

Responding to COVID-19 in African Countries:

Executive Summary of Polling Results: Cross National Findings

August 2020



INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact societies, not only in terms of health, but also social and economic conditions and day-to-day life.

This document provides the findings from public opinion polls in 18 African Union Member States to understand the public's knowledge, risk perception, attitudes, access to information, reactions, behaviours and practices related to COVID-19.

This Executive Summary is supplemented by an Appendix with the full set of data should readers require additional detail.

METHODOLOGY

The public opinion polls were conducted by telephone from 4 August to 17 August 2020.

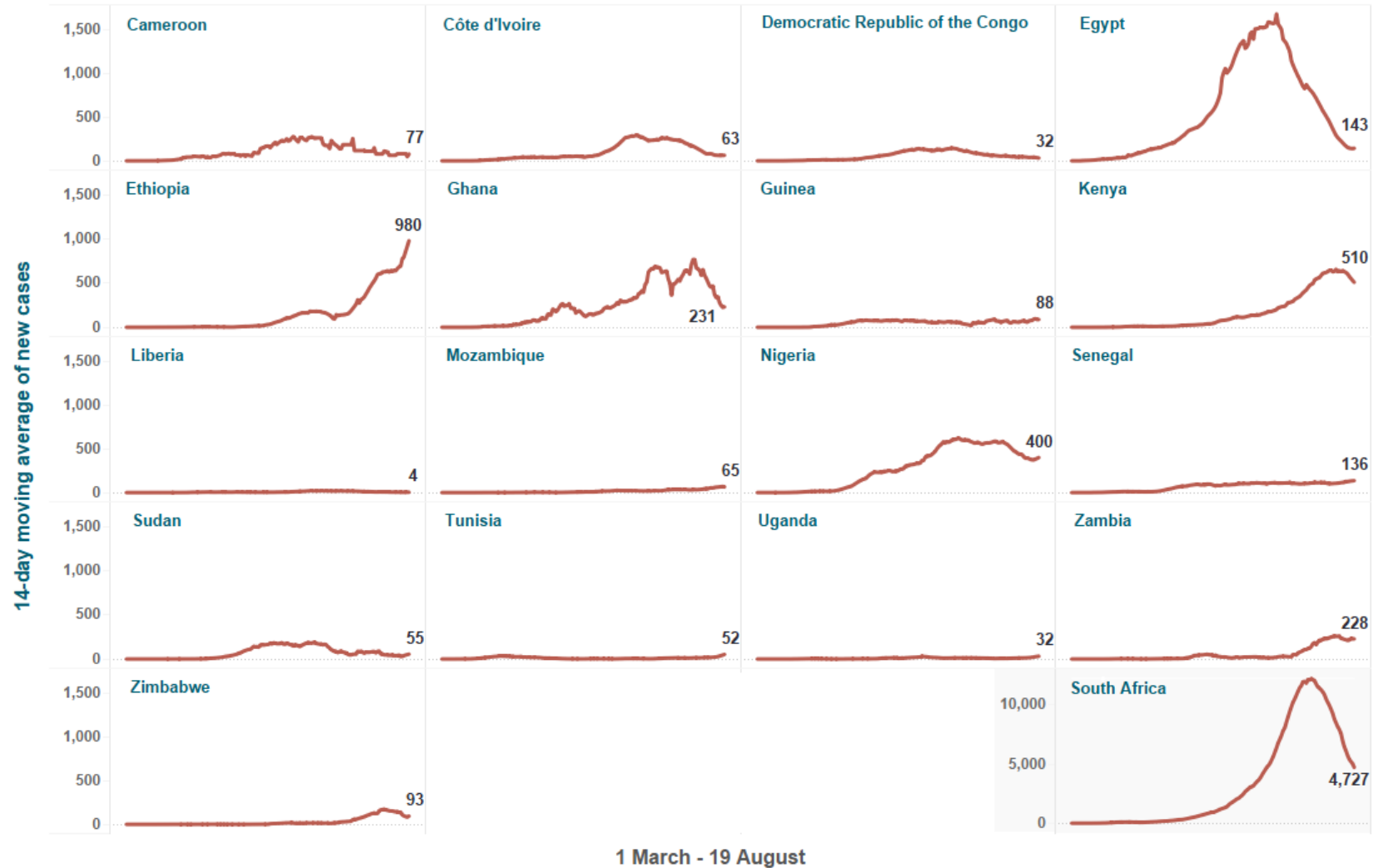
Samples were drawn to be nationally representative of each Member State; weighting was applied by gender and region to align the final data with the population. The weighted national sample size in each of the surveyed Member States is 1,200 completed interviews.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 Across Surveyed Member States

14-day moving average
of new cases from
1 March to 19 August

Data Source: Africa CDC



Note: South Africa is on a different scale to the rest of the countries

KEY FINDINGS

1

Support and adherence for personal Public Health and Social Measures (PHSMs) such as washing hands are relatively strong.

Both support and adherence are relatively lower for public gathering PHSMs, and lowest for stay-at-home orders that restrict economic mobility.

2

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on essential health services.

Of those requiring health care services (48% of the sample), 45% have delayed, skipped or were unable to obtain services required. This proportion is slightly higher among those who report having long-standing health issues.

3

Respondents reported considerable burdens from lost income and food insecurity.

Overall, seven in ten respondents indicated they have experienced a barrier to accessing food, such as high prices or lower income.

A majority of those polled said their income is lower now compared to this time last year, and two in five respondents reported spending more hours on unpaid work such as childcare.

Information, Perception & Misinformation

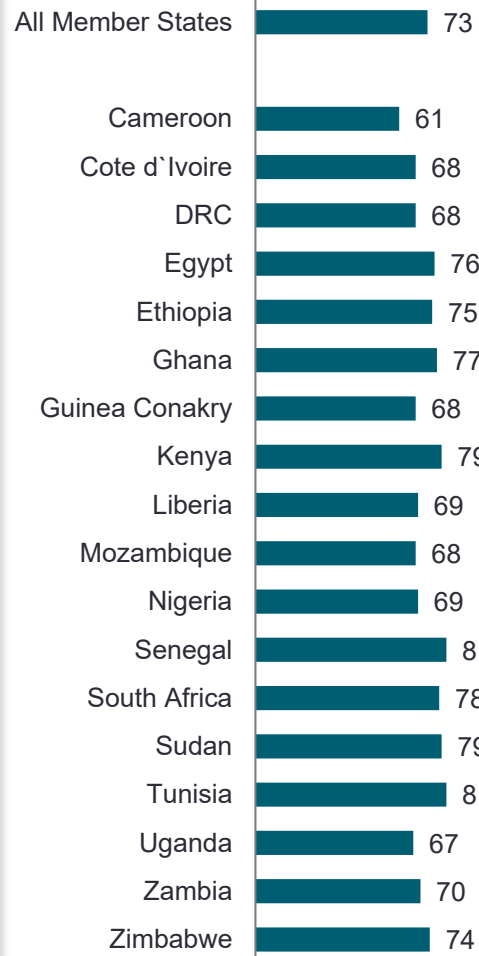
There is a high level of knowledge about preventive measures

There is a sizeable minority who found statements about foreigners discrediting African medicines and testing vaccines on nationals to be credible.

Preventive Measures

% True for ALL THREE statements:

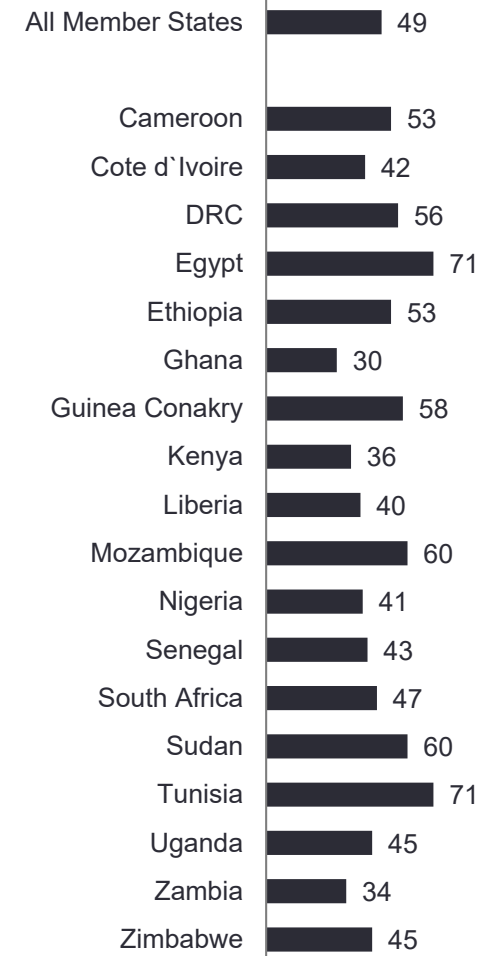
- Washing hands helps prevent COVID-19
- Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days
- Wearing a face mask when around other people prevents the spread of COVID-19



Reaction to Recovered Patients

% True (one statement):

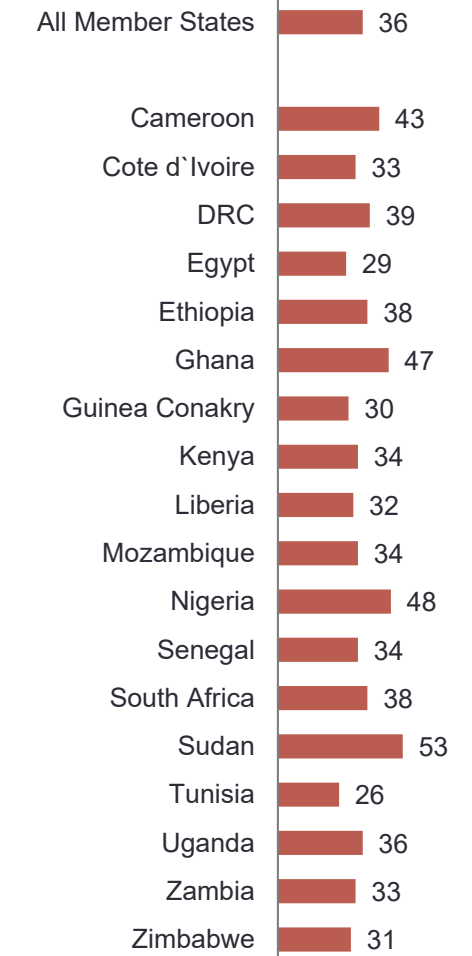
- People who have recovered from COVID-19 should be avoided to prevent spreading it.



