



LiveCast 1 – African Government Response to COVID-19

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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06:38

Greetings, everyone. I know this may be morning for some of you, afternoon for others and evening for others. Nevertheless, Greetings. I am Joseph Atick, the executive chairman of ID4Africa. And I'll be moderating this exciting session on the impact of Corona of COVID-19. On identity management in Africa, as seen by the identity authorities or the identity stakeholders, I'd like to warmly welcome all of you to this webinar series that we have started, we have actually an addition to the seminar today, we've announced two more coming up in the future. One is on the 17th of June, which will feature lineup of the leading development agencies. And they will give the perspective of identity for development and the impact of COVID on the development agenda. Then on the 26th of June, we will have a session, which is the industry perspective. We are we've done a request for proposals last week to the old industry. And we said if you have any interesting ideas or innovations which show how innovations are responding to the crisis, the pandemic, and what will be the innovation landscape in a post COVID era. We will be selecting that sometime next week. And we will select in seven of the top proposal we've been getting a lot of proposals, and I think it's going to be an exciting session as well. So please mark your calendars, in addition to today, the 17th of June and the 26th of June and it will be exactly the same time as the start of this seminar. I want to emphasize that this is not a replacement for our in person, annual general meeting, nothing replaces that nothing replaces that intensity of energy, and the and the intimacy of the discussions that happen when you bring in 1500 people in one room. So we do miss that. But we permit ourselves to have this discussion as a webinar on Africa online, because we think Africa is in our DNA. Africa is in our name. We have come from Africa, and we intend to go back to Africa. So but please do not think that because we holding something on zoom, that we have abandoned Africa, we will be there anybody can hold anything on zoom from any region and pretend that they are speaking for Africa. We are not we are coming to you from Africa. And we will be inviting you back to Africa. And so, however, we have to do this, in fact, this week, would have been the meeting the annual meeting as originally scheduled. And so how so we cannot wait until we see you

again because the topics are becoming more and more urgent and we want to use this opportunity To continue the engagement of our, with our community, which we missed terribly, we really miss you. And want to let you know that in these times, even when we are apart, we stand together. And so I want to say a few words about when we think the face to face or the in person Annual Meeting can take place. As you know, this was scheduled for this week, we moved it to October of 2020. Given that the world is recovering, however, not fast enough, and also the airlines and the restrictions on gatherings of large scale are unlikely to be lifted, we believe that it is likely that I will be in person in 2020. So however, you have my commitment, that we will be meeting in person in 2021, we have put together a safety plan, which we share, which we shared with the government. And we will be discussing with the government of Morocco, which is the host how we intend to conduct the session safely and effectively. But obviously, we have to be

11:18

considerate to their requirements, the Minister of Health requirements. So we are we're busy working on all the details. So stay with us. Stay tuned, I use this opportunity to thank all members of the community, whether it is the government, whether it is the development agencies, the foundation partners, the Gates Foundation, media Foundation, the development agencies, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, the Center for Global Development, and also the exhibitors, for all their solidarity for realizing that we are not ever, under no other time Have they expressed this type of solidarity, which gives me hope and excitement that we're going to come back together. So I thank everybody, for their solidarity, their enthusiasm, their appreciation. And I think we're learning a lot now that we're realizing that our mission is going to be even more important in a post COVID era, it's going to be a mission of giving digital identity for all because the recovery is going to rely on the presence of infrastructure. And infrastructure needs digital identity to empower people to empower economies, and to build social safety nets that are going to protect those vulnerable and protect the risk against the risk of some other pandemic that might happen. We've seen the future and the future has risk. And as a result, we can no longer go about our daily business thinking that we cannot build contingency plans for that risk. So our mission remains viable. And our enthusiasm for that mission and our commitment for Africa is more than ever, is there. So don't want to delay this any more. I want to thank the panelists who have joined us and I see now William is joining us. And so the panel is now complete. Thank you all for taking the time from your busy schedules to come and share with us some of your thoughts. This is a very interactive session. So there will not be any presentations. But there will be an opportunity for depth discussions. So to kick off the session, I will ask the panelists one by one, to present themselves to say who they are their organization in their country. And I'm letting them do that themselves. Because those were our entering the attendees from a web from a web browser will only see the person who speaks one at a time while the others from an app can see the whole panel. So so I let them say that and then we'll come back and we'll pose our very first question. One more comment in for those who have submitted questions. We have received over 150 questions. So we're going to try to answer them in bulk in automatically. But if you want to ask questions, you can still ask questions, but try to make sure they are very, very particular to what's being said at the moment, because so many questions have been asked in general about other issues and we're gonna try to get to them in this hour and a half. Okay, so without any further ado, I asked the panelists to present themselves starting with Nigeria. Okay.

14:54

Good morning. Good afternoon and Good evening, everyone. My name is Aliyu Aziz. I am the Director General and also the chief officer of national identity management commission in Nigeria in charge of the identities in Nigeria. Thank you and welcome to the webinar,

15:15

Kenya.

15:17

Thank you. My name is Reuben Kimotho, director, national legislation Bureau. And the Bureau is in charge of processing of identity applications and the issuance of added accounts to all the Kenyans. 18 years and above in the country. Thank you.

15:39

good day, my name is Mory Camara. I'm the managing director of the National Agency of electric electronic governance and digitalization of the state in Ghana. Welcome to the webinar.

15:54

Uganda.

15:56

Good day, everyone. My name is Grace Nanyanzi, manager of Information Systems. I'm from Uganda, and I work for national identification and registration authority (NIRA).

16:13

Hi, Welcome, everyone. This is Yoda. Yoda Zemicheal from Ethiopia. I work as a technical advisor at the Prime Minister's Office. I'm also part of the national ID team. Thank you,

16:31

Mauritius.

16:39

And the core activities of the civil service division, celebration of civil marriages, registration of death and rotation following marriages, changing name, divorce, adoption, etc. We are also in charge of the national identity card system, and also the Muslim family Council, which is a council setup to register Muslim religious marriage and free also services in terms of conciliation and the civil status office falls under the umbrella of the Prime Minister's Office. Thank you.

17:14

Thank you. And last but not least, signing up.

