



RCF /14/43 (2021)

The political, economic and social role of African women in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

*Resolution adopted by the 43rd Conference
(Djibouti, 15 October 2021)*

*The Committee of Women Parliamentarians of the African Parliamentary Union,
meeting on 13 October 2021 in Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti,*

Aware of the political, economic and social implications of COVID-19 in Africa,

*Concerned about the negative impact of COVID-19 on public health in general,
and maternity and contraceptive services and on the fight against AIDS and malaria in
particular,*

Considering the impact of this pandemic on the African economy,

Noting the food crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic,

Considering the impact of the pandemic on education in Africa,

Considering the consequences of COVID-19 on peace and security,

*Stressing the importance of the role of African women in the face of the
pandemic,*

*Taking into account the analysis made by the United Nations on the impact of
COVID-19 (May 2020),*

Recommends:

1. Immediate easing of customs duties for all essential health products; while governments must introduce a protection policy for our populations who are suffering from rising food prices due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. Reducing the high dependency on pharmaceutical imports by boosting national production capacity, including through intra-African and South-South cooperation, and other external partnerships;
3. Collaboration between African engineering and medical universities and local manufacturers to innovate and manufacture key medical equipment, including respirators and oxygen;

4. Establishment of platforms or the development of the existing ones for the exchange of knowledge and know-how, cross-fertilization of ideas, joint initiatives and collaborative research;
5. Establishment of African centres for disease prevention and control for the development of vaccines or medical treatments against COVID-19 and increased use of community health workers based on their past experience;
6. Analysis of infection and recovery data by gender, age, location and disability, to capture gender inequalities and differences in exposure and treatment, as an important first step to effectively supporting marginalized groups;
7. Development of research into indigenous plant medicine;
8. Measures to support micro-finance and safeguard livelihoods, such as the provision of loans, guarantees and tax relief to large enterprises and SMEs;
9. Development of recovery plans, to include the informal sector, women and other vulnerable groups, including an expansion of social protection measures and a range of regulatory and financial instruments;
10. Support for key sectors such as tourism and African airlines to ensure their viability and liquidity, including through loan guarantees and temporary tax exemptions;
11. Restructuring the debt of African countries to free up much-needed resources to deal with the pandemic and its aftermath. This should be accompanied by an increase in lending by multilateral lending agencies, including through an increase in the IMF's special drawing rights, to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and provide liquidity to African countries over the next two years;
12. More flexible management of the capital account, as needed, so that the financing generated by debt relief can help stabilize the financial situation;
13. Strengthening social protection systems by ensuring access to the most vulnerable groups, particularly young children, pregnant women and nursing mothers, the elderly and other groups at risk;
14. Taking into account the agricultural sector as an essential part of the economy, a sector that must continue to function regardless of the emergency restrictions imposed by the pandemic;
15. The easing of possible export restrictions by Africa's partners, including bans on food exports;
16. Setting up structures to build buffer stocks for food security;

17. Strengthening energy infrastructure, internet access and the use of technology in education, including exploring with the media (especially radio) and mobile telecommunication providers, low-cost solutions to create or expand access to distance or online learning platforms;
18. Peace and ceasefire in countries in conflict so that the fight against the virus can continue unhindered, as called for by the United Nations and the African Union;
19. Consultative and inclusive decision-making on electoral timetables to ease tensions that may arise as a result of COVID-19;
20. Supporting UN and African humanitarian initiatives, both in the context of the fight against COVID-19 and in country-specific humanitarian aid plans;
21. Maintaining humanitarian and pandemic initiatives to ensure that vulnerable groups such as displaced persons, refugees, migrants, women, children and the elderly and persons with disabilities are not discriminated against and that their needs are met, including their inclusion in national health systems and response plans; awareness-raising by women in major cities, transport stations and rural areas to improve immunization coverage;
22. Step up the response to violence against women, which was exacerbated by the lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic;
23. Developing programmes for young girls during the pandemic, lockdown or school closure, to prevent repeated incidences of teenage pregnancy;
24. Social and psychological protection for women physically or verbally abused women, as well as women separated from their families; the rates of which have increased according to the United Nations;
25. Involvement of senior parliamentary officials and managers, both men and women, in awareness campaigns on the risks of COVID-19;
26. Mandatory reforms in political parties to make room for women in leadership;
27. Need to create African cultural centres to raise awareness and change harmful behaviour based on our cultures, to protect the population and prevent diseases;
28. Remuneration of domestic work of homemakers;
29. African women must be involved in decision-making process to adopt measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, taking gender equality into account for enacting legislation; a process that must be done by prior consultation with various social groups.