

## Helping fight coronavirus in Africa

Throughout its 75-year history, MAF has been serving isolated communities across the developing world. Yet during the outbreak of coronavirus, the word 'isolation' has taken on a whole new meaning.

Implementing every precaution to protect its staff and the remote communities MAF serves, the organisation has been quick to offer support wherever possible.

The first call came on 28 March in Liberia, when MAF Pilot Steven Biggs responded to a request from Liberia's Ministry of Health. 'We flew a medical team to Zwedru to test a suspected case,' Steven explains. 'A coronavirus diagnosis in remote Liberia could be devastating as there's very little in the way of health facilities here.'



In South Sudan, President, Salva Kiir Mayardit, publicly thanked MAF for its support so far. On 11 April, the WHO and South Sudan's Ministry of Health asked MAF to transport coronavirus test kits to Wau, a two-hour flight from Juba. MAF Pilot Wim Hobo commented, 'We are happy to keep flying in South Sudan, and to support the people in this way.'

Communications Officer Jenny Davies, based in Juba, has been in her role for just eight weeks and has watched the country brace itself for coronavirus. 'It feels like being on the edge of a precipice,' she says. 'Washing hands with soap seems such an unlikely weapon in a country where crises are usually fought with guns.'

Although testing in Africa is a real issue, Henk-Jan Muusse, MAF's

Regional Director for Africa, says most governments reacted more swiftly than many of their European counterparts.

'We had Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo very recently, so Africa is used to fighting viruses,' he explains. 'Authorities took it very seriously because of their experience — this could be one reason why the spread of the disease appears to be slower in Africa.'

Henk-Jan is overseeing how MAF operations can support African governments during the crisis and is leaning on God's sovereignty during these uncertain times. 'We have the opportunity to pray for those who are struggling more than us,' he concludes. 'He is the one we cling to and who gives us hope.'

### Pause for prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are our refuge and strength during this very strange and uncertain time. Please keep every member of our MAF family safe, both at home and overseas, as we all play our part to bring an end to this crisis.

### Tested negative

MAF's one-hour flight to test a potential coronavirus case in Liberia saved medics a 20-hour journey on terrible roads. We thank God that the test was negative and pray that MAF would be used strategically to help limit the spread of the virus in this fragile nation.

### Keep updated

As you play your part in preventing the spread of coronavirus, we want to keep you up-to-date with how MAF is responding across the globe. You can find details of flights helping to tackle the virus on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.co.uk/mafuk](https://www.facebook.co.uk/mafuk) or by visiting the MAF website [www.maf-uk.org/news](http://www.maf-uk.org/news).