



# Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs

## **MEDIA BRIEFING**

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### **Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs**

*Level 3 in line with the Risk-based approach to contain the Spread of COVID-19*

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**Colleagues;**

**Members of the fourth estate;**

**Compatriots.**

84 days have lapsed since the first reported case of COVID-19 on our shores. From that day onwards, led by the steady hand of the President, we have put in place measures to contain the spread of the virus and save lives. These measures have been coordinated by Cabinet with the advice and inputs of the various Command Councils in all our spheres of governance.

All these levels and spheres have greatly benefitted from inputs of various experts and scientists, including those that serve in the Minister of Health's Advisory Committee on the Coronavirus.

Our efforts have also been directed by consultations we have had with various sectors and constituencies in our country including the local government, traditional leaders, religious sector, NEDLAC and the private sector.

We have also benefitted from the overwhelming support we have received from all South Africans.

Ordinary South Africans from all walks of life, political persuasions, religious conviction and cultural backgrounds from all races and classes have largely heeded our call to stay at home, practice hygiene measures such as washing of hands and maintaining a safe social distance. These simple but effective measures are the most important ammunition in our fight against COVID-19, in the absence of a cure or vaccine.

We have also been encouraged by the reignition of solidarity and activism by millions of South Africans, who through acts of kindness have ensured that those who are less fortunate are fed, cared for and have access to masks and sanitizers. Indeed, we have confirmed ourselves as a great and resilient nation. The measure of a great nation is how it treats the weakest and not the strongest, as once said by Madiba.

Thanks to your sacrifices and contributions we have managed to flatten the curve, but the peak of the curve remains in the horizon. As we migrate the country into Alert Level 3, as announced by the President, we must redouble our efforts so as to further contain and prevent deaths.

These next phases of our fight and Level 3 allows us to open up all the productive sectors of our economy, *al be it* to a moderate degree in some high-risk sectors. This risk level, thanks to the employ of the Risk Adjusted Strategy allows us to maintain the delicate balancing act between saving the lives and livelihoods of South Africans.

It also requires greater responsibility and discipline from all us as citizens of this resilient nation.

Consequently, at this alert level everyone who enters a work, public space and/or public transport must wear a cloth face mask or a homemade item that covers the nose and mouth. We must also ensure that all our public facilities have sanitisers and that all patrons are screened.

These coming phases also confirm prevention as a corner stone of our response. It is only healthy communities and individuals that can drive our recovery plan, on the other side of the infection curve. We must also remain cognisant of the ever-present danger of reversing the gains we have thus far recorded. *“In fact, the risk of a massive increase in infections is now greater than it has been since the start of the outbreak in our country”*, to quote the President.

**Compatriots**, as we have said before, our Risk Adjusted Strategy is also based on a combination of sound and scientific advice and benchmarking against international experience. Countries such as Vietnam have inspired our approach to eventually reduce the numbers of infection and curb the loss of lives. To paraphrase Che Guevarra, we must aim to have at least as many Vietnams as we have provinces and districts. Thus, in the employ of the Risk Adjusted strategy we have subjected each province and district or metro to its own level of the risk alert system. This will assist us in mounting coordinated and targeted interventions, especially in the deployment of our limited resources.

Nonetheless, as per the announcement of the President, we will move the whole of South Africa to Risk Level 3, which implies certain adjustments to our Level 4 Regulations. However, our state of national

lockdown continues, until such time we have flattened the curve for a sustained period.

In this regard, our differentiated approach and risks levels will be directed by the advice we will receive from the Minister of Health and inputs from the WHO, ministerial advisory committee, experts and various cabinet ministers. These levels are applicable *“at a provincial level and ... to all metropolitan areas and districts within that province, unless a different alert level is explicitly determined... as a hotspot”*.

So far, we have only identified potential hotspots, and we are doing all we can to change the fortune of these areas. In the event that our collective efforts bear little or no fruits, such an area will require added efforts including subjecting it to higher level restrictions including the limiting of movements within and to and from a hotspot.

In the areas that are not hotspots we will allow movements within the district and localities. We will permit movement only to and from work, as well as to buy or obtain available goods, services and medical attention. Limitations on movement across provinces and now between metropolitan areas and districts and hotspots is prohibited, except for persons travelling for purposes of starting work; moving to a new residence; or caring for an immediate family member. Provided such persons have the relevant permits.

Given that schools will open in phased approach, we will also open travel in between provinces and districts for pupils, students and teaching staff.

As said by the President we will lift the curfew and allow more time for exercising, walking, and cycling. However, this is permitted so long as

this is not done in organized groupings. In this regard, health protocols and social distancing must be strictly observed.

Public training, fitness and recreation facilities remain closed except those conducting non-contact sports matches, without spectators. The Minister of Arts, Culture and Sports will elaborate on this.

Workplace gatherings for work purposes will be permitted under strict conditions and the observance of health, hygiene and social distancing protocols. Employers must ensure that the 1.5 metres distance is maintained amongst employees. We will have to limit the number of people in the workplaces, so that we minimise the chance of infection.

In minimising the chances of infection, on site consumption places for food, entertainment and recreation will remain closed. These include places such as restaurants, shebeens, taverns, night clubs, bars, cinemas, theatres, fêtes, bazaars; casinos; and similar places.

As will hotels, lodges, bed and breakfasts, timeshare facilities and resorts and guest houses, remain closed, except those that are accommodating remaining and confined tourists, persons lodging as a result of work purposes; and persons in quarantine or isolation. The various ministers will elaborate on these aspects especially the Minister of Tourism.

