

Lift travel ban to Ebola states – AU

ELEVEN top resource-sector executives have urged governments to lift travel bans on Ebola-hit countries, saying they “aggravate” the humanitarian crisis.

And AU members said yesterday travel bans imposed to stem Ebola should be lifted to ensure the economic impact of the restrictions did not add to the continent’s woes.

“It was agreed that as African member states we should urge all member states to lift all travel bans, so that people can move between countries, and to trade, and to open up the economic activities,” AU commission chief Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said.

But it was also stressed that while the travel ban should be lifted, there should be proper screening mechanisms put in place, both in the countries from which citizens would depart and at the ports of entry whether land, sea or air.

The chief executives of firms operating in west Africa – including ArcelorMittal’s Lakshmi Mittal and Randgold’s Mark Bristow – praised the international response to the epidemic, but said some measures were doing more harm than good.

“There is a risk the measures being taken to restrict travel to the countries most impacted by the virus will aggravate the growing humanitarian crisis,” they said.

Airlines have restricted travel to Ebola-afflicted countries. – Sapa-AFP