

“Keeping Peace, Building Trust: Leading Peace Operations in post-COVID world”

Thematic session 1:

The impact of COVID-19 on training as a basis for effective mission preparedness and leadership

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***The impact of COVID-19 on training as a basis for
effective mission preparedness and leadership***

Dr Oyono Nee THOM Cecil

**Executive Secretary
African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA)**

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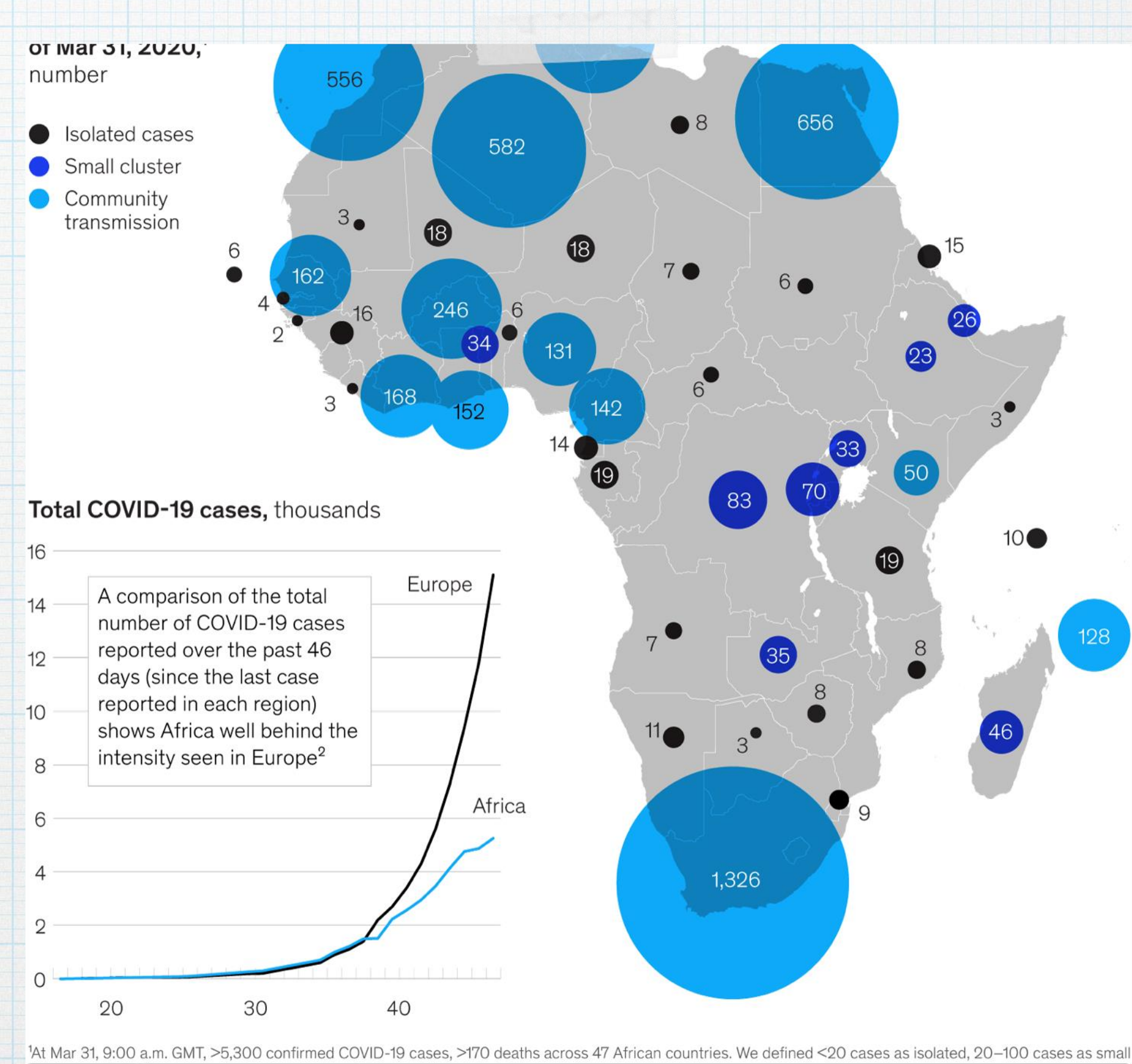
INTRODUCTION

- * An apt and timely theme
- * Considering the enormous challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to human existence as well as to global peace, security and stability...
- * AIM
- * to draw lessons from the impact on training, for effective mission preparedness and leadership...



