

P R E S S E M E L D U N G

Alarm grows in Africa as continent records its 10,000th case of COVID-19

Berlin, 08.04.2020 Some of the most vulnerable children and their families across Africa who depend on the informal economy for their livelihoods are and will increasingly be impacted by measures designed to stop the spread of COVID-19, Save the Children is warning, as the number of people on the continent infected with COVID-19 reached 10,000 yesterday.

Significant efforts are being made by African governments to respond to this growing pandemic, however the number of cases in Africa have been increasing exponentially since 13th March 2020, with the total caseload on the continent doubling from just over 5000 to 10,000 in the space of a week.

With South Sudan the latest country on the continent to confirm a case on Sunday, there remain just three African countries - Lesotho, Comoros and Sao Tome and Principe - who have yet to report a case of COVID-19.

Governments in the region are focusing on limiting the spread of the COVID-19 with increased restrictions, however, these measures disproportionately impact the poorest households, who depend on the informal economy for their already fragile livelihoods. Across the continent, unlike in many parts of the world, social security coverage in Africa is extremely limited or non-existent and largely confined to workers in the formal economy and their families. According to the International Labour Organisation, only 17.8 per cent of Africans receive at least one social protection cash benefit, and only about 10 per cent of the economically active population is covered by social security schemes.

Children and their families across Africa have already been struggling through a decade of climate shocks and regular food crisis, which have driven numbers of hunger crises across the continent. Save the Children is warning that as markets close and movement is restricted, many households will have less income to meet their basic needs, including food and fuel for cooking. The lack of income will have particularly dire consequences for the poorest households, who may be forced to choose between paying rent and feeding their children.

Families dependent on casual work are particularly vulnerable, as they cannot earn an income through working from home or self-isolating. Many of these families will need to rely on their savings to get by, and be forced to deplete whatever food, fuel and water stocks they have.

Save the Children's Campaign and Advocacy Director for Africa, Eric Hazard, said:

"We're extremely concerned that mounting financial pressures on families will increase food insecurity in communities already struggling to know where their next meal is coming from, which in turn will have a devastating impact on children. We know through experience that when families lose their incomes and have no social safety net, children become vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. As COVID-19 starts to impact on the economy, the loss of parental income and closure of schools may force many children to beg for food, take hazardous jobs to support their families, or families to split up in search of food, leaving children, especially girls alone, unprotected and exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation and at risk of child marriage.

"Local and donor governments and institutions need to act together and commit to stopping the pandemic in Africa and tackle the negative effects of restrictive measures on vulnerable populations' livelihoods, and in doing so, sustain food security and access to health services, by integrating the needs of the most vulnerable in their response to the COVID-19."

To protect a generation of children from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, Save the Children has launched the largest appeal in its 100-year-history, aiming to raise \$100 million to urgently keep children and their families safe during the global COVID-19 outbreak, the most serious

threat to global health and security in modern times. The appeal will support its [Agenda for Action](#) – a five point plan for a coordinated community, national and global action on five fronts to avert a catastrophe that could affect the lives of millions of children.

Globally, Save the Children works with half a million community health workers in 44 countries to deliver vital health services – the agency aims to support them in recognising symptoms and preventing COVID-19 - and aims to train another 100,000 in the coming six months. It will work with local communities to deliver training and protective equipment so that prevention measures can be ramped up, and cases can be identified early, referred for treatment and where possible, isolated.

To support Save the Children's global COVID-19 emergency appeal, click [here](#).

NOTES TO EDITOR

* According to the [World Bank](#), there are 0.2 doctors per 1,000 people in Sub Saharan Africa – the equivalent of 1 doctor per 5,000 people.

Bei Interviewanfragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Pressestelle.

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Über Save the Children

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in über 120 Ländern im Einsatz. Save the Children ist da für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen – seit 100 Jahren und darüber hinaus. Diese Kinder zu schützen, zu stärken und zu fördern ist das zentrale Anliegen der Organisation. Die Schwerpunkte der Arbeit liegen in den Bereichen Schule und Bildung, Schutz vor Ausbeutung und Gewalt sowie Überleben und Gesundheit. Save the Children setzt sich ein für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen können.