Misinformation

% True for BOTH statements:

- Foreigners are discrediting African medicines which could cure COVID-19.
- Foreigners are trying to test vaccines on us

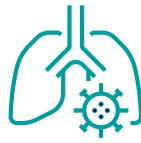


Q2. I'm going to read things people have said about coronavirus or COVID-19. Please tell me if you think each is definitely true, probably true, probably false, or definitely false. If you don't know, say so. (True = Definitely + Probably True)

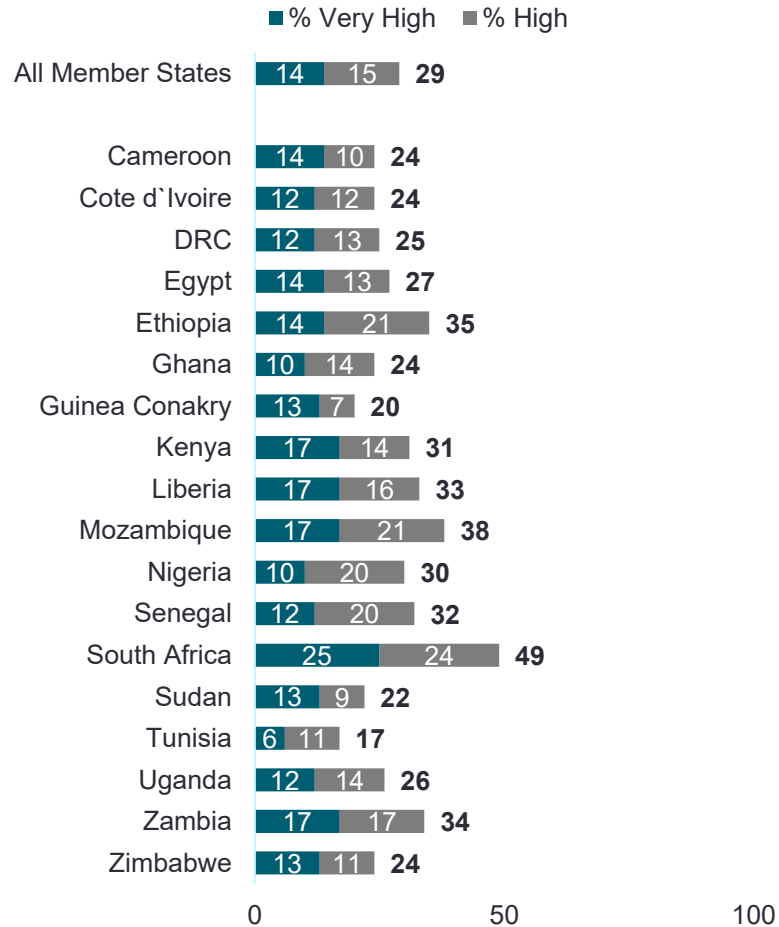
Risk Perceptions

Fewer than one in three respondents across Member States surveyed perceive they are at risk of contracting COVID-19.

However, one in two respondents across all Member States surveyed believe that if they were infected, COVID-19 will have a serious impact on their health.



Perceived risk of catching COVID-19:



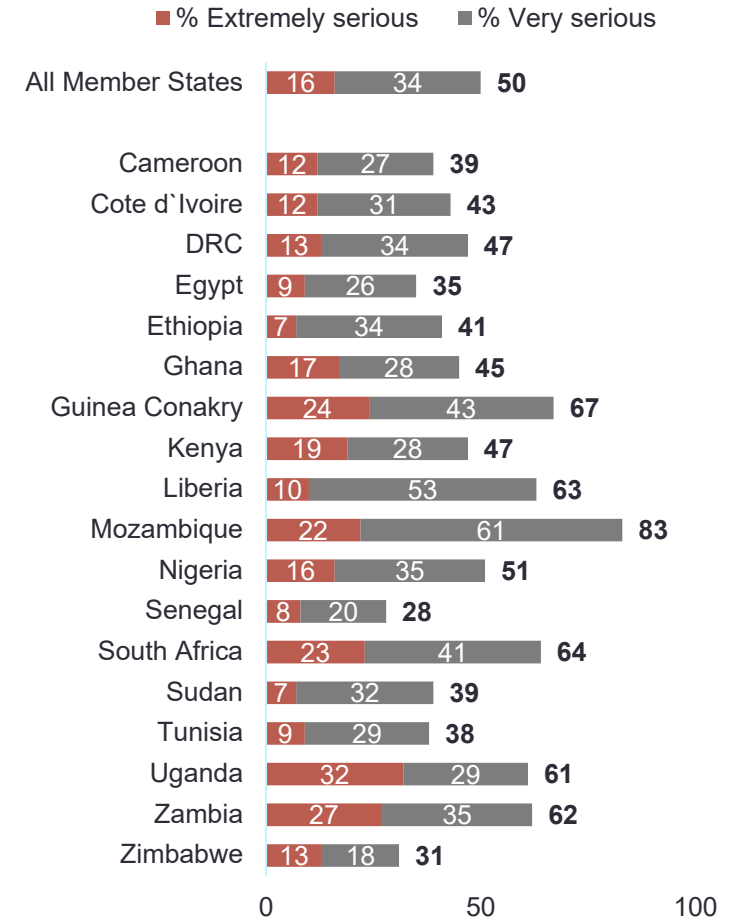
% OF PERCEIVED RISK HIGHER AMONGST:

- Aged 26 to 55: 30%
- Household income >500K USD per month: 31%
- Report they or someone in their household had a COVID-19 infection: 41%

Q8. Please indicate what you think your level of risk of catching coronavirus or COVID-19 is: Very high, High, Medium, Low, Very Low, Don't know



Perceived severity of COVID-19 :



% OF PERCEIVED SEVERITY HIGHER AMONGST:

- Age 55+: 54%
- Household income <100USD per month: 54%
- Reported mental health issues: 57%
- Believe risk is high / very high: 61%

Q9. If you were infected by coronavirus or COVID-19, how seriously do you think it would affect your health? Not at all seriously, Somewhat seriously, Very seriously, Extremely seriously, Don't know / no response

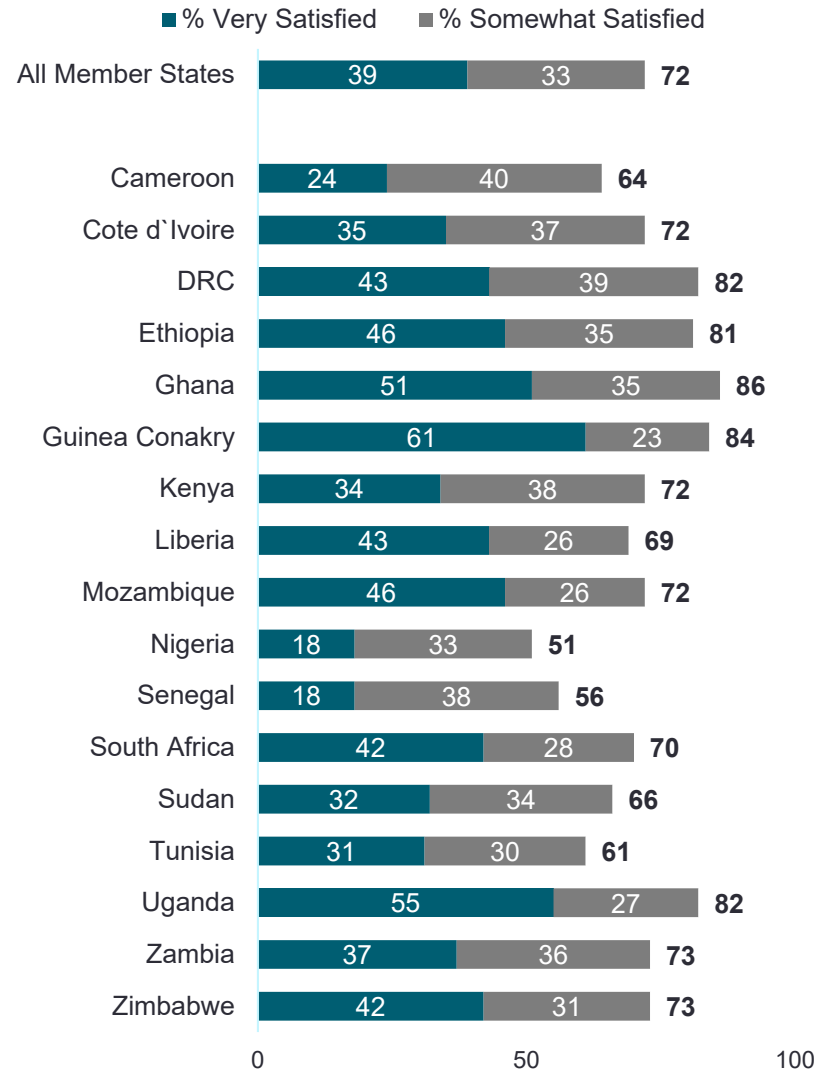
Satisfaction with COVID-19 Response

While a majority in each country express satisfaction with the response of their government, there are wide variations, ranging from a bare majority in Nigeria to strong satisfaction in Ghana.

There are similarly strong levels of trust for the presidencies, health ministries, hospitals and family physicians across Member States surveyed.