17:20

Thank you, President. Good morning, and good luck. Everyone, I'm Mouhamed Mahi Sy. And in the industrial universal healthcare agency in Senegal, we are in charge of offering to poor people and

disadvantaged people risk to coverage in in the system, we have developed inside again, which will cover each district with around 607 to one insurance a sham in a rural area. And district. Thank you.

18:03

Excellent. So now that you've seen the range of the representation that we have, as well as the identity stakeholders, I would like to go back to the panel and ask a panel wide question, which is essentially to give us in summary, in few minutes, two minutes tops, just the situation analysis on the impact of COVID. To what extent has COVID-19 impacted their countries? And what is the current status. I mean, we're just just giving you a situation analysis so you get a feeling for what's happening. And then we go back into more details of the impact on identity management and the changes and etc. So back to the panel and starting with Nigeria, to what extent has COVID-19 impacted your country.

18:55

Thank you very much. Well, COVID-19 pandemic resulted in lockdown of of the country, cancellation of gathering public activities, closure of schools, airports, restrictions on the interstate travels, etc. It affected Nigeria in all of the areas you mentioned and further expose the inadequacies in our healthcare system. The need for us to also ramp up the identity registration to support social welfare and also the benefit disbursement. The multiplier effect of poverty and hunger as it relates to security of lives and properties and the economic impact of being a consumer nation rather than a deep producer of oil that we have meant to be so we looked at the numbers are still rising. They we have not yet reached the peak but it's not as As bad as in the in Europe or America, so we we hope for the best. Thank you.

20:07

Thank you Kenya.

20:09

Yes, the epidemic has had a major effect on on this country in terms of the way overdrive business government functions, and in accurate lpsps over Kenya as a way of doing things. When the first cases are detected in Kenya, the country didn't put up urato quite a number of measures to try to control the spread of the disease. Some of the measures was a major trade because most of the immediate cases in Kenya came from travelers who are coming from outside, especially from China, UK, USA, and UAE. So the airport was closed to all international flights except for cargo. May then they after that, we also close the airport for our airports for a mix of travel. Right now we have a coffee in Kenya, from seven to five 7pm to 5am in the morning, and that's impacting heavily on the way Kenyans conduct business and during their life. In terms of a work environment. Kenyans have been encouraged by the government work from home those who can work from home. And even for those who can work from home, a lot of premises have been closed. Hotels, bars and restaurants have been close. Okay, last week, there was a some patio opening to a few of them. But the manger, a lot of them are cross or they're impacting heavily on employment of a lot of Kenyans who have been working in that sector. In terms of crossover movement. Nairobi, which is capital city at the Mombasa, they have been locked down you can cannot move out of Nairobi and Mombasa to the other environs, again, we have also cross some cross in some of our counties, which are neighboring countries like Somalia, especially somebody and Tanzania, where we have had quite a number of cases. So there is a major major impact on on this but

mechina, Kenya, in Kenya, we cannot say the made the Kenya has not received a lot of cases because right now, the cases we have had the will test that poses out to the by yesterday was 2093. After the testing of 82,900, maybe it will have increased by today. And we have had 71 deaths. We have one day for the two recoveries, which is which is quite encouraging to a lot of people. But what I've witnessed is that while there was a lot of anxiety and worry amongst Kenyans in the initial days, time progresses than the people got used to the pandemic. There is a feeling of people getting wanting to get back into business, because they find it is impacting heavily on the way that we run things in this country.

23:40

Thank you, Jeannie.

23:44

Thank you. So like many other countries, we've been affected tremendously on the economic side. On the health side, we have few deaths right now about 23. Saying that any death is very difficult than hearts. I don't want to minimize that. But the other total of 3866 cases, we have 23 deaths and 2267. In in recovering the impact that the pandemic has had on our country. Suddenly it's affecting the price the most we had a number of initiatives in place at the beginning of the spread of the virus that had to slow down a little bit. So that affected the identity related entities in Guinea, who were trying to identify and assist those four. In any case, the government took a number of measures to stop the spread. good hygiene washing hands wearing mask confinement social Social distancing as well. But in our economies, people have to go out to make a living. So we can assume we can say that so far. It's we managing, but the economic impact is great. Another point is at this stage, everything that has been done as mainly been done through the efforts of the government, there's a lot of help and assistance coming on the way. But I would say the main impact right now has been economic. So I'm not going to take too much time. I'm going to pass it on if there's any other questions.

25:39

Thank you, Uganda.

25:43

I think yes, like any other country COVID, as affected as we first got our first case on 21st much. Right now we have around 500. Luckily, we don't have any debt. And we thank God for that. We only have 283 active cases. So the risks have recovered. And so of course, it has affected our economy. By now we should be a word expect to be growing at 6%, it has come down to around 4%. So we been in a lockdown for the past two months, we and it's now being eased out private transport, it has been opened, of course, with the few restrictions. To be able to achieve social distancing, public transport is expected to start tomorrow with a number of guidelines. So our president has really been key in fighting this. And we, I think the public is listening, is listening and learning to follow the guidelines. So that we avoid the spread of this. And luckily, we really don't have cases in the community. The cases we have right now are coming from our neighbor, neighboring countries, because again, a big a landlocked country, we depend more on Tanzania and Kenya to move goods. But we are managing.

27:16

Thank goodness. Thank you escapia.

27:20

Um,

27:21

so just like the rest of Africa, we fortunately we've been shielded from, like the pandemic scale we're seeing in Europe and the US. We have so far tested, the Ministry of Health has been expanding its capability and testing and they have so far tested 120,000 people assuming that your countertop population is between 100 and 120 million 0.1% of the population. But anyone who's deemed at risk, who who has a recent arrival, who has had contact with a recent arrival, or who's showing symptoms usually gets tested. So total test is 120,000. Total confirmed positive so far as 1200. And unfortunately, there are 17 diseases so far. As Mory from Guinea mentioned, there is emergency law in our country, and people are told to stay home as much as they can. But the reality in Africa is that a lot of people had to go out to make a living and people cannot basically stay home for weeks on end. So that's a difficult thing. Thank you facing as I think, as a personalities, we're just starting the rainy season in Ethiopia specifically. So we're going to have three more months of cold. So it would be an interesting

28:52

okay. I think we may have lost your order at the end, but Mauritius?

28:59

Yes. Well, our case is somewhat similar to other African countries. We start we started with a curfew and the lockdown and the confinement and 20th. March is one case.

