Dear Fellow Members of AFICS-K,

Special greetings to you all during this difficult period of our lives. I am aware that everyone is currently adjusting to these uncertain and worrying times, but I feel it is important to keep you all informed regarding what is happening around us. For example, the Government has extended the curfew and stay-at-home for another three weeks. I urge you to continue to observe the government guidelines. As you are aware, those violating these directives are dealt with accordingly. Also, Nairobi Hospital has confirmed that they have started conducting coronavirus tests and those willing to take the test may do so at a cost of Ksh.10,000. Because of the current situation, this cost will be reimbursed by Cigna. Once the test is done, it takes between 6 and 24 hours to get the results. I am almost sure that this will be the case with other insurance providers. Also, based on the guidelines from WHO contained in our recent newsletter, don’t forget to keep yourselves active by doing at least thirty minutes of daily exercise.

In this vein of optimism, I would like to share with you encouraging messages from influential figures—both thinkers and people of action—to help you get through this global crisis with a more positive mindset:

1. Albert Einstein reminds us that we are all in this together, whether we are rich, poor, young, elderly, and so on. He himself was no stranger to crisis, having fled Nazi Germany to seek refuge in the USA. He reminds us that we must rely on each other by being of service. As our scientists, health care workers and Government are doing their best to mitigate the crisis, let us do our part individually and collectively to support the government directives.

2. Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the Roman stoic philosopher noted that “Hardship strengthens our character. We become wiser by adversity; prosperity destroys our appreciation of the right”. In short, the current crisis has reminded us to appreciate more the things we take for granted, like free movement, socializing with our friends and family, etc.

3. In crisis, former President John F. Kennedy said, “be aware of the danger—but recognize the opportunity”. It is amazing that during this pandemic, individuals, local NGOs, charities, Jua kalis and our redundant manufacturing plants, here in the country, have seized the opportunity created by this pandemic to make face masks for donations and sale. Kitui and Athi River factories are making Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), which is in short supply globally, to protect our public health workers, the nurses, doctors and clinical staff. Moreover, one of our local university students with faculty members has made a prototype ventilator; once approved by the Government, it could be used for coronavirus patients in ICU. This is what President Kennedy meant when he said that a crisis can have both bad and positive sides. If you also have messages of encouragement during this period, please share them with us.

Before I end, let me wish our Muslim colleagues a blessed Ramadan.

Thank you for your continued support and remain safe and healthy.