

Regulator, Stakeholders Chart Ways Forward for Broadcast Industry Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

The need to strengthen the capacity of the broadcasters in understanding and engaging with public policy directions and developing responses to challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic was the thrust of a webinar, jointly organized by the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC and the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, on Wednesday September 30, 2020.

Participants at the event include journalists, editors and managers of commercial and community broadcast stations, senior journalists, print and online publications with the theme; *Broadcast Policy Directions and Industry Responses in the COVID-19 Context*.

The facilitators of the webinar were Mr Kenny Ogungbe, CEO of Kenny Media Communications Ltd, Mrs Agatha Amata, media consultant and CEO of Rave TV and Trend FM Asaba, and Dr. Tony Anigala, Director, Broadcast Monitoring of the NBC.

Goodwill messages at the one-day event were delivered by Mr Jake Epele, Founder and CEO of Albino Foundation, Mr Lanre Arogundade, Executive Director of the International Press Center, IPC, Lagos and Mrs Adeola Ekine, Chairperson of the Lagos Chapter of the National Association of Women Journalists, NAWOJ.

Mr Epelle, in his message, harped on the need for inclusion of the People with Disabilities, PWDs, in media reportage and in the electoral process.

Mrs Ekine, Chairperson of Lagos NAWOJ, in her goodwill message, said the viral pandemic has had a negative effect on the media than other sectors of the economy and expressed satisfaction that the webinar was timely.

During his goodwill message Mr Arogundade said COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the important place of credible information in educating and mobilizing the populace towards positive behavioural changes.

In his welcome address, Dr Akin Akingbulu of IMS, said the webinar was the second in the series of such event organized in collaboration with the NBC in the COVID-19 era with focus on policy and dialogue on the challenges of the broadcast industry amid the viral pandemic.

"This collaboration went high with the coming of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria, EU-SDGN, project and has gone higher with the era of current Director General of NBC, Prof Armstrong Idachaba, a man with strong passion for the broadcast industry in Nigeria," he said, adding that;

"We have seen what the broadcasting industry has been passing through during the COVID-19 and it has not been funny. That is why we have brought together these seasoned industry players to handle the topic for discussion. I hope this session will develop inputs into policy directions of broadcasting in Nigeria."

In his remarks, Prof Idachaba thanked IMS for the webinar, which he described as timely. He also assured the Albino Foundation that NBC would look deeper into the issues of People with Disabilities, PWDs, in the Commission's Regulatory framework.

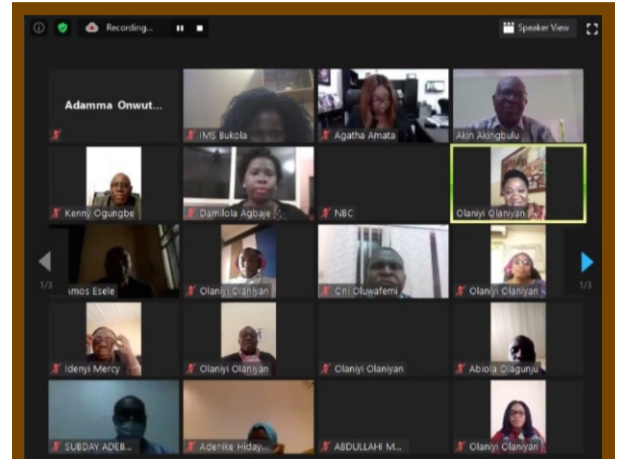
Prof Idachaba noted, "As a commission, the pandemic threw up some unique experiences as nobody expected it when it came. And it threw everybody off guard", he stated.

The NBC boss expressed optimism that some of the outcome of the deliberation would throw up suggestions for policy formulation for future references.

