



WHO CARES?

Joyce Boham

I cry
 each day of hunger, of water, of family, of friends
 I plead
 for health, equal opportunity, quality education
 I yearn
 for somewhere to rest, at night, and in day
 Poverty pushing me to leave my family in search of basic needs.
 Losing my child, my family, my property
 O COVID-19, I am moved.
 I am moved to sleep on the street,
 And you shout 'Virus! Keep social distance!'
 Who cares? Do you care?

I sell at night
 A woman, a bread winner
 I wake at dawn to find the profits.
 A sachet of water keeps me fresh.
 Where is one meal a day for my children?
 Suddenly demolishing my home for development,
 And you scream 'Stay at home!'
 Did you say 'home'?
 I cannot travel back home
 Lockdown and barriers
 I cannot run back even into bondage
 My legs are weak
 I cannot go back to the makeshift home I share
 It is no more
 Really!! Stay at home?
 Which home?
 Do you care about my health and safety now?
 Who cares? Do they care?

They cry that it's a pandemic.
 It's deadly, it's unseen, yes, it is no respecter of persons.
 I hear it affects the powerful, the famous, the rich,
 The helpers and even our grandparents.

They did not know, I have been fighting a pandemic too
Homelessness, starvation, maternal mortality, CSM,
breast and cervical cancer, Ebola
I deal with ethnic and religious conflicts,
I have been shouting, of war, of conflict
political, economic, social, and religious strife,
our children, women, our able young men, and the elderly
You did not come to my aid
Your pandemic, who cares?

Do you care?
Give me the skill
Stop the talk and build me factories to work in
If you care, stop the gender-based violence
Stop the outdated cultures
Stop disempowering women
Your laws enforcing agency, they giggle at my pandemic
Who will hear me?
Do you care? empower me to farm, to bake, to sew, to teach, to weld.
If you care, encourage me
Hear me at your discussion table
Hear my dream, not my sex.

Do you care?
I cry for help.
Free me from the shackles.
I am a woman,
I am African.
Build my confidence
Help me resist the oppressor's rule.
If you care, develop my skill
So I too can contribute my quota to make my nation great and strong.
For the sake of my grandchildren
and perhaps even your great grandchildren, who knows?
Let me be a woman and Africa would be strong.
Who cares
Enough?