

ADNA Statement on Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis in Africa
April 7, 2020

The Advocacy Network for Africa (ADNA) is a non-partisan network of over 200 US-based organizations and scholars with programmatic focus on Africa /U. S-Africa policy.

- Cognizant of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the global community and that Africa faces unique challenges given her very limited resources, inadequate health systems and medical personnel, acute shortages of crucial essential services like reliable water and power sourcing as well as lack of access to communication in rural areas, in massive and crowded informal settlements of displaced peoples and in refugee camps;
- Painfully aware of the spiraling numbers of infections with over 10,000 confirmed cases across the continent by April 7, 2020, and possibly millions undetected as a result of the lack of adequate testing kits and laboratories;
- Recognizing that the pandemic reaffirms the African reality of Ubuntu: “*I am because we are*” and thus only as a human family can we overcome this challenge noting that countries around the world are ill-prepared as they scramble to contain the pandemic with shortages of scarce resources endangering lives and deepening the crisis;
- Considering emergency appeals issued by the African Union and the United Nations to enhance their efforts to strengthen Africa’s response to the pandemic;
- Acknowledging the supplemental bills recently passed by the US Congress that allocate initial funds to bolster Africa’s response to COVID-19,
- Emphasizing that extensive support is needed to contain the corona virus through strengthening of public health infrastructure and mitigating the economic harm consequent due to the pandemic;
- Underlining that no country can alone stop the spread of the corona virus and that collective action is the only viable solution;

ADNA, in the spirit of *Ubuntu*, and global solidarity, urges the U.S. Congress and the Trump Administration to:

1. ***Provide funds for the COVID19 response in Africa.*** Massively increase the current \$100 million pledge by Congress to \$300 million in order to boost the Africa COVID-19 capabilities of the African Union, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and UNICEF. African governments are responding with different forms of fiscal stimulus but there is a shortfall of 100 Billion dollars. Dedicated funds can provide a unified and coordinated response to the needs of all African countries through programs that:

- Expedite the delivery of medical support, including 1) Personal Protective Equipment, 2) test kits and 3) ventilators; 4) adequate wages for medical professionals and other essential workers on the front line of this pandemic; and 5) air-bridges or hubs across Africa to ensure the delivery of essential products and personnel.

- Support trusted civil society organizations to provide essential services to vulnerable populations with particular attention to rural areas, camps for refugees and internally displaced persons and informal settlements, beyond the reach of existing services.

2. Join Pope Francis' call for a "Global Jubilee" for African debt forgiveness. Support debt relief measures for African countries amid the COVID-19 crisis so that they can prioritize spending on life-saving measures instead of debt repayments.

3. Collaborate in resource mobilization efforts to build a sustainable global health infrastructure capable of managing the COVID-19 and future pandemics in Africa. Consider a Global Health "Marshall Plan" that asserts a U.S. commitment to building such a sustainable health infrastructure.

4. Recognize the connection of climate change and pandemics. Both are affecting the health and well-being of people and the planet. Invest in early warning systems and adaptation efforts to address disease challenges posed by a warming planet as part of a bold climate strategy. Fund efforts to spur renewable energy, particularly for vulnerable last-mile communities in Africa and around the world.

5. Ensure U.S. foreign assistance is grounded in human rights-based approaches that uphold the highest standards of accountability, transparency and timely information disclosure and that the United States call on recipient institutions and governments also adhere to these standards.

6. End the deportations and the use of immigration detention centers in the United States and release non-violent people who are incarcerated in jails, prisons and detention centers to slow the spread of the virus.

7. Support the UN Secretary General's call for an immediate global ceasefire, so people in war torn regions can access life-saving aid to fight the coronavirus.

COVID-19 is a good indication for how interlinked we all are. Responding to the current crisis and investing in initiatives to prevent and mitigate future pandemics will not only be in Africa's interest but will benefit the entire global community, including the United States.

We look forward to working with you to implement these recommendations and anticipate seeing the United States act in a manner that is in keeping with the American people's long-standing commitment to justice, human rights, health, and well-being.

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