

**THE FOURTH PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS
ON THE
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

THURSDAY, 16TH APRIL 2020

STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

Fellow Kenyans,

1. Today the 16th of April, 2020 marks one month and three days since the first confirmed case of the Coronavirus Disease was recorded in our country.

2. As a Government, and on the advice by our medical and public health experts, we moved quickly to implement a comprehensive plan designed to limit individual exposure to the virus and its spread within our communities.

3. We recognised the profound need for prompt action, observing the exponential nature of the pandemic's transmission that had been recorded in other countries across the world.

4. The measures we have taken are firm and indeed have been impactful. The nighttime curfew, and the barring of travel in and out of the areas that have the most infections, are indeed limiting the ability of the disease to be transmitted at a great scale. The same is the case for the social distancing, the guidelines that have been set out that include

amongst other things the closure of learning and entertainment institutions, as well as the barring of air travel into our country.

1. I want at this juncture to thank each and every one of you, all who have stepped up to be in compliance with these necessary measures because your actions are without doubt saving lives. Without them, we would need to deal with a disease that is highly infectious and that can double and redouble its spread and cause untold human human destruction. We have seen this happening in other countries. If we did not take strong and immediate steps, the damage to our peoples lives and our

economy, our country would have been far worse than the current difficulties that we are going through now.

2. Your compliance fellow Kenyans, with distancing, wearing of masks, the hygiene advisories, these small and basic actions are protecting other Kenyans, and even your own families. We love and respect our elderly fellow Kenyans, our grandmothers and grandfathers. They are so vulnerable to this disease. So it is important that each one of us do the right thing and show our

care for them by doing as our medical experts are advising us.

Fellow Kenyans,

3. Our measures are slowing the rate the disease would be spreading, but we must be honest and say that there are still infections underway in nearly half of our counties.

4. In the last 24 hours we conducted 704 tests, out of which 9 persons have tested positive for Coronavirus. In that regard, the total number of persons who have tested positive now stands at

234. Fortunately for us, 53 persons have also turned negative and have been discharged from hospital.

5. We have lost 11 people to this disease and nearly one thousand are still in quarantine, and 156 in isolation facilities. Fellow Kenyans, these are not just numbers. These are people, human beings.

6. They range in age from 2 years to 64 years, and come from every socio-economic group, and multiple ethnicities and countries of origin. None of these people set out to be infected, we can all be infected if we are not extremely careful. Coronavirus

is not a respecter of age, of status, of ethnicity or race: we have even seen leaders of countries get infected and had to seek serious medical attention.

5. Our response to this crisis is revealing our skills and capabilities as a nation.

6. One instance is in quickly escalating testing which is key to detecting and dealing with the pandemic. **O**ur testing capability has gone up dramatically, and we have tested over ten thousand individuals. This week the Ministry of Health has received more testing reagents that will allow us to upscale our testing capacity; starting with targeted

areas and eventually to the wider Kenyan population.

7. We are grateful that we have seen innovation out of this crisis, for example students at Kenyatta University need to be applauded for developing a prototype of an inexpensive ventilator for use in our local hospitals.

7. Not to be left behind, other universities and technical institutions are also making remarkable progress in the local manufacture of medical

technologies and equipment in support of our medical and public health needs that have arisen from **COVID-19**.

8. With imports severely interrupted, I equally applaud our local industry that has stepped into the gap. These efforts are reflected for example by the Kitui County Textile Company and the National Youth Service producing face-masks in large numbers.

9. Others like Shona EPZ Limited and Bedi Investments Limited in Nakuru who are manufacturing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

for our medical workers on the frontline. I encourage all those who are able to rally to supply this need, but also we need to ensure that those engaged in this manufacture pay heed to the standards required of these products.

