

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 PUBLIC BRIEFING ON THE NATIONAL  
RESPONSE MEASURES

24 FEBRUARY 2021

WINDHOEK

*\*Check Against Delivery*

Fellow Namibians, Good Morning.

Our struggle against the unwelcome and invisible enemy COVID-19 continues. I therefore, convene today's Public Briefing, to provide the latest update on the COVID-19 National Response Measures for the next dispensation. The current Regulations will expire at 23h59 tonight, 24 February 2021. The current measures will be extended for a period of 36 days, from 25 February to 31 March 2021.

With regards to the Restriction of Movement, Curfew hours will be adjusted to begin at 22h00 and end at 04h00, daily. Also, the limit of meetings to two hours, is abolished.

As at today, Namibia has recorded 37,896 cumulative confirmed cases, with 2,058 active cases in the country. Over the last 12 days we have observed a rising trend in infections, with the highest positivity rate recorded at Kavango East and West, Oshikoto and Oshana, fast becoming the epicenter in our fight against COVID-19. Learners in schools and hostels have been the most affected population, with a 40% infection rate. It is imperative that parental engagement is improved as a means of supporting schools, especially secondary and boarding schools in the fight against COVID-19. Furthermore, schools must strictly adhere to the guidelines as set out by the line ministry.

At this point in time, we have lost 411 lives due to COVID-19 and related illnesses. I therefore wish to pause in memory of those who have lost their lives - Let us keep their families in mind, who are dealing with the pain of loss. The impact of these deaths are compounded by the fact that family and friends cannot be with their ailing loved ones during the most crucial moments. On behalf of the Government, I extend my deepest sympathies to you.

We are still faced with the difficulties of adapting to altered routines and habits. I will be the first to admit that as the days, weeks and months progress, these changes can become overbearing and our will and resolve can begin to wane.

Apart from the loss of life and the economic damage that has been caused by COVID-19, another worrying aspect is the mental health of our people. Our fight against COVID-19 has become a battle of attrition, a test of our collective character and our primary instinct, which is our will to survive.

I am fully aware that you want to return back to life as we use to know it. You want to start rebuilding what has been lost and remove the weight of restrictions on your lives.

I am aware of the mental health impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent consequences thereof on you. I therefore, wish to reassure the nation that Government sees the war against COVID-19 and the conclusion thereof, as a priority. There is no one who takes joy in imposing restrictions on our people but we must also realize that this is a matter of absolute necessity and the results are telling.

Although it has come at a high cost, materially, physically and psychologically, our efforts to curtail the spread of this virus have paid dividends. Regionally, Namibia has done well in managing the pandemic. At the forefront of these valiant efforts have been our frontline health care workers and first responders. Under very trying circumstances, they have adhered to the code of ethics of their profession and due to their efforts, to date, Namibia has averted a crisis with regards to the further spread of the virus. I also wish to thank our men and women in uniform who have worked tirelessly to enforce the regulations in the interest of the safety of our people.

Credit also goes to those Namibians who have adhered to protocols and have stretched out a hand of solidarity to their brothers and sisters in need. By espousing the African principle of solidarity, you have fostered national well-being even in the midst of difficult circumstances. Let us all endeavor to continue in this positive spirit by realizing that our individual strength can only be magnified by helping others.

Fellow Namibians,

Until a safe and effective vaccine becomes available in Namibia, these restrictions and continued public vigilance and diligence to the Regulations, remains our only line of

defense. Government remains seized with procuring vaccines for the Namibian people. We are engaged with our friends in the international arena, at various levels in order to expedite this process. At present, the People's Republic of China has pledged to donate 100,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccine and the Republic of India has also pledged to donate 30,000 doses of the vaccine from the Serum Institute of India. We express our appreciation to the Governments of China and India for this gesture of friendship.

While we wait for the arrival of the vaccines let us continue to maintain hygiene by washing and sanitizing hands; wearing a face mask in public, and maintaining social and physical distance. These are the most secure preventative measures against the spread of this disease.

Furthermore, let us also try, where we can, to improve our general well-being by engaging in activities and following habits that bolster personal health.

Let us continue to hold hands and comply with the measures. In so doing, we can move towards removing the restrictions and continuing the construction of our Namibian House.

I now invite the Minister of Health, Dr. Shangula, to provide more detailed responses on the national response to COVID-19.

Thank you.