



**VERSION 1- COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR SAFE MASS GATHERINGS IN NIGERIA**  
**15<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Mass gatherings are highly visible events with the potential for serious public health consequences if they are not planned and managed carefully. Mass gatherings can amplify the spread of infectious diseases including coronavirus disease (COVID-19), where this is circulating. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is constantly monitoring the epidemiological situation in the country. In view of the rapid evolution and global transmission of coronavirus, NCDC will make the recommendation for cancellation of mass gatherings in line with guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO).

At this stage, we are not advising the cancellation of gatherings, but our advice may change as the epidemiological situation evolves. This is assessed on a daily basis. Regular updates can be found on [www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng](http://www.covid19.ncdc.gov.ng)

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control offers the following guidance with key planning considerations for organisers currently planning mass gatherings in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. These include:

- Religious events e.g. church services, calls to prayer, prayer meetings and other gatherings
- Sporting events e.g. football matches
- Social events e.g. weddings, funerals, parties, music concerts
- Others e.g. youth service camps, conferences, exhibitions

Organisers of these events must ensure adequate preparations are in place, before hosting an event. Event organisers should consider using distancing measures to reduce close contact among people during the gathering e.g by providing more entry and exit points, more food points, ensure handwashing facilities (with soap and water) are readily available at entry and exit points.

#### **PRE-EVENT OR GATHERING**

1. The State Ministry of Health should be informed of the event. The location will be assessed by officials from the State Ministry of Health to ensure safety procedures are in place. The requirements listed below will be assessed prior to the event.
2. Organisers should provide the following information to attendees prior to the event and at entry
  - Advice on regularly and thoroughly washing of hands with soap under running water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
  - Avoid shaking hands, hugging and any other form of physical contact where possible



NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL

- Please stay at home if you feel ill with fever, cough or breathing difficulties
- Cover your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze (organisers can provide this). Dispose of the tissues immediately
- Please remain in self-isolation for 14 days, if you have just returned from China, Japan, Italy, Republic of Korea, Iran, France, Germany, Spain

### **DURING EVENT OR GATHERING**

1. Organisers of major events should provide temperature scanners to be used for temperature screening at entry points. People with symptoms such as cough and a fever should **NOT BE ALLOWED** into the premises.
2. Use the gathering to reinforce messages on hand and respiratory hygiene and staying safe. Religious institutions are encouraged to demonstrate hand washing technique before the start of prayers to their congregation
3. Ensure provision of adequate hand washing facilities including running water, soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
4. Arrangements should be made to check this on entry
5. Organisers should provide adequate human resource who will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting communal places such as ablution areas, all floors, toilets and surfaces such as door handles, chairs and church benches with disinfectant or soap
6. Organisers should provide adequate waste management facilities such as closed trash cans so that people dispose tissue and other waste properly
7. Organisers should review practices that put their congregation at risk (e.g sharing a communal cup, receiving the holy communion on the tongue, shaking hands)

### **FACILITIES IN PLACE FOR MASS GATHERINGS:**

1. Temperature scanner for screening at entry point
2. Room with adequate ventilation and proper air circulation
3. Hand washing facilities- running water and soap
4. Waste management facilities
5. Health personnel to detect fever on entry and respond to emergencies
6. Adequate resources to disinfect after the event

Attendees at mass gatherings are also advised to review the advisory above and take note of preventive measures.

#### **ABOUT NCDC**

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is the government agency with the mandate to lead the prevention, detection, and control of communicable diseases. Its functions are to prevent, detect, investigate and control communicable diseases of national and international public health importance.

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