

April 2020

TO: Our African Brothers and Sisters-USA

FROM: Africa House- Sacramento, California Africa Day Association, & Center for African Peace & Conflict Resolution-CSU-Sacramento

RE: COVID-19 Community Solidarity Message: We are in this together!

*This message follows our well attended Africa community of northern California COVID-19 Teleconference of March 27, 2020, with Guest Speakers and fellow African born health professionals: Dr. Olivia, Director of the Sacramento County Public Health and Dr. Lilian Duru, Associate Physician of Family and Community Medicine, University of California Davis Medical Group. The message expresses a concern about the serious risk of the COVID-19 pandemic and calls for responsible actions by all, as individuals and groups. We are all in this together!*

It is very clear that the 2019 novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) is real and dangerous. Contrary to some myths, no one is immune to the deleterious effects of the corona virus disease, irrespective of race, sex, age, nationality or class. The pandemic has disrupted various economic plans, devastated many families, and challenged the global community. While the pandemic seems to be receding in Asia, stabilizing in Europe, and raging in America, the emerging trend in Africa is very worrisome; some fear that it is a time bomb in Africa. To date, almost every African country has experienced positive COVID-19 cases, with over 15,000 cases and more than 800 deaths (see more <https://africacdc.org/>; <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>). Further, the disproportionate rate of infection and fatalities among blacks in many US communities (e.g. New York, Detroit, Chicago, etc.) is alarming, with multiple collateral negative consequences or hazards for family and community health security.

Without any doubt, Africa is at a serious risk of more devastation from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially given her weak health and social infrastructures, and poverty, along with pronounced level of vulnerable populations. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those who have been adversely affected. We salute our many health workers and frontline crew that make it possible for most of us to stay at home. We mourn the disproportionate impact on our African American brethren and join in the united efforts for a solution. We are all in this together, in solidarity of purposeful community, steadfast compliance with the public health mitigation precautions, compassion for one another, and abiding faith in the Creator. We must pray for God's merciful intervention, and strictly heed the public warnings and precautions of social/physical distancing, and self -isolation as well as care.

We appeal to one and all to take the COVID-19 very seriously, dutifully obey the established government policies and public health protocols for prevention, social mitigation, and care as well as services for the vulnerable populations, including the poor, elderly, and victims of the likely increase in domestic violence. We urge all communities

to suspend all public gatherings, including weddings, funerals, graduations, and etc., during the effective period of the social mitigation policies and orders in their local communities or groups, and follow any future plans for public reopening.

Further, we urge all Africa Diaspora organizations, groups, and personalities to partner with the proper public agencies or governments as well as institutions in their respective countries in Africa to support their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including donation or provision of their time, talent and treasure. Each diaspora organization should remain abreast of developments in their communities and provide necessary support and care for one another. We acknowledge the many diaspora organizations that are engaged in messaging to the youth and creation of public enlightenment campaigns. At this critical time, education for prevention and mitigation is the winning strategy. We'll lead in the development and dissemination of a list of community resources in the greater Sacramento area, especially in the areas of housing and food insecurity, healthcare, financial support, and government relief sources. Future teleconferences on COVID-19 resources and developments should be anticipated.

We know that it is difficult to support one another when we must physically isolate ourselves. It is a formidable task to maintain a semblance of normalcy when our whole life, our social, cultural and economic structures are torn apart by forces outside of our control and seemingly outside the control of any human being. Yet we must keep in mind that none of us is an island. We really exist due to the efforts of others. We have no better choice than remain in solidarity with the rest of the community, including ensuring healthy, peaceful family relations at this very difficult period. Let us show through our individual and collective actions that we are deserving of our blessings. While we pray without season and hope for the best outcome, let us be smart by adequately preparing for the worst. Together in solidarity, we'll overcome!

Peace & Health, Always!