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Media Release

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As at today, the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is 1655. This is an increase of 70 from the previously reported cases.

The provincial breakdown is as follows:

GAUTENG	704
WESTERN CAPE	454
KWAZULU – NATAL	246
FREE STATE	87
EASTERN CAPE	31
LIMPOPO	19
MPUMALANGA	18
NORTH WEST	11
NORTHERN CAPE	8
UNALLOCATED	77

The total number of COVID-19 tests conducted to date is 56 873 and increase of 2 936 from those reported yesterday.

REPORTING OF CONFIRMED DEATHS

It is with sadness that we report yet another two deaths related to COVID-19. This takes the total number of COVID-19 related deaths in South Africa to 11. The first deceased patient is an 82 year old female who was admitted to ICU on the 29th March 2020. She had presented with fever, short breath, body pains, dry cough and sore throat. She also had comorbidities that included hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol.

The second deceased patient is an 86 year old male admitted to hospital on the 26th March 2020, with a diagnosis of bronchopneumonia and respiratory distress. He had an underlying condition of chronic obstructive airway disease (COAD).

We convey our condolences to the family of the deceased and thank the health workers who were treating these deceased patients.

NO.	PROVINCE	SEX	AGE
1	WESTERN CAPE	FEMALE	48
2	FREE STATE	MALE	85
3	GAUTENG	MALE	79
4	KWAZULU-NATAL	FEMALE	46
5	KWAZULU-NATAL	MALE	74
6	KWAZULU-NATAL	FEMALE	63
7	KWAZULU-NATAL	FEMALE	81
8	KWAZULU-NATAL	FEMALE	80
9	KWAZULU-NATAL	MALE	80
10	WESTERN CAPE	FEMALE	82
11	KWAZULU-NATAL	MALE	86

MEETING OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S CONTINENTAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Yesterday, a meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the African Union's Continental Response to COVID-19 was held. This meeting we co-chaired, as His Excellency, President MC Ramaphosa is the current Chairperson of the African Union.

This meeting was attended by 10 Health Ministers from African countries who received a briefing from the Director of the Africa Centres of Disease Control and Prevention (ACDC), Dr John Nkengasong.

The Ministers of Health acknowledged that the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented public health disaster. We jointly shared the concern about the disastrous effect this pandemic may have in the African continent, given the levels of poverty and explosive spread in densely populated areas of human settlement.

All countries shared their experiences thus far and it was agreed that we must strengthen our coordination efforts as a continent in order to limit the number of deaths and reduce the uncontrollable spread of this pandemic.

We further agreed that we will share best practices and embark on a strategy to fundraise jointly in order to ensure self-sufficiency, promote manufacturing within the continent and pool procurement within member countries. This will contribute in balancing our public health care strategies whilst contributing in protecting economies of our countries.

As AU Health Ministers, we also supported the initiative to coordinate technical experts, researchers and clinicians under the umbrella of the ACDC.

MEETING WITH TRADITIONAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

We held a meeting with the Traditional Health Practitioners (THPs) National Sector Leaders. The sector expressed its support for government's effort in dealing with the COVID-19 and committed to support initiatives such as tracing of contacts.

THPs indicated their willingness to participate in government's campaign for a hygienic behaviour to the communities they serve. This includes washing of hands, covering your mouth when coughing and social distancing.

The sector also expressed its concerns about their non-recognition as essential services providers. They presented to me that there are many citizens who consult with them and rely on their traditional herbs and remedies for their ailments. Since the lockdown, these THPs have since not been able to provide these herbal remedies to their patients.

This will assist in coordinating the approach of them referring patients to public health care facilities should they suspect that they may have the COVID-19 virus.

We acknowledge that government, through the Department of Health has recognised the role of Traditional Health Practitioners through the formation of the interim structure and the passing of the Traditional Health Practitioners Act. Therefore, it is important to properly define their role during this lockdown period. I further emphasised the importance of this sector to comply with all the policies and regulations that government has stipulated. This will ensure that no one takes advantage of vulnerable citizens in the name of traditional healing.

The THPs and I agreed that there must be an ongoing channel of communication with the department for proper coordination and information sharing, that will assist in this fight against the COVID-19 virus.

Dr Zwelini Mkhize
Minister of Health
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