



UMGENI WATER MESSAGE FOR OUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

STRATEGIES TO COMBAT COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

As we are aware, the new corona virus strain (Covid-19) continues to exact significant repercussions worldwide. Our country has not been spared its presence and accompanying social and economic challenges. The Government of the Republic of South Africa has rightly taken the lead in initiating stringent measures aimed at containment. Entities of State, among them Umgeni Water, have responded to the Presidential declaration of a national disaster with firm preventative actions that have been precisely developed to ensure maximum impact.

Umgeni Water fully understands the strategic importance of its products and services and the significant role they play in provision of essential services, including safe drinking water, by our customers. The increasing importance of availability of water in this trying time, when sanitising and washing of hands to combat this disease is vital, cannot be over emphasised.

It is in view of this, and the need to ensure that there is minimal or no disruption to daily operations that Umgeni Water has begun implementing programmes and actions that, we are confident, will contribute to sufficient awareness of Covid-19 and, in this way, be an effective barrier against contracting or transmitting it. Equally importantly, these programmes and actions will support the smooth operation of our business and uninterrupted supply of potable water to our customers so that they are able to continue to fulfil their mandate relating to access to water.

MAJOR OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF UMGENI WATER

It is important that our customers and other stakeholders are assured the business activities of Umgeni Water remain unaffected and continuing uninterrupted. These business activities include:

- Abstraction, treatment and conveyance of water;
- Operation and management of dams;
- Operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants;
- Water quality sampling;
- The variety of services that are provided by our laboratory;
- Infrastructure planning and implementation;
- Supply chain management and procurement, and
- Financial and administration services



MITIGATION AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY

While we are concerned that the number of people infected with Covid-19 has increased and the impact on our country's economy is becoming increasingly apparent, we do not anticipate a dramatic change in the day-to-day operations of Umgeni Water's business because adequate mitigation measures have been implemented to protect our staff, infrastructure and the various disciplines within our organisation. Some of the significant mitigation and preventative measures implemented include:

- Reactivation of the corporate inter-divisional Crisis Management Team, which will provide strategic oversight and support for implementation of mitigation and preventative measures and develop new measures, if required;
- All sites (Head Office, Regional Offices, Waterworks, Wastewater Works and Dams) are now classified as "restricted access" and will remain as such for the next 30 days;
- There will be limited or controlled visits to our sites by suppliers and contractors, and such suppliers and contractors will have to state whether their preventative protocols have been activated and are aligned to Government protocols and to those of Umgeni Water;
- As a means to minimise physical contact and reduce risk of further transmissions, Umgeni Water will be commencing a predominantly work-from-home/off-site process and flexible working arrangements as identified by Divisional Executives;
- Adequate mobile telecommunications infrastructure has already been procured for staff who will work away from the office in order to ensure work continuity and fulfilling of contractual commitments;
- Umgeni Water facilities will remain open and accessible to our stakeholders; however, access will be limited to assist sites to implement the required measures that are aimed at minimising spread of the virus;
- As far as practically possible, meetings that require attendance will be conducted via video conferencing, Skype or similar teleconference apparatus. Where physical presence is unavoidable, meetings will be kept as short as possible;
- All air travel for Umgeni Water employees has been suspended or restricted to the essential ones;
- As part of social ethics and a mandatory requirement, employees are required to disclose to their Executives whether high, medium or low risk countries were visited in recent times. Those who have travelled outside of South Africa (in particular, the identified risk countries) in the past 20 days will be required to self-isolate for 14 days and for a duration as prescribed by the doctor while being monitored for symptoms;
- Intensive coronavirus awareness and hygiene campaigns are being undertaken in which staff

are being given easy-to-understand material on Covid-19 and other strains of corona virus. These campaigns are ongoing and involve issuing of hand sanitisers and placing of sanitisers throughout buildings;

- Plant operators who normally use public transportation will be taken home and brought back to work the following morning in Umgeni Water vehicles as part of initiatives to ensure that staff remain healthy;
- As part of preventative strategies, proper social distancing is being implemented to ensure minimal person-to-person contact. In this regard, increased and wider use of video conferencing and, at work stations, the rule of thumb of a distance of 1 metre apart will be enforced where required without impact on daily business activities and on necessary movement;
- As part of initiatives to maintain a hygienic environment, frequency of cleaning and sanitising of offices and boardrooms has increased, and
- Rapid deployment of a fully trained team to work closely with health officials and experts to track employees who have been in contact with people who have symptoms associated with Covid-19.

ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

This strategy and other measures implemented are in line with the Occupational Health and Safety Act No 85 of 1993 and the Health Act 61 of 2003. They are also aligned to the national Disaster Management Act, the Disaster Management Protocols of the Department of Water and Sanitation, the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal and Umgeni Water's Crisis Management Plan and Business Continuity Plan. They will remain in force for the duration of the declaration of national disaster and associated Regulations or if requested by the Presidency to remove them earlier.

INVOLVING OUR COMMUNITIES IN PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The initiatives that have been implemented are not only internally focused. As a caring corporate citizen, staff of Umgeni Water are also reaching out to communities that live close to Umgeni Water's infrastructure and to the operators of public transport who are also based close to such infrastructure. The Board and Management of Umgeni Water realise nearby communities and taxi associations and bus companies can play both a significant and vital part in fighting off the disease and, in this way, stop further infections.

The key and most powerful thrust of our interaction with these external stakeholders is focused on two areas: education on Covid-19 and personal hygiene that encapsulates hand washing as a vital means of preventing spread. This is being done through a variety of media, including advertising in isiZulu and English-medium mass-circulating newspapers, on community radio stations and in social media.

We are also seeking help from and partnerships with municipalities for posters to be placed at municipal buildings and community centres. The number of people who go to or utilise municipal

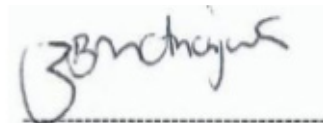
property is significant; and an awareness initiative here will allow Umgeni Water to reach a large constituency.

CONCLUSION

The strategy and measures implemented reflect the organisation's determination to protect the wellbeing of its employees, to ensure that Umgeni Water's infrastructure are operating at optimum and the essential services and products the organisation provides are not impacted. Negative impact must be avoided because its repercussions are serious and will be felt by our customers, in business and industry, in households and in the Province's economy.



THAMI HLONGWA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



ZIPHOZETHU MATHENJWA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

DATE: 20 MARCH 2020