INTRODUCTION

- * Scope
 - * Part One: Impact on Training in Africa
 - * Part Two: Lesson/recommendations from APSTA Programmes as basis for preparation of effective missions and leadership
- * Recommendations
- * Conclusion



Part One: Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

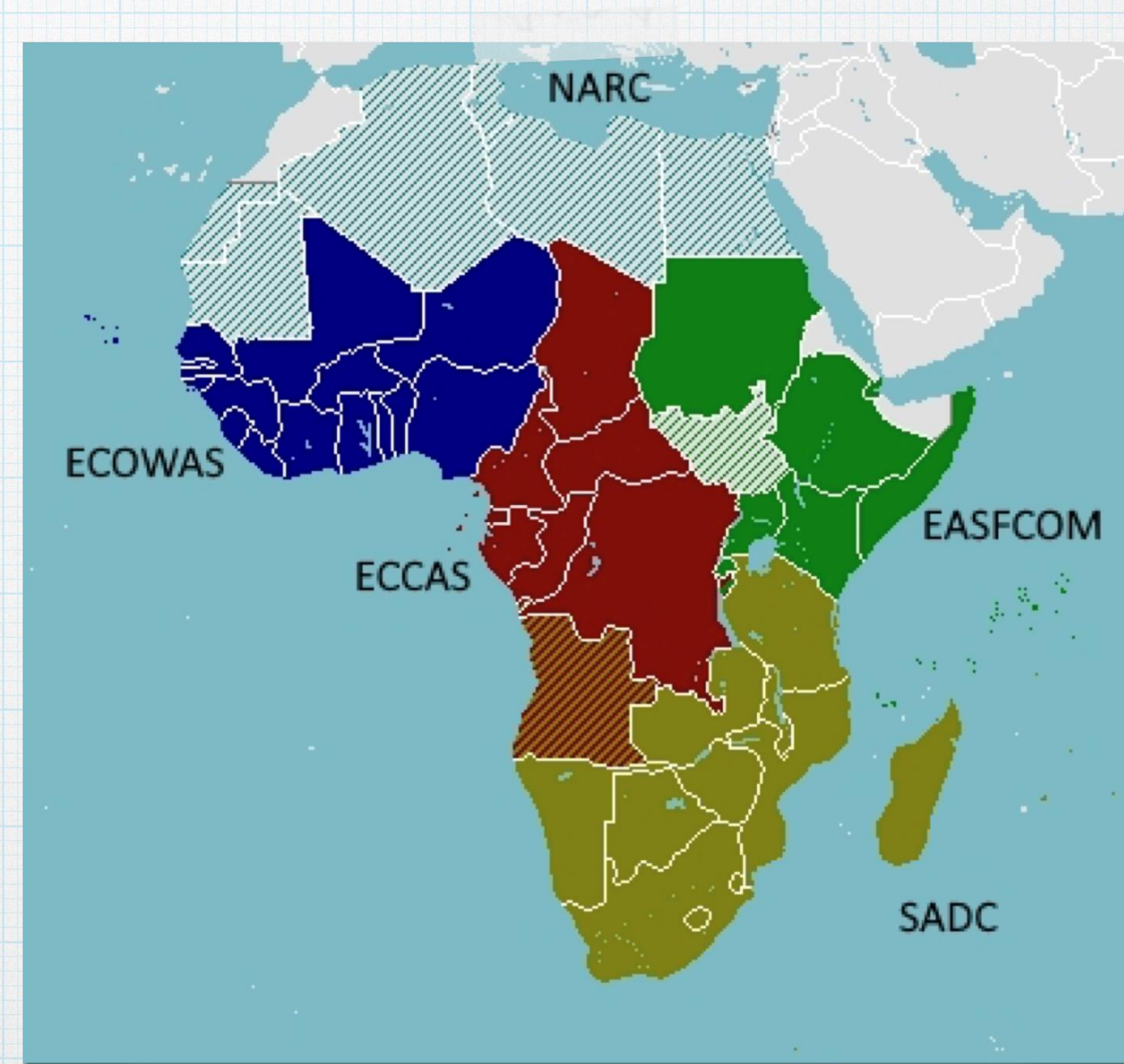
- * As at May 2021, about 5 million cases in Africa; with approximately 130, 000 fatalities...
- * Adversely impacted implementation of ASF/PSO-related training activities by AUC/RECs/RMs/ Member States / TCEs/TIs & AU PSOs
- * Seven (7) critical impacts are isolated from recent APSTA-UNITAR survey and discussed subsequently...



