

Ghana

Public Health Act, 2012

Declaration of Public Health Emergency Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic Instrument, 2020

Executive Instrument 61 of 2020

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WHEREAS, the Republic of Ghana subscribes to the World Health Organisation (WHO) principles that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition;

WHEREAS, a central and historic responsibility for WHO has been the management of the global regime for the control of the international spread of disease, to which effect the International Health Regulations (IHR) were adopted by the 58th World Health Assembly on 23rd May, 2005, which entered into force on 15th June, 2007;

WHEREAS, the purpose and scope of the IHR (2005) are to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade;

WHEREAS, the Director-General of WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on Wednesday, 11th March, 2020, declared the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a pandemic, pointing to over one hundred and eighteen thousand cases in over one hundred and ten countries and territories around the world and the sustained risk of further global spread;

WHEREAS, according to WHO, the COVID-19 is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 and has not been previously identified in humans, and whose common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties; and in more severe cases, can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death;

WHEREAS, on Thursday, 12th March, 2020, the President of the Republic addressed the nation in respect of enhanced measures taken by Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, at which time there had not been any reported or confirmed case in Ghana;

WHEREAS, on Friday, 13th March, 2020, the first two cases of the COVID-19 were reported and confirmed in Ghana;

WHEREAS, on Sunday, 15th March, 2020, the Minister responsible for Information, at a press briefing informed the people of Ghana that the number of cases of COVID-19 had increased to six and issued several guidelines for entry into the Republic and other related preventive measures;

WHEREAS, on Sunday, 15th March, 2020, the President of the Republic, chaired a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on COVID-19 Response, and, thereafter, decided, in the interest of public safety and protection of all people living in Ghana, to review the public gathering advisories;

WHEREAS, on Sunday, 15th March, 2020, the President of the Republic in yet another address to the Nation, announced that six cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed in Ghana, all of whom were people who had recently travelled into the country;

WHEREAS, the President of the Republic, in the address to the Nation on Sunday, 15th March, 2020 in respect of measures taken by Government to combat the COVID-19, directed the Minister responsible for Health to exercise the power of the Minister under section 169 of the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851);

WHEREAS, on Saturday, 21st March, 2020, the President of the Republic chaired a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on COVID-19 Response, to review the country's position, and subsequent to that meeting, addressed the nation on additional measures to stem the spread of the virus, and protect the lives of Ghanaians;

WHEREAS, under subsection (1) of section 169 of Act 851, the Minister responsible for Health is required to declare a public health emergency where there is a situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property or the environment;

WHEREAS, under subsection (2) of section 169 of Act 851, the criteria for a public health emergency include an incident which should

- (a) immediately threaten life, health, property or the environment;
- (b) have already caused loss of life, health detriments, property damage or environmental damage; or
- (c) have a high probability of escalating to cause immediate danger to life, health, property and the environment;

WHEREAS, the Minister responsible for Health recognises the threat of COVID-19 to life and health, and its high potential to escalate and cause danger to the life and health of people living in Ghana; and

WHEREAS, the Minister responsible for Health has for some time now held several meetings with the cadre of health professionals and subsequently announced measures to control the spread of COVID-19, and is committed to mitigating its effect on the economy and people living in Ghana by complying with established national and international laws in this regard.

NOW THEREFORE, in exercise of the power conferred on the Minister responsible for Health under sections 169 and 170 of the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851), this Instrument is made this 23rd day of March, 2020.

1. Declaration of public health emergency

COVID-19 is hereby declared a public health emergency.

2. Testing and quarantine directives

A person who

- (a) shows symptoms of COVID-19 shall be tested for COVID-19 and put under quarantine, as may be necessary;
- (b) enters Ghana shall be mandatorily quarantined for a period of fourteen days, and tested for COVID-19; and
- (c) is determined by the relevant health authorities to be unable to undergo satisfactory self-quarantine shall be mandatorily quarantined by the relevant authorities.

3. Preventive measures

- (1) To avoid the spread of COVID-19, all persons shall take preventive measures including
 - (a) regular hand washing with soap under running water;
 - (b) use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers;
 - (c) avoiding shaking of hands;
 - (d) covering of mouth and nose with tissue when coughing and sneezing;
 - (e) immediate disposal of tissue and other materials used for covering the mouth and nose into a trash bin;

- (f) maintaining a distance of at least one metre away from a person with fever, cough, sneezing and difficulty in breathing;
 - (g) avoiding close contact with a person showing symptoms of respiratory illness;
 - (h) staying at home when symptoms of fever, cough and difficulty in breathing occur;
 - (i) promptly calling prescribed telephone numbers when necessary; and
 - (j) being physically active, sipping water to keep mouth and throat continuously moist, healthy eating, avoiding stress and taking enough rest and sleep.
- (2) All facilities and establishments including, manufacturing and industrial workplaces, local markets, supermarkets, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, security and essential services shall ensure that
- (a) social distancing is maintained between patrons and staff, and among staff of the facility or establishment; and
 - (b) enhanced hygiene procedures, including the provision of running water and hand washing soap, alcohol-based hand sanitisers and disinfectants, are complied with.

Kwaku Agyeman-Manu (MP)

Minister for Health