In his presentation, Mr Ogungbe, who spoke on sustainability of the media generally, said COVID-19, "is a teacher", meaning that it has created such uncertainty which has made it possible for people and businesses to learn lessons of survival and renewal. While he noted that the broadcasting industry had been facing challenges, which the advent of COVID-19 pandemic worsened, he disclosed that these problems, which included lack of payment by advertisers, "forced many radio and TV stations to reduce hours of broadcasting because there was no money to run the stations." Other challenges, he said, included the increase in VAT payment from 5% to 7.5% and the increase of pump price of petroleum products.

Accordingly, he suggested some measures, which the regulating authorities could look into to support the broadcast media remain afloat. These are debt forgiveness to ensure sustainability of many radio and TV stations, afflicted by the bad economy, courtesy of the pandemic; tax holidays and a stimulus package, "like it happened America and Europe, so that many stations can go back to regular hours of operations."

In her contribution, Ms Amata, who spoke on *Government and Regulator Support to Broadcasting and Beyond*, frowned at



Participants at the webinar.

what she considered the neglect of the media, "as frontline workers which they were during the pandemic", but had been treated differently by the authorities, unlike others they were in the frontline with during the pandemic.

She called for government-backed stimulus package for the media without any conditionality, arguing that the stations donated free airtime to carry COVID-19 messages in anticipation of future support in kind. She, however, advised that the support must be done through professional media organisations like NUJ, Newspapers Association of Nigeria, NPAN, the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, BON, which understand the operations of the media.

To enable the broadcast media stay in business in the past COVID-19 era, she called for tax exemptions, tax rebates, tax holiday and license fee reduction by the appropriate authorities and urged, "all of us to come together as one voice to make a presentation for NBC to take to the supervising Ministry".

Dr Anigala, in his presentation, *Partway of Government Regulatory Support to the Broadcast Industry in COVID-19 Era*, said the regulator has been very supportive of the industry by way of capacity building for community broadcasters, jointly held with IMS on April 23, 2020 and another one for On-Air personalities on coverage and reportage on COVID 19, which had ensured that those who make bogus claims on treatment of COVID-19 without authentication are not featured. Other forms of NBC support were donations of safety kit donations to some stations.

He sympathized with the canvassed position that bills were mounting in the face of dwindling revenue for stations, but sought the understanding of stakeholders as "NBC has a role to play but cannot do so without money like license fees."

Policeman Brutalizes Journalist As CP Apologises

A photojournalist with *The PUNCH*, Olukayode Jaiyeola was on Thursday brutalized by men of the Nigeria Police Force while covering the #*RevolutionNow* protest in Lagos.

Jaiyeola, who was part of journalists covering an October 1 protest in the state, was brutalised at the Maryland area of Lagos.

The incident happened around 12 noon when a policeman, hit Jaiyeola's head with a baton. Jaiyeola's colleague and *The PUNCH* reporter, Deji Lambo, who was at the scene, said Adadu hit Jaiyeola with such force that the photojournalist collapsed immediately, with blood gushing out of his injured skull.

He said Adadu tried to flee into a police vehicle after attacking Jaiyeola but "I grabbed his shirt, insisting that he had injured a journalist."

Lambo said, "Adadu's colleagues also shielded their own and whisked him into a police vehicle. They also pushed Jaiye into the same vehicle."

He said Jaiyeola was taken to the Police Clinic in Ikeja, the state capital, where his injured head was stitched. Jaiyeola's camera was also seized by police officers during the encounter.

Meanwhile, the state Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu, who described Adadu's conduct as unprofessional, apologised and visited Jaiyeola at the police clinic in Ikeja, where his head was stitched.

In a statement, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Muyiwa Adejobi, said Odumosu had ordered immediate orderly room trial of the cop for brutalising Jaiyeola, who had no confrontation with the police.

The statement read, "The state Commissioner of Police, Hakeem Odumosu, has ordered immediate detention and orderly room trial of one Inspector Innocent Adadu attached to PMF 22 Ikeja, for hitting and injuring one Kayode Jaiyeola, of *PUNCH* Newspapers with a stick at Maryland, Lagos, on Thursday, October 1, 2020, around 11.10am.

