



COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE #5

16 May 2020

I. HIGHLIGHTS

Trinidad and Tobago

Rollback

Prime Minister, Dr. Keith Rowley, announced further tentative adjustments on reopening, with Phase 2 now starting on Thursday, 21 May 2020, as compared to 24 May 2020 which was originally the start of the Phase 2. He said if all goes well, Phase 3, originally planned for 7 June 2020, of the Reopening will also be advanced.

Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Roshan Parasram, confirmed that the Ministry of Health continues to review the process for private labs to conduct COVID-19 tests. Three labs have been shortlisted thus far and a decision on the suitability of these labs is expected to be made next week.

There is only 1 patient, stable and ambulatory, at the Caura Hospital. To date, 874 Community Tests have been conducted in Trinidad and Tobago, and all returned with a negative result.

The Ministry of Health Virtual Media Conferences/Updates will now be held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. PM Rowley said Government will come to the population if something develops outside of those days.

See the specific phase and actions under III. Response, Key Trinidad and Tobago/Ministry of Health Response to COVID-19, 16 May 2020, page 4.

Dutch Territories

Relaxation Measures

Aruba continues their step-down process with regards to the opening of the country. Aruba's borders remain closed for incoming travel. As of Monday, 18 May 2020, as part of the Level 2-Phase of Reopening of the local economy, shelter in place will no longer be in effect and schools will be allowed to reopen though some will wait until 25 May to ensure they are ready. In addition, shopping malls, churches and cinemas will be allowed to reopen, and construction projects will be allowed to resume. On 8 May 2020, the Minister of Tourism, Public Health and Sport, Mr. Dangui Oduber, announced that the Aruban border will open tentatively between 15 June and 1 July 2020. The curfew will also remain in effect until further notice. All social distancing and hygiene protocols are to be maintained.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

(as of 16 May 2020)

Trinidad and Tobago

116 Confirmed Cases
8 Deaths
107 Discharges

Aruba

101 Confirmed Cases
3 Deaths
93 Discharges

Curacao

16 Confirmed Cases
1 Death
13 Discharges

Sint Maarten

77 Confirmed Cases
15 Deaths
54 Discharges

Bonaire

2 Confirmed Cases
0 Death
2 Discharge

St. Eustasius

2 Confirmed Cases
0 Death
2 Discharges

Saba

2 Confirmed Cases
0 Death
2 Discharge

Curacao's "Shelter in place" has been lifted but the curfew will remain from 9pm to 6am. A ban still remains for large gatherings. All Stores and Businesses can open their doors, however, they must comply with previously imposed social distancing and hygiene rules. Restaurants, snack bars and hotels can continue to operate with curbside takeout and delivery only, doors must remain closed for dining-in. All Beaches are open from 6 am till 8 pm.

In **Sint Maarten** there are 2 persons hospitalized. Both the French and Dutch sides are working together to coordinate their response. They will continue to work together as they work to remove the border controls to allow the free movement between both sides of the islands. They have initiated their Phase 1 opening which was moved up to 11 May 2020 and are moving quickly to Phase 2. Businesses are allowed operate between 8am - 6pm and must observe mandatory guidelines of 'COVID-19 Prevention and Safety Plan for the Business Community' and they must also have their operational plans in place before re-opening. Link below outlines the phases.

<http://www.sintmaartengov.org/PressReleases/Pages/Prime-Minister-Chair-of-the-EOC-Silveria-Jacobs-Updates-on-the-Economic-ReOpening-Plan.aspx>

Sint Maarten is also beginning to prepare for the 2020 Hurricane Season which starts in 3 weeks and is predicted to be a very active one.

BES

Saba continues its re-opening with the opening of schools on 18 May guided by established protocols. Emergency order has been lifted in **Sint Eustatius** as of 15 May. **Bonaire** started easing restrictions on 6 May and as of 8 May all residents who were stuck in Curacao, Saba and Sint Eustatius have been allowed to return home with the condition that they remain in home quarantine for 2 weeks. Social distancing and hygiene measures remain in effect in all the BES.

