

Prime Minister Dr. Ngirente Edouard said that it cannot be predicted when COVID-19 would disappear and it might last for years, consequently people should be prepared to live with it.

He made the statement, while briefing members of both chambers of Parliament on measures taken by the Government to combat COVID-19 and its negative impact on the country's economy.

Dr Ngirente noted that all concerned government institutions and officials are working hard to put in place measures from the national up to the village level.

“The Government has set up 7 COVID-19 testing laboratories in Rwamagana, Rusizi, Nyagatare, Rubavu, Kirehe, University Teaching Hospital in Butare and Rwanda Military Hospital in Kanombe.” Prime Minister Ngirente said.

He added that the country has 17 treatment centres with a capacity of 1,767 beds and 11 quarantine isolation sites that can host 500 people.

Speaking about the financial and economic interventions, the Prime Minister said that the National Bank has introduced an extended lending facility of 50 billion Rwandan francs which will provide liquidity to banks.

Dr Ngirente told Parliamentarians that the Government of Rwanda established the Economic Recovery Fund to support the recovery of businesses hardest hit by COVID-19 so that they can survive, resume operations and safeguard employment, thereby cushioning the economic effects of the pandemic.

He added that more than USD 200 million will be needed to help businesses, both big and small, navigate the current uncertain times and stabilize their operations.

This fund is supported by the Government of Rwanda, development partners and international organizations and foundations.

In the agriculture sector, the Premier said that the Strategic Food Reserve played a crucial role in feeding those affected by the lockdown. He said that the storage capacity of the Strategic Reserve will be increased.

The presentation of Government Action to Parliament by the Prime Minister is provided for by the Article 133 of the 2003 Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003, revised in 2015.

