



**REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
FEDERATION/CHAIRMAN OF THE PTF-COVID-19 AT THE NATIONAL PRESS
BRIEFING OF MONDAY, 29th JUNE, 2020**

I welcome you all to the National Briefing by the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 for Monday, 29th June, 2020.

2. When the PTF briefed the nation on **1st June, 2020**, we informed you that Mr. President had approved amongst others, that we should proceed into phase two of the eased lock down for a period of four weeks to enable the PTF evaluate the developments properly and continue to ensure balance between lives and livelihood.

We also cautioned that the gradual relaxation was subject to review should developments warrant it.

3. Within the Month under review, the PTF continued to monitor developments and consistently admonished Nigerians to change their behavior in view of the fact that the spread of the virus had entered the community phase. It is the considered opinion of the PTF that Nigerians, though aware of the existence of the virus, have generally misunderstood the objectives behind the reasoning of government in gradually relaxing the restrictions.

4. For the purpose of emphasis, the virus is still dangerous and has continued to wreak havoc at home and abroad. The exponential rise in number of cases detected and the fatalities gives cause for concern. Statistically, the following numbers should interest us:

Global, African and Nigerian Situation as at 27th June, 2020

Description	World Statistics	African Statistics	Nigerian Statistics
Confirmed Cases	10,129,054	375,390	24,077
Fatalities	502,189	9,329	558
Recoveries	5,493,601	175,876	8,625
Samples Tested	N/A	N/A	130,164
Recent Spike in Daily Numbers	125,039 reported in the USA on 26/06/2020	N/A	779 reported in Nigeria on 27/06 2020

Statistical comparison between the exact dates in the months of May and June, 2020

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Period of Comparison	Global Numbers	African Numbers	Nigerian Numbers
May 28 2020	Confirmed Cases: 5,593,631 Deaths: 353,334	Confirmed Cases: 89,592 Deaths: 2,370	Confirmed Cases: 8,915 Deaths: 259
June 27 th 2020	Confirmed Cases: 10,186,375 Deaths: 502,985	Confirmed Cases: 383,104 Deaths: 9,604	Confirmed Cases: 24,077 Deaths: 558

Daily Reported Statistics in Nigeria from 18-27 June, 2020:

June, 2020	18 th	19 th	20 th	21 st	22 nd	23 rd	24 th	25 th	26 th	27 th
Cases	745	667	661	436	675	452	649	594	684	779
Recoveries	340	274	137	161	230	229	275	209	431	372
Fatalities	06	12	19	12	07	08	09	07	05	04

NOTE:

- (i) For eight out of the days the daily numbers exceeded 500; and
- (ii) For every detected case, there is a high possibility that up to five (5) have not submitted to testing and therefore not detected.

5. As we are all aware, the PTF in conjunction with sub-national entities, the organized private sector, put in places a number of measures. The PTF also escalated its activities around risk communication to Nigerians but we have observed with growing concern the non-

compliances with these measures designed to prevent transmission and protect vulnerable segments of the population. We hold the strong view that if such actions do not abate, experiences of resurgence of the virus from other jurisdictions including China, the United States of America, Brazil and across Europe may emerge in Nigeria and we run the risk of erasing the gains made in the last three months.

6. By way of a reminder, there is presently no known vaccine for the virus and that all over the world non-pharmaceutical measures still remain the most effective fighting opportunity we have for overcoming this pandemic.

7. To further strengthen our National Response, the PTF in the intervening period vigorously built partnerships locally and internationally. Similarly, we fully have decentralised the National Response with State Governments and communities taking ownership and more responsibility. These efforts have greatly improved our ability to maximally detect, trace, isolate and treat nationwide successfully.

8. The PTF has also continued to pursue the strategic thrust of “telling (communicate), tracing (identify) and treating (manage)” cases, with a stronger focus on precision interventions in high burdened LGAs within identified states of the Federation. This precision intervention will be signposted by:

- i. Aggressive scaling up of efforts to ensure effective community protection and sensitisation; and
- ii. Increased provision of support and guidance to states in their response to the outbreak.

9. Ladies and gentlemen, the focus on the important roles to be played by the States is underscored by the following considerations:

- i. The spread has entered the community phase which only States and LGAs should drive;
- ii. The inaction of a particular State could endanger its neighbours and compromise the entirety of the response;

- iii. States will be encouraged to make considerable efforts to ensure a push for compliance within the guidelines issued by the PTF;
- iv. States must also take greater care in leading on public health measures in the LGAs under their jurisdiction, by working on surveillance, case finding, testing, isolation, tracing and quarantining contacts; and
- v. FG will predicate its resource deployment to States on the level of compliance and the extent of collaboration received on this public health emergency.

