



# Trades Union Congress (Ghana)

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REF: OSG/11Q/2020/VOL.1/60

23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2020

H.E. NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA  
JUBILEE HOUSE  
ACCRA

Dear Sir,

## COVID-19: URGENT NEED OF FURTHER ACTION

First, we would like to thank you for the sterling leadership you have provided since the outbreak of Covid-19 in Ghana. The bold measures you have taken have helped to minimize the spread of the virus.

However, in spite of these bold and decisive measures, Ghana has recorded 21 cases of Covid-19. On Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2020, the country recorded its first death from the pandemic. Understandably, the anxiety among the general public has risen further as indicated by the panic buying in Accra and other major cities and towns across the country, as people race against time to stockpile essential items.

The additional measures you announced on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2020 including the closure of Ghana's borders, mobilization of retired health workers, and the procurement of additional COVID-19 test kits are appropriate. We wish they had come earlier.

Apart from the Covid-19 cases from people with travel history, there are cases from domestic contacts. The virus is now spreading within our communities. The fears of the health authorities have finally materialized. Our efforts should now focus on halting further spread of the disease in the communities.

The ban on mass gathering, the closure of schools, colleges and universities, as well as the call for social distancing and enhanced hygiene procedures, such as more frequent washing of hands with soap and the use of hand sanitizers, are very important measures.

But these measures have their inherent deficiencies. For instance, hand sanitizers are in short supply. Even if they are available many Ghanaians cannot afford them because a significant proportion of Ghanaians are living in poverty. Running water for hand washing is scarce in many of our communities. Even

our health facilities are complaining of insufficient running water. Our transportation system, especially *trotro* is not designed to allow for social distancing. Schools have closed and children are at home but parents are commuting to their workplaces in *trotro* and sharing working tools with their colleagues. Others are interacting with clients.

By all indications, our health system is not equipped to address any mass outbreak of COVID-19. Our Intensive Care Units (ICUs) can hold only a few patients at a time. The World Health Organization (WHO) has already warned of a potential catastrophe in Africa if more radical measures are not taken now.

The experiences of advanced countries (Italy and USA in particular) in the last few weeks have shown that no country has the health infrastructure to deal with COVID-19 totally. Therefore, the success of the fight against the spread of COVID-19 depends more on the efficacy of political measures. China, which took the extreme but necessary measures and took them at the right time, has largely been successful in combating the spread of the virus. Countries that hesitate to implement the right measures at the right time will suffer.


Mr. President, the risk of spread of the virus in Ghana remains high. We need more aggressive measures to protect the people from this deadly virus, including a lockdown if that is what is needed to protect the people. Only workers performing essential services should be allowed to work but they should be adequately protected from infection. The pharmaceutical industry and others that produce basic household supplies must be given financial and fiscal incentives to increase production. We strongly suggest that government should provide sanitizers to all residents in Ghana free of charge or they should be subsidized to make them affordable to everyone, regardless of their income levels.

These are extreme measures but they are necessary. We know that you have the courage to take these measures. Ghana is counting on you for a direction in this unprecedented health crisis.

May the Good Lord bless you and grant you wisdom, courage, and good health to lead us out of this crisis!

Yours faithfully,

**FOR: TRADES UNION CONGRESS (GHANA)**



**DR. YAW BAAH**  
**SECRETARY GENERAL**