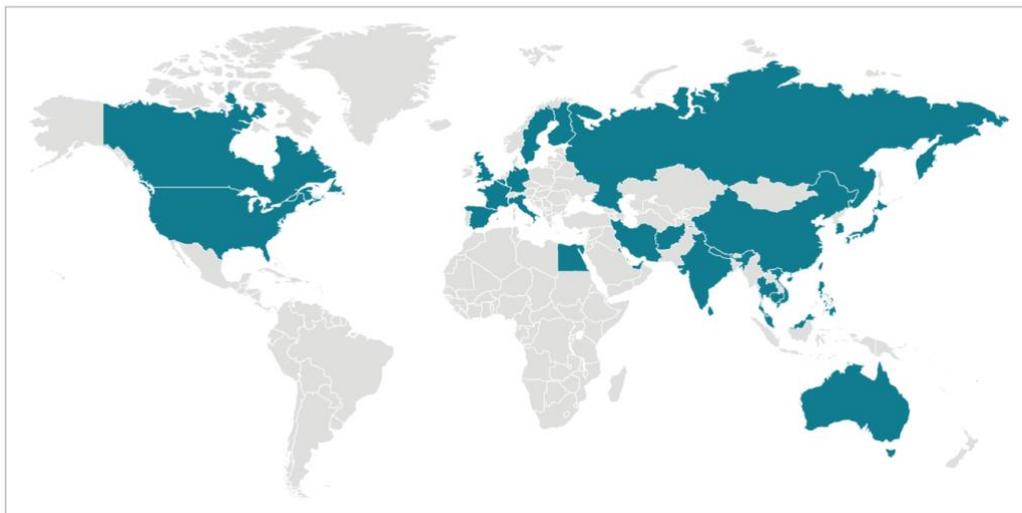




COVID-19 INFORMATION NOTE

As of 11:00 a.m. ET February 24, 2020



Courtesy of Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov, accessed 25 February 2020

What stands out from this latest iteration of the Covid-19 global Heat Map, particularly to those of us who live and work in Africa, is the almost complete absence of reporting of cases on our Continent. Is this a true reflection of the actual situation, or is the situation more pressing than is being depicted?

The purpose of this short Information Note is not to speculate on the politics of the reporting, but to provide companies and businesses with some practical advice on the steps that they can take to best prepare themselves by addressing: “What would I do if Covid-19 strikes?”

To paraphrase an old military saying, ‘time spent in preparation is rarely wasted’, and that is precisely how businesses should be making best use of their time during this apparent lull before the possible storm. Why wait?

With preparation being the key, here are five simple steps that businesses can take now that will help them weather the impacts of the storm, should it visit our shores:

1. **Form a Covid-19 Planning Team.** This could be one person, or a small team, but whatever the resources you allocate to this task, someone at the appropriate level within your organisation must be given the specific responsibility for planning your possible response strategies. They should, in the first instance, dust off your Crisis Management Plans and look specifically at your Business Continuity Plans to make sure that they are ‘fit-for-purpose’ and can be adapted to meet the needs of the potential pandemic situation.
2. **Gather Information, develop Insight.** With 29 countries declaring the presence of the virus so far, the World Health Organisation has, at the time of writing (25 Feb 20), decided to keep its



powder dry on whether or not to declare the current situation a global pandemic. They continue to watch and gauge the effectiveness of containment strategies that countries around the World are implementing, and the picture continues to be, at best, a mixed one. What will our Government's response be should Covid-19 begin to manifest itself here? How effective will plans be and how might they impact your people and your business? Without gathering and sifting information, you will be devoid of useful insight, thereby limiting the effectiveness of your plans.

3. **Scenario Plan.** As will all things Business Continuity, look at the worst-case scenarios and use them to develop your graduated response and to plan your contingencies accordingly. The warning signs are currently clear from a global perspective, but less clear from an African continental perspective. That being the case, what are the triggers that you as a business should be on the look-out for? Scenario planning will help you clarify these and will also help you plan the range of possible responses available. What do you need to do now in order to protect your business and your people in the short term/ the medium term/ and also in the longer term? What practical steps should be taken now, and what contingencies need to be put in place in order to mitigate certain scenarios? An example: do I currently have sufficient PPE...

4. **Recovery Planning.** The old saying that: 'if the thinking is not right, the doing will almost certainly be wrong'... continues to hold true, and so thinking now about how you would recover your business and what you would need to do to ensure that you recover at pace will give you huge competitive advantage and turn a difficult situation into an opportunity.

5. **Crisis Communications Plan.** You are probably already communicating with your staff, clients, suppliers and other key stakeholders to provide them with reassurance that you are on top of the developing situation and that you have strategies and plans in place to deal with any eventuality. If not, then you are behind the curve. Communicating with your internal and external stakeholders will be critical for your reputation, but also perhaps for your very survival, and to that end, developing a Crisis Communications Plan is essential.

If you would like advice or assistance with designing or implementing any of this, please contact:

colin@russellphilips.com or call me on +254 700 500 007

