



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

PRESS STATEMENT ON PREPAREDNESS OF COUNTIES ON COVID-19 - 22nd April, 2020

On behalf of the Forty Seven County Governments, I take this opportunity to thank H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H, for his leadership in the fight against the novel corona virus pandemic.

We sincerely appreciate the contribution by H.E the President of Kshs. Five (5) Billion as complementary support to County Governments in response to the corona virus crisis. This will indeed go a long way in the fight against the pandemic.

May I also on my own behalf and that of CoG take this opportunity to send a message of condolence to families who lost their loved ones in the flash floods and mudslides that hit West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet, Kericho and Baringo counties and pray for a quick recovery for those who were injured.

We are appealing to donors and Kenyans of goodwill to stand with the people displaced by the calamity by providing food, shelter and any other support.

In the last one (1) week, County Governments have put in place the following measures in response to COVID 19:-

1. Welfare Package to health workers

Through support of H.E the President, he has directed the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Public Service to develop a welfare package to cushion health workers. In line with the President's directive, we hereby urge the aforementioned Ministries to fast-track the development of guidelines and advise County Governments on implementation of the same in the shortest time possible so that our health workers can work comfortably knowing that they are well taken care of.

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The provision for County Governments to procure PPEs not only from KEMSA but other agencies is a great relief.

In line with the aforementioned, Counties have started in earnest to procure face masks and other PPE kits from local manufacturers. Local SMEs have since increased their production from 300,000 pieces of surgical face masks a day to 510,000 pieces.

I urge all County Governments to take advantage of the three (3) month window and favorable pricing to procure what is needed.

3. Testing Centres for COVID – 19

In my previous weekly update to the Nation on County preparedness, I highlighted that there were 5 testing centres. I am happy to report that as of today, we have an additional Five (5) testing centres bringing the total number to Ten (10). This is good progress and we expect to see enhanced testing in the coming days.

Further, inspection of other laboratories is being conducted for accreditation. We are hopeful that Mombasa and Machakos County Referral Hospitals will be added to the list of accredited testing centers.

A Mapping of 187 Gene-xpert machines has been undertaken to determine their suitability for testing following approval by World Health Organization (WHO) on the use of the said machines. So far, 56 machines have been approved for testing of COVID 19.

However, the use of the same has been hindered due to unavailability of cartridges. Hopefully, testing should resume in 56 locations once the cartridges are available.

4. Food Security

In my last week's update, I highlighted that County Governments have put in place measures to support farmers with seed and fertilizer subsidy. I wish to report that cumulatively 10, 598 metric tons of fertilizer, 1,376 metric tones of assorted seeds and 93,450 assorted fruit trees have been distributed to farmers for free.

Further, County Governments have partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in creating situation/war rooms that will focus on weekly monitoring of availability, accessibility and affordability of food in the Country with a view to informing Kenyans about the food situation in each County and the Nation at large.

The County situation/war room has installed hotlines to assist traders and transporters on their daily operations and members of the public who experience any challenges in relation to food. We urge our farmers and traders to continue with their operations while observing the guidelines put in place. In the event of any challenges they are advised to use hotline numbers that will be provided to the public by close of business today.

Support to Counties affected by floods and landslides

County Governments have set up a fund in which every County will contribute Kshs. Two Hundred Thousand (200,000) to support Counties that are experiencing floods and landslides. We urge all well-wishers to contribute to the fund through the Council of Governors Secretariat.

5. County Support from partners

The Council of Governors extends its sincere appreciation to the World Food Programme (WFP) for providing technical support to CoG to assist with recovery strategy in Agriculture and Food Security.

We also want to thank Danida for their support of Kshs 3.3 Billion to County Governments to cater for operations and maintenance of level one, two and three facilities in Counties during this time of COVID-19. We urge the National Treasury to release these funds urgently as they are needed to address the pandemic.

We appreciate the above support and call upon other development partners, private sector, philanthropic foundations and civil society organisations to partner with the CoG through the Secretariat to ensure all Counties are supported.

6. Challenges

Whereas Counties are making efforts in the fight against the pandemic, we are experiencing the following challenges:-

Violation of the curfew – the decision by the National Government to impose forced quarantine to persons arrested for violating the curfew has strained the County budget as Counties are compelled to provide food for those quarantined.

Escape from Quarantine facilities – we note that some of the individuals in quarantine are escaping from the facilities and thus posing a risk on the spread of the virus to other Kenyans. We therefore urge the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Inspector General to put in place stringent security measures to minimize cases of individuals escaping from quarantine facilities. This will ensure that those in quarantine complete the fourteen (14) day period recommended by the Ministry of Health.

Disbursement of funds to the elderly – The National Government Administrative Structures are not consulting County Governments to harmonise data being used for disbursement of support to the elderly and vulnerable. This has led to a number of needy/elderly being left out of the programme.

Conclusion

As a Nation, we have entered week four of the upward trajectory of the virus which from the global trend, we need to be extremely careful. Both levels of Government are working together to ensure that there is a uniform response towards curbing the spread and effects of the pandemic.

As a Council, once again we recognize and appreciate the support we have received from the President. We are indeed grateful.

As we endeavor to enhance our efforts, we urge our citizens to continue observing the Ministry of Health guidelines so that we can collectively win this fight.

Signed

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