29:24

Can you can you put on mute until because there's an echo?

29:29

Yes. Sorry.

29:34

Could you please. William, you are on mute. Continue. unmute yourself. unmute yourself so we can hear you or did we do you Maybe while while while William is trying to get back.

30:09

Yes. Okay. Thank you. Yeah. So I was I was saying that about 300 cases, out of which you had 10 deaths recorded. And as a date, we have only three positive cases, these people are the hospital or the hospital. And we have passengers coming to Mauritius who are in current time. This is the current situation as far as the committee is concerned. And the effects are also same as in other countries. So we have all the public sector and the private sector, both work work clothes, we will have to go to supermarket with protective equipment and an alphabetical orders. So twice, twice a week. The economic condition is somewhat difficult, as in most countries, but government has been helping a lot of people, people government came with which assisted scheme whereby it helped to pay the wages of those working in their private sector for the public sector, there was absolutely no difficulty. So what

government has done, government has dispersed the sum, the sum equivalent 207 to 3 million US dollar to help public sector to pay to be there to pay the wages of the employees, and then have also raised a COVID fund national fund. And today we have gathered 4.1 million US dollar that some will be held, it will be used to help NGOs, enterprises, and people who are at grassroots level, and the Bank of Mauritius also has injected 100 and 50 million US dollars in the budget. We are voting our budget tomorrow itself. So money has been injected in the national budget to give a boost to the economy to help the sex the sisters who are who have been affected by the COVID by the COVID. Some of you in brief later on, maybe we can develop more.

32:07

Yeah. Thanks. Thanks. Thanks for Yeah, Mouhamed,

32:12

thank you, in Senegal, like like the other country in Africa was also really affected by the pandemic, economically and societally. Today, we have 3932 cases of infection on Coronavirus and 1063 people was recovered. And we have 45 people who visit from the pandemic the government decided recently a relaxation of the state of emergency we have adopted a new strategy to live with the pandemic to adopt our life to live with the pandemic and some measure the government decided to allocate 1000 billions of safer to support affected sector like public the private sector and also poor people. Government has dedicated food distribution for 1 million family in the in Senegal. And in the meantime, we have make constant that sector which was specialized specialize it on foot delivery and good delivery, working when, during this this disparate, disparate and robell is that the situation actually in synagogue we have a new strategy to now live with the pandemic with relics of the state of emergence.

34:13

So, as you could see, we've heard from all seven panelists, and the repeated theme has been that the Coronavirus had a major shock, economically major impact economically. And clearly when somebody says major economic impact. It means vulnerable people who are already being excluded because they're not yet in an inclusive system or being out of the system or going to even be more disadvantaged. And therefore, we as Mouhamed said, as a community, we have to figure out how to get back to work, how to get back in the field and how to live with the pandemic. So I want to get concrete I want to get technical and instead of asking the full panel I'm gonna throw in a couple of questions which were asked by by a lot of people. And it has they have to do with the fact that all countries have adopted social distancing as an effective measure to live with the pandemic. And when when somebody speaks of social distancing, there are certain constraints about ID systems. So I'll ask you a spin on this. Can you conduct enrollment? Can you conduct authentication? Can you conduct collection of data in the field, while maintaining social distancing? Even the images we have in mind when we see elections, very long lines and people stacked one against the other. So anybody that has any plans and experiences any ideas, please raise your hand so I can recognize you. And I give you the opportunity to speak about how do you reconcile social distancing with the fundamental functions of identity authorities that need to touch people? Nigeria, do you have any? We could stop anybody. You still have it? Yes, that

36:24

is a problem is not the social distancing problem, I think there's a fundamental problem is in Africa. The technology we use is generally we use fingerprint identification, and fingerprint identification means contact or contact with the central and the global problem is in the in the case of of COVID deserve, how we're gonna continue to use fingerprint identification. And what kind of measure we can take to be sure that zero will not be the case of contamination, yes, because it is a contact we have a contact from the teapot in our case, because we are concerned on identification in health facilities, generally, people who come to authenticate themselves in the health facilities are supposed to be sick. So, if they are obliged to use the fingerprint identification to authenticate themselves, there is a risk of contamination because every people use the same sensor.

38:01

Right? So we need to

38:02

clean the Do we need to have someone who is beside the sensor to clean every time we have to authenticate people someone that the question actually, we have to face there is a sim in my offices, we have fingerprint for people to to check. People have to authenticate, to come in and to go outside the office. Take a second pause.

38:43

take a pause. I want to I want to hear Nigeria's reaction to this because we heard that you know, all biometrics in Africa is relying on finger prints and fingerprints on touch. So one idea is we're going to need to clean disinfect and the question is can we trust this process? Can this be happened in a systematic way. So Nigeria, do you have any any perspective on that? Yeah,

39:06

I believe that we we we have to adopt the the cleaning before the use of the fingerprint machine and also cleaning after each wire, we will look forward to having some other biometric models to implement. Like at our back end, we have directory models of the fingerprint face an iris but we have not been capturing data on the on the iris so this is an opportunity also for us to also introduce the eyes, but we need to keep the we need to keep the two meters apart guidelines for queuing at the Centers. We have to restrict the number of parcels that are allowed into the center at a time. We also have to space out seating arrangements, also for even our staff to be on shift not to cram the office. And then we also have to encourage people to use the pre enrollment portals. So that it will reduce the time when you come to for the, for the biometric capture, and also to implement some of these online appointment booking processes. But the fingerprint will will will be with us for some time, it cannot change immediately. So we need to take this dis majors of disinfecting in the scanner, and also cleaning it before and after, and making sure that all the COVID-19 measures are also taken into place. Thank you.

