The events of the past five days have raised panic among many Emaswati following the drastic increase in the number of COVID 19 confirmed cases in the Kingdom. We have recorded 93 positive cases since Saturday 6 June 2020.

This by any standard is a huge surge in the number of COVID 19 infections in this country. We are once again called to take care of ourselves and each other. The call is for each and everyone of us to take responsibility for our actions and not let the frustrations of the partial lockdown to compel us to ignore health precautions which will protect us from this virus if fully followed.

The rationale behind introducing a national partial lockdown on March 27 was to allow our health system to better prepare for a surge in cases. It was meant to slow down the spread of the virus and ensure our health establishments are not overwhelmed with patients. This we have achieved over the past 11 weeks through a number of interventions that Government has adopted and effected to boost our capacity.
While our health system is stronger than it was at time, we have not yet reached a stage where we can relax and hope that all will be well. We need the cooperation of all Emaswati in ensuring that we control the spread.

Over the past two weeks, Government has loosened the partial lockdown measures to allow the economy to come back to life and give an opportunity to more Emaswati and business which were locked up to start operating under outlined conditions. Last week Friday I announced a number of other businesses which will be allowed to start operating on Monday 15 June 2020. May I hasten to emphasize that Government will not hesitate to close down businesses that will fail to adhere to the conditions that will be announced by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade.

While the decision to reopen was based on the premise that our economy cannot stay in lockdown forever, we cannot in any way let up on the precautionary guidelines in this fight. It is of paramount importance that while we gradually reopen the economy, we still take individual responsibility for our health.

Government also announced the phased reopening of schools and tertiary institutions, especially the completing classes, given that we have lost almost a term of education due to the partial lockdown.

The events of the past week, however, have necessitated that Government reviews the decision of opening schools to ensure that all necessary precautions and preparations are in place before teachers and our children get back to class in a safely manner.
The opening of Form 5 and completing classes at Tertiary Level is therefore postponed to 6 July 2020. Government will then analyse any developments to determine when to open classes for Grade 7 and Form 3.

May I once again remind all of us on the importance of following health precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. If all of us would follow these measures religiously, we could see a remarkable reduction in the number of new infections. The measures include:

- Washing hands regularly with running water and soap and using a sanitizer in the absence of water.
- Using other non touch methods of greeting instead of shaking hands.
- Observing social distancing and maintaining a distance of at least 1 metre from each other at all times.
- Wearing a mask in public places and at home when one experiences flu like symptoms
- Avoiding touching your face (mouth, nose, eyes).
- Cleaning all high touch surfaces in our home and business regularly.

As individuals, our actions have a huge bearing on the country’s overall fight against COVID-19. I therefore call upon each and every Liswati to be deliberate in their efforts to stay safe and beat COVID-19.

We cannot overemphasise the importance of staying at home and moving only when necessary. May I also appeal to parents to keep their children at home and not allow them to move without a reason.
This is not a time to panic but to take full responsibility for our individual actions.

Thank you.

Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini
PRIME MINISTER

11 JUNE 2020