Directorate of Information & Communication

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Saving lives, economies and livelihoods campaign launches in Africa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21 August 2020


The Saving Lives, Economies and Livelihoods campaign will facilitate the development of a harmonized strategy to protect borders, travellers, economies, livelihoods, and schools in Africa from the risk of increased COVID-19 transmission as countries begin to re-open their borders.

The campaign is being implemented by the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus of the African Union, which includes representatives of the Africa CDC, World Health Organization Africa Regional Office, African Union NEPAD, UNICEF, African Union Member States, public health institutions, and several partners. The objectives are to:

1. minimize the spread of infection within and across borders by creating a unified public health corridor for safe travel within the continent;
2. curtail the impact of COVID-19 on economies and livelihoods through the mutual recognition and acceptance of health information and data across Member States;
3. ensure that schools are reopened safely through the establishment and engagement of a multi-sectoral committee to develop a school opening safety plan.

“In the last two weeks, Africa passed one million cases of COVID-19. Noting that we do not have a vaccine yet, and recognizing the socio-economic effects of the pandemic on Member States, we must continue to be proactive so that we do not lose the precious gains made with the preventive measures. I am therefore proud to announce the official launch of the African Union Africa Against COVID-19: Saving Lives, Economies, and Livelihoods as an effort to use innovative tools, methods and partnerships to prevent further transmission, deaths and socio-economic harm on the continent as economies, borders and schools re-open,” said H.E. Amira Mohammed.
“Transport is a catalyst for many of the big initiatives on the continent such as the Single African Air Transport Market and the Continental Free Trade Area, but transport has been halted around the world, affecting most sectors. It is important to work together as a continent to turn this crisis into an opportunity to improve our systems so we can reopen our economies quickly and safely,” said H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid.

The campaign is supported by a consortium of private sector organizations, including Econet Group and other pan-African institutions that are part of the PanaBIOS platform. These organizations generously donation of their innovative technology platforms for the campaign.

“That many African organizations such as the African Organisation for Standardisation, Africa Economic Zones Organization, African Tourism Board, Koldchain BioCordon, and several others are supporting the PanaBIOS platform is testament to a newfound spirit of public-private partnerships and to the belief in local innovation that will transform the continent completely,” Dr Edem Adzogenu, Chairperson of AfroChampions said.

“We are excited to be working with African Union Member States, the Africa CDC and our implementation partners by offering the Health Status Report, a mobile-based, global health information platform – powered by secure blockchain technology – that captures a person’s COVID-19 testing data and results”, said Mr Strive Masiyiwa, Executive Chairman of Econet, and African Union Special Envoy for the Continental Fight Against COVID-19.

“This data can be shared by individuals confidentially and at their discretion with relevant government, transport and business entities, in a manner that respects personal data privacy,” added Mr Masiyiwa.

“When we talk about easing the lockdown of economies and border crossings, it’s all about people. It’s about how easily we can facilitate the movement of people while at the same time ensuring critical public health measures are in place,” said Dr John Nkengasong.

The campaign will leverage the African Union’s Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT) initiative to scale up testing, contact tracing and treatment in Africa while incorporating innovative indigenous technologies from the private sector to enhance surveillance, digitisation of COVID-19 test results, and data management.

About Africa CDC
Africa CDC is a specialized 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. Learn more at: http://www.africacdc.org

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