

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**STATEMENT BY DR. KALUMBI SHANGULA, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES ON THE OCCASION OF THE COVID-19 BRIEFING AND  
INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEASURES FOR THE POST-STATE OF  
EMERGENCY DISPENSATION.**

21 OCTOBER 2020

WINDHOEK  
*\*Check Against Delivery*

Your Excellency, Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia  
Your Excellency, Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President  
Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Co-operation  
Honourable Ministers  
Senior Government Officials  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our President has just shared with the nation far-reaching policy changes and interventions with respect to Namibia's COVID-19 response and preparedness. This is in line with our belief that our response to this devastating pandemic must be robust in order to enable us to be nimble and effective. It demonstrates that Namibia is committed to a responsible and measured approach to combat COVID-19, while ensuring the safety of our people and protecting their livelihoods.

We are going to ensure that the measures announced here today are implemented fully and in a manner that continues to build on the gains and successes that have been realized so far in our national response to the pandemic. While the new measures will be in force until 30 November 2020, the agencies of government will continue to regularly monitor the situation in order to respond speedily, should the situation so demand. In this regard, the National COVID-19 Monitoring Team, which is a Technical entity will continue to compile and submit its weekly reports to policy makers in order to allow for prompt action as needed.

Although, as the President announced, Namibia has done away with the requirement for quarantine of travelers who present negative PCR COVID-19 test results that are not older than 72 hours, travelers will be implored and will be required to observe the Infection Prevention and Control Protocols such as physical distancing, handwashing and sanitizing, mandatory wearing of a mask in public spaces and avoidance of unnecessary public gatherings.

I wish to emphasize the following, in addition to the policy statement enunciated by His Excellency:

- Any person who develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 after arrival in Namibia, will be required to undergo a COVID-19 test.
- Similarly, in line with our contact tracing protocols, any person, who is identified as contact of a positive COVID-19 case, will be placed in a quarantine facility or in supervised home quarantine for seven (7) days. Such person will also be tested for COVID-19. This includes travelers who may have arrived in the country for different reasons.

The country is currently exploring the use of rapid diagnostic capabilities to identify the sources of infection, to ensure prompt contact tracing and isolation of positive cases. Special arrangements will be implemented for the quarantine of healthcare workers in line with our Risk Categorization and Risk Stratification Framework.

This week, Cabinet approved the implementation of a New Approach to the COVID-19 response in the post-State of Emergency dispensation. This approach is designed to ensure a more coordinated manner to evaluate and consider appropriate stances in combating COVID-19. It provides for strengthening coordination of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic by adding two (2) Thematic Pillars to the existing nine (9) pillars of the National Response. These are:

- Continuation of Health Services (CHS)
- Research and Innovation (RI)

The approach also provides for the expansion and re-enforcement of the National COVID-19 Dashboard Monitoring Team. The expanded National COVID-19 Dashboard Monitoring Team will comprise the following institutions:

- Office of the President;
- Office of the Prime Minister;
- Ministry of Health and Social Services;
- Ministry of Finance;
- Ministry of Industrialization and Trade
- Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism;
- Ministry of Works and Transport;
- Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security;
- Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation;
- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture;
- Office of the Attorney General;
- National Planning Commission;
- Namibia Statistics Agency;
- A representative from the Modeling Team (MoHSS);
- A private Sector Representative of the Tourism Sector;
- Other experts from different disciplines and developmental partners may be co-opted as necessary from time to time.

As the borders open up, it is important to strengthen Port Health Services and management as part of the new approach to COVID-19 response. In this regard, we will deploy additional fulltime Port Health Officers at targeted Ports of Entry, especially those with the highest travel traffic. In the same vein, we are pursuing innovations of electronic/computerized platforms for the management of arriving passengers and their tracking from Ports of Entry. The electronic platforms being considered include PanaBios. in conjunction with the African Union and MyPass.

On the COVID-19 Vaccine, I wish to inform that interactions are ongoing with the COVAX Facility to ensure that Namibians will have access to a safe vaccine when it comes out. The Communication Strategy on the COVID-19 Vaccine will soon be rolled out.

Close monitoring and tracking of the global and local COVID-19 pandemic are critical to protect the investments made in the last 6-7 months. Hence, as a country, we will develop Early Warning Indicators to allow for early recognition of a possible second wave. These indicators include, but are not limited to high positivity ratio in specific geographic areas, and increase in hospitalizations due to respiratory-related conditions.

We will also continuously monitor the impact of our anti-COVID-19 strategies which have been implemented by different state agencies. We will look at variables such as:

- Morbidities/Mortalities,
- Loss of jobs, closure of businesses/bankruptcy,
- School drop-out rates,
- Demand on social safety nets, and
- Expenditure on COVID-19 related health services.

This will allow us to gauge the full impact of COVID-19 on our society.

While we are introducing further relaxation of the restrictions, we must remain mindful that the pandemic is still in our midst. For this reason, we must remain alert at all times. We must encourage each other to comply with the measures. Organizers of public gatherings should continue to employ the necessary measures to prevent and suppress further spread of the virus. At all times, we must ensure that the public events we organize do not turn into super-spreaders. This can only be achieved when we practice physical distancing, wear face masks and practice hand hygiene. We have no other choice. This is the only way to protect ourselves, our families, our communities and eventual our country. This message must be embraced and heeded by all of us. Let us do it for the sake of our country.

On our part as Government, we will continue to do our very best to serve our people to the best of our abilities. We ask for full co-operation from members of the public in order to effectively carry out our duties of safeguarding the health of our people. This is particularly vital in this new dispensation where the COVID-19 restrictions have been relaxed.

We have been successful due to the cooperation from the public. I commend you for this understanding. Let us join hand to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic.

I thank you.