10. Other local industries have heeded the rallying cry and diverted their regular commercial production to support Kenya's COVID-19 response

by manufacturing **soap and disinfectants** — for free distribution by Government to frontline health institutions, vulnerable groups and communities. **These efforts are demonstrating our ability as a nation, to be a stronger manufacturing nation, who will ultimately create jobs and serve our nation not just during this crisis but into the future. This I believe will help all of us** champion our agenda of expanding Kenya's manufacturing base.

11. Now that these products are being manufactured locally, the focus for all purchasing parties should be to ensure that we procure these products domestically so that we can keep our enterprises and our workers growing and working.

Fellow Kenyans,

12. I believe that it is in moments like this that the **true character of a Nation and a People is revealed.** Kenyans are showing that they can invent, innovate, and respond rapidly to a major

challenge that has not known its equal for many many decades. Knowing our character is so key to building our confidence that we have in us to solve even more challenges that face our people.

13. We are learning today anew that we are a country of empathy and compassion.

14. In every corner of our country, companies, families and neighbourhoods are reaching out to those most affected economically by this crisis and helping.

15. To ensure that donations, especially food and non-cash items, are distributed in a safe and responsive manner, the Government has prescribed that such efforts be channeled through, or coordinated, by with the recently established **Kenya COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund together with the relevant security agencies.**

16. This fund should be responsive, should not be encumbered by bureaucracy and must be open to innovation and technology in the delivery of assistance to our people. **I** do not want to hear of needless delays or frustrations caused of well-

designed, appropriate measures that Kenyans in the civil and private sector have designed to assist their fellow citizens we must expedite our ability to deliver this assistance to our people in the shortest possible time.

17. In the Counties, these efforts should be coordinated jointly by our Governors and County Commissioners, as Devolution continues to show its power to deliver to Kenyans.

18. I want to applaud the work being undertaken by the Council of Governors, and indeed all

individual Governors in Counties. We have agreed with Governor Wycliffe Oparanya, who is with us today, that Governors will work with County Commissioners in every County to ensure that support to our vulnerable fellow Kenyans is delivered seamlessly.

19. I also look forward to development partners and charitable institutions as well as individuals enabling the COVID-19 Fund to support well-structured

efforts such as these that can deliver cheap and subsidised food into the areas of greatest need. An example of such promising efforts include one being structured between Kenyan high-technology food and consumer goods distributors and horticultural pack-houses that are linking farmers and vendors in delivering affordable and accessible food to our people. Let us keep up the innovation while uniting to deliver solutions and coordinating our actions.

Fellow Kenyans,

20. The spectrum of efforts to be undertaken all require resources. **I** am glad to note that in the

short time **the Kenya COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund** has been in place, we are racing towards realising contributions amounting to some **One Billion Kenya Shillings.**

21. I want to thank all Kenyans - individuals, social groups or corporate entities; for their generosity and sacrifice in supporting vulnerable Kenyans.

22. As always, on behalf of an eternally grateful Nation, I also want to continue to praise and thank our healthcare workers for their dedication and selflessness in responding to the greatest threat to

public health in over a century; the officers and staff of the national government administration; our clergy of all faiths whose spiritual guidance has never been more valuable; our media who have shown patriotism and civic responsibility in their coverage and programming; our innovators, our manufactures, our farmers, and our banks, for their effort in maintaining our economy, amid a global slowdown; and to all others players who have done their role in preserving Kenya's strength in this war.

23. We also salute our hardworking and dedicated law-enforcement officers who are keeping Kenya safe and orderly. However, I must note that every

time a regulation is breached with the assistance of a Government officer, it risks the lives of thousands of innocent Kenyans. Any officer who breaches his duty to implement the measures against the pandemic will be met with the harshest of sanction. You are meant to serve the people and to protect them, not to enable the selfish few to endanger the rest of Kenyans. If you are in charge of a police station or are a County Commissioner or a Chief, not doing your job you must realize that there will be consequences.

24. In the same breath I want to condemn in the strongest way possible those of us who can assault

or interfere with law enforcement officers doing their job. And I want to reiterate again any such actions will be met with the full force of the law.

