

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB

**ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 35th COVID-19 PUBLIC BRIEFING ON
THE NATIONAL RESPONSE MEASURES**

15 OCTOBER 2021

WINDHOEK

Checked Against Delivery

Good morning, Fellow Namibians,

This is the 35th time we are engaging in this exercise, of briefing the nation on the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. This is a commitment of the Government to communicate public information in a consistent, transparent and accountable manner. It further demonstrates that we have not and will not avoid doing what is necessary to protect the lives and secure livelihoods of our People, against this deadly enemy. Through concerted actions we have put in place and with the cooperation of the Namibian people and the grace of God, we have been able to curtail and suppress the pandemic.

Although the war against COVID-19 is not yet over, we are making inroads and steering our ship ever closer towards the shores of recovery. In the Year of Resilience, despite untold losses, pain and suffering, we have come together as Namibians and demonstrated our collective ability to withstand adversity and rebound from difficult life events. Through resolve, determination and the will to survive, we have continued to withstand the heavy weight brought on us by this invisible enemy. Our limits have been tested. We have bent but we are not broken. It has been said that “where there is a will, there is a way” and together as Namibians, we will find the way.

Although we are aware that there may be many more challenging days, weeks and months ahead, let us be encouraged that through our collective

strength and the support of friends from all corners of the world, we have stemmed the tide of despair and can see on the horizon the hope of a return to normalcy. I commend all of you, the Namibian people, for your compliance and cooperation, to this end.

Information and data gathered by the National COVID-19 Dashboard Monitoring Cluster for the period from 16 September 2021 to yesterday, 14 October 2021, indicates that Namibia has been observing a marked decline in the number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, across the entire country. The subsiding number of cases is attributable to a number of factors, particularly public compliance to the COVID-19 Public Health Regulations. We should not take this respite for granted. It takes active steps to bring about a reduction in the numbers and it will require active steps to ensure that the trend is maintained.

The COVID-19 vaccination coverage is showing signs of progress, especially in the Regions that have borne the brunt of the pandemic historically, such as Hardap, //Kharas, /Khomas and Erongo. During the period, we recorded an average vaccine uptake of 2,871 doses per day. This figure has declined compared to the daily uptake a month ago. There is need to do more on this regard and get more people vaccinated. Nationally, vaccination coverage currently stands at 19.5 percent of total population for those who have received their 1st dose, while 15 percent of the population, today, are fully vaccinated.

Once again, I implore all eligible Namibians to come forward and get vaccinated. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that all Namibians are as safe from the spread of COVID-19. Thus, getting vaccinated is our responsibility to ensure the safety and preservation not only of Namibia's citizens, but humanity at large.

Fellow Namibians,

With the trend of declining COVID-19 positive cases, decreasing hospitalizations and deaths in the country, the Cabinet met this week to deliberate on the next dispensation of the Public Health Regulations. Informed by available data and consistent with the approach of evidence-based decision-making, I will today announce further relaxation of the measures in our national response.

The current COVID-19 Public Health Regulations will expire at midnight tonight, Friday, 15 October 2021. The following Regulations will come into force for a period of thirty (30) days from Saturday, from 16 October 2021 until midnight, Monday, 15 November 2021.

1. Public Gatherings as defined in the Regulations have been adjusted to two hundred persons per event. Spectators at sporting events are permitted, up to 200 persons per event. Having just returned from America, I have observed that those packing the stadia for sports have

their vaccine passports. I therefore hope those who will attend, will do the same.

2. The Curfew will be suspended altogether, allowing for greater economic activity, particularly with respect to long haul public transport operators and the entertainment industry.
3. Restrictions related to liquor remain as is. The Minister of Health will repeat these measures when he takes the floor.
4. Business operations: All recreational places such as nightclubs, casinos, gambling houses, betting houses and gyms may continue operations as is - allowing patrons up to half capacity.
5. Burials of persons who succumbed to COVID-19 or whose deaths are COVID-19 related must continue to take place within a period of ten (10) days. On-site consumption of meals at all gatherings, including burials, will now be permitted. The restriction on the number of persons attending burials of 200, applies to mourners only, excluding essential workers.
6. In this regard, I implore all citizens and business owners to enforce the Infection Control and Prevention measures of wearing a face mask, hand washing, physical distancing and avoiding overcrowding. Equally

important is raising public health awareness on vaccination among customers.

Fellow Namibians,

I would like to thank all members of the public for their cooperation and adherence to the public health measures. Although we are relaxing the measures, this does not mean that we have defeated COVID-19. If we are truly committed to eliminating this scourge from our communities, then we have a collective responsibility to continue maintaining absolute vigilance.

Let us continue to safeguard the gains we have made by applying all diligence and precaution in our personal conduct. Prevention will always remain better than cure. COVID-19 is evolving and the measures to combat it effectively must, as a matter of necessity, also evolve accordingly. Therefore, should the situation deteriorate, although we pray and hope that it will not, the Government will respond appropriately. Let us continue to hold hands and maintain the front as a united, resilient and unbreakable nation. Together, let us continue the march on the frontlines of this battle, towards victory and onwards, towards recovery and prosperity.

I now call upon the Ministers of Health and Social Services; Justice and the Attorney General to elaborate on technical aspects.

Thank you.