40:52

So, let me ask specifically another identity authority, what our plans would be what I heard is, yes, it would be nice to have contact less. But the fact is, we are for our transition period of time, we are going to still be using contact fingerprints, so we have to live with it. So what do we do? So, Reuben, what is

your view about the future of contact fingerprints? Do you think that's going to be obsolete in five years? Or do you think we can live with pandemics and touch fingerprint in the in using measures such as Mouhamed and DG Aziz have explicitly said,

41:37

Ava? If I may comment on this one. The epidemic has really potential registration activities in the country. We are in a position where we had the semi semi automated decision systems where we were capturing the road fingerprints, which required the personal contact between Africans and under the officers. And that we had to suspect that demented tree when the epidemic was coming to this country, and death right now in the country, we only issuing identity cards may be on the positive side. In Kenya, the M pesa. system in terms of transactions, which uses they documentation has gone the wrong way. Slowing down my use of physical money. And again, when it comes to use over the identity documents, we have a nice citizen system whereby By the way, night date, night 80% of Kenyans own identical cause, by law, you cannot do anything in Kenya, you cannot enter into get into any transactions, whether government, whether we're whether business or commercial without any political or social. So we have added we migrated our data to an EU citizen platform, is it a platform is whereby if somebody is applying for a passport or somebody is applying for other services, you just Rogaine and you can be able to migrate under build and kitted using that system in terms of your data. So that's an advantage in terms of it. Kenyans were already enrolled

43:45

by grouping, you said you move them to an E citizen platform and they can be authenticated. So you have an authentication model, but it still uses fingerprint, no.

43:58

Yes. The it's the use of the identity number not necessarily that biometric systems

44:08

digital identity,

44:10

yes, identity you sort of, but we also develop advanced status, where we come up with our own specifications for identity, electronic identity, and then now with a dynamic with this disease, we are also trying to see whether we can be able to refocus those specifications so that they can be able to be tailored to that to reacted to that the problem we have now because we find that if you have to have an idea, you have to have a physical interactions and others it will go a long way not not limiting the spread of the of the disease, otherwise for the purpose of a occasional registration, we also plan to have a life capture systems in our county headquarters, so that we are going to limit the interaction between the applicants. And also the the officers in the interview for purpose of putting up safeguards for those emergency cases, like carving fish or masks, carving, the tangent and, and all that I think we have already, we as a department, we are worried about that and suffering to the officers.

45:33

Okay, so so let's assume that we need to live with fingerprints in a transitional period or for a long time to come. And we have to trust the sensors because we have to build in place some sort of disinfection and cleaning mechanism. But how do we ensure that some center somewhere in in some remote area, which is not directly under your control, will be following the standard of cleaning and die trust as a citizen coming to the center? Do I trust that they've done that they've cleaned it the way it should have been clean? Or can I take something into my own hands? No pun intended, and tried to deal with the situation? Actually, I wanted to give the opportunity for Grace to chime in on this in this area, because I think we will seem to be converging to the notion that, yes, we would love to have contactless but the fact is, fingerprints are what we have today. And fingerprints will be for a while, what we need to do. And so we got to clean, we got to disinfect, we got to do what it takes. So, Grace, do you have a perspective?

46:42

Um, yes, and yes, we have to clean but also, I think we have to plan to plan and have proper guidelines. We're the first one, one of the first services to be closed together with the schools due to the numbers we have in place. So we have plans to reopen. But we have to limit how many people come to the registration center through the appointment system. But even as you limit, you have to make sure that not only have you cleaned your machines, the people themselves are clean, because they is this close enough, they must wear the masks, they must follow the guidelines. And I think communication also the public has to know the reason why these measures are being followed. And I know we still use the fingerprints and so on. But I think we also have to aim for digital identity. The agencies that we so far connected with, as integrated with that use the National ID continued operating throughout the lockdown, they really didn't accelerate, some of them they are businesses went up. Because all you needed is to go to their online site key in your national ID number, and you get a service. So there was no contact needed. The the our telecom industry made more money because people were using more of the online services. And so we needed to aim at having the degree to move to the digital identity. So that at least that they records we have such people are able to transact going forward as we look what to do with the incoming record.

48:32

So you have the digital identity, but I assume that the authentication is a soft authentication, all you have to do is submit your, your demographic, you're not actually authenticating through any biometric or are they authenticate using a selfie, so there is no authentication? Soft

48:51

there are some we have different ways, they are some way just submit your your bio data, and then we verify and, and and because we are allowed to, we have a law that allows us to share information. So once you enter your national ID number, the person offering our services are able to compare the information submitted to them and the one in the National ID database. So they are able to do this without contact. However, we have others that where you need to authenticate where you need to, to do this. But so those who are affected kind of so they have of course they didn't stop but they have to do more cleaning to follow the guidelines, as stated by a Minister of Health.

49:39

great outcome. I want to I want to hear your day on this subject. But hold on the thought. You know, when we talk about fingerprints we talk about we assume that the fingerprint is touch fingerprint, but there's a whole class of new technologies, new sensors, new algorithms where you take a photo of of the of the of the finger or multiple fingers. So these are you wave your, your hand or you present it in front of a sensor or scanner. So the panel, please think about that modality if it's viable for Africa or not while I go to your day, he who, you know wanted to give his perspective on how do we open up the work of the business of the national identity authorities during this pandemic? You they I believe you wanted to say

50:33

Yeah, yes, I actually would wanted to add on this issue of contacts versus contactless biometrics, we need to get here are in the process of launching a pilot. So we're more concerned about enrollment, more than authentication. The options are still all of them are on the table, there is contactless authentication technologies we wanted to set for the pilot.

51:07

We've heard about lots of different kinds of technologies, we've heard about voice recognition, or facial or gait recognition. All of those are biometrics. And since we are at the start of the pilot, we are open to test all of those to see which one is feasible. But principle wise, principle wise we are going for, for foreign authentication, I'm sorry for an enrollment. That's biometric based but not necessarily for authentication. We wanted to limit to minimize biometrics for authentication. We wanted to focus on OTP or soft authentication or other technologies and avoid biometrics because it's an overkill for in terms of facilities and logistics required. And for many services, it's an overkill to have a biometric authentication. And that's the principle we're having for the pilot as well as for the Main Lounge.