NUJ Vows to Uphold Freedom of the Press

The Nigerian Union of Journalists, NUJ, has said it was determined to ensure that government upholds the freedom of information and expression of citizens' rights, as they were fundamental human rights.

President of the NUJ, Mr. Chris Isiguzo, during the International Day for Universal Access to Information, IDUAI, 2020 celebration, said the union's resolution necessitated the decision to stand against the "anti-people, draconian hate speech bill, and social media bill at the National Assembly."

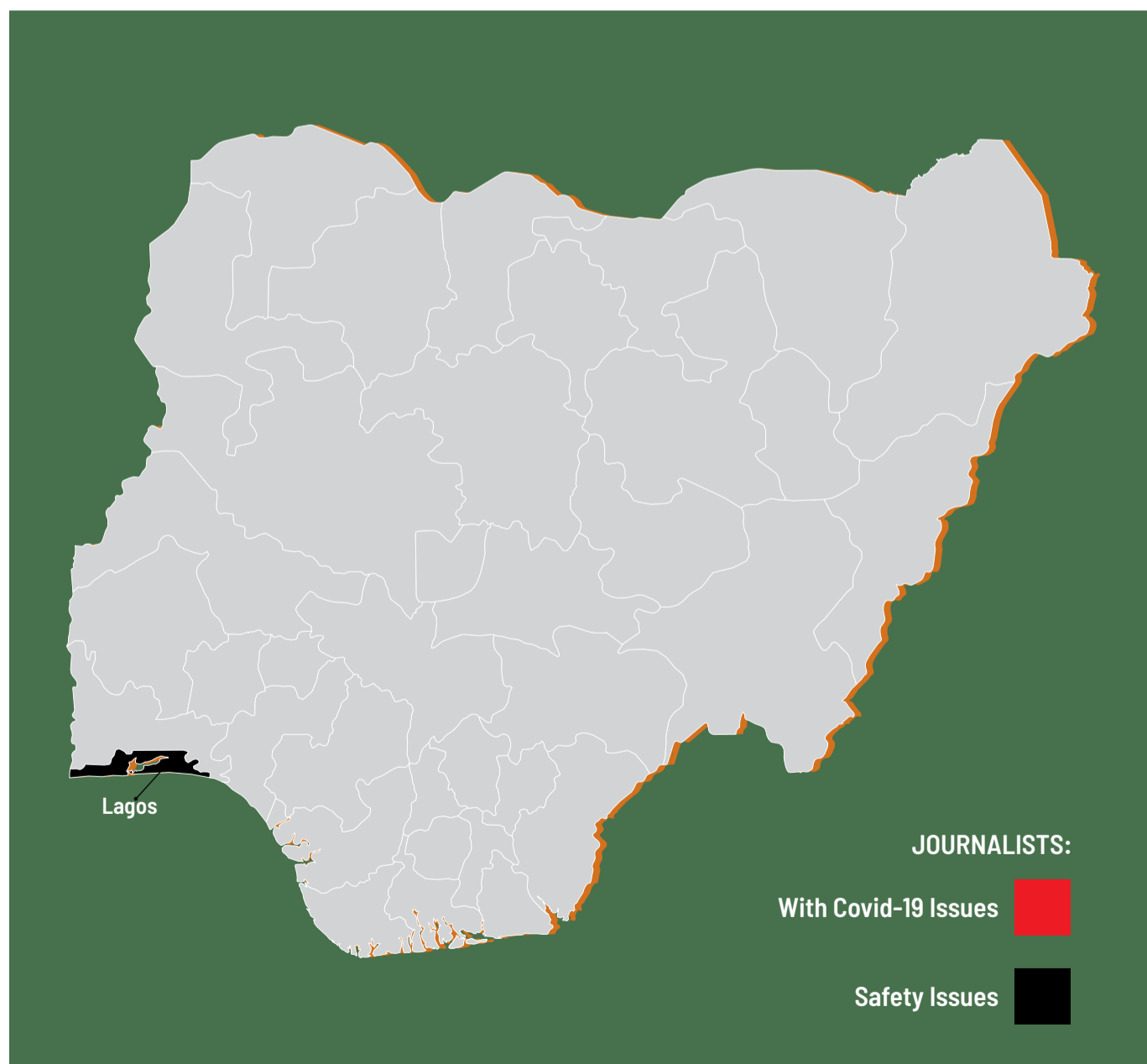
"We stood against them, we are still standing against them and we will continue to do so because any law that decides to pigeonhole Nigerians, or stop us from free expression will be completely rejected," he said.

