



MEDIA RELEASE

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Statement by His Excellency, Dr Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia following the travel ban imposed against Southern African countries

I wish to first congratulate the excellent work carried out by our diligent South African scientists and health professionals in service of the global health community. These outstanding men and women of our region have identified and characterized the Omicron variant, which has been singled out by the WHO as a SARS-Cov-2 variant of concern. In carrying out their work transparently and ethically, they have unwittingly drawn fire and condemnation for their country and the Southern African region – which has now been subjected to an unacceptable travel ban. Yet, all Africans should be proud of what we can achieve when we hold hands and pull in the same direction.

I urge the developed world to consciously meditate on the wisdom of unilateral decisions that result in targeted, ambiguous regional travel bans, which are not based on scientific rigor and evidence. These bans have many undesired impacts, including stalling much needed economic recovery in the Global South, stoking tensions and sowing seeds of division between countries and citizens.

In Namibia, our scientists too are hard at work. We have yet to detect any Omicron variant in Namibia. Yet we too, have been blanketed by the same unnecessary collateral punishment. I therefore condemn this misguided and most unfortunate action and call for progressive and inclusive leadership from our peer countries.

Hage G. Geingob

President of the Republic of Namibia

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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