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Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

March 27, 2020
Press Release

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed held a virtual meeting with the COVID-19 Ministerial Committee to discuss progress and provide additional direction and measures in the prevention and containment COVID-19.

Considering that the number of positive cases has increased to **a total of 16 as at March 27, 2020** and to ensure that these numbers do not increase exponentially, the Federal government has been taking heightened precautions to ensure that enough preventative measures have been taken.

Following discussions held, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced the following additional key measures and calls for action:

1. As of this afternoon, recent arrivals to Addis Ababa who cannot afford to be quarantined in the various hotels identified, will be transferred to Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) for the 15 days mandatory quarantine period upon arrival.
2. Two-week extension of school closures as of today, including higher learning institutions.
3. Strict adherence to social distancing protocols is expected within market areas and religious establishments. The Federal Government has been granted a constitutional mandate to halt religious gatherings in times of grave national emergencies. But before enacting these constitutional measures, it once again appeals to all citizens that they are practicing social distancing protocols.
4. Calls upon all retired and in-training medical professionals to prepare for national duty if the situation warrants such extra support.
5. More than 134 facilities have been identified for quarantine, isolation and treatment but with varying levels of equipment. Therefore, the government calls upon all citizens to strengthen the efforts of the national resource mobilization committee which is in the process of finding materials like beds, mattresses, bed sheets, ventilators and other medical and non-medical supplies.

6. The macro-economic sub-committee has been undertaking dialogue with key industry stakeholders in various sectors to craft a way forward in safeguarding the economy. As a result, the following measures will also be undertaken to stabilize the economy:
    a. Tax exemption for the import of materials and equipment to be used in the prevention and containment of #COVID-19.
    b. National Bank of Ethiopia to avail Birr 15 billion liquidity for private banks to enable them to provide debt relief and additional loans to their customers in need.
    c. Banks to avail foreign currency for importers primarily importing goods and input materials for the prevention of #COVID-19.
    d. Commercial Bank of Ethiopia to increase the amount of money individuals can transfer through mobile banking, to limit in-person cash handling
    e. Removal of the minimum price set by the National Bank of Ethiopia on the horticulture sector for flower exports
    f. The Ministry of Revenue to expedite VAT returns to support companies with cash flows
    g. The Ministry of Trade and Industry to continue strengthening the measures it is undertaking to control price increments and supply shortages of consumer goods

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