

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY

**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT
DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB ON THE OCCASION OF THE VIRTUAL
MEETING OF REGIONAL HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT TO DISCUSS STRATEGIES TO CONTAIN
COVID-19**

**May 8, 2020
STATE HOUSE**

Check Against Delivery

**President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, African Union
Chairperson and Convener of this meeting,**

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

I express appreciation to the Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa for calling this virtual meeting, and for the hard work and hours invested in championing our continental response.

- 1. The first two cases of COVID-19 in Namibia were confirmed on 13 March 2020. We acted swiftly the next morning on 14 March to suspend outward and inbound flights to and from Doha, Qatar, Frankfurt, Germany and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On 17 March, we declared a State of Emergency to contain the spread of COVID-19.**
- 2. Since 28 March 2020, we have been at Stage 1 of the Lockdown, which commenced with the affected Erongo and Khomas Regions, including the contingent local authority areas of Okahandja and Rehoboth. The lockdown was extended countrywide from 18 April to 4 May 2020. We rolled out a Stimulus Package at around 13% of our budget to assuage the loss of income for businesses and the most vulnerable sectors of the population, who received an Emergency Income Grant.**

- 3. I have been emphasizing throughout this period that the health of Namibians remains the priority. Our prompt action to close points of entry and issue comprehensive restrictions on the movement of people helped to contain the spread of the virus. The incidence curve flattened at 16 cases, with 9 recoveries up to date. I should also add that there have been no community transmissions and no COVID-19 related deaths in Namibia.**
- 4. The countrywide lockdown lapsed at midnight on Monday, 4 May 2020, and we have progressively commenced with the relaxation of countrywide restrictions on the movement of people, goods and services. We are seeking to strike a balance between protecting life on the one hand and economic activity on the other. The State of Emergency, which I declared on 17 March 2020 remains in force for a period of 6 months and may be extended, subject to the data available on COVID-19 cases. The country has entered STAGE 2 since Tuesday 5 May 2020, a period envisaged to last until 2 June 2020. We will graduate to STAGES 3 and 4 subject to tangible improvements on the ground.**

- 5. Your Excellencies, COVID-19 is a global pandemic and requires coordinated regional, Pan-African and global action. During this difficult period, Namibia recognizes how interdependent and how interconnected we are as neighbors. To illustrate this point, a member of the Namibian parliament with family residing in South Africa had bereavement and Government-to-Government coordination permitted her to attend the funeral in South Africa. We share northern and northeastern borders with Angola, Zambia and Botswana, and we have to educate our people who are in some instances not aware that they have crossed borders.**
- 6. Namibia will continue to keep ports and harbors open in order to facilitate the movement of goods to landlocked neighbors and beyond.**
- 7. I am grateful for this VIRTUAL MEETING of neighboring countries, and wish to thank you, Your Excellencies for the importance you attach to collective action in order to deal with the shared challenge of COVID-19.**
- 8. Finally, let me thank Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa for initiating this timely Virtual Meeting of Heads of State**

and Government, permitting us to share lessons, strategies and best practices in our region.

I THANK YOU