



Joint Press Release

Africa CDC and Mastercard Foundation partner to deliver one million test kits, deploy 10,000 community health workers for COVID-19 response

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 4 JUNE 2020. Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and Mastercard Foundation are partnering to respond to COVID-19. Through its COVID-19 Recovery and Resilience Program, Mastercard Foundation is committing around US\$40 million to Africa CDC's Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT).

These funds will be used to purchase one million test kits, and to train and deploy 10,000 community healthcare workers and 80 surveillance rapid responders to support contact tracing as well as strengthen Africa CDC's capacity to oversee a continental response to the pandemic. Africa CDC will undertake these COVID-19 response measures in partnership with the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET).

PACT is anchored on the Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 endorsed by the Bureau of Heads of State and Government of the African Union to help limit COVID-19 transmission in Africa. PACT will strengthen the capacity to test, trace, and treat COVID-19 cases on the continent. Under the initiative, Africa CDC is working with Member States and several partners to support pooled procurement, storage and distribution of diagnostics and other medical supplies; testing of at least 10 million individuals; and the deployment of one million community workers and community healthcare workers. PACT will also support the deployment of technology platforms that will enhance testing, epidemiological modelling, and critical health forecasting, to support re-opening and recovery of economies.

"There is only one formula to fight COVID-19 in Africa and that is the PACT initiative. The daily figures show clearly that the pandemic is still on the rise, and to defeat it Africa needs greater cooperation with everybody, including the governments, the community, the media, and the development partners. We need to equip, deploy and train more healthcare workers as quickly as possible, and we expect that there will be more cooperation and solidarity through PACT," said Dr John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC.

Africa CDC has distributed more than 2.5 million tests and provided medical equipment such as personal protective equipment, thermal scanners, and ventilators, across Africa. As of 31 May 2020, Africa CDC had deployed 164 community healthcare workers to support COVID-19 response across 14 Member States and at its headquarters in Ethiopia. Despite this progress, governments across Africa continue to face tremendous needs within their public health systems, which must be met to ensure an effective and sustained response to the pandemic. Africa CDC is rallying resources and support to bridge existing gaps in public health systems by meeting the PACT targets.

"We are impressed by the swift pan-African response to COVID-19 led by Africa CDC and regional organizations. They have created a clear plan and targets to deliver a robust health response and save lives. The Mastercard Foundation stands with the Africa CDC and calls on other funders to support this excellent plan. Fighting this pandemic requires all of us to

coordinate our efforts and work together,” said Reeta Roy, Mastercard Foundation President and CEO.

Lessons from the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa in 2014 show that many people died not only from the disease itself, but from a lack of essential medicine or timely medical care. The same trend has been observed in the current pandemic. Africa needs more testing kits if it must quickly detect, isolate, and care for those who are infected. It needs more healthcare workers and rapid responders who are trained to support contact tracing as well as referral and linkage to healthcare services at the community level.

For media enquiries, please contact

Mrs. Wynne Musabayana | Head of Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: MusabayanaW@africa-union.org

Mr. James Ayodele, Principal Communication Officer, **Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC)**, Tel. +251 953912454, E-mail: ayodelej@afriaccdc.org

Ms. Helen White, Strategy Lead, Program Communications, **Mastercard Foundation**, Tel. +27 76 166 5372, E-mail: hwhite@mastercardfdn.org

About Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC)

Africa CDC is a specialized technical institution of the African Union that strengthens the capacity and capability of Africa’s public health institutions as well as partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks, based on data-driven interventions and programmes. Learn more at: <http://www.afriaccdc.org>

About the Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone has the opportunity to learn and prosper. Through its Young Africa Works strategy, Canadian EleV program, and the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, the Foundation works with partners to ensure that millions of young people, especially young women, access quality education, financial services, and dignified work. The Mastercard Foundation was established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company. The Foundation is independent with its own Board of Directors and CEO.

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