II. SITUATION SUMMARY

Table 1. COVID-19 Status in Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao, Sint Marten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, 8 May 2020

Country	# Confirmed Cases	# Deaths	# Tests Conducted	# Discharges	Transmission Type	Non-pharmacological Interventions			
						Travel Restrictions	Schools closed	Essential Services	State of Emergency
Trinidad and Tobago	116	8	2511	107	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Aruba	101	3	1985	89	Cluster of Cases	Yes	Yes	Have started lifting restrictions with the opening of non-essential services	Social distancing and hygiene requirements and care for employee and customers have been maintained. Borders remain closed. Curfew adjusted to 10 pm - 5am.
Curacao	16	1	350	13	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes	Being lifted as of 8 May	Social distancing and hygiene requirements and care for employee and customers have been maintained. Borders remain closed. Curfew remains in effect from 9 pm-6 am
Sint Maarten	77	15	418	54	Cluster of Cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Social distancing and hygiene requirements and care for employee and customers have been maintained. Borders remain closed. Curfew remains in effect from 9 pm-6 am
Bonaire	2	0	293	2	Sporadic Cases				
St. Eustatius	2	0	Not available	2	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Stay at home restrictions in place lifted
Saba	2	0	Over 85, recent figures not available	2	Sporadic Cases	Yes	Yes		Stay at home restrictions lifted

III. RESPONSE

A. Key Trinidad and Tobago/Ministry of Health Response to COVID-19, 16 May 2020

On 16 May 2020, at the Prime Minister Media Conference on COVID-19, it was announced that Phase 2 would start on Thursday, 21 May 2020.

The following sectors will open from Thursday, 21 May 2020:

- The entire manufacturing sector
- The construction sector
- Laundry and dry-cleaning shops
- Mechanic and tyre shops (car dealerships are NOT opening)

The above businesses must ensure employees and customers follow the Public Health Regulations on COVID-19, including maintain physical distance, wear masks etc. The Prime Minister endorsed "No Mask, No Service." at all business places. Police will be patrolling with Public Health Officers to ensure compliance with Public Health Regulations.

- Public Transportation will continue to operate at 50% passenger capacity and police will enforce this regulation.
- A one-off \$2,000 Fuel Support Grant for maxi taxi operators will be put into effect to help them.
- Domestic workers and personal services like spas and barber shops present a great risk in COVID-19 spread and therefore it is still too early to open these areas.
- Bars remain closed.
- The Stay At Home Order remains in place for protection.
- Trinidad & Tobago's borders remain CLOSED except for the carefully managed return of Trinidad & Tobago Nationals who are abroad, including UWI students at Barbados and Jamaica.

B. Key PAHO/WHO Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba Response to COVID-19, 16 May 2020

- Hosted a webinar with the Tobacco Control Team at the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Authorities on establishing and operating national quit line to provide tobacco cessation support
- Supported the weekly MHPSS TWG to conduct stakeholders mapping exercise to identify the Who is Where, When, doing What (4Ws) in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
- A QIAamp Viral RNA Mini Kit (250) (Extraction Kit for 250 assays) was handed over to the Trinidad and Tobago Public Health Laboratory

IV. NEEDS

- COVID-19 Tests (Extraction and Amplification Kits)
- Nasopharyngeal swabs
- Personal Protective Equipment

V. GAPS/CHALLENGES

- Lack of continuous supply of RNA extraction kits which also remains a principal challenge at the regional level
- Insufficient nasopharyngeal swabs that are also difficult to obtain as there are overall production and shipping challenges
- The Dutch territories are challenged with when and how to open their borders
- The Netherlands is prepared to help Curaçao, Sint Maarten and Aruba with a loan to mitigate some of the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. The loan comes with very stringent requirements that the countries must meet. These demands have led to challenges between the Netherlands and the other countries in the Kingdom.

VI. REFERENCES

- Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago: <http://www.health.gov.tt/>
- Aruba: <https://www.arubacovid19.org/>
- Sint Maarten: <https://vromi-sxm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opstdashboard/index.html#/285fa99a4fc442fcb4a71ea7297d1ec6>