



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

1st April, 2020

PRESS STATEMENT ON PREPAREDNESS OF COUNTIES **ON COVID-19**

We continue to acknowledge the efforts of the National and County Governments put in place to contain the spread of the Corona Virus. We also commend the citizens who have heeded the call and follow the directions given by the relevant government agencies. It is for the good of all of us especially this time when we get reports of increasing number of COVID - 19 positive cases.

All of us are at a risk of contracting the disease and must do our part in this war. Everyone has a duty to stay safe and protect the other person from the infection and therefore I request you to follow the guidance given by our doctors. There are many vulnerable people amidst us, the aged population, young children and those with underlying medical conditions. As a country we bear a big HIV/ AIDS burden, this may compound our situation should the virus continue to spread. Every individual has a duty to stay safe and protect the other person from the infection.

I make this appeal to you cognizant of the fact that millions of Kenyans risk death by starvation should they stay at home without food. We therefore call upon the National Government to make arrangements and put in place economic stimulus interventions for small and micro enterprises to cushion them against the economic impact of the Corona virus.

I will today address you on the progress County Governments have made, the gaps and challenges identified since last week Wednesday, and finally the call for support that we put out today.

What we have done so far: Measures in place

1. ICU beds and Ventilators

Currently, only 24 Counties have functional ICU facilities, 14 Counties of these having benefited under the MES project. The total number of ICU beds is 162 in the Counties. 22 Counties do not have ICU facilities, we call upon the National Government to support these counties set up ICU facilities.

Cumulatively, there are 161 ventilators in the County ICUs. We need support from the National Government to acquire approximately 300 more ventilators.

2. Human Resources for Health

To address the gaps in Human resources, the National Government has agreed to support Counties to recruit additional 6656 health workers in different cadres for Covid-19 emergency only.

3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All 47 Counties still grapple with the challenge of inadequate PPEs despite the Governments effort to procure some and get donations from philanthropists. As at 20th March, KEMSA distributed the following assorted PPE items: surgical masks 694 Pieces, Face Masks 32,000, medical disposal overalls 910 Pieces, Face shields 735, goggles 610 pieces, examination gloves 769 Boxes of 50pairs in each, Gumboots 140 pairs, N95 masks 2000pieces, only 167 sets of complete PPEs was distributed.

These items are not readily available in the market and if there are, the standards are not guaranteed and the price is prohibitive.

Therefore measures need to be stepped up to procure them in bulk to ensure the country acquires enough stock.

This shortage poses a serious challenge of vulnerability of health workers in the response.

4. Testing for COVID -19

Only two laboratories at the National level i.e. KEMRI and National influenza laboratory are able to test for the virus currently. This in itself is a great risk for the country should the disease spread rapidly in many counties at the same time as is projected in the coming weeks.

The National Government has agreed to operationalize five other laboratories in the regions. As the Council of Governors we request that accreditation of regional laboratories should be fast tracked and private laboratories in known private hospitals such as Aga Khan, Nairobi Hospital, M.P Shah, Mediheal medical centres, among others.

5. Isolation facilities

Most counties have isolation facilities and Counties have been requested by the National Government to expand their ward capacity. It has been agreed by the National Coordinating Committee that more isolation places be identified in Counties and these could include boarding schools to serve as isolation facilities. Governors have agreed to identify these facilities.

6. Community Sensitization

Communities are being sensitized on the need to adhere to the government guidelines on infection prevention in local vernacular languages and sign languages.

7. Reduction of Electricity tariffs

The Council of Governors requests the National Government to lower electricity tariffs for all medical facilities in the Country and not to disconnect in case delay for the next 3 months.

8. Waiver of CESS

County Governments have agreed waive CESS on food stuffs and transportation of the same.

9. Approval of County Supplementary Budget on emergency
The National Treasury is requested to upload the votes of County supplementary budget for emergency on IFMIS with the interim approval of the county budget committees awaiting ratification by the County Assemblies.

Following the agreement between the Council and Kenya Pipeline Company Limited, for the supply of 20,000 litres of sanitizers per week, the Council will with effect from today supply counties with sanitizers as follows:-

Category 1:

Counties with active confirmed cases will receive 520 litres per County per week.

Category 2:

Counties classified as high risk will receive 420 litres, per County per week.

Category 3:

All other counties will receive 400 litres per County per week.

This will be reviewed on a 2 weeks basis.

Finally, we urge all members of the public to remain vigilant as the risk of transmission at the community is higher with more confirmed cases. We ask them to report any suspicious persons who have refused to self-quarantine. We have installed emergency lines in all the 47 County Governments – let us utilize them they are working. We should continue with the

precautionary measures such as maintaining hand washing routine and social keeping distance.

Signed:

H. E. Hon. FCPA Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, EGH, CGJ
Chairman, Council of Governors