He noted that the reason was not far-fetched because the unique ingredients of responsible democracy remained the people's right to freely express themselves.

Controversy had trailed the recent efforts of the government to gag the media and the people from expressing themselves in line with the relevant sections of the Constitution.

Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) states that "the press, radio, television, and other agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the fundamental objectives, contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people."

Nigerians, civil society groups, and other stakeholders have condemned the plans of the government to gag the people, especially the five million- naira fine imposed for hate speech.



Google To Pay \$1b To News Publishers



For media publishers around the world struggling to cope with business downturn occasioned by the COVID 19 pandemic, here is the real, big news.

Google plans to pay US\$1-billion (R16.6-billion) to publishers globally for their content over the next three years, its CEO said on Thursday, a move that could help it win over a powerful group amid heightened regulatory scrutiny worldwide.

News publishers have long fought the world's most popular Internet search engine for compensation for using their content, with European media groups leading the charge.

CEO Sundar Pichai said the new product called Google News Showcase would launch first in Germany, where it has signed up German newspapers including Der Spiegel, Stern and Die Zeit, and in Brazil with Folha de S.Paulo, Band and Infobae. The product will be rolled out in Belgium, India, the Netherlands and other countries. About 200 publishers in Argentina, Australia, Britain, Brazil, Canada and Germany have signed up to the product.

“This financial commitment — our biggest to date — will pay publishers to create and curate high-quality content for a different kind of online news experience,” Pichai said in a blog post. The product, which allows publishers to pick and present their stories, will launch on Google News on Android devices and eventually on Apple devices.

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”**

TSTV Rivals DSTV, Relaunches with Pay As You Go

Nigerian Direct to Home Pay TV operator, TStv Africa, has re-launched in the Federal Capital Territory.

It held a symbolic Road Show in five different convoys across the length and breadth of the Federal Capital City of Abuja to create the required enlightenment among prospective subscribers.

TSTV, a Pan-African pay-tv platform really wants to prove that the dream remains alive on the minds of the promoters.

The platform had revealed plans to re-launch some services last month September.

It was 2017 when news broke that there was a seeming messiah coming to break the monopoly of South African-owned satellite television giants DSTV.

Nigerian television owners threw caution to the wind and celebrated endlessly for the prospect of a company coming to show DSTV how it is done.

For one TSTV promised mouth-watering features that even the most ardent supporter of DSTV will be interested in.

TStv said they are preparing for a re-launch nationwide.

Pay-per-view television premium channels at a meager price of 200 Naira per day, and an add-on bonus of 20 Gigabyte free data allowance for a whole month are the features that TSTV has promised their subscribers.

StarTimes Launches Premium Nollywood Channel “PBO TV”

Pay TV, Startimes On October 1, unveiled a partnership with a notable Nollywood production company, Big Idea Mediaworks, to launch PBO TV, a 24-hour entertainment channel dedicated to top-rated Nollywood movies, series, sitcoms, music and late-night comedy shows

The management said, the deal, was In line with its commitment to offer premium content, StarTimes has collaborated.

PBO TV is on basic bouquet at N1700 monthly on channel 184 and smart bouquet at N2,200 monthly on channel 017, the same bouquets housing recently launched Hollywood movie channel, TNT Africa.

