

Joint Statement by the Heads of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, the Caribbean Community, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on the COVID-19 Pandemic

Joint Statement by the Heads of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, the Caribbean Community, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on the COVID-19 Pandemic



The global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact on the entire world population requires the global community to work together to address the consequences to human health and disruptive effects on an interconnected world economy. The devastating COVID-19 pandemic is reshaping our world and exacerbating inequalities in our societies. Together, we must ensure coordinated and inclusive response and recovery efforts, to build economies and societies that are healthy, equitable, safe, clean, and resilient.

The Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) extend their solidarity to the global community, particularly in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, in our collective and resolute fight against the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic - the invisible enemy of humanity.

During this challenging time, it is vital to promote increased coordination among all countries and regions with respect to the prevention and treatment of, and eventual cure for COVID-19. We echo the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire to reinforce diplomatic action, enable the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance, and protect the persons who are most vulnerable to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative effect on all economies in the world, particularly in terms of commodity prices, fiscal revenues, foreign exchange receipts, foreign financial flows, food supply chains, travel restrictions, the travel, hotel and tourism industries, and labour markets. **We recognize** that these economic and social challenges are likely to be more disastrous in developing countries. **We are gravely concerned** about the potentially dire consequences to the economies and livelihoods of our Member States.

While welcoming the recent decision of international creditors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to provide debt relief to low income countries, **we call** for this relief to include the most vulnerable economies in the world, including our Member States.

The COVID-19 crisis is stretching the already challenged health systems in many of our countries, which also lack the required medical equipment, test kits, and protective gear that are in high demand worldwide and difficult to source. It is expected that COVID-19 cases will overwhelm health facilities. This will adversely affect patients with high-burden communicable and non-communicable diseases, who will lack access to adequate care. This could result in increased morbidity and mortality. **We note** with concern that social protection issues are emerging as a result of COVID-19, particularly for the most vulnerable in our communities. **We call** for global COVID-19 recovery efforts that build health infrastructure and systems, as well as social protection measures, to ensure equitable and inclusive access for all.

We acknowledge the potentially dire consequences to the economies and livelihoods of our Member States, and the exacerbation of inequalities in our societies. Determined to protect the lives and livelihoods of our people, **we also call** on our development partners and relevant multilateral organisations - the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations (UN), the World Bank Group (WBG), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO) - to put in

place the needed short, medium, and long-term emergency response programmes, in coordination with our regional institutions, to assist developing countries to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We urge our development partners to collaborate expeditiously by reviewing any unnecessary bureaucracy to facilitate movement of health professionals, essential cargo, and emergency medical supplies to the affected communities in our regions.

We **recognise** that while COVID-19 is the most urgent threat facing humanity today, climate change remains the greatest threat in the longer term. **We also call** on all countries to ensure that the economic recovery measures to tackle COVID-19 align with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The transboundary nature of this pandemic reinforces the importance of multilateralism to address our common challenges.

In light of this ongoing crisis and the disproportionate socio-economic effects on countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, **we resolve**, on behalf of the organisations listed below, to coordinate our efforts and pool available resources, in order to aid our respective Member States to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

H.E. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)

H.E. Irwin LaRocque, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Caribbean Forum of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (CARIFORUM).

H.E. Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

Tags: [News articles](#) ^[1]

Source URL: <http://www.acp.int/content/joint-statement-heads-organisation-african-caribbean-and-pacific-states-caribbean-community->

Links:

[1] <http://www.acp.int/category/story-type/news-articles>