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PANAMA GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

Panama City, Panama  
March 17, 2020

Dear PGS Clients:

We understand that many of you live abroad and may be anxious to know about the situation on the ground here in Panama with regard to the COVID-19 virus (“Coronavirus”). Fortunately, the number of cases in Panama remains relatively low, with only 69 recorded cases and one fatality since the first incident was confirmed on March 9. Regardless, the Panamanian government has been implementing very strict measures to prevent the spread of the virus:

- Flights originating from Europe and Asia are now prohibited from landing in Panama.
- Passengers on cruise ships that have visited high-risk areas are prohibited from disembarking in Panamanian ports.
- Only Panamanian nationals and foreigners with permanent residency in Panama are permitted to enter the country, and they are required to go into home quarantine for 14 days immediately upon their arrival.
- All citizens have been instructed to remain at home as much as possible during these first few critical weeks (self-isolation). In addition, they are asked to avoid unnecessary travel, especially to the interior of the country. (To date, the virus has largely been contained in the Greater Panama City area, with relatively few cases reported in the interior.)
- Employers have been asked to enable tele-working options for as many employees as possible, and to stagger work hours for those who must come into the office to reduce the number of travelers on public transit during peak hours.
- Funds have been released for the immediate purchase and additional medical equipment (mechanical ventilators, monitors and intensive care beds) that would be required should the country see a dramatic increase in cases that require hospitalization. Intensive care wards have also been expanded throughout the country’s public hospitals.
- The Gorgas Hospital laboratory has sufficient test kits to keep up with the current demand. However, 36,000 kits will be available by March 18 and 50,000 within two weeks. Some kits will be distributed to private hospitals to ease the possible burden on public facilities should the disease progress.
- Strict fines have been put in place through the Consumer Protection Agency to prohibit price gouging by local merchants. Additionally, merchants have been instructed to restrict the number of essential cleaning and personal hygiene items (hand sanitizer, bleach, alcohol, toilet paper) for sale to an individual to ensure a steady supply for the general population.
- Special financing will be made available to small businesses who require assistance in overcoming the challenges they will undoubtedly face while the country confronts this situation.
- Fairs, conventions, cultural events, religious gatherings, concerts and sporting events have been banned throughout the entire country.

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- Access to beaches, rivers and public swimming pools has been banned.
- Bars, discotheques, night clubs, casinos, theaters, cinemas are prohibited from operating.
- Indoor and outdoor playgrounds, gyms, sports fields and courts have been shut down.
- Residents of condominium towers and gated communities have been prohibited from gathering in community social areas.
- Restaurants may continue to operate but can only allow a maximum of 50 diners, spaced one meter apart from one another, in addition to take-out and delivery options.
- A maximum of 50 people can be present inside any commercial establishment at one time, and must be spaced at least one meter apart at check-out lines.
- All public and private gatherings of over 50 people are prohibited, with strict fines imposed on those who violate this sanction.
- Regular public education campaigns are being transmitted through the local media and through the cellular telephone network by the Ministry of Health (MINSA) and the National Disaster Response Unit (SINAPROC) as new regulations are issued by the government.

At PGS Attorneys and PGS Realty, we have adopted special measures to protect our clients and our staff from the threat of the COVID-19 virus that are effective immediately:

- 75% of our staff have been instructed to work from home and have been granted remote access to our servers and telephone exchange to ensure that there is no interruption in service to our clients.
- We will maintain a core group of four staff - one licensed attorney, one administrative support person, one paralegal and a messenger - in the office to attend to urgent matters that cannot be handled remotely.
- Whenever possible, our attorneys and real estate agents will use videoconference applications to meet with clients remotely rather than in person.
- For any documents requiring signature, we will send our messenger to meet our clients at their place of residence or hotel so that they will not have to risk traveling to our office. Our messenger will be outfitted with a protective face mask and disposable gloves.
- We will be taking advantage of the government's "virtual platforms" for the submission of documents wherever possible to minimize the exposure of our paralegals and attorneys.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in both of our lobbies and anyone visiting our office (staff or visitors) will be required to use it upon entry. In addition, all staff working from the office will have their body temperature verified at least twice per day and will be immediately sent for testing should they display fever or any other symptoms of the virus.

Please note that many residential buildings and private gated communities in Panama begun to restrict the entry of service providers and non-residents, essentially making it impossible for our real estate agents to show properties in many cases.

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Those buyers and sellers who live outside of Panama and have a real estate closing scheduled to occur within the next 30-60 days should contact their lawyer immediately to make arrangements for a special power of attorney to be granted for the purposes of completing the closing process.

While we will endeavour to maintain regular office hours and carry out our business operations as efficiently as possible, we are experiencing delays at public institutions (such as the Public Registry, Tax Authority, Land Titles Office and Immigration) due to reduced government staff, restrictions on visits by the public and shortened workdays.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we do our best to process your documentation and transactions during the time that these special measures are in effect.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our office at +507 391 8878 or E-mail [info@panamags.com](mailto:info@panamags.com) (for legal inquiries) or [info@pgsrealty.com](mailto:info@pgsrealty.com) (for real estate inquires).

Sincerely yours,

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