



Australian Government

AFRICA COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE PLAN

- Australia is prioritising its aid investments across Africa in ways that foster resilience and preserve recent economic and development gains across the continent.
- While there is no single African COVID-19 experience, the pandemic will compound existing development challenges and disrupt agricultural productivity, supply chains, employment, markets and food security.
- Working with partner governments, multilateral agencies and non-government organisations amplifies Australia's ability to reach those impacted by COVID-19, conflict and displacement.

Africa is important to Australia's interests in fostering global economic growth, trade liberalisation, agricultural productivity and food security, and addressing transnational crime. The impacts of COVID-19 could undermine Africa's recent economic growth and poverty reduction.

COVID-19 SITUATION ANALYSIS

There is no single African COVID-19 experience. As in-country transmission rates grow, each country's unique public health and risk profile will shape the course of the pandemic. While the full extent of the pandemic is yet to be felt in Africa, it has already compounded existing development challenges.

Public health responses to COVID-19 in Africa vary. Despite the majority of African countries adopting WHO recommended mitigation strategies, community transmission is widespread across the continent. The fatality rate of reported cases has been low compared to other parts of the world, perhaps due to the young average age and low international exposure rates. However, variances in countries' commitment to testing and data quality may obscure true transmission rates. Many health systems are also burdened by Ebola, HIV, measles, TB and malaria.

The World Bank predicts the continent will face its first recession in 25 years. African countries are already among the most indebted in the world; further economic decline may lead to debt crises. With the onset of COVID-19, Africa faces reduced agricultural productivity, weakened supply chains and further limited job prospects for its large population, particularly for youth.

The pandemic has had varied impacts on individuals across Africa. Close monitoring is required to determine the particular impacts on women and children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, including

refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons.

COVID-19 may exacerbate political instability. Many African countries are also highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and disasters, which pose challenges to food security. Further disruption to social protection programs will increase food insecurity for the poor and vulnerable.

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE

Australia's nine diplomatic missions in Africa will lead our COVID-19 response, engaging with African governments, humanitarian and development agencies, Australian and international NGOs and the private sector.

Australian development and humanitarian assistance in Africa is most efficiently and effectively delivered through multilateral agencies. We will contribute to a coordinated response and have already supported UNOCHA's COVID-19 Humanitarian Response, which complements existing government responses and targets those most in need. Working with trusted partners who meet international accountability and performance standards also minimises fraud and corruption risks, particularly for investments in locations not easily accessible for monitoring and evaluation.

Health Security

COVID-19 will exacerbate the effects of other health challenges, including by disrupting vital programming, supply chains and routine health systems. Australian support to international health emergency financing mechanisms mobilises resources to support African responses to infectious disease outbreaks, including COVID-19. We recognise the critical importance of equitable access to an effective vaccine, therapeutics and diagnostics for COVID-19.

We have directed humanitarian funding to longstanding



humanitarian crises that are compounded by COVID-19. Through UNOCHA country programs, we will support additional health facilities, training and personal protective equipment in South Sudan, and the scale up of integrated COVID-19 activities aimed at women, children and displaced people in Somalia.

We will help communities across Africa prepare for and respond to COVID-19 through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). Partnering with local organisations ensures a community-focused response and expands our timely support to remote and impoverished groups. ANCP partnerships will focus on delivering hygiene messaging, soap and protective equipment, and ensuring basic food security and livelihoods continue to build community resilience.

Stability

COVID-19 is likely to exacerbate acute food insecurity and malnutrition in many African countries. Through core and targeted funding to the World Food Programme (WFP), we will respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on food security, nutrition, markets, and regional supply chains across Africa, including in South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia. We will help support resilient communities with diverse livelihoods, and improve their capacity to address COVID-19 through World Vision's Somalia Resilience Program. We will continue to prioritise the empowerment of women and girls, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ communities and marginalised groups, including through the Direct Aid Program (DAP).

