COVID-19: COMPILATION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES AND RESOURCES OF RELEVANCE TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
5 April 2020 Update

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GLOBAL</th>
<th>SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • COVID-19 declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 by WHO  
• 1,133,758 confirmed cases, 62,784 deaths  
• enormous disruption to lives as well as social and economic systems globally | • 43 countries affected with 4,874 confirmed cases, 110 deaths, 441 recovered  
• Calls by WHO and other actors for scaling up novel coronavirus preparedness efforts in the African region and supporting countries to implement recommendations |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFRICAN CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Public health, social protection and social services systems are weak in African countries.  
• Only 17.8% of Africans have access to any form of social protection (ILO 2019) and low spending countries spent merely $4.10 annually per poor person (including the administration costs of the programmes) (UNDP 2019).  
• Most workers employed in the informal sector with no access to any form of social protection (income support, sick leave, etc); they are forced to choose between endangering personal and public health and their livelihoods.  
• High proportion of a large urban population live in overcrowded conditions, informal settlements, lacking access to safe water and sanitation, which makes it difficult to follow public health directives, such as lockdowns, ‘social isolation and distancing’.  
• Governments have limited fiscal space to implement countermeasures; fiscal space is likely to further shrink as a result of global economic downturn due to COVID-19 outbreak.  
• Economic development, trade with key partners in Europe, China and within the continent will be severely compromised with additional burden for the poor and vulnerable due to price hikes, disrupted value chains and loss in income. Commodity prices burst will render impossible to provide the economic stimuli at par with those of the developed countries. Many countries and regional bodies call for the debt relief.  
• The impacts will be heightened in several countries that are affected by conflict, violence and/or fragility.  
• Citizens’ trust in governance institutions is low, which impedes governments’ response to COVID-19. The crisis might become politicized with implications on planned or cancelled elections.  
• Gendered burden of care work is very high in African countries; older women are impacted by the crisis disproportionately.  
• High inequality rates will likely lead to concentration of resources in wealthy parts of the population (e.g. hoarding of food, sanitary items) and can drive prices up for the poor and/or make health services inaccessible.  
• The crisis has created a momentum for rapid progress toward collectively financed, comprehensive, and universal social-protection systems. UNDP Report The State of Social Assistance in Africa, based on comprehensive data from all African countries (See Social Assistance in Africa Data Platform) argues for strengthening the national architecture of social assistance as one of the pathways to reducing vulnerability and poverty while also tackling inequality and promoting social inclusion. The report can be used as evidence and advocacy for this purpose. |
In the past days, sub-Saharan African countries have instituted new programmes or are adjusting the existing schemes to respond to Covid-19. They are featured in this compilation. A few international measures are mentioned because of their relevance to sub-Saharan Africa context and/or innovative nature. We have placed particular attention to initiatives directed at persons working in the informal economy; vulnerable groups; and women who are disproportionately affected by the crises due to their care responsibilities and are overrepresented in informal employment.

The chart shows types of measures taken by governments in sub-Saharan Africa mentioned in this compilation. The data was compiled through an online research and cannot be treated as exhaustive. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been introducing new social protection schemes or adjusting existing ones in response to the spread of COVID-19.

### Advocacy and analysis

- **James Smart: How communities without a safety net are grappling with COVID-19 pandemic**: https://twitter.com/jamessmart/status/1246935010839605249
- **WIEGO: COVID 19 Response: this provides different materials on how to protect informal workers during the COVID19 crisis**: https://www.wiego.org/covid19crisis

---

3 Examples and resources in green are new weekly additions.
• WIEGO: Informal Economy Budget Analysis (IEBA) examines how government budgets address the needs and interests of different groups of informal workers: https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy-budget-analysis

• WIEGO: Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) offer an in-depth understanding of how home-based workers, street vendors, and waste pickers are affected by economic trends, urban policies and practices, value chain dynamics, and other economic and social forces: https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy-monitoring-study-iams


