

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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African Union Dedicates Friday 22 May 2020, the Continental Prayer Day on Covid-19 pandemic

Ahead of the Africa Day to be commemorated on 25 May 2020, the African Union Commission (AUC) through its Directorate of Citizens and Diaspora Organizations (CIDO) in collaboration with the African Union's Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF) have dedicated Friday 22 May 2020 as a continental day of prayer.

Recognizing that the Covid-19 is spreading rapidly around the world and is now declared a pandemic, noticing with deep concern that the pandemic amplifies human suffering and economic distress and is an existential threat to humanity, as global deaths increases on a daily basis, knowing that we all face COVID-19 globally as a human family, without regard for regional and national borders, nor any discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, race, gender, age, politics and social status, the AU Commission has called on citizens from all AU Member States to meditate spiritually and pray within their different religious denominations, in view to build strong spiritual and moral resistance to counter the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Continental Prayer Day is aimed to rally African citizens, governments and non-state actors to intensify collaborative action towards curtailing the spread of COVID-19 and mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the disease, while strengthening the morals of the population to deal with the sanitary challenges and health haphazard caused by the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak early this year.

The pandemic has affected all Africans regardless of regional and national borders, age, creed, political and social status. As such, it is necessary that believers coordinate efforts to engage in this chain of prayers for the protection of all Africans within the continent and in the Diaspora, during this critical period of uncertainty, particularly those at the frontlines including the medical practitioners, among others.

According to a release by the *African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF)* the *Africa Prayer Day* is emphasizing on the need to pray to the Creator to grant His mercy and to show us how to face the challenges posed by the impact of the Covid-19.

“We pray for those who suffer from the virus and plead to the Creator for quick recovery of the affected and those who are bedridden. We pray for all those who lost their precious life due to the virus. We pray for the medical professionals, caregivers, the cleaners, the essential services staff as well as the researchers who are working tirelessly to save lives. We pray for many of the women who are not safe while in lockdown, and request that measures be put in place to protect and support women facing the increasing risk of domestic violence. We pray together as citizens of the world in the fight against the spread of Covid-19 and for its quick end and for the discovery of cures and treatments. We also appreciate and encourage the efforts and innovations of home-grown African medical researchers, medical engineers and doctors in their attempt to develop cures and treatments that reflect our traditions and values.

We extend our support and cooperation to health authorities, across the continent, by abiding to the laws of our respective countries and by educating the public on Covid-19 risk prevention and request the public to follow health guidelines.”

Activities of the Day of Prayer was held virtually, with inter-religious councils and faith based organization across the continent and in the diaspora livestreaming or broadcasting their messages on mainstream media and social media platforms.

Note to Editors: *The African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF) is an AU platform created in 2016 and formed as a cooperative interaction between people of different religious and/or spiritual faiths or beliefs. The AU-IFDF seeks to tap into the power of religious communities in order to advance in areas of justice, peace and security in Africa, on both an individual and institutional level.*

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