



# GUIDELINES FOR RESUMPTION OF PROCEEDINGS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

An outbreak of the novel coronavirus began in China in December 2019 and the World Health Organization declared it as a global pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. However, the first confirmed case was recorded in Nigeria on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and there has been an increasing number of infections reported by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the Federal Government issued directives for the cancellation of large gatherings, places of worship, social and sporting events for an initial period as a measure to reduce the spread of the disease.

The House of Representatives adjourned sitting from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in response to the need combat its spread. The resumption date was eventually shifted as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria announced a 14-day mandatory lockdown on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as well as Lagos and Ogun States from 30 March 2020. The Federal Government subsequently extended the lockdown by another 14 days from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

The House has noted the need to resume sitting and attend to proposals before it to assist the Federal Government confront the COVID-19 effectively as well as approve government plans to jumpstart Nigeria's economic and growth development considering the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the citizens of Nigeria especially the lockdown and fall in crude oil prices.

The House has also noted the guidance from the World Health Organization and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control on workplace practices for public and private institutions.

The House recognises that the best way to prevent infection and reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the virus by adhering to basic hand and respiratory hygiene measures and hereby issues these guidelines for re-convening the House of Representatives.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- Protect the health and safety of the Members and Staff.
- Advise Members and Staff on protocols for social/physical distancing, face masks and face covering.
- Undertake critical legislative work required to support the Federal Government to effectively tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Execute other crucial legislative work economic growth and development.
- Ensure that the House of Representatives is in compliance with regulations outlined by the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

## 3. NCDC GENERAL GUIDANCE ON WORKPLACE PRACTICES

- Promote thorough and frequent handwashing, with soap and water for at least **20 seconds** and make available alcohol sanitizers, especially at all entrances.
- Wash your hands:
  - before leaving home
  - on arrival at the office
  - after using the toilet
  - before food preparation
  - before eating any food, including snacks
  - before leaving the office
- Cover your nose and mouth with tissue when coughing or sneezing. Used tissue should immediately be disposed in a covered bin followed by washing of hands. Alternatively, sneeze or cough into a bent elbow if no tissue is available.
- Ensure provision of bins.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands to avoid transfer of the virus from surfaces into eye or nose.
- Display signage reminding staff and visitors to maintain good and respiratory hygiene.
- Clean and disinfect the offices and premises daily, especially frequently touched surfaces like tables, door handles, countertops, computers, light, and air conditioner switches.

## 4. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Avoid handshakes.
- Use face masks or face covering always as only those properly kitted against COVID-19 will be allowed into the premises of the National Assembly.
- Avoid touching your face.
- No admittance to the gallery.
- Mandatory temperature check will be conducted at the main entrance into the National Assembly by qualified medical personnel. Members and Staff are to fully cooperate on the temperature screening.
- Any Member or Staff whose temperature is above the acceptable range will be advised to seek proper medical advice.
- Members and Staff are discouraged from opening any main door, except their office doors, as the Sgt-At-Arms are to man such doors, open them and disinfect regularly.
- Members and Staff are required to be transparent about their travel history and if recently returned from places with ongoing transmission in the last 14 days must self-isolate whether they have symptoms or not.
- If any Member or Staff feels sick, he or she must stay at home, contact his or her doctor for medical advice and do not come to the National Assembly premises. If symptoms akin to COVID-19 develop, call NCDC on 0800 970 00010.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT

- Ensure that all Members and Staff are abreast of these Guidelines and other preparedness action plan put in place to reduce the risk of exposure in the National Assembly.
- Work towards equipping the National Assembly Clinic to handle COVID-19 related cases in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure the presence of qualified medical staff dedicated to handle COVID-19 related matters and other emergency health issues. All other general medical cases should be referred to hospitals outside the National Assembly till further notice.
- Provide temperature screening at the entrance gates of the National Assembly and entrance into the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

- Provide 'Special Pass' for vehicles of staff and any other persons that have been approved to be allowed into the premises to reduce contact with the security men at the entrance of the National Assembly.
- Discourage the sharing of work equipment, tools, computers, phones, and desks.
- Provide hand sanitizers on each Member's seat in the Chamber and in their offices as well as strategic locations within the House.
- Ensure that handwashing facilities are functional, and that Members and Staff always have access to water and soap, also ensuring the working environment is kept clean
- A medical doctor should be available at the entrance of the Chamber each day during sitting.
- Enough bins should be placed at strategic locations for disposal of tissue papers: such bins should be emptied frequently each day.
- Provide cleaners with the appropriate cleaning agents.
- Members are advised to notify in advance, the Clerk of the National Assembly and Clerk of the House of Representatives before visiting their offices, to avoid overcrowding in their offices.
- Members are advised to talk with their colleagues more on phone and limit moving around their offices.
- Provide signages reminding staff and visitors to maintain good and respiratory hygiene.

## 6. ACTIVITIES IN THE CHAMBER

- Maintain physical and social distancing to safeguard the health and safety of Members and Staff.
- Members, including the leadership, are to maintain three (3) empty seats between them.
- Only Two Clerks-at-Table are to sit at a time.
- Clerk and Deputy Clerk will also observe social distancing.
- Members and Staff will wear their face mask on in the Chamber and everywhere in the House premises.
- Members are not to approach the Speaker and the Clerks in the Chamber, and when that becomes absolutely necessary, social distancing must be observed.

## 7. AUTHORIZED PERSONS

The House of Representatives will ensure that only relevant and essential staff will resume work to support the legislative duties of the leadership and members of the House of Representatives.

- Honourable Speaker
- Deputy Speaker
- Honourable Members
- Clerk of the National Assembly
- Clerk of the House of Representatives and Deputy Clerk
- Chief of Staff to the Hon Speaker
- 2 Special Advisers/Assistants to the Honourable Speaker of his choice
- 2 Special Advisers/Assistants to Deputy Speaker of his choice
- Secretaries to the Honourable Speaker and Deputy Speaker
- 2 staff of each Member of the Leadership of their choice
- 2 staff of each Member of their choice
- 2 staff of the Clerk to the National Assembly
- 2 staff of the Clerk of the House of Representatives
- Directors of the House of Representatives
- Committee Clerks
- 4 Clerks-at-Table
- Essential Staff involved in production of Order Paper and Votes and Proceedings
- One Staff of each of the Directors
- One Staff of a Committee Clerk who is not a Director
- 2 Sgt-at-Arms staff to be in the chamber
- 2 Sgt-at-Arms staff at the entrance to Chamber
- 4 Police Officers in the House premises
- Cleaners
- Limited number of staff of State Security Services
- Limited Sgt-at-Arms in the National Assembly premises

- With the exception of the Federal Fire Service, all officers and men of other paramilitary organization such as Federal Road Safety Corps, Nigeria Safety and Civil Defence Corps, etc. are to stay away from the premises till further notice.

## 8. ADDITIONAL STAFF FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- Medical staff as approved by the Clerk of the National Assembly.
- 2 Electronic Media Representatives and 2 Print Media Representatives as approved by the Chairman of the House Committee on Media and Public Affairs and the Director of Information.
- Staff of the Directorate of Estate and Works as approved by the Clerk of the National Assembly to ensure regular supply of electricity, including uninterrupted switch to generating set as may be necessary.
- Other critical essential staff, apart from the Secretaries, as may be approved by the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

## 9. OTHER MANDATORY PROVISIONS

- All business premises, including Banks will remain closed till further notice.
- All catering services, including in the offices of members of the Leadership are suspended till further notice.