

Pandemic recovery presents an opportunity for Africa to reinvent its growth model

2021 Ibrahim Forum Report highlights Africa's structural weaknesses exposed by the pandemic and identifies avenues towards a more self-sufficient future

[Download: 2021 Ibrahim Forum Report](#)

[Register: 2021 Ibrahim Governance Weekend](#)

Dakar and London, 2 June 2021 – The 2021 Ibrahim Forum Report, *COVID-19 in Africa One Year On: Impact and Prospects*, outlines how recovery from the pandemic provides an opportunity to define and drive a new growth model for the continent.

Launched by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation ahead of the 2021 Ibrahim Governance Weekend (IGW), the report presents new analysis on Africa's challenges as exposed by the pandemic, including weak health capacities, setbacks in human development, rising instability and a vulnerable economic growth model. The comprehensive report on the impact of COVID-19 across the continent serves as an urgent wake-up call. It also points to clear avenues where Africa can now build back better.

Commenting on the launch of today's report, **Mo Ibrahim, Founder and Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation**, said: "Africa has demonstrated strong leadership in its response to COVID-19. However, the data also show where we are falling short. We now have an opportunity to harness lessons from the pandemic to build an African-led recovery that champions good governance, strengthens continental integration, and puts young people at its centre. This will be the focus of the 2021 Ibrahim Governance Weekend and I look forward to our discussions, involving voices from across Africa and beyond."

Using the latest data, the report provides a comprehensive picture of the impact of the pandemic across Africa, highlighting structural weaknesses in its health and economic systems. It also reveals how COVID-19 has deepened existing development and security challenges, and is exacerbating a pre-existing youth unemployment crisis.

However, the report also outlines the continent's strong and unified response to this crisis, and points to opportunities for African leadership to create lasting change for generations to come. An African-led recovery, underpinned by stronger continental integration, economic diversification, a green strategy and digital leapfrogging, can pave the way for a more self-reliant, self-sufficient Africa.

Key findings include:

- African countries introduced contact-tracing within two days of the first confirmed COVID-19 case, building on best practices established during previous disease outbreaks like Ebola.
- Across the continent, 20 countries introduced comprehensive contact-tracing before the first 100 cases of infection, compared to only 14 European Union countries.
- In 2018, sub-Saharan Africa spent on average only 1.9% of its GDP on public health, the second smallest share globally
- Africa's health capacity is among the lowest in the world with an average of 135 hospital beds, 3 ICU beds and 35 physicians per 100,000 people
- The refocusing of limited resources towards the pandemic means combined excess deaths from malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS could now exceed one million if not addressed.
- School closures across the continent were aggravated by a shortfall in remote learning capacities, with Africa's growing youth population missing almost seven months of schooling.

- Women and girls are facing increased vulnerabilities, including rising gender-based violence.
- One million girls in sub-Saharan Africa may never return to school after becoming pregnant during school closures.
- Africa is the only continent where violence rose in 2020 compared to 2019.
- Disruptions to democratic practices and restrictions to civic freedoms risk further undermining citizens' trust in their governments.
- While economic growth in Africa has been positive since 1991, the standstill created by COVID-19 in 2020 led to recession on the continent for the first time in 30 years.
- The pandemic has uncovered structural weaknesses in Africa's growth model and a system overly reliant on external demand for primary commodities, but also on external supply for key goods such as food and pharmaceuticals.
- Africa's ability to respond to the crisis has been impeded by limited fiscal space and complex debt burdens, with as many as 30 countries spending more on repaying public debt than health before the pandemic.

The Ibrahim Forum Report will inform discussions around the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's health, economic and political systems during the Ibrahim Governance Weekend, taking place 3-5 June 2021.

The IGW brings together leaders, decision-makers and youth voices from across Africa and beyond to discuss issues of critical importance to the continent's progress. Unpacking the findings of the Forum Report, the 2021 IGW will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on Africa and the path to recovery.

Discussions will be focused around three themes:

- **Health: Thursday, 3 June 13:20-14:50 GMT**
Lessons from the pandemic: an urgent call to strengthen Africa's health capacities
- **Society and Politics: Friday, 4 June, 13:00-14:30 GMT**
Managing the fallout: setbacks in democracy and rights, and new triggers of instability
- **Economy: Saturday, 5 June, 13:00-14:30 GMT**
Looking ahead: a key opportunity to reinvent Africa's growth model

Speakers and contributors at the 2021 Ibrahim Governance Weekend include:

- **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, Director-General, World Health Organization
- **António Guterres**, Secretary-General, United Nations
- **H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou**, former President of Niger, 2020 Ibrahim Laureate
- **H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**, former President of Liberia, Co-Chair of the Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response
- **Dr Donald Kaberuka**, African Union Special Envoy on COVID-19
- **Ursula von der Leyen**, President, European Commission
- **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson, African Union Commission
- **Charles Michel**, President, European Council
- **Amina J. Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations
- **Dr John Nkengasong**, Director, Africa CDC
- **Dr Vera Songwe**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Register for the 2021 IGW

Registration for media is open at the following link: <https://mif.live/igw/media/registration>

All registered media will be able to attend a dedicated media Q&A with IGW spokespeople at 09:00 GMT on Saturday 5 June. More details will be released closer to the time.

Contact MIF

For more information, or to request an interview with a MIF spokesperson please contact:

- MIF media team, mifmedia@portland-communications.com, +44 7922 877 489

We encourage you to follow the live feed and discussions on Twitter by using #IGW21, or following @Mo_IbrahimFdn.

You can follow the Mo Ibrahim Foundation on:

- Twitter: @Mo_IbrahimFdn
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MoIbrahimFoundation>
- YouTube: <https://youtube.com/user/moibrahimfoundation>
- Instagram: <https://instagram.com/moibrahimfoundation>
- Website: mo.ibrahim.foundation

About the Mo Ibrahim Foundation

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established in 2006 with a focus on the critical importance of political leadership and public governance in Africa. By providing tools to support progress in leadership and governance, the Foundation aims to promote meaningful change on the continent.

The Foundation, which is a non-grant making organisation, focusses on defining, assessing and enhancing governance and leadership in Africa through five main initiatives:

- Ibrahim Index of African Governance
- Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership
- Ibrahim Governance Weekend
- Ibrahim Fellowships and Scholarships
- Now Generation Network