24th April 2020

Dear EAGC Members and Stakeholders,

WEEKLY UPDATE ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FOR THE GRAIN SECTOR IN EASTERN AFRICA

Greetings from the Secretariat.

Mindful of the fact that the Covid-19 situation continues to evolve, this 5th edition of the Communique is a continuance of our weekly update on developments in the grain sector in Eastern Africa. Previous editions of this Communique, issued weekly from 24th March 2020 are accessible here.

Since our previous Communique, the number of COVID-19 cases has unfortunately continued to increase in Eastern Africa with a total of 1390 cases recorded in the 10 EAGC mandate countries.

Tanzania has reported a record high of 196 new cases of Covid-19 in the week while Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda have yet again recorded the highest number of cases in the past week with about 24 fatalities.

As a result, new measures have been announced by some governments while other pre-existing measures have been held in place to curb the spread of the virus.

Despite the challenges experienced as a result of the measures imposed, a smoother movement of relief goods among them food supplies across the regional borders has been noted, as governments have stepped up the efficiency of implementing COVID-19 screening protocols. Adherence to the new measures by business personnel while applying appropriate risk management has also eased the cross-border trade situation.

EAGC therefore, through this Communique, presents updates on:

A. New measures taken by governments in Eastern Africa
B. Updates on cross-border trade situation
C. EAGC support to grain trade
A. New Measures taken by Governments in Eastern Africa

Regional COVID-19 response

There were no new regional measures instituted in the past week. The regional concerted effort to keep borders open for movement of goods is gradually bearing fruit with improvements in cross-border trade management as discussed later in this Communique.

Kenya

- The Government has gazetted the importation of maize at a concessional import duty rate of 14% for white maize and 10% for yellow maize, imported between 20th April and 30th May 2020 by millers scheduled in the Gazette Notice.
- The screening of truck drivers entering and operating in the country has been introduced.
- Ships are required to declare the health status of their crew and to reveal their last ten ports of call. Mandatory testing of the crew has been instituted.
- A lockdown has been imposed in Mandera County following a rise in Covid-19 cases in the county, and its proximity to neighboring Ethiopia and Somalia.
- Meanwhile, Nairobi Metropolitan Area, Mombasa, Kilifi and Kwale Counties remain sealed off from the rest of the country with only movements related to essential services such as food supply allowed in or out of these areas.

Uganda

- Testing at key border points with Standard Operating Procedures has be introduced.
- The government has also initiated the mapping of truck routes with the aid of a tracking mechanism.
- Cargo trucks will soon be required to have no one accompanying the driver as an additional measure to limit spread.
- The extended 2-week lockdown by a further 3 weeks runs up to 5th May 2020 as the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase albeit more slowly.
- Essential services such as food markets, plantations and factories will remain open but subjected to Standard Operating Procedures published by the Ministry of Health.

Tanzania

- The Government has announced that the country is not considering the option of a lockdown yet. The Government continues to encourage and communicate the adoption of personal protection and social distancing measures.
- The indefinite extension of the closure of all learning institutions and cancellation of large public events such as the commemoration of Union Day on 26th April 2020 remains in place.
- International passenger flights remain suspended indefinitely, effectively closing off the country for passenger travel for the foreseeable future.
**Ethiopia**

- No new measures instituted in the past week.
- The State of Emergency, instituted on 8th April 2020, remains in place and will give the Government the powers to bypass Parliament to take appropriate measures to curb the spread of the virus.
- A lockdown has not yet been announced meaning that economic activities continue albeit at a lower level.
- The country’s borders also remain open to cross-border trade.

**Malawi**

- No new measures have been put in place in the past week. Previous measures put in place remain. However, there was an injunction on a 3-week lockdown announced last week. A court ruling is expected on 24th April 2020.
- Central markets have been closed but smaller locality markets will remain open from 0500hrs to 1800hrs to serve consumers within their vicinity.
- Enforcement Officers appointed under the Public Health (Corona Virus Prevention, Containment and Management) Rules 2020 to ensure strict enforcement of COVID-19 mitigation measures.
- Cross-border trade in goods continues unaffected.

