Update on trajectories of confirmed cases (cumulative numbers) in 46 sub-Saharan African countries to 17th July 2021

In the graphs on the following pages we display the increasing numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases in each sub-Saharan African country. Note that the scales on the (vertical) y-axis differ from country to country – total number of cases vary widely among countries, from 2,410 in Sao Tome and Principe to 2,283,882 in South Africa. The x-axis (time) is the number of days since the start of the outbreak in that country, and this also varies considerably from 430 days in Lesotho to 507 days in Nigeria.

No cases of COVID-19 have been declared by Tanzania since the 29th April 2020 (509 cases). The late President John Magufuli cast doubt on the validity of the country’s testing program, closed the national testing laboratory and dismissed its director. While we have no precise data on new cases, it seems likely that these will have continued to increase exponentially in the absence of physical distancing control measures. The WHO classifies Tanzania as experiencing community transmission.

On the 20th May 2020, Benin announced a downward correction of -209 cases in their cumulative case count to that date. It appears that, contrary to WHO case definitions, Benin had declared cases identified by Rapid Diagnostic Testing (serological tests for antibodies) which had not been confirmed by PCR tests for viral antigen. These had apparently been identified through mass community testing. The dates on which those unconfirmed cases had been reported has not been specified, although we have requested this information. From the trajectories (see next page), it seems likely that this may have accounted for part of the surge of reported cases between 8th-11th May.
SOUTH SUDAN (Eastern Region - 1st Case 6th April)

Cumulative number of confirmed cases to date of report

Number of days since first confirmed case (beginning of outbreak)

E Swatini (Southern Region - 1st Case 15th March)

Cumulative number of confirmed cases to date of report

Number of days since first confirmed case (beginning of outbreak)