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african monitor

African voices for Africa's development

PRESS STATEMENT

Friday, 20 March 2020

African Monitor joins efforts to combat COVID-19

As an organisation whose vision is to ensure that grassroots communities' voices are heard and that they live in dignity and in a just society, African Monitor (AM) has stepped up measures to safeguard the marginalised as the country continues the fight against COVID-19.

AM will work with the national SDG stakeholders and the African Working Group to mobilise the civil society community for urgent action.

In doing our part to minimise the risk of infection, (AM) will mobilise the youth champions across the 10 African countries that we're working with to raise awareness in the communities by providing them with accurate information and advice in local languages.

"In such an unprecedented period during which we are dealing with a virus that we have had little prior information about, it is crucial for the vulnerable communities to be informed as much as possible. What is more crucial is that the messaging should reach marginalised communities in their own languages", said Ms. Namhla Mniki, Executive Director at African Monitor.

AM will work to ensure that the vulnerable in at least 10 countries are reached through the messaging on COVID-19.

Furthermore, AM has encouraged all our staff to work from home and practice good hygiene and precautionary measures, including restricting travel and self-isolating.

It is therefore crucial for the international community, civil society and governments to join hands – not literally – in supporting those that are vulnerable. It is also essential that each proposed measure be implemented immediately in order to protect and mitigate risks, so that we may overcome the situation with minimal loss of life.

The World Health Organisation has declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a global pandemic – a medical emergency far graver than what has been experienced in over a century. The South African government has declared it a national disaster. African Monitor understands that the COVID-19 pandemic is now a global health and societal emergency that requires effective immediate action by everyone in the world. Everyone has a key role to play in minimising the likelihood of transmission and the impact on society.

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COVID-19 was first discovered in late 2019 in China; is a viral respiratory illness caused by a newly identified coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, and it is estimated that they cause roughly one-third of all cases of the common cold. Some coronaviruses cause illnesses in people and others only circulate among animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people.

The virus causing COVID-19 may have emerged from an animal source, and it is now able to spread from person to person. It's more contagious, more deadly (particularly for older people), and it has a greater potential to overwhelm the world's health care system.

ISSUED BY: AFRICAN MONITOR

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