



Policy Brief No. 202003

March 17, 2020

本文已发表于 China Daily | March 12, 2020

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Series on #Global Health Governance# No. 1

Sino-African Cooperation Needed for Virus Fight

The spread of COVID-19 in Africa needs attention because the challenges are many, and they are compounded by a lack of drugs and vaccines to counter them. This means the spread of the virus will magnify existing gaps in the local health systems.

Currently, N-95 protective masks are selling for more than \$20 a pack on e-commerce platforms, while protective suits and test kits are commanding even higher prices, which are unaffordable for African countries, where per capita GDP is less than \$2,000.

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* <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/12/WS5e698a42a31012821727e5e9.html>。



Health has been a priority in Sino-African cooperation. China has acted as a responsible stakeholder in helping Africa to fight epidemics such as Ebola, cholera and malaria. It has lessons to offer in treatment and research, thanks to its experience in dealing with COVID-19.

As China is busy fighting the novel coronavirus at home, it should help Africa through a targeted approach.

It should have clear priorities on working with Africa, based on the severity of the epidemic and the level of development of the affected country.

Cases have been reported mostly in North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco), West Africa (Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria and Togo) and Southern Africa (South Africa).

Due to a large number of new cases and risks of further spread as a result of proximity to coronavirus-affected Iran and Italy, North Africa should be the focus of Sino-African cooperation.

West Africa needs support due to its weak healthcare systems, a fact laid bare by the earlier Ebola crisis.

In comparison, South Africa has a stronger emergency response capacity, and China can consider undertaking joint prevention and control efforts through measures such as case monitoring, data sharing and exchange activities in science and technology.

Cooperation should also include prevention, response and recovery.

Sino-African cooperation should focus on mid-to long-term intervention and undertaking various measures during different stages of the outbreak.



China can work with the international community and other relevant countries in enhancing hygiene standards and regulations, which will help guard against risks of infection in other African countries not affected by the epidemic so far.

It can help African countries enhance the storage and restocking of drugs, vaccines and medical equipment to meet the urgent needs by drawing lessons from its own experience, while devising long-term cooperation programs to train healthcare professionals. It can also undertake prevention and control planning.

It should provide test kits, masks and infrared body temperature thermometers to low-risk countries, and protective suits, treatment equipment and drugs to high-risk countries to prevent infection among the medical staff.

As China brings the epidemic under control and restores full production capacity, the type and scale of assistance may vary accordingly.

Additionally, focused communication and information sharing with different sections of society are crucial.

First, information should be shared with the public.

Second, it's important to build virtual platforms for African experts for the sharing of updates on clinical cases and lab tests through discussions, and for statistical updates to enhance the response capacity of local health professionals.

As China passes a milestone in its COVID-19 response at home, it will be in a better position to provide assistance to other countries.



With the noble goal of building a community of shared future in mind, China should closely monitor the epidemic in Africa and other underdeveloped areas, and provide assistance in the form of technology and supplies.

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