

# **President's Coordinating Council reinforces intensified response to Coronavirus COVID-19**

18 Apr 2020

President Cyril Ramaphosa has today, Saturday 18 April 2020, chaired a virtual meeting of the President's Coordinating Council (PCC), which discussed measures to strengthen and intensify the country's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The PCC consists of Ministers, Premiers, Executive Mayors of metropolitan municipalities and the leadership of the South African Local Government Association.

The previous meeting of the structure, which was held on 4 April 2020, assessed the effectiveness of the original 21-day lockdown period.

The PCC today agreed on the need for a risk-adjusted approach to the resumption of economic activity at the completion of the lockdown period. Such approach would entail the gradual easing of regulations in various sectors, guided by available evidence which supports the ongoing containment of the virus, until the economy is operating once more on full capacity.

The meeting discussed progress and challenges in the implementation of the nation-wide lockdown with specific emphasis on the need for relief of social distress suffered by many South Africans who have suffered a loss of income, who are experience food shortages or who do not have access to water.

Since the lockdown, over 100,000 households across the country have been provided with food parcels, with further households being targeted through the Solidarity Fund and Department of Social Development's Disaster Relief Fund. The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) has also set aside over R400 million for social relief of distress through food parcels and vouchers to be rolled out on a larger scale. The PCC agreed that these efforts needed to be significantly expanded as a matter of urgency. PCC further emphasized the need for social distress efforts to be dispensed in a manner that upholds the dignity of all beneficiaries.

The PCC has agreed to ramp up water provision across the country and to deliver relief to more households so that it reaches those most in need. This includes measures covering the homeless and other vulnerable groups.

The Council further received an update from Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize on health interventions being undertaken to manage the spread of the coronavirus, including mass screening and testing, contact tracing and treatment of infected people.

As part of government's public health containment measures, the Council has considered

available capacity in the country for quarantine sites and hospitals.

The meeting further made inputs for Cabinet's consideration when it meets on Monday, 20 April 2020, relating to the need for an economic reconstruction plan which appreciates the huge damage that COVID-19 would have wrought on the South African economy. Government must also develop an economic recovery plan for municipalities which are expected to bear the brunt of the economic, political and social fallouts from COVID-19 as engines of our national economy and the coalface of delivery.

The meeting was unanimous that the impact on the South African economy would depend on the pace and magnitude of the interventions which would be required of all social partners.

This includes the need to fast track the implementation of identified structural reforms. The meeting agreed that measures should be put in place to ensure that more cash is put in the hands of households to induce economic activity in the medium term.

President Ramaphosa has lauded the importance of the PCC saying, "The PCC is an invaluable platform that allows us to assess the extent to which our response to this pandemic has fully embraced the principles of cooperative governance. Fundamental to all the work we do to combat the coronavirus is the interface between different spheres of government, each of which has particular responsibilities for effective implementation."

Public Enquiries: Presidential Hotline 17737

COVID19 Specific Enquiries: NICD Hotline 0800 0029 999

Media enquiries:

Spokesperson to the President, Khusela Diko on [media@presidency.gov.za](mailto:media@presidency.gov.za)

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