



## African Union and African private sector launch COVID-19 Response Fund

**Leveraging African solidarity, the initiative aims to implement a pan-African self-reliance strategy to halt COVID-19 pandemic**

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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Ahead of an expected surge in cases of COVID-19 in Africa, the African Union and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) have launched a public-private partnership with the AfroChampions Initiative, known as the Africa COVID-19 Response Fund. The partnership aims to raise an initial US\$ 150 million for immediate needs to prevent transmission and up to US\$ 400 million to support sustainable medical response to the COVID-19 pandemic by pooling the resources required for the procurement of medical supplies and commodities; supporting the deployment of rapid responders across the continent as well as providing socio-economic support to the most vulnerable populations in Africa.

H.E Cyril Ramaphosa, Chairperson of the African Union and President of the Republic of South Africa commended the effort and welcomed the creation of the joint AU-Africa CDC-AfroChampions partnership noting that *"while we continue to welcome expertise and feedback from regions already engaged in the fight against the coronavirus, we must also establish an autonomous strike force. Other regions in the world are already paying a heavy tribute to Covid 19 and their support will be limited. Therefore African money and African expertise must be mobilized"*.

The Africa COVID-19 Response Fund is a financial instrument to mobilise and manage funds from the private sector in Africa, and other well-wishers with the support of several African banks. The Fund will operate under the supervision of the African Union through its public health institution Africa CDC, which will determine priority interventions and actions.

Priority actions will include the purchase and distribution of key equipment for diagnosis, treatment and protection of caregivers, as well as implementing a broad awareness campaign on prevention among African populations.

In addition to medical response, part of the funds raised will be allocated for supporting the most fragile communities, in the least developed African countries, whose socio-economic activities have been impacted significantly by measures taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

*"There is a race against time to prepare and protect our communities. Africa must fight this as one and no country on our continent should be left behind. We must coordinate efforts of Member States, African Union agencies, World Health Organization, and other partners to ensure synergy and minimise duplication. We must also promote evidence-based public health practice for surveillance,*

*prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and control of COVID-19,"* said Dr John Nkengasong, Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

An advisory board consisting of public and private sector representatives has been established to oversee management of the Fund, together with an experts' panel, both composed of committed parties with experience in fund-raising and public sensitization. *"The time has come for Africa to deploy forward-looking measures. We must start from now to strengthen our capacities in diagnostic tests, drug manufacturing and health infrastructure. Not only can the African private sector contribute to this fund, it should also consider other actions like prevention campaigns in companies, redeployment of production lines towards equipment and products needed against the pandemic, optimisation of transport and connectivity infrastructure to support health emergencies,"* said Paulo Gomes, Vice Chair of the AfroChampions Initiative and former Executive Director at the World Bank, who has joined the advisory board.

Several African countries have already provided seed funding to the Fund including South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Kenya and Mali. Private sector partners that have already signed up for this initiative include: Africa Health Business, Global Infectious Disease Services, SpeakUpAfrica or Talamus Health Incorporated; African banks such as Ecobank, Standard Bank and Equity Bank; private equity funds such as RH managers; philanthropic organisations like the Africa Public Health Foundation; private leaders from the UNDP African Influencers for Development Group.

"To every person and every organization that is keen to be involved, please be certain that there is a role for you - and join this movement quickly in order to multiply its impact," said H.E. President, Cyril Ramaphosa.

Donations to **The African Union COVID-19 Response Fund** can be made to

**Account Name: AU Support Against COVID-19**

**Bank name: ECOBANK Kenya Ltd**

**Bank Code: 043**

**Bank branch: Westlands**

**Branch Code: P13**

**Account Number: 6640002533**

**Account Currency: US Dollar**

**Swift code: ECOCKENA**

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## NOTE TO EDITORS

### **Response strategy and AU-Africa-CDC-AfroChampions Platform - Project highlights**

COVID-19 will likely cause widespread illness and death in Africa. Since 2003 and the first SARS epidemic, the volume, velocity, and variety of travel between the rest of the world and Africa has increased dramatically, which will result in initial and continuous introductions of infected persons from areas with COVID-19 transmission. Africa's baseline vulnerability is also high, given its relatively fragile health systems, concurrent epidemics of vaccine-preventable and other infectious diseases, inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure, population mobility, and susceptibility for social and political unrest during times of crisis.

In Africa, the primary strategy for COVID-19 will be to limit transmission and minimize harm. Given that transmission throughout the continent is inevitable, delaying and diminishing the peak of outbreaks can help health systems better manage the surge of patients and communities better adapt to the disruption of social, cultural, and economic activities.

The response strategy aims to maximise coordination between all stakeholders to achieve impact. AU Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention is at the forefront to implement the strategy with two major operational units:

- Africa Task Force for Coronavirus (AFTCOR),
- Africa CDC's Incident Management System (IMS). The IMS is supported by the African Volunteer Health Corps (AVoHC), a continental resource for surge staffing during public health emergencies.

In practice, a thorough mapping will be developed to identify needs by country, for public and private hospitals. Grouped orders will then be placed, first with African manufacturers to optimize transportation and delivery.

The financial arm of this response is a dedicated fund, whose purpose is to attract, manage and disburse supplemental resources through the Africa CDC of the African Union. The Africa CDC Fund is a public-private partnership that will make a sustainable and significant contribution to the COVID-19 response efforts in Africa. The fund should operate according to the following principles

- The Africa CDC Fund is a financial instrument, not an implementing entity.
- The Africa CDC Fund will invest new resources in the COVID-19 response efforts based on African Union guidance and country-led responses to outbreaks and epidemics.
- The Africa CDC Fund will establish a simplified, rapid, innovative process with efficient and effective disbursement mechanisms, minimizing transaction costs and operating in a transparent and accountable manner based on clearly defined responsibilities.

Fund-raising target is based on initial estimates from Africa CDC and set to \$ 400 million to be divided as follows:

- Preventing transmission - \$ 150 Million
- Preventing deaths - \$ 170 Million
- Preventing social harm and cross cutting measures (countermeasures, prevention campaign and supply chain management) - \$ 30 Million
- Economic support to vulnerable populations - \$ 50 Million

#### ***About the Africa CDC***

Africa CDC is a specialised technical institution of the African Union which supports Member States in their efforts to strengthen health systems and improve surveillance, emergency response, prevention and control of diseases. For more information, visit, <https://africacdc.org/>

#### ***About AfroChampions***

The AfroChampions Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to galvanize African resources and institutions to drive further Africa's economic integration. The Initiative supports the emergence and success of African corporate champions, which have a critical role in integrating African markets and accelerating the transformation of the continent. For more information, visit <http://afrochampions.com/about/who-we-are/>