



Kenya Embassy, Brussels

STANDING OPERATION PROCEDURES (SOP) ON COVID - 19 (CORONA VIRUS)

Introduction

1. Corona viruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 presumably in WUHAN, China and has not been previously identified in humans.
2. Common signs of infection include red eyes, fever, and cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and sometimes can lead to death. Further, Belgium will soon officially acknowledge Anosmia (loss of smell) and loss of taste as symptoms COVID-19.
3. To date, many countries in the world including Belgium and Luxembourg are under a state of emergency (lockdown) due to an alarming high rate of infections, hospitalization and death that threatens to overwhelm hospitals and health personnel. The obtaining situation has and continues to impact negatively on the economy due closure of businesses, job losses and a sick a workforce. Africa, and indeed Kenya, has also been affected with several cases of corona virus reported and the trend is bound to rise in terms of infections and fatalities. Currently, there is no vaccine against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) is to take daily preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing of hands often.
4. His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya has issued guidelines on how to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard the lives of Kenyans. It is against this background that a simplified SOP is

needed to protect the lives of Home Based Officers (HBO), Local staff, Kenyan citizens living in Belgium and Luxembourg and visitors to the Kenya Mission including giving direction on actions to be taken in case of any eventuality.

Scope

5. This SOP will cover but not limited to the following:
 - a. Procedures and access to the Kenya Embassy in Uccle, Belgium
 - b. Equipment and gadgets
 - c. Basic protective measures and hygiene standards
 - d. Important addresses and numbers
 - e. Evacuation procedures

Procedures and access to the Kenya Embassy in Uccle

6. H.E Ambassador (Prof) Jacob Kaimenyi remains the overall in-charge of the Mission on all issues concerning official and non-official communication from the Mission on COVID-19. All directives will be issued from his H.E the Ambassador's office and communicated through the security committee. The Mission is a public facility serving both Kenyan citizens in the diaspora and other foreign nationals.

7. This SOP provides for the procedure of accessing the Mission during/and after this period of the coronavirus pandemic as follows:
 - a. The Kenya Embassy will only allow one (1) person at a time to access the reception areas for services.
 - b. At the reception, all visitors must maintain a distance of at least one (1) metre from the counter
 - c. All persons, both visitors and all staff members, MUST wash their hands thoroughly at the entrance using water and soap and thereafter use provided sanitizers.
 - d. The Mission reserves the right of admission and is at liberty to deny some visitors access if it deems so fit.
 - e. Visa issuance is suspended until further notice.

- f. Assistance of Kenyans in distress to be based on urgency need basis after careful evaluation.
- g. Members of staff dealing directly with members of the public should wear masks and gloves if necessary.
- h. All members of staff, HBO and local staff, should wash their hands regularly and use sanitizers placed at designated areas.
- i. Written instructions and signage to be placed at the main entrance giving the relevant instruction on required steps to be undertaken before accessing the premises of the Mission.
- j. Unnecessary movement around the Chancery by all members of staff should be kept to a minimum and all should stick to their respective work stations.
- k. Disinfection of the Chancery to be done as a precautionary measure before resumption of normal operations and on a need basis.
- l. Disinfection of commonly touched surfaces (door handles, staircase railings...) on a regular basis.
- m. All meetings, social gatherings of any kind will be suspended during this period until further notice.
- n. All constructions or renovations within the Chancery and residential areas of HBO will be suspended during this time until directed otherwise.
- o. HBO and Local staff to work in shifts, if there is need for presence of a staff member at the Chancery, and from home if not on essential duties.
- p. All HBO and Local staff who fall ill and/or present COVID-19 symptoms must undergo a medical check-up to ascertain their health status before resuming duty. However, the Mission will stand guided by the measures and controls put in place by the Belgian Federal government regarding re-entry of persons that tested positive for COVID-19 as well as those that presented symptoms but were not tested.
- q. Officers with pre-existing conditions to work from home.
- r. Working hours is from 1000 hours to 1430 hours.
- s. Procurement of non-essential products/services is suspended till further notice.