Satisfaction with Government response to COVID-19



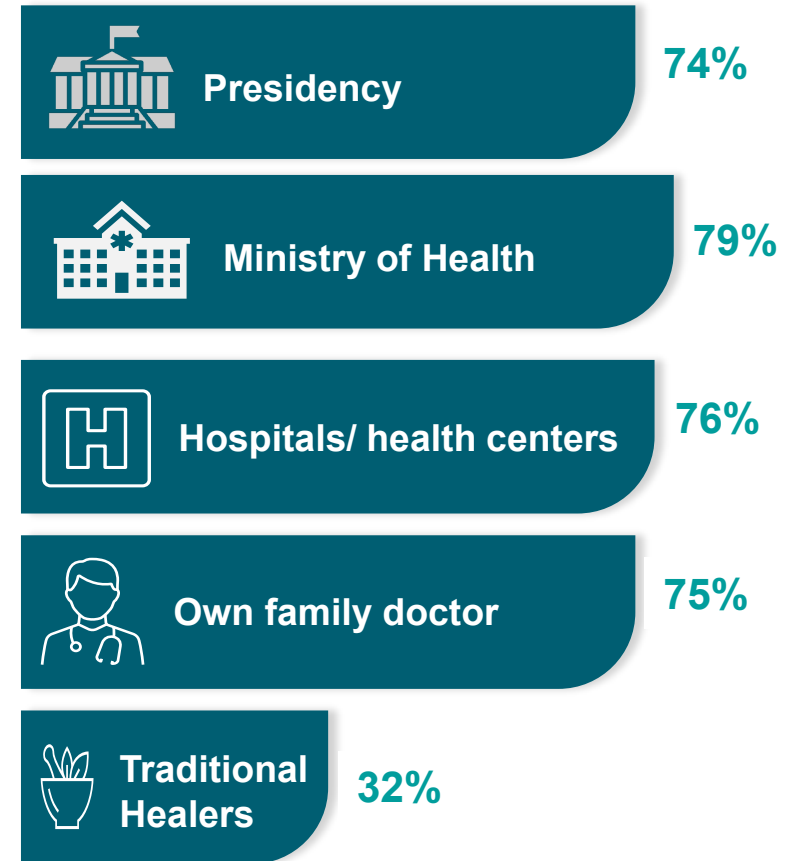
Q11. How satisfied are you with your (COUNTRY NAME) government's response to coronavirus or COVID-19? Very satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, Don't know / not sure

* No data from Egypt for this question



Trust in handling of the coronavirus

% Trust a great deal or a fair amount



Q12. To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the following individuals and organizations' handling of the coronavirus in [COUNTRY]? A great deal, A fair amount, Not very much, Not at all, Don't know, Not heard of organisation, Not applicable.

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PHSMs Support and Adherence

There is support for and adherence to personal PHSMs such as wearing a face mask and washing hands.

PHSMs that impose restrictions on activities, such as going to the church or mosque, and stay-at-home orders, have lower levels of support *and adherence*.

Public Health and Social Measures (PHSMs)

	Adherence: level to which activity describes "you personally"				Support: perception of necessity		
	<i>Completely applies</i>	<i>Mostly applies</i>	<i>Sometimes applies</i>	<i>Does not apply to me</i>	<i>Absolutely necessary</i>	<i>Somewhat necessary</i>	<i>Not really necessary</i>
Wear a face mask in public when near others	71	14	9	6	84	12	4
Wash more often than you used to	68	19	12	2	86	11	3
Avoid handshakes and physical greetings	58	18	14	10	77	16	7
PERSONAL PHSMs: SUMMARY	66	17	12	6	82	13	5
Stop joining public gatherings and places of entertainment	57	18	15	11	68	20	11
Stop going to the church/mosque	44	16	18	22	43	25	30
PUBLIC GATHERING PHSMs: SUMMARY	51	17	17	17	56	23	21
Reduce the number of times going to the market or grocery store	38	23	25	14	53	29	16
Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities	33	17	23	27	42	27	30
ECONOMIC PHSMs: SUMMARY	36	20	24	21	48	28	23

Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?

Please see Appendix for detail by country

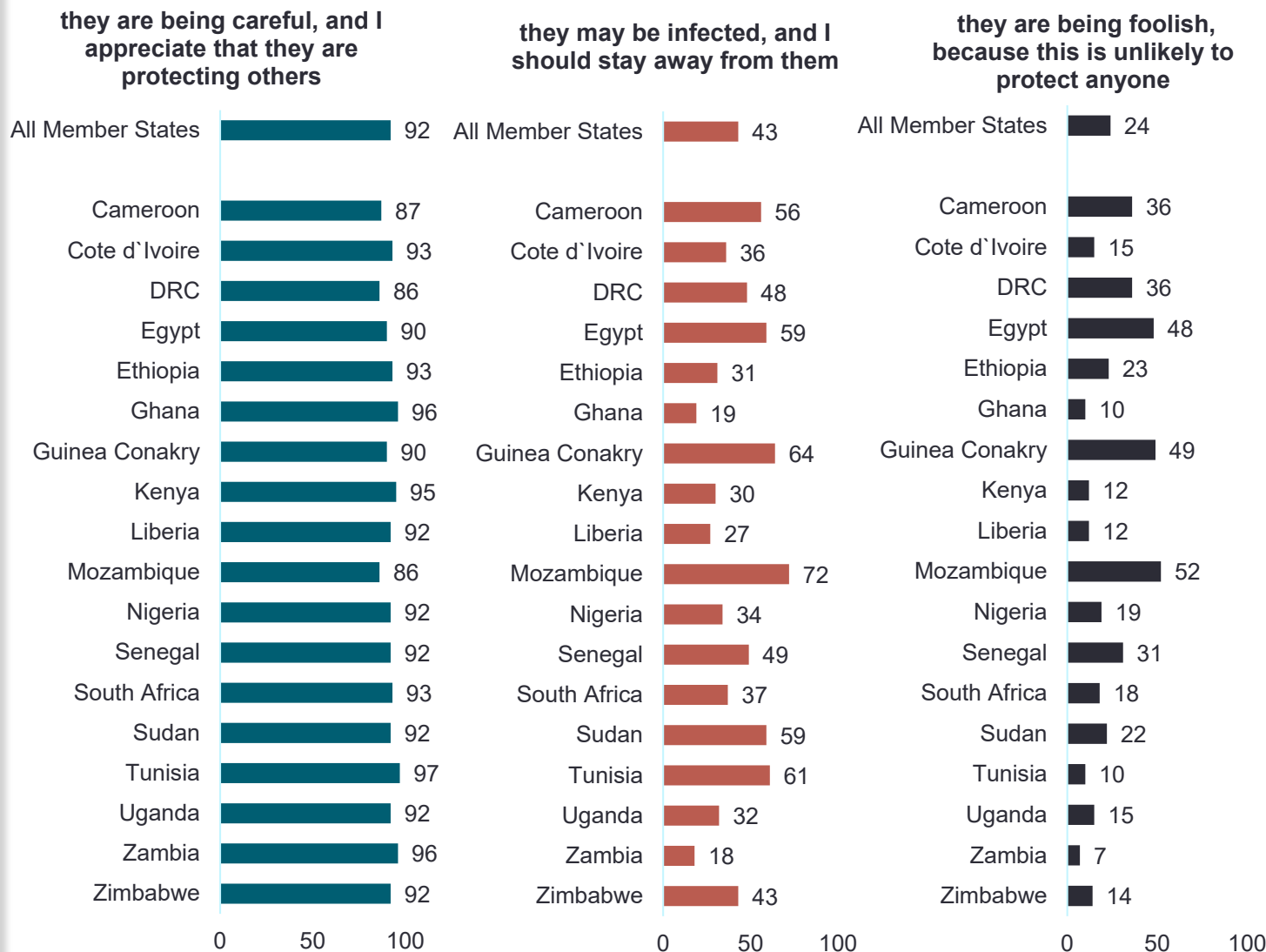
Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?

Face Masks: Perceptions, Use and Attitudes

While most agree that people wearing face masks are being careful, about two in five believe that those wearing a mask may be infected with the virus.

Perhaps due to regulation as much as opinion, nearly everyone polled reported having a face mask ready to wear (large majorities also reported wearing face masks; see previous slide.)

When other people wear face masks near me, I think...



96% have a face mask ready to wear

Adherence:
Wear a Face Mask in Public Around Others
Completely applies: 71%
Mostly applies: 14%

Q4. Do you have a face mask of any kind that is ready for you to wear? Q13g. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: G) Wearing a face mask in public when near others

Q3. I would now like to ask your opinion about face masks, which some people are wearing at the moment. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Showing % agree (Strongly + Somewhat agree)

Impact on Health Care Services

Close to half of respondents have experienced missed or delayed health care services. Incidence is higher among those reporting long standing illness or health problems. Concerns about going out and risk of catching COVID-19 was the most frequently mentioned reason.

One in four respondents report that accessing medication has been much more difficult as a result of the pandemic.



Missed or delayed health care services

% Yes: (among those requiring services)*	
	45
People with longstanding illness or health issues	51
Women	47
Low Income (HHD <100USD per month)	42
High Income (HHD 500+ USD per month)	50
Urban	50
Rural	42

* Base = those requiring services (48% of the sample)



Difficulty accessing medications

% Much More Difficult (among those requiring medications)*	
	28
People with longstanding illness / health issues	34
Women	28
Low Income (HHD <100USD per month)	33
High Income (HHD 500+ USD per month)	25
Urban	27
Rural	28

* Base = those requiring medications (81% of the sample)

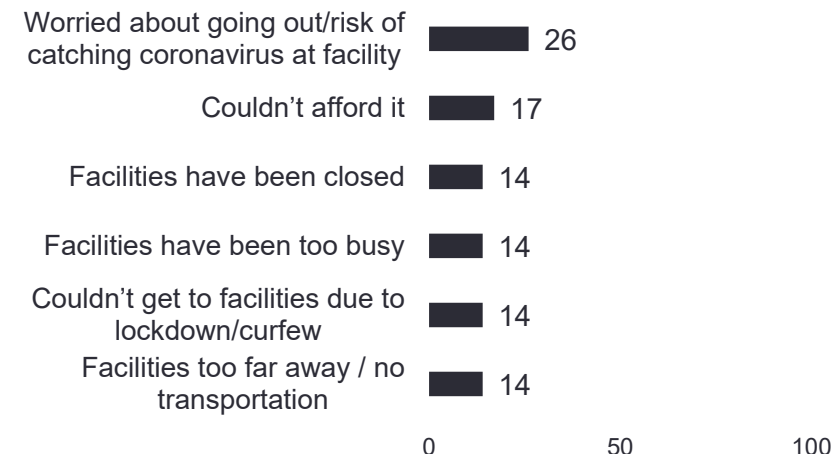
Q21. Have you or any other person in your household delayed, skipped or been unable to complete health care visits since the COVID-19 crisis?

Q24. Has the COVID-19 crisis made it more difficult to obtain medications you need for you or your household or has it had no impact? If you do not need medications, please say so.

Q41. Do you have any longstanding illness or health problem?



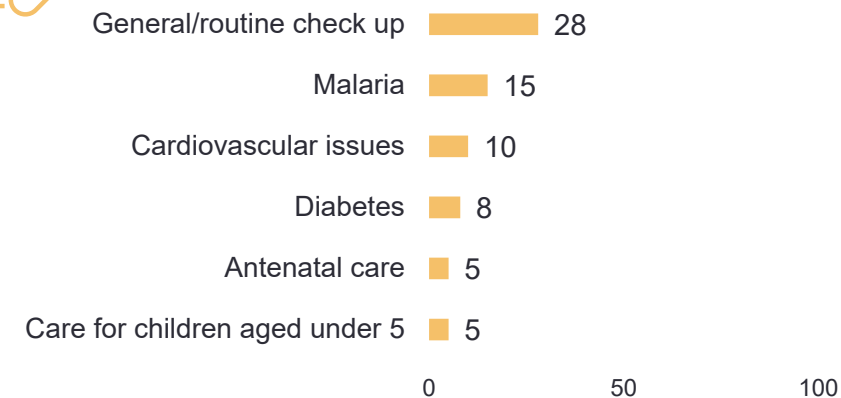
Reason for skipped services



* Base = missed, delayed, skipped or been unable to complete health care visits



Types of services missed or delayed



* Base = missed, delayed, skipped or been unable to complete health care visits

Q22. Why have you or another person in your household delayed, skipped or been unable to complete health care visits since the COVID-19 crisis?

