



Ms. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP  
Secretary of State for International Development  
Department for International Development  
22 Whitehall  
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Ms. Chi Onwurah MP  
Chair of the APPG for Africa  
c/o The Royal African Society  
21 Russell Square  
London WC1H 0PD

1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

Dear Anne-Marie,

As Chair of the APPG for Africa, I am writing to ask you what actions DFID are taking to support efforts to respond to the escalation of Covid 19 in Africa.

In 2015, the APPG for Africa undertook a lengthy enquiry and published a report on the *Lessons from Ebola Affected Community: being prepared for future health crisis*, a copy herewith, and we believe the findings are especially relevant for response to Covid 19.

Our inquiry found that the initial response to Ebola from international partners and national governments was undermined by a lack of trust between such external actors and local communities. This was fuelled by the spread of misinformation and a lack of communication between initial responders and affected communities. To prevent this in future epidemics, our report recommended that early community engagement and mobilisation led by trusted community leaders must be an essential priority in responding to all future health crisis.

The UK's initial response to Ebola was criticised as overly authoritarian and unwilling to engage with local concerns and did not place enough emphasis on social mobilisation. As the response progressed, the disadvantages of this approach were recognised, and programmes incorporating community engagement were developed and supported. In the international community, the UK was later lauded for its support of programs that focus on community engagement, however, this was largely confined to targeted, vertical programs.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa  
c/o The Royal African Society, SOAS, 21 Russel Square, London WC1B 5EA  
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The Royal African Society provides the Secretariat for the APPG for Africa



As such, members of the APPG for Africa would like to know what actions DFID is taking to work with Government, international actors and community leaders to support the dissemination of accurate information on Covid 19 and for existing health facilities in affected communities? Is DFID prioritising programmes which put community ownership and mobilisation at the centre of the fight against Covid 19?

It is equally clear that the disruption to the global and local economies caused by Covid-19 is also having a major impact on Africa, where countries cannot throw the kind of money at people that western governments have been doing. Is DFID undertaking any collaborative work with other donors and the International Financial Institutions to help protect African economies from the worst side effects of the global slow-down, and help them continue to fund essential health provision?

Finally, we would also welcome the opportunity to host a remote meeting with you to learn more about DFID's response to Covid 19 in Africa. If your office could *laisse* directly with Hetty Bailey on [baileyh@parliament.uk](mailto:baileyh@parliament.uk) to arrange a time that would be appreciated.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

**Chi Onwurah MP**  
**Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa**

**Lord Chidgey**  
**Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa**