

# MEDICAL INDUSTRIES IN AFRICA

## A REGIONAL RESPONSE TO SUPPLY SHORTAGES





# Medical Industries in Africa

A Regional Response to Supply Shortages

## About the paper

COVID-19 has severely strained the supply of certain healthcare products. This report shows that Africa can position itself strategically and develop a regional response to avert future shortages of such products.

Supporting health and positioning the continent strategically in the future trade landscape of the global medical industry are compatible objectives. Opening markets, diversifying supply and reinforcing regional value chains to combat COVID-19 would build resilience to future pandemics and help Africa become a competitive supplier of certain health-related goods. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) has a vital role to play in supporting these value chains.

**Publisher:** International Trade Centre

**Title:** Medical Industries in Africa: A Regional Response to Supply Shortages

**Publication date and place:** Geneva, July 2020

**Page count:** 20

**Language:** English

**ITC Document Number:** TMI-20-40.E

**Citation:** International Trade Centre (2020). *Medical Industries in Africa: A Regional Response to Supply Shortages*. ITC, Geneva.

For more information, contact: Julia Spies, [spies@intracen.org](mailto:spies@intracen.org)

ITC encourages the reprinting and translation of its publications to achieve wider dissemination. Short extracts of this paper may be freely reproduced, with due acknowledgement of the source. Permission should be requested for more extensive reproduction or translation. A copy of the reprinted or translated material should be sent to ITC.

Digital image(s) on the cover: © shutterstock

© International Trade Centre (ITC)

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

## Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely burdened the global health system, especially in terms of accessing medical supplies. The World Health Organization warned in early March 2020 that global production of certain personal protective equipment would have to increase dramatically to meet the surge in international demand.

For many countries in Africa, access to these essential materials is complicated by the introduction of export restrictions from their already limited number of suppliers. Business surveys on non-tariff measures conducted by the International Trade Centre (ITC) provided evidence to show that complex regulatory requirements and rules of origin have added pressures on African trade of COVID-19-related products.

We are pleased to present this paper, which aims to support the recently launched UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, as well as the discussions around the implementation of the AfCFTA.

In the report, we examine the potential of the African medical supply industry and show how trade can be an important element of the continent's health response, both in the short and long term. We suggest a strategic mix of open markets, diversified procurement and stronger regional value chains to combat the current health crisis, build Africa's resilience against future pandemics and help the region become a competitive supplier of certain health-related products.

As we continue to respond to COVID-19, we hope this report demonstrates our capacity as an institution to produce prompt, targeted studies to meet immediate needs. We also hope it will serve as a springboard for future analyses of the health sector and other critical topics.



Dorothy Tembo  
Executive Director a.i.  
International Trade Centre

## Acknowledgements

Julia Spies conceptualized and prepared this report with valuable research assistance from Maria Cantero, Dumebi Ochem and Sylvain Périllat. Xavier Pichot kindly shared all tariff and tax data. Ursula Hermelink and Abdellatif Benzakri kindly provided insights from ITC business surveys on non-tariff measures. Mondher Mimouni and Lionel Fontagné (Paris School of Economics) offered useful guidance and comments.

Natalie Domeisen and Anne Griffin managed the editorial production of the report and oversaw quality control. Jennifer Freedman edited the report. Serge Adeagbo and Franco Iacovino provided graphic and digital printing support.

## Contents

About the paper	ii
Foreword	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Acronyms	vi
Executive summary	vii

## CHAPTER 1 KEEP THE MARKET FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICAL SUPPLIES OPEN 1

Africa's import dependency	1
Temporary tariff and tax cuts could improve access	2
Rules and procedural requirements hinder market access	5

## CHAPTER 2 DIVERSIFY SUPPLIERS 6

Africa relies on just a few health product providers	6
Diversification opportunities are available	7

## CHAPTER 3 BUILD REGIONAL SUPPLY CAPACITIES IN MEDICAL PRODUCTS 8

Africa could develop regional value chains for medical supplies	8
The African Continental Free Trade Agreement has a role to play	10
A regional response to pandemics	11

### Figures, tables and boxes

Figure 1	Disinfectants and sterilizers top African medical supply imports	1
Figure 2	Many countries have liberalized measures on medical imports	2
Figure 3	Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia and Congo apply highest taxes on medical items	4
Figure 4	African businesses face the most difficulty to import medical supplies	5
Figure 5	Concentration of supply of African versus world imports, by product	6
Figure 6	Africa exports many key inputs for personal protective equipment	8
Figure 7	South Africa, Egypt could supply inputs used to make disinfectants in Africa	9
Figure 8	South Africa, Egypt could supply inputs used to produce masks with filters	10
Table 1	Alternative suppliers are available for many healthcare products	7
Box 1	African countries innovate to produce medical supplies	10

## Acronyms

Unless otherwise specified, all references to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, and all references to tons are to metric tons.

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
ITC	International Trade Centre

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_22826](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_22826)

