Responsible Business Response to COVID-19 in Africa

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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Please use the **Q&A feature to ask questions**

Comments are welcome in the **chat**

During the Open Floor discussion, please use the **"raised hand" button to identify yourself to speak.**

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COVID-19 IN AFRICA: RISKS AND CHALLENGES

**COVID-19 In Africa**

- **Confirmed Cases**
  - Africa: 0.5%
  - Other: 99.5%

- **Affected Countries**
  - Africa: 19.8%
  - Other: 80.2%

**Challenges**
- Shared accommodation ≠ self-isolation
- Commuting to work
- Informal market ≠ working from home
- Gaps in health systems

**Risks**
- Diagnostic Capacity
- Accurate and up-to-date access
- Lack of sufficient community health workers
- Adequate and responsive testing
COVID-19 AND THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT TEN PRINCIPLES

United Nations
Global Compact
Uniting business for a better world

We are calling on business leaders to support companies and workers affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

#UnitingBusiness
Support and Respect Human Rights

- Ensure that **any measure implemented to address COVID-19 is accessible to people without discrimination** of any kind such as race, colour, disability, age, gender, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity or other status.

- Ensure that **the needs of those most marginalised and/or vulnerable** are given the necessary and appropriate attention.

**In Practice:**

- Where possible, provide flexible work arrangements for those 65 or older, are working parents, or have pre-existing medical conditions

- Pay special attention to how remote working and telecommuting options (“work from home”) may affect female workers and working parents adversely

- Pay special attention to day laborers, contractual workers and workers without any social protection coverage

**Principle 1:** Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

**Principle 2:** make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.
Ensure Continuation of Fair Labour Conditions

**Principle 3:** Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; and

**Principle 4:** the elimination of all forms or forced and compulsory labour.

**Principle 5:** the effective abolition of child labour; and

**Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

- Respond with **flexibility, compassion and solidarity to the impact on your employees and your business partners**, especially SMEs.

- Ensure a **stable continuation of income and benefits** despite flexible working arrangements.

- **Honour current contracts** to the greatest extent possible.

- Apply the principles of prevention and **ensure a safe working environment** by limiting employee exposure to coronavirus in the workplace through:

  - Allow for flexibility from suppliers and employees in meeting deliveries and quotas.
  - When possible, try to ensure a win-win situation with payments to balance financial impacts—provide, if possible, payment extensions for contracts.
  - Provide employees, customers and communities with guidance to encourage hygiene practices and post visible messages on COVID-19 to prevent future infections.
  - Regularly clean workplace facilities and ensure consistent access to clean water, soap and alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
Assure Environmental Protections

- **Encourage telecommuting and virtual meetings** which can reduce negative impacts on the environment caused by travel.

**In Practice:**

- Use this as an opportunity to assess which virtual practices can be continued in the long-term to reduce emissions.
- Encourage the use of free and affordable technologies to make telecommuting and virtual meetings more convenient and interactive.

**Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

**Principle 8:** undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

**Principle 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
Uphold Ethics and Maintain Transparency

In Practice:

- **Build trust through communications** and policies that are consistent, inclusive and transparent
- Ensure that **products and services are distributed and sold in an ethical manner**.

- Develop a company-wide safety protocol that clearly outlines remote working policies, identifies hygiene and cleaning practices and procedures to take when employees and/or their families are ill
- Take an active role in combatting misinformation by disseminating accurate information through official channels from trusted sources
- Encourage flexible forms of communication in the workplace (e.g., WhatsApp, texting, emails)
- Avoid price gouging on critical and high demand products and services (e.g., hand sanitizers, face masks, data)

**Principle 10**: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.
KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR

Private sector’s best contribution is preventative action.

Business in Africa is not new to managing health emergencies – rely on lessons from previous experiences.

Interventions should be simple and practical.

The business of business should still be business.

It is important for business to take action but not act alone.

