



## DESK FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia  
(DfSD-ELCRN)

MAIL: [imuhurudempers@gmail.com](mailto:imuhurudempers@gmail.com) Mobile number: +264-0816044101 - Landline: +264-061-224531

---

25<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Bishop Sageus /Keib and the entire leadership of ELCRN!

I am writing this letter with a heavy heart, grieving, feeling hopeless and sad but also deeply disappointed by the lack of sense of urgency from leadership in government, private sector, civil society and in particular our church leaders in dealing with the unfolding disaster! We are facing one of the greatest challenges in living memory in our country. It is evident that the situation has moved from worse to catastrophic. It unavoidably calls for the active involvement by all sectors of society to yield positive results and the church has the moral authority to intervene!

***SINCE THE BEGINNING OF JUNE 2021, I HAVE BEEN TO AT LEAST SEVEN REGIONS OF OUR COUNTRY (WITH WORK AND FUNERALS). MANY OF OUR MEMBERS AND PEOPLE FROM OTHER CHURCHES ARE ASKING THE QUESTION, "WHAT ARE OUR CHURCH LEADERS DOING ABOUT THE WORSENING AND DEEPENING CRISES? WHEN ARE OUR CHURCHES GETTING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AN CHURCHES EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN AND HOLD GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE ABOUT HOW THEY ARE HANDLING THE CRISIS?"***

Our public and private health systems are collapsing and unable to cope and deal with the prevailing crisis worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals, clinics and almost all health facilities are overwhelmed. The health workers are in short supply (as some get infected and unable to work). There is a critical shortage of vaccines. The Mortuaries are full to capacity. There are indeed wide spread reports of the short supply and/or the lack of Oxygen at hospitals.

The Pandemic is causing a mental health crisis that might have devastating effects on citizens in the short, medium and long-term. The country has limited capacity to deal with this challenge.

Economic situation is worsening as more and more people get unemployed, with no new job opportunities. The poverty and hunger are rampant and skyrocketing. People who were marginalized and destitute even before the pandemic are in worse conditions and facing extreme starvation.

*To make things worse, some church leaders downplay the impact of this virus as a conspiracy and even discourage people from getting treatment including from getting vaccinated.*

As a nation we are at crossroads. The conspicuous silence of the Church Leaders may find us wanting or at best as accomplices. It is therefore time that our church leaders intervene and demand accountability from the government about how they are planning to deal with the crisis!

**What is the emergency response plan of government?** It is time that church leaders come together and take JOINT ACTION AND GIVE HOPE TO THE NATION in this time of crisis.

**The intent of this letter is not to prescribe to Bishop and our church leaders what to do as a matter of urgency. However, I am morally obliged and duty-bound, to escalate this rather critical devastating problem to your level with the proposed action points. In this context, the Bishop and the church leaders may wish to consider the following recommendations:**

1. **Invite** the ELCRN Church Council (and other relevant institutions) to an urgent virtual meeting with the express purpose, to discuss the COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Response of the ELCRN.
2. **Consult** with effect from today and over the weekend with other Church leaders at Bishop level, to convene a meeting of church leaders specifically on COVID-19 Pandemic and under the auspices of the **Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN)**, early next week preferably for Tuesday or Wednesday. I am ready to search and avail contact details which may be required.
3. **Draft** a Statement that clearly articulates the concerns of the church leaders and the answers that the government must respond to and clarify. This statement must also indicate the services, capacities and support the church and civil society organizations in general can offer to the government as part of the emergency response.
4. **Convene** through the CCN a meeting of Church Leaders with the President and Minister of Health next week after the church leaders meeting to share the concerns, demand accountability and offer what churches can avail.
5. **Convene** a meeting of Church Leaders with civil society and private sector leaders after meeting with the government to initiate and coordinate a church and civil society organizations emergency response against COVID-19.
6. **Development** of an Ecumenical COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan,
7. **Mobilize** resources from local and international donors to roll-out this Plan by the end of June 2021.
8. **Set-up** a COVID-19 Ecumenical Emergency Response Tasks Force and
9. **Meet** on a weekly basis to monitor progress from the government response, get feedback from the church response and agree on concrete remedial actions to contain the impact of the pandemic.

I am on standby ( and I am sure there are many others) to assist Bishop /Keib and the leadership, to kick-start any of the ideas I am sharing above. **Most meetings above can be held virtually.** Many people I have engaged at funerals, other social gatherings and on social media are in agreement with the ideas I have expressed above. The fundamental question being asked is **“Where is our Church in this hour of crisis and emergency!”**

With the kind regards,



IM Uhuru Dempers  
Director: Desk for Social Development of ELCRN  
0816044101

