



## Preventing and minimizing the impact of COVID-19 at UGAFODE

Coronavirus was declared by the WHO as a pandemic and according to the IMF boss, the virus is expected to cause more problems in the financial services ecosystem than the 2008 -2009 economic recession where many of the customers could not settle their loan obligations. The Ugandan Government through the Central Bank has listened to the concerns of many loan customers who are unable to settle their loan obligations and asked Financial Institutions to restructure the loans on a case by case basis. At UGAFODE, we have realigned our operations and put in place measures that are aimed at triggering behavior change to prevent the spread of the virus as we continue with our operations to serve our customers, stakeholders and the general public. A business continuity plan (BCP) has been developed with measures taken by UGAFODE to protect the institution's staff, systems, customers and other stakeholders against the coronavirus outbreak. A task force was set up both at Board and Management level to review the recommendations and measures in the BCP aimed at mitigating the impact of Corona on our business.

### Measures for Staff and customers



- Creating awareness about COVID – 19 amongst our staff and customers
- Provided hand washing facilities at the entrance of all branches
- Security personnel at banking hall entrances enforce hand washing among staff and customers
- Every staff provided with a hand sanitizer to help keep their hands germs free
- All shared facilities have their doors open at all times to avoid passing on germs on the door knobs and handle
- We have reduced the number of staff serving customers at the branches and head office. This has been adopted to implement social distancing measure introduced by the Ministry of Health in the guidelines to safeguard both the staff and the customer
- All field operations are put on hold and staff are either working from home or are on leave
- Protective masks and gloves have been availed to the staff to curb transmission.
- Surfaces are cleaned with detergents as often as possible so that customers and staff don't transfer germs from the tills and work stations in the banking halls.
- Branches are provided with cleaning material to ensure proper hygiene

## **We continue offering uninterrupted service to our esteemed customers and stakeholders**

- The Board meets weekly to review performance, guide management on best practices and practical ways of mitigating the pandemic.
- Senior Management and Branch Managers meet regularly via zoom to ensure we achieve business expectations while adhering to Government and Ministry of Health guidelines.
- All our branches with the exception of Nakasero which is located in a shopping arcade continue to serve our various customers as they have been though working hours have been revised from 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday. All branches are closed on Saturday
- We continue to lend to existing customers with good repayment history operating in the sectors that are critical during the COVID – 19 pandemic. .Lending to new customers during the lock down has been put on a hold except for those customers in agriculture and health sectors that are not adversely affected.
- Restructuring of all outstanding loan obligations where customers have proved to us that they are not able to pay under the prevailing circumstances. This will reduce the burden on our customers so they can focus on stabilizing their businesses as they plan to pay later.
- Branches are spearheading customer engagements and monitoring so as to recover as much as they can through phone calls and UGAFODE MOBILE
- Field staff especially Credit Officers and Deposit Mobilisers that regularly interface with customers are doing so through phones calls.
- Regular customer engagements through our CALL CENTRE, SMS and Social media
- Sensitizing customers to embrace and adopt the use of UGAFODE Mobile to deposit and withdraw cash.
- We have removed all transaction charges on UGAFODE Mobile so as to make it affordable and a better option than walking long distances to the banking halls.
- In a bid to limit contact and implement the “stay at home” directive, our meetings are held via Zoom, Skype or phone call meetings. These include Board meetings, senior management meetings, Branch managers’ meetings and Department meetings.

**What should we do in a situation when our staff is discovered to have COVID – 19 related signs while on duty?**



We will quickly follow the Ministry of Health guidelines of reporting using the numbers (**Toll Free Lines 0800 203 033/0800 100 066**) as well as notifying the HR department for further management of the situation.



All those staff that would have been in contact will remain home in self-quarantine after notifying HR for 14 days.



The branch will be disinfected to kill all traces of the virus that would have been passed on.



The branch may be closed based on the guidelines by Ministry of health and Bank of Uganda.