Examples of Corporate Efforts During Covid-19
1. 🌐 Paying hourly workers out because of illness
2. 💰 Closing but still paying workers
3. 🌐 Extending or offering free services
4. 📦 Fee suspension
5. 🌐 Free information
6. 🌐 Community/health philanthropy
7. 🌐 Repurposing company operations to service health needs
LESSONS LEARNED FROM HEALTH EMERGENCIES
Connecting Business initiative (CBI) response to COVID-19
What is the Connecting Business initiative?
Connecting Business initiative (CBI)

launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 by OCHA, UNDP and other partners to transform the way the private sector engages before, during and after crises

improves disaster preparedness, response and recovery by integrating the private sector into national and international disaster management mechanisms

reduces risks and duplication while increasing the resilience of companies and societies

Business engagement and public-private partnerships

- disaster prevention
- emergency preparedness
- response and recovery

Resilient communities & economies
Last year CBi supported 19 networks

CBi Secretariat (OCHA Geneva and UNDP Istanbul)
CBi Member Networks
Other private sector networks supported in 2019
Disaster Response and Recovery

9 CBi Member Networks and their members responded to a total of 31 disasters in 2019.

CBi Secretariat created emergency pages for 3 disasters, co-created a Business Guide for the Hurricane Dorian Response and deployed to the Bahamas to engage with private sector actors in the response.

- Droughts: Madagascar
- Earthquakes: (Mexico) Pacific, Philippines, Vanuatu
- Fires: Madagascar, Mexico, Pacific
- Floods: Fiji, Kenya, Mexico, Sri Lanka
- Freeze: Mexico
- Health epidemics (measles): Fiji, Pacific, Madagascar
- Heavy rainfall and landslides: Mexico
- Protracted displacement: Kenya
- Political instability: Haiti, Pacific
- Terrorist attack: Sri Lanka
- Tropical storms (cyclones, typhoons): Fiji, Mexico, Madagascar, Philippines
Collective private sector response through CBi
Co-developed a **Business Guide** in collaboration with other UN organizations

Created an **emergency page** to share information and updates with the private sector

Facilitates exchange of best practices (webinars etc.) among networks and companies based on needs

Provides technical support to private sector networks to help them guide companies

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**Plateforme humanitaire du secteur privé de Côte d’Ivoire**

- Raising awareness among its members of the risks and hygiene practices to ensure people understand the importance of curbing the spread of the virus
- Working with critical partners such as UNDP, the Red Cross and Institut Pasteur en Côte
- Has collected and discussed the needs and challenges of the private sector, including business continuity

**Private Sector Humanitarian Platform Madagascar**

- Initiated a meeting with WHO before any cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed in the country
- Working with the Ministry of Health and other partners to share information and raise awareness among critical companies > an emergency conference call with BNGRC, WFP and major telecommunications operators
- Currently in discussions with UN agencies / World Bank on potential cash transfer activities
What are companies doing?
Examples of private sector action

Safaricom implemented a fee-waiver on M-Pesa to reduce the physical exchange of currency
Standard Bank provides 90-day Coronavirus Business Interruption Payment Scheme ("payment holiday") to small business owners
Foxconn Technology Group (supplier of iPhone components to Apple) has refitted production lines to manufacture surgical masks
General Motors and medical equipment maker Ventec have partnered to build ventilators at a GM plant
LVMH makes hand sanitizer in its perfume factories
Inditex is converting factories to make hospital gowns
Reminders to companies

1. Prioritize containment
2. Keep operating – as long as it is safe and possible
3. Innovate and find solutions to new needs
4. Look beyond response and start planning recovery efforts
5. Make financial and in-kind contributions
6. Join advocacy efforts
Thank you!
OPEN FLOOR FOR
SHARING BEST
PRACTICES
HELPFUL RESOURCES ON COVID-19

World Health Organization (WHO) Coronavirus Emergency Site
- Situation Dashboard
- Situation Reports
- COVID-19 Mythbusters
- Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19
- COVID-19 in Africa
- Chat with WHO via WhatsApp

Center for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 Factsheet

UNICEF COVID-19 Guidance for Parents
- How to Talk to Your Child About Coronavirus

Check with your national government’s Ministry of Health to receive updates on your country’s COVID-19 emergency measures

Avoid the spread of misinformation! Share these resources with employees, workers, family and friends
HELPFUL RESOURCES ON COVID-19 (cont’d)

Connecting Business Initiative


Example from Philippines on Private Sector Supporting the Poor during Covid-19

Check with your national government’s Ministry of Health to receive updates on your country’s COVID-19 emergency measures

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THANK YOU!