



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

6th May, 2020

PRESS STATEMENT ON PREPAREDNESS OF COUNTY

GOVERNMENTS ON COVID-19 – WEEK 7

Ladies and gentlemen, for the last seven weeks, County Governments have been preparing and tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. We have moved from importation of the virus to local transmission and County Governments have equipped themselves to successfully tackle the virus within their jurisdictions. This they have done in close partnership with the National Government and partners. We are grateful for the support received so far.

In the past week, the County Governments have put the following plans in place:

1. Recruitment of Health Workers

The process of shortlisting and interviewing the candidates was completed on 30th April, 2020 as we had earlier informed you. The newly recruited 5,550 health workers will begin to report to their various work stations on different dates this month. Plans by the National Government to hire additional 1,156 health workers are welcome. This will bring the total number of health workers recruited to 6,656 as agreed upon by the National Government and Council of Governors.

2. Disbursement of funds

We wish to inform you that County Governments have set aside a total of Kshs 6.1 Billion in their Supplementary Budgets towards the fight against the virus. We have not received any funds towards Covid-19 fight from the National Government as erroneously reported in some quarters.

3. County efforts to procure PPEs

Majority of the Counties have begun the process of procuring Personal Protective Equipment. In the past week, twenty (20) County Governments have procured 315 complete PPEs. Over and above PPEs, these County Governments have also procured 30,000 assorted gears in the past week.

4. Intensive Care Units

As of today, we have a total of 209 ICU beds in 26 Counties and 212 Ventilators in 26 Counties. To supplement this, 43 County Governments received a donation of 86 oxygen concentrators from Crown Healthcare, 172 infra-red thermometers and 86 pulse oximeters.

5. Quarantine/Isolation and Testing

In the last week, 4 County Governments have quarantined 100 people in their facilities as a result of contact tracing. Testing of those quarantined is ongoing in these Counties. However, there is need for them to be complemented with more testing kits.

Further, two County Governments namely; Nairobi and Mombasa have started mass testing and we urge our citizens to support the process by showing up to the various points for testing. This disease can only be controlled by early identification, intervention and treatment.

Additionally, we welcome the move by the Inspector of Police to set aside police holding facilities for those who violate the curfew and lockdown rules separate from county quarantine facilities.

6. Strengthening of border disease surveillance by counties

In the last one week, nine (9) County Governments with international borders were able to quarantine 205 people and tested 249 across all the borders. The cost of quarantine is met by both the counties and the persons quarantined.

Furthermore, these Counties have put in place measures such as fumigation of trucks in transit and screening of all persons crossing the borders.

We urge the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to come up with a protocol of dealing with neighboring countries that will only allow limited access, if at all, in order to curb the spread of the virus into the Country.

7. Operationalization of County food security War rooms

I wish to report that from last week, five (5) more counties have formed County Food Security war rooms bringing the total to 40 counties. The data being collected by the County food security war

rooms is being used to inform policy decisions to enhance food access and ease doing business in the Counties.

From the reports that we received, we have identified and are addressing the reducing stocking levels of food stores and shops. Counties continue to ascertain the vulnerable households and are consulting with National Government to ensure that these households are supported with food and non-food commodities. In addition, County Governments are supplementing this move through consultation and coordination to ensure that there is no duplication of the activity.

8. Enforcement of Market Guidelines

County Governments welcome the support through the National Youth Service in enforcing the market guidelines on wearing masks and maintaining social distance. We urge citizens to take this seriously and cooperate with NYS brigade.

9. Vocational Training Centers

I am happy to report that in the past week, Vocational Training Centers in Mandera (2), Nyandarua, Kirinyaga and Bomet have commenced production of facemasks, increasing the total number to 82 Centers in 21 Counties which are producing facemasks for distribution to the public. This has increased the production capacity by 8% therefore producing 431,000 masks in a day. These Centers have engaged 400 tailors. Vocational Training Centre trainees are engaged in industrial training and apprenticeship programmes to continue developing skills in their respective

trades. The masks produced are being distributed for free to the vulnerable members of the society including children homes.

10. Re-opening of Hotels within County Governments

Hotels and Restaurants within the Counties are slowly opening their doors to members of the public while strictly adhering to the protocols provided by the Ministry of Health as enforced jointly by the Public Health Officers and the County enforcement officers. We encourage our citizens to ensure their safety while visiting these hotels by listening to and following the rules and guidelines provided.

Challenges

Whereas Counties are making strides towards combating the pandemic, Counties are experiencing the following challenges: -

1. Floods and Landslides

The Country continues to suffer great havoc caused by the ongoing floods. The current heavy rains in some parts of the counties has led to flooding and landslides causing approximately 35 deaths and over 13,000 households displaced and leaving many injured in accordance to reports received from 18 Counties. The floods have also destroyed crops raising the cost of food supply. Transportation of food items has been affected due to impassable roads and many have abandoned their homes and farms for secure areas.

We kindly ask well-wishers to provide direct support to these Counties.

2. Provision of water to informal settlements

Provision of water is a County Government function. During this period, the National Government has allocated money towards provision and access to water. Despite this, the money is yet to be disbursed for use by County Governments. The directive from the National Government not to disconnect water in informal sectors has greatly affected revenue collection which goes towards Operations and the purchase of water treatment chemicals. We urge citizens who are gainfully employed and are capable, to pay their water bills to ensure that the water is treated and provided to all citizens.

3. Heightened Gender Based Violence in our homes

The Council appreciates the measures some counties have put in place to ensure that GBV survivors and women in need of sexual reproductive health services are assisted. I request that every County put measures in place to respond to GBV and sexual violence cases that may arise during COVID-19 and to ensure expectant mothers are supported to reach health services especially during curfew hours for safe delivery.

4. Interaction of truck drivers with local citizens

We take note of the massive 35KM truck traffic at Malaba boarder stretching to Mayanja market in Bungoma County. It has emerged that the truck drivers are interacting with local residents as they

wait in the traffic jam to undergo the mass testing for Covid-19, which is mandatory for all cargo operators crossing the border. This has raised fear among the local residents that the virus could spread in the area.

We note that this testing exercise is pivotal in combating the spread of Covid-19 in border Counties, however we call upon the National and County Governments to increase the number of health workers conducting the testing at the border points to expedite the exercise. We also call upon the National Government to speed up infrastructural development in Busia County especially the Busia –Korinda highway Carriage to reduce the perpetual truck jam that poses a danger to the communities during this period.

Conclusion

It is important to note that in the past three days, we have witnessed an escalation of the positive cases posing a new challenge. The Council of Governors continues to urge all of us to stay at home, practice social distancing, wash your hands and wear masks properly. We must all ensure adherence to these measures for us to succeed in the fight against this pandemic.

Asanteni Sana.

Signed

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