Q23. And do you mind if I ask what those delayed, missed or not completed health care visits were for?

"Responses should be interpreted within the context of a country's prevalence of health issues and the population's typical frequency of accessing specific types of health services."

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Economic and Food Relief Measures

A majority of those polled have experienced barriers to purchasing food due to high prices and/or because their income has declined.

Three in four income earners are reporting lower income than last year. This is particularly pronounced among those in urban centers and those with lower incomes.

Two in five report they are spending more hours on unpaid work.



Barriers and difficulties purchasing food

	% reporting barrier in the past week	Urban	Rural	Low income	High income
Any barrier (yes to ANY of the below):	72	71	73	79	66
Have you been unable to buy the amount of food you usually buy...					
<i>because the price was too high</i>	59	60	59	66	58
<i>because your income has dropped</i>	56	57	56	63	54
<i>because of shortages in the markets you buy from</i>	44	44	43	47	48
<i>had difficulties in going to food markets due to restrictions</i>	38	39	37	41	44
<i>due to most food markets being closed</i>	38	39	37	41	43

Q17. [FOOD BARRIERS]: In the past 7 days, how many days have you or someone in your household experienced any of the following? Have you been unable to buy the amount of food you usually buy...



Impact on income	74
% Reporting Income is Smaller than last year	
Women	74
Men	73
Low Income (HHD <100USD per month)	78
High Income (HHD 500+ USD per month)	59
Urban	83
Rural	61

Q18. How does the amount of money you made in the past 7 days compare to the amount you made this time last year? Is it... Bigger, Smaller, Stayed the Same, Don't make any, Don't know. Results rebased to those who make income.



Impact on unpaid work	38
% Reporting More Hours on Unpaid Work	
Women	39
Men	36
Low Income (HHD <100USD per month)	44
High Income (HHD 500+ USD per month)	35
Urban	36
Rural	39

Q19. Since the crisis began, have you had a change in your hours spent on unpaid work, such as childcare, care of the elderly and housework? More hours, less hours, no change in hours, don't know.

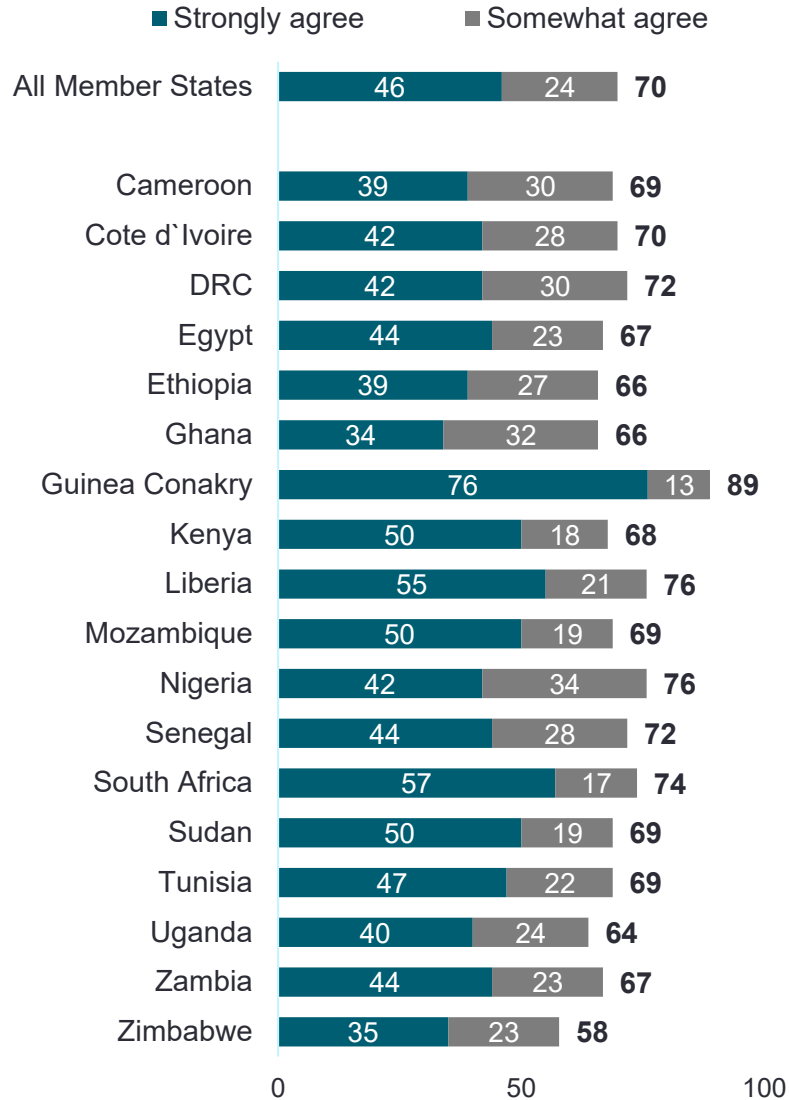
Concerns about Resuming Normal Activities

There is an anxiety that permeates across all countries about resuming normal activities, with Guinea recording the highest levels of anxiety and Zimbabwe relatively lower.

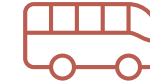
Despite this anxiety, there is a majority who would feel comfortable taking public transportation if it wasn't too busy.



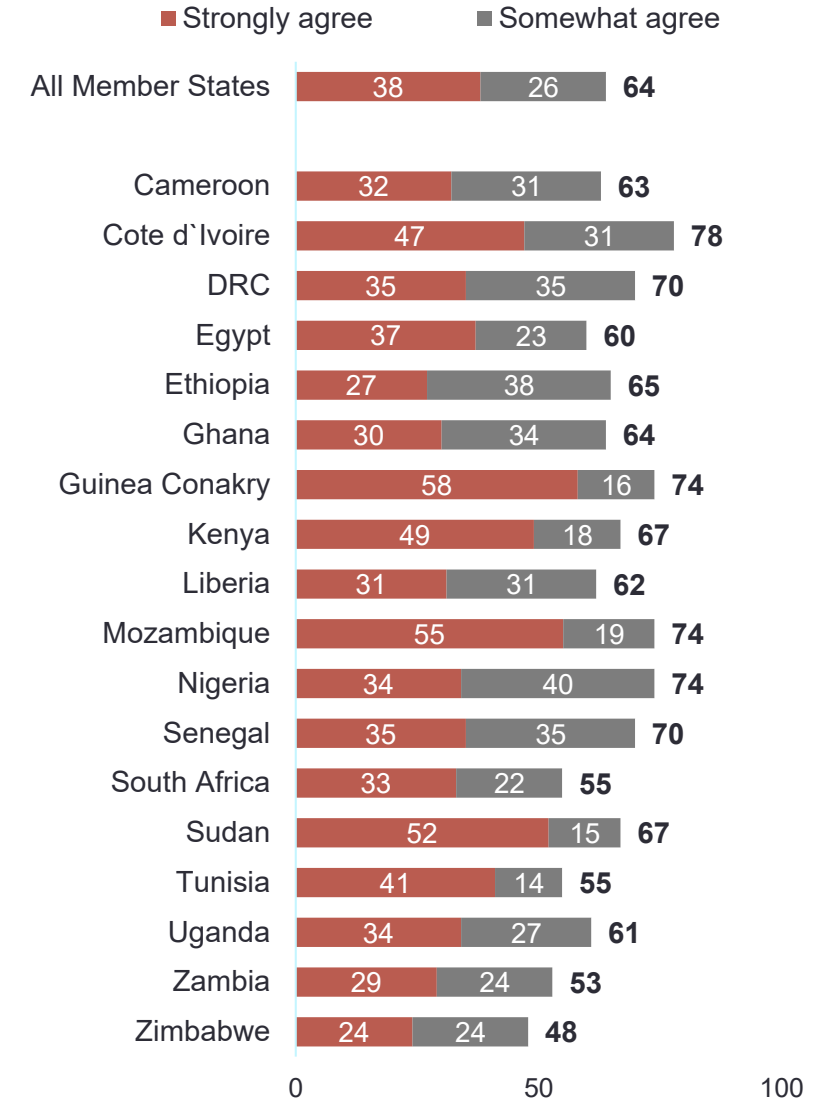
Thinking about resuming normal activities after the lockdown makes me feel very anxious



Q15. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?



I would feel comfortable taking public transportation such as local buses or trains if it was not too busy



Q15. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?

