MEASURES TAKEN BY UGANDA TO COMBAT COVID-19

After most of the neighboring countries had confirmed cases of COVID-19, the government of Uganda started taking deliberate measures to reduce gatherings starting with closing academic institutions at all levels and banning all political, cultural, social and religious gatherings. The first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Uganda on 25th March, 2020.

As at 30th April, 2020, the following measures are obtaining:

1. Closure of all educational institutions.
2. Suspension of religious gatherings such as prayers in Churches and Mosques.
3. Suspension of all social, cultural and political public gatherings and conferences.
4. Suspension of all local passenger public transport.
5. Suspension of all passenger flights into and out of the country.
6. Suspension of entry into Uganda by anyone other than truck drivers, by land or water.
7. Suspension of non-food sellers from markets.
8. Imposition of a countrywide lockdown save for a few workers in selected sectors deemed to be essential.
9. Imposition of a countrywide 7pm to 6.30am curfew.

The Customs Administration has in line with the national COVID-19 guidelines conducted the following:

10. Set up a crisis team to respond to COVID-19 emergencies.
11. Ensured that information relating to COVID-19 is relayed to staff, clients and the general population through all available channels of communication including social media.
12. Depopulated the offices by facilitating some staff to work from home to provide for social distancing.
13. Facilitated staff especially at the borders with personal protection equipment and sanitizers.
14. Joined the national task force by monitoring movement of cargo trucks through electronic cargo tracking.
15. Enhanced facilitation and processing of clearance for Cross-border Movement of Relief and Essential Supplies.
16. Provided a list of relief and medical supplies relating to COVID-19 under tax exemption.
17. Encouraged importers and manufacturers to take on tax exemptions as provided for under the laws and allowed general extension of payment of duties upon request.
18. Provided for general waivers on penalties for delays in transit, late arrival of commercial documents and over stay by ATA carnet holders.

19. Provided for the use of electronic services while interfacing with clients and responding to queries and inquiries.

The Uganda Revenue Authority submitted information on measures implemented by the East African Community as follows:

**THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 BY EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY COUNTRIES**

The six countries of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan have all reported Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Cases.

The following measures are currently being implemented in regards to Customs

1. All designated border points of entry and exit of goods are operating as usual.

2. Movement of cargo has been restricted to the gazette transit routes.

3. Transporters and Freight forwarders have been required to have not more than 3 operators of trucks.

4. Screening of truck drivers and crew (For Uganda and Kenya).

5. Quarantining of individuals with COVID-19 symptoms under the supervision of health officials for 14 days.

6. Giving priority to essential goods and medical supplies during clearance.

7. Promotion of local production of items required in containing COVID-19 such as sanitizers, face masks, ventilators etc.

8. Designating specific points along the transit routes for recuperation by the drivers.


10. Manufacturers and importers are being encouraged to take advantage of exemptions for relief items and medical supplies as provided for under the law.

11. The use of established electronic systems to minimize physical contact is being encouraged.

12. There are relaxed measures on the enforcement of transit time limits.

13. Shipping lines have also been encouraged to waive charges on container delays.

There is disinfecting of trucks carrying cargo albeit in a limited scale.