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18/LAW01/133

LAW

200 LEVEL(CARRYOVER STUDENT)

**ASSIGNMENT**

**Write a report, of not more than two pages, on the Corona virus pandemic and the effects of the lockdown and restriction of movement on Nigeria.**

ANSWER

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people who fall sick with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate symptoms and recover without special treatment.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or exhales. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air, and quickly fall on floors or surfaces.

You can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface and then your eyes, nose or mouth.

Corona virus has caused a pandemic due to its mode of transmission being very easy and the government also called a lockdown nation wide and even world wide.

**EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION PF MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA**

In Nigeria, federal and state governments are taking proactive steps to curtail the spread of coronavirus throughout the country. As the country experiences a steady increase in the number of confirmed cases, movement restrictions and lockdowns are being instituted to adequately respond to the pandemic. These situational responses affect businesses including in their interactions with their relevant regulators. We have previously highlighted the details of some of the Nigerian Federal Government’s responses such as the Nigerian National Assembly’s Emergency Stimulus Bill, the Central Bank of Nigeria’s policy measures in response to COVID-19, and its dedicated credit facility to develop the healthcare sector.

Many states have restricted airport and inter-state travel to curtail the spread of COVID-19. Open markets in many states are being closed or allowed to open at specific hours in order for state agencies to disinfect those spaces for COVID-19. Some state governments such as Lagos State have undertaken more stringent measures such as instituting curfews. Lagos State Governor also issued the Lagos State Infectious Diseases (Emergency Prevention) Regulations 2020 via his powers under the State’s Public Health Law and the Federal Quarantine Act, Q2 LFN 2004. The provisions of this Law are discussed below.

Lagos State Infectious Diseases (Emergency Prevention) Regulations 2020

The Regulations designate COVID-19 as a Dangerous Infectious Disease within the meaning of section 2 of the Quarantine Act, noting that it constitutes a serious and imminent threat to the public health of the people of Lagos State. It grants the Governor powers to direct a potentially infectious person within Lagos State to go to a place specified for COVID-19 screening or to go into isolation. A potentially infectious person is defined as a person who is or may be infected or contaminated with COVID-19 and for whom there is a risk that such person may infect or contaminate other persons within the State. A potentially infectious person under the Regulations is also a person who has been in an infected area within fourteen (14) days preceding arrival and entry into Lagos State.

The Regulations grant the Governor the power to restrict movement within, into or out of the State, particularly the movement of persons, vehicles, aircraft and watercraft. This restriction may not apply to the transportation or movement of, as well as movement for the purposes of procuring essential supplies, such as food, water, pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and medicines, and any other essential supplies the Governor may deem necessary.

The Regulations grant the Governor the power to restrict or prohibit the gathering of persons without the Governor’s consent, restrict the conduct of trade, business and commercial activities within the state, and to order the temporary closure of markets, except those selling or manufacturing essential services. The Governor is also empowered to prohibit the hoarding or inflating the prices of essential goods and services and direct such goods or service to be seized and utilized to address the supply needs of the State.

A breach of the Regulations is an offence under Quarantine Act and Lagos Public Health Law and is liable to a fine or imprisonment or both in accordance with those laws.

**Federal Government Responses to COVID-19**

On 29 March 2020, the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, addressed the nation on the Federal Government’s efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19 within the country.2 In his address, he directed a cessation of all movements in in Lagos State, Ogun State and the Federal Capital Territory for an initial period of fourteen (14) days. Although, the cessation of movement in Ogun State was postponed until Friday, 3 April 2020, lockdown in Lagos and Abuja was ordered to commence on Monday, 30 March 2020. This lockdown is to enable the government to track the spread of COVID-19 within these areas.. Citizens in these states have been directed to stay at home during the lockdown. Inter-state travel within these states are restricted and all businesses and offices within these states are fully closed during the lockdown period.

Certain businesses were exempted from the lockdown restrictions particularly those providing health related and essential services, including hospitals and related medical establishments, organizations in healthcare related manufacturing and distribution, as well as commercial establishments involved in food processing, distribution, and retail companies, petroleum distribution and retail entities, power generation, transmission and distribution companies and private security companies. Workers in telecommunication companies, broadcasters, print and electronic media who are able to prove they are unable to work from home are also exempted. Seaports in Lagos state are also exempted as well as vehicles and drivers conveying essential cargoes from the seaports to other parts of the country, which will be screened before departure by the Ports Health Authority. The President also noted the government’s drive to provide relief materials to communities who will be affected by the restrictions.

On Monday, 30th March 2020, the President signed the Federal Government’s COVID-19 Regulations of 20203 which declared COVID-19 a dangerous infectious disease and granted a legal basis to the directives stated in the President’s address. The Regulations further institute a moratorium on loans implemented through Bank of Industry, Bank of Agriculture and the Nigeria Export Import Bank.