



AFRICAN UNION REAFFIRMS ITS UNWAIVERING SUPPORT TO THE WHO

8 APRIL 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic is already the most serious health emergency in generations, and it is far from over. The Coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly changed our ways of life; impacted on the capacities of our health infrastructure and has disrupted the economic supply value chain with attendant negative impact on global economies. As the world grapples with the challenge of the Coronavirus, there is a need for solidarity, unity of purpose and better coordination to ensure that we are able to overcome this common enemy.

It is within this context, that the Chairperson of the African Union and President of the Republic of South Africa, HE Cyril Ramaphosa reaffirms his appreciation for the exceptional leadership of the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, from the very earliest stages of this unprecedented global health crisis.

The African Union has also commended the management of Dr Tedros in leading the global response to the pandemic.

Overall the AU recognises and appreciates the good work that has been undertaken by the WHO and notes with a sense of satisfaction the various initiatives and measures that are continuously undertaken by the organisation to mitigate the spread of the pandemic such as mobilising resources, sharing the real-time information and providing the technical and material support.

On a daily basis, the WHO has been an essential technical and scientific partner to the African Union and the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), as we work to mitigate the pandemic which has now reached nearly every member state.

The African Union has seen Dr Tedros in action before when he and the world class WHO health experts led global efforts to fight against Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In appreciation of these efforts, the African Union extends its unwavering support to the WHO and its Director-General.

The AU calls upon international community to join hands to support the efforts of the DG and the entire WHO family as they lead global efforts to fight this pandemic. If there was a time for global unity, solidarity and cooperation, this is that time. Working together, we will be able to overcome this challenge.

While all our countries are facing daunting and frustrating tasks to contain the spread of the pandemic, we should avoid temptation to apportion blame to any individual, institution or any country at a time when we should all be working together. We should work together to confront our common enemy in the form of COVID-19; and we should not allow ourselves to be distracted by anything else. Our success against this pandemic will only be realised through collaboration, cooperation and most importantly through global solidarity.

The most potent weapon against Covid-19 remains international cooperation and solidarity, as we have seen around the world. The African Union has seen first-hand the groundswell of international cooperation since the onset of this pandemic and wishes to commend all who supported and have pledged to support Africa's response to Covid-19 by reinforcing our health systems and helping to mitigate the social and economic impact. These partners include the G20, China, the United States, the European Union, the Jack Ma Foundation, among others.

The African Union extends its appreciation to all medical personnel who are in the forefront of the battlefield for their selflessness and diligence.

President Ramaphosa further calls on all African Union members and international partners to maintain and reinforce this international cooperation and collaboration in the difficult weeks and months ahead.

May we all continue, as a collective, to play our part to combat this pandemic with vigour and determination in order to return our lives to normalcy.

**ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND
CHAIRPERSON OF AFRICAN UNION**

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