

Global solidarity with Africa is an imperative

By [António Guterres](#)

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As Covid-19 spreads across the continent, Africa has responded swiftly to the pandemic and, as of now, reported cases are lower than feared. Even so, much hangs in the balance.



António Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations. Image source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

In recent years, Africans have done much to advance the well-being of the continent's people. Economic growth has been strong. The digital revolution has taken hold. A free trade area has been agreed.

But the pandemic threatens African progress. It will aggravate long-standing inequalities and heighten hunger, malnutrition and vulnerability to disease. Already, demand for Africa's commodities, tourism and remittances are declining. The opening of the trade zone has been pushed back – and millions could be pushed into extreme poverty. The virus has taken more than 2,500 African lives. Vigilance and preparedness are critical.

I commend what African countries have done already, together with the African Union. Most have moved rapidly to deepen regional coordination, deploy health workers, and enforce quarantines, lockdowns and border closures. They are also drawing on the experience of HIV/Aids and Ebola to debunk rumours and overcome mistrust of government, security forces and health workers.



#LockdownLessons: We are only as strong as our most vulnerable

Sindy Peters 18 May 2020



Solidarity with Africa

I express my total solidarity with the people and governments of Africa in tackling Covid-19. United Nations agencies, country teams, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian workers are providing support. United Nations solidarity flights

have delivered millions of test kits, respirators and other supplies, reaching almost the entire continent.

The [policy brief we are issuing today](#) highlights a spectrum of urgent challenges.

Many difficult decisions will need to be taken as the pandemic unfolds, and it will be essential to retain the trust and participation of citizens throughout.

We are calling for international action to strengthen Africa's health systems, maintain food supplies, avoid a financial crisis, support education, protect jobs, keep households and businesses afloat, and cushion the continent against lost income and export earnings.



We are because of others

Amy Pieterse, Ginkgo Agency 15 May 2020



Vaccine access

African countries should also have quick, equal and affordable access to any eventual vaccine and treatment, that must be considered global public goods.

I have been calling for a global response package amounting to at least 10% of the world's gross domestic product. For Africa, that means more than \$200bn as additional support from the international community.

I also continue to advocate a comprehensive debt framework - starting with an across-the-board debt standstill for countries unable to service their debt, followed by targeted debt relief and a comprehensive approach to structural issues in the international debt architecture to prevent defaults.

It will also be essential for African countries to sustain their efforts to silence the guns and address violent extremism – and I welcome African support for my call for a global ceasefire. Political processes and elections in the coming months offer potential milestones for stability and peace.



#LockdownLessons: Pandemic reminding us of importance of *ubuntu*, responsible kindness

Sindy Peters 13 May 2020



Women and youth

Women will be central to every aspect of the response. Stimulus packages must prioritise putting cash in the hands of women and increasing social protection. We must empower African youth. The human rights of all must be respected.

Many difficult decisions will need to be taken as the pandemic unfolds, and it will be essential to retain the trust and participation of citizens throughout.

These are still early days for the pandemic in Africa, and disruption could escalate quickly. Global solidarity with Africa is an imperative – now and for recovering better. Ending the pandemic in Africa is essential for ending it across the world.

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