52:05

Okay, so. So another question I was going to ask, I'm going to do a poll, after we come back to the question of the the, essentially the touchless fingerprint, I want the panel to think about the following statement. In five years, all identity databases in Africa will include face, finger, and Iris, and we're going to vote on that after we come back from from this question. So the question right now is, does anybody have any opinion about touch less? fingerprints? Do you have any experience and that that already in itself is an important statement? If you don't have experience with them? That means that the industry has not been vocal enough explaining what they do, and etc. And we need to be looking at that. Does anybody have experience with touchless fingerprints within their context? Maureen,

53:12

do you have any? No, no, that proves my point. We We We don't have any experience, but the convenient 19 is going to change the landscape for forever. So I think there will be pressure on the providers to come up with solutions that address this type of situation in the future is very likely that every four or five years, we were gonna run into this type of pandemics. So I believe the markets and technology will adjust to the new reality we're gonna be in. So even though we don't have experience in it, I suspect that in five years, there will be technology, if there is not already some existing that will allow for contactless enrollment of biometrics. So you think that pressure is real, to get away from contact is real enough? Definitely. When you look at solve, you look at Kelvin 19, the consensus is

we're going to have to learn to live with those type of health issues. We have not that they will adjust, they will evolve. So it's apparent that every five, six or 10 years, we're gonna run into this, we're going to have to address such as in the past a number of crisis, or event of force us to change our habits and ways I think is going to be the same way here in the biometric community.

54:49

Okay, I want to go to Mouhamed and then I'm going to ask a couple of questions. So Mouhamed, okay.

54:56

Here in Senegal, we have a pilot Implement face recognition as an option. If the fingerprint authentication does not work, because in rural area, we have a problem of guarantee of the fingerprint, many people does not have good fingerprints. So that's why we have, we have bout some tablets, which implement the face recognition. And we do it as an option. If the fingerprint authentication does not work, we have the option to pretend to be the face. But on a large scale, if we assume that now everybody goes face, do you think you have the accuracy enough for you to handle the scale that you need? Actually, the system we have is enough to be because in our countdown in, in, in order ID card, you have the picture, you have the face, you have the picture of the user of the beneficiary. That's why it is easy to implement the face recognition and we have tested it in our tablet and it is working well.

56:10

And any any interest in Iris,

56:13

not Iris yet

56:14

not face to

56:17

face recognition. Let me ask William William. What does Mauritius do? When it comes to biometrics? What are you capturing? What are you continuing what you're discontinuing from the enrollment?

56:31

The national identity card system, we did it the traditional way that is taking of fingerprints. We did not have facial recognition, no facial recognition, no Iris, because we had court cases we had. Yes. And then even if when we take the fingerprint of the processing the application, the national identity guard, we have to delete the fingerprint. We only keep the minutiae. We mean, yes.

57:01

That's the point that I wanted to hear and raise with the panel. I mean, in fact, we talk about COVID, forcing us to move into other modalities, etc. But it's many countries in Africa, they don't have the law that would permit the extraction of facial templates that do one to many, they may do one to one for authentication, but one to many may give people a little bit of concern about about privacy about surveillance. And then under the guise of COVID-19, maybe people get concerned that you're letting in

a capability that is very invasive to privacy. That's a perception. So maybe maybe that's a topic that's worth bringing back to the identity authorities, maybe Nigeria, I mean, is there any legal framework that would protect against facial surveillance, because now you've got face recognition, and you've got face templates that can do one to many?

58:06

Well, thank you very much, you know, when it comes to selection of the modalities, also the population also matter.

58:23

This way, that is why we we we have selected three models from the time that we were designing. So at the back end, we have the fingerprint, we have the face, we also have the the iris at the back end, but we are capturing only fingerprint and face, we have not yet started capturing the the iris, but with the COVID and also the need as our population is growing very fast. We need to introduce the iris and also introduce other majors. But when it comes to the data protection have, of course having a national data protection law framework that will help countries and societies develop policies that will work for the deer population is extremely, very critical. In Nigeria, we have not yet gotten the law in place, but we have regulations from from from it authority need data, which is being implemented now. So these safeguards of total we when is required, it will protect people's right to privacy with stringent data governance rules that can also affect how government responds to pandemic. The question we should be asking ourselves how can we make use of personal data for the great health Good, while still protecting the individual's right to privacy, and to what degree should privacy and other rights be curtailed, for the sake of public safety, I don't have all the answers and I, I understand that these are discussions that we need to have, as we pick the pieces of the hard work, and also the health and also the economic downturns of the, of the, of the pandemic. So, we in terms of the selection of biometrics is based on the population and also accuracy that we want to have in the use of the of the data in future that is when we do authentication in the future. And we are also working towards having that data protection in, in place, we have seen places like Singapore and South Korea, how they, how they apply to the the, during the pandemic, how they applied those technologies to really trust people, which some people might say privacy or whatever, but during pandemic, nobody. Everybody wants to be protected, rather than rather than talking about the soul is sometimes is public. Good. Thank you.

1:01:30

So looking at the panel, please raise your hand if you have a data protection law in place today. So we have 123455. Mouhamed, you raise your hand like, Oh, no, no, no. Okay, so so are five countries, out of the seven that have data protection laws. Nigeria will have the data protection law I understand in the next six months.

1:02:08

Hopefully, we'll have it in the next

1:02:12

next six months. Okay. So the

1:02:14

issue will, we'll have it in the Nexus.

1:02:18

Okay. So what we've learned from Mauritius is that, yes, while we have fears about contact fingerprints, they are the only ones that are covered by the law by framework of protection. I asked when you do you feel there needs to be a revision in the law to allow for more permissive biometrics such as face? Or do you believe that the concerns about privacy are overweight? The concerns about cleaning and that you're going to continue to do cleaning?

1:02:55

Yes, yeah, well, just to go back a bit. Let's say we are doing, we are taking processing application every day, since the confinement has been waived. And after each operation, they disinfection of each person who come when we did is when the screen is being cleaned after each operation, the offices have got protective masks, and then the public holds everyone who comes need to have masks, which is the same as in many countries, but there has been resistance. As far as far as facial recognition, pink and gray being a fingerprint is is concerned. Because, you know, people fear that some at some time, then some cases that data can be used, for example, the politician the opposition, sometime the fear was that if we give this to the police, or we give this data to the police, this can be used against the citizen to track down criminals. And it was not the purpose when the data subject gave his his details. It wasn't for that purpose, it was only to process his national identity code. So it's a bit of fear, you know, people are creating that the older versions of the democratic country, very democratic, we own the Westminster system and the UK based industry in the population for political reason, for personal reason, some would say that their biometric their figure, their face is personal to them, why to give it to the authorities. So they have some resistance.

