Zambia

Source: WCO/Zambia Revenue Authority

08.05.2020

On 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WCO), following the advice of the Emergency Committee convened under the International Health Regulations (2005), declared the current outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern and issued temporary recommendations.

Under the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005, public health authorities at international ports, airports and ground crossings are required to establish effective contingency plans and arrangements for responding to events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern and to communicate with their national focal point about relevant public health measures. The current outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) disease has spread across several borders, which has prompted demands for the detection and management of suspected cases at points of entry (POE), including ports, airports and ground crossings.

Zambia is not an exception. Please find below some of the national and regional trade facilitation measures and health protocols that Zambia has implemented in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 PRACTICES FRAMEWORK

1 Measures aiming to facilitate the cross-border movement of relief and essential supplies

a) Priority is given to the clearance of essential goods and medical supplies at the borders.
b) Health officials and the police escort trucks carrying essential goods to destinations where a relay system cannot be used (relay system refers to a system where a driver picks up a truck from his/her colleague at the border whilst the other driver goes into quarantine).
c) Encouraging importers and exporters to use pre-arrival processing (preclearance and pre-registration), and electronic payment options. Preregistration is now mandatory.

2 Measures aiming at supporting the economy and sustaining the supply chain

Remarks from the International Road Transport Union

Forthcoming

a) Waiver of Tax Penalties and Interest: to assist companies and
businesses manage their cash flows during this period when they are
faced with reduced revenues, resulting from the impact of COVID-19.
b) Allowing taxpayers with outstanding tax obligations to pay in instalments
as well as extending to 31 December 2020 of already approved
instalment plans.
c) Suspension of Customs and Export duty on selected products through
relief Statutory Instruments (SIs) 38, 39, 40, & 41 intended to mitigate the
impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Zambian economy. (see
attachments).

3 Measures aiming at protecting Customs administrations' staff

a) Providing staff with hand washing disinfectants, hand sanitisers,
temperature guns, facemasks and other prescribed personal protective
equipment to all staff working at borders and inland offices.
b) Sensitisation and awareness messages through flyers and video
messages on how to keep safe, maintain social distancing and
upholding high levels of personal hygiene.
c) Rotational working arrangement to allow members of staff to practice
social distancing at the office as others work from home.

4 Measures aiming at protecting society

a) The general public and taxpayers are encouraged to use electronic
platforms available to fulfil their tax obligations to minimise physical
contacts the walk-in arrangements (see below).
b) Fumigation and disinfection of offices, markets and other key public
places including trucks entering the country.
c) Relay system at selected borders and quarantining of drivers of trucks
from COVID-19 hit countries.
d) Suspension of customs duties and VAT on medical supplies used in the
fight against COVID-19.

5 Other Measures

a) Processing of export from inland ports as opposed from the border
stations to reduce waiting time and congestion to prevent the spread of
COVID-19 pandemic.
b) Temporary closure of selected border posts depending on the levels of
infection.



Further information: http://www.wcoomd.org/..../natural-disaster/covid_19/zambia....