



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

8TH July, 2020

PRESS STATEMENT ON PREPAREDNESS OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS ON COVID-19 – WEEK 18

On behalf of the 47 County Governments, I take this opportunity to thank our Excellency the President for his continued leadership during this period.

We appreciate the support extended to Counties through the Ministry of Agriculture by writing off 62 Billion owed by Sugar Companies in various Counties. We also wish to thank the National Treasury for releasing Kshs.10.3 Billion grants from the World Bank to support various programmes in the counties. We further thank the Ministry of Health for releasing allowances for healthcare workers amounting to Kshs. 2.3 Billion.

Fellow Kenyans, as we continue in the fight against this pandemic, we undertake to support the directives issued by the President during the 9th State address on the coronavirus pandemic. Indeed, we support the phased re-opening of the Country. However, we must all remain vigilant by implementing the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.

In the past few days, we have witnessed the number of positive cases recorded averaging 200 per day. It is therefore evident that the disease is spreading at an accelerating rate. This points to the need for intense effort by both levels of government and other stakeholders to confront the pandemic. At the same time it points to concerted effort for individual responsibility failure to which the control of the disease will be impossible and fatal.

Only yesterday we witnessed a very sad sudden death of a Kenyan who was driving himself to seek help and he never managed to get to hospital. He collapsed immediately he got out of his car. Condolences to his family.

The Community Health Volunteers need to be supported to enhance outreach. The Country is open and movement is highly increased so response needs to be swift, timely and effective.

In the past one and a half weeks, the 47 County Governments have addressed the following:-

1. Status of isolation beds in the Counties

Cumulatively, 26 Counties have complied with the President's directive of attaining 300 bed capacity in the isolation facilities. The remaining 21 counties are working towards achieving the same by 22nd July, 2020. They are all at different levels of preparedness.

2. Training and Sensitization of Healthcare workers

38 Counties have trained an additional 846 healthcare workers bringing the total to 19,177. Further, an additional 1247 community health volunteers have been sensitized bringing the total to 64,283.

We appreciate the efforts put in place by partners to train and sensitize healthcare workers and community health volunteers. We urge all the partners to now more than ever reach out and provide practical support directly to the counties. As we all know and can see it is government that is responding to this process not partners – we urge you to channel your support to government.

3. Active quarantine facilities

38 counties have reported on the status of active quarantine facilities. There are 933 people in active quarantine facilities. 382 people who were confined in public quarantine facilities have been released.

In the last one and a half weeks, the general decrease in number of people in quarantine facilities has been attributed to the uptake of self-quarantine. Cumulatively in 46 counties, 3970 tests have been carried out.

4. Recruitment of Healthcare Workers

So far, 8,680 human resource staff have been recruited and already reported to their workstations in Counties except in five counties where they are finalizing the processes. However, by end of July a cumulative total of 9,858 healthcare workers will be on board.

Fellow Kenyans,

I wish to note that Counties that have been dealing with COVID-19 from March, 2020 have shared their lessons on how to confront the disease and minimize the mortality rate while increasing the rate of recovery. In today's statement, I will share with you and other County

Governments the lessons learnt by the County Governments who dealt with this pandemic first.

Lesson 1: Training of Healthcare workers

Training of healthcare workers has proved to be an effective measure towards the fight against Coronavirus. County Governments should embrace continuous training of healthcare workers as well as community health volunteers on the management and response to COVID-19.

Lesson 2: Provision of adequate quarantine and isolation facilities

Functional quarantine and isolation facilities are critical in addressing the pandemic. This has enabled effective response to the pandemic. In dealing with the expected upsurge, all County Governments should up their game in ensuring these facilities are properly running and expedite the completion of the minimum 300 bed capacity.

Further each County needs to pay attention to setting up of a functional ICU and HDU to respond to COVID 19 cases separate from the normal ICU and HDU beds to care for patients in critical condition.

