



## STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF THE WEST RAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY ON BEHALF OF THE WEST RAND REGION CONCERNING COVID19 PANDEMIC:-

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On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. On 7 January 2020, the causative pathogen was identified as a Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The majority of these cases were linked to a seafood, poultry and live wildlife market in Wuhan City, suggesting that the novel coronavirus has a possible animal origin. Accordingly, as at 26 March 2020, the Republic of South Africa has already recorded a total of 709 confirmed cases, whereas two of these cases are recorded to be in the West Rand. The incubation period for the symptoms to be visible is estimated at 14 days.

Coronaviruses belong to a large family of viruses causing a wide spectrum of illness, ranging from very mild to severe. Some cause illness in people; numerous other coronaviruses circulate among animals, including camels and some bat species. Rarely, some animal coronaviruses can evolve to cause illness in people. Sometimes coronaviruses may develop the ability to spread from person to person, for example the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), first reported from Saudi Arabia in 2012, and the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), first recognized in China in 2002.

The occurrences of the past couple of weeks have gone to show that globalisation is a force to be reckoned with. It was only some months ago, when one would have just heard about the outbreak that was occurring in Wuhan Province China and had the whole nation under lock down. One would have never fathomed that this same outbreak would in the form of a pandemic find itself in South Africa. The places are

ordinarily too far apart, but one of the effects of globalisation is exactly that; it brings the nations of the world closer faster than we would have ever thought

COVID19, the seventh known strain of the flu, has become one of the largest disruptors of current day life, It has shaken the core of every country, business, organisation and the people of those countries. Countries are now forced to restructure the way that they operate. Businesses, Family life all things we deem as ordinary has been disrupted as social events, extra-murals, camps and schools are closed down to limit the exposure of South Africans. .

When President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation on 15 March 2020, we welcomed the strength and resolution of his stance and we want to commend government for the vigilant manner in which stringent measures and protocols to mitigate the 'community transmission' risk have been implemented. Taking our guidance from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), the National Department of Health, as well as the World Health Organization (WHO), as a region i.e. the West Rand District Municipality, Mogale City Local Municipality, Merafong City Local Municipality and RandWest City Local Municipality we have also commenced putting stringent measures in place to safeguard everyone within the Region, these interventions are embedded in the approved Preparedness and Response Plan of the West Rand Region.

With the interests of all South Africans at heart, the President displayed even bolder leadership and has issued that the Country be placed on **Lockdown** effectively from midnight 26 March 2020 until midnight 16 April 2020. For your safety and that of the staff members of the four municipalities in the West Rand of course with the exception of all identified essential services (such as water and sanitation, electricity, fire and rescue services, municipal health services, disaster management and community safety, traffic management services, etc) you are encouraged to stay put in the warmth of your respective homes and adhere to the movement protocols as outlined in the recently promulgated regulations. Municipalities in the West Rand will ensure that all identified essential services remain operational and are not distracted.

Whilst we are aware of the restrictions imposed, we can only stress the importance of all of us complying with the directives from government. Though inconvenient, these actions are aimed solely at saving lives and limiting risk, we therefore implore all the citizens in the West Rand to heed the call of government and do all that is required of us to make our region, province and country unfavorable for COVID-19 to such an extent that it can be eradicated. Let us take lessons learnt from other countries whose complacency in dealing with the matter resulted in the devastating spread of the disease. We can minimize the impact of the virus by sticking to the basic procedures such as constant washing of hands, sanitizing hands before and after any touching, keeping distance between people, covering the mouth when coughing. Members of the community are also advised to be cautious of the following symptoms:

- Headache
- Coughing
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

Whilst at home listen to news and keep yourself abreast of the situation at hand, and spread the word as to how we can combat this pandemic. That being said, please only rely on verifiable news sources and avoid spreading untested theories and beliefs as this does more harm than good to the brave fight our government is waging upon this.

To ensure a swift and effective coordination of all efforts to manage the pandemic, the region in collaboration and presence of relevant stakeholders established the Joint Operation Centre facilitated by the SAPS, and anticipating the establishment of the Venue Operations Centre's in the jurisdictional areas of the three constituent local municipalities. It is further worth noting that the discussions are ensuing between the municipalities and the Provincial Department of Health to establish covid-19 testing Centre's at the Civic Centre's and Community Halls of the three local municipalities in the region.

Let us keep all medical personnel, emergency response teams, health practitioners and all those in the front line of this fight in our hearts and in our prayers. These brave souls have responded to the patriotic call of their country to serve and save it at great expense to themselves and their families. The least we can do is pray for their wellbeing during these trying times.

***I WISH ALL OF YOU GOD SPEED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS PANDEMIC AND HOPE THAT DURING THIS FIGHT WE ALSO LEARN TO STAY CLOSER TO THE ALMIGHTY.***

**CLLR S D THABE  
EXECUTIVE MAYOR  
WEST RAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**