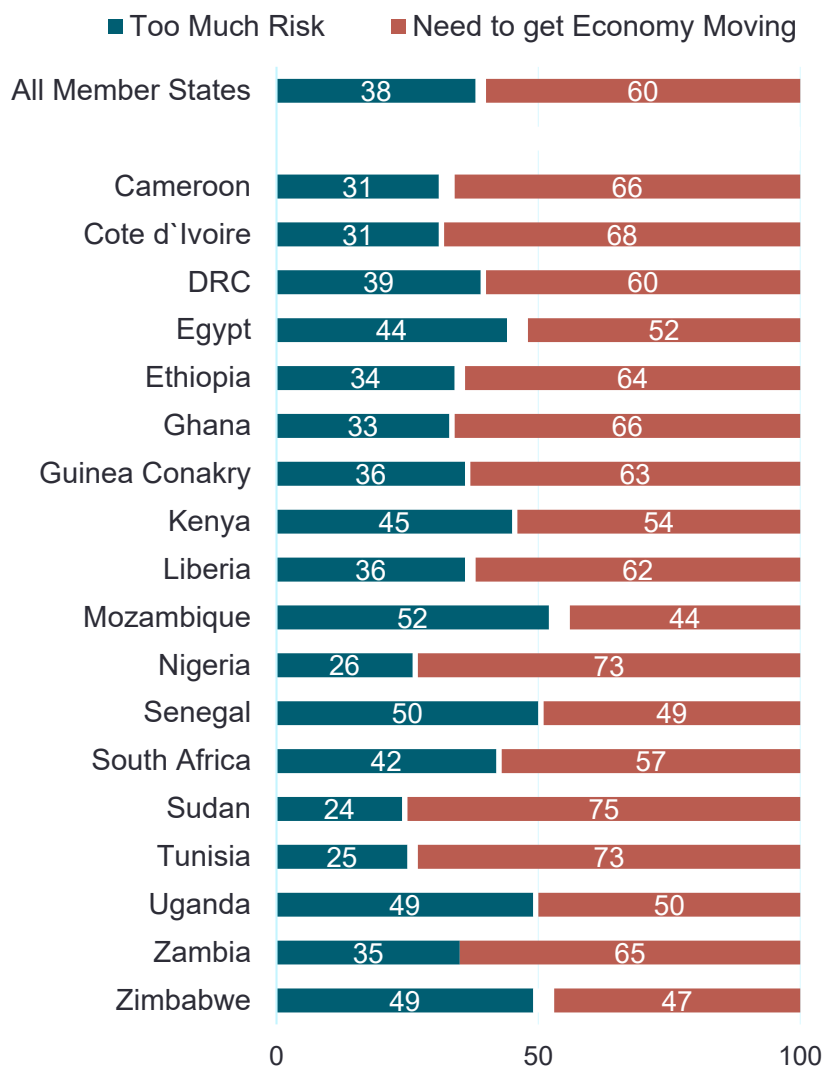
Expectations about COVID-19

In the trade-off between getting the economy moving and too much risk in loosening restrictions, the balance is in favor of getting the economy moving. However, several countries are divided on this measure.

Regardless, almost half agree it will be at least six months before the coronavirus is contained.



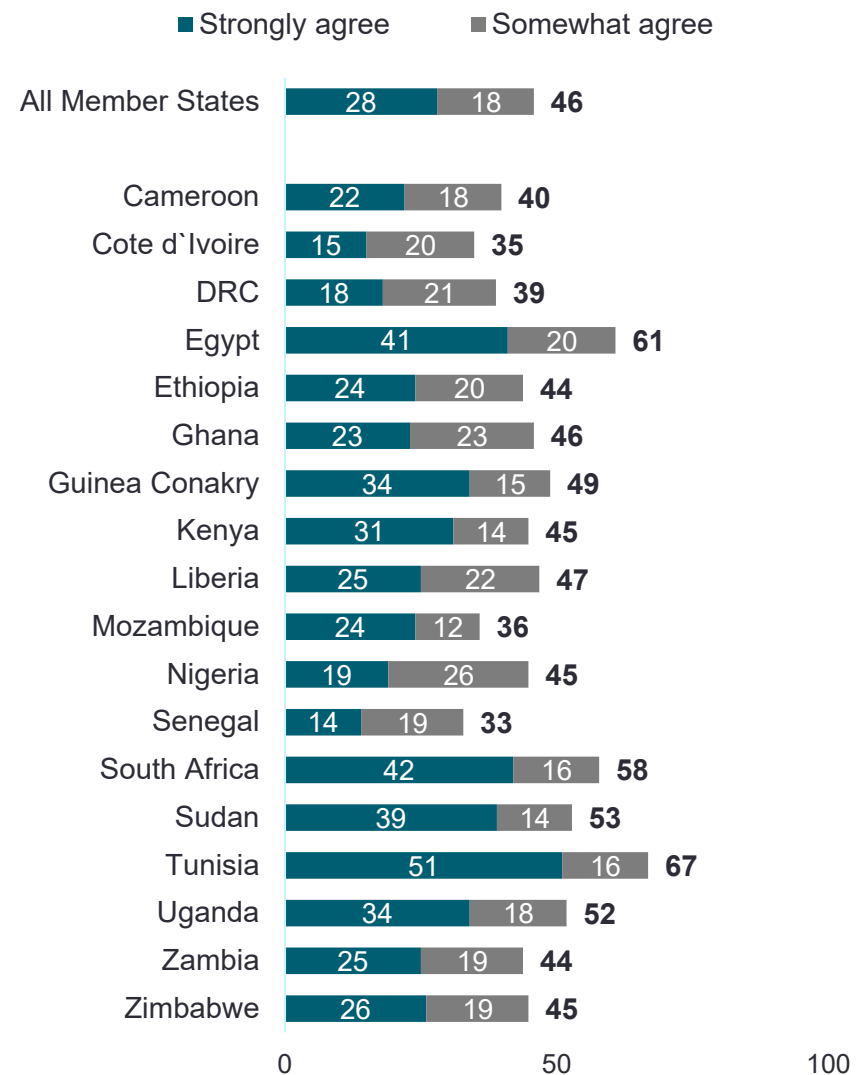
Trade off on loosening restrictions: “too risky to loosen restrictions” vs. “there is a low risk and need to get economy moving”



Q16. Some people say that loosening restrictions now puts too many people at risk of contracting COVID-19 and we need to wait at least a few more weeks. Other people say that the health risk is minimal if people follow social distancing rules and we need to get the economy moving again. Which is closer to your point of view?



It will be at least six months before COVID-19 is contained



Q15. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?

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Partnership for Evidence-Based
Response to COVID-19

Additional Methodology Details

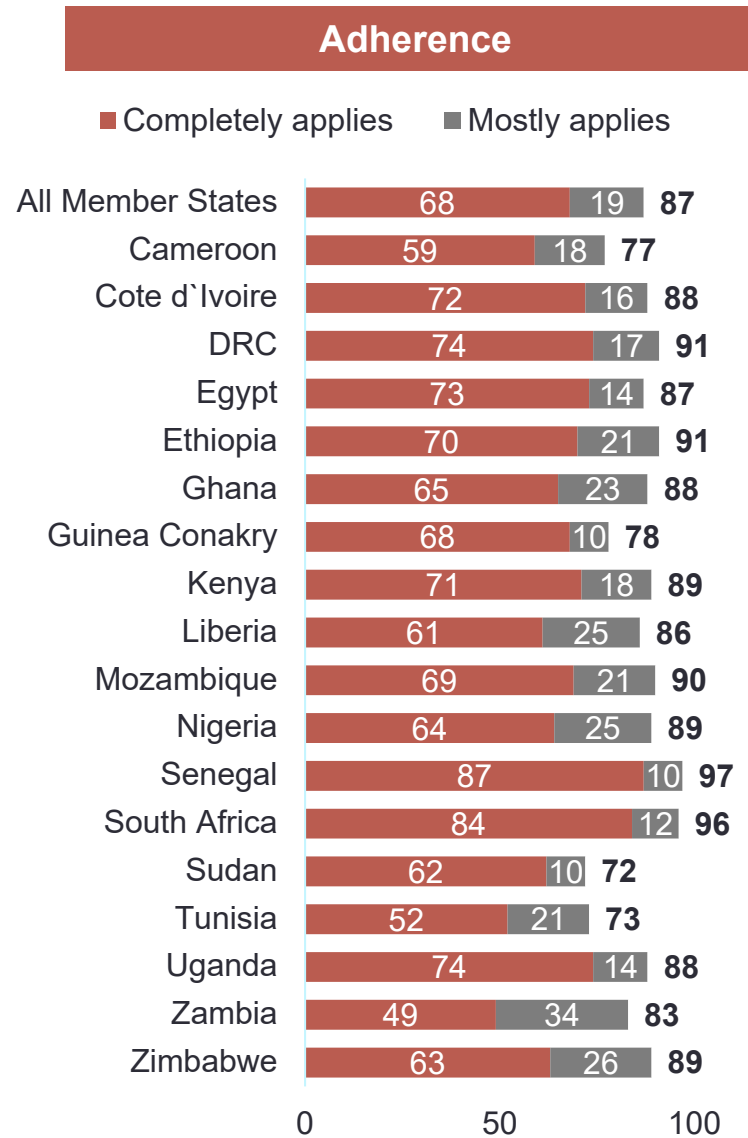
- The public opinion polling was conducted using a telephone interviewing methodology.
- The questionnaire was developed by Resolve to Save Lives, Ipsos and members of the PERC consortium.
- The polling program was approved by local review boards and all respondents gave explicit permission to participate in the research.
- Countries were selected for inclusion based on several factors including feasibility for interviewing and regional representation.
- Note that where referenced, income categories should be interpreted as indicative as sample sizes vary and income reporting can be subject to bias.
- The weighted and unweighted sample sizes for the countries in this report are as follows:

All countries	Cameroon	DRC	Egypt	Tunisia	Ethiopia	Kenya	Sudan	Uganda
Country Code	CM	CD	EG	TN	ET	KE	SD	UG
AU Region	Central		Northern		Eastern			
24041	1449	1351	1206	1218	1571	1224	1438	1286
21600	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200

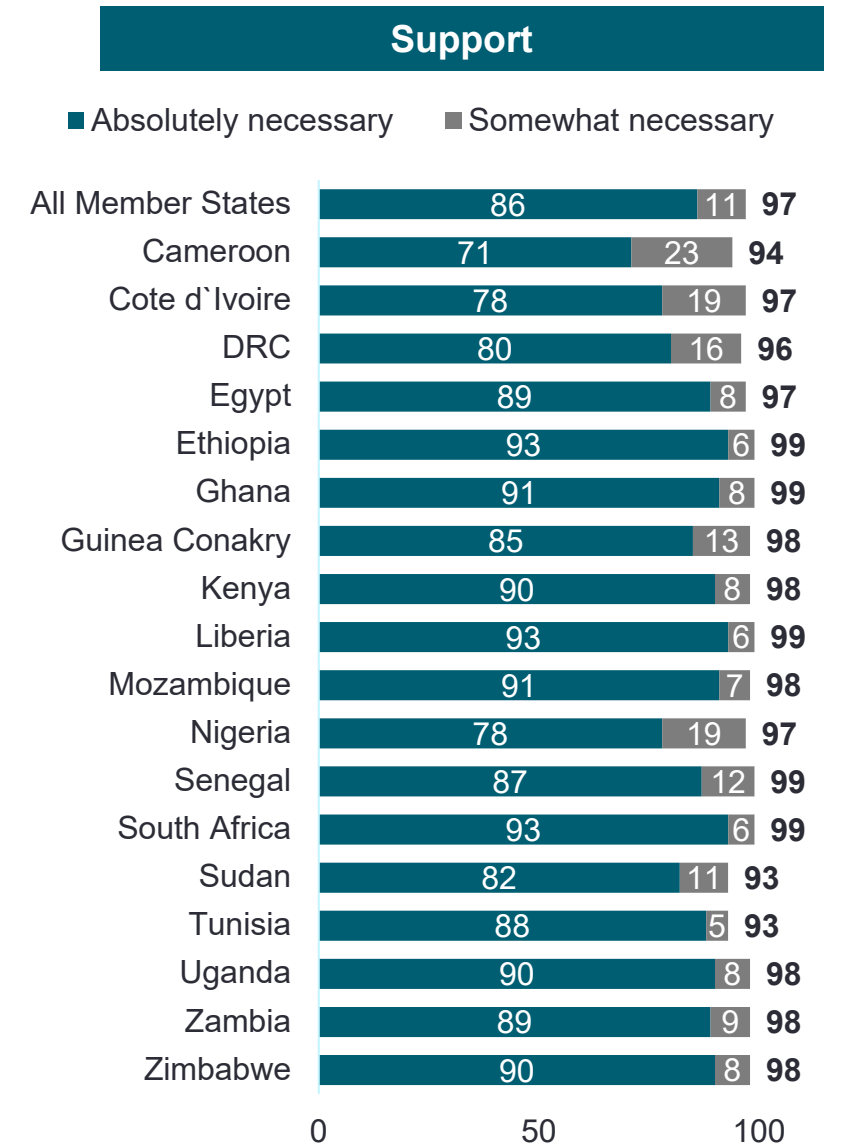
All countries	Cote d'Ivoire	Ghana	Guinea Conakry	Liberia	Nigeria	Senegal	Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Country Code	CI	GH	GN	LR	NG	SN	MZ	ZA	ZM	ZW
AU Region	Western					Southern				
24041	1416	1338	1283	1366	1304	1259	1314	1395	1290	1333
21600	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200

