

# TradeMark East Africa's Response to the COVID-19 VIRUS

## *A Message From the CEO*

Dear TradeMark East Africa Stakeholders,

As you may be aware, cases of COVID-19 have been reported in many of our operating countries (thus far in DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Sudan). COVID-19 has created an unprecedented challenge for all of us across the globe, including those of us working in to grow prosperity through trade in Eastern Africa. Africa has so far escaped the worst of the pandemic but as countries across the Eastern Africa impose measures to contain the spread of the virus, TMEA is also adjusting to the new realities.

In response to concern of continuing spread of the highly contagious disease, our partner Governments have taken number of measures to contain the spread of the virus that have varied by country. Primary amongst them is stopping international travel to and from affected countries, shutting down institutions of learning, banning large group meetings and strongly recommending that staff work from home where possible.

With the health and safety of our staff and partners at the forefront of our minds, and in line with our Governments' and WHO advice on the issue, TMEA will institute a mandatory work from home policy starting on Monday, March 23 until at least Tuesday, April 14. We will not be travelling and we will not be attending large meetings or conferences. During this time, our office locations will be closed, yet we will remain working and on duty. TMEA remains at work and operating. We have issued staff with kits to protect themselves during this time. Please be in touch as usual by phone or email with your TMEA contacts to continue to conduct business.

We are determined that we continue with our work. To ensure this and communication with our stakeholders remains constant and fluid, we shall be utilising call conferencing and video conferencing solutions in lieu of physical meetings. Any urgent needs for physical meetings that may arise during this period will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We regret any interruption caused by these changes, but believe these measures are necessary as a civic duty to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 as quickly as possible in our countries of operation, and indeed across the world. We need to show a high level of solidarity with the region at this difficult time.

We are currently reviewing the likely impacts on our ongoing projects and portfolios. We will be looking at likely scenarios depending on how the situation in our operating countries unfolds. We will be giving careful thought to how our approach can be modified to address the profound challenges that this pandemic has caused for trade, and how to support a sustained recovery in sectors worst affected. We will be communicating this information to our donor partners over the next week once the work is completed.

We will work in cooperation with all of our partners and contractors to optimise collective efforts to minimise the risk to all citizens in the organisations and the communities in which we work.

TMEA continues to operate and we look forward to engaging closely with you over the coming months to overcome the challenges being faced. We thank you for your continued support and we hope you and your loved ones stay safe and well during this difficult time.

Warm regards,

*Frank Mutsaert*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
TRADEMARK EAST AFRICA