Fellow Kenyans,

25. As your Government, we are continuing to work hard to ensure that no one is left behind. We have adopted a pro-poor approach to dealing with this pandemic and its effects knowing that they are disproportionately affected.

26. We shall continue developing and delivering actions that will assist them through this period and while the recovery is underway.

27. In addition to the mitigating measures that we have announced over the past month, I want to tell you about other additional targeted interventions that we intend to take:

I. Recognising the critical importance of health, mental and emotional needs of our frontline medical doctors, nurses and other medical professionals, I am today directing the Ministry of Public Service and

the Ministry of Health to develop a welfare package to cushion these frontline officers, especially during this challenging time. This should include actions by medical insurance companies to cover the health requirements of our hospital staff especially those dealing with the pandemic.

II. The way Counties prepare and respond to this pandemic is going to be critical. As a result of that I am directing that County Governments receive a 3-month waiver from the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) requirements for the purchase of

masks and PPEs to protect our citizens and healthcare workers from infection. This waiver applies to sourcing of these products locally.

III. The National Government will also support the Counties response to the Coronavirus crisis with 5 billion Shillings that will supplement the savings that the Counties have generated.

These monies will be devoted specifically to cushion the most vulnerable people, and to protect our healthcare workers.

IV. To further cushion vulnerable Kenyans, we have identified needy households in Nairobi that will be the inaugural recipients of the weekly COVID-19 Support Stipend. The piloting of the programme started yesterday and some of the initial beneficiaries have received their stipend.

V. In addition, today, my administration has also released 8.5 billion shillings to the elderly and vulnerable individuals under the Cash Transfer Programme run by the Ministry of Labour, for the months ahead. In addition, 500 million shillings,

which were in arrears, have also been released to persons with severe disabilities.

VI. We will continue to provide all necessary assistance to groups, communities and socio-economic sectors that have been hardest hit by the pandemic and its effects.

I have recently learned, with great happiness, that in our usual Kenyans for Kenyans manner an initiative called the **Adopt a Needy Family** initiative is in place and I want to applaud the religious organisations, businesses, and better-off

households that are undertaking this effort, and encourage all other Kenyans to take similar steps that reflect our most deeply-held values.

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Fellow Kenyans,
35 . Even as we respond to this dire emergency, I want to assure you that we are working towards

formulating **Kenya's Post Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan.**

36. And in this, we will be engaging all stakeholders to re-engineer existing economic plans and policies in light of the crisis.

³⁷ **.My** team is also paying attention to critical national matters affected by the pandemic that are causing families anxiety; one such is the holding of exams this year. In this regard, we have also directed the Ministry of Education to work with our response committee to come up with steps to mitigate any negative impact on students due to the measures taken against this pandemic.

38. Our efforts here at home are soon going to be complemented by the solidarity that the world is showing. **The** countries with the largest economies in the world are in discussion with ourselves on the

issue of suspension of debt for a period in order to allow countries to be able to spend more in combatting this pandemic and its effects as well as the economic recovery that needs to also come. Other regional and global institutions have also stepped up; for example the African Development Bank and the African-Import Export Bank, which have created emergency credit facilities for countries like ours.

39. We will utilise these facilities to support producers and exporters so that they can return to full production and protect jobs and livelihoods.

40. Here at home, I want to once again urge Parliament to expeditiously consider the legislative proposals that are before the House. These proposals will ease the tax burden for Kenyans, and

strengthen our economy at a time when that help is urgently needed.

Fellow Kenyans,

41. We are not out of the woods yet. This pandemic is still hunting for many victims. So far we have done well in responding to it but we must remain extremely careful. Indeed as your President, I will ensure that we stay alert and continue to calibrate our measures to protect Kenyan lives, our economy, and our national peace.

42. I ask each and everyone of you to join me in this critical period of protecting our families, our communities, and our country.

God bless you and God bless our Beloved Nation – Kenya, and all citizens of the world as we confront this deadly virus.

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