



ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENDERS



COMUNI-DADOS

# **COVID-19 EMERGENCY HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE FUND FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**



## THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. From December 31st 2019 through January 3rd 2020, a total of 44 case-patients were reported to WHO by the national authorities in China. During this reported period, the causal agent was not identified.

On March 11th, the WHO Director-General reiterated that countries should not give up on stopping the outbreak now that the WHO has characterized it as a pandemic. In the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold, and the number of affected countries has tripled. Six new countries in Africa (Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan) have reported cases of COVID-19 in the next 48 hours. You can keep track of the situation by consulting the WHO health emergency dashboard focus on COVID-19.

The COVID-19 virus infects people of all ages. However, evidence to date suggests that two groups of people are at a higher risk of getting severe COVID-19 disease: older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease).<sup>1</sup> underlying medical conditions. The WHO emphasizes that all must protect themselves from COVID-19 in order to protect others. Indigenous people are among the groups of people exposed to a high risk of contracting the virus. They experience disproportionately high levels of maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition, cardiovascular illnesses, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis.<sup>2</sup>



# FOR INDIGENOUS HEALTH EQUALITY

AN INDIGENOUS EMERGENCY  
HEALTH RAPID RESPONSE FUND

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>2</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs,  
Indigenous People





**COVID-19  
PANDEMIC:  
WHAT DOES THIS  
MEAN FOR THE  
INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES LIVING  
IN VOLUNTARY  
ISOLATION AND TO  
THE UNCONTACTED  
TRIBES?**





## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LIVING IN VOLUNTARY ISOLATION AND TO THE UNCONTACTED TRIBES?

The number of indigenous peoples in Africa is estimated to be around 50 million <sup>3</sup>, more than the entire population of Spain. Most indigenous peoples are nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists and hunter-gatherers. Many of them are faced with multiple challenges, including the dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, forced assimilation into the way of life of the dominant groups and marginalization.<sup>4</sup>

COVID-19 is rapidly spreading across the world and is likely to affect indigenous communities in forest region of the world more than other categories of human being. Indigenous peoples' health status is severely affected by their living conditions, income levels, employment rates, access to safe water, sanitation, health services and food availability.

In addition, ***Indigenous peoples experience major structural barriers in accessing health care. These include geographical isolation and poverty which results in not having the means to pay the high cost for transport or treatment. This is further compounded by discrimination, racism and a lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity. Many health systems do not reflect the social and cultural practices and beliefs of indigenous peoples.***

Given these challenges, important measures are adopted to limit the spread of COVID-19s in indigenous territories. Africa's indigenous peoples can make major contributions to their countries. Their traditional knowledge and the effective use and preservation of their lands and natural resources can inspire worldwide measures for conservation and mitigation, particularly in the face of climate change.

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3 International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs, 2013

4 UN Department of Public Information



## OUR COMMITMENT, AND HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE?

Environmental Defenders Ltd and Comuni-dados have formed a coalition and created an **Indigenous Emergency Health Rapid Response Fund** to provide resources and emergency health protections of indigenous peoples in at risk regions in Africa that usually receives significantly less scientific and policy attention.

The support will help to provide critical considerations and practical actions to keep schools safe and territories of indigenous people safe from COVID-19. Our goal is to directly provide funding to indigenous organizations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Uganda, Kenya and to make sure that children and their families remain protected and informed. Thinking at Ogiek Peoples of Kenya, Endoroit People of Kenya, Masai People of Kenya, Batwaa People of Uganda, Baka People of Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic, Pygmy People of Democratic Republic Congo and Central African Republic, Bayaka People, Mbuti People, Effe People, hunter-gatherer Pygmies, the Mbororo pastoralists, the Kirdi mountain communities of Cameroon, and so on.

Objectives of the fund include:

### OBJECTIVES OF THE FUND

- **Providing children and households with essential information in local languages about how to prevent infection and protect themselves;**
- **Promoting best handwashing and hygiene practices and providing hygiene supplies;**
- **Cleaning and disinfecting common spaces and buildings, especially water and sanitation facilities.**



These funds are being distributed directly to indigenous organizations and other local partners where cases of COVID-19 have been reported, preventing further spread of the disease and providing emergency health interventions to the communities at risk of being affected by the COVID-19.

**We ask individuals, collectives, national and international organisations and international development multilateral agencies and organizations to support this initiative, providing organizational and communication support, translations, scientific support and by contributing to the fund through donations.**

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Kampala, 14th March 2020

*Environmental Defenders  
Comuni-dados*

## HOW TO DONATE

Bank Name: **Equity Bank**  
Bank branch: **Kawempe branch**  
Account name: **Environmental Defenders Limited**  
Swift code: **EQBLUGKA**  
Account number (currency USD): **1042201395092**



#### ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS ltd

Ugandan organization that provide capacity-building support to human rights and environmental defenders in Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and Somalia to enable activists and journalists under threat in sub-Saharan Africa to continue their important advocacy to advance human rights, land rights, environmental rights, and indigenous people's rights.



#### COMUNI-DADOS

Italian/Brazilian collective that provide technological support in mapping the territory with a multi-dimensional approach. Works with communities to find proper tools to support initiatives directed to safeguard human, social and environmental rights.





COMUNI-DADOS

COVID-19  
EMERGENCY HEALTH RAPID  
RESPONSE FUND FOR  
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**WE NEED YOUR  
SUPPORT !  
JOIN THE INITIATIVE**