PERSONAL Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Washing my hands many times per day



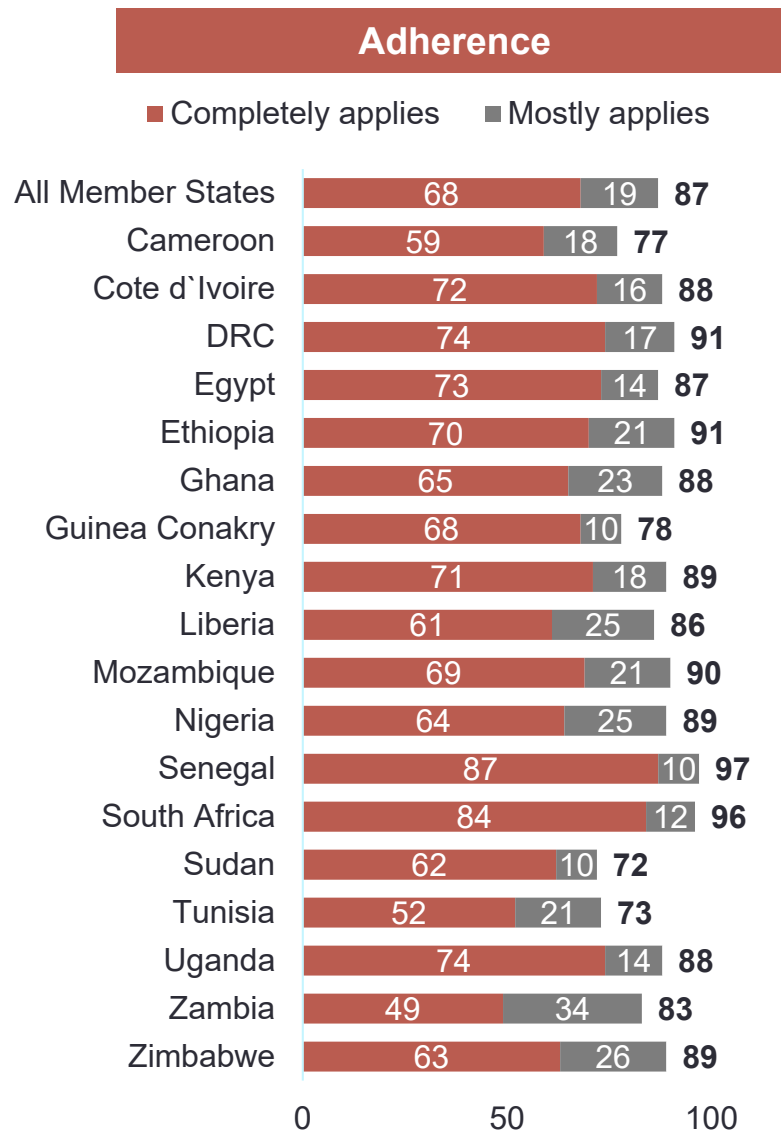
Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Washing my hands with soap or using hand sanitizer many times per day



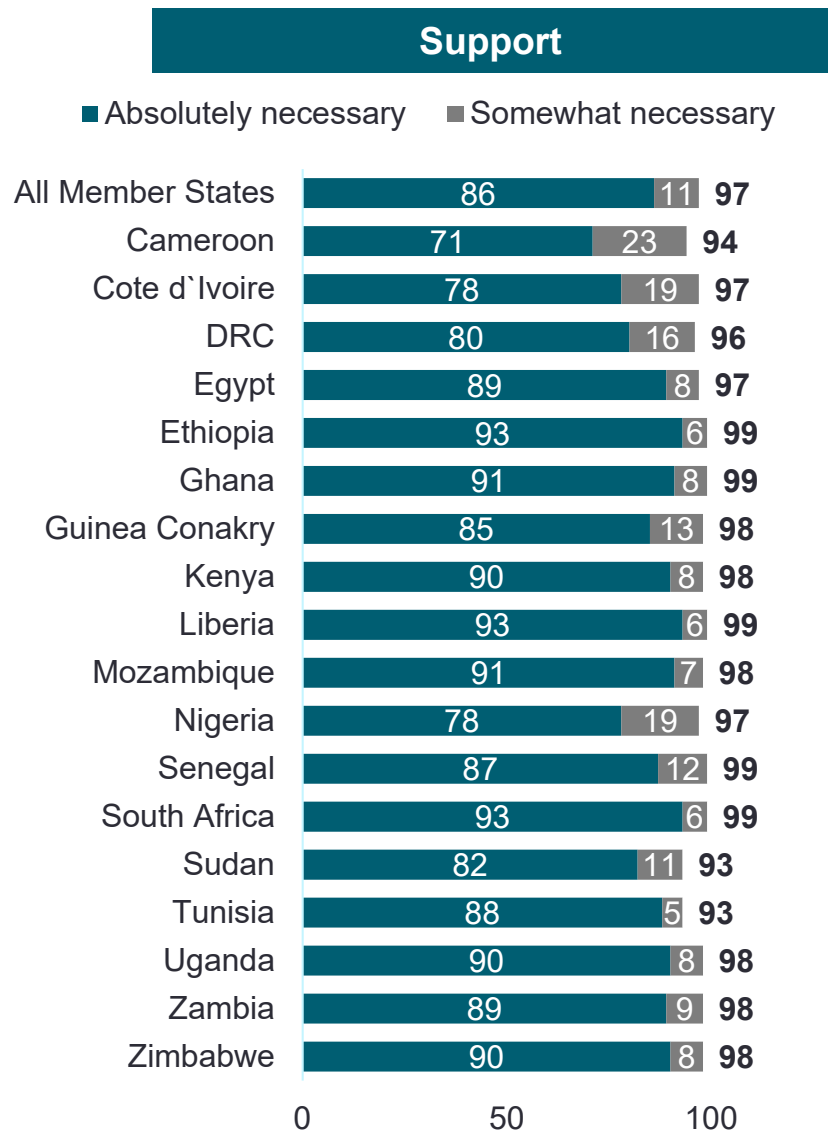
Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: ...wash their hands with soap or use hand sanitizer more often than they used to

PERSONAL Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Avoiding handshakes and physical greetings



Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Avoiding handshakes and physical greetings

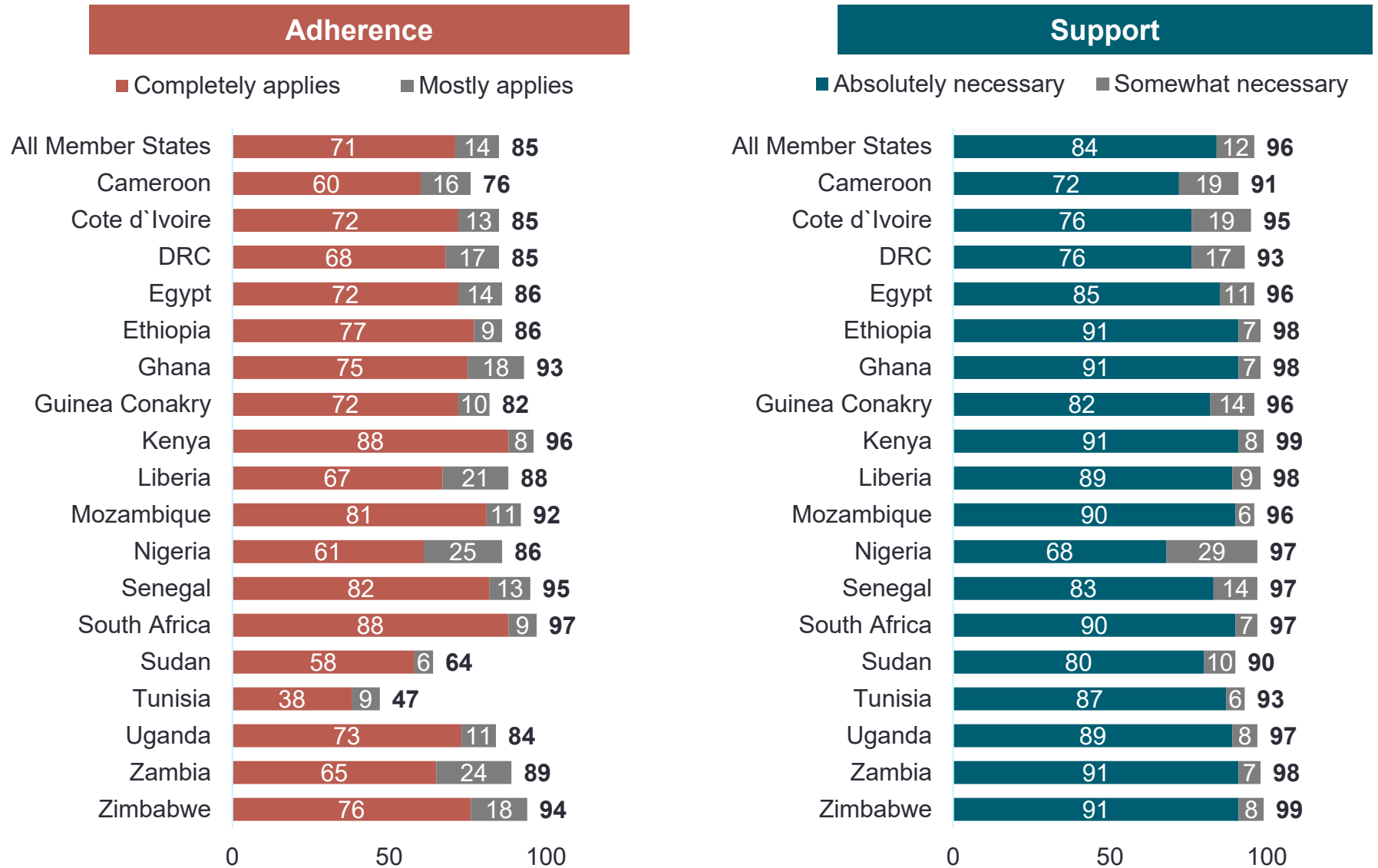


Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: Avoiding handshakes and physical greetings

