




CIRCULAR TO BANKS, MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS AND PAYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS NO. 02-2020/BSD: PROVISION OF LIMITED ESSENTIAL BANKING SERVICES

1. Following the announcement by His Excellency, the President, of a 21-day lockdown effective 30 March 2020, all banks, microfinance institutions and payment service providers will be required to provide limited essential services as follows: -
 - a) Providing uninterrupted access to online banking and payment services, including point of sale, international transactions, RTGS, mobile banking, mobile money payments and remittance services, to promote crowd containment and social distancing;
 - b) Issuing appropriate communication to customers on available electronic delivery channels;
 - c) Suspension of all increases in bank charges on electronic transactions, including those that had already been communicated to customers, but not yet effected;
 - d) Utilising information technology to ensure social distancing when delivering services and interacting with stakeholders;
 - e) Maintaining records of all persons who may, in exceptional cases of emergency, physically access a bank/branch and to facilitate tracing of such persons, should the need arise;
 - f) Activating business continuity and contingency plans, including call centres to deal with issues, as they occur;
 - g) Promoting high standards of hygiene to mitigate against any possible transmission, including disinfecting surface areas, providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers, running water and soap for staff and customers; and
 - h) Closely monitoring developments and responding accordingly.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, bank branches, agencies, banking halls and *bureaux de change* will be closed. However, arrangements may be made, in exceptional cases of emergency, to physically visit a bank.
3. It is advised that the Bank's communication of 27 March 2020 regarding publication of financial statements and submission of other reports to the Bank Supervision Division will continue to apply. However, loans and deposits returns should be submitted fortnightly instead of weekly.
4. The Bank remains available to provide the necessary support for delivery of the limited essential banking services during the lockdown period.


.....

P.T. Madamombe
For Registrar of Banking Institutions

