



Responding to COVID-19: BRITACOM PERSPECTIVE, 2 June 2020

Script of speech

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Pakistan is amongst the 180+ countries dealing with the fatal Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Like all the other countries, the economic ramifications of the crisis are also significant for Pakistan. Mitigating the health emergency and the extent of economic loss will be challenging for Pakistan.

Administrative Measures

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has taken unprecedented administrative measures to counter the effects of COVID-19 crisis. The early and immediate actions include the following:

1. All field formations and each wing of FBR have been advised to make strategies focusing on cutting down the number of employees by at least 40%.
2. Employees above 50 years of age have been allowed to work from their homes
3. Female staff (Mothers of children) has been allowed to work from their homes.
4. All those employees have been allowed to work from home that carry medical history of frequent Chest Infections, Asthma and Cardiac related problems.
5. For all those employees whose presence is unavoidable for the smooth functioning of official business, adjustments have been made in the official timings.
6. Wearing of masks and use of gloves has been made mandatory in the office premises.
7. The whole office buildings are being fumigated on regular basis.
8. Video conferences/webinars are being conducted, wherever necessary, in order to have real-time conversations.

Supporting Taxpayers & Investors

While introducing Tax Policy measures, the focus has been to support the business cash flow. To keep the individuals and businesses going and to protect them from the effects of lockdowns and restrictive measures to combat the crisis has been the main purpose. The specific measures implemented by FBR to boost the business cash flows are as follows:

1. Extension of deadlines (Filing of Tax returns, statements, replies) has been provided immediately to relieve the administrative burden for the taxpayers during the crisis.
2. Extension in filing of CRS has also been provided allowing additional time in order to facilitate the businesses to deal with their tax affairs.



3. In order to ease cash flow problems, the process of issuance of tax refunds has been enhanced. Speedy issuance of refunds has been the target here.
4. FBR has promulgated Tax Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 in order to provide special relief to builders and land developers.
5. Reduction of interest rate is another targeted policy measure that has been taken to help businesses through the COVID-19 crisis.

Measures for the Citizenry at large

Governments around the world had to undertake huge interventions in order to mitigate the loss of life and economic hardships. In order to flatten the curve of growing numbers of infected people, Government of Pakistan also had to impose the following:

1. Lockdowns (Complete or partial)
2. Social Distancing Measures
3. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) for businesses

Other **Tax Policy measures** include the following:

1. Exemption from Income Tax has been provided on any amount disbursed under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Transfer Programme that has been planned by the Government in the context of the economic hardships being experienced by the most vulnerable, the poorest segment of the society, due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.
2. Exemption from Income Tax, Sales Tax & Customs duty has been provided on the import of medical and testing equipment regarding outbreak of COVID-19. This policy decision has been taken in order to support the healthcare system.
3. Exemption from taxes has also been provided to the Prime Minister's COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund-2020.

FBR truly appreciates all the efforts made by BRITACOM to provide a platform for sharing experiences and exchanging views through this Virtual Meeting. We look forward to BRITACOM playing an important role in future in facilitating the dialogue among the BRI countries to reduce the effects of crisis on their respective economies.

THANK YOU.

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