

Directorate General of Customs and Indirect Taxes – Gabon

24 April 2020

Measures adopted to combat the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Measures to facilitate the cross-border movement of relief consignments and essential supplies

1.1. Designation of a Customs Focal Point/COVID-19 Monitoring Unit.

1.2. Note granting relief from Customs duties on imports of products to be used in fighting COVID-19 (gloves, bibs, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, Thermoscans (ear thermometers), etc.).

1.3. Appointment of a Customs representative to the Steering Committee for the Fight against the CORONAVIRUS, for the emergency procedure (signing BAEP (automatic temporary clearance note) forms on behalf of the Director General).

2. Measures to support the economy and ensure supply chain continuity

2.1. An emergency funding window for companies, to help incorporated SMUs and micro-enterprises (and, on an exceptional basis, large companies) that are up-to-date with their tax and social security obligations and affected by the COVID-19 crisis and which undertake to maintain jobs. This does not involve budget funding but bank credit offered to companies on favourable terms.

2.2. A tax window open to socially responsible companies and workers.

There are three (3) measures relating to this window, namely:

- ✓ The fall in trading licences and in combined withholding tax (ISL);
- ✓ Tax rebates to socially responsible companies (Corporation Tax and Personal Income Tax);
- ✓ Tax exemption for all bonuses awarded to workers who engage in their professional activity during lockdown.

The object of this tax window is to help companies that keep on their workers to display solidarity and set a good example, and to motivate workers exposed to risk during lockdown.

A penalty-free moratorium on debts due for repayment to banks. The object of this measure is to assist natural or legal persons affected by the crisis who have bank debts falling due for repayment.

The establishment of a lay-off allowance based on a fixed rate of between 50% and 70% of gross salary excluding bonuses. The object of this measure is to preserve jobs in the formal private sector and maintain workers' purchasing power. Formal businesses which implement this measure will be able to benefit from the facilities provided at the emergency funding window or the tax window or to obtain moratoria on credits.

3. Measures to ensure protection for Customs Administration personnel

3.1. Provision by the Committee and the SAMU (Emergency Medical Assistance Service) Social Gabonais National of bibs, gloves, Thermoflashes (infrared thermometers), hand sanitizers, etc. donated, in particular, by the Jack Ma and Alibaba Foundations.

3.2. Installation of an alcohol-based hand-sanitizer distributor at each entry.

3.3. Re-organization of the functioning of services: in the case of the DGDDI (Directorate General of Customs and Indirect Taxes), all directors and heads of service must be present; in the case of local services, the regional director and his/her deputy, bureau heads and 30% of active staff per entity must be present; a work-team rotation system is to be set up.

Only working meetings shown to be urgent and necessary may be held, involving no more than 10 people, who must maintain a safe distance of 1 m from each other.

4. Measures to ensure protection for the public

4.1. Curfew from 7.30 p.m. to 6 a.m. since 13 April 2020.

4.2. As part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has made it compulsory to wear a mask. Total lockdown of Greater Libreville (municipality of Libreville, Akanda, Owendo, Ntoun, seaside resort of Pointe Denis) since 13 April 2020. Only workers in essential occupations are authorized to leave home. Municipal markets are open three times a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) to enable the population to buy food.

4.3. Isolation of people (including Customs personnel) and families who have been in contact with people who have tested positive.

5. Other measures

5.1. In terms of social welfare: A Fund entitled the "Fonds de solidarité COVID-19" (COVID-19 Solidarity Fund) has been opened at the Deposit and Consignment Fund (DCF) (Caisse des Dépôts et de Consignations, CDC) bank to cover the cost of measures of a social nature, namely:

- Free transport on public companies for officials still performing essential functions in the public and private sectors.