The programme, which went on-air from October 1 to mark Nigeria's 60th independence, will air 12 hours of non-stop Nollywood blockbuster movies and series, with the remaining half of the day set aside for general entertainment.

The channel promises to be explosive with top-rated Nollywood stars on display.

Among the movies showing in October are June featuring Uche Jombo, Vector Tha Viper, Chinyere Wilfred, Empress Njamah; Mad About You featuring Blossom Chukwujekwu, Linda Osifo and Annie Macaulay Idibia; Being Annabel featuring Oma Amadi, Ken Erics and Desmond Elliot; and drama series including Tough Love featuring Nkem Owo, Sola Sobowale, Timini Egbuson and Sharon Ooja; Life of a Single Mom, a series featuring Mofe Duncan, Gregory Ojefua and Mercy Macjoe, among others.



NBC Offers to Support TStv

National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, has pledged to give support to TStv Africa, as the indigenous digital satellite television service begins full operation through the pay per view model on October 1, 2020.

Prof. Armstrong Idachaba, acting director-general of NBC, said TStv Africa is a wholly owned Nigerian, innovative multi-channel outfit which has promised to operate a pay per view model for the benefit of Nigerians.

Idachaba said the NBC will support the company, noting that the major issue confronting the Pay-TV sector is giving viewers the option of deregulating purchasing capacity in terms of the pay- as you- go concept.

The acting DG said the commission was committed to promoting local participation in the nation's broadcasting industry, especially in the Pay-TV sector, to create jobs and provide diversity for Nigerians.

He acknowledged the challenges TStv had faced over the years and encouraged the company to remain focused.



Prof. Armstrong Idachaba
Acting Director-General of NBC

Ondo 2020: INEC Partners With The Media

The Independent National Electoral Commission has sealed its partnership with the media in preparation for the October 10 election in Ondo state.

Chairman of the commission, Mahmood Yakubu said that the media is a major component of the Nigeria's election process, hence the need for the cooperation.

He gave the position at a media parley in

“ We are faced with a situation described as new normal under which we have to conduct an election. That is why we are here to seek the help of the media in Ondo to help.

Akure, during the week.

Professor, Yakubu explained that INEC has also partnered the presidential task force against COVID-19 to ensure that voters are safe during the exercise.

Expatriating on this in an interview with Adaba 88.9 FM, Akure, during the week, INEC National Commissioner for Information and Voter Education, Festus Okoye, said the Commission was faced with an abnormal situation, courtesy of the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes it important for people to be educated and informed about their duties and responsibilities.

He said; “ We are faced with a situation described as new normal under which we have to conduct an election. That is why we are here to seek the help of the media in Ondo to help.”

He said the programmes and policies the Commission has designed to ensure the conduct of a free, fair and credible election is conducted on October 10 in the state, would come to naught if the media is not carried along to disseminate information to the electorate.

“We have been reaching out to the media, civil society groups, traditional institutions, to help us enlighten the people so that the people will cooperate with us and do what is right on election day”, he said.

Unpaid Advertising Revenue: NBC Intervenes For Broadcast Stations

Following the meeting the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, has held during the week with the Advertising Practitioner of Nigeria APCON, over the delayed and at times, non-payment of advertising fees to stations in the country, the broadcast

media may expect to have some relief coming their way soon.

With their business ravaged by the COVID-19 lockdown forcing many to lay-off staff and cut down on hours of operations, many station owners who had been owed many years in advert revenue, made representation through the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, BON, to the NBC to intervene.

Dr Tony Anigala, Director of Media Monitoring at the NBC, who delivered a paper at the webinar, entitled; Broadcast Policy Directions and Industry Responses in the COVID-19 Context, jointly organized by the NBC and the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, on September 30, said the Commission held a meeting with the APCON on September 29 over advertiser's indebtedness to broadcast stations and disclosed that outcome held good prospects going forward for the stations.

During his contribution at the webinar, Mr Kenny Ogungbe, CEO of Kenny Communication Media, had noted that many advertisers do not pay for advertisement run for them on many stations. “Imagine a TV station being owned many years in advertisement? How do you expect the station to function?”

