



**PROGRESSIVE
PEOPLE'S PARTY**

Awake!

6th April, 2020

For Immediate Release

DECLARE A NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN - PPP

The Progressive People's Party (PPP) is pleased with the decision of the President to absorb water bills of all Ghanaians for the next three months, i.e. April, May and June. The directive to the Ghana Water Company Ltd and the Electricity Company of Ghana "to ensure stable supply of water and electricity during this period and mobilizing all water tankers, publicly and privately-owned to ensure the supply of water to all vulnerable communities" is commendable.

In our Press Release dated 24th March, 2020, we appealed to government to waive water and electricity bills to enable many Ghanaians have access to these essential social products. We had noticed that while washing of hands is one of the most powerful safety measures to fight COVID-19, WaterAid gives a staggering figure of over 8 in every 10 Ghanaians not having access to decent toilet facilities, and one out of every five of the population not having clean water.

We note that the Republic of Togo has announced free water and electricity for its citizens. So we are thankful President Akufo-Addo has demonstrated smart leadership by considering the water part. We wish to acknowledge the fact that Mr. Kwesi Pratt Jnr was one of the prominent Ghanaians who appreciated and publicized PPP's suggestion for free water for Ghanaians during this critical period in the nation.

Considering the way COVID-19 is spreading at breakneck speed, creating a severe public health emergency and its potential negative impact on families and businesses, we support the call from the Ghana Medical Association for the President to declare a Nationwide Lockdown. In doing this, we recommend a three months waiver on Electricity bills (GHc300/month cap for households and GHc500/month cap for commercial entities), since free and continuous access to water and electricity are necessities in our fight against the Coronavirus.

Our best bet is to stop the infection in both directions from spreading and we recommend that, if surgical masks are limited in supply and government cannot distribute this freely to all Ghanaians, then people who do not work in the healthcare sector should stick to fabric masks, like the ones people are sewing at home.

We urge the President to ensure that the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme (CAP) which the Finance Minister presented to Parliament, with the objective of protecting households and jobs, is managed transparently and for the benefit of all citizens.

We hereby reproduce our earlier recommendations aimed at protecting and growing our local economy:

1. Offer expanded safety nets for income and healthcare to avoid many people falling further into poverty due to job losses or health expenditures.
2. Ensure that local businesses and the hundreds of thousands of jobs it supports are able to weather the rapid economic deceleration brought on by the coronavirus.
3. Take bold steps to facilitate the development of local industries and promote the implementation of solutions that would enable Ghanaians to gain the commanding heights of the economy.
4. Expand and build more health facilities.
5. Encourage the building of industries to locally produce essentials such as medical products and food to substitute for imports and domesticate the economy and create productive, sustainable jobs.
6. Restrict Importation of consumer goods produced locally and provide low cost funds for local producers. Goldstar, Hyundai, Samsung and Daewoo all Korean brand names were nurtured and promoted with low-interest government loans, tax incentives and export/import facilities.
7. Set targets for the Sanitation Ministry to clean the country of preventable diseases.
8. Put on hold for a few months, punitive actions from SSNIT and GRA and also waive all penalties imposed. The numbers of those who pay tax and make SSNIT contributions are already small. We should not in this difficult time kill those few local enterprises.
9. Make Agriculture and Agribusiness a catalyst for ending poverty by facilitating the transportation of food from farmlands to the markets.

With a total of 214 confirmed cases, 2 moderately ill, 5 deaths as at 5th April, 2020, and still counting, we wish to remind everyone to wash their hands with soap and water regularly, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth and maintain at least 2 meters (6 feet) distance from others.

Additionally, we encourage all healthy Ghanaians to continue donating blood to the blood Bank while following the proper precautions to help us avoid a life-threatening blood shortage.

Despite the obvious challenges, this is the best opportunity for us to take off our competitive blinders, and put on our compassionate lenses by supporting our own indigenous businesses with stimulus packages. The best time to build and not to destroy is now!

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