



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

20th August, 2020

PRESS STATEMENT ON PREPAREDNESS OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS ON COVID-19 – WEEK 24

Today I depart from the norm and first speak to an issue that has been in the media for the past three days which is extremely disheartening. The arrest of the three senators, Sen Malala, Sen Lelengwe and Sen Langat ostensibly to stop them from undertaking their role of representing their Counties on a vote in the Senate, is unacceptable. This action is an outright affront to the independence of the Senate and as a Council we condemn. Senators as representatives of the people should be allowed to carry out the constitutional mandate without duress or intimidation.

Now on matters Corona, in the past few days, the Country has surpassed the 30,000 mark of COVID-19 positive cases. The Ministry of Health has reported that 90% of the cases are local transmissions and asymptomatic which has led to the rapid spread of the virus.

While we note that one of the symptoms of the virus is abnormal temperature, most of the reported cases do not exhibit this symptom. Therefore the use of thermo-guns may not be fully effective in early detection of the virus. In this regard, we urge all Kenyans to be vigilant and to voluntarily undertake the COVID-19 test to ensure that we stem the local transmissions. We further urge

employers to facilitate testing of their employees to reduce exposure to the virus.

The reality is that we have lived with the virus for the last 5 months. We must therefore appreciate the existence of the virus and adjust to the new normal failure to which the disease will treat us abnormally. In this regard, we need to extend psychosocial support to all those infected and affected by the virus and stop the stigmatization.

In the last one week, the 47 County Governments have addressed themselves to the following:-

1. Active quarantine facilities

43 Counties reported on the status of active quarantine facilities. Currently, there are **859 patients** in these facilities and **976** who were confined in public quarantine facilities have been released. The number of patients in active quarantine facilities in the Counties has reduced. As at today, 17 counties do not have patients in quarantine facilities.

Cumulatively in 43 counties, **10,490 tests** have been carried out, of which **740** healthcare workers tested positive. To support the infected workers, County Governments have put aside quarantine facilities specifically for the frontline health care workers to facilitate their recovery.

2. Training and sensitization of Healthcare workers

43 counties have trained and sensitized **2,803** healthcare workers. Additionally, **1,402** community health volunteers have been trained

and sensitized on infection prevention and control, critical care and case management.

Cumulatively since the outbreak of COVID-19 **94,782** healthcare workers and **67,190** community health volunteers have been trained and sensitized across the 47 County Governments.

This has been achieved through the collaborative effort from the National Government, County Governments and Partners.

3. Implementation of Home-based care

There are **1,881 patients** in home based isolation care across 43 Counties. A total of **1,145 people** confined in home-based care have now fully recovered. County Governments have continued to offer support to COVID-19 patients and their families with the aim of assisting them to manage the virus.

4. Domestic Tourism

In order to boost domestic tourism in the wake of COVID-19 which has adversely affected the sector, the Council of Governors in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife held a consultative meeting to sensitize counties on the importance of profiling their tourism products so as to help them market themselves and attract investors. This initiative will be achieved through an inventory that will consist of all tourism products from the 47 County Governments which will form part of the magical Kenya brand.

5. Gender Interventions

The Council of Governors through the support of UN Women held a virtual meeting on 13th August, 2020 to induct 42 individuals comprising of women, youth and persons with disabilities as representatives of the special interest groups in the County Emergency Response Committees (CERCs).

The induction focused on how to safeguard inclusion of vulnerable groups in the CERCs. This will ensure that the rights, needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities are recognized and values such as inclusion, participation and dignity are considered in the prevention and response of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges:

1. Testing of COVID-19

The turnaround time for testing has remained a major bottleneck in the fight against the virus. This has been witnessed through firsthand experience by the Council of Governors Staff who undertook a mandatory COVID-19 test which was conducted by the Ministry of Health on 14th August 2020. The results were received one week down the line as opposed to the expected 24 hours. This begs the question of how much longer it takes for the ordinary mwananchi to receive their results. Further, it poses a huge risk of community infections which if not addressed in a timely manner, efforts made will be futile.

We call upon the Ministry of Health to expedite the turnaround time for testing results to enable proper and timely management of the virus.

2. The 3rd Generation Formula

We are currently two months into the new Financial Year 2020/21. We note that County Governments have not received their equitable share of revenue due to the stalemate at the Senate. Further delay on the consensus of the formula has now paralyzed County operations and slowed down County response measures towards COVID-19. We anticipate that this will make the already bad situation worse.

We call upon the Senate to expeditiously conclude this matter to enable disbursements of funds to Counties.

3. Misappropriation of COVID-19 resources

It is saddening that the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) is unable to account for at least Kshs. 43 Billion meant for the fight against COVID-19. Additionally, it is upsetting that donations from Jack Ma were stolen hence exposing our frontline healthcare workers to the virus due to lack of PPE kits or issuance of sub-standard PPE kits.

We urge the respective office to investigate the matter urgently and bring to book all perpetrators of this heinous act. It is inconceivable that as a nation our conscience is so compromised that we happily dance on the grave of those who unfortunately succumbed to this virus.

Conclusion

We urge every individual to take personal responsibility and exercise extra caution as none of us is safe. Allow me to reiterate the words of the Cabinet Secretary Health: **“anybody can get it, you can get it, I can get it”**. Let us therefore continue to adhere to the health guidelines issued as we confront the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ahsanteni Sana!

Signed:



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