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PERSONAL Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Wearing a face mask in public when near others

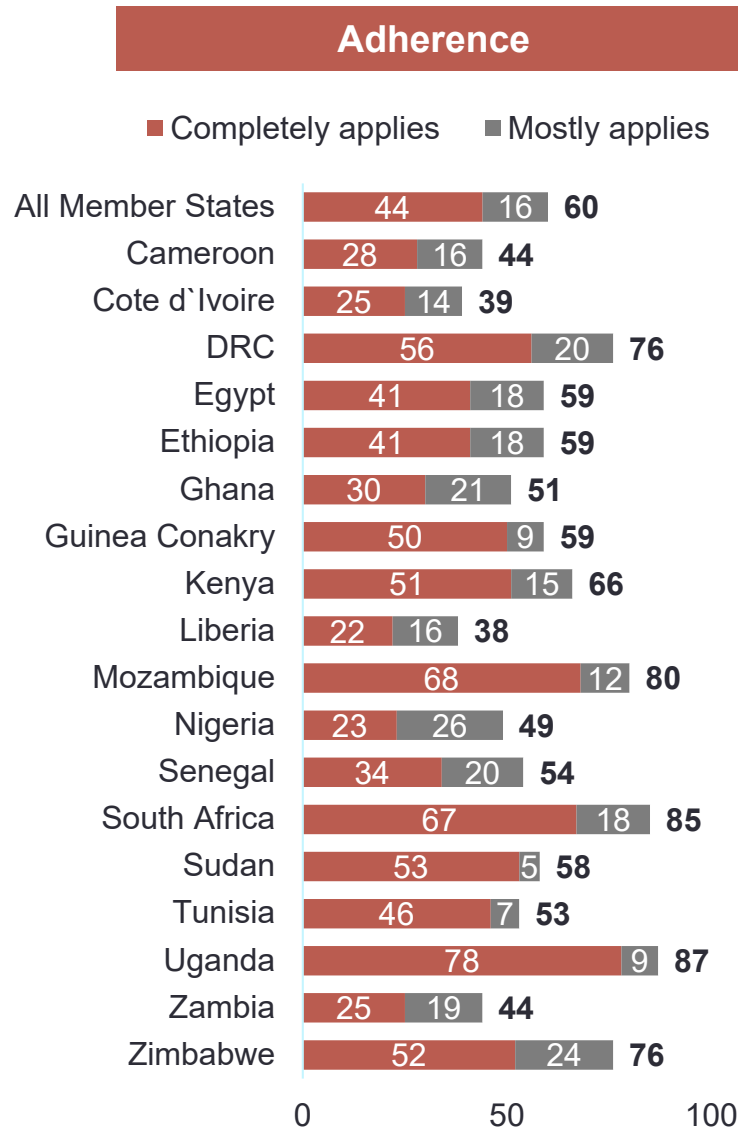


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Wearing a face mask in public when near others

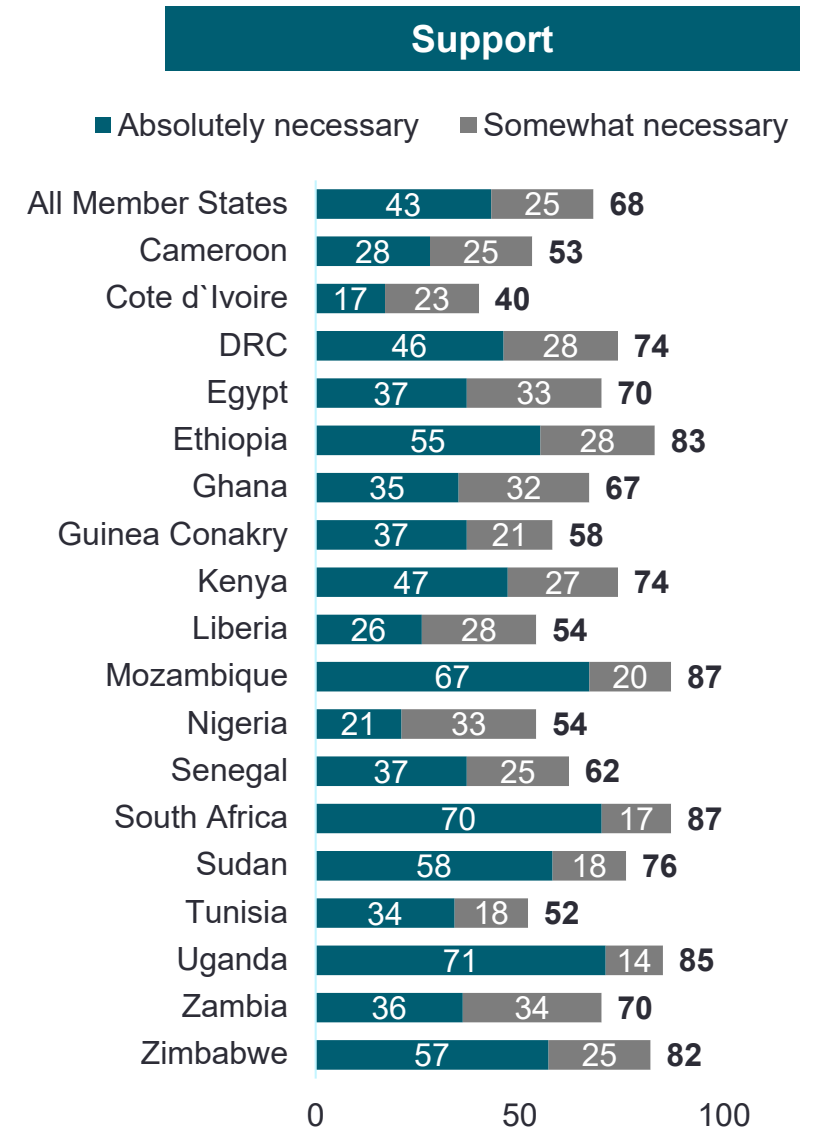
Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: Wearing a face mask in public

PUBLIC GATHERING Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Avoiding the church/mosque



Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Avoiding the church/mosque



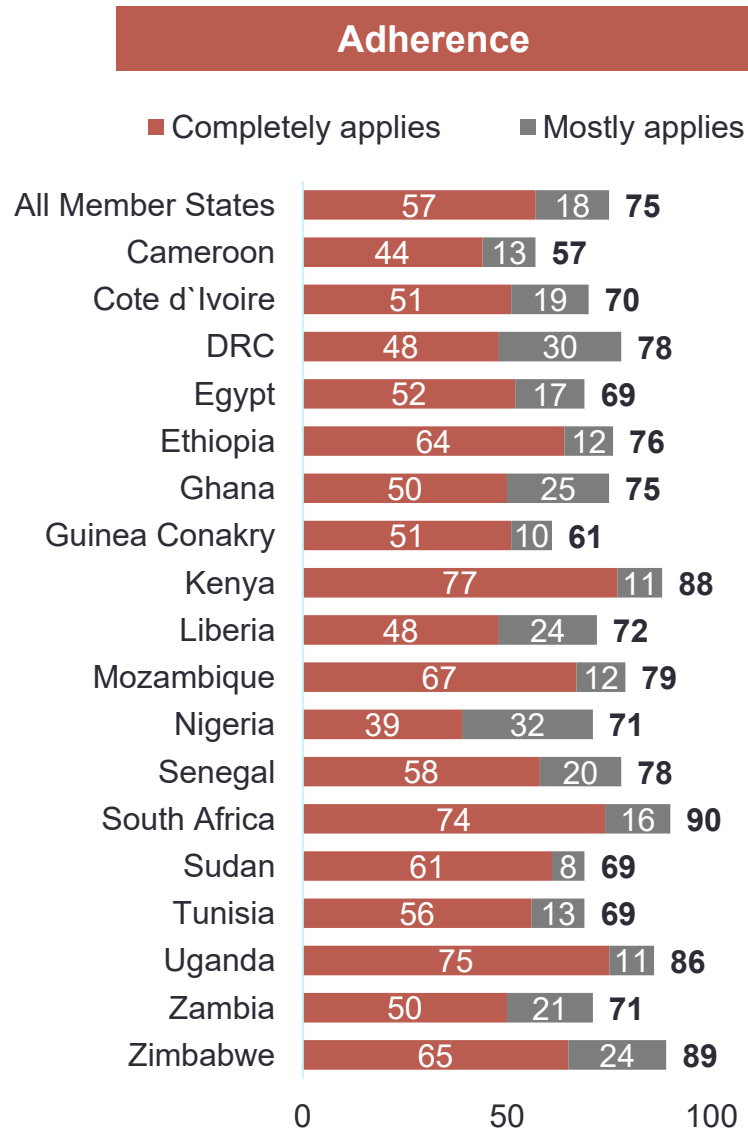
Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: Avoiding the church/mosque