1:04:30

Okay. So, I mean, obviously, we live in a society where we have 10 fingerprints, we touch things we cannot be completely go around without touching. So we have to live with a pandemic where we touch things so that that's clear. So what about a model where for enrollment, since it's, it's supervised, and there is an agent who's trained, responsible, who's wearing a mask who's with a cleaning cleaning happening? I understand that fingerprint. can be salvaged for enrollment. And because you're the best, they've got high accuracy, and they've got good stuff. What about the new normal for authentication? Because we can't afford to have like fingerprint sensors at the doors of an access control or some areas where it's the egates or whatever, because they're not attended. So unattended authentication? Does anybody from the group have any idea? Maybe we can hear from Reuben Muhammad Maury, do you have any ideas, raise any ideas of experiences with authentication and touch? How do we make that happen? Cleaning is not going to be an option, because we don't know unless I carry with me spray. And every every time I want to enter my building, what do you do a Roman I grant you that?

1:05:59

Okay, that one of the major problems this Kenya faces in terms of identification is stemming out daily registration. Because you have a lot of communities, especially those ones, which are from our neighboring countries, who try to infiltrate in the country and would wish to be registered as Kenyan

citizens. You also have Kenyan Rocco's who would wish to manipulate the data for various reasons. So the fingerprint plays a major role. And it will continue doing so for quite a long time to come. But in this country, we also coming up with a program where we want to rain identity, identity movement to to civil registration, where we are trying to integrate the two systems for purpose of starting, I've been a unique, and we had a very advanced change of capturing butts in this country, and also digitizing the butts, so that the two systems can be interlinked. And then eventually, we issue a unique number which we are calling I will do my number. Our thinking is if you identify individuals array and have them in a data database, and they issue them with a unique number, which we are calling a Duma number, then you might find that the role of biometrics could be reduced. Because you could identify applicants, individuals using a mobile ID by issue aware of the number as you speak. Now, in Kenya, we do a lot of services, which Kenyans are able to apply for and they're able to be processed without the necessary use of biometrics, just by use of the identity can be recognition of a of the number and checking into the database. And then identifying, trying to then get to that to the person who is before you applying for driving license, or praying for a word for cara, Cara is our tax authority, and all those other services when they present themselves having an identity card, and just by checking out a photograph, you're able to say yes, is the person be before me. So I think mobile identity could play a big role, but they were required to capture people come up with a family tree. And you say the unique number is a is a form of identification.

1:09:00

I want to come to you today because you raised your hand. I'm not sure you you answered this. But one question I have for you guys. Nobody has talked about authentication using a selfie. Is there any resistance in African against that? I mean, seems to be popular in western countries. You've got a phone you take your selfie, you don't touch anybody. It's a low security, it's better than nothing you can put in your your Duma number and then get a selfie. What do you guys think about that? I mean, Grace you have experienced with that ruin. Anybody wants to comment about that. And then let's start with your day because I will combine the two.

1:09:51

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in Ethiopia uses the selfie authentication for power of attorney for Ethiopian solidarity. abroad they can give, they can take a video selfie saying, I assigned Mr. X, Mr. White to take care of my business here in Ethiopia, that kind of thing. So the video, the video power of attorney assignment and such things, are we there is some experience here in Ethiopia. Yeah, the other question, I'm sorry, if you can repeat?

1:10:26

No, I thought you raised your hand, whether you wanted to add to the conversation that was taking place about authentication, but you said that selfie authentication is happening in in in some some application like, auto Sterling. If you don't have anything else to add, we can move on. Yo, yeah, Grace. Um,

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I think we need to understand how African countries the biggest population, for example, in Uganda, that want to transact or want to receive a basic service, will not have the ability to take the selfie will not

either for the device, or how to use the device, even if they had the device. So they will need to help steal social distancing is violated in that case. So as we look at this, I think we need to consider the environment in some of our countries. So that's why a, we need to also look at more over system integration. Most of the systems we use, if they are able to integrate with a national ID and agree to use the National ID number as a key identifying all services, then I think we are able to eliminate fingerprint authentication. Yes, because in in Uganda today's we are working on the process. So that we we have a centralized ifis, so that we don't have different MDS paying for the FS licenses. Once this person is being identified in one center, all the information should be accessed from that center should be updated at that center. Luckily, our law allows us to share information. Of course, there they are, we look at the privacy who must get consent, we must, we should ensure at a certain level, but just to be able to receive a service so that you're able to use an app on your phone, and then access or service. But when it comes, it's a good idea. But I think it will sound so fool soft, just a small population.

1:12:50

Okay, so so inclusion will not happen. So here's what I heard, I heard basically, in the post COVID era, or while the COVID pandemic is happening, we have to continue enrollment, social distancing has to be implemented. Cleaning in a supervised way has to be completely implemented, as we bring in multimodality, which will start to have an impact in the next 434 or five years, if you like, in the meantime, for authentication, we can use selfies, that's, that's fine. But it's not going to give us the big impact, maybe four, four small, low risk transactions, digital ID or a digital ID number. And with an integration with a national ID, or maybe a security question, maybe a pin could be enough to allow somebody to get access to a service that they're asking for. So without having to solve the problem of contactless by biometrics. Does anybody on the panel have an alternative? Yes, please, Nigeria. Okay,

1:13:54

thank you. Thank you very much. Well, when it comes to authentication, I used to think that that is where the milking of the cow you know, like in Africa, everybody wants to milk the cow. But most of our problems like say Nigeria, because we are a bigger country is the enrollment that is really our on major issue. But when it comes to authentication, we have already put the back end we put in the we put in the API's that will allow only did mean you can put only the name or you can put a combination of, of demographic information or you can put only the face or you can use the biometrics themselves. And then currently also we have the mobile ID. And also we have a QR based digital ID slips which can be useful for for for, for attentive authentication, but you're not discovered now. has not only created an appreciation and value for the inclusive digital identity, but it has also sparked the conversation on how, like new seeds should be empowered and supported to accelerate the ID coverage, and provide the foundational IDs system required for planning, development and management of future issues and also pandemics and also that they mean, we have separated the need, again from from, from, from citizenship. So DNA is proof of who, who you are. So it does not confer citizenship, so that people now recognize that the digital ID is a important benefit of the foundational ideas, they have the ability to respond quickly in the face of disaster through the use of their widget style, to manage distribution of food disbursement of palliatives, and even a location and distribution of vaccine if it's if it is needed. So there are desertion around ensuring we learn lessons from this pandemic, and work with all the stakeholders to have the National ID that that can be leveraged as the single source of truth for the functional ID to asset in eligibility for beneficiaries of services schemes, or transactions as we have it.

