



ERONGO REGION
Office of the Governor

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNOR

Honorable Neville Andre

at the

COVID- 19 MEDIA BRIEFING

held on

Friday, 26 June 2020,

at the

Swakopmund Municipal Chambers,

at 10h00

- Director of Proceedings and CRO of the Erongo Region – **Ms. Habate Doeses**
- **Hon Juuso Kambueshe**-Chairman of the Erongo Regional Council
- **Captain Appolos Haimbala** – Namibian Marine Corps Commandant
- **Chief Inspector Eric Nghaamwa** – Representing NamPol
- **Ms. Anna Jonas** – Director of Health and Social Services in the Erongo Region
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, I am speaking to you at what we all know is an increasingly challenging time for our Region, especially for the residents of our three Coastal towns, namely Walvisbay, Swakopmund and Arandis.

A time of disruption in the life of our Region: a disruption that has brought anguish to many, financial difficulties to many, and enormous changes in our daily lives.

I would like to express my personal deepest appreciation to all frontline workers, especially the Health Care workers and members of our security cluster, which include our police officers, members of the Namibian Defense Force and the Namibian Navy for their selfless service.

I am sure the Region will join me in assuring you that what you do is appreciated and every hour of your hard work brings us closer to embrace our new normal.

Together we are tackling this virus, and I want to reassure you that if we remain united and resolute, then we shall overcome

The pride in who we are is not a part of our past; it defines our present and our future.

We will succeed and that success will belong to all of us.

The Active Case Identification Exercise:

Earlier this week, I announced that we will be undertaking an active case identification exercise. This exercise is mainly aimed at:

1. establishing the extent of COVID-19 spreading in the Walvis Bay District
2. And to use the data collected to plan for the response activities for the Region.

The main purpose of this exercise is to establish the extent of transmission in the Walvis Bay Local Authority area, including Utuseb. The investigation will target locations that are densely populated as well as vulnerable persons who interact with many persons from the community as they conduct their daily jobs and offer essential services.

These will include: health care workers in all health facilities, pharmacies, cashiers, tellers, receptionists, security guards, cleaners, security cluster personnel, shops attendants, banks employees, barber shop and salon workers, car wash workers, informal traders, taxi drivers, ship operators/staff, factory workers that comply with the testing participant criterion, show symptoms and suspect to have been in contact with positive cases.

I am happy to inform the media that the exercise has commenced.

During the first day of this exercise, we experienced some teething problems.

Last night at our de-briefing meeting with the Health Care Officials and other stakeholders, we were informed that most of the Teething problems experienced during the rollout have been resolved.

We are overwhelmed by the response from the Walvis Bay residents to the targeted testing exercise.

We will continuously update the media and all other stakeholders on the implementation and outcome of the exercise.

I am therefore calling on all the employers to cooperate with us during the duration of this exercise. We appeal with all

employers to join us in affording maximum support to their employees during and after this exercise.

To the general public, this exercise is aimed at the targets.

Please be patient and give your necessary support to the Health Care Workers who are conducting the testing.

Contact Tracing:

Contact tracing testing is being conducted by the Ministry of Health and Social services and I am happy to inform the media that ever since the first case was identified in our Region till yesterday, a total number of 1229 people were tested of which 57 were positive and 1172 tested negative.

Quarantine and Isolation Facilities:

The issue of quarantine and isolation facilities has been in the media for some time now and I would like to update you on the current status of quarantine and isolation facilities in Walvis Bay

I am happy to report that the initiative by the Erongo Corona Care, to convert the garages at the Kondja Ward into an isolation facility as part of phase one has been completed, bedding and other equipment have been put in place.

This facility will officially be handed over to Government next week.

Given the sharp rise in positive cases, I would like to assure you that we have sufficient capacity to respond to the current state of infections in Walvis Bay. This facility will be accommodating people as from next week.

Furthermore, I am happy to inform you that the Ministry of Health and Social Services has added to the isolation capacities which is ready for usage as of today.

Visit to the Fishing Industry:

With the growing identification of positive cases at a fishing factory, I took time to visit fishing factories to get first hand information on how prepared and ready the Companies are.

I spoke to Management as well as Shop stewards.

Despite the fact that there is overall preparedness and readiness, there is still more that needs to be done in terms of providing more information and awareness on COVID -19, general safety of the workers, sanitizers and Psychosocial Support.

Most of the factories are also doing away with systems which might expose the employees to the virus such as removing the old biometric clocking system to a card system, where each worker will have his/her own card, thereby reducing the risks of exposure.

I was also assured by the employers that all the infected, affected and isolated employees will be in quarantine or isolation facilities will continue to get full remuneration.

Whilst visiting the fishing companies, I also learned of a growing phenomenon, that some individuals both within the companies and outside are spreading false information, and especially in social media and this is causing unwarranted panic and leads to stigmatization of the employees,

I would therefore call on all citizens in the Region, including our esteemed media partners, to refrain from spreading false and unverified information.

This is a time when we need to pull together, be united and jointly find solutions to the challenges we are facing.

Today's Media Briefing:

We will have our usual Security Cluster Update by Captain Apollos Haimbala and Chief Inspector Eric Nghaamwa.

We will then have Ms. Anna Jonas, the Regional Director of Health to give an update on Health matters.

Conclusion:

I want to take this opportunity to thank the National Health team and the medical graduates and social workers, who have been

working tirelessly during the past few days, conducting testing and providing psycho-social support communities in Walvis Bay.

I also want to thank the Security Cluster for their resources support as well as the private Sector for availing themselves, their facilities and equipment, at times for free. We really appreciate your support.

Our media for been at the forefront in providing information timeously.

Regional and Local authority Councilors for their support during this time.

Staff from different Offices of Ministries and Agencies, for their availability during this time.

I would like to single out Case 22 by extending my personal well wishes for a continued recovery and that our thoughts and prayers remain with him and his family.

We can and we will sail through these stormy days,

I thank you.