MESSAGE TO THE NATION

In light of the emergency resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic, and the rapid increase in the number of coronavirus cases (SARS-CoV-2) in Central America, where, as of March 29th, more than 2 thousand cases were confirmed, the Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua (ACN) shares the following message to the nation:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it crystal clear that in today’s world all nations must have enough scientific and technical capacities to face national and global challenges, and that decision-making must be based on scientific evidence. To this end, we urge the Nicaraguan government to deal with the pandemic in a responsible manner and to follow to the letter the recommendations of the WHO and other global scientific associations, to prevent and control the spread of coronavirus.

2. We call for increased epidemiological surveillance and systematic and comprehensive diagnostic testing to identify possible outbreaks in a timely manner; and that the true number of confirmed cases be published with complete transparency, along with presumptive cases, the number of tests carried out, and the number of cases of pneumonia.

3. As the epidemic spreads within Nicaragua, the work of professionals in the fields of medicine, epidemiology, public health, virology, pneumology and other areas of medical science has become even more critical in containing the spread of COVID-19 cases and in the primary and continued care of those infected. The current approach and political activities of the government fail to slow the spread of the virus into Nicaragua, fail to allow the rapid identification of possible outbreaks, leave the population vulnerable, expose medical personnel to risk and put needless stress on the health care system. Therefore, we demand the establishment of rigorous protocols for protecting health professionals, guaranteeing them access to masks, gloves and other indispensable equipment so they may carry out their work in the safest way possible.

4. We propose that professionals and experts in various areas of science be included to guarantee that decisions are made based on scientific knowledge and to allow them to contribute to practical solutions that have been adapted specifically to Nicaragua’s situation. For more than 40 years, Nicaragua’s principal universities have used public funds and international cooperation to train highly skilled professionals and to obtain modern equipment, representing an exceptional resource for effectively confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. Nicaragua has professionals in the fields of medical science, virology, microbiology, and molecular biology, with valuable experience in studying and treating infectious diseases as well as early diagnostic techniques. In order to achieve the greatest contributions from the scientific community, information must be shared in an honest and transparent manner, and an environment of greater freedom must be established, without which neither science nor the country will prosper.
5. We applaud the citizens who have shown much common sense and great care in listening to and implementing the World Health Organization’s (WHO) basic recommendations for preventing the spread of coronavirus. We encourage the population to continue adhering to these recommendations carefully. The dedicated and persistent participation of the populace is crucial for slowing the spread of the virus.

6. We recognize the excellent educational and prevention efforts being carried out by think tanks, medical and scientific organizations and civil society which have provided guidance to the population regarding the pandemic in a timely manner. We highlight the commendable efforts, recommendations and proposals for effectively dealing with the coronavirus threat disseminated by the Multidisciplinary Scientific Committee and the Nicaraguan Medical Unit.

7. As urgent as strategic scientific strategies are for mitigating the rapid spread of coronavirus, it is also crucial that the country’s current crushing sociopolitical crisis be resolved or the future of several generations of Nicaraguans remains uncertain.

8. It is imperative that the government and private sector work together to create a policy to mitigate the lack of food supplies and basic services among those working in the informal sector who are affected by cancellations of activities or persons laid off by businesses that have closed due to the crisis.

9. We point out the urgent need to liberate all political prisoners as well as common prisoners above the age of 60 to guarantee them adequate health conditions in their own homes.

10. We reiterate our statements expressed in our message of March 18th hoping that the Nicaragua population will know how to face this new global threat acting as a united and solidarity-inspired community.


*About ACN:* The Academy of Sciences of Nicaragua (ACN) is an organization dedicated to the advancement of science and technology, in order to reaffirm the ethical and humanistic nature of both, the commitment to the highest values of the person, and the contribution, through excellence, to human and sustainable development of the country.