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

- * a. Distruption of the implementation of ASF Training Directives 2018-2020
 - * The 12th ASF Training Implementation Workshop of 9-10 Nov 2020 noted the critical disruptions to training by AUC/TCEs & AU PSOs across the continent
 - * The survey confirmed that training activities by training providers in Africa were reduced by 50-70% within the period
 - * Thus, the pandemic adversely halted training on the continent



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

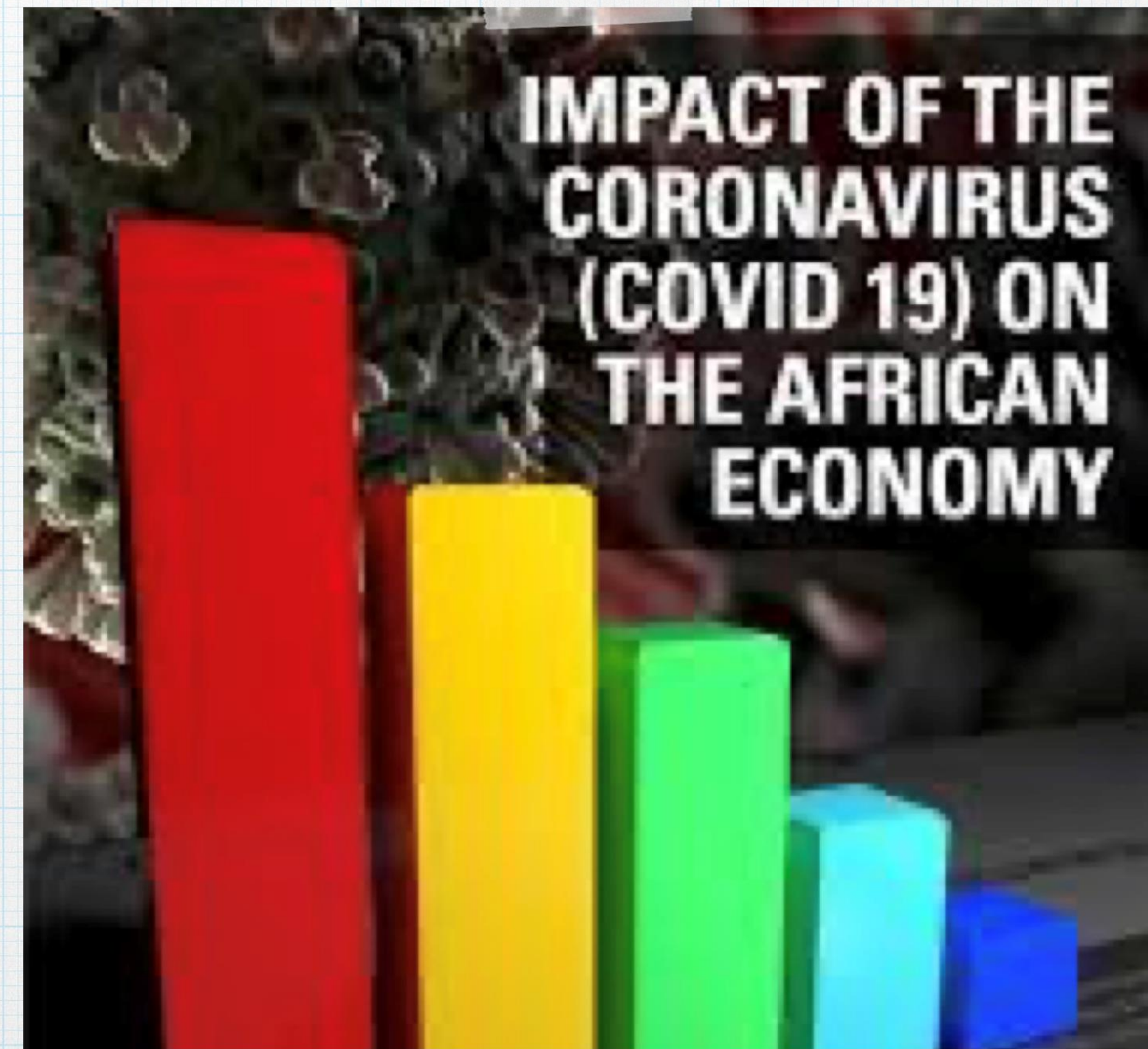
- * b. Disruptions of Programmes and Work Plans of Training Institutions across the continent
 - * All the training institutions surveyed, suspended all in-person training activities during the phase-one lockdown
 - * Only about 25% of these institutions resumed training activities immediately after the lockdown via online as well as in-person training under strict measures
 - * Thus, national training programmes were adversely impacted, besides ASF training



