



AFRICAN UNION CHAIR PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA APPOINTS SPECIAL ENVOYS TO MOBILISE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR CONTINENTAL FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

12 APRIL 2020

The Chairperson of the African Union, President of the Republic of South Africa His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Dr Donald Kaberuka, Mr Tidjane Thiam and Mr Trevor Manuel as Special Envoys of the African Union to mobilise international support for Africa's efforts to address the economic challenges African countries will face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Special Envoys will be tasked with soliciting rapid and concrete support as pledged by the G20, the European Union and other international financial institutions.

President Ramaphosa says: "In the light of the devastating socio-economic and political impact of the pandemic on African countries these institutions need to support African economies that are facing serious economic challenges with a comprehensive stimulus package for Africa, including deferred debt and interest payments.

"The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been global in both scale and reach, and this necessitates coordinated international action to capacitate all countries to respond effectively, but most particularly developing countries that continue to shoulder a historical burden of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment," President Ramaphosa said.

President Ramaphosa added: “The sentiment expressed in two recent letters written to the G20 by a group of world leaders and a team of esteemed economists underscore the importance of bolstering health systems in poorer countries; this can only be done with the support of the international community.”

Dr Okonjo-Iweala is an internationally respected economist and development expert and served two terms as Minister of Finance of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. She has also served as Managing Director of the World Bank.

Dr Kaberuka is an economist and former President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the African Development Bank (AfDB). He is the former Finance Minister of Rwanda and in 2016 was appointed as a Special Envoy of the African Union on sustain-able financing for the AU and funding for Peace in Africa.

Mr Manuel was the longest-serving Minister of Finance in the Republic of South Africa and formerly headed the country’s National Planning Commission. In 2018 he was appointed as an Investment Envoy by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to engage domestic and international investors as part of the country’s national investment drive.

Mr Thiam is a banker and businessman. He is the former Chief Executive Officer of Credit Suisse and also served as Chief Financial Officer and CEO of Prudential. He also has a background in management consulting and worked for McKinsey and Company.

The AU Chair said the appointment of the special envoys would expedite the process of securing economic support to enable countries on the continent to respond swiftly to this grave public health emergency. President Ramaphosa said the envoys brought with them a wealth of experience and enjoyed longstanding relationships in the international financial community.

“The African Union is immensely encouraged by the support that has been extended by the international community thus far. It is an affirmation that as nations of the world, we are all in this together. We must now focus on efforts to marshal every resource at our disposal to ensure that this pandemic is contained, and does not result in the collapse of already ailing economies and financial systems on the continent,” President Ramaphosa said.

**ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

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2020-04-12

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