---

**Weekly updates on social protection responses globally**


• World Bank: Ongoing updates Social Protection responses: https://twitter.com/Ugentilini/status/1239184435402211336


• World Bank: Weekly newsletter on Social Protection links: http://www.ugagentilini.net/

---

**Private sector involvement**

• How private sector can support societies and SMEs (examples of Amazon, Starbucks, Google, etc.): https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/coronavirus-and-corporate-social-innovation/

---

**MEASURES TAKEN IN OR RELEVANT TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**45

**Employment/Income support**

- **Cabo Verde**: Employees will get 70% of gross salary in the event of the labour contract being suspended, 35% will be paid by the employer and 35% by National Institute of Social Security
- **Colombia**: A program called “Bagotá Solidaria En Casa” will provide poor and vulnerable families of the District with cash for the 23-day quarantine to prevent them to have to get out their home to a daily subsistence income; conditions include compliance with quarantine and not having been reported of domestic violence
- **Malaysia**: The government is encouraging trainings by: (a) double deductions on expenses incurred on approved tourism-related training; (b) provide RM50 million to subsidize short courses in digital skills and highly skilled courses (expected to benefit 100,000 Malaysians); and (c) through the Employment Insurance System
- **Namibia**: one-off N$750 emergency income grant to formal/Informal workers who lost their jobs, wage subsidies for N$400M, various worker loan schemes
- **South Africa**: Workers who will be affected by the 21-day lockdown or become ill during the outbreak will receive government assistance + The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) will compensate affected workers through a new “National Disaster Benefit” and existing Illness, Reduced Work Time and Unemployment Benefits
- **Uganda**: contributions to National Social Security Fund can be rescheduled by businesses/employers facing economic distress without penalties for the next 3 months

---


5 Examples and resources in green are new weekly additions.
### Extension of social protection to informal economy

- **Argentina**: The government announced a new measure to support ‘monotributistas’, this includes a transfer of ARS10,000 to informal workers (3.6 million people)
- **Brazil**: mobile app to be used to identify informal workers who are not in any government register but are entitled to receive BRL $600 (about $114) assistance due to the COVID-19: [https://labs.ebanx.com/en/notes/brazilian-government-will-identify-informal-workers-using-a-mobile-app/?fbclid=IwAR1vry01hXUkIIf3vO3DmaZo-jnI0GQqWm9Ii5T58g](https://labs.ebanx.com/en/notes/brazilian-government-will-identify-informal-workers-using-a-mobile-app/?fbclid=IwAR1vry01hXUkIIf3vO3DmaZo-jnI0GQqWm9Ii5T58g)
- **Cabo Verde**: one off $100 payment to 30k informal workers
- **Egypt**: An exceptional, one-off payment of EGP 500 is planned for informal workers registered in the workforce directorates databases of governorates
- **Morocco**: The Economic Watch Committee members decided to activate a mobile payment device to transfer cash to workers operating in the informal sector
- **Namibia**: one-off N$750 emergency income grant to formal/informal workers who lost their jobs, wage subsidies for N$400M, various worker loan schemes
- **Philippines**: Informal sector workers who have temporarily lost their livelihood due to the enhanced community quarantine, can apply for temporary employment program, limited to 10 days of work involving disinfection/sanitation of their houses and immediate vicinity. Beneficiaries will have orientation on safety and health, payment of 100% of the highest prevailing minimum wage, and enrolled to group micro-insurance
- **South Africa**: proposal for monthly payments over a five-month period - informal sector entrepreneurs are one of the targets: [https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-22-support-to-jobs-in-the-informal-sector-the-case-for-a-special-covid-19-grant/](https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-22-support-to-jobs-in-the-informal-sector-the-case-for-a-special-covid-19-grant/)

