

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PACKS Africa is a youth-led Pan-African think tank operating from Accra (Ghana) and providing support services in the evidence-to-policy sector.

We have a vision of a Pan-African development process that is fueled by evidence-informed policies.

We work mostly with government agencies across Africa to enhance production and use of evidence in policy, practice and general social policies.

Our work normally involves;

- Information Systems Research
- Knowledge Management
- Advocacy for Evidence-Informed Policies

On the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our work involves Goal 9 (target 9.5), Goal 16 (target 16.10) and Goal 17 (targets 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.17, 17.18 and 17.19).

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knowledge for Pan-African  
development*

## MANAGING CORONAVIRUS IN GHANA — USE BULK OF FUNDS FOR RESEARCH-RELATED ACTIVITIES

**Accra, Ghana** – We wish to commend Government of Ghana for the announcement made on Wednesday, 11th March 2020 to the effect of releasing the cedi equivalent of **one hundred million US dollars (USD 100 Million)** for combating coronavirus in the country. This is in line with what other countries are doing with respect to the pandemic – with China committing 16 Billion USD, 12 Billion GBP by the UK, and 28.3 Billion USD by Italy.

With a culture of high 'patronage' in the country, however, and with the 2020 elections fast approaching, we wish to draw attention of government that we are also aware of the temptation to expend some of the funds on activities that may benefit resource mobilisation efforts towards the upcoming elections. We wish to encourage government to resist that temptation, and make use of this emergency funds for activities that will address immediate and remote concerns on the disease.

Since coronavirus (COVID-19) is a scientific phenomenon, we request that government concentrates the bulk of the funds to the production and use of evidence, which will be necessary to make informed decisions in the quest to combat the disease in Ghana. Much of the knowledge that is available currently on this pandemic is as a result of investments by the Chinese government at the onset of the condition in their country. Ghana should be able to invest in medical research and multi-disciplinary studies to acquire unique insights on COVID-19 in the country.

Potential areas for investment of the funds may include disease surveillance, studies on public health and health service management for the disease, efficacy of hygiene interventions and other preventive measures, COVID-19 as a zoonotic disease, risk communication and community engagement, tackling COVID-19 as disaster management, studies on the effects of COVID-19 on supply chain management, efficacy of measures to tackle fake news on COVID-19, crisis modelling, economic impacts, social stigma and cultural customs and their impacts, and statistical analysis of various kinds, including those on vulnerable populations.

We are sure that these varied studies, and the evidence that will be produced from them (including the data, publications, tacit knowledge), when juxtaposed with the views of citizens (through regular interaction) will provide the necessary resources to technically combat the pandemic, while allaying fears among the public.

Following these recommendations therefore, we wish to express our greatest commitment to pursuing this matter to its utmost conclusion. As the Minister for Information (Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah) suggested in an interview on Citi FM on Thursday, management of this fund should not be the regular political issue of the Minority against government. COVID-19 is a national crisis that can be sufficiently resolved with substantial use of adequate quality evidence.

**END**