



Republic of Namibia

COUNTRYWIDE LOCKDOWN ON ACCOUNT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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1. It is now three and half months since Covid-19 was reported by China to the World Health Organization and one month since the first two cases were recorded in Namibia. The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Namibia remains 16, ten days after the last case was recorded. Amidst ever increasing number of new cases in the world, the stagnating figure of 16 in Namibia attracts great interest.
2. Namibia has been under the State of Emergency for a month now. The lockdown which applied to Erongo and Khomas, has now been extended to the whole country as from midnight of the 17th April 2020. The announcement yesterday of the extension of the lockdown by H. E. Dr Hage G. Geingob represent a significant development in our national respond to Covid-19 pandemic. The extension affords the remaining twelve regions to benefit from the lockdown process and the Erongo and Khomas to consolidate the gains of the lockdown.
3. A number of lessons were learned from the implementation of our response measures. The success we have score thus far is a result of central leadership provided by the President and a single command structure. Public awareness was very key and I must commend the establishment of the Communication Centre by the MICT in which the media played a critical role. It was pleasant to see the messages coming out of the media house united in a single course. Please continue to do the good job for Namibia. The role played by health workers was crucial. All the teams without exception, case management, tracers, logistics and others. The public and private sectors were united in fighting a common enemy. We can be proud Namibians.
4. The job is not done yet. Let us have no illusions that there will be no more cases. The worst may still come. The recipe for this to happen is already there. The purpose of a continuous lockdown is to suppress transmission by reducing the possibility of asymptomatic people with COVID-19 from further infecting others in the community. Whilst a lockdown inevitably limits people's right to freedom of movement, such limitation is justified to protect public health. The goal is to ensure that each confirmed case infects less than one person, on average. It is proven that this level of transmission interrupts the growth of the epidemic, commonly referred to as flattening the curve.
5. Our strategy going forward is to increase our monitoring and surveillance. As I have indicated earlier, we have revised our testing strategy to assess the degree of community transmission. As we all know, initially we did not have capacity to test locally. This has now been done. But the capacity was not enough to do

all the tests we wanted done due to limited quantities of reagents. As we increase our testing capacity, we continue to revise our criteria for testing. We are going to test as many people as our capacity can allow. In doing so, we are guided by the epidemiological nature of the infection. We are going to do a targeted testing, going where we are reasonably confident of finding the target.

6. What we are all going to do going forward is to comply with the measures put in place. Covid-19 is not going around looking for people. It is people themselves who are the one looking for Covid-19 even if they don't know that. The solution to defeat Covid-19 is simple. Stay at home!