### Social assistance and subsidies

- **Argentina**: food card has reached 1,100,000 people, with nearly 400,000 households will receive this additional amount through the AUH until they receive their food support card
- **Armenia**: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Armenian Red Cross will provide between one and three food and hygiene packages to 1,400 citizens. The packages will mainly go to elderly people living alone and people with disabilities, including Syrian-Armenian refugees and people in social housing. Funded from the State budget, while the Int’l Red Cross provides volunteers.
- **Cabo Verde**: food assistance to 22.5k families + households and firms that borrow from banks will have a 3-month moratorium on payment of debt instalments
- **China**: In Wuhan, temporary assistance was also provided to the quarantined migrant population with difficulties for an amount of RMB 3000
- **Colombia**: Water services are provided free of charge for low income families
- **India**: Delhi: Free rations, with 50% more quantity than normal entitlements, to 7.2M beneficiaries + Lunch and dinner will be served free to each and every person at all Delhi Government night shelter
- **Namibia**: water subsidies (no need for water cards) during lockdowns
- **Niger**: coverage of water and electricity utility costs for the most vulnerable
- **Nigeria**: cash transfers to the poorest households throughout the country: [https://www.thecable.ng/coronavirus-weve-started-immediate-cash-transfer-to-poorest-households-says-fa](https://www.thecable.ng/coronavirus-weve-started-immediate-cash-transfer-to-poorest-households-says-fa)
- **Russia**: Pensioners will be able to order food and medicine delivery by (hotline) phone and get it delivered to their home
- **Spain**: support to homeless people (hygiene kit, food, drinks, information)
• Uganda: door-to-door food delivery for 1.5 million most vulnerable people in Kampala metropolitan area: https://www.africanews.com/2020/04/05/uganda-donates-food-to-vulnerable-people-during-lockdown/

• Vietnam: in affected areas, local government cover all expenses related to living, testing and medical treatment for all Vietnamese citizens who were institutionally quarantined

• Zimbabwe: $600 million to cover 1 million vulnerable households under a cash transfer programme for the next three months: https://www.africanews.com/2020/03/31/economics-covid-19-impact-on-africa/

---

**Expansion/adjustment of existing social protection programmes**

• Cabo Verde: Expansion of cash transfers under the existing social protection project to 8,000 families (from original 5,000)

• Dominican Republic: Expansion of conditional transfers under the Comer Es Primer program, including a 100% increase in the amount transferred to families + expansion to 100,000 new families

• Jamaica: children of families participating in the PATH cash transfer scheme will receive additional nutritional support delivered by suppliers for the period that they will be out of school (over the next 2 weeks)

• South Africa: Measures for social grants recipients: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-03-19-black-sash-wants-more-protection-for-grant-beneficiaries-collecting-at-commercial-spaces/?fbclid=IwAR2viA9re_DYDmweNx8HuYgwuiTD9jta5WqSSETYwrw96p-qlpM44JPE


---

**Childcare programmes**

• Bolivia: creation of Bono Familia, a program transferring 500 bolivianos per child to families with children in schools closed due to the virus to afford quality meals for children

• Colombia: Students beneficiaries of the school-feeding program will receive it at home

• Cabo Verde: school feeding for 30k more children

• India: The Kerala state government will deliver food ingredients for mid-day meals to over 300,000 children studying in 33,115 anganwadis (rural childcare centre) closed due to the pandemic

• Liberia: school feeding switched to take home meals, an approach they used during Ebola


---

**Innovative programmes**

• Benin: possibility for entrepreneurs to create their company online at monentreprise.bj – the online system also ensures the new business is automatically compliant with trade, tax, social security and department of labour obligations, saving time and additional visits to government departments (idea born from Benin and UNCTAD partnership): https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2310

• Colombia: Voucher for food basket delivered by the Red Cross and including in-kind donations from supermarket chains (people and firms can donate through a new platform: bogotasolidariaencasa.gov.co)

• Central Bank of West Africa states (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo): no transaction fees on payments including utility and other bills (mobile money)

• Ghana: no fees from service providers on mobile money used for utilities for the next three months

• India: compensation to poor workers via online payments if they lost their job due to the pandemic

• Kenya: Fee waivers on person-person mobile money transactions on M-PESA were approved