SENIOR AFRICAN POLICY MAKERS REAFFIRM THEIR STRONG COMMITMENT TO FIGHT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

At the 23rd Senior Policy Seminar held virtually on 30 March 2021, and hosted by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) focusing on the theme, “Global COVID-19 Health Pandemic and Its Implications for the African Economies,” senior policy makers from around the continent adopted a declaration as an affirmation of their strong commitment to fight the Covid-19 Pandemic in Sub Saharan Africa.

Declaration
March 30, 2021

We African Senior Policy Makers assembled at the AERC Senior Policy Seminar,

Affirming that the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most devastating global health and economic crisis in modern history,

Recognizing that the calamity has affected virtually every facet of socio-economic functioning and is showing us what it means to face a crisis in a world whose systems are global and interlinked,

Further recognizing that the economic and social costs of COVID-19 pandemic have been felt across the globe,

Commending governments across Africa for their efforts to address the health and economic impacts of the virus,

Noting that the ongoing pandemic is associated with unprecedented and significant health and economic challenges to both developed and developing countries,

Further noting that the impact of COVID-19 on Sub-Sahara African (SSA) countries is expected to be considerable, bringing a significant burden on the already struggling economies,
Mindful that most of the countries lack the resources to combat the socio-economic disruption caused by the spread of the virus and the measures intended to combat it,

Appreciating that with new infections on the rise, it is a race against time for governments to re-look at some policy interventions necessary to provide appropriate coping and recovery mechanisms to respond to the crisis,

Acknowledging that the effects of COVID-19 cut across all the economic sectors, however, some sectors are bound to have disproportionately larger impacts. For instance, transport, wholesale and retail trade, tourism, and personal services, including those engaged in the entertainment industry,

1. **Affirm** that a central pillar of governments’ response to the pandemic has been an important and necessary turn to investing in social protection programmes and that social protection is an effective way to protect immediate human needs and to cushion economic reversals by protecting productive assets;

2. **Commend** the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and partner development agencies and institutions to strengthen the evidence base for policy and programme design and implementation for tackling COVID-19, urging them to continue to work to develop a practical, but cutting-edge Research and Development agenda to address policy and programming challenges on accelerating post COVID-19 recovery strategies;

3. **Take note** of different fiscal measures that have been instituted including the universal cash transfers, targeted transfers to youth and elderly, tax reliefs and rebates to mitigate the challenges of COVID-19;

4. **Commit** to design and implement measures benefitting the poor directly and removing the belief in an inevitable trade-off between efficiency (growth) and equity (poverty reduction); and

5. **Further commit** to undertake fiscal measures that might be appropriate in reducing present poverty and generating a more inclusive growth pattern such as better health facilities benefiting the poorer segments of society post COVID-19.

Please find a link to the meeting recording: https://aercafrica-org.zoom.us/rec/share/_9oJWuJ5sdtaNnZeg5s6O3iBhSKTBZFgIF7Qjp3g1ZMopf1nzHlglks_HBlJuPU.ONOVS9UscFod0Gb3