

ACFID Resolution 3-2020



AUSTRALIAN
COUNCIL
FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

RESOLUTION on COVID-19 and Systems Change

Pre-Amble

COVID-19 has now taken the lives of more than one million people worldwide and is considered the world's largest ever global humanitarian emergency given its spread to every region in the world. The United Nations (UN) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have warned of three waves of crisis as a direct result of the global health pandemic:

- a. A public health crisis as health systems come under extreme strain around the globe; and in low income countries where systems are fragile and underfunded, the death toll is expected to be higher.
- b. Economic shock as the world faces the worst economic recession since the Great Depression with the livelihoods of an estimated 1.6 billion people in the informal economy expected to be decimated by lockdowns and economic restrictions; the majority of whom will be women left destitute with no safety net or social protection.
- c. Hunger catastrophe and human starvation intensified by the climate crisis with a quarter of a billion people pushed to the brink of starvation unless swift action is taken to provide food and humanitarian relief to the most-at-risk regions.

COVID-19 is expected to set poverty eradication and gender equality back decades. Women and girls are disproportionately bearing the impacts with widespread job losses, alarming increases in gender-based violence in all regions, increased unpaid labour and a rise in early and forced marriage.

Resolutions

ACFID acknowledges the devastating impacts that COVID-19 is having on the communities its members work with around the globe. In its engagement with the Australian Government, ACFID will work to drive long-term, just solutions to the intersecting health, economic and hunger crises. We will promote:

1. **Principles of good humanitarian donorship**, ensuring humanitarian funding is allocated in proportion to where there is greatest need globally. We recognise that support for our immediate neighbours in the Pacific is important and will continue to advocate for increased support to the regions of Africa, South and West Asia, and the Middle East, where poverty and conflict are affecting lives and livelihoods.
2. **Fair and just trade**: As part of supporting the economic recovery of our bilateral trading partners, ensuring that the terms of trade work for people and planet. This includes promoting decent working conditions, quality and universally accessible public services, and safe environmental standards.
3. **Solutions to the debt crisis**: In offering assistance to other countries, Australia's support should not exacerbate growing debt distress among low income countries. We will support debt cancellation and promote a long-term resolution to the debt crisis brokered through the United Nations.
4. **A public-goods health response**, ensuring Australia adopts a global solidarity approach to the pandemic and associated health crisis. This includes unhindered global sharing of technology and know-how in order that rapid responses for the handling of COVID-19 can be put in place. New diagnostic, therapeutics and vaccines must be made available promptly, in sufficient quantities and at affordable prices to meet global demand.

Moved: Michelle Higelin, ActionAid Australia

Seconded: Kate Lee, Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA