



1st May 2020

The Chairpersons

National COVID19 Taskforce

EAC Partner States

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENT OF CARGO WITHIN EAC DURING THE COVID19 PANDEMIC

The outbreak of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) has continued to affect cross-border trade in East Africa negatively. Measures taken by EAC Partner States have helped in limiting its spread within the region. Some of the measures have equally resulted into new freight logistics challenges especially at borders and other cargo clearance points.

Realizing the critical role of freight logistics in ensuring continuous supply and distribution of basic necessities, medicaments and sanitary products across the region during this period;

Appreciating that the main measures specific to road transport and freight logistics already being implemented by Partner States include:

- a) Deployment of relay driving i.e. swapping of drivers at the borders.
- b) Mandatory testing of truck drivers at borders
- c) Delivery of cargo to temporary ICDs at borders

The regional road transport and freight forwarding industry hereby makes the following observations and recommendations for more freight logistics friendly management of the spread of COVID19 in East Africa.

Challenges freight logistics businesses are facing with the measures being implemented

1. The Relay driving system

- a. Challenge acquiring equally competent truck drivers across borders due to lack of a harmonized Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) professional driver training and levels of exposure to various technologies posing road safety and asset integrity challenges.
- b. Likely elimination of majority of the transporters (the small and medium sized transporters) that are unlikely to mobilize the requisite capacity to operate across borders.
- c. Difficulty in handling insurance claims related to the cargo and the trucks in case of any eventuality, uncertainty on the safety of the cargo, the trucks as well fuel due to the of involvement multiple drivers.

2. Mandatory testing of truck drivers at the borders

- a. Inability to quickly provide test results leading to unnecessary delays at the borders.
- b. Lack of a structured regional system of testing drivers.



3. Delivery of cargo to temporary ICDs at borders

- a. Uncertainty on the safety of the cargo after it has been dropped at the border.
- b. Contractual obligations between transporters, freight forwarders and shippers that demands cargo to be delivered to their designated delivery points.
- c. Logistics/delay in return of empty containers that have to be left at borders.
- d. Lack of the necessary cargo handling equipment and storage facilities at borders.
- e. Extra cost of storing and eventually moving the cargo to its destination.

In view of the above, the road transport and freight forwarding industry recommends the following;

1. The COVID-19 testing capacity at borders be beefed up through deployment of more medical personnel and equipment to minimize the time taken by truck drivers at borders.
2. The EAC Partner States fast track establishing a harmonized regional approach on testing and management of the truck drivers during the COVID-19 period.
3. Consider testing truck drivers at the start of their journeys and or at designated facilities along the corridors to facilitate easy passage through borders.
4. Allow deployment of the cross-border Journey Management System proposed by the private sector.
5. Continue sensitizing the general population on the critical role being played and the sacrifice made by truck drivers and all freight logisticians in the time of COVID-19.
6. Governments take a leading role in engaging key logistics service providers such as ports, shipping lines and warehouses to cushion freight forwarders and the shippers against the negative effects of COVID-19
7. Continue dialogue with the Partner States on freight logistics related proposals for management of COVID-19 and any other necessary post COVID-19 interventions to avoid recurrence of the current challenges in future.

Signed by



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