10. Notwithstanding the challenges faced in the last one month and the fact that Nigeria's statistics have been on the rise, substantial progress has been made in the following areas:

- i. Harnessing of data, which shows that **60%** of the confirmed cases are in a handful of local governments in the country (**18 out of 774 LGAs nationwide**), and putting in place targeted interventions;
- ii. Increased capacity to detect, test and trace those infected with the virus, through the activation of 38 molecular testing laboratories, resulting in raising the test count nationwide in excess of **130,000**;
- iii. A shift in focus to a targeted community-based approach, enhanced risk communication;
- iv. Increased collaboration with the legislature, State Governments and the organised private sector;
- v. Activation of a new, cost-effective policy on the evacuation of returning Nigerians;
- vi. Increased awareness of COVID-19 among the population;
- vii. Cushioning the socio-economic impact of the restrictions through the provision of palliatives to vulnerable members of various communities nationwide; and
- viii. Successful re-opening sectors of the economy despite initial challenges in areas such as the banking sector, industry and agriculture.

12. Today, the PTF submitted its **5th Interim Report** to Mr. President for his consideration. In the Report the PTF specifically reviewed the issues around the general level of compliance with prescribed measures, while taking note of the following:

- i. Implications of the lack of general compliance with measures;
- ii. the global and domestic developments especially in the area of rising statistics;
and
- iii. the continued restrictions in the **education** and **transportation** sectors as well as for **activities that attract mass gatherings** such as operations of markets, worship centres and entertainment.

13. In doing the foregoing, the PTF considered the need for the continuation of the policy of striking the delicate balance between lives and livelihood as well as inputs received from different stakeholder groups.

14. The PTF similarly identified the underlisted areas of concern that would require attention under the on-going restrictions:

- i. International travel;
- ii. Entertainment activities;
- iii. Educational services/sector; and
- iv. Public and Private Sector offices.

15. You will recall that the PTF had in previous briefings stated that the aim of **Phase Two** was to sustain the gains from earlier steps taken for pandemic control and to enable additional sectors of the economy restart activities. Given the challenges and the visible danger ahead occasioned by skepticism, poor public perception both leading to lack of compliance, it has come to the inevitable conclusion that **the extension of phase two of the eased lockdown will be needed to:**

- i. consolidate the gains in the areas of the economy that have restarted,
- ii. ensure better compliance with the health-based response;
- iii. support the states in enforcing guidelines and protocols as well as strengthening the LGAs build community level structures for ownership and effective risk communication; and

- iv. help to better achieve the balance between saving lives and ensuring that wellbeing and livelihood of citizens are protected.

16. I am pleased to inform you that Mr. President has carefully considered the 5th Interim Report of the PTF and has accordingly approved that, with the exception of some modifications to be expatiated upon later, the Phase Two of the eased lockdown be extended by another four weeks with effect from Tuesday, June 30, 2020 through Midnight of Monday, 27 July, 2020.

17. Specifically, however, the following measures shall either remain in place or come into effect:

- i. Maintaining the current phase of the national response, for another four weeks in line with modifications to be expatiated by the National Coordinator;
- ii. Permission of movement across State borders only outside curfew hours with effect from 1st July, 2020;
- iii. Enforcement of laws around non-pharmaceutical interventions by States, in particular, the use of face masks in public places;
- iv. Safe re-opening of schools to allow students in graduating classes resume in-person in preparation for examinations;
- v. Safe reopening of domestic aviation services as soon as practicable;
- vi. Publication of revised guidelines around the three thematic areas of general movement, industry and labour; and community activities;
- vii. Provision of technical support for states to mobilise additional resources for the response;
- viii. Strengthening partnerships with States, Local Governments, traditional rulers, community/religious leaders and civil society to ensure increased public awareness and compliance with preventive guidelines;
- ix. Encouraging State governments to empower Local Government Authorities to intensify contact tracing efforts and ensure stronger grassroots mobilisation to support the response;

- x. Encourage States and Hospital authorities to ensure continuity of other health services to prevent fatalities from other life-threatening conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- xi. Deepening of collaboration with other mandate groups at States/Federal levels to harmonise the country's COVID-19 response in the short, medium and long terms.

18. The National Coordinator will in due course announce and publish the details of the revised guidelines while relevant MDAs including Education, Transportation and Aviation will respectively consult further with stakeholders and issue guidelines for their sectors

19. The PTF will now take your questions please.

18. I thank you for listening.