ADVISORY TO AFRICAN MINISTRIES OF HEALTH AND GOVERNMENTS
from the African Palliative Care Association
and the Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance
for COVID-19 response

1. Adherence to WHO approach

The WHO approach of health promotion, prevention, early detection, isolation and treatment of patients should be used. In addition, rehabilitation and palliative care should be part of any COVID-19 response to improve the quality of life of those infected.

2. Intense contact tracing

The care of infected persons and aggressive contact tracing should be prioritised by all countries.

3. Multisectorial collaboration

To beat the COVID-19 pandemic, governments should have multisectoral responses that protect the uninfected, provide care for the infected and preserve the general health of the country and economy.

Orchestrated comprehensive multisectoral actions by ministries of Health, Finance, Trade and Industry, local government and other stakeholders will go a long way in avoiding ineffective singular responses by the ministries of health alone.

4. Prevention and testing

In many African countries, it may not be possible to test everybody who needs to be tested, but the following WHO recommended prevention measures should be observed:

- social distancing
- frequent washing of hands with soap and running water and
- avoiding of contact with the infected persons.

5. Health worker safety protocols

Ministries of health should provide protocols for the protection of health workers in hospitals, hospices, community and home care settings to mainstream evidence-based safe care delivery practices, which protect health workers as well as community and family caregivers.
6. Access to medicines for pre-existing conditions

Health facilities that manage patients with pre-existing conditions such as TB, HIV, diabetes mellitus and other NCDs should continue to provide access to medicine refills without exposing such patients to the coronavirus.

7. Health facility isolation rooms

Health facilities that receive COVID-19 patients should have ministries of health approved isolation rooms, clear patient flow charts and signage at the facility.

8. Protocols for health care worker protection

Ministries of health should have protocols that guide health workers on how they can provide the service during the COVID-19 outbreak without infecting themselves or taking the virus home.

9. Translation for public messaging

Health messaging for the general population should, at minimum be translated into all commonly used national languages.

10. Countering fake news and misinformation

Ministries of health should have mechanisms of countering fake news and wrong information, especially on social media. Each media house in the country should dedicate air time to communicate accurate messaging from the Ministry of Health and WHO on COVID-19.

Contact information for technical assistance

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