



## **Wearing A Mask Still Matters: The World Rallies to Continue Masking to Stop the Spread of COVID-19**

*World Mask Week (July 12-18) is a global movement to encourage continued masking-wearing to reach the end of the COVID-19 pandemic*

July 12, 2021, Seattle, WA—Pandemic Action Network, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the African Union, 3M and over 50 global, regional, and local partner organizations announced today the launch of World Mask Week 2021 (July 12-18) — a global campaign underlining a universal truth: masking in public, in combination with handwashing and physical distancing, is still one of the best ways we can protect ourselves and others against COVID-19, especially our most vulnerable community members as countries race to vaccinate their populations.

According to WHO, 2021 is already a deadlier year in the pandemic than 2020. Today, we are seeing a two-track pandemic emerge: some regions are up against the spread of variants and rising case numbers, while others with access to vaccines are lifting masking and other public health restrictions.

“Everyone who has worn a mask in public has helped slow the spread of COVID-19,” said Deputy Director of the Africa CDC, Dr. Ahmed Ouma Ogwel. “As the pandemic continues to spread and access to vaccines has been slow across much of Africa, we must fight against pandemic fatigue and continue to do what we can to keep everyone safe.”

The campaign encourages people and organizations around the world to rally behind the continued importance of wearing a mask. People will be asked to show their support by sharing a statement on social media with #WorldMaskWeek, and a picture, or video with their favorite mask, tagging others with the message of “Thanks For Masking”.

“The pandemic is not over. We should rightly recognize and encourage our progress, but we must also put our expertise to work and stay vigilant in fighting the pandemic,” said Dr. Denise Rutherford, senior vice president and chief corporate affairs officer, 3M. “3M and our team members will continue to do our part. We are proud to participate in World Mask Week because when you wear a mask, you are helping protect the most vulnerable. To all who are doing their part to stop the spread of COVID-19, we thank you.”

Face coverings block the spray of droplets from sneezing, coughing, talking, singing, or shouting when worn over the mouth and nose. Consistent mask wearing can also reduce the spread of the virus among people who are infected with COVID-19, but do not have symptoms, or are unaware they have it. While a COVID-19 vaccine will prevent serious illness and death, the extent to which it keeps people from being infected and passing the virus on to others is still emerging.

“Last year, with the first World Mask Week, we sparked a global movement in 117 countries to wear masks. This year, as the pandemic persists in much of the world, we’re coming together around the message that masking still matters and to show gratitude for those who have worn a mask and continue to mask up,” said Eloise Todd, Co-Founder of the Network. “In order to end this pandemic for everyone, we must deploy all the tools available around the world to fight COVID-19 - and that includes mask-wearing.” To mark the urgency of this moment, Pandemic Action Network has released a [Why Masking Still Matters](#) policy brief including key messaging and recommendations for governments, businesses, and individuals.

The Pandemic Action Network was launched in April 2020 to drive collective action to help bring an end to COVID-19 and to ensure the world is prepared for the next pandemic. Since launching, the Network has been working with influencers to promote mask wearing, along with social distancing and handwashing. World Mask Week provides the opportunity for global unity around a single message: Let’s keep masking — not just for ourselves, but for our families, our communities, those who are most vulnerable, and the world.

For more information about World Mask Week, please visit [worldmaskweek.com](http://worldmaskweek.com).

### **About the Pandemic Action Network**

Pandemic Action Network drives collective action to bring an end to COVID-19 and to ensure the world is prepared for the next pandemic. The Network consists of more than 100 global multi-sector partners, working both publicly and behind the scenes to inform policy, mobilize public support and resources, and catalyze action in areas of acute need. Partners are aligned in a belief that every effort made in the fight against COVID-19 should leave a longer-term legacy that better prepares humanity to deal with outbreaks and help prevent another deadly and costly pandemic from happening again. Learn more at [www.pandemicactionnetwork.org](http://www.pandemicactionnetwork.org).

### **About the African Union**

The African Union leads Africa’s development and integration in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the regional economic communities and African citizens. The vision of the African Union is to accelerate progress towards an integrated, prosperous and inclusive Africa, at peace with itself, playing a dynamic role in the continental and global arena, effectively driven by an accountable, efficient and responsive Commission. Learn more at: <http://www.au.int/en>

### **About the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention**

Africa CDC is a specialized technical institution of the African Union that strengthens the capacity and capability of Africa’s public health institutions as well as partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks, based on data-driven interventions and programmes. Learn more at: <http://www.africacdc.org>.

**About 3M** At 3M, we apply science in collaborative ways to improve lives daily as our employees connect with customers all around the world. Learn more about 3M’s creative solutions to global challenges at [www.3M.com](http://www.3M.com) or on Twitter [@3M](#) or [@3MNews](#).

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