- t. The Head of Mission may order for complete closure and shut down of the Mission at short notice where necessary.

Equipment and gadgets

8. The under listed equipment and gadgets will be procured and placed in strategic areas as necessary:

- a. Thermal guns (at least 2) to be placed at the disposal of all members of staff.
- b. Hand washing facilities containing water, soap and disposable hand drying towels will be stationed at the entrances, at the main reception and at the Consular section.
- c. Sanitizers to be placed at the main entrance and all other doors/entrances inside and within the chancery.
- d. Sanitizers to be placed in all vehicles (personal and official).
- e. Soap, sanitizers as well as disposable hand drying towels to be placed at all sinks and wash hand basins in the Chancery.
- f. All drivers to ensure they wash and sanitize their vehicles at all times.
- g. The afore-mentioned equipment and materials be procured and retained by the Financial Attaché for distribution as necessary.

Basic protective measures and hygiene standards

9. Coronavirus is spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 1m or 6 feet). This is through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is equally possible that a person can get infected with COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then subsequently touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. The following basic steps may mitigate the possibilities of contracting the COVID-19 virus:

- a. **Wash your hands frequently** - Regularly and thoroughly clean hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer and/or hand rub or wash with soap and water to minimize risks of contracting the virus. Washing hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

- b. **Maintain social distancing** - Maintain at least 1.5 metres distance between yourself and another person. When someone coughs or sneezes they spray tiny droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing/sneezing is infected.
- c. **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth** - Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.
- d. **Practice respiratory hygiene** - All to follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.
- e. **Stay at home if you feel unwell.** If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, **contact your General Practitioner (GP) immediately.** Do not go to the emergency room/hospital. The GP will guide you accordingly. Calling in advance will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.
- f. If you recently visited areas where COVID-19 is spreading, ensure that you undertake self-quarantine for at least two weeks (14) days. Avoid contact with others and visit medical facilities for necessary tests to protect yourself and others from possible COVID-19 infection.
- g. **Avoid handshakes at all times and use other alternative methods of greetings.**

Addresses and Important numbers

10. In case of any cases of the COVID-19, the concerned should get in touch with their respective GPs. That notwithstanding, during this period important contact persons and numbers will be as follows:

- a. Federal Public Service - Health Emergency help line **0800 14 689**
Opening hours:
8 a.m to 8 p.m (week days)

- 10 a.m to 8 p.m (weekend)
- b. Protocol COVID-19 Hotline - 025018282
- c. Ambulance Services - 112
- d. Police - 112
- e. Fire Department - 112

Evacuation Procedures

12. An evacuation plan is generally meant to prepare the stakeholders for any eventuality on how to get out persons of interest including citizens to safer locations in times of calamities. For this case and under the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in Belgium and Luxembourg remains the overall in-charge of evacuation of HBOs and Kenya citizens from the country of residence to home country. This evacuation will be triggered and necessitated by a situation where the Corona infection levels are out of control. The following should be adhered to in case of an evacuation:

- a. All will be required to report to the Chancery and assemble outside.
- b. A roll call will be called by the Secretary of the security committee and brief the Head of Mission accordingly.
- c. The security committee with the help of a designated health practitioner will segregate and prioritize the evacuation lists.
- d. The security committee will get in touch with home based agencies including the MoFA (Belgium and Luxembourg), FPS Health and Luxembourg Ministry of Health to designate the appropriate pick up points of the evacuees.
- e. The Consular section will be required to update and print the names of Kenyan citizens in Belgium and Luxembourg for use for roll call during the times of evacuation.
- f. The Mission transport officer will be required to identify and source for appropriate transport including ambulances to the designated pick-up point.
- g. The Head Mission, Head of Chancery and the security committee members will be the last to evacuate ground zero.

Conclusion

13. These SOPs are not exhaustive and may be modified, edited and changed at any time to address the prevailing situation. The Head of Mission avails himself to safeguarding Kenya's National Interests and always available to implement directives from H.E the President of the Republic of Kenya as may be issued from time to time.

Ambassador (Prof) Jacob Kaimenyi