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**Ministry of Health and Social Services**

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**PRESS STATEMENT**

**Update on COVID-19 in Namibia.**  
**Dr K. Shangula (MP), Minister**

1. Today the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020 marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> day since the declaration of the State of Emergency by H. E. The President and the 13<sup>th</sup> day since Khomas and Erongo regions were put under lockdown on account of Covid-19 pandemic. These two events have profound impact on the lives of Namibians. The aim is to suppress the propagation of coronavirus.
2. During the outbreak of covid-19, a total of 333 samples were tested for Covid-19. Of these, sixteen (16), which represent 4.8% of the total tested positive. Fifteen (15) of those who tested positive were placed in our isolation and treatment facilities where they received medical treatment and psychosocial support. One person was hospitalized and received intensive treatment. Three (3) patients were success fully treated and cleared of the coronavirus. They have since been discharged from our treatment facilities. We have not recorded a death as a result of Covid-19. I pause here to thank the 16 individuals who tested positive for their cooperation with our treatment regimen. I thank the team of health professionals who have been and who are still managing the Covid-19 cases with such dedication and commitment that goes beyond the call of duty.
3. One of our strategies is to isolate those who may have been exposed to Covid-19 in order to limit transmission. Persons who came from countries with a high burden of Covid-19 have been quarantined. So far, the total of persons quarantined is 263. A total number 109 persons have been discharged since they have not displayed any symptom which is consistent with Covid-19.
4. Our response activities are anchored on the National Health Emergency Management Committee that handles aspects of coordination, logistics, laboratory, surveillance, case management, points of entry and community engagement. The critical element in our response is the exceptional leadership provided by H. E. The President and support of the Rt Hon Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and the entire Cabinet.

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5. We continue to expand our infrastructure in order to deal with increased number of patients. In this regard, the following facilities have been or are being developed:
- A 4-bed isolation facility at Hosea Kutako International Airport;
  - A 20-bed mobile military hospital at Hosea Kutako International Airport;
  - Conversion and re-modeling of Robert Mugabe Clinic into a Covid-19 screening and treatment facility;
  - Conversion and re-modeling of Windhoek Central Hospital Casualty with negative air pressure into ICU;
  - Construction of a 12-bed prefab in-patient facility for moderately ill Covid-19 patients at the Windhoek Central Hospital; and finally
  - Construction of a 540-bed Rhino Garment Treatment Centre in Otjomuise.

In addition, a 200-bed facility is being developed at Ongwediva Trade Fair Centre for the northern regions. This is also a joint project between the public and the private sectors.

6. The private sector has made welcome initiatives to complement government efforts in order to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. The Rhino Garment Treatment Centre is being developed jointly with the private sector. We have received many pledges of support both in financial terms and in kind. The media is playing a crucial role in disseminating correct information to the public. While on this point, recently there was clip circulating in the social media of the Minister of Health and Social Services, ostensibly receiving Covid-19 vaccines from the Chinese Ambassador. In fact, the photo was taken at the occasion when I received **test kits** and not vaccines from the Ambassador. Most of the media houses witnessed that event. I want to stress that such framing are not helpful but counterproductive to our noble efforts.
7. So far, we have done well in controlling the pandemic. Let us have faith in our institutions, systems and processes. My call to the public is to remain calm and confident; to comply with the measures in place and to stay home. This will expedite our return to normality.

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