

The Banking Sector's Position on the Outbreak of Corona Virus - COVID-19

The world is on high alert following the outbreak of the Corona Virus - COVID-19 that continues to spread at an alarming rate. The outbreak has already been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO). At home, The Honourable Prime Minister has also issued several directives to curtail the spread of the disease. The banking sector, comprising of the Central Bank of Lesotho as the regulator along with FNB Lesotho, Lesotho PostBank, Nedbank Lesotho and Standard Lesotho Bank have also joined this call to alert the nation to exercise preventative measures in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

Current research indicates that the best form of prevention is to maintain the highest levels of personal hygiene and to avoid crowded environments. We are exploring all avenues to provide sanitisers and improve regular cleaning at all branches and ATMs nationwide. To protect yourself and others from infection, WHO recommends all people to;

1. Adopt "social distancing" which involves avoiding close contact with other people and being in crowded places.
2. Cover your mouth or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash can.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
4. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds no less than 10 times a day.
5. Stay at home when you are sick and seek medical care.

The symptoms of COVID-19 include sneezing, fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and can be mild or severe cases. You are encouraged to seek medical help if you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you have been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

With regards to your banking, we advise all clients to use all electronic banking channels for their banking as much as possible. These include Internet Banking, Mobile Banking, and App services. The use of these channels will limit visits to branches to reduce exposure. However, all branches and ATMs are being regularly sanitised to ensure a safe environment for clients whilst visiting branches.

Whilst making use of electronic channels, utmost care must be exercised to ensure that due diligence is taken to avoid cybercrime. Clients are always urged to ensure the safety of their PIN and passwords.

As the banking sector, we reaffirm our commitment to join the world in combating COVID-19 and to cooperate with the Ministry of Health and other interest groups to arrest this pandemic. The wellbeing of customers, staff and the nation is important to us. Let us all be vigilant and exercise all preventative precautions to be safe.

The banking sector is committed to maintaining its business operations and deeply values its continued partnership with you.

We encourage the nation to monitor and follow the latest updates and prevention tips from official sources of information such as Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF Lesotho.

