

By David Njuguna Bernard

COPING WITH COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When the first case of a Coronavirus (COVID-19) patient was reported in December 2019 at the City of Wuhan, China, many people, I included world over took little attention.

After all, it was happening thousands of miles away and in any case, just a single case of an unknown disease affecting ONLY one person amongst a billion plus Chinese!

Little did we anticipate that this one single case would greatly disrupt the whole world and turn our lives upsidedown.

Today, no single discussion would end without a mention of Coronavirus. My own mother is now conscious of this Corona disease that was 'brought by Hawa Wageni (These foreigners)'.

Millions of GBs have been spent as meetings are held online trying to find the source of this seemingly elusive virus which to date has no cure.

Countries have traded words accusing each other of being responsible for the outbreak of this highly contagious disease. The United States of America president Donald Trump's attempt to have China take responsibility of the outbreak would see him drive his country out of the World Health Organizations (WHO).

Closer home, the pandemic has reopened the old sibling rivalry between Kenya and Tanzania with the latter accusing Kenya of a rash decision to close her borders over the pandemic spread.

The Tanzanian president John Magufuli has insisted even today that his country has not reported a single case of COVID-19. He has declared that any positive Coronavirus COVID-19 result from their laboratories is case of sabotage! Actually, he sacked doctors from his diseases control laboratories for reporting positive Coronavirus results.

Indeed, he has directed that no Kenyan truck driver should be allowed into Tanzania even with a valid Corona free medical certificate. Only history shall either vindicate or verify him!

Now on a sad note, the Burundi president Pierre Nkurunziza has died of what authorities there say is ‘a heart attack’. Only last week did Nkurunziza would declare at a political rally, “Do not be afraid. God loves Burundi and if there are people who have tested positive, it is so that God may manifest his power in Burundi”.

Meanwhile, his wife, First Lady Denise Bucumi Nkurunziza is still undergoing treatment for an underlying condition linked to Coronavirus at the Aga Khan University hospital, Nairobi.

At the University of Nairobi, the management has put in place measures to ensure that teaching and research goes

on uninterrupted through distance learning. Teaching, theses defense, examinations and committee meetings are being held online.

The last two weeks witnessed two major physical cum virtual events at the University of Nairobi in compliance with the Public Health Order Act in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Education Cabinet Secretary, Prof George Magoha recently presided over the official handing over of the University of Nairobi Confucius Institute on Arboretum Drive by the People's Republic of China to the government of Kenya.

And on Friday, June 5, 2020, the Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi installed Professor Stephen Kiama as the eighth Vice- Chancellor of the University of Nairobi.

As the saying goes, we all need to embrace the changes that have been precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these changes might prove hard at the beginning, but just, 'Chak achaka'- just begin!

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