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

- * c. Budgetary impacts of disruptions in training programmes
 - * The global and regional economic impacts of the pandemic adversely affected funding for training
 - * Shortfalls in funding led to adverse reductions in number of trainings delivered by training institutions
 - * Institutions that usually delivered more than 20 training per annum could barely deliver up to 5 in the year 2020 up to first quarter of 2021
 - * Thus, the pandemic also adversely impacted on training via reduction in available funds



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

- * d. Travel restrictions adversely impacted regional training programmes especially for ASF/PSOs
 - * Training for ASF/PSOs statutorily involves participants from various countries within the region or from different countries on the continent
 - * Regional trainings therefore entails cross-border travels which were halted during lockdown
 - * 90% of Institutions surveyed, converted planned regional trainings into national trainings and even at that, were not able to deliver up to 5% of planned trainings within the period under review
 - * Thus, the pandemic also adversely impacted on ASF/PSOs regional training



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

- * e. Divergent lessons on migration of trainings to online platforms
 - * Training institutions across the continent were at different levels in terms of expertise and facilities for the delivery of e-learning / online training prior to the pandemic
 - * In reaction to the first wave of the pandemic, almost all institutions surveyed attempted migrating some trainings to online platforms with varying success rates
 - * Training Institutions with requisite expertise and resources quickly commenced migration of activities to online platforms
 - * Institutions with neither expertise nor adequate resources could not do much via online platforms, despite APSTA's facilitation of e-learning training for African Training Institutions, in collaboration with the UNSSC in Sept 2020
 - * Thus, the pandemic also adversely impacted more on training institutions with low adaptive capacities



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

- * f. Integration of trust-building module in training course curricula as key lesson from the pandemic
 - * Observed hostility of local population towards uniformed personnel across Africa dates back to the patterns of civil-military relations across the continent since independence
 - * Such hostilities are worsened by public health crises perceived as imported by foreigners such as peacekeepers; as was the case with COVID-19 pandemic in the Central African Republic in 2020 ('MINUSCARVIRUS') as well as MINUSTAH and the Cholera outbreak in Haiti (2010)
 - * Thus, trust between the local population and the mission have to be pro-actively sustained by peacekeepers via their conduct, made possible via training, right from the tactical levels, who are often in direct contact with the local population



Part One:

Impact of COVID-19 on Training in Africa

- * g. Lessons for accentuating the comparative advantages of female peacekeepers during training
 - * Women constitute just 4.7% of military contingents and 10.8% of formed police units, out of approximately 95,000 peacekeepers deployed in the 13 UN missions in 2019; with 7 missions across Africa alone
 - * Yet, female peacekeepers have proven more fit for certain roles, especially those within contexts of public health crises as in Haiti (2010), Ebola and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; but female deployments remain abysmally low
 - * Thus, public health crises make strong case for increased preparation and involvement of females in missions and leadership responsibilities



Part Two:

Lessons from 2 APSTA Programmes as basis for preparation of effective missions and leadership



Part Two:

Programme One:

Review of Fifteen (15) years of Senior Leadership Training in Africa: Experiences and Lessons



Part Two:

Lessons from APSTA RSML Review as basis ...