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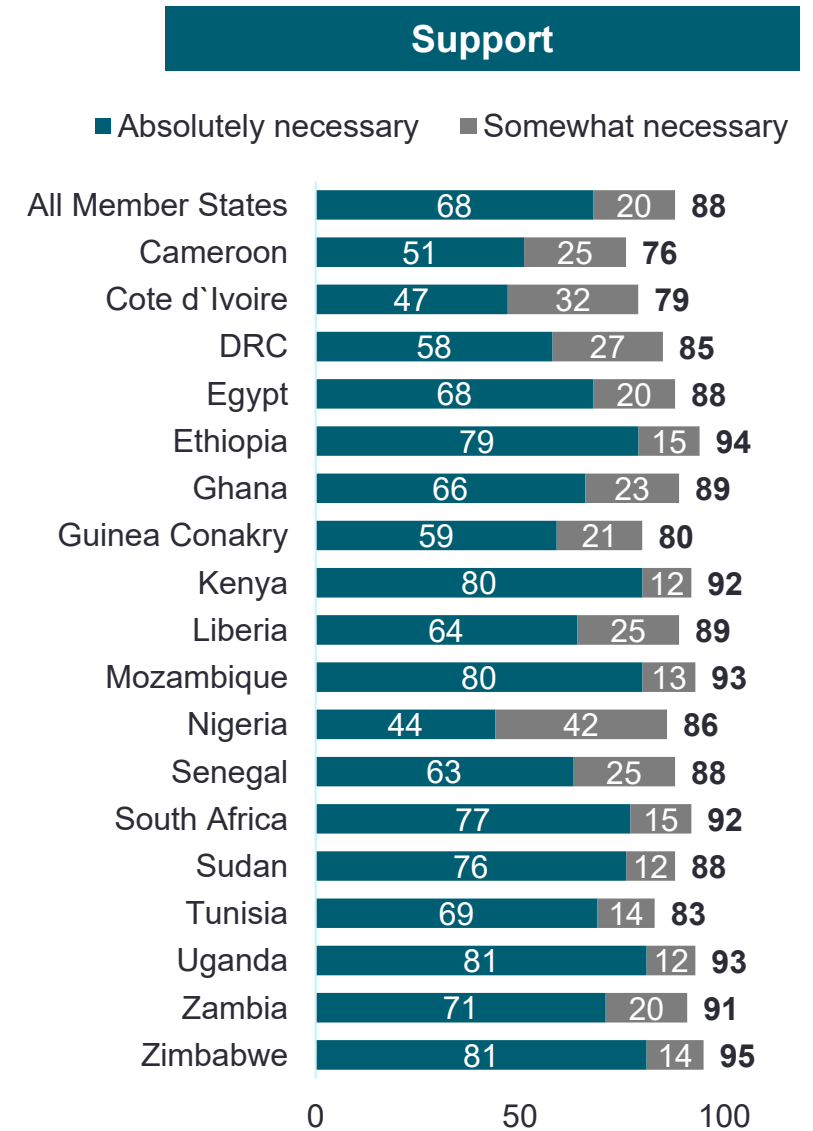
PUBLIC GATHERING

Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Avoiding public gatherings and places of entertainment



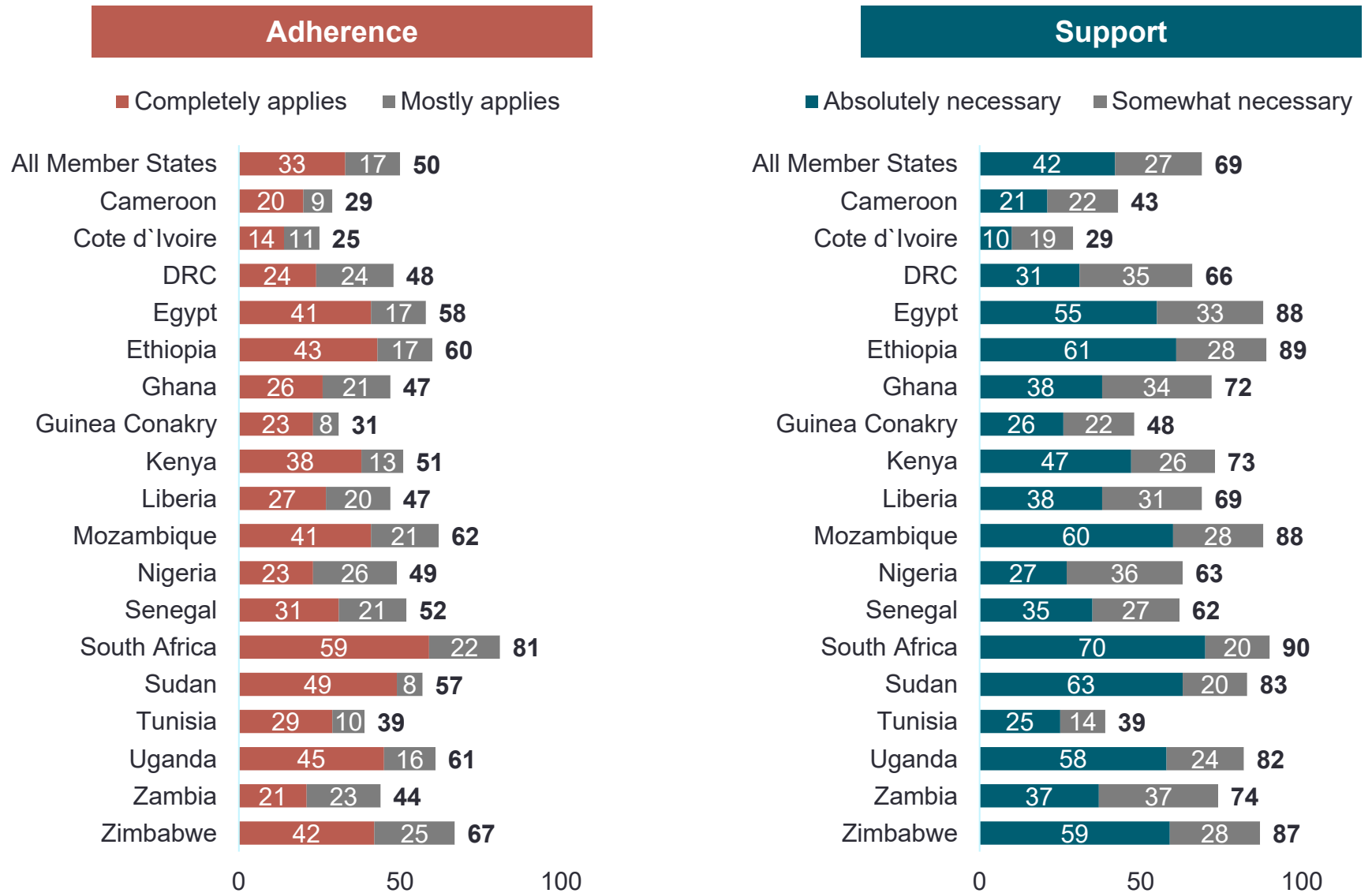
Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Avoiding public gatherings and places of entertainment



Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: Avoiding public gatherings and places of entertainment

MOBILITY Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities

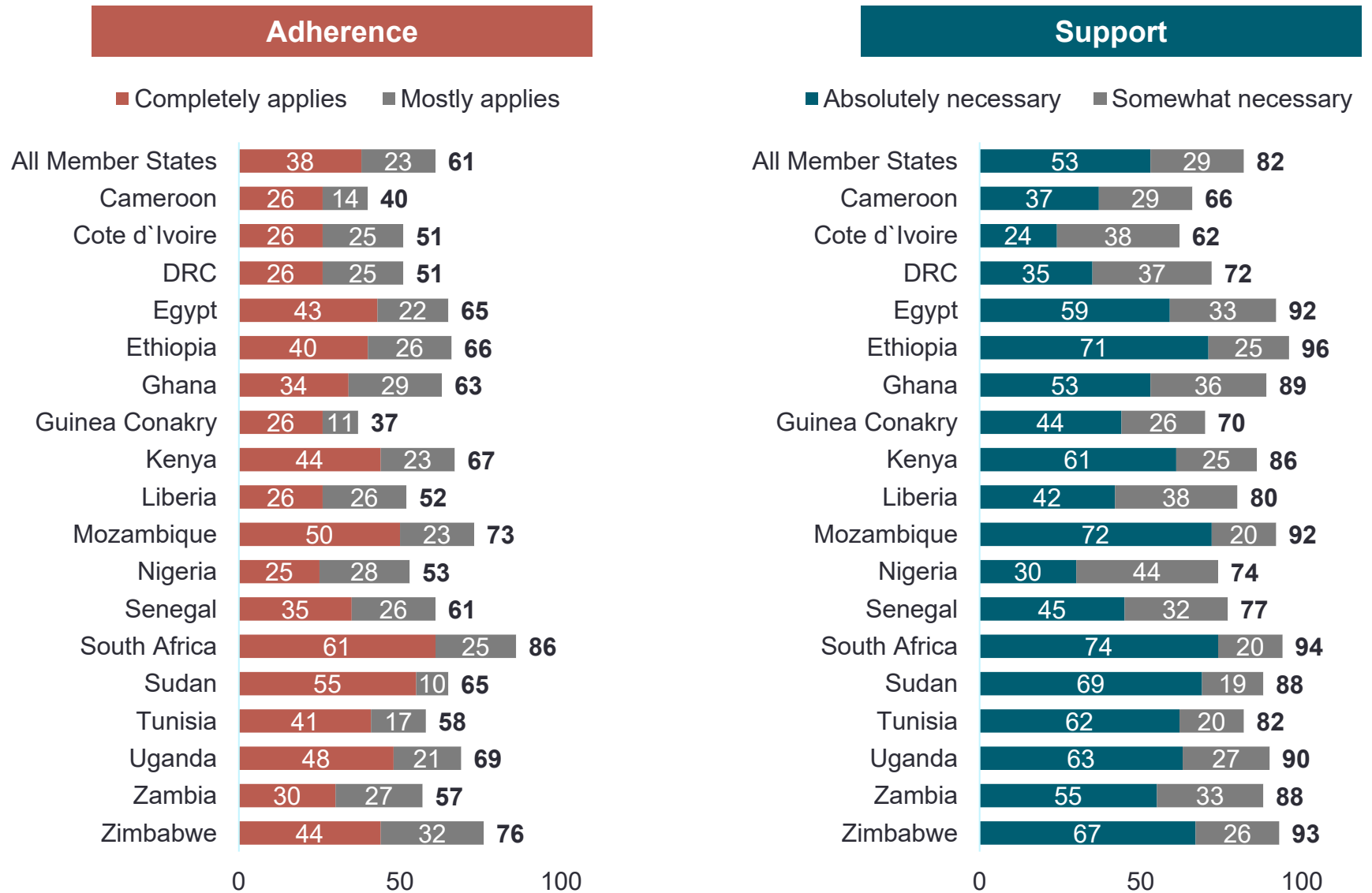


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities

MOBILITY Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Reducing the number of times I go to the market or grocery store



Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Reducing the number of times I go to the market or grocery store

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in [COUNTRY]?: Reducing the number of times I go to the market or grocery store