So the authentication is, is the easiest part of identity management, but rather get identities and in multiple models is much more

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the role. Now. Okay, well said, let me point out another in this transition into a D materialized world, some would argue that COVID thrust the world 10 years into the future by trying to D materialize things, it's dematerializing. The work, we're working from a distance, it has materialized temporarily, ID for Africa. So we're now having a discussion via zoom. But there is as as as generators of identity, and even financial institutions we produce still do materialized elements that circulate in populations, and which are a potentially carriers of contagion and infection. One is the physical ID card, and the second are currencies. So the question I have for the panel, and it's open for anybody, raise your hand if you want to discuss it, what do you think is the future of the physical ID? Will it be less important? Will it be the same? Or will we simply skip it altogether? Anybody wants to comment? More if you have any any perspective,

1:18:00

I don't think that we will skip it, but it's definitely on the way on the way out. There are some realities that Africa has that make it that the credential as a value in mentality of people. So even though we may be pushed to a more digital way of identification, validation, authentication of identity, the use of credential is gonna take a little longer.

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You're not ready for it. Simply you're not ready for completely dematerialized. Billy Yeah, any anybody from Nigeria? What do you think? Yes. jazzy Yeah, I

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think it will take a long time before we we eliminate the cat because the cat is in the psyche of people. But we should also be mindful like the experience from India with the app heart there are 1.3 billion people and they did not give any single cat so when you do the political leaders and the economy can lead us they will not be pointing at you to that direction. So that if you can't, and if we improve on our on our on our digital infrastructure, I believe that we should be able to use the digital identity The sooner than than the later but the general public once the plastic so and in some places it is like upright. I spoke to elderly people like young people that have the National ID they think that it is a high price that they need it they can pay for it. So before like us, we used to give it free of But now people are clamoring to pay for the card. So what is

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so there is a future for the physical medium. And then basically somebody is taking your ID card, they need to make sure they're wearing gloves or maybe protecting themselves. From that regard. I saw Grace and Reuben agreeing with what you're saying. So I assume we will grant them that agreement. And I want to move on to another aspect, which may be controversial. But before I do that, do I assume that the same applies to physical currency? I mean, basically, are people in Africa hesitant to take money? I mean, here in France, for example, for a while, I could not go to the supermarket and the supermarket would refuse to take actual cash, they would say, No, you got to give us contactless. So

now they relaxed a little bit. But is that the case in Africa anywhere where they insist that it's m pesa? For example, Reuben, are there places which say, I want contactless, I don't want to touch anything. From the currency point of view, which is a vector of contagion. Any, any any perspective? Grace? Yes, please.

1:21:18

I think COVID. During this period, we've seen use of mobile money, platforms a lot. And even those that our banking banks have integrated with mobile money, so you can access your your mobile account by user by us then transact. And, of course, there is a fee to that. So when you go to a market, and you want to pay the lady using mobile money, there they are, they don't really resist, but they will ask you to add a top rate charge, which is fair enough. So I think we are we are kind of adopting, we are moving to that. And that is our level of acceptance.

1:22:09

Okay. I think I think that's, that's, that's interesting. I want to raise a controversial subject. And I'm sure Mouhamed is going to have something to say about this. So get ready. Some organization, some people in the world have argued that we need a special ID related to COVID special health ID, if you like, you can call it immunity certificate, or you can call it health passport. And I think I'd like to hear from the entire panel, because I think this is a subject that is going to have different perspectives depending on where you're coming from. I don't want to put you on the spot, Mouhamed. But what do you think of that proposal? Do we really need an immunity certificate? A digital ID for COVID?

1:23:05

Yeah, I'm well place it to talk about it. Because we're actually in San Diego, I was the, to lead the what we call a provisional digital identity, to use digital identity, to provide public services, it is a provisional digital identity that people can use to access public services. And actually incident again, we have started the process to build a new digital identity to help people to access to public services at home.

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But this has nothing to do with COVID. You still can have a health Id like in France, for example, but I'm talking about Yeah, that's good. But should we be linking it to COVID?

1:24:07

Yeah, yeah, actually, because it is a profession not because we need to have a quick solution to face the situation. That's why we call it a provisional digital identity. This digital identity can be provided from the national identity number, but also from the mobile number because all the mobile phone number in Senegal, as provided from the national identity, identity number, tell you we are working on this scheme to implement the digital identity identification, what we call the provisional digital ID for the Senegalese people to access to public services. I would add to that Residential kitchens, the fact of living the physical card only depend on the capacity of our government and public sector to deliver digital services, the example of Senegal and related also to digital currency, the government decided to close all the offices for electricity, electricity, and water companies. And people are obliged to pay by a wallet or digital payment system. And if the government decided something, every people are obliged to do it.

So the capacity and the future of the digital identity of the digital money in Africa, I think, in all, it only depends on the capacity of our government to deliver digital services.

1:26:06

Okay, so anybody else wants to comment on this topic? Do you think we need a just like yellow fever certificates? Do we need COVID? certificate? Oh, yes, please, Nigeria, New Jersey.

1:26:22

You know, health health ID is one of the functional identities. And I believe that if I can go to my doctor, and he wants to know my history, he wants to help me by but he need some form of that kind of ID. But if I go to if I'm traveling, and I want to enter Cameroon, and the passport office is asking for my health ID and then I will front out from that. Or if I go to the bank, and they want to know my health ID before they can give me transfer money to me, then that will be an an issue. So the point is to have the foundational ideas that are linked to functional IDs. And given the fact that one has been given also a clean bill of health today does not remove the exposure or risk of contacting COVID. The next one out. So we have to be you have to be careful, we have to look at the long term of how the card can be used. We have been using the new see ID card, we have an affiliate for the E health, but it has never been used. So it does privacy and security, our mo demo consents, Gad, and then auditing so but as a functional ID for the health sector final output, your doctor also needs to get more information to two. Thank you.