- * In 2020, APSTA in collaboration with UNITAR reviewed 15 years of Senior Leadership Training in Africa
- * Experts on the programme underscored many gaps, especially in:
 - * Leadership training
 - * Course content
 - * Delivery methodology
 - * Selection of participants
 - * Facilitation and mentorship
 - * Integration of new technology
 - * Management of mission communication strategy, and
 - * Gender mainstreaming
- * These are briefly discussed subsequently.



Part Two:

Lessons from APSTA RSML Review as basis ...

* Leadership Training:

- * Experts underscored need to prepare prospective leaders to:
 - * Challenge own assumptions and be able to accept innovative ideas from subordinates
 - * Understand the primacy of politics and the political process
 - * Establish close relationship between senior leadership and intelligence cells of missions in order to keep abreast of changing dynamics of mission environment
 - * Inculcate critical effective leadership skills and behaviour including humility, integrity, vision, decisiveness, courage, and strategic thinking, among others.

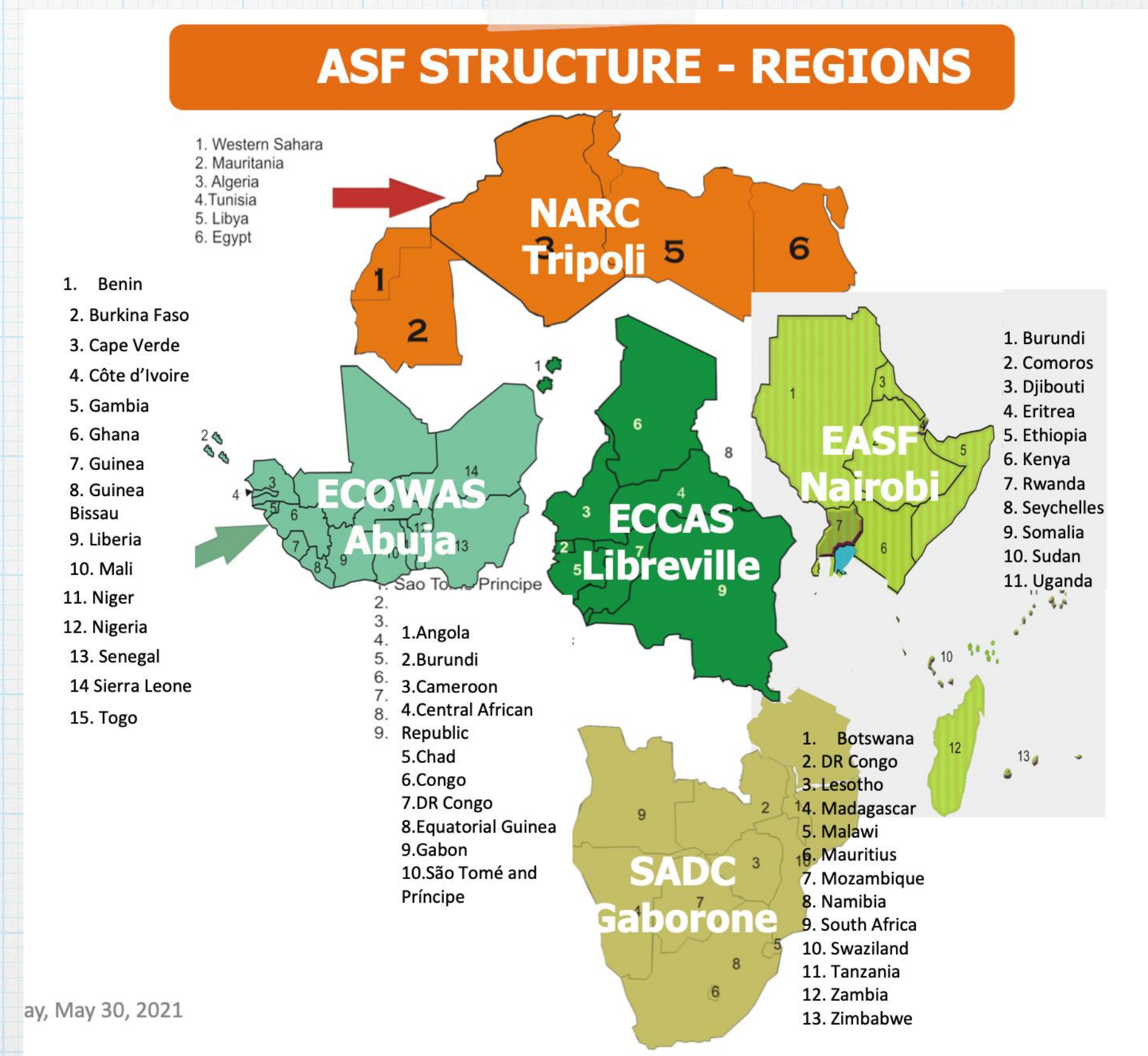


Part Two:

Lessons from APSTA RSML Review as basis ...

* Course Content:

- * Experts underscored need to prepare prospective leaders to:
- * Emphasise operational conflict analysis that recommends best course of actions to mission leadership team and help prioritise action; instead of mere academic conflict analysis
- * Address challenge of micro-management of missions by Senior leadership, via in-depth understanding of respective job descriptions and use of integrated planning
- * Integrate responsibility for documentation, interdiction and mopping up of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs)
- * Impress on Head of Mission, that conduct and discipline as well as human rights violations are issues squarely on his desk, and should not be delegated to junior officers down the chain of command



Part Two:

Lessons from APSTA RSML Review as basis ...

- * **Course Delivery Methodology:**

- * Emphasise the combination of best adult learning principles, and use of case studies, documentaries and exercises

- * **Selection of Participants:**