With regards to funerals. At Level 3 we will continue to limit interprovincial travel for the purposes of attending funerals. Those permitted to travel are legal spouses or partners of the deceased; children or grandchildren of the deceased, whether biological, adopted or stepchildren; children-in-law of the deceased; parents of the deceased whether biological, adopted or stepparents; siblings, whether

biological, adopted or stepbrothers or sisters of the deceased; and/or grandparents of the deceased.

Indeed, the virus, has challenged our ways as a society and our various cultures.

This is a time when we should all join in meditation, fellowship and prayer. Consequently, we will have a national-day-of-prayer, on Sunday, as announced by the President. This day must be observed in the comfort of your homes or through virtual means.

We have also widely consulted with the religious sector and are now in a position to categorise religious counselling as an essential services. This will enable the millions who have been affected by the virus, to receive this much needed service, since the majority cannot afford professional attention of this nature.

We will also permit religious gatherings such as church services as of June 1, so long as health, hygiene and social distancing is observed. This means that we must maintain 1.5metres between the maximum of 50 congregants, should the chosen venue be able to accommodate such. We must all be wearing masks when we attend our places of worship, and the washing of hands or sanitization should be undertaken prior to worship.

Our places of worship must be sanitized, and the screening of participants is mandatory. The issued directions elaborate on the other protocols that should be observed.

Our lived experiences have shown funerals as high COVID-19 transmission vessels. Consequently, we will continue to limit the number

of funeral attendees to 50. Provided the transportation, hygiene, health and social distancing protocols and guidelines are observed. The station commanders of all our police stations are charged with the duty to keep meticulous records with regards to the funerals and number of attendees.

Recent experiences particularly in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Limpopo show that interprovincial travel has contributed to community transmissions. Consequently, travel between our provinces remains prohibited with the exception of those in possession of permits to attend funerals or conduct essential services and level 3 functions in between our provinces and districts. Which forms are available as an attachment to the regulations we publish today.

Our international ports of entry remain closed except for those designated by the Minister of Home Affairs to undertake (a) the transportation of fuel cargo and goods; and (b) humanitarian operations, repatriations, evacuations, medical emergencies, movements for diplomatic and international organisations and staff and other exceptions.

The Minister of Home Affairs will also elaborate on the category of persons allowed to undertake international travel under exceptional circumstances these include those returning to work, study or residence here and abroad. Suffice to say, this category of persons will be expected to adhere to strict entry and exit protocols which include screening, quarantine or isolation, sanitisation, social distancing and the wearing of masks.

In order to ensure smooth movement of employees and as a measure to carefully and gradually open our economy we will also permit a limited

domestic air travel service. The Minister of Transport will soon announce and attach relevant directions in this regard as well as in relation to across country and interprovincial cargo which is also currently permitted. Suffice to say current regulations, directions, guidelines and health protocols will be strengthened so as to factor in the increased and gradual return to work of many more people.

Amongst those returning to work are all public servants, with the exception of those who have permission to conduct work from home from time to time and those that are older than 60 or carry with them comorbidity conditions. Our message remains the same --- work from home if you can, wash your hands, and maintain a safe 1.5 metre social distance from the next person. The Minister of Public Services and Administration has issued a circular in this regard.

This provision also means that local governments can and will operate close to full operation. Consequently, council meetings and gatherings can resume with strict social distancing, hygiene and health measures. Directions in this regard will be issued.

Given the potential for further transmissions, we will continue to prohibit public engagements such as iZimbizo and IDP consultations and limit them to virtual, electronic and broadcast platforms as we are currently doing.

The various associations and businesses have also developed industry specific guidelines. However, recent experiences, particularly in the mining sector, direct us to strengthen these, in consultation with the various industries.



**Compatriots**, when we embarked on this journey, we did say it would not be smooth sailing. We have had to adjust our plans as we gained and gathered more experience.

COVID-19 has hit hard on all South Africans, particularly those who are vulnerable and homeless. We have mounted a response. But we cannot afford to have many more in the streets. To this end, we will continue to prohibit the eviction of tenants during level 3.

However, given that rental income is also an important livelihood stream for some, we have inserted the possibility for a competent court to grant an eviction order provided it is just and equitable.

The sale of tobacco, tobacco products, e-cigarettes and related products remains prohibited, except when they are destined for the export market.

The sale of liquor in licensed premises will now be permitted as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2020, for the limited period between Mondays and Thursdays from 09h00 and 17h00. However, onsite consumption is prohibited, and e-commerce sales will be permitted subject to the same onsite trade days and times. The Minister of Trade, Industry and Competitions will elaborate in this regard, suffice to say no special or events liquor licenses will be issued for the duration of the state of national disaster.

In opening our economy, we must maintain a firm eye on our goal of flattening the curve and minimising the rates of infections and deaths. We must remain conscious of the ever-present danger that we can quickly reverse our gains if we act too hastily and irresponsibly. To this end, the operating sectors of our economy must pay attention to strict, health, hygiene and social distancing measures. Workplaces must employ extra ordinary measures to protect our citizens. We must

therefore minimise the number of workers at the workplace at any given time, and also encourage remote working.

We must also secure the livelihoods of our citizens. The social and economic measures we have implemented, have at times not fully reached the intended recipients. Through collaboration and concerted actions, we will better target our interventions, so that we see a brighter and better South Africa, beyond the virus.

All the measures we have implemented are difficult, but necessary. We must endure today so as to secure the future of this beautiful nation.

**Morena boloka Sechaba sa heso!!**