Lesson 3: Strengthening of County Specific Health system and Facilities

From experience it is emerging that those who fall sick from the pandemic will most likely be attended to in the counties where this happens. This being the case, it is important that each County strengthen its systems and ensure the facilities can provide the requisite services to respond to the disease as modeled by Ministry of Health Experts.

Lesson 4: Ensuring availability of Pharmaceuticals and Non-pharmaceutical supplies

Availability of essential medical supplies is key in responding to the virus. Medicine must be available especially for individuals with underlying medical conditions. In addition, availability of non-pharmaceuticals of good quality is key in protecting the healthcare workers who will in turn confidently attend to COVID-19 patients as it reduces the risk of transmission of the virus.

Lesson 5: Enhancing preventive and promotive healthcare services

Capitalizing on preventive and promotive healthcare services through community health platforms is a key measure in stemming the spread of the virus. We therefore urge the members of the public to continue implementing the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.

Lesson 6: Continuous engagement of communities and advocacy on COVID-19 prevention measures

Community engagement is an enabler to effective contact tracing and curbing the spread of the virus. Community sensitization and advocacy is thus paramount in quick response to contact tracing.

Lesson 7: Strengthening disease surveillance system

Nyumba Kumi initiative has proved to be so effective in disease surveillance system. Therefore Counties need to utilize this system for early detection, triage and response. This system proves to be

effective in generating quality data for timely public health interventions.

Lesson 8: Enhanced Testing capacity of COVID-19

It is important to undertake continuous testing especially for healthcare workers. County Governments have continued to test workers attending to COVID-19 patients after every two weeks.

Lesson 9: Adequate allocation and mobilization of additional resources to support COVID-19 response interventions

The resources at the disposal of County Governments are not adequate to enable waging a war to confront this pandemic. Therefore County Governments must partner with Development partners, private sector and other stakeholders, to boost their response measures. Delay in disbursement of funds can be catastrophic and precipitate an apocalypse kind of situation in dealing with COVID-19. We therefore urge the National Government to ensure that disbursements to Counties are effected without undue delay.

Challenges:-

1. Ignorance of COVID-19

The numbers have now proven to all and sundry that the virus is here with us and we must exercise caution. To my fellow politicians, the political class has been singled out by the media as the most unconcerned and reckless in this fight second only to the youth. I urge all politicians including myself to lead by example because we are not immune by virtue of being politicians.

Let us support the President by keeping Kenya safe. We have done it before and we can do it now.

To all Kenyans I once again reiterate what has been said before:-

(a) wear your masks correctly as it reduces the risk of infection by 80%;

(b) maintain social distance as it reduces the risk of transmission by 75%;

(c) if you need not get out please stay and work from home as it reduces the risk by 100%.

Let us ensure strict adherence to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health for us to win this war.

2. Dissemination of Information

There has been a challenge of dissemination of information to the public on COVID-19. As we embrace home-based care, I urge all the County Governments to ensure that training of home-based care starts from the household level as those affected by the virus will be taken care of at that level. It is therefore paramount that every household is trained in a language they understand. Please note care givers even at household level are both men and women.

I urge all the FM stations especially vernacular stations to take on this challenge and train Kenyans on home-based care the same way students are being tutored. Dedicate one hour each week as FM stations and disseminate information to Kenyans in languages that they understand best. County Governments are ready to partner with you to provide all the information and attend your programs.

3. Non-availability of Testing Cartridges

Lack of infrastructure for mass testing has obscured the true reflection of the spread of the virus therefore posing a risk of increased community transmissions. Despite the availability of Genexpert machines in all Counties, testing has been hindered due to lack of cartridges. We cannot contain this virus if we do not expand the testing.

4. Contradictory Results

The results that have emerged that are contradictory is an immediate risk and a roll back on the fight against the virus. It has made the citizens begin to think that their myth is true. This needs to be urgently addressed.

Conclusion

As we continue to put in place measures geared towards the containment of the virus, we must continue to implement physical distancing and sanitation. All Counties must ensure that public spaces are well equipped with sanitation facilities as preventive measures are paramount towards curbing transmission of the disease.

Signed



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