1:28:07

Yeah, actually. Great. We have 10 minutes left, I want to I want to cover very quickly a couple of touchy subjects as well, funding in the downturn of economy in Africa. What is your perspective as a panel regarding the funding situation, will it will it stay flat? Will it go up? Will it go down? And how do you worry about funding? So I want I want this the whole panel? Maybe I could start with Reuben. When do you worry about funding in the in the economic crisis that's following the COVID.

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Is that?

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I think,

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like I mentioned earlier, the k&n alarm, which a lot of Kenyan citizens, when the pandemic was first reported, is winding down. And a lot of people wish of getting things moving, especially because of the economic problem. And what I'm foreseeing and maybe we could be having a major pronouncement by lead of this week is where the country may, to some limited degree, tried to get back to business identity, business, commercial business and all that and the identity movement to play a very big role. Maybe let me come back to one question that asked me about the role of identity as I see it in the future, not only in Africa, even over the world identity to continue playing a major role with the problems you're having terrorism, the global economy. I'd even in Africa, we have come up with an African economic unit where require to be identified. So I can foresee with the safeguards in terms of the hell,

the safeguards, we'll come up with some kind of program whereby identity movement or continue, economic issues will continue. But of course with the sub guns and I can see identity were playing a major role.

1:30:24

So you're not worried at night about funding. So I'm going to go to Ethiopia. Today, you have plans to launch a program on identity, do you think that froze the COVID? has frozen your planning or you think accelerated your planning very quickly, please, so we can fit everybody?

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COVID may have decelerated other issues. But with regards to funding, there is no lack of it's both from internal sources. There are different sectors such as the commercial banks who want to avoid financial fraud and who want to contribute to this project in any way they can. But also from outside from abroad development partners. We were we do not have any shortcomings in that in that area.

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And anybody else on the panel who has a different perspective, Mory, do you want to say anything about funding? is funding in uncertain in these economic times? Or is it certain

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in terms of the identity entities? I don't think so. I don't think so funding will be affected on the operational level. Definitely, it has affected the department. execution. I may be worried a little bit more in the long term because it has an impact on the global economy. So it will have to be affected at some point in the short term. I don't see any impact as of yet.

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Okay, Grace.

1:31:54

Um,

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I think we it has been affected because priorities for the country are different now. Nowadays, more focus on health. So some of the planned activities have to be delayed. So that they forecast now is the focus right now is on serving the people. So they are they are number building hospitals, a number of interventions government is putting up a number of planned activities. Yes, I've been affected, but moved to the near future.

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Okay. Actually, I want to get William's perspective, not on the impact of general ID but on civil registration. What do you think has the impact of covid 19? On crvs? funding?

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Yes, in Mauritius, I'm glad to say that there has been no negative impact. Because of the COVID, because we had earmark funds. And funds were earmarked for the revamping of the national identity card system for the purchase of new blank guards and the equipment for the renewal of personal printers, of course, because it was they were all no black, then I'm very pleased to see that government in the budget is going to be voted tomorrow as has approved these funds. So as far as a modernization of the whole system of civil registration, national identity guard is concerned with it going to be affected. Thanks.

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Excellent, excellent. Mouhamed. Give us a perspective from Senegal. What do you think the funding looks like for ID related programs including what you do?

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Okay, naturally in our sector, we are a private sector. bonding is not affected, we have a phase that we have found to continue our project, even we was affected at the starting of the of the pandemic, because no one knows have any information about the pandemics. But now we have more information about the pandemics we have now a strategy to put in the in this context. And all the partner, give us guarantee to continue to find us and to help us.

1:34:34

Excellent. I want to ask a pointed question to DG Aziz. I hope the jerseys, you forgive me if I'm putting you on the spot, but I think you have the shoulders to hold that. Wait. Let me ask you. Do you think identity authorities such as NIMC should have been recognized by governments as essential services in the country?

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Well, I am believe that they are they are, they have essential services and like we we have to maintain the back end that is a database running so that authentications have to be happening during the pandemic, and also it is

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enrolling in Rome and gets stopped during the pandemic.

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Yeah, Erol men have to stop because everything stopped. And, and it is now that we are working out modalities to go back to eat. And, and also when you talk of wouldn't be funding tool, as you know that for a long time the World Bank has approved the funding and we be looking forward to today, today inaugural meeting of the of the steering committee, and that is going to happen this this Friday, and it involves all the ministers from education to health and finance and and the communication and digital economy. So that we will move this project forward. So, and from my own experience, anytime that something happens like q1 this year, where we are talking about example practices and trying to enforce the need or need, the moment that there was an issue or we stopped it, then the US came up with a travel ban for certain data. So identity came in again. And immediately while we are working on this one, then they could they could the COVID came in. So identity government have not done

anything or that or that events will force the government to recognize that identity is important. It needs to be focusing all the funding, because he says the foundation, you have to when you are building a house, you must have a foundation. And so how we have grown without that foundation, so it is a essential services. And the chairman of the of the COVID is also the our own our own chairman for the four. Oh, and thank you.

1:37:18

So excellent, I'm sorry to interrupt you because we came on the top of the hour. And I want to say he reverted here. Identity is essential service. And we need as a movement ID for Africa to continue to push for the recognition by governments because the world is filled with risks filled with events, pandemics, and events that are disruptive to the economy, disruptive to the lives of people and without strong identity that can help us build social protection nets that can help us allow people to get access, even when buildings are inaccessible, we would be missing an opportunity and important opportunity in development. So we could continue this discussion for another several hours, I can guarantee you and I will apologize. Sincerely to all of those who submitted fantastic questions, you can imagine how difficult it is for us to answer all of your questions. We've only touched the surface. I hope you enjoyed this session, you found it very interesting. So if you did join us on the 17th, we're going to continue this discussion, but from a different perspective, bringing in agencies like the World Bank, like UNICEF, un UNDP, UNESCO, and the Center for Global Development around basically the topic of what has changed in the development agenda as a consequence of COVID. So we'll continue this together. And, and I hope we will be in a position to be in person together. Because I really miss you all. I really miss the energy that you've given me. You've given me a little bit here, why via this medium. Thank you for that. But I think nothing will replace the energy and the success of the upcoming ID for Africa in person meeting. So let's hope this will happen very soon. Until then, we will see you on the 17th for the continuation of this webinar series. I thank the panel for their participation and I'm obliged to end the session here. Thank you.

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Thank you, everybody, be safe. Be safe.

1:39:38

You say