



## **THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

### **MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES**

#### **PRESS STATEMENT ON ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS OF THE MANUFACTURING AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY DUE TO THE CORONA VIRUS/COVID-19**

Fellow Countrymen;  
Manufacturers; and,  
Traders;

It is now public knowledge that the global pandemic of Corona Virus/COVID-19 is already in Uganda, with nine cases so far registered. In an effort to stem further spread of the virus which causes COVID-19; Government has instituted several measures including:

- closure of schools,
- restrictions on cross-border movements, and
- Public health guidelines, *among others*.
- *Decongestion of Markets*
- *Regulating of transport and movement of persons.*

I highly commend the Hon. Minister of Health and her team for their efforts in containing the outbreak of the corona virus in the Country.

To the Business Community – Manufacturers and Traders – as well as the general public, let us play our role by heeding the advice given to us, and ensure that we comply with directives and the measures that have been issued and instituted.

However, I have noted the Private sector have the following concerns;

- **Trading across borders and Certainty of Supplies of Raw Materials and Consumer Goods** All entry/exit points remain open, particularly for inward and outward movement of cargo. Only three people/ accompanying the cargo are allowed and they must observe the health regulations (such as sanitizing, handwashing, and being subjected to temperature checks) in place at the point of entry and long the transit routes.
- **Customs and other Border Agencies** are in place to provide services to enable expeditious clearance.
- **Congestion of trucks at Malaba and Busia;** we have negotiated and Kenya has now cleared Ugandan Trucks to enter their territory. Trucks are now entering the Country
- **Hoarding of goods;** Traders should desist from hoarding of goods which result in hiking of prices. Government implores the RDCs to head a task force comprising DISOs,

DCOs, LCs, Security Committees and LDUs to ensure the defaulters and essential commodities. If the traders fail to comply; their licenses will be revoked and their premises sealed off.

A number of issues have been raised by the Business Community

- Financial Obligation:  
The Private Sector has raised the following concerns;
- Inability to meet the statutory obligations such as; PAYE and Utilities
- Deferring of Bank loans,
- Flow of Imported Industrial inputs - negotiation with KRA on demurrage.

I will present all these issues to Government and shall communicate back the way forward.

Government has received information on the harassment of both foreign nationals and Uganda Business people who have recently come from abroad on suspicion of having COVID-19. I appreciate your strong awareness but let us handle them according to the law/ Ministry of Health Guidelines.

- i. Harassing Foreign Business Persons: Harassment of foreign business persons merely on account of suspicion that they are COVID-19 positive because they come from a high risk country must stop forthwith. The law

enforcement organs, particularly the Uganda Police Force, are asked to ensure that no such harassment takes place. Any suspicious cases, whether foreigners or local, should voluntarily report to the Ministry of Health or be reported to the Ministry of Health for professional management. In any case, returning foreigners and nationals are being placed under quarantine in line with medical recommendations. This is for the good of both the suspected patient and the general public.

- ii. **Payment for Utilities** e.g. Water that support the implementation of Public Health Measures: Government is concerned about the increase cost especially water and is considering the review of the rates and supply system. I, therefore, urge the business community to continue providing protective gears.
- iii. **Supply of Sanitizers and other protective gears.** All manufacturers of sanitizers are urged to ensure that their products are certified with UNBS. I have directed UNBS to fast-track the testing and Certification of these products. Manufacturers should apply on-line and UNBS will pick samples from their premises. It will take a maximum of seven days.
- iv. All industries must be de-congested through allowing their workers to work in shifts.

- v. Periodical markets, whether weekly or otherwise, are henceforth suspended. Local Authorities led by the RDC and a team comprising of DISOs, DCOs and DPCs and Chairmen LCV are asked to ensure that this suspension is observed. The exception is for those selling fresh food stuff, which must also observe the public health guidelines put in place by the Ministry of Health, and have access control to ensure that everybody accessing them washes their hands and sanitizes.
- vi. **FOOD MARKETS:** To scale down the number of people in the markets and only allow those trading in food such as bananas, poultry, and meat.

Trading in non-food products has been suspended in the markets. Selling of Cooked food on the streets is also suspended. Otherwise, Restaurants, supermarkets, arcades, boutiques and other shops outside food markets remain functional but must observe the Guidelines in place.

### **Regulating of transport and movement of persons**

The following categories of transport shall continue to operate;

- Trucks , delivery vans, and pick-ups strictly for delivery of food and essential commodities
- Ambulances
- Security vehicles
- Institutional /government vehicles (only three persons)
- Vehicles for sanitary services
- Private vehicles with three persons

Public transport ( taxis, coasters, buses, boda bodas, tuk-tuks) have been suspended for 14 days.

There has been a misconception of H.E's Directives in some areas which I would like to rectify.

I would like to state the following;

- Distribution channels of foods and beverages be allowed to continue operating so long as people do not converge
- Shops which are not within food markets should not be closed. Except lock ups
- Depots/ stockiest stores and distribution chains of alcohol remain operational
- Salons, operational under guidelines
- Vehicles intercepted with several passengers should be given a pass by the enforcement officers to return to the point of origin. They should not disembark from the point of interception to avoid mixing with the communities therein.

***\*Police should communicate to the Police at the point of Origin.***

Enforcement team's e.g. LDUs, Police should refrain from beating people. Please explain to them through the community radio towers in the local language.

I take this opportunity to thank the people of Uganda for their positive response to the guidance of H.E. the President and the Hon. Minister of Health to fight against the COVID-19 virus in Uganda.

To the manufacturers and business community, irrespective of your size, let us be agents of defeating the spread of COVID-19 (Corona Virus) in Uganda by adhering to public health guidelines.

Other issues pertaining to the future of your businesses will be addressed when we defeat the Pandemic.

It is your responsibility to keep yourself and those next to you free from the COVID-19 (Corona Virus). And you have the means to. Let us all act positively and responsibly.

I would like to thank H.E the President and the Ministry of Health for the persistent efforts they have implemented in saving out lives.

Amelia Kyambadde (MP)

**MINISTER**

26<sup>th</sup> March, 2020