures that include the relaxation of labour regulations to protect jobs (Government & business owners allowed to negotiate a temporary decrease of salaries & wages during the crisis period)

- ❖ Salary subsidy for industrial workers.
- ❖ Pay stipend to affected students abroad.
- ❖ Grants for vulnerable students in institutions of higher learning against lockdown extensions.
- ❖ Continued humanitarian assistance to vulnerable households to minimize the impact of food insecurity.

### The Positive Impact of Policy Responses to Migrant Workers

- ❖ Availability of strategic supplies.
- ❖ Mobile phone network operators reduced or removed charges on mobile money transfers & doubled the limit of personal transactions to facilitate remittances for migrant workers.
- ❖ Migrant workers' work permits that were expiring or had expired, & who, along with the employer, wished to continue working in the country, were able to renew their work permits while still in the country.
- ❖ For returning citizens & permanent residences, partnerships with other Governments were established for the organisation & coordination of evacuation & repatriation flights for those with the economic means for purchase.
- ❖ Introduction of temporary measures to address immigration matters during the lockdown period.

### Negative impacts of Policy Responses to Migrant Workers

- ❖ Travel prohibitions affected labourers seeking to enter the country.
- ❖ There are undocumented workers who also work in the mines who have been hard hit (suspended operations & closures, as part of cost cutting measures).
- ❖ Wage subsidies are only meant for citizens, which means migrant workers are excluded.
- ❖ Social distancing & travel bans have paralysed grassroots community work, without any indication of when such activity may resume.
- ❖ Levels of strain is likely to cause the violence to migrant workers as competition for scarce resources rises. (Violence is disruptive to day-to-day economic activities which allow households to make ends-meet).
- ❖ Many migrants who are unable or unwilling to return to their countries of origin have been made extremely poor by the imposition of the national lockdown.
- ❖ Potential arrest & travel bans on undocumented migrant workers is an issue of concern.