He said that as a member of the business committee of BON, they had met with the Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria, APCON and the Media Independent Placement Practitioners Association of Nigeria, MIPAN, to no effect and urged the NBC to intervene.

“ We met with officials of APCON in Abuja on the September 29 with the main issue of indebtedness to broadcast stations and when to pay. The outcome hold high prospects for the industry.” Anigala said, adding, “On September 30, we held a meeting with BON on how we can ameliorate some of their challenges they are undergoing.



Editor's Note

A meeting of minds between broadcasters and the industry regulator on burning operational and administrative challenges facing the stations would not only create a synergy between them but also ensure that a familiarity that breeds sustainable definition of good practice is maintained. That platform was nurtured during the week with a down-to-earth webinar jointly organized by the broadcast industry regulator, the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC and foremost media NGO, the Institute for Media and Society, IMS.

Seasoned broadcasters and other media stakeholders and officials of the NBC made far reaching submissions during the one-day, no-holds-barred meeting, whose input for policy and regulations could chart a way forward for the troubled media industry in the country. The story of the event makes our opening story.

Plan by the world's most popular search engine, Google to pay \$1 billion to news publishers globally in the coming days is one of the biggest news that many despairing media outfits would welcome any day.

As usual but unfortunate, news about police assault of journalists appears to continue unabated until the perpetrators, perhaps, are brought to book. During the week, journalists covering the #RevolutionNow protesters in Lagos were brutalized by the police.

The controversy surrounding Pay TV and subscriber's call for the adoption of pay-as-you-go tariff method appears to have seen the light of the day as the NBC has pledged to support an indigenous company kick-start the preferred package by subscribers.

All these and many more stories are included in this soar away edition for your delight, Happy reading.

The Editor

Institute for Media and Society, Nigeria

NCDC Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by State, October 2, 2020

States Affected	No. of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	No. of Cases (on admission)	No. Discharged	No. of Deaths
Lagos	19,542	4,088	15,249	205
FCT	5,720	665	4,977	78
Plateau	3,451	776	2,642	33
Oyo	3,267	890	2,337	40
Edo	2,628	26	2,495	107
Rivers	2,453	121	2,273	59
Kaduna	2,426	53	2,334	39
Ogun	1,858	98	1,732	28
Delta	1,802	16	1,737	49
Kano	1,738	16	1,668	54
Ondo	1,631	50	1,545	36
Enugu	1,289	102	1,166	21
Ebonyi	1,042	4	1,008	30
Kwara	1,036	56	955	25
Abia	895	15	872	8
Gombe	883	111	747	25
Katsina	864	5	835	24
Osun	842	35	790	17
Borno	745	4	705	36
Bauchi	699	17	668	14
Imo	572	25	535	12
Benue	481	58	413	10
Nasarawa	452	114	325	13
Bayelsa	399	5	373	21
Jigawa	325	6	308	11
Ekiti	321	12	303	6
Akwa Ibom	293	7	278	8
Niger	259	15	232	12
Adamawa	248	23	208	17
Anambra	237	5	213	19
Sokoto	162	1	144	17
Taraba	102	7	89	6
Kebbi	93	1	84	8
Cross River	87	4	74	9
Zamfara	78	0	73	5
Yobe	76	6	62	8
Kogi	5	0	3	

Highlights

- On the 1st of October 2020, 153 new confirmed cases were recorded in Nigeria.
- Till date, 59,001 cases have been confirmed, 50,452 cases have been discharged and 1,112 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.
- The 153 new cases are reported from 14 states - Lagos (81), Rivers (21), FCT (11), Ogun (8), Kaduna (7), Oyo (6), Akwa Ibom (5), Osun (3), Katsina (3), Edo (2), Ebonyi (2), Nasarawa (2), Plateau (1), Kano (1)
- A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 3, continues to coordinate the national response activities

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