**Burundi**

**South Sudan**

**Rwanda**

The Government has adopted measures to support businesses and minimize declining cash flows:

- Immediate and near-term measures
  - Flexibility in loan restructuring and deferred payments by commercial banks, guided by the National Bank of Rwanda
  - Refund of VAT to SMEs to allow continued operations
  - Extension of deadline to file and pay Corporate Income Tax and flexibility to enhance business liquidity: two weeks extension for large businesses and one-month extension for SMEs

- Medium to Long Term Measures
  - Support fund for longer term recovery with modalities to be availed in May 2020
  - The social protection plan to deliver food to vulnerable households to protect their food security during the lockdown remains in place
  - Deadline of the lockdown extended to 30th April
B. Updates on cross-border trade situation

Cross-border trade continues to improve along major trade corridors in East Africa as East African borders remain open for cross-border trade. While COVID-19-related measures have previously hampered cross-border trade, there are signs that the situation is gradually improving as bottlenecks at the borders are being eased.

Kenya/Tanzania borders

- No new developments at the borders this past week.
- The average transit time for movement of vehicles between Kenya and Tanzania is about 1-2 days currently observed with the borders not operating for 24 hours.
- A police escort is still required for trucks crossing from Tanzania into Kenya.

Uganda/Kenya borders

- Stricter limitations on movement of people are expected to be enforced soon. Previously, a maximum of 3 persons were allowed per truck (driver plus 2 support crew). However, it is soon expected that only the driver will be allowed to cross with the truck as an additional measure to limit spread of COVID-19. This comes after 3 truck drivers from Tanzania and Kenya were tested positive for COVID-19.
- Some relatively long queues have been observed this past week as screening measures have been tightened and night-time curfew in Kenya restricting border operating hours and increasing transit times.

Tanzania borders with Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Malawi

- The situation at Kasumulu-Songwe (Tanzania-Malawi), Tunduma-Nakonde (Tanzania-Zambia), Rusumo (Tanzania-Rwanda) and Kabanga-Kobero (Tanzania-Burundi) borders remains unchanged from last week
- Movement of trucks is relatively smooth despite COVID-19 screenings and some delays at customs at the borders in no small part due to less cargo traffic at the Port of Dar-es-Salaam.
C. EAGC support to grain trade

EAGC is continuously supporting Members to conduct trade during the pandemic within Government Guidelines. The listing of current enquiries and offers for grain trade are available here.

EAGC further reminds Members and Stakeholders on its trade facilitation services as summarized below:

Support with securing supplies of grains, farm inputs, equipment and services through the G-Soko and G-Hub systems.

i. Logistical support for grain trade using pre-qualified service providers.

ii. Emergency working capital arrangements with partner financial institutions ease liquidity constraints affecting the grain suppliers as a result of COVID-19.

iii. Continued monitoring and regular reporting to Members on developments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic to inform the business decisions.

EAGC reiterates its call to Members and Stakeholders to bring to its attention any disruptions they experience in either domestic or cross-border trade through Secretariat contacts at the end of this Communique (Annex 1). The Secretariat continues to closely monitor developments to update Members and remains at your disposal for any support that you may require during difficult period.

Thank you and God Bless you.

Gerald Makau Masila,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
EASTERN AFRICA GRAIN COUNCIL
# Annex 1: EAGC Contact Addresses for you to reach us for assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
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**Website Links:**
- [www.gsoko.com](http://www.gsoko.com)
- [www.ratin.net](http://www.ratin.net) – daily news updates
- [www.grain.institute](http://www.grain.institute)
- [www.eagc.org/services/atpaf-esa](http://www.eagc.org/services/atpaf-esa)