- * Affirm selection of qualified candidates only, who have been adequately prepared at both tactical and operational levels
- * Emphasise close collaboration between African Union and Member States in the selection process to ensure deployment

- * **Facilitation and Mentorship:**

- * Develop and maintain a database of experts, knowledgeable and experienced in coping with mental and professional status of participants



Part Two:

Lessons from APSTA RSML Review as basis ...

- * **Integration of new technology:**

- * Devise approaches to maximise concentration of participants, and incentivise online participation and boost motivation for reading of online pre-course materials
- * Affirm that e-learning will not be able to replace in-person or face-to-face interaction for some trainings, especially the senior leadership course

- * **Management of mission communication strategy:**

- * Emphasise need to expose senior leadership to the development of action plan for mission communication strategy prior to deployment
- * Emphasise the need for the leadership to drive mission communication strategy rather than delegate the role to the Public Relations Officer or spokespersons only

- * **Gender Mainstreaming:**

- * Emphasise increased participation of female peacekeepers in senior leadership training, as well as their deployment to missions



Part Two:

Programme Two:

Roundtable on women in peacekeeping leadership: experiences and lessons



Part Two:

Lessons from women in mission leadership as basis ...

- * In June 2020, APSTA commemorated the International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers with a Roundtable interrogating the experiences and drawing lessons on women participation in peacekeeping leadership.
- * Experts on the programme underscored many crucial lessons, as follows:
 - * a. Uniformed Women are late comers to strategic training as they are often denied slots at staff, war and defence colleges
 - * b. Indisputable character of females as critical success factors in missions, yet hardly given the opportunities to participate
 - * c. Lack of specialised training for African female peacekeepers, which reduces their chances to compete with male counterparts for posts in missions



Part Two:

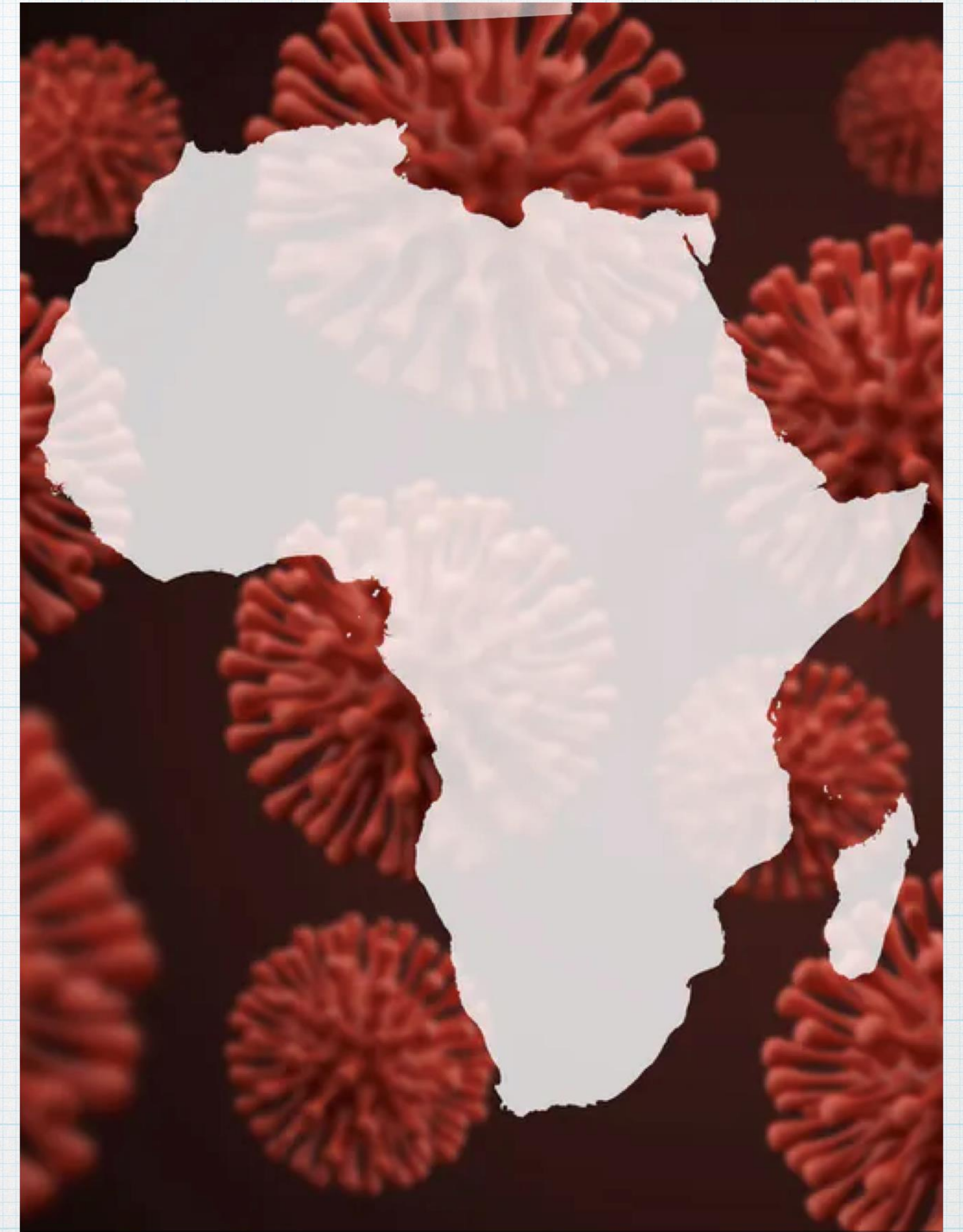
Lessons from women in mission leadership as basis ...

- * Experts on the programme underscored many crucial lessons, as follows:
 - * d. The impression that deployment to missions for female peacekeepers is more a privilege than a right
 - * e. Exclusion of female peacekeepers from mission planning, which makes it difficult to mainstream gender adequately into mission functions
 - * f. Shortfall in female candidates at national levels, for selection as candidates for senior leadership training
 - * g. Need for women to become more daring in applying for leadership positions in missions



RECOMMENDATIONS

- * On the strength of the lessons discussed, it is recommended that:
 - * a. Training Stakeholders should harness the lessons underscored within the context of the pandemic, to prepare more effective missions and leadership.
 - * b. Training Institutions should take urgent steps to address the gaps in senior leadership training across the continent
 - * c. African Union, Member States and Training Institutions should professionalize the preparation of female peacekeepers prior to deployment
 - * d. African Union, Member States and Training Institutions should address the challenges of female participation in missions via policy
 - * e. Training Stakeholders should re-evaluate measures to incentivise e-learning prior to the migration of training to online platforms



CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted on training for peace and security across Africa. However, it has also generated lessons for enhancing missions, especially via improved leadership training by training providers across the continent.