Australian scientific and agricultural innovation and expertise will support Africa's stability and recovery. Digital Earth Africa will pivot its focus to food security which, alongside water mapping products, will provide governments with data to tailor and evaluate their COVID-19 responses and contribute to the growth of Africa's technically skilled workforce. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) will work with smallholder farmers and international development partners to reduce poverty, increase food security and address the impacts of climate change. Indigenous Australian fire management techniques to mitigate climate change and improve the protection of biodiversity and wildlife will be utilised through Australia's International Savanna Fire Management Initiative in Botswana. We will strengthen the agriculture sector and create greater economic opportunity for rural

communities by bringing together the public and private sectors through the Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund and the G20-initiated Global Agriculture and Food Security Program.

Through Australia Assists, we will deploy humanitarian specialists to support key UN agencies' responses to COVID-19 and protracted crises across East Africa. Our humanitarian and development assistance commitments are complemented by countering violent extremism programs and targeted defence deployments.

Economic Recovery

Through maintaining our commitment to Australia Awards scholars, we will build capacity in key sectors and ensure sustained connections between Australia and future African leaders. This continent-wide program provides opportunities for women, and recognises their importance to economic recovery. Many Australia Awards Alumni return home to make a contribution to their country's post-COVID-19 development trajectory. Alumni form a vital network across Africa of government, business and community leaders with knowledge and experience of Australia.

The Australian Volunteers Program has provided remote volunteering support to partner organisations and will recommence sending volunteers in-country as soon international borders are re-opened and it is safe to do so. Volunteers will work alongside their counterparts to support the development of a skilled workforce which will contribute to post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

Through niche private sector partnerships, we will support community level programs in agriculture, renewable clean energy and health security. We will explore opportunities for engagement with the private sector to support the COVID-19 response, including through the DAP and Business Partnerships Platform.

We will keep supply chains open, supporting the movement of essential workers and health and humanitarian cargo through WFP air and water transport services. Macro-economic responses will be crucial to Africa's economic recovery. Austrade will promote Australian capability, and facilitate connections and opportunities for trade between Australia and Africa. We will strongly advocate for free and open trade, the meaningful participation of women, and the World Bank and IMF funding on fair terms.

Table 1: COVID-19 Response Plan Performance Framework

Response Plan	Health Security	Stability	Economic Recovery
Expected Outcomes	Women, girls, and vulnerable groups (including people affected by conflict) receive essential health services and emergency assistance (SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)	Vulnerable groups and rural poor have improved food security and access to livelihoods (SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 15)	Australian expertise is building economic opportunity across Africa (SDG 4, 5, 8)
Key Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of vulnerable women, men, girls and boys provided with emergency assistance in conflict and crisis situations (target 200,000 over 2-year Plan) - People provided with essential health services <p>Communities provided with WASH support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women and men receive help to increase livelihoods - Vulnerable communities reached with new or improved social protection programs, including remote communities <p>Countries Australia has supported in the last 12 months with policy and technical advice on building capacity for food security (including examples of assistance provided and results achieved)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women and men assisted to gain recognised post-secondary qualifications (target 30 over 2-year Plan) - Examples of small businesses having increased market access - Examples of African Government usage of Digital Earth Africa products to inform policy and/or practice
Supporting Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ANCP - Business Partnerships Platform - Disability Rights Advocacy Fund - Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (core contribution) - Global Partnership for Education (core contribution) - The Global Fund (core contribution) - Somalia Humanitarian Fund - Somalia Resilience Program - South Sudan Humanitarian Fund - WHO Health Emergencies Program (core contribution) - WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies (core contribution) <p>World Bank's Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (2020/2021 only)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACIAR - Australia Assists - Digital Earth Africa - International Savanna Fire Management Initiative - South Sudan WFP - UN CERF (core contribution) - UNHCR (core contribution) <p>UNOCHA (core contribution)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australia Awards - Australian Volunteers Program - Business Partnerships Platform - Digital Earth Africa - DAP