



# National Civil Society Council of Liberia

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April 15, 2020

Hon. Lenn Eugene Nagbe

**Minister**

Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs & Tourism,  
Capitol Hill

Monrovia, Liberia

Dear Minister Nagbe:

**Ref: An Open Letter to Minister Lenn Eugene Nagbe on the Exclusion  
of the Civil Society in the Fight on COVID-19**

The National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCCL) would have me convey its profound compliments to you in particular and the Incident Management Team in general as you lead the national response against COVID-19 in Liberia. At the same time, however, as the general coordinator of the civil society landscape in Liberia, our attention has been drawn to the latest press release issued in Monrovia on 14 April, 2020 by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICAT), concerning the stay-home measures announced by the Government of Liberia.

Particular spotlight is placed on paragraph two (sentences two and three) in which you indicated that “Going forward, only health workers and their support staff, accredited journalists on duty, members of the House of Representatives, Senate and Judiciary will be exempted. All other persons, including other officials of Government in the street after 3pm will be in violation of the law.”

Hon. Minister, while we acknowledge the good intention of the Government to proceed meticulously in the fight against COVID-19, the virus that is briskly devastating the globe, we consider that based on paragraph two (sentences two and three) of your release of 14 April 2020, the Government has already excluded the Civil Society Movement from the fight. We cannot second guess whether or not this exclusion was an oversight on the part of the Government. However, what we do know is that this will certainly create an excluded middle between the Government and those at the grassroots level insofar as the fight on COVID-19 is concerned; remember, the Civil Society Movement has always created the missing links and critical safeguards between the Government and the people of Liberia. To this effect, your exclusion of the civil society automatically disconnects the Government and the people of grassroots communities because that ideal synergy nurtured by CSOs is now lacking.

Additionally, there are human rights issues arising from the implementation of the stay-home measure announced under the State of Emergency. When you exclude the Civil Society Movement as you have already done, it signals misinterpretations not only within the body politics but amongst international partners and key stakeholders about Government's real intention in enforcing its orders. Is it that the Government does not want us helping them checkmate excesses associated with the fight? What about areas of social mobilization, community sensitization and awareness on key messages that would help our people win the war on COVID-19; is the Government asking us to disengage and leave this to it exclusively?

Already, a number of CSOs are involved in mobilizing and distributing anti-Coronavirus materials such as disinfectants, faucet buckets, sets of hand gloves, cartoons of soap and locally made facial masks in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Sinoe Counties. Others are involved with social mobilization, thereby harnessing grassroots

support against COVID-19 and spreading sensitization and awareness amongst local people about how to stay safe from the virus across the country. Instead of leveraging on all these opportunities, the government has decided to exclude the Civil Society Movement. Is this not an irony?

To all intents and purposes, if due care is not taken to the effect of the inclusion of key partners and stakeholders including the Civil Society Movement, the lock down measure could create more harm than good and could open a floodgate for wider danger of unimaginable consequences.

We will most certainly appreciate your expeditious response to these concerns.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Loretta Alethea Pope-Kai', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Loretta Alethea Pope-Kai  
**National Chairperson**