



## COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

15<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

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

Today marks the 5<sup>th</sup> week since the outbreak of the Corona virus pandemic in the Country. We are grateful to the Ministry of Health for keeping us abreast with daily updates on key information on the status of Corona virus in the Country.

Through a statement made by the Health Ministry Acting Director General on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020, it was predicted that the number of positive cases would increase exponentially between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> week with at least 5,000 positive cases by mid-April. However, through collective effort by both levels of Governments we note that community transmissions have slowed down to 216 positive cases compared to the projected number.

Remarkably, County Governments have relentlessly continued to implement the directives issued by the National Government through enforcing the curfew and the partial lockdown. Counties have also committed to ensure that all the directives are complied with as per the Public Health Act and Rules together with the directives issued by the Ministry of Health.

We further note that there are newspaper and social media articles alleging that Counties are not prepared to handle COVID-19. It is paramount to note that Counties have put in place interventions to handle the pandemic and we have on a weekly basis continued to update the nation on preparedness by the Counties.

In the last one (1) week, Counties have put in place the following measures geared towards responding to the corona virus pandemic.

## **What we have done so far: Measures in place**

### **1. Preparation of isolation and quarantine facilities**

All the forty seven (47) County Governments in close collaboration with the respective Government agencies have prepared **3156 beds for isolation** while ensuring that health and safety standards are met and gender considerations are prioritized.

County Governments have opted to utilise facilities such as KMTCs and Universities which have cubicles to reduce mingling of isolated persons.

Counties have also made progress towards procuring more ICU beds hence increasing the capacity from 162 to 208 and increased ventilators from the previous 161 to 201.

### **2. Training of Health Workers**

In order to increase the capacity of health workers, Counties have invested in training of more than 9701 health workers both at the County and sub-county level.

### **3. Use of Technology**

There has been increased use of E-Conferencing over the weeks. It is commendable that Counties are using this opportunity to hold their meetings virtually with a view to minimize physical contact thus curbing the spread of the virus.

The Council of Governors has been convening weekly extraordinary meetings through E-Conferencing to deal with emerging issues in Counties. We therefore encourage Parliament, County Assemblies, civil society organisations, churches and all private sectors to embrace E-Conferencing as a platform for communication during this period.

### **4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Due to shortage of PPE kits in the Country, County Governments are now purchasing locally manufactured PPEs to mitigate the shortage. The local SMEs in the Counties are producing an average of 300,000 pieces of face masks per day.

While we note mass production of face masks locally, we hope that the production will result in reduction of the retail price of the face masks. We further note with concern that availability of other PPEs remains a challenge country wide.

It is our hope that by the end of the month, we will mitigate the shortage due to the local production.

## 5. Ventilators

The County Governments applauds the innovation of prototype ventilators by Kenyatta University students. As much as the pandemic has been bad for the country, it has given us an opportunity for new innovations. Indeed necessity is the mother of invention.

We urge the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Health and KEBS to move with haste in certifying the efficacy of these ventilators so as to enable Counties equip the hospitals.

## 6. Testing Kits for COVID -19

We commend the efforts made by the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) in the manufacturing of local testing kits for COVID 19 which is a major milestone in the fight against the novel corona virus.

However, we note that no County has received sample collection kits and testing kits. We urge the National Government to fast-track distribution of the kits as Counties are eager to embark on testing of patients in order to contain the pandemic.

## 7. Human Resource

The UNDP are in the process of hiring 53 UNVs for the health sector for the County Governments to provide back up support on the fight against the pandemic.

## 8. Food Security

County Governments have supported farmers by distributing **9.225 metric tonnes of fertilizer** and **10060 metric tonnes of**

**assorted seeds.** Farmers have therefore embarked on planting food crops.

We however note that the issue of locusts has remained a major issue in Northern Kenya and is now affecting other Counties such as Laikipia, Nyandarua and Nakuru. There is therefore need for proper focus on this issue.

County Governments are putting resources to support food security. We urge the National Government, to come up with modalities of supporting this initiative.

The Council of Governors also urges corporates, development partners and other Kenyans of good will to join County Governments in this noble cause.

## **9. Public Health (Distribution of Food and non-food supplies during COVID-19 Pandemic) Rules, 2020**

The draft rules propose that the County Commissioners shall have the responsibility to inspect and distribute food and non-food supplies. The proposed regulations violate the institutional and functional integrity assigned by the Constitution to the two levels of government.

Therefore, the responsibility of distribution and inspection of food and non-food supplies should be left to County Governments.

## **10. Dissemination of information to the Public**

This has been done through various communication channels including; radio interviews, mobile public address system in sub counties and common spaces to sensitize the public on COVID-19.

## **11. County Donations**

Through the supplementary budgets County Governments have committed an estimated total Kshs. Five billion of (5,000,000billion) in the County Governments Emergency Fund to respond to COVID 19.

## **12. Procurement of Medical supplies**

County Governments are facing a challenge in procurement of medical supplies in the midst of this pandemic due to the monopoly of KEMSA as the sole provider of medical supplies to Government.

We therefore urge the Ministry of Health and Parliament to urgently review or suspend the law to allow County Governments to procure essential medical supplies requirements from other suppliers.

## **Conclusion**

As County Governments, we continue to make strides in the fight against the pandemic despite the daily challenges which we continue to resolve day by day with the help of National Government, Development Partners and non-state actors. As leaders we are doing our part, we therefore urge you citizens to

do your part by ensuring strict adherence to the Government directives.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Present with us today are the County Pension Fund (CPF) Managing Director, Mr. Hosea Kili, OGW, and the Director of MozartBet, Mr. Robert Sirma who have generously donated to County Governments. The members of the public will greatly benefit from the generous contribution of the hand washing dispensing units by CPF that will be distributed across all the 47 County Governments. The contribution by MozartBet of Personal Protective Equipment, masks, sanitizers, and thermometers to Hospitals handling the Covid-19 pandemic will ensure that our frontline medical staff can perform their duties without strain and fear of exposure.

I also wish to take this opportunity to deeply and sincerely thank all our development and private sector partners including;

- DFID
- United Nations Agencies, specifically UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women through the Governments of Finland, Sweden Denmark and the United Kingdom.
- World Bank
- World Health Organization
- Children's Investment Fund Foundation; and
- Kenya Pipeline

Indeed, your support and continuous partnership has helped to lift a burden off our shoulders.

I assure you that County Governments will make good use of the supplies to minimize the risk of infection among citizens in their jurisdictions.

The Council of Governors calls upon the Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations to partner with the Council even through donations. This will allow for proper coordination and distribution to avoid what we saw happen in Kibera last week and to conform to the directions given by the Cabinet Secretary of health, Hon. Mutahi Kagwe.

**Signed**

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